FOREIGN AFFAIRS
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2018 • VOLUME 97 • NUMBER 1 • THE UNDEAD PAST

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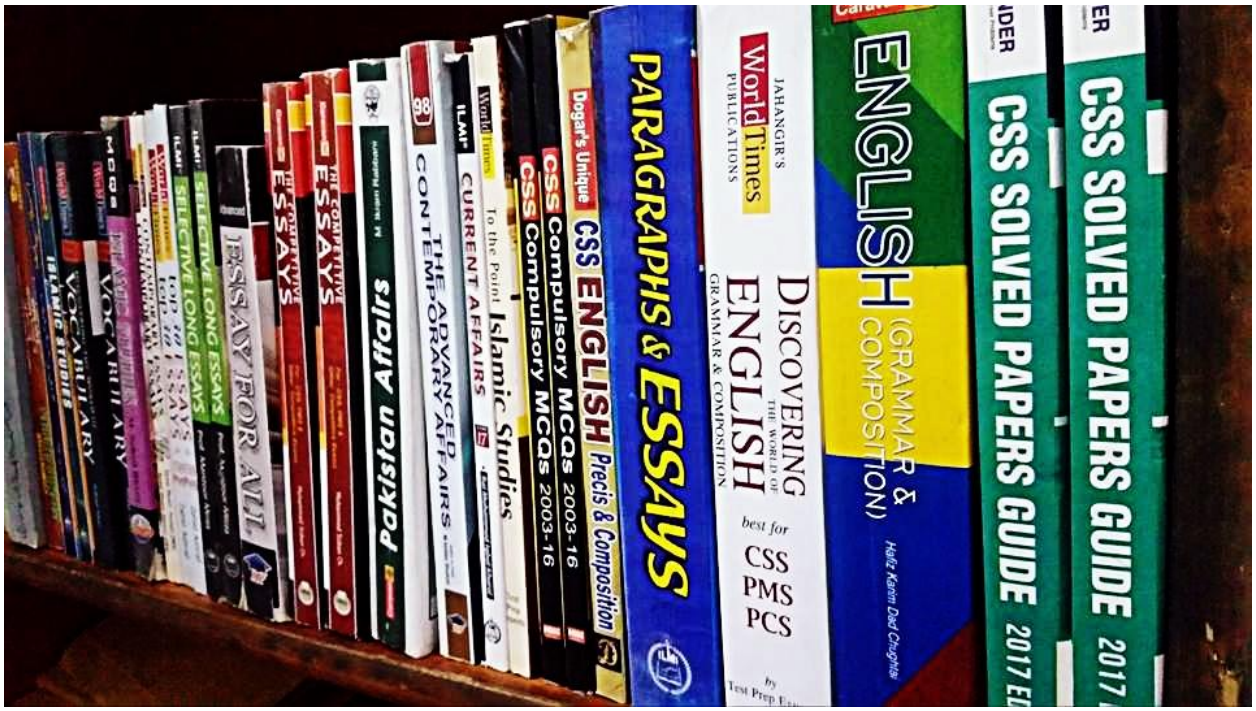


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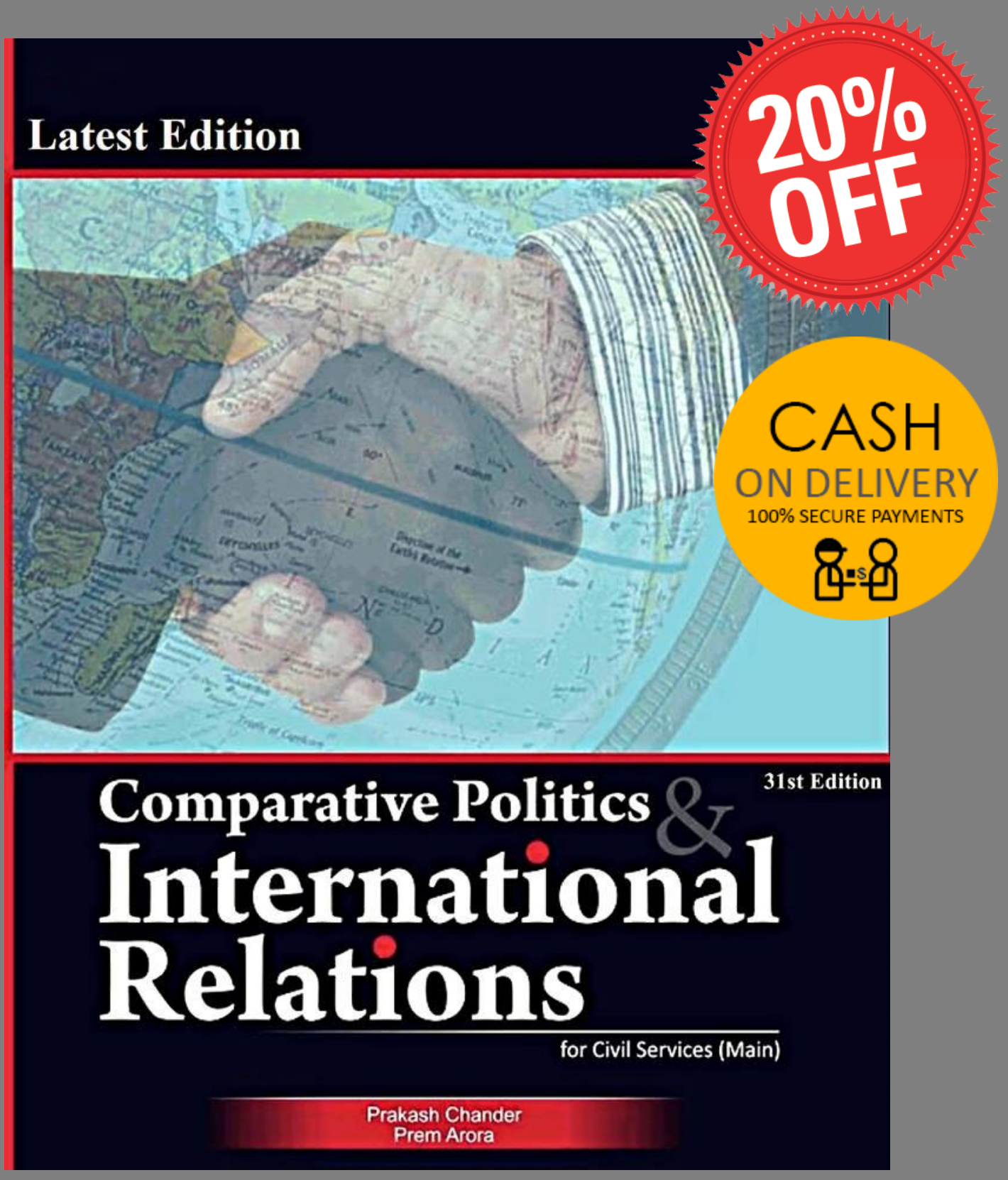

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*January/February 2018*

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Archibald Cary Coolidge, Founding Editor
Volume 1, Number 1 • September 1922

# FOREIGN AFFAIRS

*January/February 2018 · Volume 97, Number 1*

Published by the Council on Foreign Relations



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GST Number 127686483RT
Canada Post Customer #4015177 Publication #40035310

# CONTRIBUTORS

The Harvard historian **ANNETTE GORDON-REED** has spent her career producing groundbreaking research on the Founding Fathers and the interplay between race and justice in American history. In 2009, she won the Pulitzer Prize for *The Hemingses of Monticello*, in which she unraveled the myths about Thomas Jefferson's relationship with Sally Hemings, the slave who bore him several children. In "America's Original Sin" (page 2), Gordon-Reed argues that the United States is undergoing a long-overdue reckoning with white supremacy.

When the Holocaust denier David Irving sued an American academic for libel in 2000, the historian **RICHARD EVANS** served as an expert witness, providing the key evidence proving that Irving had distorted the record. Evans, who was until 2014 a professor of history at Cambridge University, has written many books on modern German history, including a celebrated three-volume history of the Third Reich. In "From Nazism to Never Again" (page 8), Evans describes how successfully Germany has come to terms with its past.

Born in Swaziland, **SISONKE MSIMANG** was raised in Zambia, Kenya, and Canada and educated in the United States. From 2008 to 2013, she served as executive director of the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa, a pro-democracy group based in South Africa. Now the head of programs at the Centre for Stories, an Australian group that collects stories from migrants and refugees, Msimang, in "All Is Not Forgiven" (page 28), argues that South Africa's celebrated truth-and-reconciliation process failed to grapple fully with the legacy of apartheid.

**HALEH ESFANDIARI** grew up in Iran but left the country just before the 1979 revolution. She went on to teach Persian language and literature at Oxford and Princeton, and in 1998, she started the Middle East Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. In 2007, Esfandiari was arrested in Tehran by the authorities, who accused her of "endangering national security." She spent 105 days in solitary confinement. In "Reform or Revolution?" (page 143), she argues that Iran will not see a democratic revolution anytime soon.

# THE UNDEAD PAST

How do nations handle the sins of the fathers and mothers? Take genocide, or slavery, or political mass murder. After such knowledge, what forgiveness—and what way forward?

The Germans have a word for it, of course: *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, or "coming to terms with the past." But the concept is applicable far beyond the Nazis—as Americans belatedly recognized when Robert E. Lee shot to the front of the culture wars last August after the riots in Charlottesville, Virginia.

To put the debates over memorializing the Confederacy in context, this issue's lead package explores how various countries have handled similar problems. There have been all too many crimes in all too many places, but six cases stand out—two of genocide, two of political mass murder, and two of enduring racial oppression. Individually, the articles here delve into how each country has processed its tragic past. Together, they reveal interesting patterns and lessons.

To kick things off, Annette Gordon-Reed considers the United States' troubled racial history, from the founding to the present. Slavery may be gone, she points out, but its underlying ideology lives on.

Then, Richard Evans traces Germany's evolving attitudes toward the Nazi era, from initial postwar sympathy to mature critical engagement—with the contemporary resurgence of right-wing populist nationalism as an unfortunate coda to a generally heartening story.

Nikita Petrov and Orville Schell look at Russia's and China's problematic responses to Stalinism and Maoism, respectively. Petrov finds an official soft-pedaling of the Soviet regime's horrors, combined with a patriotic celebration of Russia's authoritarian past. Schell finds something even worse—an airbrushing of Mao's horrors out of the historical picture by later Chinese Communist leaders.

Sisonke Msimang casts a cool eye on South Africa's truth-and-reconciliation process, arguing that although it provided a useful public forum for victims to find answers and perpetrators to seek forgiveness, it failed to dismantle the enduring structural racial and economic inequalities of apartheid.

And Phil Clark, finally, assesses Rwanda's ongoing recovery from genocide—a success story in many respects, such as the creative legal processing of perpetrators and impressive official education programs, but playing out under the Kagame regime's authoritarianism.

Worst practices are easy to identify: denying what actually happened. Best practices are more scattered, but one country leads the field. Germany's crimes rank with the worst in history. But at least, over time, the right lessons were indeed learned, and responsible engagement with the past has become a new national tradition. (One example is the *Stolpersteine* plaques—two of which are pictured on the cover, remembering Martin and Sophie Happ, who were murdered at Auschwitz in 1943.)

Perhaps facing a problem so directly and brutally that you coin an actual word for it is a smart idea after all.

*—Gideon Rose, Editor*


*Germany has accomplished an undeniably impressive feat: a collective acceptance of moral responsibility for the terrible crimes of its recent past.*

*—Richard Evans*

ERIC FELKER


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# America's Original Sin

## Slavery and the Legacy of White Supremacy

*Annette Gordon-Reed*

The documents most closely associated with the creation of the United States—the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution—present a problem with which Americans have been contending from the country's beginning: how to reconcile the values espoused in those texts with the United States' original sin of slavery, the flaw that marred the country's creation, warped its prospects, and eventually plunged it into civil war. The Declaration of Independence had a specific purpose: to cut the ties between the American colonies and Great Britain and establish a new country that would take its place among the nations of the world. But thanks to the vaulting language of its famous preamble, the document instantly came to mean more than that. Its confident statement that "all men are created equal," with "unalienable Rights" to "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness," put notions of freedom and equality at the heart of the American experiment. Yet it was written by a slave owner, Thomas Jefferson, and released into 13 colonies that all, to one degree or another, allowed slavery.

The Constitution, which united the colonies turned states, was no less tainted. It came into existence only after a heated argument over—and fateful compromise on—the institution of slavery. Members of the revolutionary generation often cast that institution as a necessary evil that would eventually die of its own accord, and they made their peace with it to hold together the new nation. The document they fought over and signed in 1787, revered almost as a sacred text by many Americans, directly protected slavery. It gave slave owners the right to capture fugitive slaves who crossed state lines, counted each enslaved person as three-fifths of a free person for the purpose of apportioning members of the House of Representatives, and prohibited the abolition of the slave trade before 1808.

As citizens of a young country, Americans have a close enough connection to the founding generation that they look to the founders as objects of praise. There might well have been no United States without George Washington, behind whom 13 fractious colonies united. Jefferson's language in the Declaration of Independence has been taken up by every marginalized group seeking an equal place in American society. It has influenced people searching for freedom in other parts of the world, as well.

Yet the founders are increasingly objects of condemnation, too. Both Washington and Jefferson owned slaves. They, along with James Madison, James Monroe, and Andrew Jackson, the other three slave-owning presidents of the early republic, shaped the first decades of the United States. Any desire to celebrate the

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JOSHUA ROBERTS / REUTERS

*Lost cause: police beneath a statue of Robert E. Lee in Charlottesville, Virginia, August 2017*

country's beginning quickly runs into the tragic aspects of that moment. Those who wish to revel without reservation in good feelings about their country feel threatened by those who note the tragedies and oppression that lay at the heart of this period. Those descended from people who were cast as inferior beings, whose labor and lives were taken for the enrichment of others, and those with empathy for the enslaved feel insulted by unreflective celebration. Learning how to strike the right balance has proved one of the most difficult problems for American society.

## WHY SLAVERY'S LEGACY ENDURES

The issue, however, goes far beyond the ways Americans think and talk about their history. The most significant fact about American slavery, one it did not share with other prominent ancient slave systems, was its basis in race. Slavery in the United States created a defined, recognizable group of people and placed them outside society. And unlike the indentured servitude of European immigrants to North America, slavery was an inherited condition.

As a result, American slavery was tied inexorably to white dominance. Even people of African descent who were freed for one reason or another suffered under the weight of the white supremacy that racially based slavery entrenched in American society. In the few places where free blacks had some form of state citizenship, their rights were circumscribed in ways that emphasized their inferior status—to them and to all observers. State laws in both the so-called Free States and the slave states served as blueprints for a system of white supremacy. Just as blackness was associated with inferiority and a lack of freedom—in some jurisdictions, black skin created the legal presumption of an

enslaved status—whiteness was associated with superiority and freedom.

The historian Edmund Morgan explained what this meant for the development of American attitudes about slavery, freedom, and race—indeed, for American culture overall. Morgan argued that racially based slavery, rather than being a contradiction in a country that prided itself on freedom, made the freedom of white people possible. The system that put black people at the bottom of the social heap tamped down class divisions among whites. Without a large group of people who would always rank below the level of even the poorest, most disaffected white person, white unity could not have persisted. Grappling with the legacy of slavery, therefore, requires grappling with the white supremacy that preceded the founding of the United States and persisted after the end of legalized slavery.

Consider, by contrast, what might have happened had there been Irish chattel slavery in North America. The Irish suffered pervasive discrimination and were subjected to crude and cruel stereotypes about their alleged inferiority, but they were never kept as slaves. Had they been enslaved and then freed, there is every reason to believe that they would have had an easier time assimilating into American culture than have African Americans. Their enslavement would be a major historical fact, but it would likely not have created a legacy so firmly tying the past to the present as did African chattel slavery. Indeed, the descendants of white indentured servants blended into society and today suffer no stigma because of their ancestors' social condition.

That is because the ability to append enslaved status to a set of generally identifiable physical characteristics—skin color, hair, facial features—made it easy to tell who was eligible for slavery and to maintain a system of social control over the enslaved. It also made it easy to continue organized oppression after the 13th Amendment ended legal slavery in 1865. There was no incentive for whites to change their attitudes about race even when slavery no longer existed. Whiteness still amounted to a value, unmoored from economic or social status. Blackness still had to be devalued to ensure white superiority. This calculus operated in Northern states as well as Southern ones.

## CONFEDERATE IDEOLOGY

The framers of the Confederate States of America understood this well. Race played a specific and pivotal role in their conception of the society they wished to create. If members of the revolutionary generation presented themselves as opponents of a doomed system and, in Jefferson's case, cast baleful views of race as mere "suspicions," their Confederate grandchildren voiced their full-throated support for slavery as a perpetual institution, based on their openly expressed belief in black inferiority. The founding documents of the Confederacy, under which the purported citizens of that entity lived, just as Americans live under the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, announced that African slavery would form the "cornerstone" of the country they would create after winning the Civil War. In 1861, a few weeks before the war began, Alexander Stephens, the vice president of the Confederacy, put things plainly:

> The new constitution has put at rest, forever, all the agitating questions relating to our peculiar institution—African slavery as it exists amongst us—the proper status of the negro in our form of civilization. This was the immediate cause of the late rupture and present revolution. Jefferson in his forecast had anticipated this as the "rock upon which the old Union would split." He was right. . . . The prevailing ideas entertained by him and most of the leading statesmen at the time of the formation of the old constitution, were that the enslavement of the African was in violation of the laws of nature; that it was wrong in principle, socially, morally, and politically. . . . Those ideas, however, were fundamentally wrong. They rested upon the assumption of the equality of races. This was an error.
>
> Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery—subordination to the superior race—is his natural and normal condition.

Despite the clarity of Stephens' words, millions of Americans today are unaware of—or perhaps unwilling to learn about—the aims of those who rallied to the Confederate cause. That ignorance has led many to fall prey to the romantic notion of "the rebels," ignoring that these rebels had a cause. Modern Americans may fret about the hypocrisy and weakness of the founding generation, but there was no such hesitancy among the leading Confederates on matters of slavery and race. That they were not successful on the battlefield does not mean that their philosophy should be ignored in favor of abstract notions of "duty," "honor," and "nobility"; Americans should not engage in the debate that the former Confederates chose after the war ended and slavery, finally, acquired a bad name.

It has taken until well into the twenty-first century for many Americans to begin to reject the idea of erecting statues of men who fought to construct an explicitly white supremacist society. For too long, the United States has postponed a reckoning with the corrosive ideas about race that have destroyed the lives and wasted the talents of millions of people who could have contributed to their country. To confront the legacy of slavery without openly challenging the racial attitudes that created and shaped the institution is to leave the most important variable out of the equation. And yet discussions of race, particularly of one's own racial attitudes, are among the hardest conversations Americans are called on to have.

This issue of the Confederacy's legacy was made tragically prominent in 2015, when the white supremacist Dylann Roof shot 12 black parishioners in a church in Charleston, South Carolina, killing nine of them. History had given the worshipers in Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church every reason to be suspicious of the young man who appeared at their doorstep that day, yet they invited him in to their prayer meeting. Although they had, Roof said, been "nice" to him, they had to die because they (as representatives of the black race) were, in his words, raping "our women" and "taking over our country." Their openness and faith were set against the images, later revealed, of Roof posing with what has come to be known as the Confederate flag and other white supremacist iconography.

The core meaning of the Confederacy was made heartbreakingly vivid. From that moment on, inaction on the question of the display of the Confederate flag was, for many, no longer an option. Bree Newsome, the activist who, ten days after the shooting, scaled the flagpole in front of the South Carolina State House and removed the Confederate flag that flew there, represented the new spirit: displaying symbols of white supremacy in public spaces was no longer tolerable.

And those symbols went far beyond flags. Monuments to people who, in one way or another, promoted the idea of white supremacy are scattered across the country. Statues of Confederate officials and generals dot parks and public buildings. Yet proposals to take them down have drawn sharp opposition. Few who resist the removal of the statues openly praise the aims of the Confederacy, whatever their private thoughts on the matter. Instead, they raise the specter of a slippery slope: today, Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee; tomorrow, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Yet dealing with such slopes is part of everyday life. The problem with the Confederacy is not just that its leaders owned slaves. The problem is that they tried to destroy the Union and did so in adherence to an explicit doctrine of slavery and white supremacy. By contrast, the founding generation, for all its faults, left behind them principles and documents that have allowed American society to expand in directions opposite to the values of the South's slave society and the Confederacy.

It is not surprising that colleges and universities, ideally the site of inquiry and intellectual contest, have grappled most prominently with this new national discussion. Many of the most prestigious American universities have benefited from the institution of slavery or have buildings named after people who promoted white supremacy. Brown, Georgetown, Harvard, Princeton, and Yale have, by starting conversations on campus, carrying out programs of historical self-study, and setting up commissions, contributed to greater public understanding of the past and of how the country might move ahead. Their work serves as a template for the ways in which other institutions should engage with these issues in a serious fashion.

## RECONSTRUCTION DELAYED

For all the criticism that has been leveled at him for the insufficient radicalism of his racial politics, Abraham Lincoln understood that the central question for the United States after the Civil War was whether blacks could be fully incorporated into American society. Attempting to go forward after the carnage, he returned to first principles. In the Gettysburg Address, he used the words of the Declaration of Independence as an argument for the emancipation of blacks and their inclusion in the country's "new birth of freedom." What Lincoln meant by this, how far he was prepared to take matters, will remain unknown. What is clear is that Reconstruction, the brief period of hope among four million emancipated African Americans, when black men were given the right to vote, when the freedmen married, sought education, and became elected officials in the South, was seen as a nightmare by many white Southerners. Most of them had not owned slaves. But slavery was only part of the wider picture. They continued to rely on the racial

hierarchy that had obtained since the early 1600s, when the first Africans arrived in North America's British colonies. Rather than bring free blacks into society, with the hope of moving the entire region forward, they chose to move backward, to a situation as close to slavery as legally possible. Northern whites, tired of "the Negro problem," abandoned Reconstruction and left black people to the mercy of those who had before the war seen them as property and after it as lost possessions.

The historian David Blight has described how the post–Civil War desire for reconciliation between white Northerners and white Southerners left African Americans behind, in ways that continue to shape American society. The South had no monopoly on adherents to the doctrine of white supremacy. Despite all that had happened, the racial hierarchy took precedence over the ambitious plan to bring black Americans into full citizenship expressed in the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution. In a reversal of the maxim that history is written by the victors, the losing side in the Civil War got to tell the story of their slave society in ways favorable to them, through books, movies, and other popular entertainment. American culture accepted the story that apologists for the Confederacy told about Southern whites and Southern blacks.

That did not begin to change until the second half of the twentieth century. It took the development of modern scholarship on slavery and Reconstruction and a civil rights movement composed of blacks, whites, and other groups from across the country to begin moving the needle on the question of white supremacy's role in American society.

Since then, black Americans have made many social and economic gains, but there is still far to go. De jure segregation is dead, but de facto segregation is firmly in place in much of the country. The United States twice elected a black president and had a black first family, but the next presidential election expressed, in part, a backlash. African Americans are present in all walks of life, up and down the economic scale. But overall, black wealth is a mere fraction of white wealth. Police brutality and racialized law enforcement tactics have shown that the Fourth Amendment does not apply with equal force to black Americans. And the killing of armed black men in open-carry states by police has called into question black rights under the Second Amendment. To understand these problems, look not only to slavery itself but also to its most lasting legacy: the maintenance of white supremacy. Americans must come to grips with both if they are to make their country live up to its founding creed.

# From Nazism to Never Again

## How Germany Came to Terms With Its Past

*Richard J. Evans*

Defeated regimes are not only swiftly removed from power but often immediately erased from memory as well. When Adolf Hitler's "thousand-year German Reich" came crashing down in 1945 with the Allied victory in World War II, reminders of the 12 years of its actual existence were hastily scrubbed away as Germans scrambled to adjust to life after Nazism. Stone swastikas were chiseled off the façades of buildings, Nazi insignia were taken down from flagpoles, and, in towns and cities across Germany, streets and squares named after Hitler reverted to their previous designations.

Meanwhile, millions of former Nazis hid or burned their uniforms, and in the final days of the war, the Gestapo set fire to incriminating records all over the country. Many of the most fanatical Nazis did not survive: they either perished in the final conflagration or killed themselves, along with Hitler, Joseph Goebbels, Heinrich Himmler, and many others, in one of the greatest waves of mass suicide in history, unable to imagine anything beyond the all-encompassing world of the Third Reich, the only thing that gave their lives purpose and meaning.

In stark contrast to the countries that the Nazis had conquered during the war, Germany saw no resistance to the Allied occupation. As wartime gravestones eloquently testified, many Germans had fought and died "for Führer and Fatherland." But with the führer gone and the fatherland under enemy occupation, there seemed no point in fighting on. German cities had been reduced to rubble, and millions of Germans had died; as a result, everyone could see what Nazism had ultimately led to. The Allied occupation was vigilant and comprehensive, and it quickly suppressed even the slightest act of resistance. The Allies put in place an elaborate program of "denazification," war crimes trials, and "reeducation" measures that targeted not only former Nazi activists and fellow travelers but also the militaristic beliefs and values that the Allies believed had allowed the Hitler regime to gain support and come to power in the first place. In 1947, to symbolize this forced reinvention of German political culture, the Allied Control Council, which governed Germany at the time, formally abolished the state of Prussia, which "from early days has been a bearer of militarism and reaction in Germany," the council claimed.

Germans by and large wanted to focus on the gigantic task of rebuilding and reconstruction and to forget the Nazi past and the crimes in which, to a greater or lesser extent, the vast majority of them had been involved. The year 1945, many of them declared, was "zero hour"—time for a fresh start. However, politicians and intellectuals also reached back to older values in their quest to construct a new Germany.

**RICHARD J. EVANS** is Provost of Gresham College, in London, and the author of *The Third Reich in History and Memory*.


*Stumbling across history: plaques memorializing Holocaust victims in Berlin, November 2013*

TOBIAS SCHWARZ / REUTERS

In the throes of the Cold War, the country split into the capitalist Federal Republic in the West and the socialist Democratic Republic in the East. From 1952 onward, a fortified fence separated them; in 1961, the last remaining links were severed with the building of the Berlin Wall. On either side, rival visions of the new Germany emerged. Konrad Adenauer, the leading politician in West Germany, sought to rebuild the country on the basis of "Western," Christian values, while Walter Ulbricht, the leading politician in the East, looked to the traditions of the German labor movement, formed in the mid-nineteenth century under the inspiration of Karl Marx. The democratic traditions of the United States—and, to a lesser extent, those of France and the United Kingdom—exerted a powerful influence on West Germany, whereas the Russian Revolution, Leninism and Stalinism, and the social and political precedent of the Soviet Union provided the model for the socialist state in East Germany.

Yet postwar German efforts to forge a new identity could not just leap across the Third Reich as if it had not existed. Germans ultimately had to confront what the Hitler regime had done in their name. The process of doing so was halting and hesitant at first, and complicated by the country's division during the Cold War. In recent decades, however, Germany has accomplished an undeniably impressive feat: a collective acceptance of moral responsibility for the terrible crimes of its recent past. The country has given material expression to this acceptance by preserving physical traces of the Nazi era and building fresh memorials to its victims. These memorials serve more than just a symbolic function: in the face of increasingly influential far-right groups and parties that reject

contemporary German norms of tolerance, seek an end to what they consider the "shaming" of Germans, and encourage pernicious forms of historical revisionism, these monuments to the past act as constant, unavoidable, and visceral reminders of the truth.

## AFTER HITLER

In the aftermath of World War II, the victorious Allies moved swiftly to prevent any of the sites associated with Hitler and the Nazi leadership from becoming pilgrimage destinations for those who still adhered to Nazism. The Soviets blew up the remains of the bombed-out Reich Chancellery in Berlin. The underground bunker where Hitler spent his final weeks was progressively demolished or filled in. Deliberately anonymous and unremarkable new buildings were constructed around the site; today, if visitors manage to find the spot, all they will see is a children's playground and a parking lot.

Yet even when the physical damage of the war had been repaired, by the 1960s, many reminders of the Nazi regime persisted in most German cities; quite a few of the physical remains of the Hitler regime proved simply too massive to dismantle easily. It was one thing to remove a concrete Nazi eagle and swastika from a public building, but quite another to demolish the huge stadium constructed for the track-and-field events of the 1936 Berlin Olympics, for example, or the grandiose and largely intact Tempelhof Airport in Berlin, originally designed by the Nazis as one of four terminals that would serve what they imagined would be the "World Capital of Germania" after their eventual victory. What is more, both of those structures were just too useful to eliminate. A postwar role was even found for the concentration camps, the sites of the regime's worst crimes, as some of them were used to house Nazi prisoners awaiting trial or even to provide temporary shelter for German refugees and exiles from eastern Europe.

There was a limit, as well, to what the Allies could achieve in encouraging or forcing the Germans to come to terms with what they had done. West Germans, the vast majority of the formerly united country's population, seemed to suffer from a generalized historical and moral amnesia in the postwar years; on the rare occasions when they spoke about the Nazi dictatorship, it was usually to insist that they had known nothing of its crimes and to complain that they had been unfairly victimized and humiliated by the denazification programs and the "victors' justice" of the war crimes trials. Many still seethed with anger at the Allies' carpet-bombing of German towns and resented the expulsion of 11 million ethnic Germans by the postwar governments of Hungary, Poland, Romania, and other eastern European countries. An opinion poll carried out in West Germany in 1949 revealed that half the population considered Nazism to be "a good idea, badly carried out." In the East, the country's new Stalinist leaders wanted the public to identify with the memory of the communist resistance to Nazism, which had been real enough, but which the authorities massively exaggerated. As a result, East Germans were not really forced to face up to their involvement in the crimes of Nazism at all.

In the 1960s, however, things began to change. The much-heralded "economic miracle" transformed West Germany

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into a prosperous and flourishing society. Germans reconciled themselves to democratic institutions because they were finally delivering economic success, as they had not managed to do under the ill-fated Weimar Republic in the 1920s and early 1930s. A new generation of young Germans, born during or after the war and brought up in a democratic society, began to demand the truth about the Nazi era from their parents and teachers. Historians, most notably at Munich's Institute for Contemporary History, began to research the Nazi period seriously and critically, as the documents seized by the Allies for the Nuremberg prosecutions were returned to German archives. The West German authorities themselves launched numerous prosecutions for war crimes, culminating in the trials of Auschwitz camp personnel in 1963–65. Massive publicity was generated by the 1961 trial in Jerusalem of Adolf Eichmann, one of the principal administrators of what the Nazis had euphemistically called "the final solution of the Jewish problem in Europe." The German student rebellion of 1968 and the coming to power of a Social Democratic government led by Willy Brandt, who had spent the Nazi years in exile, further opened the way to a more honest confrontation with the Nazi past. The neo-Nazi National Democratic Party emerged in 1964 to challenge these developments and won a few seats in state parliaments but never managed to get the five percent of the vote necessary to secure representation in the national legislature.

These developments lent urgency to the question of what to do with the remaining relics of the Third Reich. In Nuremberg, for example, there was the roughly seven-square-mile site where the Nazi Party had held huge rallies, one of which was immortalized in Leni Riefenstahl's chilling 1935 propaganda film *Triumph of the Will*. Municipal officials converted the Luitpold Arena back into a public park, as it had been before Nazi times, and blew up the massive grandstand known as the Tribune of Honor, where 500 Nazi dignitaries had seated themselves to watch the mass choreography of party rallies.

By the end of the 1950s, however, some groups in the city began to argue in favor of preserving some of these buildings as sites of memory, rather than obliterating them—and with them, not unintentionally, the memory of Nuremberg's role in the Nazi movement. Although some members of the city council were keen to dissociate the city from its Nazi links by appealing to a more distant, medieval past, others thought this smacked of dishonesty and deception. At the Zeppelin Field, another vast arena used for the Nuremberg rallies, the Allies had blown up the huge swastika that topped the main grandstand, which had been constructed by Hitler's architect, Albert Speer. But the buildings encircling the field were preserved, and the arena itself was used for sports practice, camping, and other open-air activities. Parts of an unfinished great hall became the home of the Nuremberg Symphony Orchestra. In view of the harmless nature of these new functions, it seemed wasteful to demolish the structures that housed them. In 1994, the city council decided to put up a permanent exhibition about the Nuremberg rallies and the surviving buildings in the complex, housed in a wing of the great hall, placing the events in their historical context and

explaining the function and impact of the rallies in winning over people to the Nazi movement.

The concentration camps went through a similar series of phases after the war, reflecting changing German attitudes to the Nazi past. For example, in 1948, the British occupying forces returned the camp at Neuengamme, near Hamburg, back to the Germans, who immediately converted it into a state penitentiary, removing the wooden huts and replacing them with a large new prison complex. The authorities pledged that the facility would be run in accordance with standard legal norms and penal practices, unlike its predecessor. But the fact that it incorporated the old concentration camp implied that the latter, too, had housed a population of criminals rather than the innocent victims of a genocidal regime. Meanwhile, the canal that camp inmates had been forced to build was leased to a commercial enterprise, as was a wing of the former camp's brick factory.

The few memorial sites that appeared on the grounds of the old concentration camps in West Germany said little or nothing about the camps themselves, instead paying homage to the victims with Christian monuments organized according to religious denomination. Only after groups formed by ex-prisoners pressured state authorities did they agree to open exhibition centers at the camps: at Dachau in 1955, Bergen-Belsen in 1966, and Neuengamme in 1981. But these exhibitions framed their messages in Cold War terms, decrying totalitarianism yet making little mention of the fact that many of the prisoners were held there because they were communists. The opposite was the case in the concentration camp sites in East Germany, which focused on the (often overstated) resistance activities of communist inmates, with whom the visitors were urged to identify.

## THE TRUTH WILL OUT

The landscape of memorialization had thus already changed considerably between the immediate postwar years and the 1980s. But a far more dramatic transformation took place following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany in 1989–90. This change was accentuated by a second generational shift, as the senior members of the German professions (medicine, law, education, and so on), who had started their careers during the Nazi period, reached retirement age and relinquished power to younger colleagues, who had not been implicated in the crimes of the Third Reich. The 1990s saw a far-reaching reckoning with the past, as new research, often accompanied by public controversy, exposed the role of doctors in the killing of mental patients; of academics in planning the extermination of the Jews, Slavic peoples, the Sinti, the Roma, and others regarded by the Nazis as inferior or dispensable; of civil servants in the implementation of the Holocaust; of judges and lawyers in the condemnation and execution of political offenders, "social deviants," gay men and women, and many others who fell afoul of discriminatory Nazi laws.

Such revelations were not uniformly accepted. There were public demonstrations against a touring exhibition that exposed the crimes of the German armed forces on the eastern front during World War II, which included the massacre of Jews, the killing of civilians, the wanton

destruction of enemy property, and much more besides. Still, by the late 1990s, most people in Germany accepted the validity of these accounts, and a majority of Germans had come to believe that their country bore the major responsibility for the extermination of some six million European Jews by the Nazis.

A wave of memorials accompanied and encouraged this collective embrace of the truth. In 1992, the artist Gunter Demnig launched the *Stolpersteine* ("stumbling blocks") project, in which small brass plaques the size of cobblestones were laid into the sidewalks of German towns and cities outside the houses where the murdered victims of Nazism had lived until their arrest. The plaques carry the names of the victims and the dates and places of their birth and death. The project quickly became popular as a way of memorializing the dead. To date, more than 56,000 *Stolpersteine* have been placed in urban locations in some 22 countries, the vast majority in Germany itself. By placing them where people would walk over them, the artist intended to remind passersby of the complicity of ordinary Germans in the violence. Although some towns still resist their placement, the number of these small but powerfully evocative memorials continues to grow.

Larger, more elaborate forms of memorialization took shape, as well. The sites of former concentration camps were turned into large-scale memorials to the victims, with elaborate exhibitions that now took a more comprehensive approach to their subject, replacing the partial view of the Cold War years. The modern Neuengamme prison was closed in 2006. A supermarket built on the grounds of the Ravensbrück women's concentration camp was never opened after widespread protests (although the building itself was not demolished). The camp at Sachsenhausen, to the north of Berlin, in the former East Germany, was cleared of rubble, and a new exhibition center was opened there in 2001. And in 2005, perhaps the highest-profile of these projects opened: the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, located in the center of Germany's new capital, Berlin.

## VICTORS AND VICTIMS

A shared sense of responsibility for the crimes of Nazism arguably aided the process of reunification, as Germans had to find a new source of national identity beyond the liberal democratic values or communist visions that had shaped the respective political cultures on either side of the Berlin Wall. Of course, there are still some who insist that the Germans were themselves victimized, above all by the Allied strategic bombing campaign that killed over half a million German civilians during the war, or by the expulsion under brutal and often murderous conditions of some 11 million ethnic Germans from eastern Europe in 1944–46. But this remains a minority view, and significantly, it has not found expression in permanent memorials: indeed, a plan to create a museum in Berlin to commemorate the victims of the expulsion had to be abandoned after protests lodged by the Polish government, in particular.

At the same time, a number of memorials created during the Nazi period have not been removed and have aroused considerable controversy and debate. One example is the memorial to the soldiers of the 76th Infantry Regiment at the Dammtor train station, in Hamburg, a huge concrete block commemorating

the men of the regiment who fell in World War I. German veterans managed to frustrate Allied plans to demolish it, and so it remains intact. There are many monuments to the World War I dead in Germany, most of them politically more or less neutral, but this one, erected under the Nazi regime in 1936, is openly militaristic in character, carrying the inscription, in Gothic lettering, "Germany must live, even if we must die."

For the Western powers in the Cold War, this sentiment was not wholly unwelcome. But the sight of such an unmistakably Nazi memorial, which depicts 88 steel-helmeted infantrymen in relief marching round the side of the block, brandishing their weapons, aroused growing protests from the 1970s onward. The response of the Hamburg authorities was to commission an "antimonument" by the Austrian sculptor Alfred Hrdlicka, which since the mid-1980s has stood next to the main block, commemorating the victims of war, and especially the 40,000 inhabitants of the city who lost their lives in the gigantic firestorm created by Allied bombing raids in 1943. Only partially completed (for financial reasons), it nonetheless poses an effective criticism of the original memorial: war, it reminds viewers, is generally not the glorious and heroic enterprise claimed by the monument to the 76th Regiment.

## TESTING TOLERANCE

Not surprisingly, an understanding of war's costs has deeply affected contemporary German political culture. Since 1945, no European country has been more pacifistic in sentiment or more opposed to military intervention outside its own borders. No country has placed more weight on stability and continuity, a preference expressed most succinctly by Adenauer's famous electoral slogan of the 1950s: "No experiments!" And no European country has been more welcoming to immigrants and refugees, including Greek, Italian, Spanish, and Turkish *Gastarbeiter* ("guest workers") drawn by the economic boom of the 1960s and more than a million refugees from the Middle East and elsewhere looking for a safer and better life who have flooded Germany in recent years.

Today, such values are being tested as never before. The refugee crisis has sparked an intense backlash against postwar norms of tolerance. Two organizations in particular have emerged to object to the government's policies in this area. Pegida (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West) formed in 2014 in Dresden and has since held a series of mass street demonstrations against immigration, calling for "the preservation of German culture" and decrying "religious fanaticism." One Pegida speaker declared that Germany had become "a Muslim garbage dump." Opinion surveys in 2014 showed that although somewhere between a third and half of all Germans sympathized with the movement's complaints, the great majority declared themselves unwilling to join in the demonstrations, correctly considering Pegida's fears of a supposed overwhelming of German and European culture by Muslim immigrants to be grossly exaggerated.

In the past three years, Pegida has largely given way to another new political movement, Alternative for Germany (AfD), which has emerged as a conventional political party and received the third most votes in national elections last fall, gaining 94 of the 598 seats in

the national legislature. As well as being anti-Islam and anti-immigrant, the AfD denies human influence on climate change, wants to ban same-sex marriage, supports what it calls traditional family values, opposes European integration, and repudiates what it sees as a culture of shame and guilt over the Nazi past in favor of a new sense of national pride. In January 2017, the leader of the ultra-right faction of the party, Björn Höcke, demanded a "180-degree about-face in the politics of memory," a statement that aroused controversy even within the AfD. And even the moderate faction's leader, Frauke Petry, who has since left the party, showed no reluctance to use Nazi terms that have been more or less anathemas to German politicians since 1945, such as *Volk*, which means "folk," "people," or "nation" but now has strong racist overtones, owing to its usage by the Nazis.

The AfD enjoys its strongest support in the former East Germany. Around 20 percent or more of voters in the five states there cast their ballots for the party last fall, in contrast to between seven and 12 percent in the former West German states. This reflects the legacy of the communist regime's failure to instill an adequate culture of remembrance in its citizens; former East Germans don't seem to have the same allergy to right-wing extremism that former West Germans have. In a similar way, it's in former East German cities, such as Dresden, that Pegida has staged its most successful demonstrations. As the brief rise of the National Democratic Party in the late 1960s showed, when a coalition government of the two main parties holds power, as they did then and as they did under Chancellor Angela Merkel until the 2017 elections, the lack of any adequate political opposition encourages the rise of right-wing protest movements in Germany.

But neither Pegida nor the AfD has managed to disturb the German consensus about the Nazi past. All the other main political parties support Merkel's refugee policy and are even more committed to the dominant German culture of memory. The threat of right-wing populism in Germany has proved to be far weaker than in a number of other European countries. The days when a genuinely neo-Nazi party could win significant numbers of votes are long over, and despite some flirtation with Nazi ideas and even acts of violence on its ultra-right fringes, right-wing populism in Germany no longer has the Nazi ties it used to have. Indeed, echoes of Nazism on the fringes of the AfD have on occasion plunged the party into crisis and have led to the resignation of some senior members. The party has said that it wants to end Germany's sense of responsibility for the German past, but with so many solid and prominent memorials to the victims of Nazism scattered all across the land, from the *Stolpersteine* to the concentration camp memorials, it is difficult to see how that would happen. Such physical reminders of the crimes of Hitler and the Nazis confront Germans every day, and while a small minority may not like this, they have no choice but to put up with it. When it comes to accepting the sins of the past, there is, in the end, no alternative for Germany.

# Don't Speak, Memory

## How Russia Represses Its Past

*Nikita Petrov*

Every spring, buses covered in portraits of Joseph Stalin appear on the streets of Russian cities. His face replaces ads for cell phones, soft drinks, laundry detergent, and cat food. With each passing year, the dictator gets more handsome and more glamorous; a portrait of him in his gorgeous white generalissimo's jacket has become especially popular. He casts his stern gaze on the citizens, as if to say, "Remember me? I'm here, I didn't go anywhere—and don't you forget it!"

The ads aim to remind the country of the dictator's role in the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany in World War II. For those who would rehabilitate Stalin, that victory is their final argument, their last chance to drag the tyrant out of oblivion and put him back on his pedestal. They use it to make excuses for the dictator, to wash his hands of the blood he shed, and to recast him as the savior of the motherland during the hardship of the war years. The victory, in this version of history, legitimizes and justifies the entire repressive Soviet regime.

In the eyes of the Stalinists, admiration for the tyrant ought to be public and compulsory. That's why they've chosen such an assertive way to inject the dictator into public space. Many want to go even further. There's talk of erecting monuments to Stalin. There are annual calls to restore the city of Volgograd's Soviet-era name: Stalingrad. Newly published histories in Moscow's bookstores perpetuate the mythologized image of Stalin as a strict but fair ruler. Their titles—*The Other Stalin*, *Stalin the Great*, *Stalin: Father of a Nation*—say it all. There is even a new popular literature attempting to justify the actions of Viktor Abakumov, Lavrenty Beria, and other odious leaders of Stalin's secret police. The monsters of Stalin's era are coming back from the dead. And some of Russia's leaders, including President Vladimir Putin, are exploiting the ideology of Stalin's era to serve their own ends.

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### SHADOWS OF THE PAST

At first glance, the resurgence of admiration for Stalin seems surprising. The leader of one of the twentieth century's bloodiest regimes, Stalin was responsible for the deaths of between ten million and 12 million people in peacetime. At least five million of these died of starvation and disease in 1932–33, during a famine caused by the mass collectivization of agriculture. (Because the records are so scanty, accurate numbers are hard to determine. Some historians put the famine's death toll even higher.)

The most intense period of deliberate killing, although it saw fewer overall deaths, came during the Great Terror, which took place in 1937–38. At Stalin's direction, the Soviet secret police, known as the NKVD, killed hundreds of thousands of former kulaks (well-off peasants who had been stripped of their property

during collectivization) and other "anti-Soviet elements," along with members of ethnic minorities, especially Germans and Poles, who might be tempted to betray the Soviet Union. All told, nearly 700,000 people were shot in a roughly 15-month period that began in the summer of 1937. Many others were sent to the gulag, the vast system of labor camps spanning the Soviet Union that held over 1.5 million people by the start of World War II.

Despite this bloody history, Russian authorities today avoid giving official assessments of either the Soviet past in general or individual Communist leaders in particular. That was not always the case. In 1987, during the period of liberalization known as glasnost, the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev gave a speech marking the 70th anniversary of the Russian Revolution in which he said that Stalin had committed "enormous and unforgivable" crimes. Today, such a clear statement would be unthinkable. In 2000, during his first inauguration as president, Putin set the new official tone, declaring that "there have been both tragic and brilliant pages in our history."

Since then, the Kremlin has maintained this official line. On the one hand, in 2015, the government announced a new policy called the Program for Commemorating the Victims of Political Repression. Last October, as part of that policy, Moscow saw the opening of the Wall of Grief, a memorial to the victims of Soviet totalitarianism. This marked an important watershed: official government acknowledgment of the scale and gravity of the mass repressions. But many human rights advocates have expressed skepticism of the Russian government's ability to properly acknowledge the past. They point to the growing human rights violations in Russia and the fact that the archives containing the records of the security services' crimes remain closed.

Official public memory also has a darker side. Authorities still refrain from officially describing Stalin's deeds as crimes. They carefully refer to them as "mistakes," justifying them by pointing to the difficulties of the pre-war period and the need to prepare the country for war, as well as through misleading comparisons. At a press conference in 2013, a British correspondent asked Putin how he felt about Stalin. Putin shot back: "Was Cromwell any better?"

Contradictory views of Stalin are not limited to politicians. A popular high school textbook, *The History of Russia, 1917–2009*, claims that "as a statesman, Stalin was a great hero, but in terms of human rights, he was an evil murderer." More and more often, Stalin is referred to as "a great statesman" who undertook a controversial but nonetheless effective push to strengthen the country. It's as though Russians have two national histories.

## HISTORY NOT ON TRIAL

The resurgence in public appreciation for the Soviet regime became possible in large part because Russia has never put its communist past on trial. Stalin flagrantly violated the constitution his own government had ratified in 1936. Despite constitutional guarantees including freedom of speech, the press, religion, and assembly, he created extrajudicial organs that issued death sentences in the absence of the accused and personally signing off on execution lists. More than six decades since Stalin's death, there has been no official reckoning with this lawlessness.

In 1991, President Boris Yeltsin issued a decree terminating the activities of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The CPSU then challenged the decree in the Constitutional Court. Memorial, the civil rights group for which I work, prepared an expert analysis for the court in support of Yeltsin's decree that included many archival documents testifying to the multitude of crimes perpetrated by the party's leaders, from Vladimir Lenin to Gorbachev—but most of all by Stalin. The report marshaled vast quantities of evidence to prove that the party was a special instrument of the state that crudely violated constitutional norms, supplanting the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government.

The court ruled in Yeltsin's favor, authorizing his closure of the CPSU. "For a long period of time," the decision declared, "this country was ruled by a regime with limitless power founded in violence, controlled by a small group of Communist functionaries, united in the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU, led by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU." But the court had not set out to determine whether the CPSU had broken any laws and so gave no assessment of the crimes committed by the party or its leaders. It even declined to rule on the constitutionality of the CPSU before Yeltsin's ban. Thus, the opportunity for a reckoning with the crimes of the Soviet regime was lost.

Today in Russia, it is impossible to take former Soviet security functionaries to court because their crimes were committed so long ago and the current government has failed to extend the relevant statutes of limitations. The Russian government even attempts to interfere in court proceedings in other former Soviet republics. In the 1990s and early years of this century, Estonia and Latvia conducted investigations and trials of former associates of Stalin's security forces, charging them with genocide and war crimes. In 2004, Latvian authorities convicted Vassili Kononov, a Red Army soldier, of war crimes for his participation in 1944 in the murders of nine unarmed people, including a pregnant woman, in Mazie Bati, a village in modern-day Latvia. In 2008, Estonia put Arnold Meri, a former Communist functionary, on trial for his role in the mass deportations of Estonians in 1949. (Meri died before the trial concluded.) In both cases, the Kremlin launched loud propaganda campaigns in protest.

## OFFICIAL MEMORY

There's no doubt that Stalin was a criminal, whether or not the Kremlin deems him one. Still, official acknowledgment of the criminality of both Stalin himself and the system he led is important, as it would help prevent the state from reverting to the policies that made Stalin's regime possible. In modern Russia, with its deep-rooted tradition of authoritarianism, the danger of returning to bad habits is real.

In that light, the new popular Russian ideology is worrying. It consists of a paternalistic conception of government paired with the glorification of the past, including the entire Soviet period. The ideology's basic principles are simple: the government is always right, and if in the past its policies created any victims, even a great many of them, they were necessary to continue down the special path chosen by the country. To ensure popular acceptance of these ideas, the state increasingly intervenes in the teaching of history.

*Sorry not sorry: Putin at the Wall of Grief, Moscow, October 2017*

SPUTNIK PHOTO AGENCY / REUTERS

For the government, history is not a subject to be treated objectively; instead, it is an instrument to advance the ideology of the state. The official "historical and cultural standards" that guide public school curricula mention the "mistakes," not the crimes, committed by the Soviet regime. Textbooks dryly present the facts about the Great Terror without properly assessing them. They either list the total number of people arrested and executed or just claim that Stalin had decided to carry out a "general cleansing" of Soviet society as part of a necessary purge of a potential "fifth column." These accounts aim to rationalize events rather than present a clear picture of what happened and what it meant.

These history texts form part of an official Russian state program of "patriotic education." This endeavor not only runs counter to the principles of a free and democratic society but also contradicts the Russian constitution. That document, adopted in 1993, states that "no ideology may be established as the official state ideology or made compulsory in any way." In theory, educational historical texts should aim to develop independent thinking, which can form the basis of civic consciousness. But in practice, the desire to promote patriotism prevents an honest analysis of history and takes textbooks out of the realm of scholarship. The result is biased writing that twists the facts to support ideologically determined conclusions.

At the personal level, many people still remember relatives and loved ones who died in the purges. They are not afraid to discuss the past, but their memories are often framed by an acceptance of the official line about the necessity of Stalin's deeds. "That's just the way

things were back then," Russians often remark. Rather than blame the government, most see the Great Terror as something akin to a natural disaster. Very few Russians privately acknowledge—and fewer still are brave enough to publicly declare—that the mass Soviet political repression of 1937–38 was a crime, planned and perpetrated by Stalin and his government against the Soviet people.

There is no place in the Kremlin's fine-tuned propaganda for an honest public discussion of Soviet-era political repression, resettlement, famine, and mass murder. Instead, the prohibition against remembering past horrors goes hand in hand with patriotic fervor for the modern state. Putin's government has enacted laws that limit the freedom to speak, rally, or demonstrate and has restricted the activities of nongovernmental civic groups. All of this is justified as necessary to prevent "foreign intervention" in Russian affairs. Kremlin propaganda and pro-Kremlin historians insist that Western media and institutions use the "intentional negativization" of Soviet history as a weapon against Russia.

## THE HISTORY OF EXPANSIONISM

Russia's modern resurrection of old ideologies reaches back further even than the Soviet era. A new dogma deems the Soviet government the inheritor of the Russian empire, and modern Russia, in turn, the rightful heir to the Soviet Union. According to this view, Russia has inherited both the empire's old enemies and the confrontational thinking that went with them. Russia's foreign policy reveals its leaders' archaic ideas. An old conception of "geopolitical principles" has become their go-to rationalization for the country's actions.

In particular, the Kremlin uses the 1945 victory over Hitler's Germany as an instrument for rehabilitating the Soviet regime. The victory has taken on a universal significance. Modern Russian propagandists acknowledge that leading Western countries also fought Hitler's Germany but claim that they did so in their own interests. Only the Soviet people fought for the interests of all humanity, the propagandists contend. To them, this demonstrates the messianic essence of the Russian people and that the Russian victory was the single most important event of the twentieth century. Stalin's great achievement, they say, was that he returned the country to the Russian geopolitical doctrine.

The irony is that the Soviets would have rejected this interpretation. The third edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, published by the state during the government of Leonid Brezhnev, defines "geopolitics" as a "bourgeois, reactionary conception" based on the idea of a state as a geographic and biological organism seeking to expand and noted that geopolitics "became the official doctrine of fascism."

But today, Russian politicians and political scientists unashamedly defend the expansionist policies of the Soviet Union with reference to geopolitics. This allows them to present the forced sovietization of neighboring countries—and even the mass repression that followed—in a positive light.

## STUCK IN THE PAST

In the immediate aftermath of the fall of the communist government in 1991,

it seemed that history would be laid bare. Declassified archival documents demonstrated that the country had been run by a group of criminals led by Stalin and that the mass murders they perpetrated were crimes against humanity. Unfortunately, the new Russian government, busy with more immediate problems, never got around to passing a legal verdict on the Soviet past and calling its crimes by their names. And paradoxically, the very freedom of the 1990s allowed previously hidden Stalinist voices to make themselves heard.

Two and half decades later, the Russian public has been left disillusioned by lackluster economic reforms, widespread official corruption, and politicians who have turned their backs on the people. They dream of a strong leader capable of installing a just order. The renewed sympathy toward the Stalinist past is based on idealized conceptions of the orderliness, peace, and justice of the decade after 1945. The desire to turn back the clock also flows from the legacy of Soviet education, which taught the masses that the Soviet people were superior to the citizens of capitalist countries. Every Russian above a certain age knows the slogans from their childhood: "Our system is the best and the fairest. We are going down the most correct path, leading the way for the rest of humanity."

The Soviet Union that propagated those mantras collapsed into a cloud of dust. But a slave mentality remains deeply ingrained in Russian minds, along with a latent monarchism and paternalism. The general mood is summed up in a formulation long accepted in conservative circles: "We don't need a government that serves us; we need a government that's like a father, even if that father is strict." Back in Brezhnev's time, these attitudes were common among the masses, but the political elite prevented the return of a dictator in Stalin's mold, afraid to see the reemergence of Stalin's style of governance. Today, however, the Kremlin has instilled the cult of strong government in the public consciousness, proclaiming in its propaganda the exceptional nature of the Russian people and their history and the special value of unifying all Russian-speaking people, no matter where they live. All of this serves to justify Russia's expansionism abroad and repression at home. As long as Russia refuses to officially acknowledge the darkness in its past, it will be haunted by ideas that should have died long ago.

# China's Cover-Up

## When Communists Rewrite History

*Orville Schell*

The Chinese Communist leader Mao Zedong's "permanent revolution" destroyed tens of millions of lives. From the communist victory in 1949 in the Chinese Civil War, through the upheaval, famine, and bloodletting of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, until Mao's death in 1976, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) set segments of Chinese society against one another in successive spasms of violent class warfare. As wave after wave of savagery swept China, millions were killed and millions more sent off to "reform through labor" and ruination.

Mao had expected this level of brutality. As he once declared: "A revolution is neither a dinner party, nor writing an essay, painting a picture, or doing embroidery. It cannot be so refined, so leisurely, gentle, temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another."

Today, even experts on Chinese history find it difficult to keep track of all the lethal "mass movements" that shaped Mao's revolution and which the party invariably extolled with various slogans. Mao launched campaigns to "exterminate landlords" after the Communists came to power in 1949; to "suppress counterrevolutionaries" in the early 1950s; to purge "rightists" in the late 1950s; to overthrow "capitalist roaders" during the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s; and to "rectify" young people's thinking by shipping them off to China's poorest rural areas during the Down to the Countryside Movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The ideological rhetoric obscured the extremism of these official actions, through which the party permitted the persecution and even the liquidation of myriad varieties of "counterrevolutionary elements." One of Mao's most notable sayings was "the party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the party." Long after his death, his successors carried on in that tradition, most visibly during the Tiananmen Square massacre and the ensuing crackdown that the CCP carried out in response to peaceful protests in 1989, which led to untold numbers of dead and wounded.

Today, China is enjoying a period of relative stability. The party promotes a vision of a "harmonious society" instead of class struggle and extols comfortable prosperity over cathartic violence. Someone unfamiliar with the country might be forgiven for assuming that it had reckoned with its recent past and found a way to heal its wounds and move on.

Far from it. In fact, a visitor wandering the streets of any Chinese city today will find no plaques consecrating the sites of mass arrests, no statues dedicated to the victims of persecution, no monuments erected to honor those who perished after being designated "class enemies." Despite all the anguish and death the CCP has caused, it has never issued any

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*Accessory after the fact: pendants featuring Mao and Xi, September 2016*

THOMAS PETER / REUTERS

official admission of guilt, much less allowed any memorialization of its victims. And because any mea culpa would risk undermining the party's legitimacy and its right to rule unilaterally, nothing of the sort is likely to occur so long as the CCP remains in power.

## (RE)WRITTEN BY THE VICTORS

Despite its truly impressive success in shepherding China's economic development and rise to global power, the party remains insecure and thin-skinned, perhaps because its leaders are still so painfully aware of the party's historical liabilities. The Central Propaganda Department—which, along with myriad other state organs, is tasked with censoring the media and making sure that all educational materials tow the party's line—has sealed off entire areas of China's past. Serious consequences flow from the manipulation of something as fundamental to a country's identity as its historical DNA. Maintaining a "correct" version of history not only requires totalitarian controls but also denies Chinese the possibility of exploring, debating, understanding, and coming to terms with the moral significance of what has been done to them and what they have been induced to do to themselves and one another.

The task of "correcting" or erasing entire segments of a country's past is costly and exhausting. An example of the lengths to which propaganda officials go has recently been brought to light by Glenn Tiffert, a China scholar at the University of Michigan. Through dogged sleuthing, he discovered that two digital archives—the China National Knowledge Infrastructure, which is connected to Tsinghua University, and the National Social Sciences Database, which is sponsored by the Chinese government—were missing the same group of 63 articles

published between 1956 and 1958 by two Chinese-language academic law journals. These articles had long been available via both archives, only to inexplicably disappear. (Tiffert is not sure when the erasure occurred.) His study revealed that certain scholars, especially those who had been influenced by the West and had run afoul of the party's ever-changing political lines, almost always had their articles deleted. At the same time, certain topics, such as "the transcendence of law over politics and class, the presumption of innocence, and the heritability of law," and certain terminology, such as the phrases "rule of law" and "rightist elements," also seemed to serve as cause for removal. Tellingly, there was a striking uniformity in the writers and topics that were excised.

Except for a few institutions abroad that maintain hard-copy collections of such journals, those articles are now unavailable to Chinese citizens and to the world. Such manipulation is made all the more pernicious owing to the fact that "even sound research practice may offer no defense," as Tiffert points out. "Perversely, the more faithful scholars are to their censored sources, the better they may unwittingly promote the biases and agendas of the censors, and lend those the independent authority of their professional reputations."

As the astrophysicist and dissident Chinese intellectual Fang Lizhi wrote in 1990 of such state-sponsored assaults on China's historical memory:

> [The policy's] aim is to force the whole of society to forget its history, and especially the true history of the Chinese Communist party itself. . . . In an effort to coerce all of society into a continuing forgetfulness, the policy requires that any detail of history that is not in the interests of the Chinese Communists cannot be expressed in any speech, book, document, or other medium.

Fang wrote those words just after the Tiananmen Square massacre, when he was trapped in the U.S. embassy and the CCP was undertaking one of its most audacious efforts at historical erasure—namely, wiping away all traces of the crimes it had just committed from archives, books, and electronic media. So successful was this censorship that, in 2004, the Chinese dissident and future Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo lamented that even though "the people of Mainland China have suffered some unimaginable catastrophes after the Communist accession to power, . . . the post-Tiananmen generation has no deep impression of them and lacks firsthand experience of police state oppression." Ten years later, the Chinese artist Ai Weiwei put it more bluntly: "Because there is no discussion of these events, Chinese still have little understanding of their consequences. Censorship has in effect neutered society, transforming it into a damaged, irrational, and purposeless creature."

In this way, China has become "the People's Republic of Amnesia," in the words of Louisa Lim, a former BBC and NPR correspondent in Beijing, who used that phrase as the title of her 2014 book. As she wrote, "A single act of public remembrance might expose the frailty of the state's carefully constructed edifice of accepted history, scaffolded in place over a generation and kept aloft by a brittle structure of strict censorship, blatant falsehood and willful forgetting."

**THE STONES SPEAK**

But is it really better for societies or communities to collectively remember traumatic periods of their histories? Might not such retrospection reopen old wounds and revive old, murderous struggles? (That is what the writer David Rieff argues in his recent book *In Praise of Forgetting*.) The CCP would like the people it rules—and the rest of the world—to embrace such logic and accept that evasion of the brutal truth about the past is the best route to healing.

An entirely different school of thought grew out of the German experience of facing up to the crimes of the Nazis. The man who devised the road map for the expiation of German guilt was the philosopher and psychoanalyst Karl Jaspers, who in 1945 gave a series of influential lectures at the University of Heidelberg that were later collected in a book titled *The Question of German Guilt*. Even though what happened under Adolf Hitler precipitated something "like a transmutation of our being," said Jaspers, Germans were still "collectively liable." All of those "who knew, or could know"—including those "conveniently closing their eyes to events or permitting themselves to be intoxicated, seduced, or bought with personal advantage, or obeying from fear"—shared responsibility. The "eagerness to obey" and the "unconditionality of blind nationalism," he declared, constituted "moral guilt." Human beings are, said Jaspers, responsible "for every delusion to which we succumb." He put his faith in healing through "the cultivation of truth" and "making amends," a process he believed had to be completely free from any state-sponsored propaganda or manipulation.

"There can be no questions that might not be raised," he declared, "nothing to be fondly taken for granted, no sentimental and no practical lie that would have to be guarded or that would be untouchable." In Jaspers' view, only through historical awareness could Germans ever come to terms with their past and restore themselves to a semblance of moral and societal health.

Jaspers' approach owed a great deal to psychoanalytic theory and the work of Sigmund Freud. For Freud, understanding a patient's past was like "excavating a buried city," as he wrote in 1895. Indeed, he was fond of quoting the Latin expression *saxa loquuntur*: "The stones speak." Such mental archaeology was important to Freud because he believed that a repressed past inevitably infected the present and the future with neuroses unless given a conscious voice to help fill in what he called "the gaps in memory." In this sense, history and memory were Freud's allies and forgetting was his enemy.

Mao, too, was fascinated by history, but he took a far more utilitarian view of it: for him, the historical record served chiefly to fortify his own reductive theories. Independent historians engaging in free-form explorations of the past represented a profound threat, and during Mao's reign, many of them were dismissed from their official positions, charged as "counterrevolutionaries," sent off for "thought reform" at labor camps, and in all too many cases persecuted to death.

## DANGEROUS HISTORY

Given his own neo-Maoist predilections, it is hardly surprising that Chinese President Xi Jinping also views independent scholars as dangerous progenitors of what Chinese state media have termed "historical nihilism." In 2015, the *People's Liberation Army Daily* warned that China "must be [on] guard" against such malefactors because they are now "spreading from the academic realm into online culture," where "capricious ideas are warping historical thoughts and leading discourse astray."

Tiffert spells out what it means when Chinese historians run afoul of party censors. They confront, he writes, "a sliding scale of penalties, including harassment by the authorities, closure of publications and online accounts, humiliating investigations into personal affairs, business activities and tax status, and ultimately unemployment, eviction, and criminal prosecution." Last year, Chinese civil law was even amended to punish "those who infringe upon the name, likeness, reputation, or honor of a hero, martyr, and so forth, harming the societal public interest," writes Tiffert, which explains why "previously outspoken intellectuals and activists are going silent."

Tiffert also reports that "the Chinese government is leveraging technology to quietly export its domestic censorship regime abroad . . . , by manipulating how observers everywhere comprehend its past, present, and future." Indeed, last summer, Beijing hectored Cambridge University Press into sanitizing the digital archive of *The China Quarterly*, an important English-language academic journal, by removing over 300 articles the CCP found objectionable from its Chinese search function. (The publisher reversed its decision days after a number of news outlets reported on its initial capitulation.) Then, last November, Springer Nature, the publisher of such titles as

*Nature* and *Scientific American*, eliminated from its Chinese websites a large number of articles that included politically sensitive references—more than 1,000 articles in all, according to the *Financial Times*.

China's leaders seem to believe they can escape the party's compromised history without penalty, at least in the short run—and they might be right. After all, China's economic progress and emergence as a significant global power do not appear to have been impeded, so far. The CCP is wagering that it can undo, or at least dodge, the long-term damage it has inflicted on the Chinese people by simply erasing history.

But hiding the crimes of the past sits uneasily alongside the CCP tenet that there is no such thing as "universal values," which are invariably associated with democracy and human rights and which the party casts as something foisted on China by the West as a way to undermine China's authoritarian one-party system. According to this view, human beings have no common bias against such things as persecution, forced confession, torture, and violent repression; no basic shared yearning for liberty or for freedom of expression, assembly, and religion; and no desire to live in a world where wrongs can ultimately be righted.

If that were true, however, the party would have no reason to fear an honest accounting of the past. After all, if universal values do not exist, then Mao's attacks on his critics and enemies do not represent grave transgressions. And yet the CCP goes to great lengths to hide the truth about those deeds—a contradiction that suggests something like a guilty conscience, or at least embarrassment at being exposed. If that is the case, then perhaps some future Chinese regime will have to find a way to acknowledge and even come to terms with the full dimensions of what the CCP has done to China—the bad along with the good. For the foreseeable future, however, that seems unlikely.

In the wake of China's Democracy Wall Movement of 1978–79, during which thousands of Beijingers gathered at an unprepossessing brick wall to hang political posters, deliver speeches, and hold political debates, Chinese writers began examining their country's decades of political oppression. This writing came to be known as "investigative reportage" and "scar literature." But such inquiries ended after 1989, and ever since Xi took office, in 2012, an ever-heavier shroud of censorship has cast China into an increasingly deep state of historical darkness. A recent study by the China Media Project, at the University of Hong Kong, searched 140 mainland Chinese publications for articles about the Cultural Revolution, a ten-year period during which countless millions of middle-class Chinese, intellectuals, and Western-trained professionals were persecuted and killed for having "bad class backgrounds." The researchers found only three articles that dared delve into that decade in any detail. For publications to cover the subject more thoroughly "would mean running a foolish risk," wrote the authors of the project's report.

And even if such work were someday again welcomed in China, its impact might be less than dramatic, because so much has been suppressed and repressed. In the words of the dissident Liu: "Eyes kept too long in the darkness do not easily adapt to dazzling sunlight when it suddenly pours through a window."

# All Is Not Forgiven

## South Africa and the Scars of Apartheid

*Sisonke Msimang*

In old black-and-white photographs, the antiapartheid activist Ahmed Timol looks elegant, with an open face and a ready smile. One classic shot captures him midstride. Clad in dark sunglasses with a pipe dangling from his mouth, he has the dashing air of a 1950s film star. Shortly after that photo was taken, on October 25, 1971, Timol—a member of the South African Communist Party—was arrested. Two days later, he was dead. His body was found on the pavement outside the headquarters of the notorious Security Branch of the apartheid police in Johannesburg. An inquest overseen by an apartheid judge determined that Timol had committed suicide by jumping from a window. He was not yet 30.

Forty-six years later, on an October morning in 2017, a court in the now democratic South Africa ruled that Timol had been murdered. The police had lied, and the judge had covered up their crime. Far from being a redemptive tale, the Timol case marked an unsatisfactory end to a long and difficult journey for Timol, his family, and the antiapartheid activists who still remember him. Even Archbishop Desmond Tutu—long a champion of forgiveness—seemed frustrated by the state's foot-dragging. His statement on the matter summed up the ambivalence many in South Africa feel about the relationship between truth and justice: "It is sad it took so long," he said. Almost five decades after Timol's murder, two of the three policemen found responsible for his death are no longer alive, having died without ever having to answer to a judge. The third will now face murder charges for Timol's death.

For many South Africans who watched the proceedings on television, the Timol case served as a reminder of the inadequacy of the much-touted truth-and-reconciliation process. Although it provided a forum for victims of human rights abuses and the perpetrators of those crimes to come together and seek truth and forgiveness, it failed to address the deeper wounds of apartheid that continue to plague South Africa. Today, many look back on the process as a carefully managed stage show—a piece of theater concerned with the appearance of truth-telling rather than the substance of what the truth actually means.

South Africa has been heralded as a beacon of national unity, but the emphasis on individual crimes has distracted from the broader sins of apartheid. Twenty-three years after the transition to democracy, the wider systemic racial and economic inequalities that have kept most black South Africans poor while preserving the wealth and privilege most white South Africans enjoyed under apartheid remain firmly in place.

### WHEN RACISM IS POLICY

For centuries, South Africa suffered under the yoke of colonialism. The first Europeans began colonizing what is now South Africa in 1652, with the arrival of

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the Dutch. After defeating the Dutch in the Boer War of 1899–1902, the British established the Union of South Africa, a dominion of the British Empire. In 1913, its all-white government passed the Natives Land Act, confining Africans to ownership of land in only seven percent of the country. In spite of their smaller numbers, whites were free to own or lease land in the other 93 percent of South Africa.

It was only in 1948, once the National Party (NP) took power, that apartheid became official state policy. Through legislation, the NP enforced a wide-ranging system of racial segregation that curtailed the freedom of movement and association of the black majority and other nonwhite ethnic groups while maintaining white minority rule through brute force and formal disenfranchisement. Central to this racial caste system was a set of racial categories invented by apartheid's architects: white (of European ancestry), African (black), Coloured (of mixed racial heritage), and Indian (descended from South Asian immigrants). In ways both small and large, the policy codified racism. What was referred to as "petty apartheid" was enforced through laws and regulations that segregated public facilities such as benches and drinking fountains. "Grand apartheid" dictated where blacks and whites could live and work, what sorts of jobs they could apply for, and where and when they could travel. Multiracial communities were destroyed, and African, Coloured, and Indian people were forcibly removed from places designated for whites.

The apartheid state invested significant energy in legitimizing racial discrimination by projecting the idea that the codification of racism was not only acceptable but also just. Apartheid officials rolled out extensive propaganda campaigns aimed at convincing the international community that black South Africans enjoyed high standards of living under a policy of "separate development." And they created a complex system of "homelands" (or "Bantustans")—territories set aside for Africans in miserable and often arid areas. Bantustans were created to legitimize the disenfranchisement of blacks in South Africa by stripping them of their citizenship and pretending as though they were citizens of new countries that had been created by the apartheid regime. They were also established to give the false impression that blacks enjoyed self-rule and autonomy. The Bantustans may have been a farcical attempt to prop up the ideology of separate development, but the apartheid regime wasn't entirely dismissed. It had a measure of respectability, in part because of the geopolitics of the time. The Cold War shadowed apartheid's worst years, and much of the NP's propaganda hinged on the idea that white minority rule was the last line of defense against communism in Africa.

So egregious was the legal regime in South Africa that in 1973, the UN General Assembly declared that apartheid represented "inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them." This definition cut to the core of what the apartheid state wished to evade. The South African state was deeply invested in appearing to be just. Indeed, in South Africa, the appearance of justice has always been far more important than

justice itself. Like all systems of racial segregation, apartheid derived its respectability from the law.

As such, the country's white rulers were deeply respectful of the laws they created and were careful to manage a democracy, albeit one that catered only to whites. The pretense that white minority rule was a legitimate enterprise permeated all aspects of life; it was crucial that the white population accept this idea, because without their buy-in, the system would have collapsed. Apartheid-era leaders gained credibility by holding regular elections (but in which only whites could vote) and building schools for blacks (who lived in designated segregated areas). The entire façade of legalism behind which apartheid was built was rooted in the quest to make a deeply amoral system appear respectable.

## CONFESSION TIME

By the mid-1980s, the apartheid regime began to show signs of strain. A global movement to impose economic sanctions on South Africa was gaining steam abroad. At home, meanwhile, a unified protest campaign by antiapartheid activists succeeded in making the country ungovernable, and in 1985, the government declared a state of emergency. By the end of the decade, the country was burning.

The NP, which had sustained apartheid for over 40 years, could see the writing on the wall. In 1990, as a result of initially secret negotiations with the antiapartheid activist Nelson Mandela's banned party, the African National Congress, the NP agreed to remove the prohibition on all other political parties. It also agreed to release all political prisoners, including Mandela, who had languished behind bars for nearly three decades on charges of treason. Two years later, white South Africans voted formally through a referendum to end their minority rule, giving the country's president, F. W. de Klerk, a clear mandate to enter into open talks that would pave the way for a new fully democratic dispensation. But the road to democracy was punctuated by political violence. In 1993, for example, Chris Hani, one of the ANC's most beloved leaders, was assassinated by white supremacists. In response, Mandela chose peace over retribution, calling on his supporters to stay calm and returning to the negotiating table. In 1994, the country held the historic elections that made him president.

By using negotiations rather than armed insurrection, Mandela and his comrades averted civil war and sheltered whites from mass violence. But as part of the tradeoff, whites were supposed to be truly, genuinely, and everlastingly sorry for the sins that had been committed against blacks in their name. To underscore this idea, Mandela's government established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which led a quasi-legal process intended to "bear witness," record, and, when appropriate, grant amnesty to the perpetrators of crimes of apartheid. Chaired by Tutu, the TRC included well-respected human rights activists and legal minds and was influential in shaping South Africa's narrative of forgiveness and redemption.

Although the outgoing regime had pushed hard for a blanket amnesty that would shield perpetrators from any form of prosecution in the interests of moving forward in peace, the ANC insisted on a different arrangement. As an inducement to telling the truth, the TRC offered perpetrators amnesty from both civil and criminal prosecution if they could

*Peace without justice: near Johannesburg, August 2011*

SIPHIWE SIBEKO / REUTERS

convince the commission that their crimes had been committed to further political objectives and that they had disclosed everything they knew. In effect, the TRC provided a "get out of jail free" card to those claiming ideological motives.

The commission was also charged with the task of determining if victims of gross human rights abuses were entitled to any reparations and what those might be, as well as making recommendations about rehabilitating perpetrators, supporting victims, and putting in place institutional reforms to ensure that the post-apartheid state did not commit similar crimes. The TRC's investigations often culminated in televised public hearings that opened in prayer and ended with the singing of biblical hymns or songs from the liberation struggle—emotional bookends that marked important public symbols of the private pain that families and communities had been carrying for years.

The TRC's work was premised on the idea that truth was an essential first step toward healing. For the first time in South Africa's history, whites would be forced to listen to blacks. Victims even had the right to question perpetrators, who in turn were encouraged to tell the truth in the interests of national unity and reconciliation. For many black people whose lives had been defined by taking orders from whites, whose daily routines and living patterns had been shaped by the whims of whites, and whose opinions and needs had been dismissed by whites and by the system of apartheid they had built to protect themselves, the TRC offered more than the truth; it offered a chance to regain their dignity.

At the hearings, victims gave harrowing statements about their experiences, and perpetrators described horrible crimes. One jarring confession resolved the cold case of Sizwe Kondile, a member of the ANC who had disappeared in 1981. It took

17 years for the truth to come out. Dirk Coetzee, a police commander who ran a series of farms where antiapartheid activists were taken to be tortured and killed, testified to having covered Kondile with a balaclava and shooting him in the head. He and his men then threw Kondile's body onto a fire and spent the evening drinking and eating as the corpse roasted. The following morning, only ashes remained. Coetzee and the three other men who had participated in the crime all received amnesty.

There was a strongly confessional element to the TRC's operation; sinners came to the hearings seeking absolution, and victims came seeking to forgive so they might be liberated from their pain. Some people saw the entire process as a religious experience. Indeed, as its chair, Tutu encouraged such thinking. In interviews, he often spoke of the acts of contrition and forgiveness he witnessed as "miracles." In a 1997 speech, Tutu said, "Many times I have felt we should take our shoes off because we were standing on holy ground." At the time the commission was carrying out its work, South Africa was lauded as an example of a country in which truth had triumphed over tragedy. Indeed, since then, there have been over 1,000 other truth-and-reconciliation commissions established across the world—from Chile and Guatemala to Nepal and Sierra Leone.

## FORGIVING AND FORGETTING

Although the TRC offered a chance for many families to hear the truth about what happened to their loved ones, its mandate was too narrow to encompass the range of injustices that had been perpetrated. By fetishizing individual human rights violations, it sidestepped the structural impacts of apartheid. As the political scientist Mahmood Mamdani has noted, the TRC effectively ignored the systematic dispossession of blacks, even though state-enforced black poverty was a deliberate outcome of apartheid. It was accomplished through forced removals from cities, separate and unequal education, the deprivation of basic democratic rights, and, most important, the explicit reservation of certain kinds of jobs for whites and the exclusion of black people from certain categories of study and employment. Mamdani has argued that South Africa's failure to include broader policy-based forms of discrimination in the TRC's mandate "ignored Apartheid as experienced by the broad masses of the people of South Africa."

The TRC's narrow focus resulted in the exclusion of 3.5 million victims of forced relocations alone. If one considers those who were victims of the so-called pass laws, which limited black people's movement and work opportunities, or those who were victims of the substandard education, it becomes clear that the process failed to address the vast majority of apartheid's victims. In other words, the TRC never tried to treat most of the enduring wounds of apartheid.

Instead, forgiveness became a national mantra, and reconciliation an official ideology. Progress toward nation building was measured by the march of forgiveness. To be a good new South African, you had to leave anger in the past. Although the TRC allowed victims of apartheid to express grief and pain, it did little to encourage and listen to those who were unprepared to either forgive whites collectively or assuage the guilt of those who had perpetrated crimes against their

relatives. Many murderers, such as Coetzee, confessed in public and then walked free. Whether or not those who had caused the pain were sorry was in some ways irrelevant. The preoccupation with forgiveness and the future was a problem that plagued not just the TRC but all of South African society in the 1990s. The new rulers were so worried that the country would be engulfed in bitterness that they did not provide sufficient space for conversations about the persistent injustices of the present.

Today, white South Africans seem to be suffering from collective amnesia—a mass forgetting of just how bad things could have been if the transition to democracy had not been managed so well by the ANC and its followers. Meanwhile, black South Africans have grown increasingly bitter toward the TRC. This growing cynicism is linked to the sense that for whites, the end of apartheid did not signal the end of privilege, just as it has not signaled the end of suffering for the majority of black people.

The power imbalances that defined race relations under apartheid continue to exist. In a 2015 poll of South Africans, for example, over 60 percent of white respondents said that they had access to the financial resources they need to achieve their goals, whereas only 43 percent of black respondents and 26 percent of Coloured respondents said that they did. Worse yet, a series of high-profile incidents of unrepentant white racism that have gone viral in recent years—including a shocking video clip of a group of white university students forcing the black cleaning staff in their residences to eat dog food mixed with urine—has underscored the widespread sense that blacks have been too gracious.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

While South Africans are rightly proud of the fact that they averted a race war by choosing talks over guns, and by choosing to put in place a forum for grief rather than letting rage run rampant, the endurance of the attendant peace should not be taken for granted. Over time, it has become evident that there can be no sustained improvement in race relations without addressing entrenched economic inequality. As South Africa's economy stagnates under the poor leadership of its current president, Jacob Zuma, the deferred dream of reconciliation festers like a sore. Unemployment now stands at a staggering 31 percent among black South Africans and 23 percent among Coloureds. For whites, the figure is just under seven percent. It is only a matter of time before the resulting anger becomes explosive.

Already, by the South African government's own measure, there are approximately 60 protests each day. More than two decades after democracy came to South Africa, bitterness about apartheid is not merely confined to those who lost loved ones or who were themselves victims of gross human rights violations. Anger is rife among the unemployed and the urban poor, whose housing conditions remain appalling as a direct result of apartheid. It is palpable among the young, who feel entitled to education under a democratic government yet who cannot afford the tuition. Meanwhile, white South Africans continue to enjoy the residual comforts of a system that was created to benefit them, without seeming to have a sense of how lucky they have been or are. It is this growing resentment, coupled with whites' collective shrugging of their shoulders despite the grace they have

been given, that lies at the root of the tension in contemporary South Africa.

But the most severe criticism has been aimed at black leaders, who negotiated what is now widely seen as a flawed peace in 1994. Those who have done nothing about prosecuting apartheid-era crimes, and who have failed to address the hopelessly unjust economic and social order they inherited while enriching themselves, are likely to face the wrath of South Africa's poorest and most desperate citizens—those whom reconciliation left behind.

A genuine truth-and-reconciliation process would have aimed to address not just serious human rights violations but also the socioeconomic effects of apartheid. There would have been a two-pronged process of investigations. One set of investigations would have focused on murders and disappearances, just as the TRC did. The other would have calculated the economic costs of apartheid for black South Africans and set aside resources to redress them. It would also have looked at such issues as land seizures, forced removals, pass laws, and Bantustans with a view toward working out financial compensation packages, which could have been paid in cash or taken the form of state benefits, such as pensions or grants for higher education. To fund these payouts, the new government could have made arrangements with large banks, mining companies, and other institutions that profited handsomely from apartheid. A special apartheid tax, applied over an extended period of ten or 15 years, could have addressed the concern that the innocent new state should not have to pay the debts of its guilty predecessor.

To put it simply, in the years after 1994, the ANC ought to have been bolder. In part, it was afraid of upsetting the markets and thought it had to respect the existing economic order. Given its close ties with the South African Communist Party, the ANC also felt the need to disavow policies that seemed too left-leaning. But in its haste to appear moderate, the ANC missed an opportunity to capitalize on the global goodwill directed toward its leaders after they managed a complex and fraught transition with remarkable humanity. The party failed to ensure that the new South Africa was not simply a new democratic polity but a country genuinely committed to economic justice and equality.

Today, South Africa appears to be just. It has vibrant and thriving media, a court system to rival any in the world, and a constitution that is the envy of many nations. Just like the old one, the new South Africa has done a sterling job of maintaining the appearance of justice. But it has done less well at achieving actual justice by banishing the inequalities that apartheid created. Many South Africans admit that when Justice finally appears, she may come clothed in the flames of retribution. This fate is not inevitable, but if the fire is to be averted next time, it will require courage and commitment from a new generation of leaders. And this time, those in charge must not privilege the fears of the few over the needs of the many.

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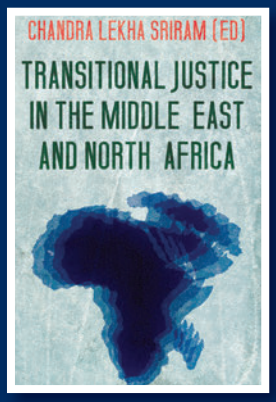


Chandra Sriram, ed. 2016
Oxford University Press/Hurst, $35.00


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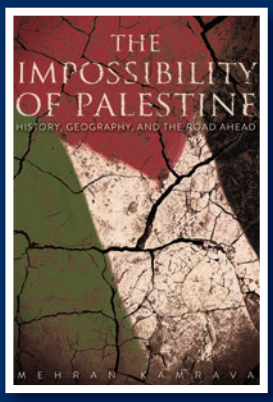


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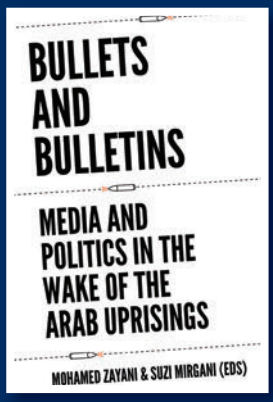


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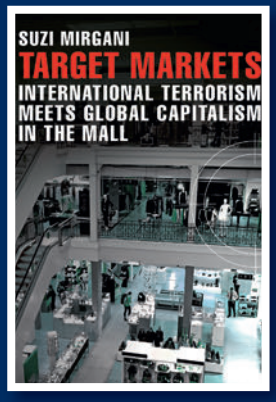


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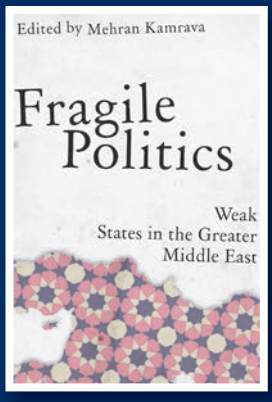


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# Rwanda's Recovery

## When Remembrance Is Official Policy

*Phil Clark*

When the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), the rebel movement led by Paul Kagame, captured control of Rwanda and halted the genocide in July 1994, it inherited not so much a state as a cemetery. In the preceding 100 days, 800,000 people out of a national population of seven million had been murdered, the majority by their neighbors and other civilians. Seventy percent of all Tutsis, the ethnic minority that had been the target of the Hutu *génocidaires*, were dead, along with 30 percent of all Twas, the smallest of Rwanda's ethnic groups. Throughout Rwanda, roads, rivers, and pit latrines were clogged with rotting corpses. The infrastructure of the country—houses, roads, hospitals, offices, schools, power stations, and reservoirs—lay in ruins. Nearly all government workers—politicians, judges, civil servants, doctors, nurses, and teachers—had died or fled. Looters had emptied the banks, leaving the national treasury without a single Rwandan franc.

The genocide reverberated across central Africa. Two million Rwandan refugees, mainly Hutus, escaped into neighboring countries in one of the largest exoduses of the twentieth century, producing a humanitarian crisis in cholera-infested refugee camps across the region. The camps in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) provided the conditions for Hutu militias to regroup and plot a return to Rwanda to finish the job of exterminating all Tutsis.

As this rebel threat expanded in the borderlands and thousands of genocide perpetrators roamed freely throughout Rwanda, there was no police force to ensure security. Small numbers of distraught RPF soldiers who had arrived to find their loved ones murdered and entire villages wiped out committed revenge killings. In the most prominent case, in April 1995, the RPF killed hundreds, possibly thousands, of Hutu civilians in a refugee camp in Kibeho, in southwestern Rwanda.

Meanwhile, the Tutsi-dominated RPF began rounding up tens of thousands of genocide suspects and transporting them to prisons around the country. By the end of 1995, around 120,000 genocide suspects were languishing in jails built to hold only 45,000 inmates. The national atmosphere of anger and revenge—coupled with the threat of disease and the massive loss of agricultural labor—threatened another bloodbath.

Yet in the 23 years since the genocide, Rwanda has experienced no further large-scale violence. Instead, it has enjoyed two decades of peace, stability, economic growth, and rising living standards. More than three-quarters of the people originally imprisoned on suspicion of participating in the genocide—as well as 300,000 additional suspects identified after the initial roundup—have been reintegrated into their communities and live side by side

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with genocide survivors on densely populated hills. No other country today has so many perpetrators of mass atrocity living in such close proximity to their victims' families. Although that might seem to raise the risk of renewed violence, most Rwandans instead have chosen to get on with life rather than settle old scores.

Understanding why they have done that requires examining the immense steps that Rwanda—at the national, community, and individual levels—has taken to deal with the genocide. One of the most striking features of Rwanda's approach has been the state's concerted effort to heal old wounds. Indeed, substantial government intervention has been the key to the country's recovery—a point reinforced by comparison with neighboring Burundi, Congo, and Uganda, where the absence of systematic official responses to mass atrocity has allowed deep societal divisions and violence to persist. And yet by intervening so heavily in people's lives, the powerful Rwandan state has sometimes hindered citizens' attempts to truly come to terms with the past.

## A TIME TO REMEMBER

Beginning shortly after the genocide, with the RPF having transitioned from rebel group to ruling party, but accelerating after Kagame became president in 2000, the Rwandan government undertook a four-pronged strategy to heal the country. This comprised commemoration, civic education, socioeconomic development, and reconciliation through justice. Over the last 15 years, I have conducted more than 1,000 interviews with everyday Rwandans, including interviews every 18 months with the same 20 respondents from a variety of backgrounds—and across the ethnic divide—to understand how they view this effort and to gauge changes in their circumstances and perceptions. What these conversations have revealed above all is that the government's top-down strategy has largely succeeded, allowing everyday Rwandans to deal with the effects of the genocide. But they have also shown that many Rwandans feel overwhelmed by the government's barrage of post-genocide programs, leading to widespread fatigue and a desire to be left alone to address the past in more personal and local ways.

Most often cited in this respect is the annual genocide commemoration, a 100-day period of mourning commencing on April 7, the date the killing began. The accompanying ceremonies revolve around an annual theme that reflects the government's current priorities and forms the centerpiece of Kagame's speech at Amahoro Stadium, in the capital, Kigali. In 2013, for example, the commemoration theme was self-reliance—a core message of the RPF throughout the post-genocide period. More immediately, it was a call for citizens to contribute to a national development fund called Agaciro (named after the Kinyarwanda word for "dignity"), which the government had just launched to help cover the economic shortfall that resulted when international donors suspended aid to Rwanda over its backing of rebels in eastern Congo.

As part of its response to the genocide, the government has also leaned heavily on civic education, principally to construct a postethnic national identity of Rwandanness. Today, nearly every Rwandan adult has passed through one

*Trying times: Rwandans at a* gacaca *trial, June 2002*

ANTONY NJUGUNA / REUTERS

of the state's *ingando* education camps. There, they learn about the main causes of the genocide, Rwanda's abandonment by the international community in 1994, the importance of Rwandanness as a means to regain the sense of unity destroyed by the Belgian colonizers who ruled the country until 1962, and the centrality of punishment of the genocide perpetrators for future peace and reconciliation.

Many of these themes also feature in the government's secondary school curriculum. For years, the government and school administrators were deadlocked over how to teach the causes of the genocide to the post-1994 generation. It took until 2008 for the charged subject to be taught systematically through a nationwide curriculum. And even so, as the Rwandan scholar Jean Léonard Buhigiro has documented, high school teachers across the country still struggle with the topic. They tend to skirt over some of its most controversial elements, including the role of ethnicity, whether the burden of responsibility should be borne by Hutu political and military elites or by the thousands of peasant perpetrators, and how to discuss Hutu victims (killed either during the genocide itself for harboring Tutsis or during subsequent revenge attacks by the RPF) without propagating the erroneous "double genocide" claim that the mass killing of Tutsis was followed by an orchestrated mass killing of Hutus.

Recognizing that socioeconomic inequality was a key driver of the genocide, the government also embarked on an ambitious development program, focusing on rural health care and education. Many of my Hutu interviewees

admit that although they remain suspicious of the Tutsi-dominated government in Kigali, they have been pleasantly surprised by the RPF's cross-ethnic development policies. From 2000 to 2015, Rwanda managed to cut its child mortality rate in half—the biggest reduction worldwide during that period and an accomplishment that UNICEF described as "one of the most significant achievements in human history." Although rural Rwanda remains extremely poor, a far cry from the gleaming office towers and conference centers of Kigali, peasants tend to compare themselves to their neighbors. And from that viewpoint, Hutus see that the government has assisted them as much as it has Tutsis, helping redress some of the deep grievances that have bedeviled local communities for decades.

Perhaps the most ambitious—and most controversial—of the Rwandan government's responses to the genocide was the prosecution of 400,000 genocide suspects in 12,000 community courts called *gacaca*, a process that took place between 2002 and 2012. These courts, which sat every week under trees and in village courtyards across Rwanda, heard more than one million cases and were overseen by lay judges who could hand down sentences as severe as life imprisonment (although most consisted merely of community service).

Underpinning the *gacaca* system was the belief that justice is indispensable to reconciliation, that without a public acknowledgment of crimes and the punishment of all levels of perpetrators, anger and resentment would fester and could lead to further mass violence. When the *gacaca* system was announced, international organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch predicted that it would inflame tensions and fuel mob justice. The actual consequences, however, were a vital cross-ethnic dialogue about the causes and impact of the genocide and the successful reintegration of perpetrators who had served their sentences.

## MOVING ON

Nearly every Rwandan adult has participated in most aspects of this government-led recovery process. Its core messages—particularly the need to remain vigilant about ethnically divisive propaganda and the importance of delivering justice for past crimes—have sunk deep into the public consciousness and formed the basis for a more peaceful society. But Rwandans have grown exhausted from the constant summoning up of the traumatic past. In 2012, when the *gacaca* courts finished their work, the most common reaction among suspects and survivors alike was a sense of relief that the trials had finally ended. Many complained that the heavy schedule of government programs—including one day lost per week during the decade of *gacaca* trials—was keeping them from getting back to their farms to provide for their families and rebuild their lives.

The last five years, since the end of the *gacaca* courts and with the slowing of the *ingando* camps (as almost all of the population has now been educated), have brought some respite. The government has begun to tone down the annual genocide commemorations, holding fewer spectacular ceremonies in stadiums around the country in favor of smaller, quieter events at the community level. More broadly, it has started to shift away from a policy agenda designed explicitly

to address the legacies of the genocide, toward one focused on modernizing the economy, integrating regionally, and reducing dependence on foreign aid.

As the government has stepped back, the population has been freed to address the effects of the genocide in less formal but equally powerful ways. Beginning in 2002, communities across the country formed dialogue groups aimed at discussing issues arising during the *gacaca* hearings. Often, these groups have been facilitated by churches, which remain a principal mobilizing force in a society that is 57 percent Catholic, 26 percent Protestant, and 11 percent Seventh-day Adventist. When the *gacaca* trials and the *ingando* camps were at their peak, these dialogue groups focused on the local causes of the genocide, debates over national versus ethnic identity, justice, and reconciliation. Today, they emphasize more immediate concerns, such as improving food distribution, protecting communities' security, containing outbreaks of disease, and resolving family disputes. The shift shows that people have moved on from the past yet remain vigilant about the types of local inequalities and conflicts that have historically fueled mass violence. Indeed, Rwanda's most popular radio soap opera, *Musekeweya* (New Dawn), listened to by millions of people across the country, now relies less on *gacaca*-related plot lines and has begun exploring broader issues of trauma, trust, and community-based conflicts, especially those concerning land.

Many communities have also formed economic cooperatives, incorporating both Hutus and Tutsis, to pool resources such as seeds or fuel. They have started these not only out of economic necessity

but also in the hope that working together will start to mend historical rifts. This is a crucial development, because in the past, many Hutus viewed Tutsis—who were heavily favored under Belgian colonialism—as unjustly wealthy, and many who participated in the genocide did so to capture Tutsi land and livestock. As one leader of a cooperative of widowed potters in western Rwanda recently told me, "Among our members, we have people whose relatives were *génocidaires* and others whose relatives are survivors. What we have in common is during the genocide, we all lost our husbands and everything we owned. That unites us and motivates us to share what we have." Or, as the head of a coffee-grinding cooperative in eastern Rwanda put it: "For reconciliation, words are easy. Actions are what count. Long hours performing hard work together tell you everything that's in people's hearts."

Rwandans' views on the impact of the genocide and the nature of their country today vary substantially. Nearly all the rural respondents I have interviewed, however, describe peaceful but still uneasy community relations. In tight-knit communities, perpetrators, survivors, and witnesses confront one another daily. They attend the same churches, send their children to the same schools, and plow the same fields. What they tell me is that the nature of these local relations is the ultimate gauge of the extent of reconciliation, rather than government indicators such as the Rwanda Reconciliation Barometer, a public opinion survey conducted every five years, which routinely reports that more than 90 percent of Rwandans believe their communities have fully reconciled. In some communities, people report that Hutus and Tutsis now intermarry at the same rate they did before the genocide and attend each other's weddings and funerals as often as they did before. They also actively cooperate in subsistence agriculture, sharing seeds, food, milk, and labor when sickness or other misfortune strikes. In some communities, such simple deeds laden with meaning are widespread; in others, they are much less so.

Across all communities, however, another message resonates: despite continued trauma and complex local relations, no one expects a return to mass violence. Given how recently the genocide occurred, that is a remarkable development and bucks the trend of cyclical conflict elsewhere in the region. When prompted to explain this view, Rwandans tend to highlight two factors: the *gacaca* courts provided a release valve for people's anger and resentment, and the reduction in socioeconomic disparities between ethnic groups has taken the sting out of historical antagonisms.

## THE HEAVY HAND OF THE STATE

Inevitably, in a society recovering from such intimate and all-encompassing violence, major challenges persist. In a 2017 article, the Rwandan researcher Emmanuel Sarabwe reported that new forms of conflict are now widespread in the country, including domestic and sexual violence and intrafamily feuds. Many of these stem from the genocide (for example, due to the remarriage of women whose spouses were imprisoned as genocide suspects) and from the psychosocial trauma that is endemic throughout the population. Even though there has been a nationwide

focus on addressing the direct harm of the genocide, these less visible legacies within households are often ignored.

What's more, many Rwandans have grown increasingly concerned about the slow progress of democracy at the national level. Throughout the RPF's time in power, the party has displayed little tolerance for dissent. Numerous opposition leaders and dissidents have been harassed, exiled, or assassinated.

As Kagame's second—and, according to the constitution, final—term wound down, the government organized a petition to hold a national referendum in 2015 that would allow him to run for a third term. Ninety-eight percent of the electorate voted in favor of the measure, and in the presidential election held this past August, Kagame won nearly 99 percent of the vote. Because the referendum led to constitutional amendments that do not come into effect until 2024, Kagame could seek two additional five-year terms—potentially keeping him in office until 2034.

During the petition, the referendum, and the election, the government regularly intimidated voters and undermined opposition parties by infiltrating their ranks, harassing their leaders, and sometimes barring their registration. In a fair fight, the RPF would probably win presidential and parliamentary elections by substantial margins anyway, thanks to its successful record in promoting development and providing security—not to mention the population's recognition that, historically, no change in leadership in Rwanda has occurred without major bloodshed. Even so, the RPF decided to use a range of heavy-handed tactics to guarantee its electoral success, an approach that has generated widespread resentment.

In the coming years, the major challenge for the RPF will be to balance the need for a strong state to provide security and prosperity—a difficult task in an increasingly volatile region—with the need to afford citizens more political and social autonomy. A greater sense of freedom would enable the population to more fully enjoy the fruits of the country's post-genocide renewal while deepening the individual and community healing that can only happen in quieter, more private spaces. Rwanda's impressive recovery from the genocide has stemmed from not just a highly coordinated government response but also the resilience and creativity of the local population. For the latter to flourish now, the government will need to give its citizens much more latitude to define their own futures.

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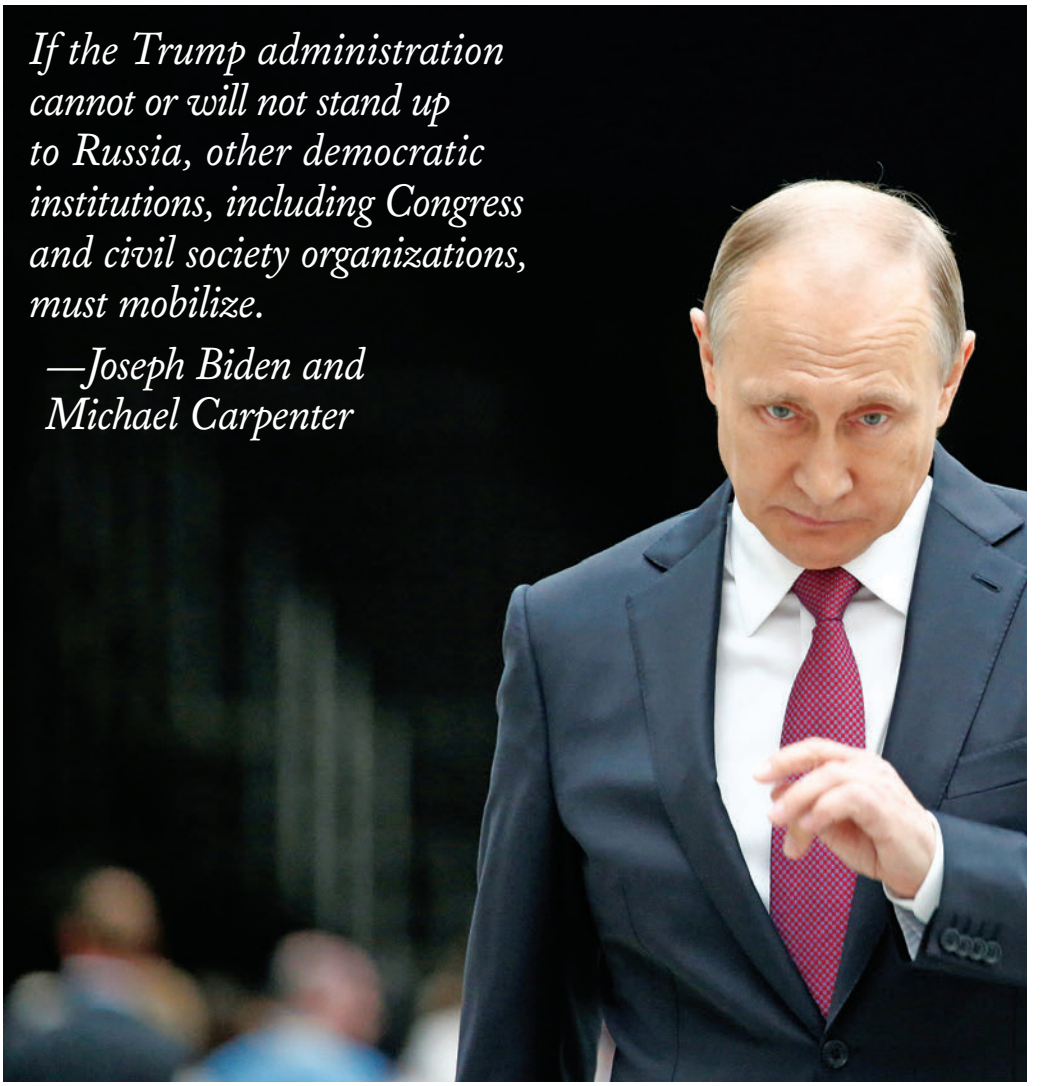
# ESSAYS

*If the Trump administration cannot or will not stand up to Russia, other democratic institutions, including Congress and civil society organizations, must mobilize.*

*—Joseph Biden and Michael Carpenter*



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# How to Stand Up to the Kremlin

## Defending Democracy Against Its Enemies

*Joseph R. Biden, Jr., and Michael Carpenter*

During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union faced off in an existential struggle between two antithetical systems. Either the Soviet bloc would "bury" the West, as Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev threatened in 1956, or Western principles of democratic accountability, individual rights, and the rule of law would triumph over Soviet totalitarianism. The eventual outcome—the demise of the Soviet system and the expansion of the U.S.-led international order—showed that military power is essential to American national security but also that the United States must advance its goals through the quiet resilience of democratic institutions and the attractive pull of alliances.

After the Cold War, Western democracy became the model of choice for postcommunist countries in central and eastern Europe. Guided by the enlightened hands of NATO and the EU, many of those countries boldly embarked on the transition from dictatorship to democracy. Remarkably, most succeeded. Post-Soviet Russia also had an opportunity to reinvent itself. Many in Europe and the United States hoped that by integrating Russia into international organizations (such as the Council of Europe, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund), they could help Russia become a responsible member of the rules-based international order and develop a domestic constituency for democratic reforms. Many Russians also dreamed of creating a democratic, stable, and prosperous

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Russia. But that dream is now more distant than at any time since the Cold War's end.

Today, the Russian government is brazenly assaulting the foundations of Western democracy around the world. Under President Vladimir Putin, the Kremlin has launched a coordinated attack across many domains—military, political, economic, informational—using a variety of overt and covert means. At the extreme, in the cases of Georgia and Ukraine, Russia has invaded neighboring countries to block their integration into NATO or the EU and to send a message to other governments in the region that pursuing Western-backed democratic reform will bring dire consequences. More frequently and more insidiously, it has sought to weaken and subvert Western democracies from the inside by weaponizing information, cyberspace, energy, and corruption.

At its core, this assault is motivated by the Kremlin's desire to protect its wealth and power. The Russian regime that emerged from the ashes of the Soviet collapse consolidated immense authority and privilege in the hands of a small cabal of former intelligence officials and oligarchs. They appear strong from the outside, but their power remains brittle at the core—a fact that Putin and the top members of his regime understand better than anyone. Without a chokehold on civil society, the adoring applause and sky-high approval ratings they generally enjoy could quickly descend into a storm of boos and whistles, as Putin has discovered on more than one occasion. The regime projects an aura of invincibility that masks the shallow roots of its public support, particularly among younger, urban, and educated Russians.

To safeguard its kleptocratic system, the Kremlin has decided to take the fight beyond Russia's borders to attack what it perceives as the greatest external threat to its survival: Western democracy. By attacking the West, the Kremlin shifts attention away from corruption and economic malaise at home, activates nationalist passions to stifle internal dissent, and keeps Western democracies on the defensive and preoccupied with internal divisions. This allows Moscow to consolidate its power at home and exert untrammeled influence over its "near abroad."

To fight back, the United States must lead its democratic allies and partners in increasing their resilience, expanding their capabilities to defend against Russian subversion, and rooting out the Kremlin's

networks of malign influence. The United States has the capacity to counter this assault and emerge stronger, provided that Washington demonstrates the political will to confront the threat. However, since the Trump administration has shown that it does not take the Russian threat seriously, the responsibility for protecting Western democracy will rest more than ever on Congress, the private sector, civil society, and ordinary Americans.

## TYRANNY BEGINS AT HOME

The first victim of the Kremlin's assault on democratic institutions was Russia itself. Opposition politicians have been harassed, poisoned, and even murdered. Basic freedoms of expression and assembly have been restricted, and Russian elections have become choreographed performances that are neither free nor fair. In recent years, Russian human rights groups have even claimed that the horrific Soviet-era practice of using psychiatric institutions to imprison dissidents has been quietly revived.

In contrast to the Soviet Union, however, contemporary Russia offers no clear ideological alternative to Western democracy. Russia's leaders invoke nationalist, populist, and statist slogans or themes, but the Kremlin's propaganda machine shies away from directly challenging the core precepts of Western democracy: competitive elections, accountability for those in power, constitutionally guaranteed rights, and the rule of law. Instead, the Kremlin carefully cultivates a democratic façade, paying lip service to those principles even as it subverts them. Thus, it grants nominal opposition parties representation in the Russian parliament but thoroughly co-opts and controls them. It allows independent media to operate (although not in broadcast television), but journalists are regularly threatened and sometimes beaten or killed if they report on taboo subjects. It permits civil society groups to exist but brands them as "foreign agents" and crushes them if they demonstrate political independence. It oversees a vast repressive apparatus—recently augmented by the creation of a new National Guard force of around 350,000 members—to deter and respond to dissent. In short, Russia's leaders have built a Potemkin democracy in which democratic form masks authoritarian content.

This cynical and heavy-handed approach is driven by intense anxiety. Having watched with a mix of shock, horror, and sorrow as the Soviet Union disintegrated, today's Russian leaders worry that their

*This is what autocracy looks like: detaining a protester in St. Petersburg, February 2014*

MAXIM ZMEYEV / REUTERS

own system could meet a similar fate. The Russian economy is utterly dependent on hydrocarbon exports, so its health is tied to the price of oil and gas; as those prices have plummeted in recent years, the state-owned gas giant Gazprom's market capitalization has shrunk, from about $368 billion in 2008 to around $52 billion today. Meanwhile, long-term demographic decline is sapping Russian society; the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration has projected a 20 percent decrease in the population by 2050. According to the CIA's *World Factbook*, life expectancy in Russia ranks 153rd in the world, far below the world's developed democracies and lower even than developing countries such as Nicaragua and Uzbekistan. Finally, endemic corruption has stunted Russia's potential for economic growth based on innovation and integration into global value chains, portending a period of prolonged stagnation.

## WEAKNESS DRESSED UP AS STRENGTH

In the face of these negative trends and the possibility that they could contribute to organized resistance, the Kremlin appears to have concluded that its best defense is a strong offense. But not content to merely crush dissent at home, it is now taking the fight to Western democracies, and especially the United States, on their turf.

From the Kremlin's perspective, the United States and its democratic allies pose three distinct threats. First, Russia harbors an erroneous but stubborn—perhaps even obsessive—belief that Washington is actively pursuing regime change in Russia. There is no truth to that idea; the United States has never sought to remove Putin. But Putin and his associates have long peddled a conspiracy theory that accuses the United States of engineering popular uprisings in Serbia in 2000, Georgia in 2003, Ukraine in 2004 and 2014, Kyrgyzstan in 2005, and throughout the Arab world in 2010–11. And they have apparently come to believe their own propaganda, perceiving Washington's hand behind the mass protests that erupted in Moscow and other Russian cities in 2011–12. Tens of thousands of Russians took to the streets before and after elections that returned Putin to the presidency after four years in which he had ruled from the sidelines as prime minster. Putin was apparently unable to comprehend that his attempt to remain in power indefinitely might alienate some constituents or that widely shared smartphone videos of ballot stuffing during the parliamentary election held in December 2011 would offend Russian citizens.

*Russia's leaders have built a Potemkin democracy in which democratic form masks authoritarian content.*

Second, the regime fears that Western support for democratic reforms among Russia's neighbors, particularly measures to boost transparency and fight corruption, will undermine the patronage networks that allow Kremlin cronies to extract enormous rents in the "near abroad."

Third, democratic transformation in Russia's neighborhood would serve as a powerful counterexample to Moscow's kleptocratic and authoritarian rule and would delegitimize its authority over the long run. So Russia waged wars against Georgia in 2008 and against Ukraine in 2014 in order to undermine governments determined to pursue further integration with NATO and the EU. Meanwhile, a third country in the region, Moldova, has been partially occupied by Russian forces since the early 1990s as leverage against any sudden movement toward the West (despite a provision of constitutional neutrality that precludes Moldova from joining foreign military alliances).

The Kremlin has justified its violations of these countries' sovereignty on the grounds that they form part of Russia's "sphere of privileged

interests," as Dmitry Medvedev, Russia's then president and Putin's junior partner, explained shortly after Russia's invasion of Georgia. That term is telling. Kremlin insiders have long benefited from privileged status in these three countries. For example, murky gas-trading ventures with Kremlin-linked oligarchs in Ukraine have netted billions of dollars in profits for Putin's cronies at the expense of the Russian state.

The small Balkan nation of Montenegro lies almost a thousand miles from the nearest Russian border and was never part of the Russian or the Soviet empire. But it, too, finds itself tangled in Putin's web. Montenegro became enveloped in Russia's "sphere of privileged interests" not owing to proximity but because Kremlin-linked oligarchs and criminal groups invested their wealth and expanded their influence there following the dissolution of Yugoslavia. After Montenegro became independent from Serbia in 2006, these Russian interests came under threat as the Montenegrin government began to lobby for NATO and EU membership. As a precondition for membership, Montenegro was pressed by both organizations to establish a firmer rule of law. Western officials pushed the country to appoint an independent special prosecutor to combat organized crime and corruption and demanded that it clean house in the defense and intelligence sectors. Correctly perceiving these reforms as a direct threat to its interests, the Kremlin responded almost immediately, coordinating a campaign funded by Russian oligarchs to oppose Montenegro's NATO membership and subsidizing a small anti-NATO and pro-Russian political party in the country.

When that failed to slow Montenegro's march toward integration with NATO, the Kremlin resorted to more coercive tactics. In the weeks prior to Montenegro's parliamentary elections in October 2016, a small group of Russian military intelligence agents hatched a plot to carry out an armed coup d'état using mercenaries recruited from extremist nationalist groups in the region. The scheme unraveled when one of the plotters tipped off the authorities, forcing the Kremlin to dispatch an envoy to Serbia to bring home the stranded conspirators.

## PUTIN'S SOFT SUBVERSION

The Kremlin has relied on subtler tools to subvert democracies in western Europe and the United States. Although Russian operatives have carried out at least one politically motivated assassination in the

West (and possibly more), Moscow's intelligence services are generally more cautious when operating on NATO territory, relying instead on information operations and cyberattacks. Whereas Soviet intelligence operatives occasionally tried to plant false stories in Western media outlets, today the Kremlin subcontracts the task to proxies, who spread customized disinformation using fake accounts on social media. These proxies need not even reside in Russia since they can be contacted and compensated via the so-called Dark Web (a parallel, closed-off internet) wherever they live. Different messages can be tailored to specific demographic groups, depending on the Kremlin's goals, which have ranged from discouraging voter turnout to boosting attendance at political rallies held by Russia's preferred candidates. To maintain a modicum of plausible deniability, Russia's "patriotic hackers" and trolls are typically employed by entities loosely connected to the Kremlin rather than directly by the government. For example, the Internet Research Agency, a notorious "troll farm" based in St. Petersburg that reportedly purchased thousands of ads on Facebook during the 2016 U.S. presidential race, relies on the financial support of a close Putin associate.

*U.S. elections in 2018 and 2020 will present fresh opportunities for Russian meddling.*

During the 2016 U.S. campaign and the 2017 presidential contest in France, Russia's intelligence services cultivated similar online intermediaries to hack private e-mails and distribute the stolen information to organizations such as WikiLeaks, which in turn disseminated it more widely. Although Western cybersecurity experts and intelligence agencies were able to identify the Russian military intelligence agency as the main culprit behind both attacks, the disinformation had already penetrated the mainstream media by the time it was attributed to Russia.

In France, the widespread knowledge of Russia's prior involvement in the U.S. campaign somewhat lessened the Kremlin's first-mover advantage. But Russia has hardly given up, and it has taken similar steps to sway political campaigns in a wide range of European countries, including for referendums in the Netherlands (on Ukraine's integration with Europe), Italy (on governance reforms), and Spain (on Catalonia's secession). Russian support for Alternative for Germany, a far-right party, aimed to increase the group's vote totals in last fall's parliamentary

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elections by amplifying its messaging on social media. A similar Russian effort is now under way to support the nationalist Northern League and the populist Five Star Movement in Italy's upcoming parliamentary elections. Further down the road, the U.S. midterm elections in 2018 and the presidential election in 2020 will present fresh opportunities for Russian meddling.

The manipulation of energy markets is another important tool that Russia uses for coercion and influence peddling. Russia has repeatedly threatened to cut off gas to Ukraine, and in 2006 and 2009, Moscow actually stopped the flow in the middle of winter. The clear message was that leaders who crossed the Kremlin could literally see their populations freeze to death. Russia again made threats to cut off gas deliveries following its invasion of Ukraine in 2014, but thanks to intense diplomacy by the United States and the EU, Kiev's neighbors helped avert a crisis by ensuring an adequate supply.

Since then, new liquefied natural gas terminals in Lithuania and Poland have helped diversify Europe's natural gas supplies, but this has not stopped the Kremlin from continuing to use energy to pressure European governments, particularly in the Baltic states, the Balkans, and central Europe. Currently, for example, Russia is building a nuclear power plant in close proximity to the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius, giving Moscow a powerful psychological weapon should it choose to foment rumors of an accident.

In addition to using energy to coerce its neighbors, the Kremlin is adept at using energy deals to curry influence with European political and business leaders. The fruits of these influence operations can be seen in Putin's close personal relationships with a host of current and former European officials, many of which were facilitated by Western political advisers with ties to the Russian energy sector.

## WEAPONIZING CORRUPTION

Russia's disinformation operations, cyberattacks, and energy politics have received a good deal of attention. Less well covered are the ways in which Russia has managed to effectively export the corruption that has warped its own politics and economy—weaponizing it, in a sense, and aiming it at vulnerable societies elsewhere.

In Russia's crony capitalist system, success and survival in business depend on the protection of powerful patrons who can shelter a businessperson or a company from raids by bigger competitors or overzealous

tax officials. Kremlin authorities and Russian intelligence officials sit at the top of this pyramid, receiving bribes and payoffs in exchange for such protection. But the state itself also benefits from this arrangement, which gives the Kremlin enormous leverage over wealthy Russians who do business in the West and over Western companies that do business in Russia. Moscow can ask (or pressure) such businesspeople and companies to help finance its subversion of political processes elsewhere—by making contributions to an anti-NATO organization in Sweden, for example, or establishing anti-fracking groups in Bulgaria and Romania to fight developments that might threaten Russia's dominance of the eastern European gas market.

What makes corruption such an effective weapon is the difficulty of proving that it even exists, or that its purpose is political. Occasionally, however, cases appear that illuminate how Russia weaponizes corrupt relationships to achieve its political goals. Consider, for example, the fact that the far-right candidate in last year's French presidential race, Marine Le Pen, secured (albeit legally) a multimillion-dollar loan for her campaign from a Russian bank with alleged links to the Kremlin while advocating a policy of lifting sanctions on Russia. (Le Pen, of course, has denied that the funding influenced her positions.)

Money laundering is another example of how the Kremlin seeks to infect Western democracies with the corruption virus. Western financial institutions launder staggering amounts of illicit Russian money. In January 2017, New York State banking regulators revealed that Germany-based Deutsche Bank had helped Russian clients launder $10 billion; the state hit the bank with a $425 million fine. Two months later, the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, an international network of investigative reporters, uncovered a complex scheme that moved more than $20 billion of illicit Russian money through numerous Western financial institutions. After being "cleaned," some of the money went to groups that advocated closer relations between EU countries and Russia, including a Polish nongovernmental organization run by the political activist Mateusz Piskorski, who also heads a pro-Kremlin political party—and who was arrested by Polish authorities in 2016 on charges of spying for Russia. (He remains detained and has yet to be tried.)

The scope of Russian corrupt influence is exceptionally wide, particularly since Russian oligarchs who made vast sums of money over the last several decades have parked much of this wealth in the West,

including in luxury real estate markets in London, Miami, and New York. These billions of dollars of investments have been used in many cases to secure access to Western political and business elites. They also serve as a ready source of financing for the Kremlin's influence operations abroad. A good deal of this money has gone to support antiestablishment candidates or movements in Europe—on both the far right and the far left—that support closer partnership with Russia or that publicly question the value of membership in NATO or the EU. For the Kremlin, it hardly matters what specific ideology these candidates or movements espouse; the more important goal is to weaken and divide Western democracies internally.

## HOW TO FIGHT BACK

Russia's assault on democracy and subversion of democratic political systems calls for a strong response. The United States and its allies must improve their ability to deter Russian military aggression and work together more closely to strengthen their energy security and prevent Russia's nonmilitary forms of coercion. They must also reduce the vulnerability of their political systems, media environments, financial sectors, and cyber-infrastructure. Every country in the Kremlin's cross hairs must also better coordinate its intelligence and law enforcement activities to root out Russian disinformation and subversion and find ways for authorities to cooperate with the private sector to counteract such meddling.

But Washington and its partners cannot only play defense. They also must agree to impose meaningful costs on Russia when they discover evidence of its misdeeds. At the same time, to prevent miscalculations, Washington needs to keep talking to Moscow.

The Kremlin would like nothing more than for Western leaders to declare NATO obsolete and cut investments in collective defense. Given Russia's aggression in Georgia and Ukraine, NATO must continue to forward-deploy troops and military capabilities to eastern Europe to deter and, if necessary, defeat a Russian attack against one of the alliance's member states. But the threat of unconventional and nonmilitary coercion now looms larger than ever. More than a decade has passed since Estonia became the first NATO country to see its government institutions and media organizations attacked by hackers based in Russia. In the intervening period, the risk of a far more debilitating attack has increased, but planning for how to defend against it has lagged.

One step NATO members can take would be to broaden the responsibility for such planning beyond their militaries and defense ministries. The EU and the private sector need to be part of such efforts, so that Russian strikes on infrastructure can be isolated and backup systems can be put in place. Although much of the responsibility for cyberdefense currently rests with individual countries, the interconnectedness of allied infrastructure makes greater coordination imperative.

Western democracies must also address glaring vulnerabilities in their electoral systems, financial sectors, cyber-infrastructure, and media ecosystems. The U.S. campaign finance system, for example, needs to be reformed to deny foreign actors—from Russia and elsewhere—the ability to interfere in American elections. Authorities can no longer turn a blind eye to the secretive bundling of donations that allows foreign money to flow to U.S. organizations (such as "ghost corporations") that in turn contribute to super PACs and other putatively independent political organizations, such as trade associations and so-called 501(c)(4) groups. Congress must get serious about campaign finance reform now; doing so should be a matter of bipartisan consensus since this vulnerability affects Democrats and Republicans in equal measure.

The United States also needs more transparency in its financial and real estate markets, which have become havens for corrupt foreign capital, some of which undoubtedly seeps into politics. To expose and prevent the money laundering behind that trend, Congress should pass new legislation to require greater transparency in high-end real estate investments and tighten loopholes that allow money to be laundered through opaque law-firm bank accounts or shell companies. Authorities in Washington and other Western capitals must also integrate law enforcement and intelligence tools to neutralize corrupt networks linked to Russia. The Kremlin has successfully fused organized criminal groups, intelligence agencies, and corrupt businesses, as revealed in great detail by a recent investigation carried out by Spanish authorities. Nothing illustrates the tangled web linking organized crime, Russian government officials, and the Kremlin's foreign influence operations more clearly than the ongoing lobbying efforts in the United States on behalf of the criminal syndicate responsible for the death of Sergei Magnitsky, the Russian lawyer who was killed in a Moscow prison after he uncovered a corrupt scheme to steal $230 million from the Russian Treasury. In the United States, a dedicated interagency body should be charged with coordinating efforts to neutralize such malign networks.

The United States' cyber-infrastructure, most of which is owned and managed by the private sector, remains vulnerable to foreign hacking—or, worse, a crippling systemwide attack. To protect the networks that operate power plants, for example, or those that manage train and airline traffic, government regulatory bodies and private operators must raise their standards and apply them consistently. This means, among other measures, ensuring that there are no back doors into networks that remain isolated from the public Internet, mandating that software patches and updates be installed as soon as they become available, and conducting regular network diagnostics. Similarly, state and local governments that maintain electronic voting machines must address lapses in network security that have left open too many back doors to intrusion and potential manipulation. Some immediate steps that authorities should take include mandating an auditable paper trail of every ballot cast and protecting voter registration rolls with the same vigor as vote tabulation systems.

Meanwhile, journalists and activists in the United States and Europe must do more to expose and root out disinformation, especially on social media. Civil society initiatives have taken the lead on this: the University of Pennsylvania's FactCheck.org, Ukraine's StopFake.org, and the German Marshall Fund's Hamilton 68 have all exposed propaganda by debunking falsehoods and shedding light on the sources propagating them. Social media companies such as Twitter, Facebook, and Google must provide greater transparency about who funds the political advertisements on their platforms, work harder to eliminate automated and bot-generated content, and invest in the technological and human resources to root out fake foreign accounts that spread disinformation. In countries with extensive experience of Russian information warfare, such as Estonia and Finland, officials and media professionals alike have learned that the more light they shine on the methods foreign actors use to sow disinformation, the less successful the propaganda becomes.

## HANG TOUGH, BUT KEEP TALKING

In the short term, Putin and his allies are likely to continue their assault on Western democracy. So Washington and its allies must stand firm and impose costs on Russia for its violations of international law and other countries' sovereignty—those it has already committed and those it is likely planning. Maintaining the sanctions that the United States and the EU levied on Russia in response to its invasion of Ukraine has been important not only in pressuring Moscow to resolve the conflict in the near

term but also as a signal to the Kremlin that the costs of such behavior will eventually outweigh any perceived benefits. Having suffered few lasting consequences for its 2007 cyberattack on Estonia and only a short financial decline following its 2008 invasion of Georgia, the Kremlin erroneously concluded that it could act with relative impunity. It did so in spite of the clear marker that the Obama administration laid down from the very start. As one of us, Joe Biden, noted in a speech at the Munich Security Conference in 2009, "We will not recognize any nation having a sphere of influence. It will remain our view that sovereign states have the right to make their own decisions and choose their own alliances." So when Russia invaded Ukraine, the United States led the way by imposing tough sanctions. Fortunately, the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, a bill that Congress passed last August, codified the sanctions on Russia that were put in place by the Obama administration and gave the current administration enhanced authorities to impose lasting consequences on Russia for its interference in the 2016 election.

Even while defending U.S. interests and safeguarding liberal democracy elsewhere, Washington must keep the channels of communication open with Moscow. At the height of the Cold War, American and Soviet leaders recognized that, whatever their differences, they could not afford a miscalculation that might lead to war. They had to keep talking. The same is true today: as two nuclear superpowers with military assets deployed in close proximity in many different parts of the globe, the United States and Russia have a mutual obligation to maintain strategic stability. That means not only regulating the development and deployment of strategic weapons but also communicating clearly to avoid misunderstandings about what each side perceives as a strategic threat. For its part, Washington needs to spell out clear consequences for interfering in the U.S. democratic process or tampering with critical U.S. infrastructure.

## MOBILIZING WHEN TRUMP WON'T

As two former government officials, we are, of course, no longer in a position to implement such policies, which raises the question: What if these recommendations are ignored? The White House seems unlikely to act. Too many times, President Donald Trump has equivocated on whether Russia interfered in the 2016 election, even after he received briefings from top intelligence officials on precisely how Moscow did it. After meeting privately with Putin at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Vietnam last November, Trump told reporters that Putin "said

he absolutely did not meddle in our election. He did not do what they are saying he did." Pressed about whether he accepted Putin's denials, Trump replied: "Every time he sees me, he says, 'I didn't do that,' and I really believe that when he tells me that, he means it." Trump has made a habit of lavishing praise on Putin and even reportedly sought to lift sanctions against Russia shortly after his inauguration. We are not questioning Trump's motives, but his behavior forces us to question his judgment.

If this administration cannot or will not stand up to Russia, other democratic institutions, including Congress and civil society organizations, must mobilize. A starting point would be the creation of an independent, nonpartisan commission to examine Russia's assault on American democracy, establish a common understanding of the scope and complexity of the Russian threat, and identify the tools required to combat it. The 9/11 Commission allowed the United States to come to terms with and address the vulnerabilities that made al Qaeda's attacks possible. Today, Americans need a thorough, detailed inquest into how Russia's strike on their democratic institutions was carried out and how another one might be prevented.

In the absence of an independent commission with a broad mandate, the United States will be left with only the relatively narrow investigations led by the special counsel Robert Mueller, the congressional intelligence committees, and the Senate Judiciary Committee. The good news is that Congress has already demonstrated its clear understanding of the Russian threat: in an overwhelmingly bipartisan manner, it passed the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act by a margin of 419 to 3 in the House of Representatives and by 98 to 2 in the Senate. Congress should continue to rigorously exercise its oversight responsibilities to ensure that the administration applies the letter and spirit of the legislation—and, if it does not, to make sure the American people find out.

And finally, as more news breaks each day about the extent of Russia's disinformation campaign and the tactics that Moscow used to manipulate public opinion and exploit the fault lines within U.S. society, it falls on all Americans to be aware and informed citizens. We must collectively reject foreign influence over our democratic institutions and do more to address the challenges within our own communities, rather than allowing demagogues at home and tyrants abroad to drive us apart. Putin and his cronies do not understand that the greatest strength of American democracy is an engaged citizenry. Even if the president refuses to act, we can.

# BLOCKCHAINS:

## The new life-changing technology and its challenges

Judging by the news coverage around the world, cryptocurrencies are increasingly becoming more mainstream. More people have been moving more money and buying more things using cryptocurrencies, as seen by the popularization of Bitcoin.

With the continuing rise of this new medium of exchange, ordinary consumers are gradually finding out about blockchains, the technology that forms the core of cryptocurrencies.

Experts have stated that several thousands of cryptocurrencies are currently circulating around the world. From Japan, there is one cryptocurrency that hopes to distinguish itself from the rest by serving as a bridge with another country: the Philippines.

Conceived in Japan, Noah Ark Coin hopes to address some of the downsides faced by thousands of overseas Filipino workers, or OFWs, who remit hard-earned money to their families back home. Some estimates put these annual remittances from OFWs at around $26.4 million, or about 10 percent of the GDP of the country's GDP. The amount is predicted to grow as long as more Filipinos seek work abroad.

For these OFWs, particularly in Japan, unfavorable exchange rates, large service fees, transaction times and security are the most important concerns. To address these issues, Noah Ark Coin built the technology and formed partnerships with the biggest blockchain company in the Philippines, Satoshi Citadel Industries (SCI), and Japanese fintech company Nippon Pay.

Through this partnership, any OFW in Japan can exchange Japanese yen for Noah Ark Coins and add them to their Noah Ark Coin-enable wallet (developed by SCI) via a terminal in any store that offers Nippon Pay services. Right there, the OFW can transfer his Noah Ark Coins to the wallet of their families back home with no service fees incurred. On the other end, their families can exchange Noah Ark Coins to Philippine pesos, which they can deposit to or withdraw from their local bank accounts. Additionally, they can pay for their mobile phone and electricity bills, school tuition fees and health insurance directly from their Noah Ark Coin wallets.


**Mayor Joseph Ejercito Estrada (4th from left) and representatives of the City of Manila and J. Bros Construction Corporation at the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement to build Horizon Manila, the 419 hectare reclaimed development in Manila Bay**

The usefulness of the Noah Ark Coin goes beyond the remittances of OFWs.

In one section of the 419-hectare Horizon Manila reclamation project by the City of Manila, the developers of this cryptocurrency are building Noah City in partnership with Luxembourg-based maritime construction, engineering experts Jan De Nul Group and locally-based J. Bros Construction Corporation.

Visitors to Noah City will be able to make all their payments and transactions using Noah Ark Coins in any of the stores and restaurants. The project developers predict a significant increase in the usage of Noah Ark Coins, which will result in the sharp rise in the cryptocurrency's liquidity. The development of Horizon Manila is also expected to attract foreign investors, particularly from Japan, and contribute to the development of the City of Manila.

Noah City is one component of this vision to

build a new kind of community. On the island of Mindanao, in the southern Philippines, the company is building a resort complex close to the Dakak Beach Resort. Aside from having 50 luxury villas, an infinity pool, restaurants, and a spa, Dakak Beach Resort also features a golf course designed by golfing legend Greg Norman, one of the country's largest amusement parks, the longest zipline in Asia, a movie theater, and a shopping center.

A joint project with NOAH Foundation, which administers Noah Ark Coin, Dakak Beach Resort and the new Noah Resort will allow all guests to pay their bills in all its facilities using their new cryptocurrency from June 2018.

Last year, Noah Foundation kicked off its community-building activities with an event called Organic Osmeña 2020, held in Sergio Osmeña Sr., Zamboanga del Norte, in northwestern Mindanao. The initiative aims to convert all agriculture in the region to organic farming by 2020.

The event was attended by more than 700 organic farmers from 39 municipalities in the region, as well as Senator Cynthia Villar, the Chairperson of the Committee on Agriculture and Food, Representative Seth Frederick Jalosjos, as well as eight mayors from the region and representatives from the Department of Tourism, Department of Agriculture, Department of Transportation, Department of Labor and Employment, and TESDA (Technical Education and Skills Authority of the Philippines).


**J. Bros Construction Corporation President Jesusito Legaspi Jr. meets with Noah Ark Coin Promoter Tadashi Izumi during the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement between Noah City and Horizon Manila.**

During the event, Ark Systems Technologies CEO Clarke Robertson announced the development of GrowKart, a revolutionary app that will allow organic farmers to connect directly with supermarkets, restaurants, and consumers.

**A view of one of the holes in the Greg Norman-designed golf course of Dakak Beach Resort, an amenity that will be accessible to all the guests of Noah Resort**

Robertson also explained that production management, distribution control, and sales management infrastructure for farmers will be built using blockchain technology and Noah Ark Coin.

This new infrastructure and platform will allow farmers to eliminate middlemen and go directly to retailers and consumers, which will increase profits and productivity. And for consumers, this will mean more affordable produce.

By taking full advantage of blockchain's smart contract functionality, Noah Ark Coins can contribute to many of the world's pressing problems, such as uplifting the standards of living of subsistence farmers in the Philippines or in any part of the world. Perhaps some cash-strapped entrepreneur with a revolutionary idea can raise needed funds by using peer-to-peer cryptocurrency transactions.

For its potential to improve the lives of millions more easily, blockchain technology might be viewed soon as this century's most important invention.

NOAH

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# Why China Won't Rescue North Korea

## What to Expect If Things Fall Apart

*Oriana Skylar Mastro*

U.S. officials have long agreed with Mao Zedong's famous formulation about relations between China and North Korea: the two countries are like "lips and teeth." Pyongyang depends heavily on Beijing for energy, food, and most of its meager trade with the outside world, and so successive U.S. administrations have tried to enlist the Chinese in their attempts to denuclearize North Korea. U.S. President Donald Trump has bought into this logic, alternately pleading for Chinese help and threatening action if China does not do more. In the same vein, policymakers have assumed that if North Korea collapsed or became embroiled in a war with the United States, China would try to support its cherished client from afar, and potentially even deploy troops along the border to prevent a refugee crisis from spilling over into China.

But this thinking is dangerously out of date. Over the last two decades, Chinese relations with North Korea have deteriorated drastically behind the scenes, as China has tired of North Korea's insolent behavior and reassessed its own interests on the peninsula. Today, China is no longer wedded to North Korea's survival. In the event of a conflict or the regime's collapse, Chinese forces would intervene to a degree not previously expected—not to protect Beijing's supposed ally but to secure its own interests.

In the current cycle of provocation and escalation, understanding where China really stands on North Korea is not some academic exercise. Last July, North Korea successfully tested an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of reaching the United States' West Coast. And

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*All alone: a North Korean soldier near the Chinese border, June 2013*

JACKY CHEN / REUTERS

in September, it exploded a hydrogen bomb that was 17 times as powerful as the one dropped on Hiroshima. U.S. rhetoric, meanwhile, has inflamed the situation. Trump has mocked the North Korean leader Kim Jong Un as "Little Rocket Man," threatened that North Korea "won't be around much longer," and announced that "military solutions are now fully in place, locked and loaded." To back up these threats, the United States has brought its long-range bombers and naval vessels conspicuously close to North Korea.

The real possibility of chaos on the peninsula means that the United States needs to update its thinking about Beijing's motivations. In the event of an escalation, China will likely attempt to seize control of key terrain, including North Korea's nuclear sites. The large-scale presence of both American and Chinese troops on the Korean Peninsula would raise the risk of a full-blown war between China and the United States, something neither side wants. But given how weak Beijing's ties to Pyongyang are, and given China's own concerns about North Korea's nuclear program, the two great powers may find surprising common ground. With some forward thinking, the United States could lessen the risk of an accidental conflict and leverage Chinese involvement to reduce the costs and duration of a second Korean war.

## UPDATING THE RECORD

As the conventional wisdom has it, China is unwilling to push North Korea to denuclearize on account of its own insecurities. This thinking is based on three assumptions: that China and North Korea are allies, that China fears instability on the peninsula and the refugee problem that may result, and that Beijing needs North Korea to survive as a buffer state between China and South Korea, a key U.S. ally. These assumptions were true 20 years ago, but Beijing's views have evolved significantly since then.

China and North Korea long enjoyed a closeness born of mutual dependency. Just one year after the birth of the People's Republic of China, Beijing came to the assistance of its fledgling communist neighbor during the Korean War. To prevent future "aggression" against Pyongyang, the two signed a mutual defense pact in 1961. And when the end of the Cold War robbed North Korea of its Soviet benefactor, Beijing stepped in to provide economic and military assistance. But today, China and North Korea can hardly be characterized as friends, let alone allies. Chinese President Xi Jinping has never even met Kim, and according to Chinese scholars with government access or ties to the Chinese Communist Party, he despises the North Korean regime. The rumor in Chinese foreign policy circles is that even the Chinese ambassador in Pyongyang has not met Kim.

Xi has publicly stated that the 1961 treaty will not apply if North Korea provokes a conflict—a standard easily met. In my travels to China over the past decade to discuss the North Korean issue with academics, policymakers, and military officials, no one has ever brought up the treaty or a Chinese obligation to defend North Korea. Instead, my Chinese colleagues tell me about the relationship's deterioration and Beijing's efforts to distance itself from Pyongyang, a change that a *Global Times* public opinion poll suggests enjoys wide support. As the Chinese scholar Zhu Feng has argued in *Foreign Affairs*, giving up North Korea would be domestically popular and strategically sound.

In fact, the bilateral relationship has gotten so bad that officers in the People's Liberation Army (PLA) have suggested to me in private meetings that Beijing and Pyongyang may not take the same side in the event of a new Korean war. The Chinese military assumes that it would be opposing, not supporting, North Korean troops. China would get involved not to defend Kim's regime but to shape a post-Kim peninsula to its liking.

These policies have shifted alongside China's increasing confidence about its capabilities and regional influence. Chinese thinking is no longer dominated by fears of Korean instability and a resulting refugee crisis. The PLA's contingency planning previously focused on sealing the border or establishing a buffer zone to deal with refugees. Indeed, for decades, that was probably all Chinese forces could hope to achieve. But over the past 20 years, the Chinese military has evolved into a far more sophisticated force by modernizing its equipment and reforming its organizational structure. As a result, China now has the ability to simultaneously manage instability at its borders and conduct major military operations on the peninsula.

*China is no longer wedded to North Korea's survival.*

If Kim's regime collapsed, the People's Armed Police, which has approximately 50,000 personnel in China's northeastern provinces, would likely be in charge of securing the border and handling the expected influx of North Korean refugees, freeing up the PLA for combat operations further south. China currently has three "group armies" in the Northern Theater Command, one of the PLA's five theater commands, which borders North Korea. Each of these armies consists of 45,000 to 60,000 troops, plus army aviation and special forces brigades. And if it needed to, China could also pull forces from its Central Theater Command and mobilize the air force more extensively. When China reorganized its military regions into "war zones" in February 2016, it incorporated Shandong Province into its Northern Theater Command, even though it is not contiguous with the rest of the command, most likely because military leaders would require access to the shoreline to deploy forces to North Korea by sea. The last two decades of military modernization and reform, along with China's geographic advantages, have ensured that the Chinese military would be capable of quickly occupying much of North Korea, before U.S. reinforcements could even deploy to South Korea to prepare for an attack.

In the past, part of what explained China's attachment to North Korea was the notion that the latter served as a buffer between China and a once hostile capitalist, and later democratic, South Korea. But China's increased power and clout have all but eliminated that rationale, too. Beijing may have previously been wary of a reunified Korea led by Seoul, but no longer. Some prominent Chinese scholars have begun

to advocate abandoning Pyongyang in favor of a better relationship with Seoul. Even Xi has been surprisingly vocal about his support for Korean reunification in the long term, albeit through an incremental peace process. In a July 2014 speech at Seoul National University, Xi stated that "China hopes that both sides of the peninsula will improve their relations and support the eventual realization of an independent and peaceful reunification of the peninsula."

Still, the Chinese calculus on South Korea has not completely changed. Enthusiasm for reunification peaked between 2013 and 2015, when South Korean President Park Geun-hye prioritized bilateral relations with Beijing. But after a nuclear test in early 2016 by North Korea, Seoul reinforced its alliance with Washington and agreed to deploy THAAD, a ballistic missile defense system, causing consternation among Chinese officials that their charm offensive was not gaining enough traction. China's chief concern remains the prospect of U.S. forces in a reunified Korea. Although China still supports Korean reunification, it also wants to shape the terms. And its approach will likely depend on the status of its bilateral relationship with South Korea.

## WHAT CHINA REALLY WANTS

Given the costs of a war on the Korean Peninsula, U.S. planners have long thought that China would do everything it could to avoid becoming entangled in a major conflagration involving South Korean and U.S. forces. If China did intervene, policymakers assumed that Beijing would limit its role to managing refugees close to the border or supporting the Kim regime from a distance through political, economic, and military aid. Either way, Washington believed that China's role would not significantly impact U.S. operations.

This is no longer a safe assumption. Instead, Washington must recognize that China will intervene extensively and militarily on the peninsula if the United States seems poised to move its forces north. This is not to say that China will take preemptive action. Beijing will still attempt to keep both sides from leading everyone down the path to war. Moreover, if an ensuing conflict were limited to an exchange of missile and air strikes, China would most likely stay out. But if its attempts to deter the United States from escalating the crisis to a major war failed, Beijing would not hesitate to send considerable Chinese forces into North Korea to ensure its interests were taken into account during and after the war.

China's likely strategic assertiveness in a Korean war would be driven largely by its concerns about the Kim regime's nuclear arsenal, an interest that would compel Chinese forces to intervene early to gain control over North Korea's nuclear facilities. In the words of Shen Zhihua, a Chinese expert on North Korea, "If a Korean nuclear bomb explodes, who'll be the victim of the nuclear leakage and fallout? That would be China and South Korea. Japan is separated by a sea, and the United States is separated by the Pacific Ocean."

*Understanding where China stands on North Korea is not some academic exercise.*

China is well positioned to deal with the threat. Based on information from the Nuclear Threat Initiative, a U.S. nonprofit, if Chinese forces moved 100 kilometers (about 60 miles) across the border into North Korea, they would control territory containing all of the country's highest-priority nuclear sites and two-thirds of its highest-priority missile sites. For Chinese leaders, the goal would be to avoid the spread of nuclear contamination, and they would hope that the presence of Chinese troops at these facilities would forestall a number of frightening scenarios: China could prevent accidents at the facilities; deter the United States, South Korea, or Japan from striking them; and block the North Koreans from using or sabotaging their weapons.

Beijing is also concerned that a reunified Korea might inherit the North's nuclear capabilities. My Chinese interlocutors seemed convinced that South Korea wants nuclear weapons and that the United States supports those ambitions. They fear that if the Kim regime falls, the South Korean military will seize the North's nuclear sites and material, with or without Washington's blessing. Although this concern may seem far-fetched, the idea of going nuclear has gained popularity in Seoul. And the main opposition party has called for the United States to redeploy tactical nuclear weapons to the peninsula—an option that the Trump administration has been reluctant to rule out.

Beyond nuclear concerns, China's stance on North Korea has shifted as part of its more general geopolitical assertiveness under Xi. Unlike his predecessors, Xi is not shy about China's great-power ambitions. In a three-and-a-half-hour speech he gave in October, he described

China as "a strong country" or "a great country" 26 times. That is a far cry from the dictum that one of his predecessors, Deng Xiaoping, preferred: "Hide your strength, bide your time." Under Xi, China is increasingly playing the role of a major power, and he has pushed for military reforms to ensure that the PLA can fight and win future wars.

Most important, a war on the Korean Peninsula would represent a litmus test of China's regional competition with the United States. Indeed, Chinese concerns about Washington's future influence best explain why China is unwilling to push North Korea to the degree that the Trump administration wants. China will not risk instability or war if the outcome could be a larger U.S. role in the region. Given this, China no longer feels comfortable sitting on the sidelines. As one PLA officer asked me, "Why should the United States be there but not us?" For this reason alone, Chinese scholars and military leaders argue, China will need to be involved in any contingency on the peninsula.

## WORKING TOGETHER

The bottom line, then, is that Washington should assume that any Korean conflict involving large-scale U.S. military operations will trigger a significant Chinese military intervention. That does not mean that the United States should try to deter China: such a response would almost certainly fail, and it would increase the chances of a direct military confrontation between Chinese and U.S. forces. Moves that could damage the relationship between Beijing and Washington would also impede contingency planning or coordination before and during a crisis, raising the risks of miscalculation.

Instead, Washington must recognize that some forms of Chinese intervention would actually be beneficial to its interests, especially with regard to nonproliferation. First and foremost, U.S. officials should note that Chinese forces are likely to make it to North Korea's nuclear sites long before U.S. forces, thanks to advantages in geography, force posture, manpower, and access to early warning indicators. That is a good thing, since it would reduce the likelihood that the collapsing regime in Pyongyang would use nuclear weapons against the United States or its allies. China could also prove helpful by identifying nuclear sites (with the assistance of U.S. intelligence), then securing and accounting for the nuclear material at those sites, and finally inviting international experts in to dismantle the weapons. The United

States, meanwhile, could lead multilateral efforts to intercept North Korean nuclear materials at sea, in the air, or traveling overland and to guarantee their accounting, safe storage, and disposal.

More than anything, U.S. policymakers must shift their mindset to view China's involvement as an opportunity instead of as a constraint on U.S. operations. For example, the U.S. Army and the Marines must accept that although securing nuclear facilities is currently a key mission in North Korea in the event of a conflict, they will have to change their plans if the Chinese get there first.

At the political level, Washington must be willing to take greater risks to improve coordination with China in peacetime. This may mean bilateral consultation with Beijing, even though that would conflict with Seoul's preference to keep China at arm's length. Granted, sharing intelligence with China and jointly planning and training for contingencies would seem unnatural, since the United States is simultaneously engaged in a long-term strategic competition with China. The U.S. Defense Department considers China to be one of its top five global threats, along with Iran, North Korea, Russia, and extremist organizations. But strategic challenges and severe threats often bring together potential adversaries, and rightfully so. With North Korea out of the way, the United States would have more resources at its disposal to address other threats.

Of course, such an effort to cooperate would require a massive degree of coordination. China has long opposed engaging in discussions with the United States on how it would behave in the event of a conflict on the Korean Peninsula or the North Korean regime's collapse because of its distrust of U.S. intentions and fears that Washington would use those conversations to sabotage Beijing's attempts to resolve the nuclear crisis peacefully. But China appears to be softening its position. In a September op-ed in the *East Asia Forum*, Jia Qingguo, a professor at Peking University, argued that China should cooperate with the United States and South Korea, especially on the question of North Korea's nuclear weapons arsenal. In Jia's words, "The omens of war on the Korean peninsula loom larger by the day. When war becomes a real possibility, China must be prepared. And, with this in mind, China must be more willing to consider talks with concerned countries on contingency plans."

If Beijing continues to resist proposals to work together, Washington should consider unilaterally communicating aspects of U.S. contingency

plans to reduce the risk of accidental clashes. It could even provide the Chinese side with intelligence to help the PLA secure the most important nuclear facilities. Alternatively, the two countries could use established mechanisms for nuclear security cooperation in the civilian sector, such as the jointly established Center of Excellence on Nuclear Security, or organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency to conduct technical training. No country has more experience dismantling and securing nuclear weapons than the United States. Although China has the manpower to seize control of the sites, it is unclear whether it has the expertise necessary to render safe, transport, or destroy nuclear weapons and material. Sharing best practices would help ensure that China can safely handle what it will find at these sites.

Every strategy has its tradeoffs. Coordinating with or conceding to Chinese involvement in a Korean contingency does have a number of downsides, as critics are bound to point out. For starters, the South Koreans completely oppose the idea of any Chinese involvement on the peninsula, let alone Chinese boots on the ground. U.S. moves to coordinate efforts with China would harm U.S. relations with Seoul, although the benefit of managing the demise of North Korea at a lower cost would be worth it.

Potentially more worrisome is the fact that Chinese intervention in North Korea would entail the loss of some U.S. influence on the peninsula. At a fundamental level, China would be acting not to assist the United States but to ensure that a reunified Korea would not include U.S. troops. But that may not be so bad, after all. In frank discussions, Chinese interlocutors have insinuated that Beijing may yet accede to a U.S. alliance with a reunified Korea. In that case, the end of a permanent U.S. military presence on the peninsula would be a reasonable price to pay to ensure that a second Korean war had the best possible outcome.

*"The United States requires the next generation of national security professionals to face a host of new issues."*

**— Dr. Steven Meyer**
*Dean of Graduate Studies, Daniel Morgan Graduate School*

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# After Credibility

## American Foreign Policy in the Trump Era

*Keren Yarhi-Milo*

"Believe me." U.S. President Donald Trump has used that phrase countless times, whether he is talking about counterterrorism ("I know more about ISIS than the generals do. Believe me"), building a wall along the U.S.-Mexican border ("Believe me, one way or the other, we're going to get that wall"), or the Iran nuclear deal ("Believe me. Oh, believe me. . . . It's a bad deal").

Trump wants to be taken at his word. But public opinion polls consistently indicate that between two-thirds and three-quarters of Americans do not find him trustworthy. The global picture is no better. Most citizens of traditional U.S. allies, such as Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Jordan, Mexico, South Korea, and the United Kingdom, say that they have no confidence in the U.S. president.

In other words, Trump suffers from a credibility gap. This is, perhaps, unsurprising. According to *The New York Times*, Trump said something untrue every day for the first 40 days of his presidency. His actions speak even louder. Trump has sown doubt about some of the United States' oldest and most important commitments, such as its support for NATO—an alliance Trump described as "obsolete" in January, before declaring it "no longer obsolete" in April. He has flip-flopped on policy positions, publicly undermined the efforts of members of his own administration, and backpedaled on diplomatic agreements, including the Paris climate accord and the Iran nuclear deal.

The United States does not derive its credibility from the words of the executive alone, but Trump's behavior carries consequences. As the president undermines the nation's credibility at home and abroad, allies will hesitate to trust American promises, and U.S. threats will

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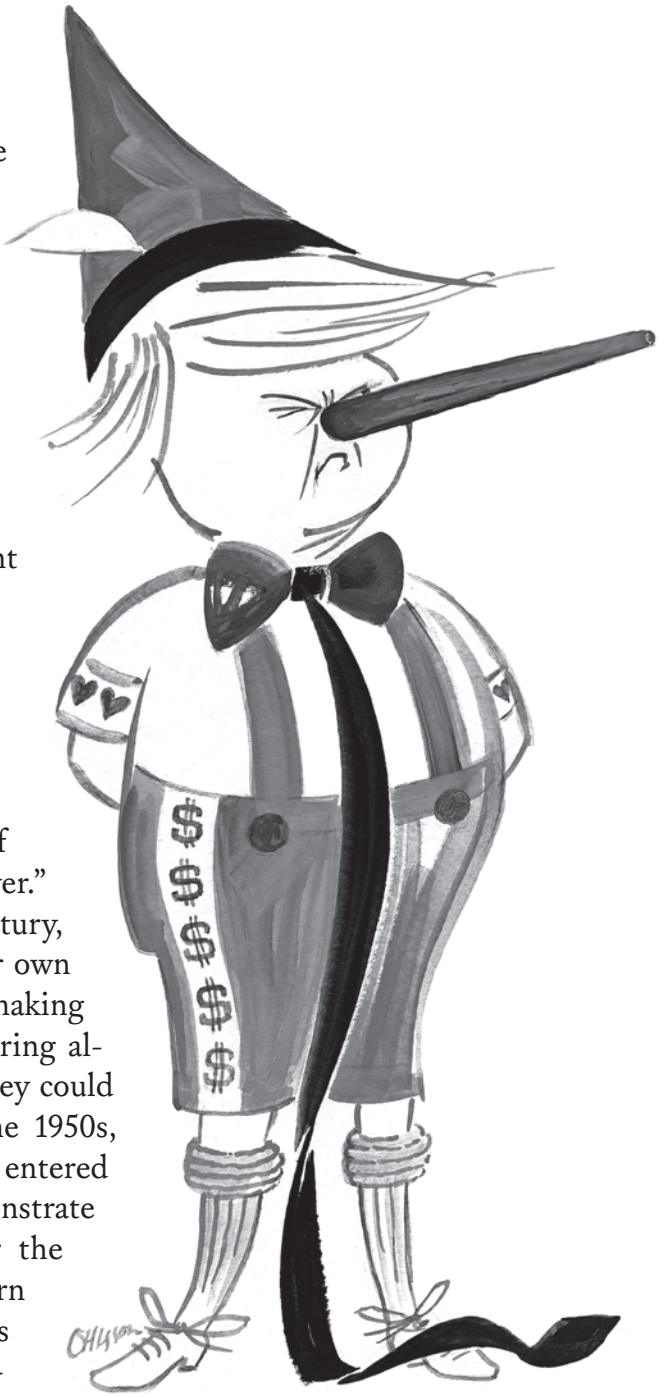
lose some of their force. The risks of deadly miscalculation will increase. And to demonstrate its resolve, the United States may need to take more costly and extreme actions. Other sources of credibility, such as American military prowess and a general faith in U.S. institutions, may mitigate some of the damage wreaked by Trump. But there is no substitute for a president whose words still matter.



## YOUR REPUTATION PRECEDES YOU

The Nobel laureate and nuclear strategist Thomas Schelling once wrote that "face is one of the few things worth fighting over." For much of the twentieth century, policymakers believed that their own credibility was essential to making threats believable and to reassuring allies and adversaries alike that they could trust U.S. commitments. In the 1950s, for example, the United States entered the Korean War in part to demonstrate its resolve to actively counter the Soviet Union. A similar concern about reputation kept U.S. troops in Vietnam long after policymakers had concluded that the United States was losing the war.

In the post–Cold War era, most American leaders have considered credibility essential to the task of maintaining the U.S. alliance system and the postwar liberal order. Such thinking played a role in U.S. interventions in Haiti, Kosovo, and Iraq. The rationale for these

interventions varied, as did their outcomes, but in each case, leaders backed their words with action.

In international politics, an actor's credibility is tied to its reputation, a characteristic that political scientists generally split into two varieties. What Robert Jervis calls "signaling reputation" refers to an actor's record of carrying out threats or fulfilling promises. "General reputation," on the other hand, refers to a broader range of attributes, such as whether an actor is cooperative or sincere. These two forms of reputation can affect each other: for example, sustained damage to a state's signaling reputation may erode its general reputation for trustworthiness. However, a country's general reputation can also be distinct. Before the Korean War, for example, the United States had made no specific commitment to South Korea. Choosing to intervene, therefore, did not affect the United States' signaling reputation but may have contributed to a general reputation for resolve.

*In international politics, an actor's credibility is tied to its reputation.*

Context can also affect credibility. For example, a president may not be perceived as trustworthy when he makes assurances to allies but may still be considered credible when he threatens military action. Or he may be seen as trustworthy on social or economic issues but not on foreign policy. Sometimes, a president's credibility at home can affect his credibility abroad. In 1981, U.S. President Ronald Reagan followed through on his threat to fire more than 11,000 air traffic controllers after they had violated federal law by going on strike. A number of policymakers and observers—including George Shultz, who became U.S. secretary of state the following year, and Tip O'Neill, then Speaker of the House—reported that this move had significant, if unintentional, consequences for U.S. foreign policy: the Soviets learned that Reagan didn't bluff.

Some scholars are skeptical that reputations matter. The political scientist Daryl Press argues that credibility has nothing to do with a leader's record of following through on threats. Instead, adversaries evaluate the balance of military capabilities and the interests at stake. Press argues that during the Cuban missile crisis, for example, members of the Kennedy administration viewed Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's threats as highly credible, even though Khrushchev had repeatedly backed down on his ultimatum that Western forces

withdraw from West Berlin. In Press' view, Khrushchev's credibility stemmed not from his signaling reputation but from Washington's view of the nuclear balance of power and Soviet interests. Similarly, the political scientist Jonathan Mercer argues that, historically, backing down from a threat has not led countries to develop a reputation for weakness among adversaries, and standing firm has not led to a reputation for resolve among allies.

The empirical evidence these scholars have gathered is important. But their view by no means represents the scholarly consensus. According to the political scientists Frank Harvey and John Mitton, for example, a reputation for following through on threats significantly increases a state's coercive power. Focusing on U.S. interventions in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Iraq, they show that adversaries studied what the United States had said and how it had behaved in comparable situations to infer its resolve and to predict its likely actions. My work with the political scientist Alex Weisiger has shown that countries that have backpedaled in past crises are much more likely to be challenged again, whereas countries with good reputations for resolve are much less likely to face military confrontations. Other studies have documented how states that break their alliance commitments develop a reputation for being unreliable and are less likely to earn trust in the future. A good reputation, this body of work demonstrates, remains crucial for successful diplomacy.

## BAD REPUTATION

Unfortunately, the reputation of the U.S. presidency has eroded in recent years. Trump deserves much of the blame—but not all of it. The United States' signaling reputation began to decline in the summer of 2013, after Syrian President Bashar al-Assad breached U.S. President Barack Obama's "redline" on chemical weapons. In August 2012, Obama had stated that the mobilization or use of these weapons would "change [his] calculus" on Syria, a remark that many interpreted as a threat of military action. In August 2013, Assad launched a series of sarin gas attacks against rebel strongholds, killing 1,400 Syrians. Yet instead of responding with military strikes, Obama agreed to a Russian-brokered deal in which Assad pledged to dismantle his arsenal of chemical weapons.

In an interview with *The Atlantic*'s Jeffrey Goldberg, Obama defended his decision by saying that "dropping bombs on someone to prove that you're willing to drop bombs on someone is just about the worst reason

to use force." But this was a straw man. Few analysts were suggesting that Obama should pursue a bad policy solely on reputational grounds; however, there are political and strategic costs when the president makes a promise and then fails to act. If Obama had not intended to follow through on his threat, he should not have issued it in the first place. And ultimately, the diplomatic solution did not work: Assad has continued to use chemical weapons.

Regardless of whether they supported or opposed Obama's decision not to intervene more forcefully in Syria, Republicans and many Democrats believed that the redline episode had damaged the country's credibility. Hawks argued that to restore the United States' reputation for resolve, Washington should be more willing to use military force. But this was a misleading, and potentially dangerous, assessment of what needed fixing in U.S. foreign policy after Obama's departure. Credibility requires consistency, not belligerency. The next president could have repaired the damage by demonstrating the integrity of American assurances and threats.

Instead, Trump has complicated the situation by showcasing both toughness, which may have some strategic advantages, and impulsivity, which undermines his credibility. By bombing Syria, reengaging in Afghanistan, and applying more pressure on North Korea, Trump may have gained a general reputation for resolve and conveyed that he is more comfortable using military force than his predecessor. Yet the president's track record of flip-flopping on key campaign pledges, his bizarre and inaccurate outbursts on Twitter, his exaggerated threats, and his off-the-cuff assurances have all led observers to seriously doubt his words.

The list of Trump's inconsistencies is long. After winning the 2016 race but before taking office, Trump spoke by phone with Tsai Ing-wen, the president of Taiwan. This represented a major breach of protocol; in order to avoid angering China, no U.S. president or president-elect had spoken to the leader of Taiwan since 1979, when the United States broke off diplomatic relations with the island. After the call, Trump declared that he was considering abandoning the "one China" policy, the foundation of the U.S.-Chinese relationship for the past four decades. But in February 2017, he reconsidered and decided to uphold the policy after all. During the campaign, Trump threatened to launch a trade war with China and pledged to label Beijing a currency manipulator. He also implied that the United States should abandon

# UNFAZED BY CRISIS

**Nearly half a year since Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt severed diplomatic ties with and imposed trade and travel bans on Qatar, the oil-rich emirate has displayed extraordinary resilience and agility in adjusting its economic growth plans.**

"During the first couple of weeks of the crisis, the country was in shock. However, we recovered very quickly. According to economic and development indicators, we are now getting back to normal," said Minister of Development Planning and Statistics Dr. Saleh bin Mohammed Al Nabit, who oversees Qatar National Vision 2030.

QNV 2030 is a long-term plan focused on economic, social, human and environmental development that aims to transform Qatar into a balanced and sustainable society by 2030.

"In terms of macroeconomic indicators, it is business as usual. The country is even stronger. We are focused on creating new trade routes, and international partners, as well as developing local businesses and manufacturing," Al Nabit stressed.

As the crisis carries on, Qatar is compelled to become less dependent on foreign partners. Thus, educational institutes assume a larger role in equipping Qataris with valuable knowledge and skills to forge a self-reliant future.

Formed in 2010, the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (DI) offers programs and research in the humanities, social sciences, public administration and development economics, and most recently, psychology and social work.

"DI is representative of Qatar. We are a small country, but we think big. In the same way, we are a small institute, but we have a large influence. We are an exclusively graduate institute with research right at the heart of what we do," DI President Yasir Suleiman Malley said.

Accepting around 150 students annually, DI has adopted Arabic as its medium of instruction and has already gained an international reputation for its 15 master's programs.

"While we understand the significance of using other languages, the Arabic language has been academically and professionally neglected. We chose the language not as a result of being here, but as a product of our mission," DI Vice President for Administration and Finance Hend Al Muftah explained.

DI is the region's first graduate institute that advocates an interdisciplinary approach and offers unique master's degrees such as Media and Cultural Studies, as well as Conflict Management and Humanitarian Action.

"What distinguishes DI from other academic institutions in the region is that it is not a replica of any other institution, rather it is built by Arab and international scholars in Qatar, for Qatar and the world," Al Muftah said.

"The Qatari vision is to become a society rooted in its own culture but at the same time, open to the world. We at DI reflect this vision through our student body," Malley said.

But while Qatar strengthens its focus on local development, it also has not reduced efforts to attract more foreign direct investment.

Robert Hager, Chairman of the American Chamber of Commerce agrees: "Qatar is about long-term commitment. Currently, we see opportunities in food security and renewable energy. While there may be some hesitations due to the blockade, it is the best time to invest because the country continues to grow."

The past months have clearly shown that Qatar can surmount any difficulty by seeking innovative ways to spur growth.

"Our partners have been part of our development. We appreciate that, and we look forward to a bright future," Al Nabit said. ■

its commitment to nuclear nonproliferation, suggesting that Japan and South Korea should develop their own nuclear weapons. He has subsequently backtracked on all these positions.

The ongoing crisis with North Korea is the latest manifestation of the same pattern. At the beginning of his presidency, Trump described the North Korean leader Kim Jong Un as a "smart cookie" and said that he would be "honored to meet him." He has subsequently taken to referring to Kim as "Little Rocket Man," and in September, he threatened to "totally destroy" North Korea.

In other instances, Trump may have upheld his own signaling reputation at the country's expense. For example, Trump followed through on a campaign promise when he decided not to certify the Iran nuclear deal in October. Because he demonstrated consistency, this decision may have bolstered his personal signaling reputation. But by reneging on a formal U.S. commitment without presenting evidence that Iran was not abiding by the treaty, Trump also imperiled the general reputation of the United States. Such a move could undermine Washington's diplomatic clout in future negotiations. If other countries believe that American political commitments cannot survive a transition of power, they will be less likely to make significant or painful concessions. Trump's earlier decision to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement presented a similar problem. Of course, any American president who wishes to change the status quo must wrestle with the dilemma of how to keep his own promises without jeopardizing the credibility of his country. But it is unclear that Trump has any concern for the larger reputational consequences of his decisions.

## RATIONAL IRRATIONALITY?

Some in Trump's circle claim that there is a brilliant strategy underpinning his erratic behavior and that the president understands the ramifications of his unsteady public posture. According to this view, Trump's seemingly irrational statements are part of a calculated strategy to make adversaries think that he is crazy. In September, for example, Trump told his trade representative to intimidate South Korean negotiators. "You tell them if they don't give the concessions now, this crazy guy will pull out of the deal," Trump said, according to Axios, referring to the U.S.–South Korean free-trade agreement. When it comes to North Korea, the logic is simple: if Trump can convince Kim that he is irrational, and therefore willing to accept the steep costs of a mil-

itary confrontation, then he might scare the North Korean leader into capitulation.

Trump would not be the first U.S. president to attempt this strategy, which scholars call "the madman theory," or "the rationality of irrationality." During the Vietnam War, President Richard Nixon reportedly asked his national security adviser, Henry Kissinger, to tell the Russians and the North Vietnamese that he was unpredictable and might even use nuclear weapons in Vietnam. But they saw through Nixon's bluff, and the gambit failed. The first rule of playing the madman game is to never publicly state that you are playing the madman game. Trump has done just that. Pursuing this approach will only make him appear unsophisticated and immature.

Another explanation that Trump's defenders have offered is that the president purposefully creates ambiguity in order to keep adversaries off balance. During the campaign, Trump said that he would not "broadcast to the enemy exactly what my plan is." It's certainly true that when carefully crafted and consistently implemented, ambiguous statements can offer strategic benefits, such as allowing leaders to speak to multiple audiences, who may have opposing interests, without alienating any of them. But Trump's statements are not strategically ambiguous; in fact, they are generally quite clear. The problem is that they are inconsistent. The impulsive tone and the fact that some of his statements are communicated via Twitter in the middle of the night further reduce their credibility.

When asked to account for Trump's behavior, some of his supporters have even suggested that the president's words should not be taken literally. The Trump adviser Kellyanne Conway told CNN's Chris Cuomo that the president should be judged based on "what's in his heart" rather than "what's come out of his mouth." U.S. allies, faced with the daunting task of discerning what lies in Trump's heart, are unlikely to find this advice reassuring.

## CREDIBILITY COUNTS

It is possible that the American public and the rest of the world have already gotten used to Trump's unpredictable statements and contradictory tweets. In some cases, his reputation for not living up to his word may even be reassuring: the world knows that he is unlikely to follow through on some of his more disturbing pronouncements, such as his threat to "totally destroy" North Korea.

But this is small comfort. What happens when his word really needs to count? How can the United States deter adversaries and reassure allies in the next crisis when the president cannot be trusted to credibly communicate U.S. intentions?

Optimists argue that Trump will eventually learn the importance of keeping his word. In this view, Trump's inconsistency results from his lack of experience, especially when it comes to foreign policy. On occasion, Trump himself has admitted this. Trump criticized China for failing to restrain North Korea but then reversed himself after speaking about it with Chinese President Xi Jinping. "After listening for 10 minutes, I realized it's not so easy," Trump told *The Wall Street Journal*. Similarly, the president changed his stated positions on the U.S. war in Afghanistan, Russia's meddling in the 2016 election, and U.S. policy in Syria after he was elected, presumably because he had learned more about those issues.

*Trump has undermined his advisers' efforts to salvage Washington's reputation by publicly undercutting them.*

It is not unusual for a president's views on foreign policy to evolve in office. But what is disturbing about Trump's process of learning is that his new views remain as fluid as his old ones, and they do not appear to emerge from thoughtful reevaluation and reflection. Instead, they appear to be determined by his mood, or by the views of the last person he has spoken to or watched on cable news networks.

Other possible sources of comfort are Trump's advisers, whom many observers have taken to referring to as "the grownups" in the administration. White House Chief of Staff John Kelly, Secretary of Defense James Mattis, National Security Adviser H. R. McMaster, Vice President Mike Pence, and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson have all sought to add coherence and stability to U.S. policy by clarifying the president's statements—or by seeming to ignore them altogether. These people are now the face of American public diplomacy: observers turn to them to understand U.S. policy. This would be reassuring if the president were playing along. But Trump has undermined his advisers' efforts to salvage Washington's reputation by publicly undercutting them. Just one day after Tillerson confirmed that the United States was speaking directly with the North Koreans, Trump tweeted that his secretary of state was "wasting his time." "Save your energy Rex," he wrote. Such statements—even if they are intended to push

Kim to make concessions—are likely to sow confusion in Pyongyang. Trump's rhetoric on North Korea has undermined the United States' signaling reputation and could potentially lead to a disastrous and avoidable war.

If there is any ground for cautious optimism, it is that the president's reputation is not the only factor adversaries and allies consider in order to discern U.S. intent. As skeptics of the importance of reputation might point out, U.S. military power, widespread knowledge of the United States' vital interests, and a long record of taking military action to defend the status quo in various parts of the world continue to allow the United States to dissuade adversaries from crossing well-established redlines. The credibility of a country does not depend solely on the credibility of its president. Foreign observers may not trust Trump, but they may still retain some degree of confidence in American political institutions and public opinion as constraints on the president's actions.

At the same time, however, the president's compromised signaling reputation increases the likelihood that adversaries will misperceive American redlines and misjudge U.S. reactions, especially in contentious regions such as eastern Europe and the Middle East. World leaders may also feel that it is now acceptable to dismiss or ignore the president of the United States when it is convenient for them to do so; they could be forgiven for coming to this conclusion when they read that Tillerson referred to Trump as a "moron." (Tillerson's spokesperson has denied this—but Tillerson himself has not.)

A damaged reputation may also make it harder for the United States to achieve its objectives through coercive diplomacy—the threats and promises that have traditionally worked because they were understood to put U.S. credibility at stake. Under Trump, the United States may have to resort to more risky tactics to demonstrate resolve, such as military brinkmanship or even military force. Such tactics carry serious risks of unnecessary escalation.

With the president's signaling reputation diminished, the United States will also have to work harder to convince its allies that it will stand by its commitments. Washington's partners are likely to demand more concrete demonstrations that U.S. security guarantees remain intact. Reduced trust in American protection may lead U.S. allies to become more self-reliant (as Trump wants them to be), but it could also embolden U.S. adversaries to more aggressively test boundaries.

It would not be surprising, for example, if Russian President Vladimir Putin decided to probe the extent of U.S. support for Ukraine.

## MAKING WORDS MATTER AGAIN

The long-term ramifications of Trump's credibility crisis remain unclear. The United States cannot control the conclusions that others draw from the president's behavior. But international observers will look at how the U.S. political system responds to Trump's statements, and when and how it counteracts them. Even if American foreign policy during the Trump administration remains consistent and coherent in action, if not in rhetoric, the United States has already paid a significant price for Trump's behavior: the president is no longer considered the ultimate voice on foreign policy. Foreign leaders are turning elsewhere to gauge American intentions. With the U.S. domestic system so polarized and its governing party so fragmented, communicating intent has become more difficult than ever. The more bipartisan and univocal U.S. signaling is, the less likely it is that Trump's damage to American credibility will outlast his tenure.

For now, however, with Trump's reputation compromised, the price tag on U.S. deterrence, coercion, and reassurance has risen, along with the probability of miscalculation and inadvertent escalation. Trump may think that a predictable and credible foreign policy is a sign of weakness. He is wrong. For a small revisionist power such as North Korea, appearing unpredictable may allow a leader to temporarily punch above his weight. But whether Trump likes it or not, the United States is a global superpower for whom predictability and credibility are assets, not liabilities.

# How to Waste a Congressional Majority

## Trump and the Republican Congress

*Sarah Binder*

Governing is always hard in polarized times, but it has been especially hard during U.S. President Donald Trump's first year in office. Undisciplined and unpopular, Trump has been largely unable to advance his agenda on Capitol Hill despite Republican control of both houses of Congress. With his political capital shrinking as his public approval falls, Trump will no doubt struggle to deliver on his campaign promises to repeal the Affordable Care Act, reform the tax code, build a wall along the southern border, and repair the nation's crumbling infrastructure.

It is tempting to blame Trump's legislative failures on his lack of government experience, his indifference to the details of policy, and his tempestuous personality. But focusing only on personal characteristics misses the political and institutional dynamics at play. The two parties are deeply polarized, Republicans hold only a slim Senate majority, and Republican conferences in both chambers cannot agree on key issues. A more disciplined and popular president might have managed to bring Republicans together. But huge obstacles would still have remained. As it stands, Trump is heading into his second year in office with little to show in terms of legislative victories—and few reasons to believe his agenda will fare any better in the future.

### STUCK IN NEUTRAL

Judging legislative accomplishments so early in a president's term is risky. Congressional Republicans won't face voters until November

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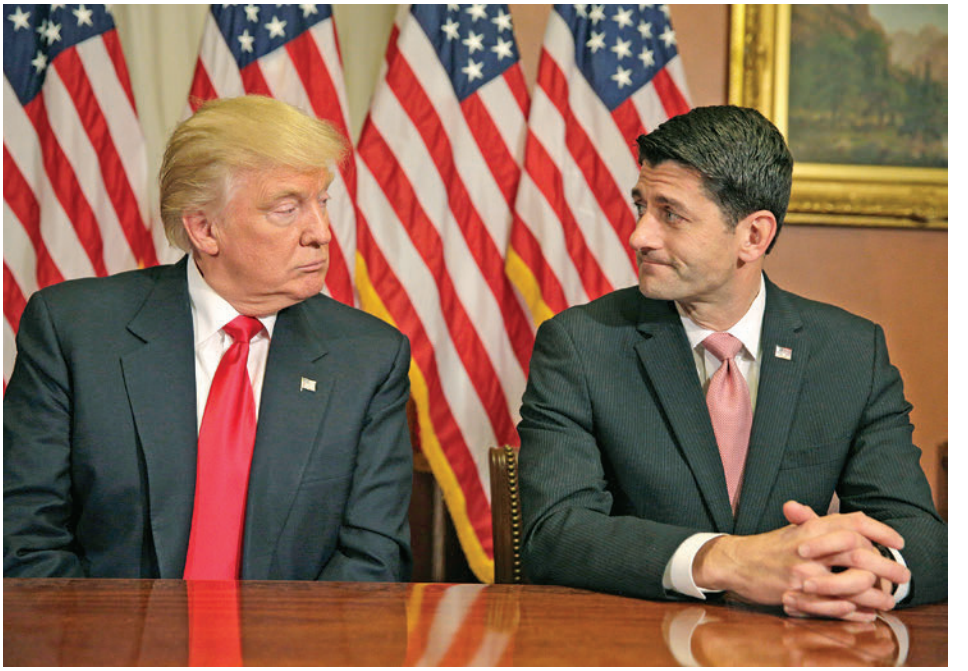

*We need to talk: Trump and House Speaker Paul Ryan, November 2016*

JOSHUA ROBERTS / REUTERS

2018, and Trump won't for two more years after that. But so far, Trump's record pales beside those of other modern presidents. Ever since Franklin Roosevelt's extraordinary first 100 days, during which he persuaded Congress to pass a raft of major laws to combat the Great Depression, that mark has become a checkpoint in assessing presidential performance. In their first 100 days, most presidents exploit their electoral victory to push through major proposals. Even with Bill Clinton's rocky start in 1993, Democrats swiftly enacted the nation's first family-leave law, which had been vetoed by George H. W. Bush. In 2001, George W. Bush made quick progress on a multitrillion-dollar tax cut, as well as on landmark education reform. Within a month of taking office in 2009, Barack Obama and a Democratic Congress had delivered the largest fiscal stimulus since World War II, along with pay-equity and children's health-care reforms that Bush had vetoed.

Trump came into office with a litany of promises: he vowed to reform immigration and the tax code, fix the nation's infrastructure, renegotiate trade deals, build a southern border wall, overhaul health care, deregulate Wall Street, and revive the coal industry. So far, Congress has delivered little from that wish list. Trump's first 100 days were, in the words of the Republican operative Karl Rove, a "honeymoon from hell."

Republicans' failure to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare, has defined Trump's early legislative record. In May, after the House barely passed a widely unpopular repeal-and-replace bill, Trump bused GOP lawmakers to the White House to celebrate their achievement in the Rose Garden (a venue typically reserved for signing bills into law). But subsequent efforts by Senate Republicans to pass their own version of the bill failed, despite their use of a legislative process that eliminated the need to secure the votes of any Democratic senators. In October, facing a deadlocked Congress, Trump moved to destabilize Obamacare's health-care markets on his own, ending subsidies to insurers that were designed to reduce costs for low-income Americans. Coupled with drastic cuts in Obamacare advertising and personnel, the president's moves increased confusion over the availability and cost of health insurance and threatened to reverse the recent rise in the number of insured Americans.

*Trump's first 100 days were, in the words of the GOP operative Karl Rove, a "honeymoon from hell."*

Republicans have achieved some victories. They have turned to the Congressional Review Act, a rarely used 1996 law that allows Congress to overturn recently written federal regulations without having to worry about a filibuster, in order to loosen restrictions on the oil, gas, coal, and telecommunications industries implemented at the end of the Obama administration. In April, the Senate confirmed Trump's nominee to the Supreme Court, Neil Gorsuch. As of this writing, however, the Senate has confirmed only 12 lifetime judges to the federal bench since then, leaving nearly 150 judgeships vacant, even though Democratic votes are not required to fill them. That said, Trump's pace is roughly on par with George W. Bush's and Obama's during each of their first years in office. This year, a slow-moving White House, a distracted Senate GOP majority, and Democratic foot-dragging have hindered what could have been quick progress on filling the bench.

Republicans have managed to score some bipartisan wins. In June, with broad support from both parties, Congress passed legislation making it easier to fire employees at the Department of Veterans Affairs, a reaction to revelations in 2014 that VA hospitals had missed targets for waiting times and falsified records. Congress' other major

bipartisan legislative accomplishment, a measure that forced the president to impose new sanctions on Russia and limited his ability to lift existing ones, met fierce opposition from Trump. But with a special counsel investigating possible collusion between the Trump campaign and the Russian government in the 2016 election and Trump facing near-unanimous, veto-proof majorities on the Hill, the president had little choice but to acquiesce to legislators' demands.

Away from Congress, Trump has had mixed success when he has tried to pursue his agenda through the executive branch. He has fulfilled some major promises. He abandoned the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal, announced his intention to withdraw the United States from the Paris climate accord, and reopened talks on the North American Free Trade Agreement. And Scott Pruitt, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, has pushed hard to unravel many Obama-era environmental protections.

But much remains undone. Most significant, several of Trump's major executive orders, including the travel ban on visitors from several countries, restrictions on federal funding for so-called sanctuary cities, and an order preventing transgender people from serving in the military, have been blocked in whole or in part by the courts. Some of Trump's difficulties in advancing his agenda through executive action have been self-inflicted. Two cabinet seats—secretary of health and human services and secretary of homeland security—are vacant. Roughly two-thirds of the most important government posts still lack a nominee, reflecting a pace of hiring that lags far behind those of past administrations. Trump has stated that he does not even intend to fill all the vacancies. Without important personnel in the State Department and other agencies, Trump's agenda lacks people to implement it.

## WHO'S TO BLAME?

At first glance, conditions in 2017 appeared ripe for major legislative change. The 2016 election turned on the need for change and produced the first unified GOP government in a decade. Granted, Trump could hardly claim a mandate for his agenda, given that Hillary Clinton had won the popular vote. But presidents rarely come in with an overwhelming mandate. As the political scientist Andrew Rudalevige has put it, "Presidents claim to speak for the nation. But in practice they are more often minority leaders." Even presidents who win both

the popular and the Electoral College votes tend to enter office with small majorities. When Ronald Reagan defeated Jimmy Carter in the 1980 presidential election—often recalled as a landslide because Reagan won 489 Electoral College votes—he won just 50.7 percent of the national popular vote. As the parties are roughly evenly matched in popular support, close national elections have become the norm.

In the past, successful presidents have reached beyond their narrow bases to build broader legislative coalitions. But structural factors often limit the parties' appetite for compromise. Continuing a decades-long trend, Democrats and Republicans are deeply polarized along party lines. This reflects both deep ideological differences between the parties over the role of government and intensely partisan team play. If one party is for something, the other must be against it. Partisan and ideological disagreements emerge on nearly every major issue of the day: whether to retain or repeal Obamacare, whether to cut taxes for the wealthy or only for the middle class, whether to keep financial regulation tight or free the industry from Obama-era restrictions, whether to grant citizenship to those protected by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (an Obama-era policy, known as DACA, that allowed some undocumented immigrants who entered the country as minors to avoid deportation) or end the program altogether. By one common metric, centrists made up about a third of each party in the 1960s; today, less than a fifth of lawmakers vote like moderates.

*Republican lawmakers cannot trust the president to stick to his policy pronouncements.*

As the parties have polarized, the incentives for presidents to make overtures to the other side and to build broad coalitions of the sort normally needed to pass major legislation have waned. Moves to the center put the support of one's own party at risk to a much greater extent than they did a few decades ago. Indeed, Trump has been far more likely to follow through on pledges he has made that are close to the views of his far-right base than he has on some of his more moderate promises. He has, for example, decertified the Iran nuclear deal and halted DACA, whereas he has failed to push Congress to follow through on his promise to boost infrastructure spending.

Polarization matters because for almost every legislative motion, Senate rules require a supermajority of 60 out of 100 votes to block a

filibuster. Since they have just 52 seats, Republicans must convince eight Democrats to vote with them each time. If the parties were more ideologically diverse, that might be possible. But senators from competitive, polarized parties find little to agree on—and no political advantage in crossing the aisle.

Recognizing their inability to attract Democratic votes, Republicans abandoned bipartisanship in both chambers from the get-go. Not only did they employ the filibuster-proof Congressional Review Act to reverse Obama-era regulations; they also ignored Senate precedent and went ahead and banned filibusters of Supreme Court nominees, allowing them to confirm Gorsuch to the bench, and sought to repeal and replace Obamacare through "reconciliation," a budgetary process that can't be filibustered. In October, they began the process to use this same method to pass a tax plan.

Yet even when Republicans have avoided Democratic filibusters, they have struggled to pass major legislation—because in addition to the polarization of the two parties, congressional Republicans have themselves splintered into factions. The current Republican conferences in Congress are more divided than both their Democratic counterparts and their Republican predecessors. A key split is ideological: hard-core conservatives, often representing southern states, hold decidedly more far-right views and are less willing to compromise than their more centrist, pragmatic colleagues. By trying to legislate without Democratic votes, Republicans have highlighted divisions in their own ranks: they can no longer blame the minority for the legislative gridlock.

Consider the fiasco over Obamacare this past spring and summer. In the House, the far-right Freedom Caucus would vote only for an Obamacare repeal bill that their moderate colleagues refused to support. (After several failures, the moderates ended up caving, and the House eventually passed a bill.) And in the Senate, where only 50 votes were required to repeal Obamacare (counting on the vice president to break a 50–50 tie), Republicans repeatedly came up short. Senators disagreed over how much of Obamacare to repeal and how it might be replaced—decisions made more difficult by cumbersome legislative rules.

## TWEETER IN CHIEF

In theory, Trump could help his party bridge these divides. As the political scientist Richard Neustadt famously argued, a president's power stems from his ability to persuade. That, in turn, depends on

his professional reputation in Washington and his public prestige more broadly. Early wins bolster his reputation with others at the bargaining table and thus beget future success. Early losses, in contrast, communicate weakness. A president's standing among voters also affects his ability to bend others to his will: the higher the public's regard for a president, the riskier it becomes for lawmakers and bureaucrats to cross him.

Viewed from this perspective, it is small wonder that Trump has struggled to advance his agenda in Congress. Republican lawmakers have come to realize that they cannot trust the president to stick to his policy pronouncements. Trump's declaration in June that the House's Obamacare repeal bill was "mean"—after celebrating its passage at the White House—illustrates the GOP's dilemma. The president's comment further exposed both centrists who voted for the bill reluctantly and conservatives who backed it enthusiastically to the threat of possible future campaign ads that attack them for supporting such an unpopular law. As lawmakers have gradually learned, the president has few, if any, consistent beliefs about policy; he seems only to want to score a deal. Despite Trump's claims on the campaign trail to be a superior dealmaker, any talent he may have had in the business world has not translated into legislative success.

Trump's standing with the general public is little better than his reputation in Washington. He is the least popular president at this stage in a presidential term since World War II, and his approval rating—around 38 percent, as of November—has dropped in every single state since he took office. This weakness creates leeway for both Democratic and Republican lawmakers to resist his policies. Red-state Democrats felt little pressure to cross the aisle to vote to repeal Obamacare. And the three GOP senators who voted against the bill to repeal Obamacare withstood considerable pressure from Trump to fold.

Beyond his weak personal standing, Trump's lack of discipline is perhaps his greatest liability. Members of Congress cannot set a national agenda and can only rarely command national press attention. They rely on the president to use his bully pulpit—or Twitter account—to craft and stick to a message, pave the way forward on contested policy, and thereby give rank-and-file members political cover for any tough votes or policy outcomes. But Trump seems singularly incapable of focusing. Instead of pressing relentlessly for tax reform, he engages

in Twitter fights with Republican senators, undercuts his cabinet secretaries, and goes to battle against NFL players. The president doesn't need to be a policy expert. But he does need to adopt a consistent message if he expects to unite a divided party and advance an agenda in Congress.

Faced with a party that struggles to legislate and his own inability to mold consensus among his fellow Republicans, Trump has compounded his party's problems. He has repeatedly created additional crises for Congress to deal with, perhaps with the intention of blaming congressional leaders if they fail to resolve each issue. In September, he began a six-month countdown clock to end DACA and threw the task to Capitol Hill, highlighting divisions among Republicans over immigration. In October, he refused to recertify the Iran nuclear deal, tossing the problem to Congress to resolve. His move later that month to cancel Obamacare subsidies intended to help low-income Americans added another contentious item to Congress' already busy calendar.

To be sure, congressional dysfunction is nothing new. In recent years, Congress has tended to delegate power to the executive—sometimes on purpose, other times as a consequence of deadlock. But now the buck no longer seems to stop with the president. Returning responsibility to Capitol Hill will not make finding solutions any easier if Republicans in Congress are unable to resolve policy impasses on their own.

## TURBULENCE AHEAD

Trump's prospects for legislative success in his second year look equally dim as those in his first. Throughout the fall, Republicans worried that Trump's promise to deliver huge corporate and individual tax cuts would meet the same fate as the effort to repeal Obamacare, even though they again planned to use budget rules that would foreclose a Democratic filibuster. Periodic spending bills to keep the government open require 60 votes, handing leverage to Senate Democrats, who could insist that Congress fund the health insurance subsidies Trump abandoned, block spending on a border wall, move to permanently protect DACA recipients from deportation, or demand more funding for their other domestic priorities. Whatever price they extract, it will involve advancing their own agenda, not Trump's.

Big deals are possible in polarized times if the costs of refusing to negotiate climb too high for both parties to bear. Whether the president will play any part in such negotiations remains to be seen. In theory, Republicans on Capitol Hill, sensing a weakened president, could cut deals with the Democrats as both parties look ahead to the midterm elections in 2018. But so long as Trump remains popular with the GOP's base, Republicans' appetite for joining Democrats at the bargaining table will be limited. And time is running short: GOP incumbents could face primary threats with Trump supporters angry at their inability to deliver on Trump's promises.

Unified party control rarely lasts long in American politics. Republicans have a narrow window to deliver on the promises they made to both traditional GOP voters and die-hard Trump supporters. But to keep hold of Congress, they must also show a broader electorate that they can be trusted to govern. Slim, divided majorities notwithstanding, Republicans control all of government. If things go wrong, voters will know who to blame.

Kaieteur Falls - FotoNatura Image

# GUYANA
## THE START OF A NEW ERA

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**THE COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA, ONE OF SOUTH AMERICA'S SMALLEST AND WIDELY UNKNOWN NATIONS, IS ON THE VERGE OF DRAMATIC ECONOMIC CHANGE. The discovery of large offshore oil and gas reserves opens new opportunities for a country rich in natural resources and with strategic access to the markets of North and South America. A new government of national unity, elected in 2015, is committed to turning Guyana into a more competitive economy and to creating a "Green State".**

Guyana is one of the world's true green gems. It has preserved much of its original environment and a unique level of biodiversity. 75% of its land area is covered in virgin rain forest. With a population of less than 800,000 and a land area larger than England and Scotland combined, Guyana is one of the least populated countries on earth.

Agriculture and the mining of minerals, such as gold, bauxite, and diamonds, have long dominated the economy. But Guyana's new government, under President David Granger, is now working on the country's economic transformation. The government places great emphasis on education, infrastructure development, and job creation as factors for more inclusive growth. "Our top priority is human development," says President Granger. "We want an educated population that can make use of our abundant resources."

With support from the United Nations Environment Programme, the government has set out a development strategy, known as the Green State Development Strategy (GSDS), that promotes a fundamental reorientation and diversification of Guyana's economy as part of a green economy. "We are looking at green energy, protected areas, biodiversity, preservation of our rain forests, ecotourism, and eco-education services," says President Granger.

The GSDS aims to make Guyana a "green state" success story that might inspire others to follow its example. As Prime Minister Moses Nagamootoo explains, "We orientate our national policy towards a green economy because we have the potential for renewable energy to drive the local economy.

**David Granger**
**President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana**

While remaining the world's green lungs, we will have cheap energy to drive agro-processing and industrial development and, in the process, create value and jobs for our people."

The government plans to turn Guyana into a more diversified and more resilient economy. Revenue from the exploitation of oil and gas reserves that were discovered off Guyana's coast will help bankroll this process. When oil production starts in 2020, Guyana will be able to export nearly all of it. "Guyana's development will not depend on oil and gas production, but will accelerate owing to the exploitation of hydrocarbons," explains Joseph Harmon, Minister of State at the Ministry of the Presidency. As President Granger puts it, "We will be walking on two legs. We will have a petroleum economy and a green economy, walking side by side, neither contradicting nor dominating one another."

# Guyana Invites Investment

Guyana's strategic location and English-speaking workforce are major assets to the country's growth objectives. Situated in South America's North-East, Guyana offers natural access to the markets of North America, the Caribbean, and South America. And for Brazil, the continent's major trading power, Guyana represents the most direct connection to the Caribbean. Being the only English-speaking country in South America also counts as an advantage for international companies seeking access to the continent.

"European and American companies actually see Guyana as a hub, as a gateway to South America," says Joseph Harmon, Minister of State at the Ministry of the Presidency. "Amazon.com, for example, makes its shipments first to Guyana, using it as a hub for various destinations in South America."

Despite these assets, Guyana has had difficulties attracting private-sector investment. The inflow of FDI has declined sharply in recent years. In 2016, FDI fell to a low of $58 million, compared to $121 million in 2015 and $255 million in 2014.

In 2015, the Ministry of Business launched a five-year Strategic Action Plan to reverse this trend. "Our strategic plan is to increase investments, improve the business environment, increase the exports of value-added products, and create better opportunities for small businesses," says Dominic Gaskin, Minister of Business. Since then, Guyana has advanced 16 positions on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business ranking.

The discovery of oil resources has significantly raised Guyana's attraction as an investment destination, but other sectors also offer abundant opportunities. "We have identified tourism, forestry products, and agro-processing as priority sectors that we want to promote and tie to our investment strategy," says Gaskin. "It is imperative that we diversify our range of exports. We need to ensure that sectors with a potential for value-added goods are given the best possible opportunities to develop."

In agriculture, Guyana has tremendous potential and could turn into the bread basket of the Caribbean. "We have huge areas of land for agricultural production. With the food that we produce here in Guyana we can feed the entire region," says Harmon.

# Economic Integration is the Way Forward

Guyana is decidedly outward-looking and enjoys friendly relations with all global and regional powers, including the United States, China, Russia, and Brazil. The country maintains close links with several international bodies. It is a member of the Commonwealth and of the World Trade Organization (WTO), as well as a founding member of both the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The very headquarters of CARICOM are based in the country's capital, Georgetown. President Granger says that "Guyana is fully engaged as a partner in regional and international organizations. The future is bright in terms of our international relations."

A protracted border dispute with neighboring Venezuela, which may negatively sway some investors, is likely to be resolved at an international level. Despite several tribunals having settled the argument in Guyana's favor, most notably the 1899 Arbitral Award in Paris, which Guyana stands by and Venezuela has declared null and void, Venezuela has extended its claims to the country's maritime space, following Guyana's oil discoveries. "While this issue remains to be settled, we understand that it may be a consideration for investors," says Granger. "But we believe we have law and justice on our side. We work within the UN process and expect to bring the territorial controversy to a peaceful and successful conclusion."

What concerns Guyana more are evolving trade relations with the European Union (EU), one of the world's largest trading blocs, and the UK's decision to exit the EU. Carl B. Greenidge, Vice-President and Minister of Foreign Affairs, explains, "As members of the ACP Group, we are currently looking at a new agreement with the EU. At the same time, the UK Brexit decision has economic implications for us. The UK is a major market for us in terms of sugar and bauxite and if tariffs change, this will have an impact on the quantities that we can export."

As a result, Guyana will seek to strengthen relations with other EU markets, as Dominic Gaskin, Minister of Business, explains. "The EU market is very attractive. We have an Economic Partnership Agreement that allows a favorable entry of several products from our CARICOM region into the EU and we are not taking full advantage of it. As we are trying to develop our value-added industries, this is the direction that I would like us to take."

# Natural Resources Power the Country

Guyana's rich natural resources have long been the driving force behind the country's development. Mining, agriculture, and forestry have grown into major industries, due to Guyana's large areas of fertile land, rare and valuable timber, and important mineral deposits, including gold, bauxite, and diamonds, among others.

With the discovery of oil and gas, but also with greater government support for renewable energies, more natural resources are now being put into the country's service. The country's rapidly evolving energy sector adds an entirely new dimension to Guyana's economy.

## Oil Becomes a Game Changer

Oil giants such as Shell, Total, and Mobil have been exploring for oil in Guyana since the 1940s. But the 2015 discovery of high-quality, oil-bearing off-shore sandstone reservoirs immediately drew international attention. Exploration company Exxon Mobil announced the find as one of the largest oil discoveries of the past decade. The total recoverable amount of oil could be worth more than $200 billion at today's market prices.

In June 2017, Exxon Mobil took the final investment decision for the first phase of development that will eventually produce approximately 450 million barrels of oil. Production is expected to begin by 2020, just five years after discovery.

For Guyana, oil production is a novelty. The government must quickly get up to speed and put in place the necessary legal and regulatory framework to facilitate the process. "Over the next three years we are working to bring ourselves up to the capacity to ensure that we can participate meaningfully in the production," says Raphael Trotman, Minister of Natural Resources. "We are working very closely with several development partners, including the United Nations Development Programme and the U.S., Mexican, and Canadian governments."

The government has proposed the construction of a $500-million processing facility and oil-services base, as well as a gas power plant and connecting pipelines. "The trajectory is for expanded oil production and that requires significant onshore facilities that have the capacity to provide all the support that an offshore oil and gas industry would need," says Dominic Gaskin, Minister of Business.

Guyana's economy stands to benefit enormously from these developments, in terms of job creation and long-term development. About a hundred local companies already provide a range of services, including in engineering, security, transportation, catering, and administration, and more services will be required in the future. A recently established business development center will assist small- and medium-sized Guyanese businesses in building their capacity and improving their competitiveness in a range of sectors that serve the oil, gas and other industries.

Most of the produced oil will be destined for export, providing Guyana, still one of the poorest countries in South America, with a significant new source of income. The government intends to maximize the value of future revenues for society by introducing careful controls on the use of these resources. "We recognize there is a tremendous potential for damage, as we have seen in other countries. A sovereign wealth fund will be the main means by which we ensure that we do not squander what we have, and that other important aspects or pillars of our economy do not suffer," explains Trotman.

> "It is important that savings from the sovereign wealth fund will ensure protection of the environment and biodiversity, and provide benefits for citizens."
>
> **Raphael Trotman, Minister of Natural Resources**

## Renewable Energy in Full Stream by 2025

Parallel to the exploitation of hydrocarbon reserves, the government is planning a radical change in the choice of sources of energy. Under the Green State Development Strategy, the government foresees replacing all other sources of energy with renewables by 2025, with hydrocarbons playing only a transitional role. "We have been advised that there is a substantial amount of natural gas available to us and we are discussing how that gas can be used as an interim measure to transition us into 100% renewable energy," explains Trotman.

As the 'land of many rivers', Guyana has an enormous potential for hydro power. "We have 72 potential sites for hydro power that could cover more than our present and future needs and we are currently exploring our options," says Trotman. "We are also working with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) on the Arco Norte project to provide power to an entire region. The idea is to build a 4,000-megawatt dam in Guyana and then export this power."

Opportunities also exist for solar and wind power and the government has begun exploring these options in a bid to meet its target for 2025.

# Landmark Projects Revamp Infrastructure

The Essequibo River flows north through Guyana over a length of more than 1,000 kilometers, dividing the country into roughly two halves. Yet, there is not a single bridge crossing the river along its course. This is emblematic of the lack of infrastructure that has slowed the country's economic development.

The government is now investing heavily in the nation's infrastructure, through the construction of bridges, road networks, airport infrastructure, sea defenses and renewable energy sources. "We allocate funds for infrastructure development not only to overcome obstacles in our development but to also act as a catalyst for this very development," says David Patterson, Minister of Public Infrastructure. "We have to increase connectivity between the hinterland and the coastland and to implement projects in key areas that will complement our development goals."

One important investment is the $150 million upgrade and extension of the Cheddi Jagan International Airport, scheduled for completion by April 2018. When completed, its runway will be one of the longest in the Caribbean, able to accommodate large transatlantic aircrafts. "Our objective is to create an air transport hub for passengers and cargo between North and South America," says Patterson. "We have commenced discussions with the biggest airlines in the U.S. for air cargo and passengers."

The government considers building a second international airport on the border with Brazil, anticipating increased trade with its powerful neighbor. For the same reason, the government is investing in another landmark project, the construction of a 455km road corridor linking the northern part of Brazil with Guyana. "This is our silk road," says Patterson. "For northern Brazil, the Linden-Lethem road link will be the most viable route to reaching the Atlantic Ocean. We estimate that between 35,000 and 60,000 containers annually will travel along this road."

The first construction phase, including 122.5km of road and a bridge across the Essequibo River, is funded by the government of the United Kingdom. As Patterson explains, "Physical work is expected to start within 2018 and to be completed by 2020. For the remaining 330km, we are currently reviewing all options, including private partnerships, arrangements for toll roads and concessions, including special economic zones, to name a few." The road will eventually connect with a future deepwater port that will complete the transport link for northern Brazil and promote Guyana's ambitions as a transshipment hub.

In addition to the Linden-Lethem road, the government plans the construction of 600km of new roads by 2025, providing transport connections to villages on the east bank of the Essequibo River. "The project has great economic potential. It will replace river transportation and will give access to two to three million acres of land. All designs are complete and we are seeking interested partners to implement the work," says Patterson.

For the private sector, these developments represent a huge opportunity. As Patterson explains, "The government has neither the capacity nor the technical skills to manage all these projects. We would like the private sector to perform all the implementation work related to new roads, new airports, and the deepwater port."

Patterson concludes that the impact will be significant. "At the end of the process, by 2030, we expect our country to be uniquely positioned, fully powered, fully linked and serving as a hub for our South American partners."

## GPL: Meeting the Demand for Energy

Investments in the energy sector are partly driven by the government's goal to offset all energy needs with renewable sources by 2025. "This year the government spent about $6 million on hydro and solar projects and is expected to continue to do so each year until 2025," says Patterson.

State-owned Guyana Power and Light Inc. (GPL), the main supplier of electricity in Guyana, welcomes the uptake of renewable energy. "We fully support the use of renewable energy," confirms Renford Homer, CEO of GPL. "In addition to obvious environmental benefits, we expect that using a mix of energy sources will reduce our production costs and create financial benefits for GPL and ultimately our customer."

GPL plays a pivotal role in Guyana's economy. Homer explains, "In 2001, we had approximately 120,000 customers. Today we are close to 186,000 customers and expect to see our customer base grow by 3-4% annually. We anticipate accelerated growth after our country realizes commercial production of oil. Our challenge at this point is to maintain adequate, reliable generation capacity to meet current and projected demand while continuing to improve the quality of our supply."

GPL is pushing to install more capacity and to make services more reliable. "Over the years we have significantly reduced outages. But as people become more dependent on electricity, we have to enhance our utility to a level where we can guarantee 100% supply 24/7," says Homer. The company intends to execute the second phase of its Infrastructure Development program that would include construction of an additional four sub-stations. "The expectation is to improve reliability in our service and reduce our technical losses," says Homer.

GPL also intends to continue to extend its network into unserved communities in the counties of Demerara, Berbice, and Essequibo. "Our objective is to extend our network and deliver electricity services, wherever it is economically feasible," says Homer. GPL also anticipates fresh demand from foreign investors. As Homer explains, "We can potentially see the emerging oil and gas sector attracting foreign companies to Guyana. There is a tremendous possibility for GPL to be a major player in the provision of electric services. This underscores our efforts to transition into a utility that can deliver a product and service that meets and exceeds customers' expectations."

## A Boost for the Shipping Industry

Despite Guyana's Atlantic Ocean coast and a network of rivers, the country has not fully exploited its opportunities in shipping. Relatively shallow waters still limit the size of vessels that can use the country's seaports, inland river transport and ferry services.

As Patterson explains, the government is now preparing an upgrade of the country's port facilities. "As part of our mid-term planning we project the establishment of a deepwater port to cater to imports and exports in our growing economy. We will begin the site selection process next year." Improvements have also begun in the country's rivers and Patterson says that the shipping fleet is also now under review. "We have an aging fleet of cargo vessels that are on average 40 years old. We have started a process of renovation, bringing in newer vessels and retiring the aged stock."

## GNIC: A Tradition in Shipping Services

Companies in the sector are prepared to seize the opportunities following such an upgrade as well as from oil and gas production. Clinton Williams, CEO of the Guyana National Industrial Company Inc. (GNIC), a joint venture between Laparkan Holdings Limited and National Engineering Co., confirms this. "We see opportunities coming from four sectors: in agro-processing and more generally agriculture, in the transportation of goods, in mining and quarrying, and of course, in the oil and gas sector," says Williams,

adding, "Our emphasis continues to be on maritime services, transportation and equipment, marine type vessels, and inland transportation."

GNIC currently operates the country's largest wharfing and industrial facilities and is strategically located in Georgetown, Guyana's capital on the Demerara River, approximately 1.2km from the Atlantic Ocean. The company, which has been described as a mini industrial conglomerate, is involved in every type of port operation, ship building and repairs, and equipment rental, as well as engineering design, construction and project management.

"The oil and gas sectors offer tremendous opportunities that will allow us to develop our infrastructure and our capability in shipyard and engineering services," says Williams. "We are already engaging with some of Exxon's subcontractors to land some of the pipes that will be used for the subsea operations, take them to a site for fabrication works, and bring them back here ready for installation. We are now in the process of negotiating how we can best do this. We have to consider road infrastructure, lifting equipment, lifting expertise and construction."

GNIC has begun upgrading its wharf and port facilities by expanding its existing wharf, converting it into a more solid cement structure, and installing new storage facilities. They also foresee a role in development projects that aim at creating better infrastructure for shipping. "Dredging and development of the deep-sea port are naturally high on our agenda. These are opportunities that we need to pursue and that will result in our facilities being able to receive larger vessels," says Williams. "We act as agents for Jan De Nul, a large dredging company operating from Belgium. They will be able to assist us in addressing the challenge of shallow drafts."

"We have also been working as contractors with shipping lines, including Tropical Shipping, Intermarine, and Caribbean Line, to discharge and unload cargo. We want to expand our relationships and invest in our facilities to become more efficient," says Williams.

GNIC is confident about its role in the wider economy. As Williams points out, "The ability to respond to market demand and to move products to market has been our strength for years."

## VIEIRA: Professionalism is the Word

E.C. Vieira Investments Ltd is another local business that stands to benefit from greater demand for shipping. The company started as a shrimp trawling business in 1981, but has since developed into a mature organization offering ship repair services.

As Edmond Vieira, Managing Director of E.C. Vieira Investments, explains, "For the last 25 years we have been in the service and repair business, offering dry docking of vessels and barge building. We perform a large number of repairs in the Caribbean area on vessels weighing up to 2,000 tons light ship displacement. For the past 10 years we have remained about the same size, yet we have increased efficiency. Now with the government's potentially greater financial capability due to oil on stream, we expect they will upgrade their fleet and carry larger budgets for the maintenance of the marine sector."

E.C. Vieira Investments is a natural partner for the growing number of international companies operating in Guyana and the region. "We employ the largest number of steel workers in Guyana. We have over 100 skilled welders, burners and fabricators and can deploy over 50 welders under production at any time," says Vieira. "We also have the capability to lift the largest vessels in Guyana."

"We have done a lot of jobs for international customers and for us this has raised the bar a little higher than if we just worked for local businesses. We have worked with the Dutch company Boskalis, one of the world's larger dredging companies, for now more than 25 years. We also work with Danish dredging company Rohde Nielsen and we have completed several projects for British tug and barge company JP Knight."

Apart from providing ship repairs, Vieira is keen to explore other opportunities. "We also want to diversify and maybe expand into land preparation for storage, rentals, warehousing, providing office space and the introduction of heavy lift capabilities."

# Construction on the Rise

The construction and housing sectors have consistently out-performed other sections of the economy. Both are essential for Guyana's social and economic development. Courtney Benn, CEO of Courtney Benn Contracting Services Ltd. (CBCSL), one of the country's most renowned civil works construction companies, explains, "The construction sector in Guyana is limited but competitive and its development leads to the expansion of the country. The creation of road networks, for example, enables development and expansion to far-off communities resulting in population shifts away from the coastal regions. Once you have an expanded development base, it presents the opportunity for business and residential housing."

The government's ambitious development plan and the impending onset of oil production come as a boost to the industry. "With the emergence of the oil and gas sector, Guyana is set to experience an oil revenue boom in 2020 and beyond," says Benn. CBCSL is responsible for several flagship developments, including Guyana's first 8-door sluice, the Doppler Radar Tower, the University of Guyana Berbice Campus in Tain, Guyana's first forensic laboratory, the reconstruction of Broad Street, and the construction of floating stations for the Guyana Defense Force and the Guyana Police Force.

"For us, the oil and gas sectors represent a rather exciting opportunity, where we hope to showcase our leadership qualities in the construction industry," explains Benn. "There will be opportunities for the fabrication of tanks, the installation of pipelines and a range of civil and mechanical works that we are capable of delivering."

A range of new technical and mechanical jobs will be required relating to oil and gas production, pushing companies to prepare in time. For Benn, "Our growth strategy over the next 5-6 years involves increased staff training and improvements in equipment capacity. Some of our strongest segments of operations are in shipbuilding, ship repairs, and steel fabrication. But in some areas of general construction we certainly aim to strengthen our capacities."

Like other companies in the country's construction sector, CBCSL must deal with fluctuating costs and the occasional materials shortage in Guyana, as well as a lack of skilled and trained personnel. But Benn says, "CBCSL has been able to distinguish itself by employing the best workers ranging from engineers to skilled tradesman. We strive to uphold our own standards to strengthen our reputation as a trusted household name."

# Opportunities Abound

As part of its Green State Development Strategy, the government is making an aggressive push for the development of high value-added industries.

The focus is placed on higher value in agriculture, forestry, mineral processing, eco-tourism, and the fish industry. Agriculture and agricultural processing represent some of most promising sectors in Guyana's diversification strategy.

"Guyana is endowed with an abundance of agricultural sources." says Noel Holder, Minister of Agriculture, emphasizing that Guyana has "highly fertile soil in the coastal areas, currently used for rice and sugar cane production, while Guyana's extensive savannahs translate to untapped opportunities for dairy, beef, mutton, cashews, legumes, soybeans and numerous other products. Moreover, Guyana is also open to foreign investors interested in developing niche markets, such as aromatic rice and medicinal crops which can lead to high-value commodities."

## Nand Persaud: At the Forefront of Development

Nand Persaud & Company Ltd. is a perfect example of a company seizing its opportunities in Guyana. What started as a small rice milling company has developed into a company with diversified interests and control over 60% of the rice market in Guyana.


Early in the process, Nand Persaud recognized the need for higher value-added goods. As Ragindra Persaud, CEO of Nand Persaud & Company Ltd., explains, "We started selling bulk rice, but this did not make us competitive. So, in 2000 we launched the Karibee rice brand, which is now sold in most CARICOM countries, the U.S., Europe, and we are just getting started in Cuba."

"We are pushing the potential for value-added products, more than anyone else," says Persaud. "For example, we feel that we can sell a lot of aromatic rice. There is demand. It is not a big market, but it is a niche market with very high margins. We are also looking at organic rice and at the same time trying to make it profitable for farmers."

Rice is not the only commodity that Nand Persaud is working on. "We are also looking to invest in the sugar sector," explains Persaud. "The government wants to privatize part of a sector that so far has been 100% state owned. We think this offers great opportunities. Demerara sugar is known world-wide and if we can brand it properly, then we can change the dynamics of the entire sugar sector in Guyana. "

Nand Persaud has also developed opportunities beyond the food sector. "One of the areas into which we diversified is business process outsourcing (BPO); we operate call centers. We are also active in the manufacturing of plastic materials and in packaging. We are now getting into renewable energy and are looking for more projects in that area," says Persaud.

## ANSA McAL: Leaders in Distribution

ANSA McAL Trading Ltd. (AMTL) represents another success story. One of the largest distribution companies in Guyana, it operates as a subsidiary of the ANSA McAL Group, which has its roots in Trinidad and Tobago and has grown to become one of the biggest companies in the region, comprising over 50 companies in Guyana, Grenada, Barbados, St. Kitts and Nevis, and the United States.

In Guyana, ANSA McAL services approximately 95% of Guyana's population with a total of more than 3000 SKUs of products across four major divisions, including pharmaceuticals, construction, consumer products, and beverages. This includes household names such as Carib, Heineken, and Pringles.

"Over the last 25 years, ANSA McAL in Guyana has experienced rapid growth and development in all areas of its business and has become an integral player in the economic activities of the

country which has helped shape and enhance the way Guyana does business," says Troy Cadogan, Managing Director of ANSA McAL (AMTL). "In more than 25 years of operations in Guyana, AMTL has contributed more than $250 million to the country's coffers and over $10 million towards a corporate social responsibility program with investments in sport, culture, communities, and other social programs."

In many ways, AMTL epitomizes the ideal of regional integration, by offering regional and international products to the Guyanese market and utilizing a Guyanese workforce. Today it employs more than 200 people and indirectly provides work to large numbers of promoters, brand representatives and entertainers.

Despite some market difficulties, AMTL continues to find opportunities in Guyana. "The country's socio-economic environment, the legal business framework, and an unreliable power supply continue to be challenges for the development of a truly competitive business environment," says Cadogan, but adds, "Guyana has always been ready for new investment opportunities and this continues to be the situation even after 50 years of being an independent nation. Our Group is committed to diversifying its portfolio in Guyana and this is demonstrated through investments in the media, retail, services and automotive industries, creating even more employment for Guyanese."

## Banking on Growth

Guyana's banking sector is relatively small, but it currently enjoys healthy liquidity and strong capital adequacy and it is on a growth trajectory. Over the past decade, the sector has shown unprecedented growth, resulting in an asset base of $1.9 billion and total lending of $874 million, representing a 130% and 220% growth respectively.

The six banks active in the sector are no longer government-owned and are quite diverse with respect to type, structure and ownership. Republic Bank is the largest domestic private bank, with a 180-year history and is presently a subsidiary of the Republic Financial Holdings Ltd. Group, which has a strong presence in the region. The Canadian Scotiabank and the Indian Bank of Baroda are two international banks, while the remaining three banks are for the most part owned by local Guyanese conglomerates.

The system navigated through the global economic crisis smoothly "due to the simplicity of the products and services offered and a very strong, solid asset base in the country," Richard Sammy, Managing Director of Republic Bank (Guyana) Ltd. and current Chairman of the Guyana Association of Bankers, explains.

Republic Bank, the leading bank in the country with a market share of 30% by assets, is complementing the government's effort by directing resources to improve the bank's technology infrastructure to accommodate increased network activity and meet customer's growing need for seamless electronic and online services. "Looking forward to the next 3-5 years, our focus will be on operational efficiency, technology and integration," says Sammy.

With a view of supporting greater social inclusion, Guyana's banks are working towards addressing the limited reach of financial services in under-served, hinterland regions of Guyana, partly by developing alternative channels, such as mobile banking, and partly by enhancing their digital capabilities. As Sammy explains, "The time is fast approaching in Guyana where technology will no longer be viewed as an option but as a pre-requisite for doing business."

Introduction of this new "digital era" will benefit both the banks in terms of cost and efficiency and the citizens. At the same time, improving the quality of financial services across the country will foster the development of communities and sectors and drive a diversified growth for the economy.

# Enhancing Guyana's ICT

Following his successful election in 2015, President Granger quickly gave his full support to the telecommunications sector. Guyana's very first Ministry for Telecommunications was established in 2016 and a Telecommunications Bill was adopted in early 2017. The legislation foresees further liberalization of the market and the establishment of a telecommunications agency in a regulatory function, with the intent of encouraging growth and helping to bridge the digital divide.

Catherine Hughes, Minister of Public Telecommunications, explains, "We had to open up the market because we needed more players who were prepared to go into the under-served areas of Guyana. We think there are good business opportunities. The country's particular topography means that we have many areas with no connectivity, which has a direct impact on development, on telecommunications, and on the provision of government services." Guyana currently has a mobile penetration rate of about 85% and a landline penetration rate of about 36%.

GTT, the dominant player in the market, offers expanded landline and mobile services and internet data packages. "Like any telecommunications company, GTT has transformed itself from voice communication to data communication," says Justin Nedd, CEO of GTT. "The landing of a sea cable connection in 2010 was a milestone for Guyana. We have seen more than 10% growth in broadband connections over the last four years. And the speed of broadband has increased over the same period; we have moved from 1 Mbps broadband connection to 10 Mbps connection and are now pushing residential 50 Mbps connection. The acceleration and the growth of ICT and broadband in Guyana has been driven by GTT's presence in the market."

The stability of service means that many business process outsourcing (BPO) companies have begun establishing operations in Guyana, including international players, such as Qualfon and Teleperformance. Nedd explains, "The ICT sector is seeing significant growth and we should expect even greater adaptation of ICT following a recent move to 4G and eventually the extension to 5G, which we expect in the next five years. We increasingly see young people and entrepreneurs leveraging ICT to break the barriers that have existed for traditional businesses. The local ICT sector demonstrates that we can operate on a global scale. Many Guyanese, returning from their studies abroad, bring the necessary skills to help the ICT sector evolve."

GTT's future growth is tightly linked with the country's development. As Nedd explains, there is still room for improvement. "In some areas, our regulatory framework must still catch up with the demands of customers. In rural areas, connectivity is still not good, and the government has a key role to play in the expansion of broadband in those areas." But ultimately Nedd is optimistic about the company's prospects. "If the country does well, so does GTT. We grow side-by-side. As more foreign direct investment flows into Guyana, the demand for GTT and others in the market is to provide better services. This has a positive influence on the company."

# Better Education Through Better Connectivity

Providing better education remains an essential development goal for Guyana and critical to supporting the country's sustained growth. The government has made it a priority to deliver quality education across all levels. For 2017, it has allocated more than $200 million, or 17.2% of its budget to education. "Education is the key factor for the human resources we need in order to develop the country. We are placing emphasis on education at all three levels: primary, secondary, and tertiary," says President Granger.

The provision of equal education across all parts of Guyana is made difficult by the fact that some communities exist in remote and hard-to-access areas. The government has decided to make better use of modern technologies to overcome these difficulties. Catherine Hughes, Minister of Public Telecommunications, explains, "Since 2016, we have focused on increasing our connectivity. We use our own fiber-optic network to provide free internet access to secondary schools and vocational and technical institutions across the country. And in some bigger schools we budget for e-class rooms, allowing students in remote areas to participate virtually in classes in other parts of the country. We have also given laptops to all school teachers in Guyana, complete with curricula and teaching material, to give them the opportunity to prepare their research."

At the same time, the creation of so-called ICT Hubs in poor, remote, and hinterland communities helps bridge the country's digital divide. Thirty-nine such hubs have been established since 2016 and 100 more are planned, offering ICT access, eServices, and digital learning. "We provide free internet access to these hubs, which represents a form of online learning. We are developing an ICT-ready environment and population," says Hughes.

# Tourism Taking a Leap

Guyana has thus far not relied on tourism for economic growth, given its abundant natural resources and strength in agriculture. But despite being a late starter amongst Caribbean tourism destinations, it is attractive both to investors and international travelers. So far this has translated into the tourism industry contributing 9% of GDP.

The government finalized the long-awaited National Tourism Policy in 2017 which aims to market the product "Guyana – South America Undiscovered". With a highly ambitious marketing program that includes rebranding, repositioning and renewal of destination, Guyana aims to "bring more visitors to Guyana and enhance the impact of the industry on the Guyanese economy and, in particular, the impact of nature-based tourism on hinterland economies and livelihoods," explains Donald Sinclair, Director General of the Department of Tourism in the Ministry of Business.

Prior initiatives have created the necessary conditions for this effort, such as the establishment of the Guyana Tourism Authority, a 46% increase in budgetary allocations for tourism, and a greater visibility of Guyana at international trade fairs and other tourism events. This also resulted in a 14% increase in tourist visits in 2016, compared to the previous year.

Guyana's irresistible combination of breathtaking natural beauty, pristine Amazonian rain forests, immense waterfalls - Kaieteur Falls is one of the world's most powerful and the tallest single-drop waterfall -, amazing wildlife, and a vibrant indigenous culture all make for an ideal tourism destination. Better coordination between the industry and national decision-makers will now allow Guyana to take its rightful place in global tourism.


Guyana's Jaguar - FotoNatura Image

Its differentiated eco-tourism product offering of rainforests, nature, and adventure distinguishes it from its Caribbean island neighbors which promote a sun and beach vacation. This is why Guyana will market and promote itself as a nature and adventure destination that offers unique cultural experiences, which resonates with the vision of being recognized internationally as a leading green destination by the year 2025.

"The National Tourism Policy will align the development of Guyana's tourism industry with the vision, goals and objectives of the Green State Development Strategy and will ensure that the anticipated increased visitor arrivals deliver maximum benefits to the citizens of Guyana," states Sinclair.

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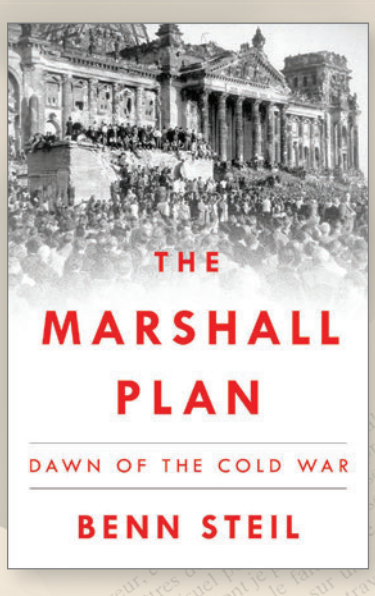


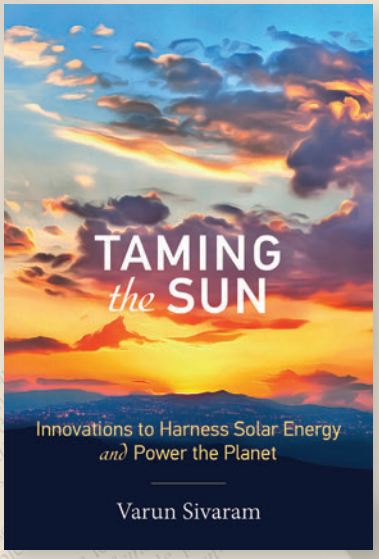


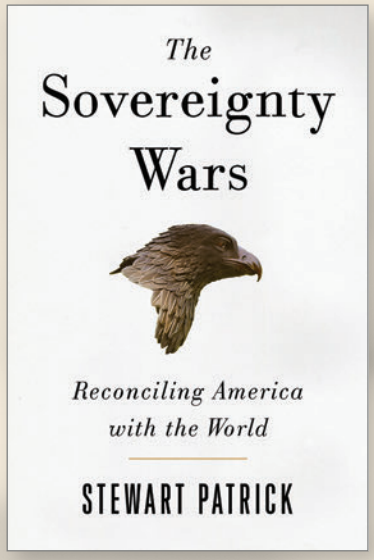


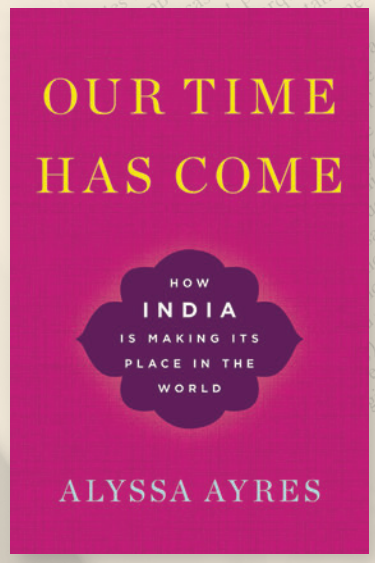


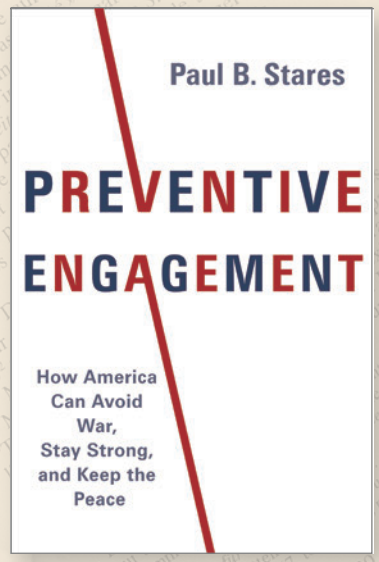


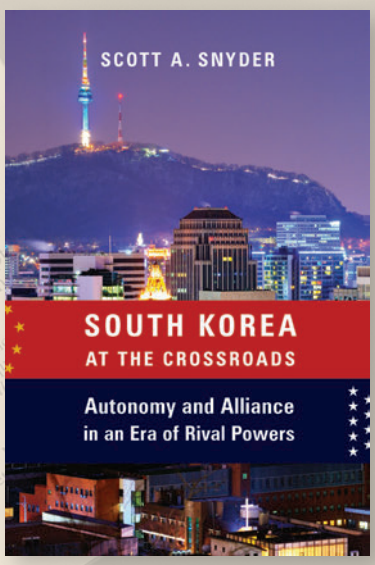


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# Macron's World

## How the New President Is Remaking France

*Ronald Tiersky*

In 2015, before resigning his position as economy minister in President François Hollande's government, Emmanuel Macron explained his idea of French democracy to the newspaper *Le 1*. "Democracy," he said, "always implies some kind of incompleteness. . . . In French politics, this absence is the figure of the king, whose death I fundamentally believe the French people did not want."

What he meant was that the French people instinctively demand a strong state with centralized leadership, that France does best when its executive actually governs rather than merely serves as a vehicle for ideological and personal rivalries. That sentiment has run through French politics for over two centuries, since the French Revolution, through two empires, the Vichy regime, and five parliamentary republics. In modern times, it has become especially prominent. In 1958, the Fourth Republic's last president, René Coty, persuaded Charles de Gaulle to return to power to deal with a military crisis shaking the French government of Algeria, then still part of France. The Algerian crisis was so destabilizing that it threatened to bring violence to mainland France. The Fourth Republic, its Parliament torn between ideologically incompatible parties and with only a weak presidency, was on the verge of collapse. Once in power, de Gaulle used the crisis as an opportunity to write a new constitution that gave the president enough power to dominate the fractured party system. He then shaped that presidency into a kind of elected kingship, turning France into a "republican monarchy," as French commentators have called it ever since.

Yet despite the immense power of the office, only two presidents, de Gaulle himself and the Socialist François Mitterrand, have deployed

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its potential to the full. Every other president either lost the initiative or never had it to begin with.

Now, in Macron, France may have found its third transformative president. Like de Gaulle and Mitterrand, Macron has the ambition to be more than simply president. He wants to accomplish great things. Of course, Macron is not de Gaulle, and France's predicament is far less serious than it was during World War II or the Algerian War. But Macron has a sense of personal destiny similar to de Gaulle's, one that is bound up with his idea of what a twenty-first-century France must be.

Macron's vision of France has at its heart a deeply integrated Europe, with France as the continent's leader alongside Germany. Macron wants the European Union to become an economic powerhouse that will play a crucial role in a multipolar world order.

To achieve this, he believes that he needs to rejuvenate more than France's economy. He aims to turn French complacency into ambition, transforming a country that has lost its energy into a dynamic, entrepreneurial nation with a renewed sense of national purpose. Macron describes his strategy as "radical centrism," meaning a centrism that is bold and original, tackling the problems of the twenty-first century—terrorism, cybersecurity, climate change—and not just triangulating positions between the old right and the old left.

As Macron told *Der Spiegel* in October, "Post-modernism was the worst thing that could have happened to our democracy," because it destroyed the idea of a convincing national myth, and with it the possibility of a feeling of national unity and purpose. "Modern political life must rediscover a sense for symbolism," he said. "We need to develop a kind of political heroism. . . . We need to be amenable once again to creating grand narratives."

## OUT WITH THE OLD

When Macron launched his presidential bid in the summer of 2016, few paid much attention. He had never run for office. His experience in government was limited to two years as a junior inspector of finances in the Economy Ministry and two years as the minister of economy, industry, and digital affairs. For months after his entry into the race, polling organizations did not even include him in their surveys.

Yet as the campaign unfolded, Macron left far more experienced politicians in the dust. He led the field in the first round and won

*Monsieur Fix It: Macron visiting a factory in Amiens, October 2017*

PHILIPPE WOJAZER / REUTERS

66 percent of the vote in the May runoff against Marine Le Pen, the leader of the right-wing populist National Front. His new party, La République en Marche! (The Republic on the Move!), or LRM, won 308 of the 577 seats in Parliament. With LRM's ally, the Democratic Movement, an older party with its roots on the center-right, the coalition has 350 seats, giving Macron the ability to pass his legislative agenda without major compromise.

Macron's victory blew apart the old party system. The ruling Socialist Party collapsed. Its candidate won only six percent of the presidential vote, and the party lost almost 90 percent of its seats in Parliament. The conservative Republican candidate also failed to make the presidential runoff, and the Republicans lost 40 percent of their seats. The National Front, shocked by Le Pen's lopsided defeat, has descended into a leadership struggle, one that Le Pen herself might not survive. Jean-Luc Mélenchon, a far-left anticapitalist demagogue, has taken up the banner of populist revolt, but his party, France Unbowed, has few seats in Parliament and much-reduced influence in the street. A kind of one-man show, Mélenchon has had a negligible effect.

In the midst of a surge of nativist populism across Europe and the United States, Macron's victory made France into the defender of the values of liberal democracy and internationalism. This was surprising. For years, economic stagnation and political failures have left much of the French population pessimistic about the future, more interested in being protected from the world than engaging with it. In a poll conducted by YouGov in 2016, 81 percent of respondents in France said they believed the world was getting worse, and just three percent said they believed it was getting better, the gloomiest result among the 17 countries surveyed.

*France is the only large European economy not to have conquered mass unemployment.*

France's stagnant economy is the cause of much of this pessimism. To be sure, many people are doing well, and the high French quality of life still exists, at least for them. But the larger picture shows a society in which too many are struggling for a decent living. French GDP growth has consistently trailed the average of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). As Macron often emphasizes, France is the only large European economy not to have conquered mass unemployment. For three decades, French unemployment has hovered around ten percent. In 2016, almost 25 percent of those aged 16 to 24 and actively seeking work could not find a job, and many others were working part time or in jobs below their skill level. The gap between rich and poor has widened, and poverty rates have risen. Poverty in France is now as much a phenomenon of the young and jobless as of the old and retired. About 13 percent of French children grow up in deprived households.

The basic economic problem is that in an open international trading system, French products and services must compete globally or they will lose market share, even at home. Domestically, two main forces hold back private-sector dynamism: sky-high public spending along with the taxes that pay for it and an overly protected labor market.

France's public sector accounts for 56 percent of GDP, the largest share in the OECD. French payroll taxes are among the highest in the world. As individuals, French workers are highly productive, but they work fewer hours each week, and have more vacation time and more national holidays, than do workers in any other developed country. The mandatory 35-hour workweek increases overtime costs and hasn't

kept unemployment down. Letting employees go in hard times can be prohibitively expensive for employers due to strict rules regarding layoffs, and wrongful-dismissal cases can drag on for years. Businesses often solve this problem by hiring inefficient temporary workers instead. This creates a two-tiered labor market, split between people with protected permanent positions and those living precarious lives on temporary job contracts.

## WORK BEGINS

Macron has nevertheless had a lucky start, taking office during improving economic conditions. French GDP growth is rising and has reached nearly two percent, close to Germany's and the eurozone's as a whole. By the fall of 2017, unemployment had dropped to 9.7 percent. Consumer confidence is at its highest level in over a decade. The country's 2017 budget deficit was 2.9 percent of GDP, already below the three percent limit mandated by the EU, a threshold France had missed for several years. In 2018, the deficit is slated to be 2.6 percent, which means planned government spending cuts that will reduce welfare programs and a cut to the military budget that will be restored the following year. (Macron intends French military funding to meet NATO's goal of two percent of GDP by 2025.) Macron aims to shrink public spending to 51 percent of GDP within five years. That would be a major accomplishment, as it would allow for significant tax reductions.

To boost growth, Paris needs to encourage foreign and domestic businesses to invest in France and create new permanent jobs. French governments have too often resorted to employing more civil servants—including teachers and staff in the public school system—to reduce unemployment. But private-sector jobs create far more value for the economy. In a broader sense, Macron must reduce the widespread French antipathy to capitalism, profits, and risk taking.

Macron's first major step was to rewrite France's lengthy labor-market rules. The major unions were expected to put up fierce resistance to any changes. Yet the government spent much of the summer consulting them, and they proved willing to cut deals. Even the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), an erstwhile ally of the Communist Party, chose to negotiate. The CGT leadership was responding to a changing mood among union members and supporters. Fewer people—tens of thousands rather than hundreds

of thousands—now show up to street demonstrations, and because of legal restrictions, public-sector strikes by railway workers, utility employees, truckers, and airline staff can no longer shut down the country, as they did in famous past crises in 1968 and 1995.

Among the labor-code revisions are new restrictions on how long employee litigation is allowed to take, limits on the compensation that labor courts may award in wrongful-dismissal cases, reductions in the number of workers' councils permitted inside individual companies, and rules that allow firms to negotiate working conditions within themselves rather than through industry-wide talks involving dozens of firms, a practice that magnified union influence.

In October, talks began on reining in France's generous unemployment insurance benefits, to be followed by discussions on reducing the variety and costs of retirement schemes. Once again, the goal is to reduce the cost of doing business in France, thus encouraging firms to invest and hire. The government also plans to increase programs of professional retraining, vocational schooling, and apprenticeships, following the "flexicurity" models of Germany and the Scandinavian countries.

It's an open question whether these sorts of policies can boost the economy quickly enough to win over public opinion to more optimistic ideas about France's economic prospects. Macron hopes for significant results within a year or two. The expansionary phase already under way will help.

## CONTINENTAL AMBITIONS

Macron's success or failure will reverberate throughout the European Union. For decades, the partnership between France and Germany set the EU's agenda, determining the content and pace of integration. But when France's economy fell behind and its political leadership declined in quality, the EU lost its focus, its incubator of new ideas, and its propulsive force. German Chancellor Angela Merkel has waited for years for a heavyweight French leader with whom she could work.

For Macron, reforming France and reforming the EU represent two sides of the same coin. In a speech he gave two days after the German elections in September, Macron laid out a vast program for EU development. The idea at the core of Macron's plan is that in return for French fiscal responsibility and economic reform, Germany would support closer integration of the eurozone, including

a joint budget to fund common investment and help countries through national recessions. There would be a eurozone finance minister and a eurozone parliament separate from the European Parliament. Macron also called for the harmonization of national corporate tax rates and an EU carbon tax.

*When France's economy fell behind and its political leadership declined in quality, the EU lost its focus.*

Macron believes that deeper European integration serves France's national interests, because national sovereignty and EU sovereignty are ever more inextricable. French sovereignty today, he told the journalist Éric Fottorino in 2017, exists "sometimes at the national level, but also at the European level," when it comes to energy, migration, technology, and some military affairs. "France cannot win against Google and Facebook, but Europe can . . . at least regulate them." Mitterrand would have agreed.

Macron's plan would create a much clearer two-speed EU than currently exists, with the 19 eurozone countries on one track and the other EU member states on a second. He intends the deepened eurozone to become "an economic power that can compete with China and the United States." Macron wants the eurozone budget to amount to several percentage points of eurozone GDP, far higher than the 1.2 percent that the EU currently allocates to its common finances.

The EU's border, Macron believes, must be made comparable to a national one, so that travel and immigration are brought under central control. This is important, above all, to prevent the movement of Islamist terrorists. He wants to establish a European asylum office to speed up the process of accepting or rejecting refugees. In 2015, Merkel was right to welcome hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees to Germany, but, Macron argues, that was a humanitarian emergency for which the EU was totally unprepared. In future crises, his strategy would attempt to keep refugees and asylum seekers close to home so they can return once the crisis from which they fled is over.

The extent to which Macron will be able to implement his European agenda will depend first of all on Merkel. It will help her a lot if Macron manages to enforce fiscal responsibility in France. German politicians have grown used to France's failure to control its budget deficit. If Macron's vision of a renewed EU is to have a chance, he

will have to convince them that he is serious about controlling spending, including how much he will ask Germany to contribute to a eurozone budget.

Even then, winning their support will not be easy. Many of the things Macron has called for represent radical departures from current EU policy, whereas Merkel's career has been defined by caution. Especially after an election that saw her party victorious but with a smaller vote share and fewer seats in parliament, she may well refuse to take big risks, especially if her new coalition partners, the Free Democrats and the Greens, oppose her.

Yet Merkel is not likely to simply run out the clock on her remaining time in office. Her decision to admit the Syrian refugees into Germany showed rare political courage. "*Wir schaffen das,*" she said. "We'll make it work." That courage has been rewarded. Turmoil among EU governments about accepting refugees threatened to break apart the union, yet they have integrated surprisingly well in Germany. Now, blessed with a dynamic French partner, Merkel might step out front with Macron, not least to demonstrate anew that Germany still supports an ambitious version of European integration. That would be a remarkable conclusion to a remarkable career.

## MACRON ABROAD

As with his domestic reforms, Macron's foreign policy will defy old categories. As an Atlanticist, he is fully committed to NATO and knows that the United States is France's and Europe's natural ally. Yet with the Cold War long over, U.S. supremacy within NATO is no longer automatic, especially now that U.S. President Donald Trump has adopted a policy of reducing U.S. exposure to the world's conflicts. As a result, Macron is intent on keeping Washington at a distance, with France mediating between the United States and other countries. And his strategy for EU development shows the importance he accords to a secure, independent Europe.

Macron is, at heart, a pragmatist. He knows that Ukraine's international orientation—toward Europe or toward Moscow—is Russia's most important problem. He has proved willing to stand up to Russian President Vladimir Putin's plans to expand Russia's influence and territory. But he also recognizes that fighting Islamist terrorism, organizing cybersecurity, and dealing with climate change all require democratic and authoritarian countries to work

together. Today, Atlanticism, Europeanism, and globalism are no longer mutually exclusive.

In Europe's dealings with the United States, Macron will play the leading role. He speaks fluent English and has cosmopolitan instincts and a background in investment banking. He also has experience in the French technology and media industries. So far, he has both charmed and challenged Trump. At the July 14 Bastille Day festivities, Macron honored and flattered his American guest. On the other hand, Macron's speech at the UN General Assembly in September flatly refuted Trump's "America first" nationalism.

Where France and the United States come closest together on foreign policy is over Iran. France, along with the United States and five other world powers, negotiated the nuclear agreement with Iran that was signed in 2015. During the talks, the French negotiators took the hardest line, demanding that Iran's ballistic missile program and Tehran's spreading influence in the Middle East be addressed in the deal. But in the end, the French government agreed to focus on the nuclear issue alone, as the Obama administration wanted.

Since the agreement was reached, France has again been the most demanding, this time in terms of verifying Iranian compliance. Although Macron was critical of Trump's decision to decertify the agreement in October, he understands that Trump's decertification may well have been a negotiating tactic. Because Trump did not denounce the agreement completely, the United States can stay in it if Congress votes in favor of doing so. Whether the United States stays in or leaves the deal, France, along with the other signatories, will maintain it. In any case, Macron and Trump both want new agreements to limit Iran's ballistic missile program and its support for Hamas and Hezbollah, and they want a more general understanding about Iran's aggressive policies throughout the Middle East.

Macron's solidarity with Israel is similarly clear. He endorses the long-standing French support for a two-state solution and the Palestinians' right to a homeland. But more clearly than any previous French president, Macron has put Israel's legitimacy as a state beyond question. In a speech marking France's Holocaust Remembrance Day, in July, he denounced "anti-Zionism" as "a reworked form of the old anti-Semitism." He warned about prejudice against Jews in France today. And he emphasized French complicity in the

Holocaust. Speaking of the infamous Vel d'Hiv Roundup of July 1942, in which over 13,000 Jews were arrested in Paris, he was unambiguous: "It was France that organized the roundup of Jews. . . . Not a single German was involved."

Much now rests on Macron's shoulders. There are many reasons why he might fail. Changing minds and creating new energy are hard tasks in any country at any time. Macron is asking the French people to care once again about the country's sense of purpose, *"le roman français,"* or "the French narrative," as he puts it. In particular, he's asking young people to feel ambitious rather than complacent.

In graduate school, Macron's master's thesis discussed Machiavelli, whose description of political leadership remains true today: the successful prince needs great skill and great luck. So far, Macron has had both. Whether he will continue to do so will count for much in France, Europe, and the wider world.

# Congo's Slide Into Chaos

## How a State Fails

*Stuart A. Reid*

On January 16, 2001, the Democratic Republic of the Congo tumbled into uncertainty. The country's president, Laurent Kabila, had been sitting in his office at his marble palace in Kinshasa, the capital, when one of his teenage bodyguards entered, drew his pistol, aimed it at Kabila, and fired several times.

Kabila had installed himself as president in 1997, after overthrowing Mobutu Sese Seko, the cancer-stricken dictator of what was then known as Zaire. He had begun fighting Mobutu back in the 1960s, leading a Marxist rebellion in the eastern half of the country before, in the 1980s, fleeing to nearby Uganda and Tanzania, where he raised his children under false names. After years of dodging Mobutu's intelligence agents, Kabila finally got the chance to remove his nemesis, riding in on an invasion backed by eight nations to take the presidency, if not control, of the country he rechristened the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Kabila's Rwandan backers quickly tired of him, however. They launched a rebellion in the east that kicked off the Great War of Africa, a five-year conflict so deadly and confused that estimates of its death toll range from two million to five million. Now, less than four years into a presidency he had spent his life pursuing, Kabila was slumped over, bleeding into his chair.

Kabila's advisers scrambled to react. Keeping news of the attack from the public, they arranged for his dead body to be flown to Zimbabwe, ostensibly for treatment. Congo's borders were sealed, its airports shut down, and a curfew announced. Late at night, Kabila's inner circle gathered to decide on a successor, as Mwenze Kongolo, the justice minister at the time, recently recounted to me. "It was at that moment," he said, "when we decided we had to put in Joseph."

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Joseph, Laurent Kabila's son, was just 29 years old, a commander in the new Congolese military. Having grown up in Uganda and Tanzania, he spoke Swahili and English, but little French, Congo's official language, and no Lingala, its most prominent African one. Shy and inscrutable, he was not a man made for politics. His only civilian work experience lay in doing odd jobs for his father and driving a taxi. Joseph was a mystery, unknown to foreign diplomats and the Congolese public alike; even his age was an open question at the time. Yet having marched across the country as part of the invasion, he enjoyed legitimacy among the military and the confidence of his father. "He was not a stranger," Kongolo said. "And with his father having died, it had to be someone close."

Convincing the country's security forces and government ministers of this succession plan turned out to be easy; convincing Joseph himself, less so. Around four in the morning, a plane sent to retrieve him from a military base landed back in Kinshasa. As a diplomatic cable from the U.S. embassy reported, when his father's advisers asked him to become president, "Joseph was initially 'very resistant' to the idea," most likely because he feared for his life. Yet he assented, and was sworn in as president three days after his father's funeral. Photos at the time show a man who looks stunned by his sudden ascension.

The moment marked yet another bloody transfer of power in Congo's troubled history. The Congolese were ruled for 75 years by the Belgians—particularly nasty, as colonizers went—until 1960, when the country became independent. Its new, democratically elected prime minister, Patrice Lumumba, held office for just two and a half months before he was ousted in a coup by Mobutu, who then orchestrated Lumumba's murder with the blessing of the CIA. After decades of Western support during the Cold War, Mobutu, in turn, would be chased from power by Kabila.

Today, Congo faces another transition crisis that threatens to throw the country into chaos. This time, however, the cause is not a transfer of power but the lack of one. During his 17 years in office, Joseph Kabila has presided over a profoundly decrepit state. Every institution to speak of has been perverted to serve itself rather than the people, 77 percent of whom live on less than $1.90 per day, which the World Bank classifies as "extreme poverty." Vast parts of the country go ungoverned, with armed militias vying for territory and resources in at least a third of its provinces. In the past two

*Blood in the streets: at a protest against Kabila in Kinshasa, September 2016*

KENNY KATOMBE / REUTERS

years, the number of displaced people in the country has doubled, to nearly four million.

Pointing to the very disorder he has let fester, the once reluctant president has repeatedly delayed elections originally scheduled for 2016 through a series of administrative maneuvers that the Congolese have termed *glissement* (slippage). With the economy weakening and armed violence on the rise, the pressure on Kabila to step down has never been greater, yet he shows no interest in doing so. The new reality recalls Voltaire's quip about the Holy Roman Empire: in this case, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is neither democratic, nor a republic, nor in control of the Congo.

For decades, the West has been obsessed with finding a cure for failed states, believing that the best way to prevent international problems is to solve domestic ones. Since the 1960s, Western governments have plowed nearly $1 trillion in aid into Africa alone, partly to ease immediate pain and partly to promote long-term stability. The UN has set up an elaborate system of peacekeeping operations, health initiatives, refugee camps, and food-distribution networks aimed at doing the same. And yet today, a country the size of western Europe and home to 80 million already suffering people is collapsing in slow motion in the middle of Africa.

## ON THE MAKE

Things weren't supposed to turn out this way. As part of the peace process that ended the war in 2003, Congo created a new political system. Rebel leaders rebranded their militias as political parties and exchanged their fatigues for suits. A new constitution was drafted. Kabila legitimized his rule by winning a 2006 presidential election organized by the UN and generally regarded as free and fair. After a nearly 50-year absence, democracy appeared to have returned to Congo.

But Kabila quickly set about co-opting the newly created institutions. He replaced judges with unqualified loyalists. His allies in Parliament weakened electoral laws and granted him the power to dismiss provincial governors. In 2011, Kabila won another five-year term, but this time, the vote, organized without the UN's help, was marred by fraud. Monitors from the Carter Center reported that some districts had "impossibly high" turnout rates of more than 99 percent and that hundreds of thousands of ballots had disappeared. Content to limit their ambitions for Congo to the absence of major war, the Western governments supplying much of the country's budget turned a blind eye.

The military, meanwhile, remained the predatory force it had been under Mobutu, only with the added complication of having to incorporate disparate rebel groups. Soldiers are poorly paid—as of 2015, colonels were earning less than $100 a month—and often go months without any wages at all. To make up for the shortfall, they extort civilians. (As Mobutu once told the army, "You have guns; you don't need a salary.") Higher up the chain of command, generals use their power to control local trade, whether it be in timber, ivory, minerals, or their own weapons.

Government ministries function as ATMs for the politically deserving. Ministers enjoy access not only to official budgets but also to off-the-books revenue streams generated through semiofficial fees and outright bribes. In 2012, the chief of staff to the minister of hydrocarbons even published, on ministry letterhead, a list of prices to secure meetings with various officials. Oil companies had to pay $5,000 to meet with lower-level advisers and $6,000 to meet with the chief of staff himself at the ministry (and an extra $3,000 to see him off-site). At the University of Kinshasa, one professor said that of his roughly 1,000 colleagues, only around 200 actually work; the rest, many of whom hold political office, collect their university salaries

without setting foot on campus. At kindergarten, children bring their teachers beignets in return for good treatment.

Every day, the orange-vested police who monitor Kinshasa's traffic circles practice an intricately choreographed form of corruption. An unpublished study conducted by researchers from Harvard University, the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Antwerp broke down this dance, invisible to the casual passenger, in detail. Each morning, the officers who man the intersections receive a quota from their commanders indicating how many cars they must flag for violations—say, a broken door handle—and redirect to the police station. There, drivers can go through the cumbersome process of receiving a ticket, having their car impounded, and paying the official fine to free it—but nearly all choose to simply pay a bribe and go on their way.

Back at the intersections, once the traffic police have met their daily quota of cars for their bosses, they go to work for themselves, extracting three types of payments. The first is the harassment bribe, one I witnessed when an officer claiming some violation forced himself into the passenger seat of my taxi to shake the driver down for $8 (a sum that would have been much higher had I not been a potentially well-connected foreigner). The second is a quick handoff of around 50 cents, a preemptive bribe given out of necessity and with a closed hand. The third is a tip, given openly and varying in amount. The study found that these police officers received approximately 92 percent of their incomes through illicit payments. Their bosses made some 99 percent of their incomes that way.

## GRAND THEFT

In many poor places, corruption would end with the petty variety. But underneath Congo's soil lies trillions of dollars' worth of copper, cobalt (used in batteries), coltan (used in electronics), tin, diamonds, and gold. Above, some of the planet's poorest people scrape by. The World Bank puts Congo's per capita GDP at $445 per year, the third-lowest in the world when adjusted for purchasing power. Nearly half of children younger than five are stunted due to malnutrition. In the slums that crowd Kinshasa, the poor live cheek by jowl in cardboard huts near streams clogged with garbage that cut through mountains made of the stuff. It is a far cry from the tony neighborhood of Gombe, a downtown district popular among the political elite where pool nets poke out over walls topped with razor wire.

For about a decade under Kabila, Congo rode the commodities boom. Its minerals—particularly copper and cobalt, which account for 79 percent of the country's exports—fed fast-rising demand in China and other emerging markets. But the price of cobalt crashed in 2008, and between 2011 and 2016, the price of copper fell by 50 percent. Now, inflation has hit 50 percent. Restaurants print special price sheets for patrons to consult separately from the menu. The Central Bank has said that it has only enough foreign exchange reserves to cover three weeks of imports.

The most egregious forms of corruption involve the president and his family. The Kabilas did not grow up rich. During a trip to the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, Laurent Kabila was stranded in Moscow, unable to afford the airfare home. His wife, Joseph's mother, sold vegetables in Tanzania. But two decades in power have made the family fabulously wealthy.

This past July, the Congo Research Group at New York University published a report in collaboration with Bloomberg News that exposed the elaborate web of businesses that the president and his relatives have constructed in Congo. The Kabilas have their fingers in everything from farming and mining to aviation and construction. Kabila's twin sister, Jaynet, holds an indirect stake in Vodacom Congo, the country's biggest cell phone service provider; another sister, Gloria, owns 40 percent of a large bank; his brother Zoé's possessions include a boxing gym in Kinshasa and a luxury hotel on Congo's Atlantic coast. Many Kabila-linked businesses receive special treatment—as with the mines that are protected by presidential guards or the company that gets $60 of the $185 fee for each new Congolese passport.

*The experience of Kabila's predecessors suggests that staying in office is the surest way to stay alive.*

Such legitimate businesses probably account for a minority of the Kabilas' income. The rest comes from murkier enterprises. In these, blame extends beyond Congolese elites to include the international mining companies and financiers who have acted as accessories to national theft. As the anticorruption group Global Witness has documented, in deals that took place between 2010 and 2012, the Congolese government sold mining rights at rock-bottom prices to anonymous offshore companies, some of them linked to Kabila's longtime friend

Dan Gertler, an Israeli billionaire. The Congolese state missed out on $1.36 billion in revenues as a result. Around the same time, the American hedge fund Och-Ziff Capital Management was funneling tens of millions of dollars to a businessman who then bribed two Congolese officials to secure favorable mining deals, a scheme the company admitted to in a 2016 deal with U.S. prosecutors. That agreement did not include names, but the descriptions made clear that the officials were Kabila and his top adviser at the time and that the businessman was Gertler. (Gertler has denied wrongdoing.) Global Witness also counted $750 million that went into state mining companies and tax agencies from 2013 to 2015 but never made it into the treasury.

Many are quick to call the Congolese state dysfunctional. But it is dysfunctional only if one considers its purpose to be serving the Congolese people. As a mechanism for distributing resources to loyalists in the political elite, it functions beautifully.

## DEMOCRACY DEFERRED

What is notable about the Kabila family's many income streams is that to maintain them requires being in Congo—and, ideally, being in power. If Kabila gets chased into exile, he and his relatives stand to lose hundreds of millions of dollars.

Thus, one motive behind Kabila's electoral delay may be financial. Kabila himself does not appear to be an extravagant man. Whereas Mobutu had a taste for pink champagne, Chanel cologne, and European villas, Kabila rarely drinks alcohol and shuns chauffeurs. Aside from watches and suits, his chief luxury is a collection of motorcycles, whose engines residents of Gombe can hear him revving late into the night. But given the involvement of his family, the decision to step down is not his alone to make.

Fear may be another motive. The experience of Kabila's predecessors suggests that staying in office is the surest way to stay alive. And if Kabila did survive a transfer of power, he could easily end up in prison. A future regime could find more than enough evidence to prosecute him for corruption. It might even investigate his conduct in 1997, when, as a commander during his father's invasion of Zaire, he allegedly participated in the slaughter of tens of thousands of Hutu refugees near a town called Tingi Tingi.

Russ Feingold interacted with Kabila dozens of times as U.S. special envoy to the Great Lakes region of Africa during the Obama adminis-

tration. Feingold held five or six direct meetings with the president and pressed him on his succession plans. "I think it's not as simple as a raw desire to keep power," Feingold said, pointing to the psychological factors weighing on a man who missed his youth to serve in a job he never asked for. Now, at 46 years old, Kabila is struggling to come up with a second act. Feingold put the dilemma this way: "What else am I going to do with my life, after I've been president of the Congo?"

And so Kabila plays for time. According to the constitution, a presidential election was supposed to have been held in November 2016, and Kabila, limited to two terms, would not have been allowed to compete. Three years before the scheduled vote, he pushed for an amendment to the constitution that would do away with the two-term limit, taking a cue from neighboring heads of state. But the effort failed, and it triggered defections from Kabila's ruling coalition. Then, his allies proposed a time-consuming national census that would push back the date of the vote, but that failed as well, and Kabila turned to more creative means. In 2015, for example, the government announced that Congo's 11 provinces would be split into 26, which had the effect of weakening rival politicians and diverting resources from elections.

Kabila's principal obstacle is his own unpopularity. Mobutu enjoyed a cult of personality and knew how to whip up a crowd. Holding a cane and wearing a leopard-skin hat, he presented himself as a village chief on a national level (never mind that the hat was made by a Parisian couturier). He was said to possess magical powers, such as the ability to hear one's thoughts. Kabila, by contrast, gives off an air of detachment, reinforced by his foreign upbringing, his lack of fluency in Lingala, and persistent rumors of Rwandan ancestry. He rarely speaks in public, and when he does, he sounds like a schoolboy reading a prepared text. At soccer games, tens of thousands of fans have debuted a chant that causes state television to cut the live feed: "Kabila, watch out, your mandate is over."

In September 2016, as the end of Kabila's term approached, protesters swelled the streets. Clashes with security forces left more than 50 dead, and the U.S. Treasury responded by imposing financial sanctions on two top security officials. Kabila's government entered into a dialogue with the opposition hosted by the Catholic Church, one of the few credible institutions left in Congo. The result was a deal, announced on New Year's Eve, in which a member of the opposition

would be appointed prime minister, elections would be held by the end of 2017, and Kabila would at last step down. But that has all but fallen apart. The electoral commission, whose head is effectively appointed by Kabila, has invoked the technical difficulties of organizing a vote, marrying legitimate complaints to absurd timelines for resolving them.

Rather than merely updating the voter rolls from the last election, the electoral commission decided to create new ones from scratch. The resulting registration process, which involves collecting biometric data from every voter, has been held up in certain provinces experiencing armed conflict. Once registration is complete, the rolls will still have to be "cleaned," a months-long process that involves analyzing ten fingerprints each for an estimated 45 million voters. But first, the computer system that does this must be ordered. After the nomination and vetting of candidates would come the gargantuan undertaking of printing the newspaper-like ballots required for an election day that could see voters choose among some 60,000 candidates from 600-plus political parties at more than 100,000 polling stations. Therefore, the commission has argued, it might make more sense to use electronic voting machines—a recipe for failure in a country with such irregular electricity supply and limited technical capacity. By pretending to fetishize democracy, the commission has deferred it.

*Mobutu enjoyed a cult of personality and knew how to whip up a crowd. Kabila, by contrast, gives off an air of detachment.*

It has also handed the government a convenient line for deflecting blame. I visited Lambert Mende, Congo's jowly minister of communication and media, at the ministry's dusty headquarters in Kinshasa. Mende kept me waiting for four full hours in a sweaty room full of chairs with torn upholstery. When word came that he was ready to see me, a handler led me upstairs to a glass partition, roused the soldier napping behind it, and brought me into the minister's office. Dressed in a sharp suit and an orange tie, Mende sat leisurely behind his desk, slowly flipping through a stack of newspapers. He shoved them to the side, grunted, and gestured for me to take a seat.

Mende is Congo's Kellyanne Conway, a spokesperson whose fervent displays of loyalty make one wonder if even his bosses think he is overdoing it. With me, he ridiculed the opposition ("lobbyists for foreign

interests"), decried U.S. sanctions ("totally unfounded, irrelevant"), and dismissed criticism of Kabila as a Belgo-American conspiracy ("they are calling him a human rights abuser, as they were calling Lumumba a communist"). He smiled impishly throughout the interview, as if to acknowledge that this was all just a performance, and quite an entertaining one at that.

"We have no responsibility, constitutionally, to organize elections," Mende answered when I asked when a vote would be held. That, he insisted, was the job of the electoral commission, on whose behalf he could not speak. "We cannot set up an independent body and act as if this body was not independent," he said. In Mende's telling, the government was merely waiting on guidance from the commission, while doing its best to ready a vote. "Not because Brussels or Washington is pushing us to do so," he was quick to add.

And when would elections take place? "The time is coming," he said. "Very soon."

A more precise answer would arrive the very next day, when the electoral commission announced that it would take 504 days once registration was finalized to hold a vote. This scientific-sounding estimate meant that elections could be held no earlier than April 2019.

## DIVIDE AND CONQUER

Opposition politicians balked. But in Congo today, the opposition has its own credibility problem. Kabila has skillfully co-opted many of its leaders—appointing one as prime minister and others to ministerial posts—giving them an opportunity to trade resistance for the privileges of power. Twice in Kinshasa, I saw the prime minister striding proudly through the lobby of the fanciest hotel, entourage in tow. "Kabila knows that the Congolese political class is corruptible, and he gives them money to divide them," the journalist Patient Ligodi said. "He knows that the opposition is an opposition of the belly: that his opponents need money."

The most threatening opposition figures have been sidelined. Jean-Pierre Bemba, who challenged Kabila in the 2006 election, now sits in a prison cell in The Hague, having been handed over to the International Criminal Court, which convicted him of war crimes. Étienne Tshisekedi, a longtime rival of Mobutu and both Kabilas, died last February at the age of 84. (For months, his corpse languished in a Belgian morgue as the Congolese government sought to delay his

funeral and the protests that it feared would accompany it.) And Moïse Katumbi, a former provincial governor, has been forced into exile.

Katumbi was once a Kabila ally, handpicked to govern Katanga, a mineral-rich province the size of Spain, in 2007. He had earned an estimated fortune of $100 million from food processing, trucking, and mining, and in office, he styled himself a tropical Michael Bloomberg, raising tax revenues nearly 40-fold, overseeing an infrastructure spending spree, and cracking down on corruption (at least when it didn't involve himself). But as it became clear that Kabila might seek to overstay his mandate, Katumbi resigned from the ruling party and announced his intention to replace him as president.

*"Kabila knows that the Congolese political class is corruptible," the journalist Patient Ligodi said.*

Then, Katumbi told me, the harassment began. His private jet was grounded. His car was rammed by a minibus. Security forces tried to kidnap his son. In May 2016, he was charged with hiring former U.S. soldiers as "mercenaries"; Katumbi characterized them as merely unarmed security advisers contracted through General Jim Jones, the former U.S. national security adviser. Katumbi fled the country during the trial and was later sentenced in absentia to three years in prison for real estate fraud. The judge who oversaw that case has also left Congo, claiming she was pressured by the intelligence services to convict him.

A May 2017 poll found that Katumbi would easily win a presidential election, with 38 percent of respondents naming him as their first choice. Only ten percent said they would vote for Kabila. Even with Katumbi in exile, authorities have worked hard to seal his fate: they evidently fear that he may try to return. After the real estate case against Katumbi was appealed, one of the judges set to rule on it received an anonymous phone call instructing him to confirm the sentence, according to Hubert Tshiswaka, a lawyer I met in Lubumbashi who has tracked local judicial decay closely. Having responded to the call by saying he would follow the law, the judge was visited by eight armed men one night this past July. Tshiswaka told me that the men tied up the judge's security guard, raped his wife and teenage daughter, and shot him in the stomach—he survived only because the men fled when a car approached.

## THE YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS

A different type of threat to Kabila has emerged in Goma. Hemmed in by volcanic mountains, Lake Kivu, and the Rwandan border, the city is the home base of an activist group that is sending the government into conniptions. Called Lutte pour le Changement (Struggle for Change), or LUCHA, the group was founded in 2012 by students frustrated with their country's persistent violence, human rights violations, and poor social conditions. But over time, it has become more overtly anti-Kabila.

I met one of LUCHA's members, Rebecca Kabugho, who is 23, in the city one evening. She wore a pink leather jacket and sported short dreadlocks. "Most of the population had decided to cross its arms, say nothing, and accept the situation in which we live—and yet it's not normal," she said. "That's why I stopped being silent and started saying what I thought out loud."

As we sat on the otherwise empty lawn of a hotel near Lake Kivu, out of earshot of staff, Kabugho recalled the night of February 15, 2016. She and fellow LUCHA members were working late at an office making banners for a march the next day. Congo's national soccer team had just defeated Mali's to win the African Nations Championship, and so they painted two lines on a cloth: "2016: We won the cup" followed by "2016: We will win elections." Around four in the morning, Kabugho heard some noise outside. It was the police, who barged into the building and arrested her and five others. They were all charged with attempting to incite revolt and served five and a half months in prison. Crowded into cells with no privacy, they ate meager rations, got sick, and spent time cleaning the septic system.

LUCHA remains small, with 1,500 members nationwide, and has yet to prove that it can turn out the broader population en masse. Even so, the government has rushed to brand it a criminal enterprise. In part, Kinshasa may fear that such groups represent early signs of youth discontent in a country with a median age of just 18. But it may also simply be groping in the dark. Kabila's regime has never met a threat it couldn't co-opt or kill. LUCHA and other similar groups are stubbornly immune to the first strategy, having chosen to remain outside the political system. (LUCHA makes a point of taking no external money whatsoever, and none of its members has run for political office.) And adopting the second strategy would only provoke more furor, because of these groups' strict refusal to take up arms. At LUCHA's initiation

ceremonies, new members stand before existing ones, Congolese flag in hand, and swear an oath committing themselves to nonviolence.

Not all of Kabila's opponents are so inclined. As peaceful methods of forcing a transition have failed to produce results, the violent variety has flared. The country has suffered a rash of recent jailbreaks. One of them, which took place at Kinshasa's central prison in May, was orchestrated by a separatist cult and resulted in the escape of some 4,000 prisoners, including the group's leader. In the southeastern province of Tanganyika, violence between the Bantu and Twa ethnic groups has grown, leaving hundreds of villages destroyed, women raped, and civilians killed.

The most disturbing conflict is the one that engulfed the Kasai, a region in the middle of Congo that had last seen full-scale war in 1961. After Congo's Ministry of the Interior and Security started trying to replace the region's village leaders, largely unmolested since independence, with Kabila loyalists, security forces searched the home of a chief who resisted. He and his followers retaliated by attacking a nearby city in August 2016, burning police stations and the local office of the electoral commission and assassinating various officials. In a sign of the hybrid nature of Congo's state, they enjoyed the encouragement of Kabila's minister of development at the time, according to an excerpt of a call that took place during the attack published by *The New York Times*. ("The colonel is in his house, and we're burning down the house so he burns to death," a subordinate informed the minister. "Did you kill the colonel's bodyguards?" the minister replied.)

*"It's not like anything I've ever seen in 20 years in Africa," a Western diplomat in Kinshasa told me.*

The military, in turn, killed the chief, and a loose alliance of cultish militias formed to carry on his resistance. It enlisted children, who brandished toy wooden guns they were told magic could make real. It may also have been behind the murder of two UN experts—an American and a Swede—sent to investigate human rights abuses, although some observers suspect government involvement.

Desperate to reassert authority in the Kasai region, the Congolese military sent in some of its most thuggish commanders. Soldiers went door to door, killing suspected militia members and sympathizers and looting their homes. Over time, the rebellion took on an ethnic

dimension and spawned yet another militia, this one armed by local authorities. The conflict spread to include five provinces, kill more than 3,000 people, and displace an additional 1.4 million. "It's not like anything I've ever seen in 20 years in Africa," one Western diplomat in Kinshasa told me.

The dead were buried in mass graves—87 of them, by the UN's count—many guarded by soldiers, suggesting that the government had something to hide. In June, Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein, the UN high commissioner for human rights, summarized the findings of UN investigators who had interviewed refugees who had fled the violence: "My team saw children as young as two whose limbs had been chopped off; many babies had machete wounds and severe burns. . . . At least two pregnant women were sliced open and their foetuses mutilated."

By the fall of 2017, the conflict had died down, and Kabila flew in for a peace conference to publicly mark its end. The humanitarian crisis continued. Refugees returned to find destroyed homes and schools and, with two planting seasons missed, a looming famine. The Ministry of Communication and Media denied my request to visit the Kasai, but Claudel Lubaya, an opposition politician from the region, described it for me. "You've seen Mosul and Aleppo?" he said. "That's sort of what the Kasai looks like."

## EASTERN PROMISES

Congo's east, especially the provinces of North and South Kivu, has long resisted pacification, the result of ethnic tensions, competition over land and resources, foreign meddling, and loose ends from the 1994 Rwandan genocide and the ensuing regional war. But even against this backdrop, the conflict there is going from bad to worse.

In Goma, the capital of North Kivu, a local researcher named Jean-Claude Buuma explained to me that there were 18 militias alone vying for control of Masisi, one territory in the province. In rural areas, the state is largely absent. Congolese forces' power is confined to major highways, he said: "One meter off, they have no control."

Often, that is by design. For example, in another territory in North Kivu, Walikale, a powerful rebel group has built a symbiotic relationship with the military it is ostensibly battling. The Nduma Defense of Congo-Rénové, or NDC-R, earned its legitimacy by beating back the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, a group of Hutus from Rwanda whom locals viewed as foreign occupiers. But the NDC-R's

*Watch the throne: Kabila at UN headquarters in New York, September 2017*

EDUARDO MUNOZ / REUTERS

activities go beyond the realm of security. Its leader, a man known as Guidon, is the area's gold monopsonist, the only buyer artisanal miners can turn to, and also holds a monopoly on the alcohol and cigarettes sold to them near the mines. A Human Rights Watch report estimated his monthly income at more than $20,000—some of which, according to Buuma, ends up in the pockets of Congolese military commanders, who in turn sell Guidon weapons. It's the traffic bribe, on a grander scale: a wrongdoer paying off the government to avoid punishment.

Kabila's attempts to stay in power have started to upset such arrangements. Capitalizing on growing frustration with the stalled presidential transition, militias are promising not only to secure the population but also to rid it of Kabila. In September 2017, for example, a warlord named William Yakutumba, who had previously confined himself to low-level racketeering, launched a dramatic attack against the military in Uvira, a city of several hundred thousand on Lake Tanganyika, near the Burundian border. Invoking the constitution, Yakutumba announced that he had "chosen the military option as the way to chase the dictator Joseph Kabila from power."

UN peacekeepers were brought in to Congo to enforce a cease-fire during the war in 1999, and they were supposed to disarm the militias and secure a lasting peace. They are still there. Now known as MONUSCO, the peacekeeping mission is the world's largest, with 18,000 uniformed personnel and a $1.14 billion annual budget, a quarter of it paid by the United States.

*More frightening than a never-ending peacekeeping mission is one that ended too early.*

Three weeks after the Uvira attack, I climbed into the back seat of a white pickup truck filled with five Uruguayan soldiers to accompany them on a UN patrol. Our two-car convoy drove due north from Goma, until the houses thinned out to make way for the lush countryside. Every five kilometers, the trucks stopped and the peacekeepers got out, gripped their guns, and scanned the horizon without saying a word. Mount Nyiragongo, a large volcano, puffed in the distance.

When I asked what the mission was that day, I got a quizzical look, as if I should have known. "To drive you 20 kilometers north and 20 kilometers back," I was told. Only when I pressed did someone mutter something about making a show of force and collecting intelligence. The unwieldy blue helmet and heavy armored vest I had been issued began to feel not just silly but unnecessary, too.

MONUSCO's reputation among the population is mixed. On the one hand, it has succeeded in protecting countless civilians, and some grateful locals have staged pro-MONUSCO demonstrations. On the other hand, many view it as too passive or, because it is an occasional partner with the unpopular Congolese military, as a party to the conflict. (It does pick and choose which commanders to work with, consulting a database of soldiers' behavior that goes back over a decade.) MONUSCO troops, moreover, have sometimes raped civilians, and a 2016 poll found that 57 percent of people in North Kivu thought they should simply leave. When we stopped in one village, I asked a 28-year-old cauliflower vendor named Janvier what he thought of the peacekeepers. "They're trouble," he said. "When they pass through, they ask questions about security, but they don't buy anything."

After 18 years in Congo, MONUSCO has grown into an entrenched institution, replete with its own visitor lanyards, regular video press

conferences, and glossy newsletter. At its headquarters in Goma, I lunched on a sumptuous buffet—$6 for a vegetarian version, $10 if you wanted meat. A poster advertised weekly tai chi classes.

A common knock against the mission is that with large parts of the population still living in a state of constant warfare and regular massacres, it has little to show for the $18 billion it has consumed since its inception—and displays no signs of working itself out of a job anytime soon. The organization also has little leverage over the Congolese government, at whose pleasure it serves. "MONUSCO behaves according to four verbs here," Lubaya, the politician from the Kasai, said. "MONUSCO condemns; MONUSCO regrets; MONUSCO disapproves; MONUSCO calls."

All of that may be true, but more frightening than a never-ending peacekeeping mission is one that ended too early. Indeed, it was MONUSCO forces who saved the day in Uvira, doing the job that should have been done by government soldiers, who, long unpaid, melted away. For all its flaws, MONUSCO is helping provide Congo's most badly needed service: security.

Before the surge in violence, 94 percent of the peacekeepers had been concentrated in the east, but with the recent flare-ups—protests and prison breaks in Kinshasa and other big cities, rebellions in the Kasai and elsewhere—they have had to spread themselves more thinly. At the same time, MONUSCO has lost eight percent of its budget, after the Trump administration put pressure on the UN to cut peacekeeping costs. So beginning in September, MONUSCO withdrew 1,700 troops from Congo. "Not only do we have a larger area to cover; we also have fewer troops to do so," complained David Gressly, an American who serves as the UN secretary-general's deputy special representative for Congo.

Having to do more with less, MONUSCO has switched strategies, replacing fixed positions with more mobile patrols—or, in its terms, moving from an approach of "protection through presence" to one of "protection through projection." It has closed five bases in North Kivu alone. In the run-up to possible elections, Gressly said, his job "is only going to get more difficult."

## NOW WHAT?

The paradox of Congo's current regime is that it looks utterly unsustainable, and yet somehow, it is sustained. Congo is a place where one can spend hours wandering from office to office trying to get the

right piece of paper, or slice easily through red tape with a well-placed phone call. Nothing works, and everything works. Competing power centers vie for access and dominance. Publicly stated motivations mask a darker private reality. Alliances flip overnight. But at some fundamental political level, nothing ever changes. Armed rebellions that look certain to gain momentum unexpectedly fizzle out. Promised protests fail to materialize.

Perhaps that is why so many obituaries of Kabila's regime have been published prematurely: because events in Congo proceed according to the competing logics of stasis and change. The most likely outcome is that Kabila will remain in office tomorrow, just as he did yesterday. That pattern could easily go on for years. But it is safe to say that ever since Kabila consolidated his power in the years immediately after his father's death, never before has he seemed so likely to go.

If Kabila does leave soon, he will exit in one of three ways. The first is the smoothest: he voluntarily steps down. It's possible he could do this in the context of somehow running for a third term and losing. Or he could bow to pressure and allow an ally to succeed him. Kabila's political coalition is not monolithic, and aspirants may seek to clear their own path to the presidency, promising to protect him and his family.

Kabila's opponents have little faith that he will experience a spontaneous change of heart, and so they have sought to apply pressure. Some of that has come from Angola, Congo's oil-rich southwestern neighbor, which has grown frustrated with the refugees streaming in. Once a crucial ally, it has withdrawn its military advisers from Congo. And Sindika Dokolo, a Congolese businessman who is a son-in-law of Angola's still powerful former president, has started a pro-democracy citizens' movement targeted against Kabila.

Most international pressure, however, has taken the form of sanctions. In May, the EU imposed an asset freeze and a travel ban on nine Congolese officials, including Mende, the minister of communication and media. Shortly thereafter, the U.S. Treasury Department imposed financial sanctions on Kabila's top military adviser and on a beach resort he owns, adding him to the list of five other officials it had sanctioned in 2016. Activists have welcomed these measures, and called for more. "The sanctions so far have just scratched the surface," said Sasha Lezhnev of the Enough Project, an Africa-focused advocacy group based in Washington, D.C. "What's needed is measures against some of the banks that Kabila and his business partners use to move

the proceeds of corruption, as well as sanctions against the senior financial advisers, the family members, and the companies they control."

Katumbi, the exiled presidential aspirant, has pushed for sanctions, too, and hired a D.C. law firm, Akin Gump, to lead the lobbying effort. An American friend of his, a former mining company executive and one-time partner at the firm, has started a curious nonprofit named United for Africa's Democratic Future: it ostensibly promotes democracy across the continent but appears designed principally to place pro-Katumbi op-eds and anti-Kabila think-tank reports.

In an apparent countermove, Bill Meierling, the chief marketing officer of the American Legislative Exchange Council, a nonprofit that has been described as "a stealth business lobbyist," published a piece of sponsored content in *The Washington Times*. In it, he accused Katumbi—who is the son of a Sephardic Jewish father who fled to Belgian Congo from Rhodes just before World War II—of being in the pockets of "wealthy foreign financiers," a "tightly-knit and highly interconnected group headed by George Soros." (A representative from *The Washington Times* said that whoever paid the newspaper to publish Meierling's article preferred to remain anonymous.)

*Kabila seems to be preoccupied with the idea that he could meet a violent end.*

Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the UN, has emerged as the Trump administration's point person on Africa, and she has continued the Obama administration's policy of urging Kabila to hold elections and step down. She even stated flatly, "The government is corrupt and preys on its citizens." In October, Haley visited Congo, where she was moved to tears at a refugee camp in North Kivu and, in an hour-plus-long meeting with Kabila at the presidential palace, warned him not to postpone the elections to 2019.

"President Kabila made a commitment to his country's constitution," Haley told me over e-mail. "He knows we expect him to honor that commitment to his constitution, as it is written—meaning he cannot be on the 2018 ballot. He also understands, the United States will not accept elections any later than 2018." A week after her visit, the electoral commission released a long-awaited calendar, with election day scheduled for December 23, 2018—not as early as the opposition wanted, but an improvement over the 504-day timeline.

The asset freezes and travel bans are rankling the officials affected, especially those who live part time in Europe. Inflicting pain is not the same thing as changing behavior, however, and there is no evidence so far that the government is mending its ways in response to the sanctions. The logic of regime survival will always supersede the logic of sanctions avoidance. If a crowd needs to be dispersed violently today, it will be dispersed violently today, whatever consequences the U.S. Treasury Department might impose tomorrow. In lobbying for sanctions, then, the opposition may only be enhancing its reputation for spending too much time in Brussels and Washington and not enough back home organizing. Congo's political elite suffers from a misguided sense that power must come from elsewhere—no doubt a holdover from a time when it really did.

All of this pressure is aimed at getting Kabila to "leave through the front door," as Congolese are fond of saying. But Kabila could resist, leading to the second type of exit: a popular revolt that forced him to flee through the back door. The model is Burkina Faso, where in 2014 an uprising forced an abrupt end to Blaise Compaoré's 27-year presidency.

With economic conditions worsening and Kabila's popularity so low, it's conceivable that fed-up Congolese will take to the streets en masse and march toward the presidential palace. In that environment, opposition leaders could seize the moment. Katumbi, for example, might return home on his private jet, surround himself with supporters, and declare himself transitional president. Kabila appears to be preparing for the possibility of mass riots. In the last two years, he has transferred some of his most trusted (and brutal) generals to Kinshasa, and his forces have stocked up on tear gas and water cannons.

One big obstacle to a mass uprising is Kabila's talent for repression. Nothing scatters a crowd like live fire. What's more, as bad as the economy is today, it was worse during the early 1990s, when the Mobutu regime began its death spiral. Back then, a running gag had it that Congo's constitution included a mythical Article 15: *Débrouillez-vous* (Deal with it). People may invoke it again.

Equally destabilizing as a popular revolt would be the third method through which Kabila could leave power: a coup or an assassination. Kabila once publicly complained that he didn't even have 15 people he could count on. He is thought to enjoy the loyalty of his presidential guards, who, like him, are well-compensated Swahili speakers. But regular soldiers are poorly paid, and they have guns, too. Manya Riche,

an analyst and former adviser to Kabila on peace building, told me that people vastly underestimate the internal threats to the regime. She had been predicting a possible coup back in 2015, and she believes one is even more likely now. "It's a house of cards," she said. "Which card is the one that will cause everything to fall down?"

Kabila himself seems to be preoccupied with the idea that he could meet a violent end. Like his father, his grandfather, a former colonial administrator, was assassinated; Joseph has openly worried that he will meet the same fate. "Any time the assassination of his father would come up, his face would noticeably change," said one U.S. diplomat who has met with Kabila many times.

In a country with so much dry tinder—poorly fortified borders with nine different countries, scores of militias, and more than 250 ethnic groups—it is all too easy to imagine the chaos that might result from any variety of the last two scenarios. The Great African War, the world's deadliest conflict since World War II, ended only in 2003. And many of that war's underlying causes—above all, a weak state—persist. "Evacuation is on everyone's mind," one member of Kinshasa's Western diplomatic corps told me. Most Congolese, of course, have no such choice.

# Let Women Work

## The Economic Case for Feminism

*Rachel Vogelstein*

In June, Saudi Arabia will make it legal for women to drive, marking the end of one of the world's most conspicuous examples of gender discrimination. The ban's removal has been rightly hailed as a victory in a country that systematically limits women's freedoms. But for Saudi officials, this policy reversal has more to do with economics than concern for women's rights. In recent years, even culturally conservative countries such as the Gulf kingdom have begun to recognize that they cannot get ahead if they leave half of their human capital behind.

Women's advocates have long championed gender parity as a moral issue. But in the modern global economy, eliminating obstacles to women's economic participation is also a strategic imperative. A growing body of evidence confirms the positive relationship between women's participation in the labor force and overall growth. In 2013, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development concluded that a more gender-balanced economy could boost GDP by an estimated 12 percent in OECD countries. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has made similar predictions for non-OECD countries, projecting that greater female economic participation would bring GDP gains of about 12 percent in the United Arab Emirates and 34 percent in Egypt. All told, according to a 2015 report by the McKinsey Global Institute, closing gender gaps in the workplace could add an estimated $12 trillion to global GDP by 2025.

Yet legal barriers to female economic enfranchisement persist in every region of the world, in both developed and developing economies. According to the World Bank, women face gender-based job

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FAISAL NASSER / REUTERS

*A woman's place: at a car show room in Riyadh, October 2017*

restrictions in 155 countries, including limitations on property ownership, spousal consent requirements for employment, and laws that prevent them from signing contracts or accessing credit. In many nations, women are still barred from traditionally male jobs or face limits on the number of hours they can work. In Russia, women cannot seek employment in 456 specific occupations, from woodworking to driving a subway. Argentina prohibits women from entering "dangerous" careers, such as in mining, manufacturing flammable materials, and distilling alcohol. French law prevents women from holding jobs that require carrying 25 kilograms (about 55 pounds). In Pakistan, women cannot clean or adjust machinery.

Many economists and analysts are understandably skeptical about the potential for change. After all, deeply embedded cultural norms underpin these discriminatory legal systems. But there is reason to be hopeful. Recognizing the economic imperative, leaders across the globe are pushing for reform. In the last two years alone, 65 countries enacted almost 100 legal changes to increase women's economic opportunities.

"Fully unleashing the power of women in our economy will create tremendous value but also bring much-needed peace, stability, and prosperity to many regions," Ivanka Trump, an adviser to her father, U.S. President Donald Trump, said at a women's entrepreneurship

forum in October. Progress, however, will require more than lofty rhetoric. To make real strides in unshackling women's economic potential, the United States will have to use its international clout and foreign aid budget to drive legal reform, not just at home but also in countries across the globe where women cannot fully engage in the economy.

## MOMENTUM FOR REFORM

The economic case for eliminating restrictions on women's economic participation is clear. In Saudi Arabia, for example, women earn more than half of all college and graduate degrees but compose only about 20 percent of the labor force. This means that the economic potential of nearly a third of the population remains untapped. As the Saudi economy struggles to cope with low oil prices, increasing female workforce participation has become part of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's ambitious economic modernization effort, known as Saudi Vision 2030. Lifting the driving ban shows that the country is serious about changing the status quo, although many other laws continue to circumscribe the rights of women in the Gulf kingdom.

Even in countries that have far fewer stark gender disparities than Saudi Arabia, leaders have sought to spur economic growth by making it easier for women to participate. In the 1990s, Canadian lawmakers eliminated the so-called marriage penalty, the product of a tax code that had depressed the incomes of secondary earners by requiring couples to pay higher rates in comparison to single taxpayers. In Japan, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's "womenomics" agenda has put female workers at the center of the country's growth strategy by increasing child-care benefits and incentivizing family-friendly workplace reforms. And in Bangladesh, cabinet ministers are seeking to advance economic development by increasing the share of women in the workplace through infrastructure initiatives, such as bringing electricity to rural areas. These projects reduce the burden of unpaid labor by making household work less time consuming, thereby freeing up time for paid work outside the home.

Countries that have pursued such reforms are already seeing results. In India, after two states changed their succession laws in 1994 to grant women the same right to inherit family property as men, women became more likely to open bank accounts, and their families started to enjoy more financial stability, according to a study conducted by

the World Bank in 2010. Similarly, in Ethiopia, since the government eliminated the requirement for a woman to get her husband's consent in order to work outside the home, in 2000, considerably more women have entered the work force and obtained full-time, higher-skilled—and therefore better-paying—jobs. Five years later, women in the three regions where the policy was first implemented were 28 percent more likely to work outside their homes and 33 percent more likely to hold paying jobs than women elsewhere in the country, according to a World Bank analysis. These reforms not only increase women's income but also create a multiplier effect, as women are more likely to invest their earnings in the health, nutrition, and education of their children.

But despite these clear benefits, the pace of change remains far too slow. Saudi women fought for three decades before achieving a repeal of the driving ban. And even after this hard-won victory, the highly restrictive Saudi guardianship system will continue to prevent women from opening a bank account, starting certain businesses, obtaining a passport, or traveling abroad without the permission of a male relative—restrictions that are arguably more significant in limiting their full economic participation than the driving ban.

According to the World Bank, 90 percent of the world's economies still have at least one law on the books that impedes women's economic opportunities. And despite rapid improvements in women's status in other areas—rates of maternal mortality have significantly declined over the last two decades, and the gender gap in primary school education virtually closed over the same time period—women's labor-force participation has actually declined, from 52 percent to 50 percent globally between 1990 and 2016, in part because of the endurance of such legal restrictions.

## HELPING WOMEN SUCCEED

Boosting the pace of change should be a priority for U.S. foreign policy—and in recent years, it has been. In 2009, the Obama administration appointed the first-ever U.S. ambassador for global women's issues to lead U.S. efforts on this front. In 2011, the United States hosted the first-ever Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation ministerial meeting on women in the economy, which led to historic commitments to promote women's inclusion in the workplace, including through legal reform. And in 2014, the United States worked with G-20 leaders to set an ambitious target to increase female labor-force

participation by 25 percent over the next decade, a goal that would add an estimated 100 million women to the global work force.

The Trump administration should sustain these initiatives and develop new policies that will economically enfranchise women throughout the world. Although the administration has been justifiably criticized for undermining women's rights in health, education, and other areas, it has acknowledged the importance of women's economic participation. In July, Washington put diplomatic and financial resources into the development of the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi), a partnership with the World Bank and other countries that will leverage $1 billion in financing to improve women's access to capital. (This program, which the White House has characterized as the brainchild of Ivanka Trump, in fact expands on a model spearheaded during the Obama administration called the Women Entrepreneurs Opportunity Facility, which continues today and similarly aims to help close the gender gap in access to credit.)

But to truly generate returns on its investment in women's entrepreneurship, the current administration must adopt a more comprehensive approach. Greater access to capital will go only so far if women remain legally prohibited from entering into business relationships or holding positions that are available to men. Indeed, some have criticized We-Fi for failing to take on the systemic legal barriers that impede women's economic participation. Others have questioned the commitment of some of the partner states—including Russia, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates—given the gender inequalities enshrined in their laws. Trump's retreat from U.S. leadership on equality and human rights overseas has compounded these doubts. During his May 2017 trip to Saudi Arabia, Trump stated, "We are not here to tell other people how to live, what to do, who to be," at a time when the driving ban, along with various other restrictions on women, remained in full effect. If the administration is serious about advancing women's economic participation globally, it must tackle laws and policies that rig the game against women—and accept the mantle of global leadership, which Trump has spurned.

The United States should start by tying development assistance to progress on women's economic participation, a strategy that would also uphold the administration's commitment to efficient public spending. Some organizations already do this. For example, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, an aid agency funded by the U.S. government,

evaluates the legal position of women in a given country when making decisions about whether to provide assistance, assessing factors including women's ability to sign a contract, register a business, choose where to live, travel freely, serve as the head of a household, and obtain employment without permission. This policy has created "the MCC effect": countries enacting legal reforms in order to attract U.S. aid. In 2006, during negotiations with the MCC, the Parliament of Lesotho ended the practice of giving women the legal status of minors. And in 2007, to secure MCC investment, the Mongolian government enacted property rights reforms that increased the percentage of female landowners and allowed for the collection sex-disaggregated data on land registration to establish a base line for monitoring future progress. The MCC model should be expanded to all U.S. foreign assistance programs to guarantee maximum returns on American investments in women's economic development.

*Women face gender-based job restrictions in 155 countries.*

The United States should also encourage similar reforms within multilateral economic institutions. For example, Washington can use its leverage at the IMF to make equal treatment for women in an economy a precondition for obtaining investment and a positive assessment from the fund. The IMF is already running a pilot program that includes appraisals of legal equality in the process of reviewing conditions in 20 countries that receive IMF loans. It should extend that policy to all recipient countries, and this approach should become standard practice at other multilateral financial institutions as well, starting with regional and subregional development banks.

Finally, Washington should draw attention to the persistent legal barriers that continue to impede women's economic opportunity and broader economic growth. The U.S. Treasury and State Departments could start by releasing an annual ranking of countries, modeled on the State Department's *Trafficking in Persons Report*. This exercise would raise awareness and create competition, incentivizing country-level reforms.

To be sure, legal reforms are just one step on the road to gender parity in the global economy. After all, the reforms must be implemented in the cultural context that gave rise to pervasive discrimination in the first place. And promoting equality on paper will not necessarily improve

the situation of women in practice. Genuine progress requires enforcement, which presents its own challenges.

Still, eliminating legal barriers to women's economic participation is essential. Without these reforms, women cannot establish their right to compete in the marketplace. And research shows that legal reforms can precipitate broader societal changes, particularly when combined with community education initiatives. In Senegal, for example, a ban on female genital mutilation, coupled with an information campaign, caused the practice's incidence to drop far more quickly than in comparable nations where it remained legal. By encouraging legal reforms and supporting grass-roots efforts to shift norms, the United States can meaningfully improve women's economic participation.

In advancing this agenda, Washington should not heed the naysayers who claim that promoting gender equality constitutes cultural imperialism. Such assertions ignore the proliferation of domestic groups fighting for women's inclusion around the world, including in Saudi Arabia, where women have been campaigning for the right to drive since 40 courageous women first staged a demonstration in the early 1990s. These critics also overlook the persuasive economic case for female inclusion, which is already galvanizing change across the globe.

At the end of the day, women's economic participation improves societies and drives growth. Leveling the legal playing field is not just a matter of fairness; it is an economic imperative that countries around the world ignore at their own peril. The time has come for Washington to act—and to use its influence to push others to act, as well.

# The Truth About the Minimum Wage

## Neither Job Killer Nor Cure-All

*Alan Manning*

It has been more than eight years since many of the United States' cashiers, dishwashers, janitors, lifeguards, baggage handlers, baristas, manicurists, retail employees, housekeepers, construction laborers, home health aides, security guards, and other minimum-wage workers last got a raise. The federal minimum wage now stands at just $7.25. In real terms, these workers' earnings have declined by nearly 13 percent since the last hike, in 2009—and have fallen by over one-third since 1968, when the real federal minimum wage was at its peak of $11.38 in today's money (although only $1.60 then). Although most Americans think the minimum wage should go up—one 2017 poll found that 75 percent supported raising it to $9.00 per hour—today's Republican-controlled Congress is unlikely to act.

But the lack of progress on Capitol Hill should not give one the impression that little is happening with regard to the minimum wage. In fact, never has there been so much action—it's just that it is happening at the state and, increasingly, city levels. The "Fight for 15" has become a rallying call on the left and has resulted in some notable successes. Twenty-nine U.S. states plus the District of Columbia now have minimum wages that exceed the federal minimum, as do about 40 municipalities.

Proponents of the minimum wage claim that a high minimum wage is the best way to ensure an acceptable standard of living for all Americans, whereas opponents counter that it is likely to destroy jobs. In the debate between these two camps, feelings often run high.

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*Super-size it: fast-food workers on strike in Los Angeles, August 2013*

LUCY NICHOLSON / REUTERS

But behind the emotion, economics, both theoretical and empirical, can help one make sense of the issues at stake. The bottom line is that there is not much evidence that the minimum wage is currently a job killer in the United States, and so there is room for it to go up. Raising the minimum wage, however, is not a particularly effective tool to combat poverty and share the benefits of growth.

## IN THEORY . . .

The recent experiments with minimum-wage increases in the United States have not gone uncontested. In 2013, voters in SeaTac, Washington, made their city the first in the country to raise its minimum wage to $15 per hour. During the campaign, groups supporting and opposing the measure spent a combined $264 per vote, one of the highest figures on record. And 27 states have passed laws requiring cities to abide by the state minimum. Those behind such pushback

make an appealing argument: that employers forced to pay above-market wages will choose to cut their payroll.

Opponents of the minimum wage have long invoked economic theory to claim that the measure destroys jobs. "Just as no physicist would claim that 'water runs uphill,' no self-respecting economist would claim that increases in the minimum wage increase employment," the Nobel Prize–winning economist James Buchanan wrote in *The Wall Street Journal* in 1996. "Such a claim, if seriously advanced, becomes equivalent to a denial that there is even minimal scientific content in economics, and that, in consequence, economists can do nothing but write as advocates for ideological interests."

Strong stuff, but wrong stuff. That view is rooted in either ignorance or dishonesty. What Buchanan really meant is that the textbook model of perfect competition taught as a benchmark in many introductory economics courses predicts that raising wages above the level that the market would dictate will move the economy from a point where the demand and supply of labor are in balance to one where demand has fallen below supply—in other words, a place in which there are fewer jobs. Some claim that the law of demand tells us that the minimum wage must destroy jobs just as surely as the law of gravity tells us that an apple will fall to the ground.

But it is important not to mistake the labor market on planet Econ 101 for the labor market on planet Earth. The predictions of this model are not akin to the laws of physics, and alarm bells should go off anytime an economist, even a Nobel laureate, claims that they are.

The predictions of any economic model are only as good as the assumptions behind it. And the assumption of perfect competition is a bad approximation for real-world labor markets. Perfect competition assumes that labor markets are frictionless, meaning that hiring workers costs employers nothing in time or money (so there are no vacancies) and that workers can always find an alternative to their current job (so there is no unemployment). In that world, finding or losing a job is no big deal, and if an employer tried to cut wages by just one cent, all its workers would leave right away.

In the real world, of course, workers celebrate getting jobs and grow depressed when they lose them, since it takes time to find a new one. Employers, for their part, know that it takes time and money to hire workers. And they know that if they lower wages, they

may find it harder to recruit and retain workers, but not all of the existing ones will quit immediately. There are economic models that capture these features, perhaps taught more often in Econ 301 than in Econ 101. And these models imply that the relationship between minimum wages and employment is more complicated than the model of perfect competition predicts.

In a perfectly competitive market, a minimum wage above the natural level moves the labor market to a place where employment is determined by the demand for labor alone. Some people are unemployed, but no company has any difficulty in filling vacancies for minimum-wage workers. In a more accurate model, by contrast, employment is influenced by both demand and supply factors. Vacancies and unemployment coexist, because one cannot instantaneously fill open positions with the unemployed who want jobs. An increase in the minimum wage may depress the demand for labor, but by making work more attractive, it also raises the supply of labor. The overall employment level, therefore, may go up or may go down.

Economic theory does not imply that a minimum wage always destroys jobs, nor does it imply that it will never do so. All it tells us is that the impact of minimum wages on jobs is not an issue that can be settled with pen and paper; it is an empirical question.

## . . . AND IN PRACTICE

Until 25 years ago, the conventional wisdom among economists was that the empirical evidence proved that the minimum wage destroys jobs and that the only interesting question was, How many? But beginning in the 1990s, new research cast doubt on that conclusion. The key work was the 1995 book by David Card and Alan Krueger, *Myth and Measurement: The New Economics of the Minimum Wage*, which concluded that much of the existing literature was flawed. Krueger's position as chief economist at the U.S. Department of Labor at a time when the Clinton administration was advocating a raise in the minimum wage only increased the controversy surrounding the book.

The debate on the impact of the minimum wage has raged back and forth ever since. Each new study claiming that the minimum wage costs jobs is met by another study critiquing it, and vice versa. A lot of this debate concerns issues of little strategic importance, generating more heat than light. Much of the research, for example, focuses on teenagers, the group most affected by the minimum wage, with

25 percent of them reporting hourly wages at or below the minimum. But teens account for a small and shrinking share of total employment, now representing less than two percent of all hours worked in the United States. And less than ten percent of all minimum-wage hours are worked by teens, down from 25 percent in 1979. So findings about teenagers' incomes have little to say about the overall impact of the minimum wage. Nonetheless, a Congressional Budget Office report in 2014 used evidence (and selective evidence at that) from the teen labor market to estimate the impact of proposed increases in the federal minimum wage on total employment.

*There is good evidence that the minimum wage boosts the incomes of the workers earning it.*

Setting these problems aside, it is important to note that although some studies claim to have found that minimum wages in the United States reduce employment, none of those is very robust, statistically speaking. If a different (but equally reasonable) model of the relationship between minimum wages and employment is used, the job-killing results often disappear. This conclusion is borne out by a number of meta-studies that have combined the estimates from many different studies to get some idea of the average estimate. There is no reason to think that, up to the levels of a minimum wage observed in these data, an increase will cause workers to lose their jobs.

Although the evidence for the minimum wage as a job killer is thin, there is some evidence that it has other negative effects. It does appear to push up prices to some degree, although the effect is small, because minimum-wage labor often accounts for a small share of the cost of a good or service. A study of a 25 percent increase in the minimum wage in San Jose, California, in 2013 found that restaurant prices rose by just 1.45 percent.

There is good evidence, however, that the minimum wage boosts the incomes of the workers earning it. Whereas the studies of the impact of minimum wages on employment are conflicting, the studies of the impact on earnings point in one direction: not only do workers paid the minimum wage see their incomes go up accordingly, but so do those paid slightly above the old minimum.

Studies of other countries support the conclusion that the minimum wage can increase pay without reducing employment. In 1999, for

example, the United Kingdom introduced a national minimum wage; an independent commission that has researched the impact extensively has yet to find any strong evidence of job losses. That has remained the case after 2016, when the government introduced a much higher minimum wage for workers over the age of 25, which now stands at about $9.80 per hour. In 2015, Germany introduced a national minimum wage (currently about $10.30 per hour), and early studies of its impact also suggest little effect on jobs. Opponents of the minimum wage often look to France for evidence for their side, since the country has both a high minimum wage (about $11.30 per hour) and high unemployment (nearly ten percent). But the main brake on employment there is probably not the minimum wage; it is restrictive labor laws.

Policymakers around the world have begun to take notice of all this accumulating evidence. The International Monetary Fund and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development—institutions that once criticized minimum wages—now recommend that when set at a reasonable level, a minimum wage should be part of a well-designed labor policy.

But what is a reasonable level? The experiences of the United Kingdom and Germany may be the most relevant for the U.S. debate, because the minimum wage is higher in those countries, both in absolute terms and as a share of the median worker's earnings. (There are some U.S. states, such as Arkansas and West Virginia, where the minimum wage represents a similar fraction of the median worker's earnings, but not many.) Thus, the United States appears to have considerable room for an increase. Moving it to around $10.50 would be very unlikely to raise unemployment. Indeed, a minimum wage at that level would end up constituting a similar proportion of the average worker's earnings as do the minimum wages on the books in the United Kingdom and Germany. And it would still be less, in real terms, than the one that was in place in 1968.

## HOW HIGH IS TOO HIGH?

At some point, a high enough minimum wage would start to destroy jobs. The problem is that no one can say where exactly that point lies. I know of only one study for any country that seems to demonstrate a clear negative impact of a national minimum wage, a study of Denmark's experience by Claus Thustrup Kreiner, Daniel Reck, and Peer Ebbesen

Skov. When Danes turn 18, the minimum wage rises by 40 percent, to something close to $15 per hour, and the study found that their employment rate dropped by a third. Employers switch to employing 17-year-olds, who are similarly skilled but can be paid much less. That study, however, does not necessarily tell us about the impact of a minimum-wage rise that affects all workers, as most employers cannot switch to similar but cheaper labor. And studies of similar age-related rises in the United Kingdom have found no effect on employment.

*The minimum wage is a particularly blunt instrument for reducing poverty.*

But the United States may soon find out what happens when the minimum wage rises dramatically. If implemented, the proposed measures in many U.S. cities would increase the minimum wage to new highs and affect a larger-than-ever share of workers. After Seattle increased its hourly minimum wage to $13, part of a projected plan to increase it to $15, the city commissioned a study by economists at the University of Washington to look into the effects. The study, released in June 2017, concluded that the measure had harmed the low-wage workers it was intended to help, since it caused employers to reduce hours and delay new hiring. But those findings have been contested and are unlikely to be the final word; there will be many other studies to come, of Seattle and elsewhere.

What is likely, however, is that some credible study finding that the minimum wage has cost jobs will eventually turn up. This is almost inevitable, because those campaigning for a higher minimum wage are not motivated by a finely calibrated assessment of the costs and benefits to low-wage workers. Rather, they have rallied around the cause of a "living wage," meaning an income that would allow workers to have what could be regarded as a decent standard of living—something that is very different from economists' idea of the highest wage that a labor market can bear. Market economies do not on their own guarantee that all people will be able to find an employer prepared to pay them a wage that gives them the opportunity to earn a decent standard of living for them and their family. If activists determine that a single mother of two must make, say, $20 an hour to get by, and they succeed in convincing the legislature to raise the minimum wage to that level, then it is entirely plausible that unemployment will rise.

When a study showing such an effect does arrive, it will be important to draw the right inference. Some will incorrectly conclude that the minimum wage costs jobs—full stop. Rather, one should conclude that such a study tells us something about the appropriate level for a minimum wage, not whether a minimum wage should be used at all. Economists would do well to shift their research focus, then. The question should be not, What is the effect of the minimum wage on employment? but, What is the appropriate level for the minimum wage?

## WAGES AND WANT

Even though most sweeping arguments against minimum-wage increases have proved misguided, it is important to be realistic about what the policy can achieve. Supporters often argue that the minimum wage reduces poverty. That is true, but it is a particularly blunt instrument for doing so. As an hourly rate, the minimum wage on its own reveals little about the household income of those who earn it. That depends on how many hours are worked, how many other adults there are in the household and how much they earn, and how many dependents there are. A minimum wage of $7.25 means something very different for a teenager working a summer job as a lifeguard than it does for a woman who has to support her family of four through shifts at McDonald's. A federal minimum wage of $15 would mean that the vast majority of households would have earnings above the poverty line if they had at least one full-time worker. But there would still be some households with only part-time workers. Moreover, given how high $15 is compared to the historical high-water mark and compared to the minimum wage in similar countries, such a level would most likely be reached not on a nationwide basis but only in certain cities. In other words, the minimum wage is unlikely to eliminate poverty on its own.

Policies such as the earned-income tax credit, a federal benefit linked to a taxpayer's income and number of dependents, are also needed. But the earned-income tax credit shouldn't be used alone, either. The risk with a tax credit is that employers will use the federal subsidy as a reason to cut wages, effectively pocketing some of the income that was intended for low-income workers. The minimum wage stops employers from doing this.

There is another important limit to the minimum wage. The United States doesn't just have a problem with low wages at the bottom of the

income distribution; it also has a problem generating growing real wages for the average worker. The gains from what economic growth there has been have flowed disproportionately to those at the top of the income distribution, who already have the most. The United States is not the only Western economy grappling with stagnant or declining living standards for the average citizen, and in recent years, populists on both the left and the right have fed off the resulting widespread dissatisfaction with self-serving political elites. On the left, one symptom of this discontent has been the push for much higher minimum wages.

But the minimum wage is very unlikely to ever affect the earnings of the average worker, and so it will do little to reverse the economic forces that have upended politics around the globe. There is evidence that minimum wages can boost earnings for people making more than the minimum, but these spillover effects peter out before one gets anywhere close to the average worker. If the United States is to share the benefits of growth across the population, it will take much more than a higher minimum wage to do so.

# REVIEWS & RESPONSES


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# Beware Greeks Bearing Rifts

## Why Varoufakis Couldn't Fix the Debt Crisis

*Martin Sandbu*

*Adults in the Room: My Battle With the European and American Deep Establishment* BY YANIS VAROUFAKIS. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2017, 560 pp.

The Abrahamic religions take a radical view of debt. Charging excess interest is the sin of usury, and outstanding obligations are supposed to be periodically canceled during jubilee years. The old moralists understood the dangers of insisting on the repayment of unpayable debts. But the global financial crisis has revealed that we badly need to relearn this wisdom.

A debt crisis occurs when the credit that has sustained spending suddenly dries up, making it difficult or impossible for debtors to service their debts. This is what happened to both U.S. investment banks and eurozone governments from 2008 on (as well as to many homeowners on both sides of the Atlantic): without the easy lending that had been available before the crash, they ran out of cash when their obligations fell due.

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Policymakers have two options in such a crisis: they can either bail out debtors so their debts are honored, but restrict new borrowing until the debt shrinks, or suspend or write down debtors' past obligations, so that new creditors need not fear throwing good money after bad. Religious wisdom counsels the latter. The eurozone, fatally, chose the former.

When investors abandoned governments and banks in the eurozone in 2010, EU leaders, including Jean-Claude Trichet, the president of the European Central Bank, insisted that Greece, Ireland, and Portugal would have to pay their debts in full and back the debts of their banks to boot. Bailout loans made this possible, and in return, debtor governments agreed to slash spending, raise taxes, and pass economic reforms ordered by the "troika" of creditors—the ECB, the European Commission, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Such policies were not confined to the crisis countries. Scared by the debt-market panic, all the eurozone governments tightened their belts. Although there was no sign of inflation on the horizon, the ECB raised interest rates. And instead of restructuring their own debts (giving bondholders a "haircut," in financial parlance), struggling banks received taxpayer-funded bailouts, large enough to prevent formal bankruptcy but too small to heal the banking system.

Ultimately, this effort to protect investors from losses caused much greater pain for everyone else. Instead of resolving the problem, these decisions created a second eurozone recession and outright depressions in the hardest-hit countries. Perversely, this worsened the

debt problem. Experts disagree about whether the crisis was avoidable. But there is no question that bad policy made things worse than they had to be—and nowhere more so than in Greece.

Athens was the first to get locked out of financial markets in 2010, after the global recession pushed its already weak public finances into a yawning deficit of 15 percent of GDP. In 2010, and again in 2012, it was also the first to be bailed out, to the tune of hundreds of billions of euros, in return for compliance with harsh austerity measures and structural reforms drawn up by the troika. These terms devastated the economy. By 2013, the unemployment rate had reached 25 percent, and the average Greek was 40 percent poorer. A bailout policy designed to avoid default—almost 90 percent of the money went toward repaying existing creditors and propping up Greek banks—had left Athens' debt burden greater than ever.

When desperate Greeks elected a radical left-wing party, Syriza, in January 2015, it was the first time a eurozone government had come to power that earnestly intended to oppose the troika's policies. The Syriza experiment put two big questions to the test: Was there a viable alternative to bailouts, austerity, and structural reform imposed from the outside? And would the eurozone allow people to democratically choose a radically different economic model?

The answer to both questions would appear to be no. After six months of negotiations with the troika, Greece's new prime minister, Alexis Tsipras, capitulated, accepting a new loan on terms that were even harsher than those he had been elected to reject. But the truth may be more complicated.

At the center of these events was Yanis Varoufakis, a firebrand academic economist who had long decried the eurozone's failure to more radically restructure Greek debt (the 2012 bailout had featured a substantial but insufficient restructuring). As Greece's finance minister in the Syriza government, he should have been well positioned to negotiate a better agreement with the troika, but by his own admission, he failed. *Adults in the Room*, his memoir from this period, offers an insight into why—but perhaps not the one Varoufakis believes.

## AN UPHILL BATTLE

Although Varoufakis entered office armed with largely correct convictions about what ailed Greece's economy, he held a weak hand from the beginning. The outgoing center-right government had set a trap for its successors by allowing the previous bailout program to expire just a month into Syriza's term in power. An expiration with no new deal gave the ECB a pretext to force the closure of Greek banks (which eventually happened in June 2015). The prospect of citizens unable to access their cash forced Syriza's inexperienced radicals into high-stakes negotiations with the clock ticking against them.

It quickly got worse. According to Varoufakis, the troika cared more about forcing Athens to comply with its policy demands than about whether those policies would help Greece's recovery, or even allow it to return the bailout money. Varoufakis claims that many of his counterparts ignored his analysis and proposals, complaining, "I might as well have been singing the Swedish national anthem." And in his telling, it

was worse when they did listen. Varoufakis says that in his first meeting with Christine Lagarde, the IMF's managing director, she admitted that the bailout program would fail but then explained "with calm and gentle honesty" that it was too late to change course—too much political capital had already gone into the program.

Varoufakis spreads the blame widely. In his account, the Germans had ideological blinders that made them axiomatically opposed to debt relief on Greece's rescue loans. Their allies were sycophantic, and their natural opponents—especially the French—were submissive. ("France is not what it used to be," Varoufakis quotes Michel Sapin, then France's finance minister, as lamenting. In contrast, he depicts Emmanuel Macron, who was then France's economy minister, as a trustworthy ally who did what he could to help.) European Commission and IMF staffers suffered from rigid minds, big egos, and flawed economic models. Most of his Greek colleagues were duplicitous and covertly aligned with the troika or Greek oligarchs. Tsipras comes across as fatally indecisive and, ultimately, a coward.

This finger-pointing makes for exciting reading, and Varoufakis enthusiastically spills the beans on his many closed-door, race-against-the-clock meetings. But the book should be read with caution. It will be hard to verify many of these anecdotes until more participants publish memoirs—and some of the quotes are implausibly detailed and eloquent. Nevertheless, most of what Varoufakis says rings true, and many who have been close to these events will share his low opinion of some of the key players.

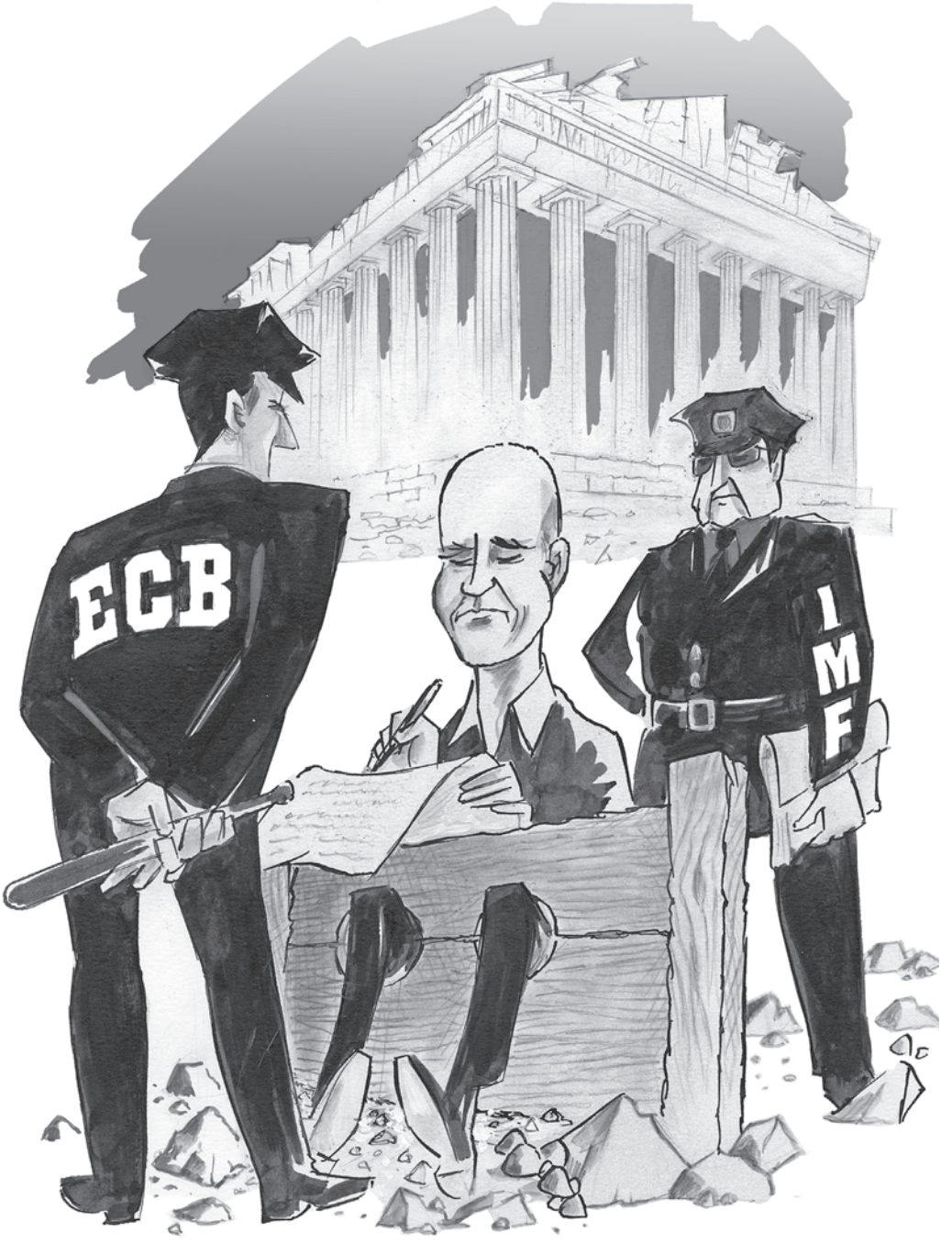
Yet the book also reveals Varoufakis' own weaknesses. Above all, it shows that embracing several roles at once—left-wing activist, academic analyst, and public servant—may have boosted his popular image, but it undermined his ability to master politics.

## DAVID AND GOLIATH

His messianic zeal for debt relief helped Varoufakis make an immediate international impression. On his first trip as finance minister, to the United Kingdom, he became an overnight star, befriending past and present Tory chancellors and quoting the poet Dylan Thomas on the BBC: "Do not go gentle into that good night, . . . Rage, rage against the dying of the light." With hindsight, one can see that those lines, with their promise of temporary dignity before an inevitable demise, encapsulate Varoufakis' six-month tenure as finance minister, which ended in his resignation and Greece's capitulation to further austerity measures.

Always the showman, Varoufakis fills his memoir with literary allusions and excerpts from his own grandiloquent speeches. He presents himself as David fighting the Goliath of a neoliberal system; consider the book's subtitle: *My Battle With the European and American Deep Establishment*. Few members of that establishment come out looking good in Varoufakis' telling. For example, Jeroen Dijsselbloem, the Dutch politician who is president of the Eurogroup of the eurozone's finance ministers, is "abrupt and aggressive," "his voice dripping with condescension," "seemingly apoplectic."

It is hard not to sense a degree of condescension in Varoufakis himself when he dishes it out. His style, however popular with his voters, must have chipped away at the goodwill of those




he needed to win over—not least because he regularly told them that what they had done before he arrived on the scene was all wrong.

Why would a politician who needed a deal delight in rubbing his opponents the wrong way? Presumably, he sincerely believed that the force of his ideas alone would sway the wills of the powerful. But while confidence can get you far in politics, overconfidence can lead you astray.

**PROFESSOR VAROUFAKIS**

In his memoir, Varoufakis employs formal game theory to justify his political decisions, mapping out a "game tree" that would not be out of place in an economics classroom (indeed, he says he used it in one of his university courses).

This game has three stages. In the first stage, the troika decides whether it will play hardball or respond to Syriza's election by moderating its demands. If the troika backs down, an agreement is reached. If not, the game progresses to the second stage, where Syriza can either capitulate or hold out for a better deal. If Syriza honors its campaign pledge to stand firm, the game enters the final stage, in which the troika must either compromise with Athens or push Greece out of the eurozone.

The logic of this game guided Varoufakis' actions. He believed that the troika would compromise only if he could make Greece's creditors believe that Syriza would rather see Greece forced out of the eurozone than bow to their demands. This would call the troika's bluff: if the creditors considered a Greek exit ("Grexit") sufficiently costly, they would renegotiate. To sustain this strategy, Varoufakis says that he tried to impress on his own prime minister the need for a twofold deterrent. To make Grexit look maximally painful for the troika, Varoufakis wanted the government to signal its willingness to unilaterally default on Greek bonds held by the ECB, which would inflict politically toxic losses on the central bank. And to make Grexit easier to carry out if necessary, he began to develop a parallel payment system based on tax credits, which could be quickly turned into new currency if Greece had to leave the eurozone.

But Varoufakis never triggered his deterrents. In his own assessment, this was a mistake, because it became increasingly clear (as he tells it) that Tsipras would bow to the creditors' demands. But the opposite may be true. By signaling that he would rather Greece leave the eurozone than give in, Varoufakis may have convinced the other side that he actually wanted Grexit. In that case, there was little reason for the creditors to compromise, since they could not keep Greece in the eurozone against its will.

His strategy also played into the hands of those across the table who may have preferred Grexit (Wolfgang Schäuble, Germany's finance minister, notoriously proposed a "timeout" for Greece) by allowing them to pin the blame on him. Varoufakis relates a conversation with Schäuble in which he asked his German counterpart what he would do in Varoufakis' position. Schäuble reportedly answered that "a patriot" would reject the troika's terms, even if doing so would lead to Grexit.

Varoufakis quotes his own words from a *New York Times* op-ed in February 2015, in which he wrote, "It would be pure folly to think of the current deliberations between Greece and our partners as a bargaining game to be won or lost via bluffs and tactical subterfuge." But there is little evidence that he followed his own advice. Any negotiator worth his salt must understand the game he faces, but the best negotiators aim to change the game itself and create common ground where none existed before. That is where the analyst's work ends and the politician's begins.

## FAILURE TO LAUNCH

Varoufakis vividly describes the plots, ambushes, duplicity, and even ostracism he faced during his six-month tenure. But the book also reveals something that its author does not dwell on: a willingness of the other side to compromise. Early on, both the European Commission and the IMF come across as ready to make something like a fresh start with Greece. As late as April 2015, two and a half months into the negotiations, Varoufakis depicts Lagarde as genuinely open to a revised program that would accommodate Greece's priorities, such as being the author of its own structural reforms. So why didn't such an agreement happen? To say that Schäuble sabotaged it all, as Varoufakis very nearly does, raises the question of how Schäuble was able to do so. Ultimately, the book cannot paper over the fact that Varoufakis could not hold up his side of a new bargain.

Varoufakis' Finance Ministry never came up with policies substantial enough to compete with those laid down by the troika. Negotiators representing the creditors rightly dismissed early Greek proposals as frivolous. Varoufakis occasionally mentions sensible initiatives, such as an algorithmic search system to identify tax cheats, but he then says very little about what happened to them. Of course, implementing programs takes time, but if these and other reforms were well under way or already producing good effects, why couldn't the creditors be convinced to support them? If Varoufakis pays so little attention to them in the book, perhaps he also paid little attention to them while in office.

Even many of Varoufakis' best ideas seem like afterthoughts. For example, he overlooked the potential of the parallel payment system, which would have created a means of monetary transaction alongside the euro. Varoufakis saw this tool solely as a way to pave a smoother exit out of the eurozone. But even within the single currency, a parallel payment system could have helped mitigate the lack of credit that resulted from a banking system that was bleeding deposits. Had this plan been implemented, Varoufakis might have been able to boost growth a little and reduce the harm caused by bank closures and capital control. Both outcomes would have strengthened the Greek government's bargaining power by giving it more breathing space.

Varoufakis also supported restructuring Greece's failing banks, which were full of bad loans after years of economic crisis. Separating good from bad assets would have created new, healthier banks, which would have supported the economy and mitigated the ECB's threat to force bank closures. So why was this not done? Varoufakis claims that when he assumed office, Syriza immediately transferred power over the banks from the Finance Ministry to the deputy prime minister's office (he intimates that this move was to protect powerful oligarchs), but he says nothing about trying to reassert control. Whoever is to blame, the failure to act early on the banks made the Greek negotiating position much more desperate.

The book also reveals that Varoufakis' personal authority was weaker than he lets on. He describes senior staff members undermining him from the outset, but he did not fight to have them removed. This was a symptom

of a deeper challenge: Varoufakis had little support inside Syriza (he was not a member), and he relied entirely on his relationship with Tsipras for his authority. At his very first Eurogroup meeting, facing strong pressure from the rest of the eurozone members, he wobbled on his no-capitulation strategy and referred the decision not to compromise up to Tsipras. None of this suggests a fully empowered negotiator. Indeed, Tsipras later sidelined Varoufakis by opening a parallel channel of communication to negotiate with the creditors.

## THE ESTABLISHMENT HAS NO CLOTHES

Varoufakis faced enormous challenges from the start. Still, his memoir suggests that failure was not preordained. The image that emerges of him—a picture of moral overbearance coupled with strategic miscalculation and negligent policymaking—is not especially flattering. A more adept politician could have played the game better and perhaps nudged the eurozone to distance itself from past mistakes.

Then again, maybe diplomatic success is not the metric by which Varoufakis should be judged. He is, first and foremost, an activist, who is more comfortable protesting outside a government building than making decisions inside it. In the book's first chapter, Varoufakis recounts a late-night meeting with former U.S. Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers, who taught him the omerta of establishment politics over drinks in a hotel bar: "Never turn against other insiders and never talk to outsiders about what insiders say or do."

With this book, Varoufakis loudly reclaims his outsider status by telling the story of Greece's negotiations as he experienced them: the pettiness of individual players, the incompetence of much of the creditors' technical analysis, and the bullying of a small bankrupt state at the hands of larger powers. Such revelations constitute a genuine service. By stripping the establishment of any remaining mystique, Varoufakis shows ordinary citizens that much better leadership is possible, and he encourages outsiders to demand that insiders raise their game. But for that to happen, those leaders will just have to be better politicians than Varoufakis.

# Reform or Revolution?

## Iran's Path to Democracy

*Haleh Esfandiari*

*Democracy in Iran: Why It Failed and How It Might Succeed*
BY MISAGH PARSA. Harvard University Press, 2016, 416 pp.

Iran has often seemed to be on the brink of democracy. During the twentieth century, the country experienced three major political upheavals: the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–11, the oil nationalization movement of 1951–53, and the Islamic Revolution of 1978–79. Each differed from the others in important ways, but all constituted a reaction to corruption, misrule, and autocracy. They all reflected the spread of literacy, the rising expectations of a growing middle class, and the impatience of a wealthy business community with official mismanagement. They were all characterized by an aspiration for some form of democratic government. Yet each time, that aspiration was disappointed.

The constitution of 1906 created a parliament to check the power of the shah and give the Iranian people ultimate control of their country. Yet two decades later, the shah once again ruled as an absolute monarch, parliament had become a rubber stamp, and the new constitution was largely ignored. The 1951–53 movement was fueled principally by a demand for the nationalization of Iran's oil industry, then controlled by the British government. Its leader, Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq, was a populist, a reformer, and a champion of parliamentary, rather than royal, authority. Yet once again, what some thought was a prospect of democracy was cut short when, in 1953, Mosaddeq was overthrown in a coup engineered by the CIA and British intelligence. The shah retained his throne, and a royal crackdown on political activity followed.

In *Democracy in Iran*, Misagh Parsa examines why the forces of repression have always gained the upper hand over Iran's democratic impulses and how democracy might eventually emerge in Iran. He touches briefly on the Constitutional Revolution and the oil nationalization movement. But his main focus is on what he regards as the failed democratic promise of the 1978–79 Islamic Revolution. He concludes that, given the character of the Islamic Republic, if democracy does come to Iran, it will do so through revolution, not gradual reform.

The Islamic Revolution, Parsa believes, could plausibly have led to a democratic government. As he points out, it was brought about by a broad coalition: seminary and university students, shopkeepers, merchants, intellectuals, and blue- and white-collar workers. The clergy mobilized large and diverse crowds to take to the streets. But even those who marched for revolution under the banner of Islam and who later voted to create an Islamic republic did not anticipate the extreme theocracy that

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the clerics would later establish. The movement's leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, led many to believe that he supported a form of democratic rule, was committed to freedom of the press and freedom of expression, and had no interest in governing the country himself or having other clerics run the government.

Yet in emphasizing the democratic aspirations of many who marched in 1978–79, Parsa fails to convey the extent to which Khomeini was committed to the idea of an Islamic state headed by the clergy and does not give sufficient weight to the power of the clergy as a body. Islam figured prominently in the values and political views of the merchants, shopkeepers, and students who demonstrated and in the platforms of the political groups, such as the Iran Freedom Movement, that supported the revolution. The marchers' principal slogan—"Independence, Liberty, Islamic Republic"—did not mention democracy. Khomeini, no doubt coached by the secular advisers who gathered around him during his brief exile in Paris in 1978, did pay lip service to democratic principles. But in his famous treatise on Islamic government, composed in 1970, during his far longer exile in Iraq, Khomeini made clear that clerics should rule in an Islamic state. Even in Paris, he insisted that sharia should prevail in a true Islamic government. After the overthrow of the monarchy, Iranians voted in huge majorities for an explicitly Islamic republic and for a constitution that placed a clergyman, Khomeini, at its apex.

## THEOCRACY ESTABLISHED

Central to the revolutionary project was the doctrine of *velayat-e faqih*, the idea that ultimate power in an Islamic state must be vested in the most eminent living Islamic jurist, with the clergy determining the basic framework of the laws, the judicial system, and how the country is ruled. The result, Parsa writes, was that "Khomeini and his allies moved to establish a theocracy. They relied on ideological, political, and repressive mechanisms to gain popular support [and] demobilize the growing opposition." Even as Iran's new leader espoused policies of distributive justice in favor of the poor and the oppressed, he set about ruthlessly eliminating rival claimants to power and silencing dissent.

In this campaign, as Parsa recounts, Khomeini and his lieutenants deployed religious police; the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the parallel military force beside the regular army, responsible for protecting Iran's Islamic character; and club-wielding thugs from the vigilante group Ansar-e Hezbollah (Partisans of the Party of God). Members of these groups disrupted dissident gatherings, while the new regime closed down newspapers critical of the emerging order and banned opposition organizations, including the Kurdish Democratic Party, which Khomeini labeled "the party of the devil." Hundreds of Kurds died in skirmishes with the Revolutionary Guards or were executed after being convicted of crimes such as "making war against God"—in other words, of rebellion. Other movements that campaigned on behalf of ethnic minorities met a similar fate. Finally, the clergy around Khomeini turned against even their former allies. Radical left-wing groups, such as the Mujahideen-e Khalq, and more moderate ones, such as the National Front and


*You say you want a revolution? Protesters in Tehran, December 2009*

STRINGER / REUTERS

the Iran Freedom Movement, headed by Mehdi Bazargan, Khomeini's first prime minister, had initially supported Khomeini, but within a few months, they found themselves targets of the regime.

The country's first president after the revolution was Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, an independent who tried to chart a moderate path during the crisis that began in November 1979 when revolutionaries captured 66 Americans at the U.S. embassy in Tehran. (They held 52 of them hostage for over a year.) But Bani-Sadr became mired in conflict with senior clerics and was impeached by the parliament in June 1981, just 16 months into his presidency. When his followers rose up, Parsa writes, "a veritable bloodbath soon followed." The clerical regime put to death 2,665 political prisoners in six months. "Even the highest religious leaders," Parsa says, "were not immune." Ayatollah Mahmoud Taleghani, a popular liberal cleric, was marginalized. Grand Ayatollah Kazem Shariat-Madari, who rejected the doctrine of *velayat-e faqih*, was placed under house arrest.

## REFORM AND REPRESSION

Parsa shows that repression has remained a prominent feature of the Islamic Republic ever since, but also that dissent was never eliminated. The ideas of reform, the rule of law, and democratic and accountable government remained alive. There have always been schisms within the ruling elite, Parsa observes, and outspoken, dissenting voices have always made themselves heard, especially on subjects such as the murder of political prisoners, the banning of newspapers, and election tampering. In 1981, one of Khomeini's grandsons told the BBC that the Islamic government was "worse than that of the Shah and the Mongols"

and accused the regime of "killing people or jailing them for no reason."

From time to time, these undercurrents have come to the surface. In 1997, Mohammad Khatami was elected president by a large majority on promises of greater social, political, and press freedoms and respect for the rule of law and privacy rights. Khatami was, as Parsa points out, no revolutionary. He did not want to overthrow the Islamic Republic or to challenge the regime's foundations. But he did attempt to ease controls on the press and political activity, to face down the security agencies, and to advance a market-oriented economic agenda.

Yet, Parsa adds, the conservative forces only intensified their repressive tactics, and Khatami's reformist moment proved short lived. The backlash began in 1998 with a string of reprisals against leading moderates. That year, two reformist leaders were killed in their homes and the bodies of two murdered secular dissident writers were discovered in different parts of Tehran. They were killed, it is widely believed, by the security agencies. Abdollah Nouri, a leading cleric and Khatami's interior minister, and Gholamhossein Karbaschi, the mayor of Tehran and a Khatami supporter, were jailed on trumped-up charges.

The next year, Iran underwent one of the most explosive moments of public dissent in its recent history. In July, after the courts shut down a popular, liberally inclined newspaper, *Salam*, protests erupted at the University of Tehran. The regime responded harshly, sending security forces into the dormitories before dawn to beat up students in their beds and to trash their living quarters.

The incident spelled trouble for the establishment. As Parsa notes, in the two decades since the revolution, the university student population had increased almost tenfold, from around 160,000 in the early 1980s to 1.5 million in 2000. Only a minority normally engaged in political activism, but it did not take much to politicize the rest.

The initial protest and crackdown at the University of Tehran provided the necessary spark. Over the next six days, the unrest spread to universities in towns and cities across the country. Student leaders expanded their demands, calling for freedom of the press, the release of political prisoners, and government accountability. They shouted slogans such as "Down with dictators!" and "Death to despots!" and even called on the supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, to resign.

At first, many senior clerics and government officials, including Khamenei himself, had at least publicly expressed sympathy and cautious support for the students and decried violence against them. But as the protests spread and grew more radical in tone, the official attitude quickly changed. Paramilitary forces from the Revolutionary Guards were sent in to beat up demonstrators. The police arrested a large number of students. Some simply disappeared. Senior officials labeled the students "rioters and bandits." Khamenei claimed that they were supported "by bankrupt political groups and encouraged by foreign enemies." A massive counter-demonstration was organized to support the government. As the protests were spreading, 24 Revolutionary Guard commanders sent an open letter to Khatami warning him that they were losing patience with "democracy," which was leading to "anarchy." The message was clear: the conservative establishment's

tolerance for dissent was strictly limited. If things went too far, it would not hesitate to use force.

The crackdown continued until the end of Khatami's tenure, in 2005. Reformist newspapers were shuttered, and dozens of pro-reform activists were arrested, as were 60 members of the Iran Freedom Movement. The Council of Guardians, a constitutional watchdog group controlled by conservatives, vetoed numerous progressive laws enacted by parliament, including bills that would have expanded women's and civil rights and barred security forces from entering university campuses. Khatami, it turned out, had no control over the security forces, the intelligence agencies, the judiciary, or the courts. The result, Parsa writes, was "conservative ascendancy and intensified repression."

In the 2004 parliamentary elections, after dozens of reformist candidates had been disqualified by the Council of Guardians, the conservatives won a majority. The victor in the next year's presidential election was Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a populist who, in Parsa's words, "pursued policies that exacerbated the state's growing authoritarian nature and cut short hopes for political reform." The new president "lost no time in introducing key changes that reflected state interest in greater control, politicization and militarization of society."

## DASHED HOPES

And yet it was under Ahmadinejad that Iran saw its most serious challenge to the conservative establishment since 1979. In 2009, Ahmadinejad, implicitly supported by the ruling establishment, including the supreme leader and many commanders of the Revolutionary Guards, ran for a second term as president. He was challenged by two prominent politicians: Mir Hossein Mousavi, a former prime minister, and Mehdi Karroubi, a leading cleric and former speaker of parliament. Both were establishment figures, but both campaigned on platforms of reform and an end to Iran's international isolation. Such was the hunger for change that both attracted widespread support. Mousavi's campaign rallies were especially large and enthusiastic. Encouraged by the crowds, Mousavi and Karroubi grew bolder in their criticism of the government and their calls for reform.

On the eve of the vote, all the signs—the size of the opposition rallies, the enthusiasm of Mousavi's supporters, and the large turnout on voting day itself—pointed to a Mousavi victory. But when the results were announced, suspiciously early, Ahmadinejad was declared the winner by an improbably wide margin. Protests broke out the next day. Huge crowds poured out into the streets of Tehran, shouting, "Where is my vote?" Over the following days, much to the consternation of the regime, the Green Movement (named for the color adopted by Mousavi's supporters during the campaign) kept growing and began calling for radical change, well beyond the moderate reforms espoused by the two opposition leaders.

The regime responded harshly. Parsa describes the crackdown in vivid detail. Large numbers of riot police and paramilitaries were sent into the streets, where they arrested protesters and rounded up leaders sympathetic to the reform movement. The government shut down opposition political organizations, banned demonstrations (they took place

anyway), and directed a barrage of propaganda against the protesters. Several demonstrators were killed in battles with security forces in the streets or by sharpshooters on rooftops. Once the protests were quelled, the reprisals began. In one instance, several prominent former officials and members of parliament were put on trial together, revealing deep splits within the ruling elite.

"The Green Movement," Parsa writes, "shook the foundation of the Islamic Republic like no other event in the thirty years since the revolution. The movement unfolded so rapidly that it quickly resembled the last phase of the 1979 revolution." Yet it failed in part because, according to Parsa, its leaders, Mousavi and Karroubi, were gradualist reformers, not the agents of radical change sought by the crowds. On several occasions, Mousavi even tried to rein in the demonstrators. This gap between the leaders and the protesters weakened the campaign. Moreover, Mousavi and Karroubi had no plans for dealing with the regime crackdown when it came. Nor were the protesters themselves sufficiently organized to sustain the movement in the face of government pressure.

The leaders also failed to mobilize social groups beyond the opposition's base of students, women, and middle-class professionals. As a result, unlike during the 1978–79 revolution, the vast majority of clerics, Friday prayer leaders, merchants, shopkeepers, and industrial workers stayed away. Factory employees did not stage strikes, merchants and shopkeepers did not disrupt distribution networks, and workers did not block the production and export of oil. Parsa attributes these shortcomings to a failure in leadership, weak or absent support structures such as labor unions and professional associations, and, of course, severe repression.

## GENTLY DOES IT

It is against this background of abortive reform, protest, and repression that Parsa answers the question with which he begins his book: "Which route might Iran's democratization take: reform or revolution?" For comparison, Parsa examines two countries with their own histories of democratization: South Korea and Indonesia. In South Korea, after a student uprising in 1960, the military established a dictatorship and imposed a constitution that privileged the army as a ruling elite. But it did not reject democracy in principle or attempt to eliminate the middle-class opposition. In time, moderate forces regrouped and pushed again for democratic reform. Moreover, the South Korean dictatorship allowed a vigorous private sector to dominate the economy, leaving open the path to industrialization and prosperity.

In Indonesia, by contrast, the dictatorship set up by General Suharto in 1967 rejected the very idea of democracy and closed the door to competitive politics. Buoyed by revenues from the country's booming oil export industry, the state seized control of much of the economy. It gave the military a large role in politics and economic affairs. In 1997, when Indonesia was swept up in the Asian financial crisis, the result of Suharto's decades of repression and corruption was revolution. Early the next year, mass protests and riots began. Within five months, they had cost Suharto the support of the army and forced him to resign.

Judged by the criteria Parsa applies to determine whether autocratic states will democratize through reform or revolution, Iran, he concludes, fits the Indonesian model best. The Islamic Republic is an "exclusive authoritarian state." Power is concentrated in the hands of a narrow, clerical elite. Even the moderate reformist opposition has been largely shut out of influence. State ideology rejects democracy in principle. The state interferes extensively in the social and cultural spheres, forcing the population into passive resistance or outright opposition and exacerbating tensions between the government and society.

The state also monopolizes the economy. The results are a weak private sector, the absence of competition, a large role for the military in economics and politics, wide inequalities in wealth and income, and high levels of corruption and cronyism. A significant gulf has opened up between the Iranian people and their rulers. "The ruling clergy," Parsa writes, "have no interest in democratic transformation," since "democratization would undermine their economic privilege and political power." For Parsa, this adds up to "multiple irreconcilable conflicts—rooted in the core of the theocracy—that are too extensive to be reformed." He concludes that "a route to Iran's democratization through reform is not available," and "if these conditions and conflicts persist, Iranians may have but one option remaining to democratize their political system": revolution.

Whatever Parsa believes are the prospects for a revolution, the last three decades have shown time and again that the Iranian people, by and large, prefer peaceful change to upheaval. They twice voted in large numbers for the reformist president Khatami, and in the last two presidential elections, they again chose a moderate reformist, Hassan Rouhani. As Parsa himself points out, during the mass protests in 2009, industrial workers, merchants, shopkeepers, and a large majority of the clergy stayed away. That suggests that those key communities don't have the stomach for another upheaval of the kind they experienced in the early years of the Islamic Republic, and that the wounds of past crackdowns are still raw.

The regime appears to have learned from its experience in 2009. It allowed the election of Rouhani in 2013 and avoided blatant interference in the balloting. This caution on the part of the regime and the disorder Iranians have witnessed in the countries of the Arab Spring, especially Egypt, Syria, and Yemen, and in Afghanistan and Iraq have reinforced the people's preference for change through gradual reform, and for achieving it through the ballot box, not with the bullet. The revolutionaries are not yet at the gate.

# Recent Books

## Political and Legal

*G. John Ikenberry*

*The Retreat of Western Liberalism*
BY EDWARD LUCE. Atlantic Monthly Press, 2017, 226 pp.

*The Fate of the West: The Battle to Save the World's Most Successful Political Idea*
BY BILL EMMOTT. PublicAffairs, 2017, 272 pp.

An anxious and beleaguered mood hangs over the liberal democratic world. Scholars, policymakers, and experts—including the authors of these two books—fear that the postwar Western system is breaking down in the face of a profound crisis driven not by external threats but by deep forces at work within the West itself. Luce's well-crafted book locates the origin of the crisis in declining economic opportunities available to Western middle classes. A majority of workers in the United States and Europe are "treading water," he writes, which has had a far-reaching, corrosive effect on social and political institutions and has created openings for populist and reactionary appeals. Rising inequality has called into question the notions of progress and social advancement that underpin the Western model of politics and economics. Meanwhile, aside from the superrich, the beneficiaries of this decaying postwar order are China and other non-Western developing states, which have prospered mightily even as they remain hostile to Western political values. Adding to the bleakness of his diagnosis, Luce appears to be ambivalent about whether anything can be done to improve things. New political coalitions and policies could help redistribute wealth and opportunity, but Luce worries that advanced democracies are unlikely to experience a recurrence of the fast-paced technological innovation and explosive growth that propelled them to prosperity in the first place.

Emmott also focuses on the loosening grip of the "social and political glue" that holds the global system together. Liberal democracy has "failed to deliver" for too many people, he writes, and as a result, they have lost confidence in openness and pluralism. Emmott takes the reader on an illuminating tour of Japan, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the EU and reveals the distinct set of economic, social, and demographic maladies facing each one. Emmott argues that if Western countries want to reverse their decline, they must reaffirm their commitment to openness, the rule of law, equality of rights, and the special capacities for innovation inherent in liberal democracy. But, like Luce, Emmott doesn't shed much light on the specifics of what would amount to a wholesale rethinking of the Western social contract.

*Toward Democracy: The Struggle for Self-Rule in European and American Thought*
BY JAMES T. KLOPPENBERG. Oxford University Press, 2016, 912 pp.

*The Expanding Blaze: How the American Revolution Ignited the World, 1775–1848*
BY JONATHAN ISRAEL. Princeton University Press, 2017, 768 pp.

In the late eighteenth century, radical

experiments in popular self-rule took hold and spread throughout Europe and North America, challenging monarchical authority and aristocratic hierarchy and laying the foundation for the modern democratic state. R. R. Palmer's *The Age of the Democratic Revolution*, published more than five decades ago, remains the classic account of this upheaval. These two massive new histories are worthy heirs to Palmer's accomplishment, retelling familiar stories in ways that freshly illuminate the ascent of liberal democracy.

Kloppenberg examines how democracy, which first flickered to life in ancient Athens but later disappeared, came roaring back in the modern era. He traces this democratic revival to the European religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—the Reformation era, when Protestant communities of self-rule emerged in opposition to monarchs and popes alike. The European wars also forced monarchical states to offer rights and protections to landed elites, giving shape to nascent ideas about civil society. Kloppenberg's most distinctive theme is that democracy is best understood not as a set of institutions and procedures but as an "ethical ideal," rooted in the notion that all citizens should have the capacity to shape their lives within shared standards and traditions. Kloppenberg seeks to recover the "richness and complexity" of the great historical struggles for democracy, which he argues have been lost as social scientists have developed "flattened" theories of democracy, seeing individuals across history as pursuing their simple self-interest. In exploring the variety of democratic forms that arose in the Atlantic world, Kloppenberg reminds readers that popular self-government was not preordained by modernity nor brought into the world at a single heroic moment.

Israel's more dramatic narrative of the origins of modern democracy tells the story of the American Revolution and its global ramifications. The book focuses on the radical ideas of the American founders, most prominently Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and Thomas Paine, as they inspired democratic movements and constitutional breakthroughs in Europe and Latin America. The American Revolution started out as a political revolt led by established elites in the 13 colonies, but as the war and constitutional debates unfolded, radical Enlightenment ideas about rights, liberty, and popular sovereignty came into play. In the end, as the U.S. constitutional system took shape, more moderate ideas, often backed by Alexander Hamilton, tended to win out. Nonetheless, Israel argues that the American Revolution "commenced the demolition of the early modern hierarchical world of kings, aristocracy, serfdom, slavery, and mercantilist colonial empires." This book's wide-angle account of the nineteenth-century spread of revolutionary democratic ideals makes it impossible to see the American founding as simply a national event; it was, in reality, nothing less than a battle of ideas played out on a global stage.

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*Why Wilson Matters: The Origin of American Liberal Internationalism and Its Crisis Today*
BY TONY SMITH. Princeton University Press, 2017, 352 pp.

Woodrow Wilson casts a long shadow over the last century of U.S. foreign policy. His call to make the world "safe

for democracy" has inspired generations of American presidents and triggered debates about the precise nature of Wilsonian liberal internationalism and how it relates to American hegemony and U.S. military intervention. Before he became president, Wilson was a prolific writer and a leading American scholar of democratic government, and Smith's major contribution is his reconstruction of Wilson's thinking from his books, papers, speeches, and letters. What emerges is a portrait not of a crusader or a utopian but of a realistic liberal who understood the deep and slow-forming foundations of modern democratic rule. The book traces internationalism back to a "preclassical" era of the nineteenth century, to its Cold War "hegemonic" phase, and to what Smith sees as its "imperialist" phase, which began in the 1990s and reached its apotheosis with the Iraq war and President George W. Bush's pledge to promote democracy "in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world." Smith's message is that Wilson's ideas have been repeatedly misinterpreted and misused. By reminding readers of what Wilson really said, Smith hopes to inform a more restrained and modest U.S. foreign policy.

*Incorrigible Optimist: A Political Memoir*
BY GARETH EVANS. Melbourne University Press, 2017, 277 pp.

For decades, Evans has cut a striking figure on the global stage. As a scholar, activist, politician, and Australia's minister for foreign affairs from 1988 to 1996, Evans has been a charismatic and indefatigable presence, rallying the forces of internationalism to work toward genocide prevention, conflict resolution, social justice, and nuclear disarmament. In this revealing, even heartwarming memoir, Evans looks back and reflects on the great issues that shaped his passions and defined his career. As foreign minister, Evans came to understand that Australian foreign policy was best advanced when tied to "good international citizenship." As a "middle power," Australia could advance its interests only in concert with others, building coalitions and finding ways to shape the global agenda. Working with the Canadian government, Evans helped conceive of the principle of "the responsibility to protect" civilian populations from genocide and crimes against humanity—a singular achievement. A blend of idealism and pragmatism gave Evans confidence in the idea that people can sometimes act on their enlightened interests and work toward the global good.

## Economic, Social, and Environmental

*Richard N. Cooper*

*Economics for the Common Good*
BY JEAN TIROLE. TRANSLATED BY STEVEN RENDALL. Princeton University Press, 2017, 576 pp.

Tirole, a Nobel Prize–winning French economist, explains in straightforward language what academic economists do, how they think about society and human behavior, and what advice they tend to offer governments about some of the biggest

challenges they face: for example, how to regulate natural monopolies and financial institutions, how to deal with climate change, how to address unwanted inequalities of income and wealth, and how to handle unwanted unemployment. Like most economists, Tirole focuses on the allocation of scarce resources—an issue that even affluent societies face—and on the fact that, for better or for worse, people tend to act according to incentives. The trick, he argues, is for policymakers to craft incentives that encourage socially desirable behavior, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

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*Unfinished Business: The Unexplored Causes of the Financial Crisis and the Lessons Yet to Be Learned*
BY TAMIM BAYOUMI. Yale University Press, 2017, 296 pp.

Bayoumi argues that the U.S. financial crisis of 2007–8 and the eurozone crisis of 2010–12 share a common origin: large, underregulated European banks making ill-advised loans for housing in the United States and to the peripheral countries of Europe. Such behavior was encouraged by an intellectual climate that favored financial deregulation and assumed that private-sector actors could judge risk better than regulators could. Bayoumi's very useful history features villains but also heroes: the recessions produced by the crises could have been a lot worse if, for example, governments had not opted for fiscal and monetary stimulus. But Bayoumi emphasizes the role of intrinsic, structural flaws in the increasingly fragile international financial system, which he compares to the dysfunctional international political system that produced World War I, a conflict that few foresaw and no one wanted. He reminds readers that active participants in the financial system are typically playing with other people's money. He worries about a relapse into crisis and ends his book with an epigram: "Beware of bankers proffering improvements."

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*Windfall: How the New Energy Abundance Upends Global Politics and Strengthens America's Power*
BY MEGHAN L. O'SULLIVAN. Simon & Schuster, 2017, 496 pp.

O'Sullivan describes and analyzes the economic and political impact of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. The boom in oil and gas produced by fracking—the "windfall" of this informative book's title—has placed a severe strain on Russia and the oil-producing countries of the Middle East but has benefited China, European states, and especially the United States. O'Sullivan explores the possibility that the new abundance in energy might replace the risk of a U.S.-Chinese rivalry for scarce resources with the opportunity to establish a cooperative arrangement between the two countries that could produce stability in energy markets around the world.

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*Straight Talk on Trade: Ideas for a Sane World Economy*
BY DANI RODRIK. Princeton University Press, 2017, 336 pp.

Rodrik explores what he considers the valid reasons behind today's populist backlash against globalization in the United States, European countries, and

elsewhere. In the thoughtful, ruminative essays collected and woven together here, he explains the deep tension between economic integration at the international level and democratic decision-making at the national level. Globalization can influence government decisions that affect a society's character and economy to the clear disadvantage of some groups, a process that creates resentment and anger on the part of those who lose out. Such decisions, in Rodrik's view, should not be dictated by a sometimes unwarranted faith in the efficiency of markets or the financial system. He distinguishes between liberal democracies and other countries and argues that the same trade rules should not apply to both groups: for example, democracies should be permitted to restrict imports from nondemocracies to compensate for the latter group's lack of environmental or labor rules, which allows for lower costs and prices. The United States and European countries, meanwhile, should not try to foist their values on other countries through trade agreements.

*Unhealthy Politics: The Battle Over Evidence-Based Medicine*
BY ERIC M. PATASHNIK, ALAN S. GERBER, AND CONOR M. DOWLING. Princeton University Press, 2017, 280 pp.

Every year, Americans spend around 18 percent of U.S. GDP on health care (including administrative costs) and over $600 million of federal government money on care for those over the age of 65. Yet there are wide regional and even local variations in the treatment of particular ailments, and a good deal of care is provided on the basis of traditional practice rather than scientific evidence of its effectiveness. The United States stands out among rich countries in resisting evidence-based medicine—not in theory, perhaps, but in practice. In this informative book, the authors, all political scientists, document this phenomenon and then consider why ordinary people, physicians, and politicians all resist public spending on research that would produce obvious benefits for everyone. In brief, there is no broad constituency for such programs, yet there is plenty of opposition from the pharmaceutical and other medical industries, which fear that weak evidence for their treatments' effectiveness will reduce their sales. The medical community (and some segments of the public) also worry that a stricter emphasis on evidence-based approaches would lead to mandated treatments rather than merely better information, and would thus detract from the authority, autonomy, and status accorded to physicians.

## Military, Scientific, and Technological

*Lawrence D. Freedman*

*Sons and Soldiers: The Untold Story of the Jews Who Escaped the Nazis and Returned With the U.S. Army to Fight Hitler*
BY BRUCE HENDERSON. William Morrow, 2017, 448 pp.

During World War II, almost 2,000 young Jewish men who had escaped to the United States from Austria and Nazi Germany and who now wished to serve their new country

were sent to Camp Ritchie, in Maryland, where they were trained for intelligence and interrogation work. Their detailed knowledge of German military tactics and culture played a vital role in gathering information as U.S. forces fought to liberate Europe. Henderson tells this tale skillfully, through the stories of eight young men who faced Nazi persecution and then returned to a shattered Germany as officers of a victorious army. They survived a powerful set of experiences: facing persecution, being separated from their parents (most of whom died in the Holocaust), arriving in a new country, fighting in vicious battles, liberating concentration camps, and achieving a clear but poignant triumph. Henderson's narrative never flags, with vivid descriptions of the men parachuting into France on D-Day, persuading captured German soldiers to hand over vital information during the Battle of the Bulge, and tracking down war criminals.

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*The Last Man Who Knew Everything: The Life and Times of Enrico Fermi, Father of the Nuclear Age*
BY DAVID N. SCHWARTZ. Basic Books, 2017, 480 pp.

*Man of the Hour: James B. Conant, Warrior Scientist*
BY JENNET CONANT. Simon & Schuster, 2017, 608 pp.

Two substantial biographies shed new light on the scientific breakthroughs that led to nuclear weapons and the massive organizational effort required to get the bombs ready to use in time during World War II. The Italian American physicist Enrico Fermi, one of the greatest scientists of his generation, was the master of the nuclear chain reaction, theorizing how it could come about and then presiding over the construction of the first nuclear reactor, in Chicago in 1942. James Conant was one of the most talented chemists of his generation but, at the age of 40, left the laboratory to become a reform-minded president of Harvard University. Having contributed to the development of chemical weapons during World War I, Conant saw before most others the likelihood of a war with Nazi Germany and recognized the vital part that science would play in it. As head of the National Defense Research Committee, he became the most important figure overseeing the U.S. atomic bomb program. Like Fermi, he was animated by the fear that the Germans would get the bomb first. After the war, both men opposed the progression from fission weapons to massively more destructive thermonuclear ones; both also lamented the humiliation of Robert Oppenheimer, the American scientist who headed the Los Alamos National Laboratory (where the Manhattan Project was mainly carried out) and who was treated cruelly when the U.S. government revoked his security clearance in 1954 over inflated concerns about his loyalty. Fermi returned to science after the war but was cut down by cancer at age 53. Conant became a public figure, regularly on call in Washington, and concluded his career by serving as U.S. ambassador to West Germany.

Of the two biographers, Schwartz has the more difficult task, since Fermi left no diaries or papers. The author is left to piece together Fermi's story from whatever material he could find and is

occasionally forced to speculate. But he does an admirable job of explaining the science and provides careful assessments of Fermi's influence. Jennet Conant has the advantage of writing about her own grandfather's very full life without any shortage of primary sources. She delves into Conant's personal life with great candor, including his marriage to an anxious woman and his strained relations with both his sons. Both books illuminate the human effects of a project that was so urgent yet so terrible in its long-term implications.

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*War in 140 Characters: How Social Media Is Reshaping Conflict in the Twenty-first Century*
BY DAVID PATRIKARAKOS. Basic Books, 2017, 320 pp.

Patrikarakos has gone to the frontlines of modern warfare to interview representatives of a species he calls *Homo digitalis*: individuals whose skill with social media allows them to reshape the conduct of contemporary conflicts. These include teenage Palestinian Twitter users who can convey the terror of living through Israeli bombardments of Gaza; a Ukrainian activist who uses Facebook to crowdsource funds and supplies for beleaguered Ukrainian forces fighting Russian-backed separatists; a former employee of a Russian "troll farm" who made up and spread false news; and Eliot Higgins, a former video-game obsessive who exposed Russian propaganda about the shooting down of a Malaysian civilian airliner over Ukraine in 2014. He also tells the story of officials, particularly in Israel and the United States, who have tried to match their opponents' agility and ubiquity but have struggled to make government bureaucracies more responsive. This is a highly readable introduction to some big issues in contemporary war. Patrikarakos asks searching questions and never overstates his case. One idea emerges quite clearly, however: it remains difficult to win a narrative battle when losing a physical one.

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*Harold Brown: Offsetting the Soviet Military Challenge, 1977–1981*
BY EDWARD C. KEEFER. Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2017, 834 pp.

The Carter administration represented a momentous, if transitional, period in U.S. national security policy, and it remains curiously understudied. President Jimmy Carter's secretary of defense was the brilliant but shy Harold Brown, always on top of his brief and looking for pragmatic solutions to the short-term crises and long-term policy dilemmas that faced the administration. This exhaustive study of Brown's four years at the Pentagon is not for novices, but it does contain valuable accounts of all the critical debates that shaped the Carter era: how to control the defense budget, how to pursue strategic arms control, how to solve the Iran hostage crisis of 1979, and how to respond to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan that began that same year.

## The United States

*Walter Russell Mead*

*The Once and Future Liberal: After Identity Politics*
BY MARK LILLA. Harper, 2017, 160 pp.

The American left's embrace of divisive identity politics has, in Lilla's view, contributed to the rise of Donald Trump and to an outbreak of angry and dangerous identity politics on the right. Essentially, Lilla wants to reopen the debate that broke out in the late 1960s between the "Old Left," which emphasized class and economics and was rooted in classical socialist politics, and the "New Left," which focused more on race and identity. The gap between working-class white voters and the Democratic Party that contributed to Trump's election is, Lilla argues, the natural and inevitable consequence of the triumph of the New Left, which retreated from the world of mass politics to the groves of academia. Lilla's sweeping summaries of major events and complex arguments sometimes seem glib, and he never really comes to grips with the connection between the decline of the industrial working class and the rise of the New Left. But his concern that the sometimes illiberal forms of identity politics appearing on the left can both provoke and enable illiberal forces on the right deserves serious consideration.

*What Happened*
BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON. Simon & Schuster, 2017, 512 pp.

The 2016 U.S. presidential campaign refuses to end: President Donald Trump endlessly revisits the subject in his tweets, and now Clinton has written a book about one of the most bitterly fought and unpredictable races in U.S. history. *What Happened* is readable and in places quite charming, but it is neither a literary masterpiece nor a work of overpowering political wisdom. It does, however, offer readers real insight into what moves Clinton. Her paradoxically liberating and frustrating experiences as a member of the first generation of American women allowed to compete in the professional arena—but disadvantaged by rules and assumptions from earlier times—made her feel like an underdog even as she scaled the political heights. To her, the 2016 campaign felt like a continuation of this uphill, unequal struggle, even as many voters saw her as the insider candidate, the establishment favorite running because it was "her turn." Her campaign never resolved this tension; that failure helps explain why Trump is tweeting from the White House and Clinton has time to write books.

*Grant*
BY RON CHERNOW. Penguin Press, 2017, 1,104 pp.

Ulysses S. Grant was a brilliant general and, as president, did more than any other American leader to defend the newly freed slaves of the South after the Civil War. Yet partly as a result of

his own weaknesses and blind spots, and partly as a casualty of the pro-Southern historians who shaped public understanding of Reconstruction for more than a century, Grant lies almost forgotten in his grave. Chernow, one of the finest biographical writers in American history, has undertaken to remedy this historical injustice by explaining and rehabilitating Grant. The result is a triumph: a sympathetic but clear-eyed biography that will be the starting point for all future studies of this enigmatic man. One only wishes that Chernow had chosen to make this a two-volume account. Reconstruction is such a complex and poorly understood chapter in U.S. history that the story of Grant's presidency is difficult to tell within the confines of a single volume, one that must also contain something close to a full history of the Civil War. This remains, however, a book that no serious student of U.S. history can afford to miss.

*Safeguarding Democratic Capitalism: U.S. Foreign Policy and National Security, 1920–2015*
BY MELVYN P. LEFFLER. Princeton University Press, 2017, 360 pp.

Leffler is one of the most accomplished and distinguished historians of U.S. foreign policy, and this collection of his most influential and important essays over the last 50 years is a welcome addition to the literature in the field. Leffler adds to the value of the collection with an introduction and a running commentary that situates these essays in his own intellectual development. He began, like many of his peers, as an enthusiastic adherent of the historian William Appleman Williams, who saw economic imperialism as the main driver of U.S. foreign policy. But Leffler gradually came to believe that the complexity of the U.S. political system made it impossible for any single factor to play such a large role. Although he never lost sight of the vital role that economic considerations play in U.S. politics, Leffler saw other perspectives and other actors contesting and frequently overruling the recommendations and proposals of important pro-business lobbies and leaders. His skillful essays reveal him to be a scholar who was honest and courageous enough to let himself be instructed by the facts that he found.

## Western Europe

*Andrew Moravcsik*

*The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics*
BY DAVID GOODHART. Hurst, 2017, 280 pp.

This book is timely, partly persuasive, and politically incorrect. Goodhart identifies two basic groups in British society: "anywheres" and "somewheres." The first group contains urban, mobile, relatively young, wealthy, and highly educated elites of various ethnicities. The second comprises older, more sedentary, poorer, and less educated provincials, almost all of whom are white. "Anywheres" dominate elite education, the financial services industry, major media outlets, and the government

technocracy—all of which are clustered in and around London. "Somewheres," by contrast, are spread throughout the rest of the United Kingdom, where they seek in vain to defend local traditions, national identity, and what they conceive of as decent lower- and middle-class family values. Goodhart's political incorrectness lies in his sympathy with the latter group, against whom, he rightly argues, the cosmopolitan elite has stacked the educational, economic, and cultural deck. But sympathy gets one only so far; what "somewheres" need are solutions. They could embrace Euroskepticism with the hope that reducing immigration and limiting trade would benefit them. Yet the current British government has proved itself to be hardly egalitarian and, in any case, unrealistic in its hopes for Brexit. Or they could back socialist redistribution—yet that threatens to undermine forward-looking economic activity. Goodhart poses the right questions but doesn't offer much in the way of answers. One wonders if his hopes for change stem more from nostalgia than from realism.

*Al-Qaeda's Revenge: The 2004 Madrid Train Bombings*
BY FERNANDO REINARES. Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Columbia University Press, 2017, 288 pp.

During the morning rush hour of March 11, 2004, ten bombs exploded nearly simultaneously on Madrid's commuter trains, killing 191 people and injuring almost 2,000. Reinares' examination of that brutal attack may be the most thoroughly researched study of a European terrorist incident currently available to the public. Based on law enforcement records and media reports from a half-dozen countries, the book reconstructs the perpetrators' background as petty criminals, their radicalization in prison, and the material benefits they gained from terrorism. They belonged to a sophisticated global network of al Qaeda–linked jihadists. Their ostensible motives ranged from simple retaliation for recent Spanish police crackdowns on a local al Qaeda cell to a surprisingly intense desire to exact revenge for the Christian conquest of Spain over five centuries ago. About a month after the attack, the seven main perpetrators detonated themselves to avoid police capture. But peripheral members of the conspiracy escaped to Iraq and eventually joined the Islamic State, or ISIS. The book closes by reminding readers that the transit systems in London, New York City, and other metropolitan areas remain at risk—and that the best way to combat the threat is to reinforce international coordination of intelligence and policing. This is a must-read for counterterrorism authorities and concerned citizens alike.

*The Taste of Empire: How Britain's Quest for Food Shaped the Modern World*
BY LIZZIE COLLINGHAM. Basic Books, 2017, 408 pp.

Collingham has carved out a niche writing popular histories of global food politics. She builds her latest book around the claim that the pursuit of exotic foods drove centuries of British economic dominance. Pepper and other spices, cod, wheat, meat, tea, cocoa, sugar, rice, and other culinary delights, as well as drugs such as opium and tobacco, dominated

British international trade. This interpretation is neither deep nor original, and it treads rather lightly over the dark sides of empire, including slavery and the suppression of industry outside the United Kingdom. Collingham even defends opium use in nineteenth-century China as a healthy habit. Yet she does show how much traditional English cuisine relies on imported commodities and tastes. The traditional Victorian Christmas table would be barren indeed without Chinese tea, New Zealand lamb, Jamaican rum, Portuguese port, West Indian sugar, North American wheat, and, to top it off, a plum pudding with dried fruits from a half-dozen foreign lands. Brexiteers, take note.

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*The Fate of Rome: Climate, Disease, and the End of an Empire*
BY KYLE HARPER. Princeton University Press, 2017, 440 pp.

Historians have attributed the decline and fall of the Roman Empire to corruption, Christianity, barbarian invasion, and hundreds of other factors. Harper offers a striking reinterpretation with worrisome implications for the present day. Ancient Rome, he argues, succumbed to pandemic diseases. He documents the devastating spread of plague, tuberculosis, smallpox, and perhaps even Ebola in ancient Rome, which together killed more than half the population in some areas. He shows how the thousand-year-old empire grew vulnerable to such pathogens owing to severe Mediterranean climate change, extremely large cities, a vulnerable food chain, and its central position in vast networks of travel, trade, and migration. In making the case, Harper relies in part on fascinating new biomedical tools that are revolutionizing what is termed "paleomolecular archaeology." Yet due to the fragility of many pathogens, his study also relies on the subtle interpretation of traditional written sources, including many religious texts. The lesson is clear. Today, we inhabit a global system with a very similar combination of climatologic disturbances, urbanization, less diverse diets, and globalization. Ancient history reveals the risks we run.

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*How the French Saved America: Soldiers, Sailors, Diplomats, Louis XVI, and the Success of a Revolution*
BY TOM SHACHTMAN. St. Martin's Press, 2017, 368 pp.

American high school history courses briefly mention that French intervention helped seal the success of the American Revolution, yet the emphasis in U.S. civic discourse always remains firmly fixed on the courage and resolve of the Founding Fathers. Shachtman wants to give France its due. He demonstrates the depth of the French commitment by tracing the complex negotiations behind the Franco-American alliance. The rebellious American colonists first needed to overcome their deep mistrust of the French, whom they had fought a generation before in the French and Indian War. Then the rebels sent a team to Paris headed by Benjamin Franklin, who needed years to convince France to make its scarce resources available. Even after the alliance was formed, both sides remained ambivalent: the colonists feared that the French would quit, and the French mistrusted the

(already) highly partisan American Continental Congress. Yet the alliance held. In the end, French assistance made the difference between defeat and victory. Ten percent of the casualties suffered by those fighting for the American cause were French. Paris provided essential financing to pay Washington's soldiers; shipments of guns, artillery, and ammunition; technical and engineering expertise; diplomatic support; safe ports for American privateers; skilled battlefield leadership; and, of course, the fleet and army that ensured the decisive American victory at Yorktown in 1781.

## Western Hemisphere

*Richard Feinberg*

*At a Crossroads: Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean*
BY MARÍA MARTA FERREYRA, CIRO AVITABILE, JAVIER BOTERO ÁLVAREZ, FRANCISCO HAIMOVICH PAZ, AND SERGIO URZÚA.
World Bank, 2017, 298 pp.

Many Latin American countries took advantage of the economic boom that began at the beginning of this century to dramatically expand their institutions of higher education. In the past 17 years, this illuminating World Bank report reveals, some 2,300 new schools have opened, mostly in the private sector, offering 30,000 new programs. Across the region, average higher-education enrollment rates jumped from 21 percent in 2000 to 43 percent in 2013. Impressively, access for low- and middle-income students grew even more rapidly. Owing to the increased presence of lower-income students at colleges and universities, public spending on higher education is now skewed toward the disadvantaged—a reversal of previous distributions, which disproportionately benefited better-off families. Moreover, spending per student and student-faculty ratios in Latin American countries are now in line with those of the wealthy nations of Europe and North America. Not all is well, of course: drop-out rates remain too high; too many students attend low-quality, high-priced private universities; a deficit of graduates in science and engineering contributes to the region's low rate of innovation; and academic research grants are often not subjected to the rigors of competitive selection. The authors' proposed solutions include improving the dissemination of information on job-market prospects for graduates and reforming regulations and accreditation procedures.

*Where the Land Meets the Sea: Fourteen Millennia of Human History at Huaca Prieta, Peru*
EDITED BY TOM D. DILLEHAY.
University of Texas Press, 2017, 832 pp.

As the Ice Age wound down some 14,000 years ago and the seas and land warmed, early human settlements cropped up along the Peruvian coastline. At Huaca Prieta (Spanish for "dark mound"), multiple generations of kinship communities constructed impressive earthworks for their rituals and burials—leaving behind what the venerable anthropologist Dillehay labels "one of the most complex prepottery coastal sites" ever discovered. Using

cutting-edge forensic tools, a large multinational, multidisciplinary team uncovered, in exquisite detail, the lives and times of these Neolithic people. The contributors to this engrossing book reveal that these ancient Andeans feasted mostly on seafood but eventually added cultivated maize and chili peppers to their rather healthy diets. Although lacking ceramics, their artistic talents surfaced in sophisticated cotton textiles, basket weavings, and decorated gourds. Dillehay's speculations about Huaca Prieta's social organization are also fascinating: the evidence suggests that the community was more networked than hierarchical and more cooperative and deliberative than competitive or violent, and that its members interacted in relative harmony with one another and with their evolving maritime and terrestrial ecosystems.

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*Cuba Libre: A 500-Year Quest for Independence*
BY PHILIP BRENNER AND PETER EISNER. Rowman & Littlefield, 2017, 438 pp.

*Waiting for Uncle John*
BY JAMES OLIVER GOLDSBOROUGH. Prospecta Press, 2018, 320 pp.

A productive partnership between Brenner, a veteran Cuba expert, and Eisner, an accomplished journalist, has brought forth an eminently accessible, engaging journey through five centuries of Cuba's tortured yet hopeful history—a story unified, in the authors' view, by the island's heroic struggles for self-determination. The indigenous Taino chief Hatuey courageously resisted European domination in the sixteenth century. Hundreds of years later, Cubans launched a bloody struggle for independence from Spain, and Fidel Castro led a socialist revolution to purge the island of U.S. influence. Although the sovereignty thesis is powerful in its clarity, it arguably underestimates the island's prolonged adherence first to Spain (which earned Cuba a reputation for imperial loyalty), then to the United States (which enjoyed the support of a prosperous Cuban middle class and not just a tiny capitalist elite), and later to the Soviet Union. As the sweeping narrative frequently suggests, full-blown autonomy may not be a genuine option for a small island state. *Cuba Libre* concludes with an empathetic and balanced discussion of the dilemmas facing Cuban society today.

The loyalty of Cuban subjects to the Spanish crown emerges as a theme in *Waiting for Uncle John*, a fictionalized account of the little-known 1851 Bahía Honda expedition. Goldsborough recounts how a small band of deluded U.S. adventurers, many of whom had seen action in the expansionary Mexican-American War and Indian Wars, sought to annex Cuba as a slave state to the pre–Civil War Union. The plan suffered from a key intelligence failure: the expectation that the Cuban population would rise up against their colonial masters. Instead, the hapless invaders were quickly captured, and 51 of them were promptly "shot like dogs" by the well-entrenched Spanish. (If U.S. President John F. Kennedy had been aware of this historical fiasco, he might have questioned the CIA's assumption that Cubans would rise up against Castro and canceled the doomed Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961.) Goldsborough's

fast-paced novel includes the requisite love relationship between an ill-fated hero and an ambitious belle, as well as colorful sketches of antebellum Southern manners.

## Eastern Europe and Former Soviet Republics

*Robert Legvold*

*Stalin: Waiting For Hitler, 1929–1941*
BY STEPHEN KOTKIN. Penguin Press, 2017, 1,184 pp.

This is the second volume of Kotkin's massive biographical trilogy. In exquisite detail, it covers the critical years of Stalinism, from the decision to storm the country, by collectivizing agriculture and imposing forced-draft industrialization, through the purges of the Great Terror, to the outbreak of World War II. Kotkin manages to provide authoritative answers to an extraordinary number of long-debated questions about this period, including: What was the impulse behind the terror? What calculus drove Soviet intervention in the Spanish Civil War? How intentional was the 1931–33 famine? And was Stalin caught by surprise when the Germans attacked in June 1941? Kotkin plumbs every critical juncture in the internal and external politics of Stalin's Soviet Union at a level of detail that is mind-bending. In most books on Stalin and the system that he twisted to his desires, the reader glides from one event to the next, forming a general sense of the terrain. In Kotkin's fascinating book, by contrast, a strong undertow of detail draws the reader deep into history's flow, allowing him or her to perceive the connections between events and affording glimpses into the interactions among Stalin, his inner circle, and the many bit players who shaped this story.

*Property Rights and Property Wrongs: How Power, Institutions, and Norms Shape Economic Conflict in Russia*
BY TIMOTHY FRYE. Cambridge University Press, 2017, 260 pp.

Scholars widely accept that links exist between secure property rights, a prospering economy, and a stable government. But the question of how such rights develop has stirred academic debate for years. Because Russia vaulted from circumstances in which property rights had little meaning to an economy built around them, it offers fertile ground for testing different and often competing theories. No one has done that better—more rigorously, more creatively, and more thoroughly—than Frye has in this book. Using survey data reaching back to 2000, as well as interviews with more than 2,500 businesspeople, he examines whether and to what degree one's ability to own, hold, and profit from a business depends on the balance of political leverage between owners and state agents; the integrity of institutions such as courts; the impact of social constructs, including reputation; and the strength of social norms, whether generated by ideology, religion, or culture. All these factors matter, but Frye illuminates with great care just when, why, and how they matter, situating his analysis within an extraordinarily broad range of relevant scholarship.

*Vanguard of the Revolution: The Global Idea of the Communist Party*
BY A. JAMES MCADAMS. Princeton University Press, 2017, 584 pp.

In 1985, McAdams notes, 38 percent of the world's population lived under communist regimes. Some 107 communist parties operated worldwide, with a total membership of 82 million people. McAdams tells the story of how this movement grew out of the crucible of nineteenth-century Europe, flourished in the Soviet Union, and then spread to China, Cuba, and beyond. He starts with Marx and Engels, explaining how their revolutionary ideas triumphed over the other political and intellectual currents of their day. He then turns to Vladimir Lenin and the party he created, its early European offshoots, and the Comintern—which, for a time, allowed the movement to remain somewhat monolithic. This, however, is not merely descriptive history. McAdams wrestles with a more profound puzzle: How was it, given the failure of Marx's prophecies, that his ideas continued to animate communist parties and eventually led them to power in 24 countries? McAdams points to the sense of historical destiny and transcendence that Marxism inspired and also to the qualities of the Communist Party: its arrogated primacy, the requirements it set for its members, its rigid mission. All of that depended, of course, on the leaders who forged the movement: Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, and Fidel Castro.

*The Eagle and the Trident: U.S.-Ukraine Relations in Turbulent Times*
BY STEVEN PIFER. Brookings Institution Press, 2017, 366 pp.

The is the first book-length study of U.S. relations with Ukraine following its independence in 1991, and it is extremely well done: clearly written, deeply informed, and balanced. From 1991 to 2004, the period the book focuses on, Pifer served in a number of senior U.S. State Department and White House positions dealing with Ukraine, including as U.S. ambassador from 1998 to 2000. Every step of the way, relations were complicated and often frustrating for both sides. Pifer explores the history with dispassionate insight, beginning with the United States' single-minded effort to get nuclear weapons out of Ukraine (too single-minded, in his estimation) and continuing on to the complications introduced by Ukraine's vexed and often bitter relations with Russia and to the dashed hopes for economic and political reform. Looking back, he offers reflections on what the United States did right (navigating the complex process of removing nuclear weapons from Ukraine) and what it did wrong (frequently being oblivious to the intricacies of Ukrainian politics). He concludes the book with an analysis of the years since 2004, to which he brings similar lucidity and cool detachment, and with recommendations for the future of U.S. policy toward this troubled country.

*A Minor Apocalypse: Warsaw During the First World War*
BY ROBERT BLOBAUM. Cornell University Press, 2017, 320 pp.

Germany's barbarity in Warsaw during World War II is well known. Here, Blobaum provides the first full-length English-language account of the city's experience of World War I. Once the Germans occupied the city, in August 1915, an economic crisis that had begun in the first year of the war, while Warsaw was still under Russian rule, considerably worsened. As a result, the hardships of the city's Polish and Jewish populations achieved levels rivaling what they would later suffer in the next world war, a comparison that Blobaum explores in some detail. He traces the war's tightening grip on the economy, the swelling unemployment, the growing health crisis, the influx of refugees and wounded soldiers, and the tensions these hardships generated between the Polish and Jewish communities. He also narrates the city's cultural twists and turns—the cabarets, cinemas, and seamy nightlife—as well as the war's more positive contributions, such as the growth of voluntary associations and, in particular, the transformation of women's place in society.

*The Year I Was Peter the Great: 1956—Khrushchev, Stalin's Ghost, and a Young American in Russia*
BY MARVIN KALB. Brookings Institution Press, 2017, 304 pp.

At the age of 25, Kalb was drafted out of a graduate program at Harvard to serve as a Russian translator and interpreter for the U.S. embassy in Moscow. He arrived in 1956, fresh from the classroom, wide-eyed and inexperienced, just before Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev delivered his "secret speech" denouncing Stalin. After Khrushchev's thunderbolt, the so-called year of the thaw that followed allowed Kalb to travel to many parts of the country. His account of his stray meetings and impromptu friendships in Central Asia, Ukraine, and ancient Russian cities provides a vivid, sometimes moving portrait of Soviet society in that jarring year. Most affecting is his tale of the old man he met by chance in the then rundown Podol district of Kiev. The man remembered Kalb's grandfather, who took his family to the United States in 1914. Back at a Harvard after his year of service in Moscow ended, Kalb was interrupted from work on his dissertation by a call from Edward R. Murrow: the first step in what would become a distinguished three-decade career as a journalist at CBS and NBC.

## Middle East

*John Waterbury*

*Jihad & Co.: Black Markets and Islamist Power*
BY AISHA AHMAD. Oxford University Press, 2017, 336 pp.

This book is one of a kind, and so is its author. Ahmad is a female Muslim scholar born into a family of smugglers in Peshawar, Pakistan, who has engaged in extensive field research in two of the most dangerous places on earth: Afghanistan and Somalia. She offers a

simple and compelling hypothesis regarding the relationship between business elites and jihadists. Anarchy of the type that prevails in Afghanistan and Somalia raises the costs of doing business and shrinks profits margins. By embracing Islam, sincerely or strategically, and cooperating with jihadists, businesspeople help construct a sort of "moral" black market in smuggled goods, in which actors voluntarily comply with contracts. In turn, jihadists turn to businesspeople and smugglers for contributions—rather than extorting them, as secular warlords usually do. By financially supporting jihadists such as the Afghan Taliban and the Somali Islamic Courts Union, businesses help the extremists corner the market on the provision of security and thus help them create proto-states. This analysis is anchored by Ahmad's solid grounding in the political economy of civil war and state building. Ahmad extends her analysis to Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, and the Sahel region, where "conflicts appear to be driven by ideas and identities" but where, in reality, "everyone is talking about money." Ahmad also explains when and why alliances between businesspeople and jihadists erode, and what that means for combating terrorist groups.

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*Realism and Democracy: American Foreign Policy After the Arab Spring*
BY ELLIOTT ABRAMS. Cambridge University Press, 2017, 295 pp.

Abrams' experience in U.S. foreign policy stretches back to the Reagan years, but he is best known as a neoconservative who advised President George W. Bush. In the fascinating introduction to this book, Abrams traces his intellectual development and explores the roots of his worldview. He presents U.S. foreign policy as a Manichaean realm, split between leaders committed to spreading and strengthening democracy and human rights (Ronald Reagan, Bush) and those who believe such concerns to be peripheral to U.S. strategic interests (Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, Barack Obama). Abrams' view makes sense only if one embraces the idea of U.S. exceptionalism—or at least believes that, on balance, the United States is a force for good in the world. Abrams forcefully rejects the argument that the so-called war on terror compels Washington to countenance Arab autocracies that join in the fight. To the contrary, he points out, the autocracies fuel the extremism that in turn drives terrorism. Abrams implies that Bush understood this and thus put pressure on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to reform, whereas Obama turned on Mubarak only after massive protests broke out in Cairo in 2011—and then did little as Mubarak's eventual successor, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, ramped up repression after taking power in a military coup in 2013. On this point, Abrams and some of his liberal critics may well agree.

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*Notes on a Foreign Country: An American Abroad in a Post-American World*
BY SUZY HANSEN. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2017, 288 pp.

Hansen has been conned, and she is angry and guilt-ridden. She grew up near the Jersey Shore in the 1980s and was raised on the myth that the United States is a shining "city upon a hill," a

benevolent power that labors to elevate other countries to its lofty height. Hansen, a writer for *The New York Times Magazine*, has lived in Istanbul since 2007, and during her time there—as well as on reporting trips to places such as Afghanistan, Egypt, Greece, and Iran—the scales have fallen from her eyes. She writes well—at times grippingly—about these places. But the end result is a caricature. She attributes no redeeming features to the United States or to Americans. Inspired by her muse James Baldwin (who also lived in Istanbul for a time), she sees Americans as emotionally impoverished. In Hansen's view, every U.S. action overseas is suffused with an underlying racism and almost always accompanied by violence, and any U.S. gain inevitably comes at the expense of the rest of the world. In her portrait, the American beast is so overpowering that other people and societies seem stripped of all responsibility for their own conditions.

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*A Social Revolution: Politics and the Welfare State in Iran*
BY KEVAN HARRIS. University of California Press, 2017, 336 pp.

This empirically rich study draws on Harris' extensive fieldwork in Iran and uses welfare policy as a prism through which to view the country's transition from the shah's dictatorship to the now nearly 40-year-old theocracy of the Islamic Republic. He debunks the notion that social welfare in a rentier economy such as Iran's, which depends on petroleum revenues, is part of an authoritarian bargain in which citizens offer docility in exchange for benefits. Instead, welfare policies have mobilized whole sectors of Iranian society, fostered political agency for new groups (including women), and driven political elites in directions they may not have foreseen. Harris asserts that in the wake of the Iran-Iraq War, Iranian conservatives and reformers alike developed a commitment to a technocratic "developmental state" on the model of South Korea or Taiwan, in which public authorities interfere in markets and promote favored industries and sectors. This consensus has led to the extension of social programs such as welfare and subsidies for fuel and university tuition to educated middle-class Iranians, who have come to see access to such benefits as a right. If Harris is correct, the Islamic Republic contains the seeds of its own transformation.

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*Revolution Without Revolutionaries: Making Sense of the Arab Spring*
BY ASEF BAYAT. Stanford University Press, 2017, 294 pp.

Bayat is an expert on social movements. His book draws intellectual inspiration from the ideologically charged era in his native Iran that preceded the fall of the shah in 1979, a time when anticolonialism, hard-left socialism, and militant Islamism all enjoyed robust support. He laments the fact that the Arab world's moment of revolt—the uprisings of 2010–11—largely lacked revolutionary ideology. He argues that the dissidents behind the so-called Arab Spring were co-opted and doomed by neoliberalism (the resort to markets to solve distributional issues) and thus wound up producing mere "refolutions," watered down by reformist impulses and ideas.

His exploration of the Arab revolts fails to account for secular dissidents' inability to organize ahead of elections. He makes much of what he calls "nonmovements": informal groups on the margins of the political system that he sees as harbingers of the next revolutions. "Revolution occurs when there is no other way out," he avers. But there always is another way out: exiting the system altogether, which is precisely what many groups have done.

## Asia and Pacific

*Andrew J. Nathan*

*Myanmar's Enemy Within: Buddhist Violence and the Making of a Muslim "Other"*
BY FRANCIS WADE. Zed Books, 2017, 304 pp.

Wade's probing reportage exposes the historical and cultural roots of the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar (also known as Burma), in which an army crackdown has forced hundreds of thousands of members of the Muslim ethnic minority to flee to neighboring Bangladesh. He shows that the tragedy is only the latest phase of Myanmar's long historical effort to cope with ethnic and religious diversity by defining Burmese identity as ethnically Bamar and religiously Buddhist while denying full citizenship to minorities. The Rohingya and the neighboring ethnic Rakhine group—also a minority, but Buddhist—have exchanged acts of violence for decades, leading to the isolation of the Rohingya population in virtual concentration camps. A partial transition to democracy that began in 2012 intensified anxieties about the power balance among ethnic groups and unleashed a Buddhist fundamentalist movement that sees Islam as a threat to the very survival of the Bamar and a danger to Buddhism throughout Southeast Asia. This is a deeply insightful work on the dynamics of ethnic violence.

*Cold War Monks: Buddhism and America's Secret Strategy in Southeast Asia*
BY EUGENE FORD. Yale University Press, 2017, 392 pp.

Throughout the Cold War, the CIA, working through the Asia Foundation, tried to use Buddhism in Burma (now also called Myanmar), Cambodia, Ceylon (now known as Sri Lanka), Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam as a bulwark against communism. With access to Asia Foundation archives and deep research into Thai archival sources, Ford tells the intricate story of this unsuccessful effort. Washington competed with China for influence in the World Fellowship of Buddhists, but the organization never had much impact. In Vietnam, Buddhists turned against the U.S.-backed, Catholic-led Diem government and its successors. In Thailand, the foundation tried to draw the monkhood out of its traditional political quietism and into community development projects. But what arose instead was a violently antiprogressive Buddhist movement that encouraged the assassination of leftists as a way to earn religious merit. Politicizing the monks contributed to the polarization that bedevils Thai politics today.

*Liberalism Disavowed: Communitarianism and State Capitalism in Singapore*
BY BENG HUAT CHUA. Cornell University Press, 2017, 224 pp.

This penetrating account of the Singapore model by a senior Singaporean sociologist explains both why the model works and why it is not transferable to other countries. Chua describes the government's use of the legal system to repress dissent, its public housing program that depends on coercive land acquisition and government manipulation of the housing market, its system of profitable state-owned enterprises that makes many residents employees of the state, and its assignment of every citizen to one of four constructed "race" categories in order to regulate relations among ethnic communities. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, he argues that neither repression nor a cultural preference for authoritarianism explains the regime's success; rather, the state's successful policies—rooted in social democratic ideology and meritocratic leadership—and the island nation's strategic vulnerability explain why the population has accepted an elitist, repressive system for over 50 years and why it will probably continue to do so. Some of Singapore's techniques can be emulated abroad, such as its methods of city planning. But the model as a whole is tailored too closely to the specific features of Singaporean society to be replicable elsewhere.

*Islam and Democracy in Indonesia: Tolerance Without Liberalism*
BY JEREMY MENCHIK. Cambridge University Press, 2016, 224 pp.

Indonesia is famed for its tolerant style of Islam, but Menchik argues that it would be a mistake to assume that this has any bearing on the country's views of Western-style liberal democracy, in which religious faith is a matter of individual choice. Rather, under Indonesian law, every citizen must belong to one of six recognized religions or suffer certain disadvantages. Nor is the state secular: state schools teach religion, proselytizing is forbidden, and blasphemy is a crime. Menchik polled leaders of the two biggest Muslim organizations and found that they are willing to accept Christians and Hindus in public office because they regard their religions as legitimate, but they are unlikely to accept Ahmadis (who adhere to an offshoot of Islam), animists, or atheistic communists in government. His revealing research into local history shows how the diverse experiences of different Muslim organizations have produced a wide range of beliefs about religious tolerance and even about what a belief system has to look like in order to be counted as a religion. Since the concept of tolerance varies so much among Indonesian Muslims, the public as a whole could become more tolerant over time or, as seems to be happening now, less so.

*Red at Heart: How Chinese Communists Fell in Love With the Russian Revolution*
BY ELIZABETH MCGUIRE. Oxford University Press, 2017, 480 pp.

Thousands of Chinese Communists went to Moscow in the 1920s and 1930s to learn from the Soviet Union. Moved by revolutionary idealism and liberationist sexual ideas, many fell in love, some with each other and others (especially the men) with Russians. These Moscow-born relationships flourished while the two countries were allied and suffered when they split. One sojourner, Chiang Ching-kuo, married a Russian woman and later became president of Taiwan. McGuire presents a richly researched set of personal stories, involving both the lovers and their children, nested within a larger political story. Today, Chinese President Xi Jinping is striving to resurrect the selfless "party spirit" of a mythical golden age. As Xi extols the supposed virtues of that era, Chinese would do well to remember the chaotic personal lives of those who built the Chinese Communist Party in the first place.

*Asia's Reckoning: China, Japan, and the Fate of U.S. Power in the Pacific Century*
BY RICHARD MCGREGOR. Viking, 2017, 416 pp.

McGregor takes a fresh look at the defining triangle of East Asian power politics, which links China, Japan, and the United States. Having served as a correspondent in all three capitals, he has a sharp eye for personalities and policy factions, as well as a firm grasp of geopolitics. His fascinating narrative of the three countries' relations over 50 years is filled with fresh anecdotes drawn from interviews and newly released archival documents. From the outside, the shape of the relationships appears fixed, with Tokyo and Washington lined up firmly against Beijing. But McGregor's close analysis reveals a constant fluidity. Flinty realism has usually driven trilateral diplomacy, but in McGregor's view, no factor has done more to sustain the shape of the triangle than Japan's inability to allay Chinese resentment over the depredations of the 1930s and 1940s. At a moment when U.S. President Donald Trump is challenging the U.S. relationship with both Asian powers, McGregor warns that a breakdown in the U.S.-Japanese alliance could lead to a three-way free-for-all that would force Japan to develop nuclear weapons.

*Hard Target: Sanctions, Inducements, and the Case of North Korea*
BY STEPHAN HAGGARD AND MARCUS NOLAND. Stanford University Press, 2017, 344 pp.

Both of the main strategies that the major powers and international institutions have employed to deal with North Korea—sanctions and engagement—are based on an economic logic that the authors of this rigorous analysis believe to be flawed. Such policies were supposed to work by hurting or helping the general population—but the public's welfare is of little concern to Pyongyang's leaders. When punishments or payoffs were narrowed to target the core group of leaders, they found ways of passing the suffering to the people. When carrots were offered along with sticks, they took them without making policy changes. Moreover, both strategies

were vulnerable to the lack of coordination among Pyongyang's negotiating and trading partners. Haggard and Noland substantiate their arguments with empirical data on North Korea's authoritarian political structure, autarkic policies, opportunistic and often illicit foreign trade, and ability to wring aid and investment not only from China but also from South Korea. They use a survey of Chinese and South Korean firms doing business with North Korea to show that engagement does not increase marketization; it plays into the hands of Pyongyang's state enterprises. The authors' analysis provides many reasons to doubt that the enhanced sanctions regime recently put in place will bring North Korea to the negotiating table.

## Africa

*Nicolas van de Walle*

*A Moonless, Starless Sky: Ordinary Women and Men Fighting Extremism in Africa*
BY ALEXIS OKEOWO. Hachette, 2017, 256 pp.

Avoiding standard reportorial clichés about Africa, Okeowo, a Nigerian American journalist, narrates four stories about ordinary people thrust into extraordinary circumstances. One story describes the oddly resilient relationship between two young Ugandans kidnapped by the Lord's Resistance Army: a man forced to fight for the group and an abducted woman whom its leaders assigned to be the man's sex slave—and who now live together as husband and wife after having separately escaped the mili-

tants' clutches. Another describes a young Somali woman who pursues her passion for basketball in war-torn Mogadishu despite receiving death threats from radical Islamists. A third portrays the life of a modern-day slave in rural Mauritania and then profiles the work of a Mauritanian abolitionist. And a final tale revolves around a young Nigerian girl who escaped after being kidnapped by the jihadists of Boko Haram and a middle-aged man who leads a group of citizens fighting against them. Okeowo masterfully fleshes out her subjects, allowing them to come alive on the page while also capturing the complexities of contemporary African societies. She never holds back on the brutal details, yet the reader comes away somehow more sanguine about the region.

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*Another Fine Mess: America, Uganda, and the War on Terror*
BY HELEN C. EPSTEIN. Columbia Global Reports, 2017, 262 pp.

Epstein joins a number of other critics of current U.S. policy in Africa in noting that the "war on terror" has led Washington to sharply increase military assistance to the region, emphasize stability over democracy, and tacitly or explicitly support dictators. Epstein focuses her criticism on Washington's relationship with the regime of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, who has been in power since the mid-1980s. For decades, Museveni has received massive amounts of U.S. support, all in the name of containing Islamist regimes in nearby Somalia and Sudan. In Epstein's telling, Museveni has manipulated Washington to maintain his own rapacious rule and has exported instability throughout Uganda's neighborhood. Epstein thus partly blames the United States for the civil wars in Somalia and South Sudan and for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and the long-running conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which she suggests would not have happened without U.S. support of Museveni. It is worth asking whether the Americans have given a blank check to their Ugandan ally, and Epstein has produced an often troubling indictment of U.S. policy. But her book tends to exaggerate the influence of both Uganda and the United States in shaping the area's awful recent history.

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*Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement*
BY ALEXANDER THURSTON. Princeton University Press, 2017, 352 pp.

A number of solid journalistic accounts of the rise of Boko Haram have appeared in recent years, but Thurston's scholarly work stands out and deserves a wide readership. It offers an authoritative take on the group's murky origins and wisely situates its rise within the context of Nigerian political history. In particular, Thurston's account links the divisions and lively debates within Nigerian Islam in the 1970s and 1980s to the radical anti-Western views developed by Boko Haram's first leader and ideologue, Mohammed Yusuf. Thurston also discusses the regionalization of the emergency created by Boko Haram's assault, which has now spread to Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, places where the jihadists launched several hundred armed attacks in 2016 alone. Thurston's most troubling argument is that the Nigerian state's intensely repressive response to Boko Haram has served only to further radicalize the organization. Where this otherwise superb book falls short, however, is in its vague call to

pursue a political solution that would involve governmental negotiations with Boko Haram.

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*Radio Okapi Kindu: The Station That Helped Bring Peace to the Congo; A Memoir*
BY JENNIFER BAKODY. Figure 1 Publishing, 2017, 304 pp.

In 2004, Bakody spent nine months in Kindu, a provincial capital in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, managing a radio station set up by the UN peacekeeping force at a time when the country's civil war, which originally began in 1996, appeared to be winding down. (In fact, it has still yet to fully end.) She has written a deeply affecting memoir of her time there, one that details the enormous difficulties faced by journalists in poor, war-torn regions with great empathy. The usual problem with this type of book is that it places too much attention on the foreign narrator and too little on the local people. But Bakody inserts herself in the story mostly to deprecate her own experience and knowledge and emphasizes instead her local colleagues, who made the radio station a success—often at great personal sacrifice and risk. One dramatic highlight is the brilliantly understated account that one of Bakody's colleagues gives of how he was brutally beaten by soldiers in retaliation for a story he wrote about the army's poor performance in battle. Thanks to Bakody's talent for snappy dialogue, eye for detail, and humorous prose, the book never flags, even when its pace slows down to capture the everyday slog of running a radio station.

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*Police in Africa: The Street Level View*
EDITED BY JAN BEEK, MIRCO GÖPFERT, OLLY OWEN, AND JOHNNY STEINBERG. Oxford University Press, 2017, 392 pp.

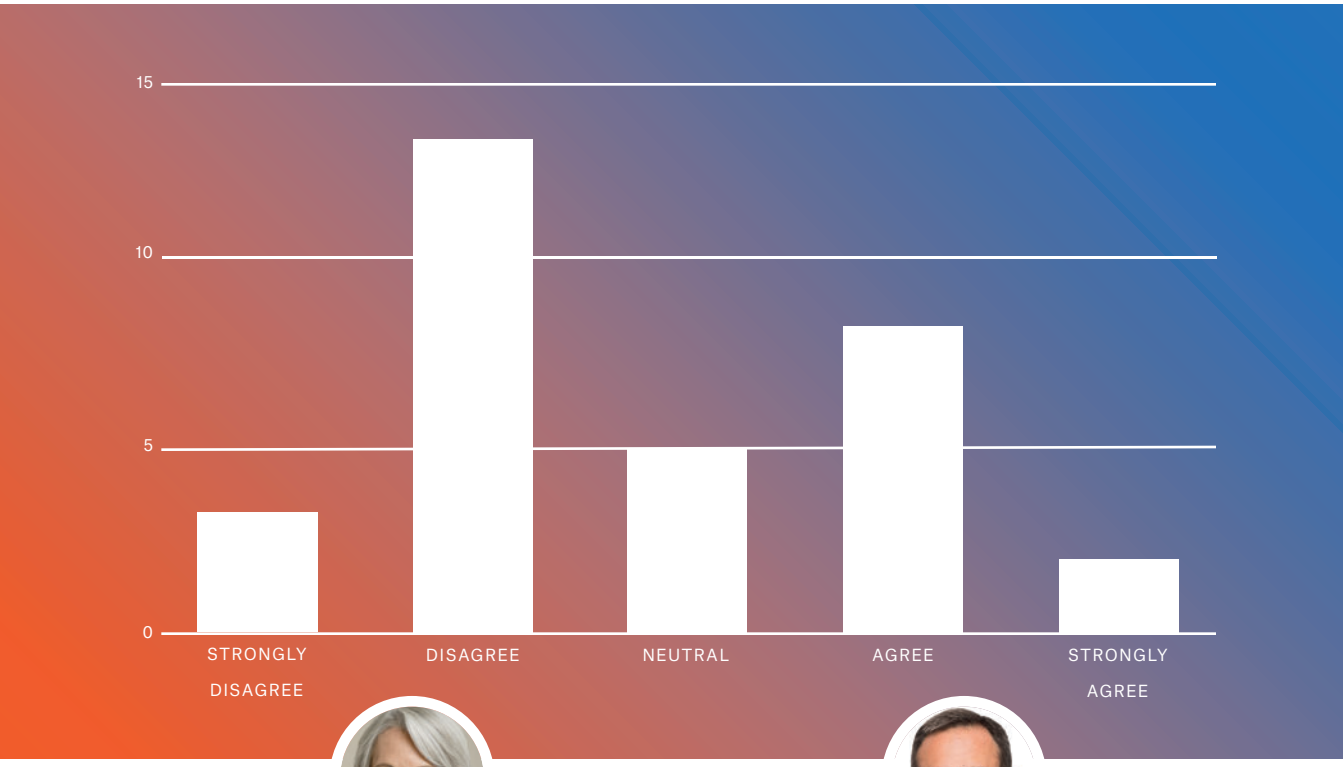
Because maintaining law and order is such a vital function of the state, studying policing can reveal clues about the nature of a country's government. In its better chapters, this collection of insightful ethnographic studies of policing in sub-Saharan Africa details the accomplishments and limits of state building in the region. Police organizations there continue to be shaped by colonial-era institutions but demonstrate surprisingly strong norms of professionalism, even as individual police officers struggle to perform their jobs with limited means in increasingly dangerous environments. Well-organized police bureaucracies have formed in recent decades, but various forms of bribery and corruption remain extremely common, and inadequate skill levels persist. A fascinating chapter by Beek deconstructs the practices at a police checkpoint in Ghana, where officers will ignore multiple infractions if a citizen offers them a small gift. This ritual follows long-standing local norms, but the behavior of individual police officers is increasingly shaped by worries that people will complain about them on local radio stations, which may result in social sanctions, as well as an official reprimand.

*Foreign Affairs* (ISSN 00157120), January/February 2018, Volume 97, Number 1. Published six times annually (January, March, May, July, September, November) at 58 East 68th Street, New York, NY 10065. Print subscriptions: U.S., $54.95; Canada, $66.95; other countries via air, $89.95 per year. Canadian Publication Mail–Mail # 1572121. Periodicals postage paid in New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Foreign Affairs*, P.O. Box 60001, Tampa, FL 33662-0001. From time to time, we permit certain carefully screened companies to send our subscribers information about products or services that we believe will be of interest. If you prefer not to receive such information, please contact us at the Tampa, FL, address indicated above.

# How Big a Challenge Is Russia?

## *Foreign Affairs* Brain Trust

We asked dozens of experts whether they agreed or disagreed that Russia is the United States' greatest geopolitical challenge. The results from those who responded are below:




**DISAGREE, CONFIDENCE LEVEL 10**

### Jill Dougherty

Global Fellow, Kennan Institute, and former CNN Foreign Affairs Correspondent

"Russia challenges U.S. interests in many areas of the world, but there are forces that are much more serious, including global warming, the disparity between rich and poor, and the increasing use of artificial intelligence and its effect on employment."

**AGREE, CONFIDENCE LEVEL 8**

### Philip Gordon

Mary and David Boies Fellow in U.S. Foreign Policy, Council on Foreign Relations

"The United States faces higher-risk situations (North Korea), greater long-term challenges (China), and more hostile regional adversaries (Iran) than Russia, but in terms of the single greatest geopolitical challenge today, Russia tops the list."

→ **See the full responses at ForeignAffairs.com/RussianSecurityChallenge**

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