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ELIZABETH WARREN: A FOREIGN POLICY FOR ALL

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2019

Who Will Run the World?

America, China, and Global Order

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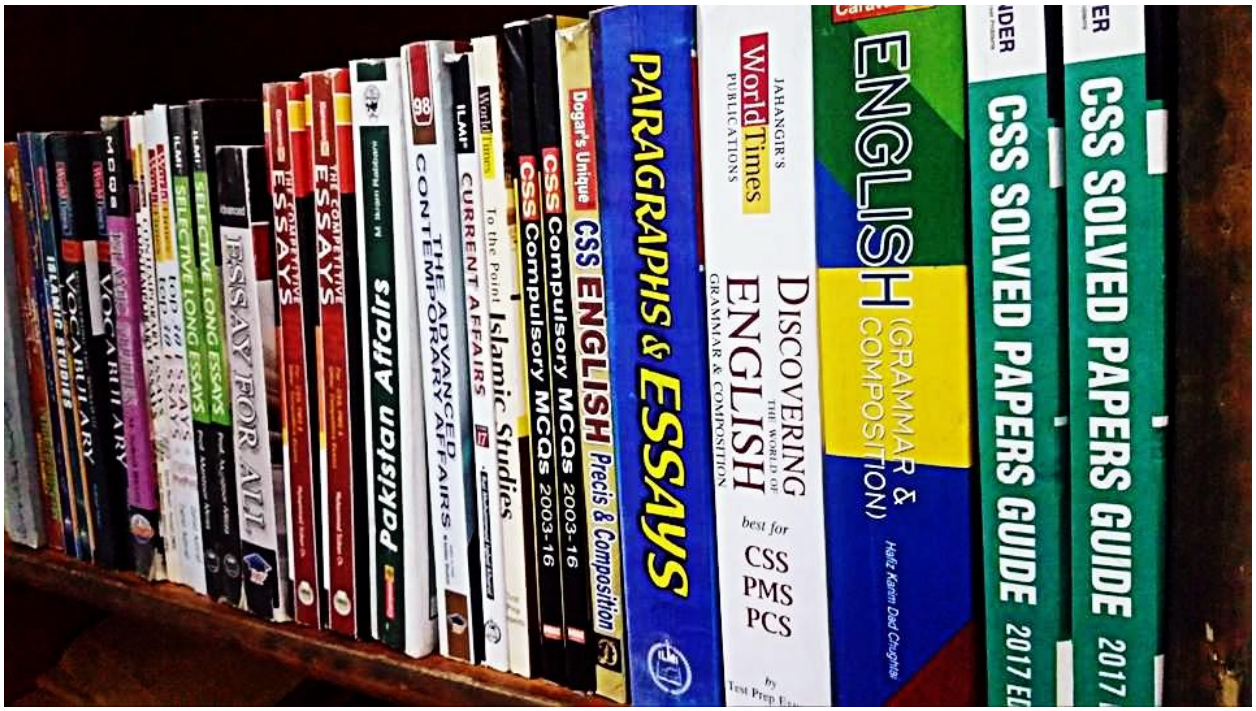

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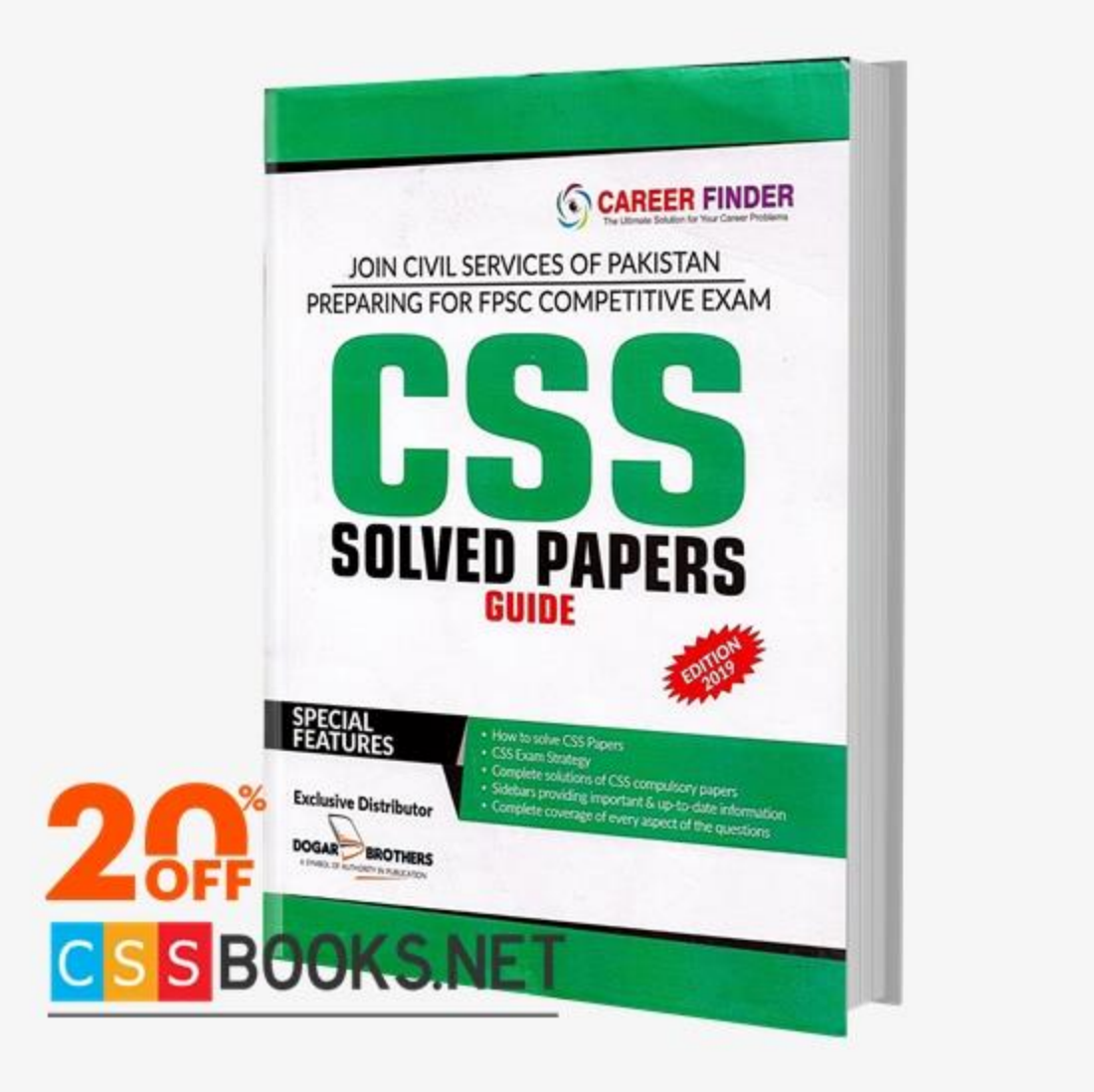

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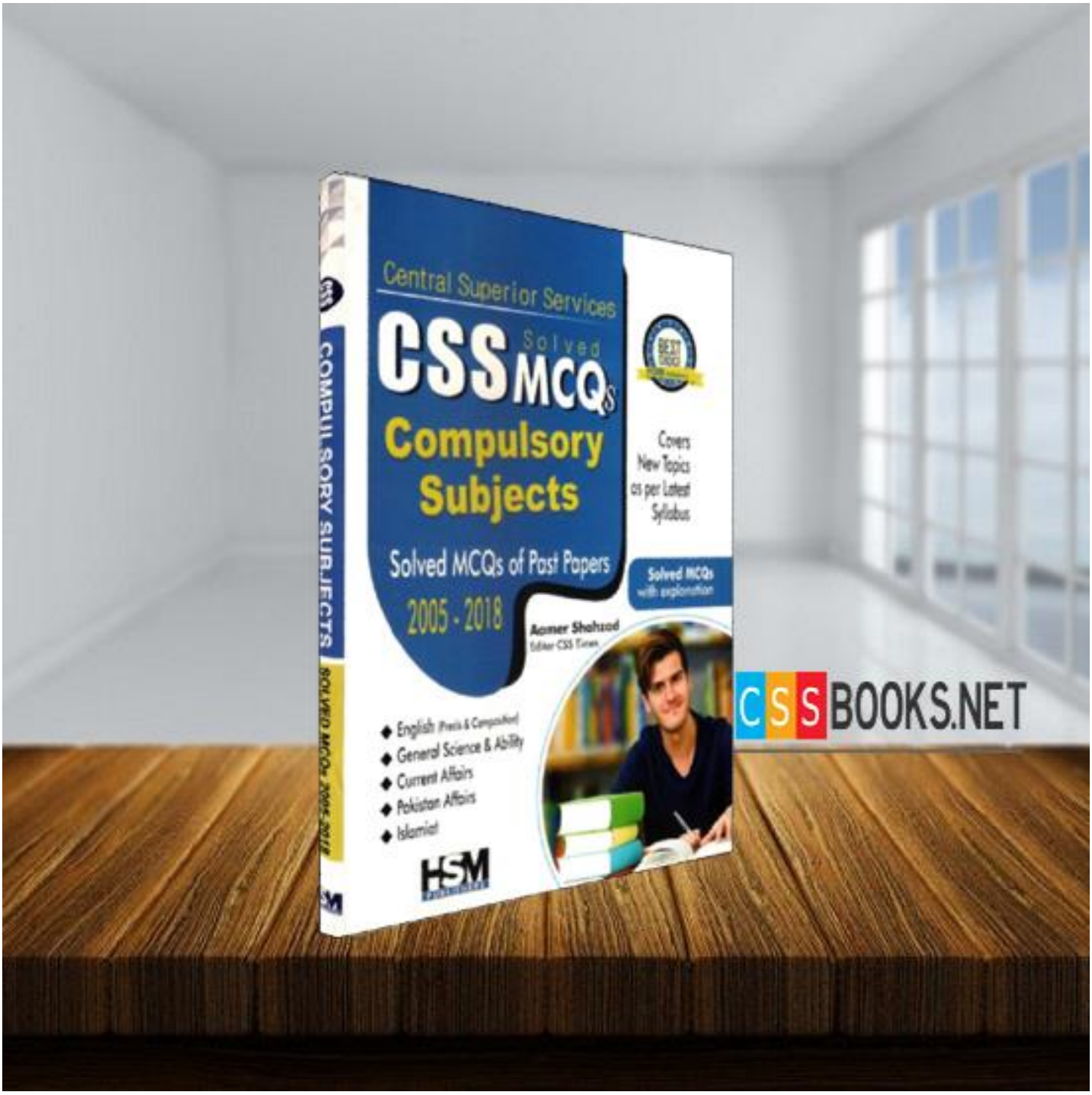

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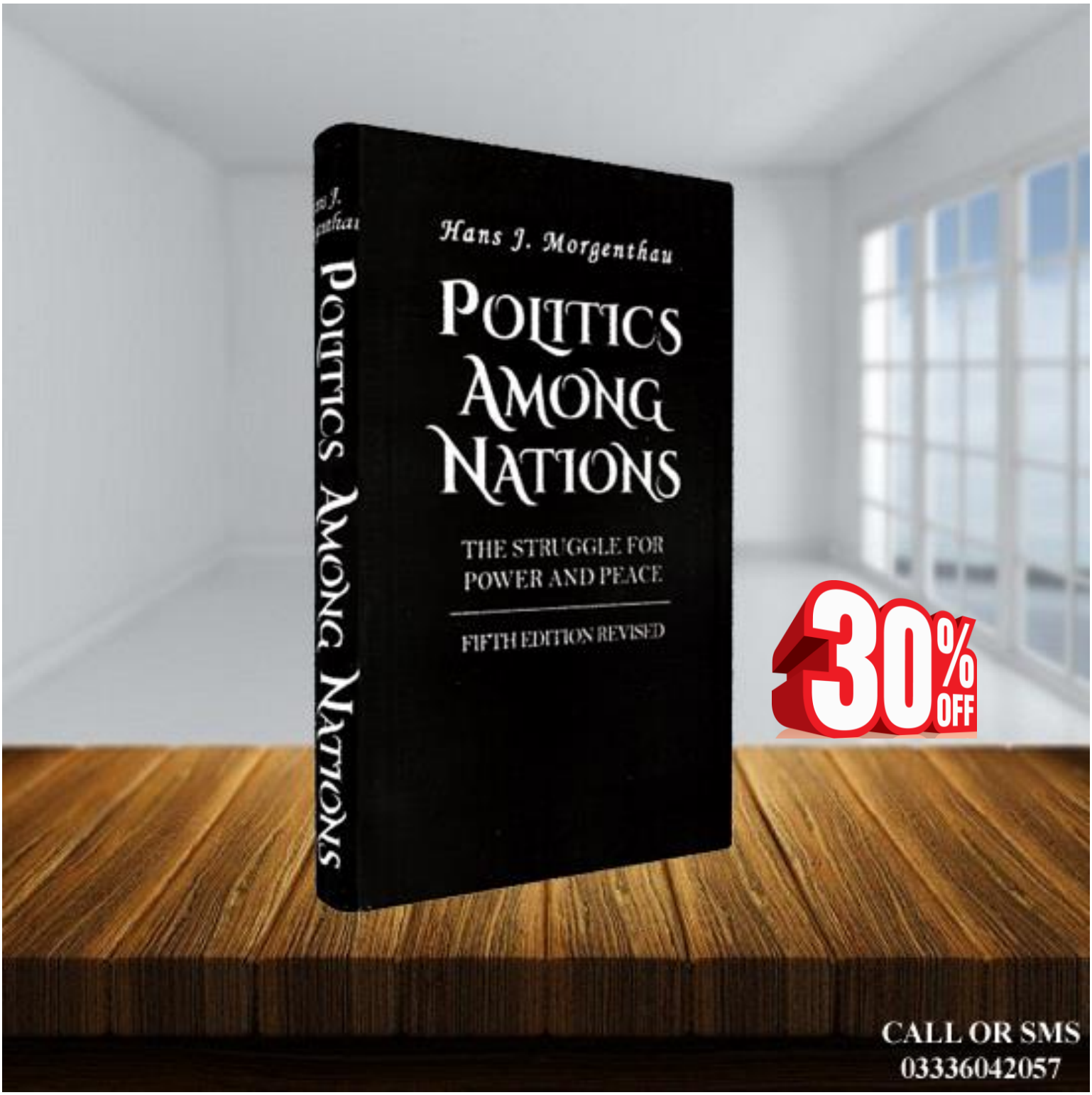

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ESSAYS

COVER ILLUSTRATION: TAVIS COBURN

January/February 2019

ON FOREIGNAFFAIRS.COM

- **Natalie Letsa** on the conflict in Cameroon.
- **Michael Auslin** on the AI arms race.
- **Madawi al-Rasheed** on the U.S. and MBS.

REVIEWS & RESPONSES

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Archibald Cary Coolidge, Founding Editor
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In her years as a law professor, **ELIZABETH WARREN** researched bankruptcy, commercial law, and social mobility. In 2012, after driving the creation of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, she was elected as a Democratic senator from Massachusetts, and in 2017, she joined the Senate Armed Services Committee. In "A Foreign Policy for All" (page 50), Warren argues that in today's struggle between open and closed societies, the United States needs to embrace policies that strengthen the foundations of democracy—at home and abroad.

SÉVERINE AUTESSERRE started her career working for Doctors Without Borders, which took her to Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Her experiences on the ground drove her into academia, where she has focused on trying to understand how societies move from war to peace. Autesserre has conducted fieldwork in Burundi, Colombia, Congo, Cyprus, East Timor, Israel and the Palestinian territories, Somaliland, and South Sudan. In "The Crisis of Peacekeeping" (page 101), she argues that international efforts to end wars have operated with a flawed assumption of what makes peace.

One of the foremost chroniclers of modern European history, **TIMOTHY GARTON ASH** covered the final years of communism on the continent as a journalist, watching the fall of the Berlin Wall and the region's transition to democracy. Now at the University of Oxford and Stanford University, Garton Ash leads a research program on free speech and continues to write about the arc of European history. In "Life After Liberation" (page 187), he reviews the Polish journalist Witold Szablowski's rollicking account of eastern Europeans' nostalgia for communist rule—and considers what it means for the region's fractious present.

AUTESSERRE PHOTO: COPYRIGHT EVAN MANN

WHO WILL RUN THE WORLD?

Two decades ago, the U.S.-sponsored liberal international order seemed to be going from strength to strength. Now, both order and sponsor are in crisis, and the future is up for grabs. There are many elements of the story—military and economic blunders, stagnation for the middle and lower classes in the developed world, a populist backlash against globalization, dizzying technological change—but a shifting balance of power may be the most important of all. That's why we've focused on how the troubled hegemon and the confident challenger are trying to write the story's next chapter.

We've chosen four takes, two on the United States and two on China. Collectively, they map a range of possibilities for world order in the coming years. Readers can decide which they find persuasive now, pending history's actual verdict later.

I kick things off by arguing that rumors of the liberal order's demise are greatly exaggerated. The order is the deeply entrenched outcome of a century of U.S. efforts to promote a better kind of international relations, and it has delivered more benefits than any alternative could. The next U.S. president is likely to try to revive it, with the support of U.S. allies. But whether Washington can muster domestic backing for a constructive foreign policy remains unclear.

Richard Haass sees the glass half empty and getting emptier. The order can't be revived; Washington must accept that fate and put its efforts into managing its deterioration. The demise of the Concert of Europe, the world's last great order-building effort, showed the risks of catastrophe—and offers lessons for policymakers today who want to avert one. Washington needs to be selective in its commitments, avoid unforced errors, and shed its reflexive opposition to multilateralism.

Oriana Skylar Mastro argues that China is not trying to replace the United States as a hegemon; it is trying to check the United States globally while expelling it from a Chinese sphere of influence in the Indo-Pacific. Beijing has so far managed to avoid undue attention and unwanted confrontation by quietly focusing on regional diplomacy, the issuance of carefully orchestrated threats and promises, and attempts to Finlandize U.S. allies. By the time Washington pays attention and responds appropriately, the chance to avert disaster may be lost.

Yan Xuetong, finally, offers a view from Beijing. The temporary U.S. hegemony of the post–Cold War era has vanished, and bipolarity is set to return. Chinese leaders understand this, but they haven't yet worked out detailed plans for how to use their newfound strength to shape the world. Whether Washington tries to restart the old order or not is irrelevant, because it can't be done. Nuclear deterrence should keep hot war at bay, but look for rising tensions and fierce competition at the levels just below.

Happy New Year!

—Gideon Rose, Editor

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TAVIS COBURN

The Fourth Founding

The United States and the Liberal Order

Gideon Rose

The United States began as a radical experiment with grandiose ambitions. Its founders believed in Locke's idea that free individuals could escape the perils of anarchy by joining together and cooperating for mutual benefit—and they created a country to show it wasn't just talk. The signers of the Declaration of Independence bound themselves in a common political project, establishing a limited government to secure their rights and advance their interests. That act, noted Secretary of State John Quincy Adams in 1821, "was the first solemn declaration by a nation of the only legitimate foundation of civil government. It was the corner stone of a new fabric, destined to cover the surface of the globe."

From the start, the United States was understood to be both country and cause, a distinct national community and the standard-bearer of a global political revolution. Destiny would take a long time to play out. Until it did, until the surface of the globe was covered with a fabric of democratic republics, the good new country would have to survive in the bad old international system. "Probably for centuries to come," Adams guessed. So how should the nation behave during the lengthy transition?

Coming at the problem a few decades into the experiment, Adams reasoned that the top priorities for the fledgling republic should be protecting the revolution and perfecting the union. And so just as President George Washington had warned about the dangers of alliances and balance-of-power politics, Adams warned about the dangers of ideological crusades. The United States stood for universal principles, but it need not always export those principles or enforce them abroad. It could be the "well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all" while being the "champion and vindicator" only of its own.

The American grand strategy that emerged in this era—continental expansion and internal development combined with self-righteous aloofness from the world beyond the seas—suited a commercial republic deep in the global periphery. It could work, however, only because the United States was protected by geography and British naval supremacy. The country's long rise during the nineteenth century was made possible by its calm external environment, a public good provided by the liberal hegemon of the day.

By the twentieth century, things had changed. British power had declined; American power had risen. The United States now dominated the Western Hemisphere, patrolled the oceans, drove the global economy, and needed a new grand strategy appropriate to its new situation. American interests had once been served by keeping apart from the world. Now those interests called for engaging with it. But what kind of engagement was possible for a country built on a fundamental rejection of the old game?

GIDEON ROSE is Editor of *Foreign Affairs*.

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After some experimentation, over the course of the century, the answer gradually emerged, in fits and starts, by trial and error. It proved oddly familiar: apply lessons from the country's domestic founding to its foreign policy, taking the logic of the social contract to the next level. If autonomous individuals in the state of nature could find ways to cooperate for mutual benefit, why couldn't autonomous countries? They didn't have to love one another or act saintly; they just needed to have some common interests and understand the concept of a positive-sum game. The more countries played such games, the more opportunities they would have to benefit by cooperation as well as conflict. And gradually, interactions could turn into relationships and then communities—first functional, eventually institutional, maybe one day even heartfelt.

This approach promised to resolve the tension between American interests and American ideals by achieving them simultaneously, on the installment plan. The United States would protect its interests by amassing power and using it as necessary, and it would serve its ideals by nurturing an ever-growing community of independent countries that played nicely with one another. Cooperation would lead to integration and prosperity, which would lead to liberalization. Slowly but steadily, Locke's world would emerge from Hobbes'.

The new grand strategy produced the dense web of benign reciprocal interactions now known as the liberal international order. That order developed in three stages. President Woodrow Wilson first tried to found it after World War I. He failed but gave his successors a model and some cautionary lessons. Presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman tried again during and after World War II, and this time, the order took hold, at least in part of the world. Then, Presidents George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton refounded it for the post–Cold War era, extending it from the West to the rest.

As the cooperative arrangements developed in one period prove inadequate for the next, the order's forward progress stalls, and pessimism spreads. In the past, the obvious benefits of continued cooperation have ultimately led new generations to create new arrangements so the good times keep rolling. Whether that pattern will continue is unclear.

In 2016, Anglosphere voters rang down the curtain on the third phase of the order's history with Brexit and the election of U.S. President Donald Trump, and for two years, the world has drifted. Conventional wisdom says the order is finished, has failed, was always a naive fantasy or a mere epiphenomenon of temporary surplus power.

And yet still, it moves. The order's core insight about the potential for mutual gains from voluntary, rules-based international cooperation remains sound. Most of the world has bought into the project and wants to stick with it. No alternative approach offers as many benefits, and most carry grave risks—for both the United States and the world at large. So the conventional wisdom is likely wrong, and the administration after Trump's will almost certainly tack backward somewhat and try to revive the order yet again.

A fourth founding will be difficult. But it can be done and needs to be done, because the stakes are huge. The catch is that it will take a sincere commitment by the world's dominant power to lead rather than win.

FIRST FOUNDING

When the Great War broke out, in 1914, the United States instinctively dove for cover. That was the standard nineteenth-century playbook: not our problem. Yet it didn't last long in the twentieth century, because the country had grown too strong to be ignored. As the fighting in Europe settled into a grinding war of attrition, the outcome increasingly depended on the Allies' access to the U.S. economy. So in 1917, Germany tried to cut off transatlantic shipping. Unrestricted submarine warfare was designed to squeeze the Allies into submission. Instead, it pulled the United States into the war, and the world, for good.

Watching the slaughter as a neutral, Wilson had refused to normalize it. The whole enterprise of war was evil, he was sure, not just any one belligerent. The root problem was the ruthless jockeying for advantage that all European countries considered normal foreign policy behavior. That whole mindset had to change. So from the sidelines, Wilson called on the belligerents to declare the stalemated war a draw and move to a new kind of postwar order based on collective security rather than competitive self-interest.

Soon afterward, Germany started torpedoing all the U.S. ships it could find. This convinced Wilson that his vision couldn't be realized unless Germany was reformed from the inside out. So when the United States entered the war, it sought not only a postwar collective security system but also the removal of "Prussian autocracy."

Wilson thought regime change was necessary because dictatorships could not be trusted to participate in his collective security system. His secretary of state, Robert Lansing, thought democracies would be less warlike in general. The administration planned to reinforce its institutionalized democratic peace with an open international trading order, so benign commercial interactions would gradually bind the world together in peace and prosperity. (That free trade would benefit the dominant United States most of all went without saying.)

International security, international economics, domestic politics abroad—all would have to be transformed before the United States could be secure. But when it was, the world would be, too. This was a postwar vision grand enough to justify the war's carnage. Pulling it off would be a long shot, however. Wilson needed to get his own country behind him, keep the British and the French in check, and bring a revived, democratized Germany back into the European balance. Talleyrand or Bismarck might have had a chance; Wilson didn't.

In the event, the cynical British and French pocketed American help during the war, paid lip service to Wilson's pieties, and kept on pursuing their individual short-term interests just as before. The American people turned out to want not a negotiated truce and a postwar balance of power but complete submission and just the sort of harsh treatment of Germany that Wilson sought to avoid. And then, as the guns fell silent, the Kaiser's regime collapsed, to be followed eventually by a weak, unstable democratic successor unable to defend itself at home or abroad. The British and the French happily took advantage of the situation, imposing a more punitive settlement at Versailles than Wilson wanted or the Germans felt they had been promised, and things went south from there.

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The peacemakers: at the World War I peace conference in Paris, 1919

EDWARD JACKSON / LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The first attempt to found the order was in trouble by the end of 1918, was on life support by the end of 1919, and died slowly and painfully in the years after.

SECOND TRY

Wilson's failure seemed to confirm the wisdom of Adams' prudence, and so during the 1920s and 1930s, the United States turned inward again. Just as before, however, the realities of power made such a course impractical. The strongest country in the world necessarily affected, and was affected by, what happened everywhere else. Retreating into isolation now was like a toddler putting his head under a blanket: it made things look better, but the outside world didn't go away.

Sure enough, within a generation, the other great powers were back to their old tricks, pursuing short-term individual interests, beggaring their neighbors, and so forth. This led to a downward spiral of mistrust, predation, depression, and war. In 1941, just as in 1917, the United States was attacked and dragged in because it was too powerful to be ignored. And once again, roused from its geopolitical slumber and driving to victory, Washington had to decide what to do next.

The Roosevelt administration was stocked with rueful Wilsonians. They continued to believe that the best way to protect American interests was to use American power to transform international politics. If anything, they believed it even more passionately than before, given what had happened since. Still, having bungled the job once, they knew they would have to up their game the second time around.

They agreed among themselves about what had gone wrong. The Wilson admin-

istration had tried to be soft on Germany and hard on Russia. It had permitted the United Kingdom, France, and Italy to make secret agreements and hold acquisitive war aims. It had waited until after the war to set up the League of Nations, designed it badly, and failed to secure congressional approval of American participation. Because of these mistakes, the victorious wartime alliance fractured, the league foundered, trade barriers deepened the Depression, and eventually a despotic Germany rose up again and dragged the world back into the maelstrom.

This remembered nightmare lay behind the entire complex of U.S. planning for the postwar order. This time, the thinking ran, Germany and the other defeated Axis powers would be occupied and democratized. The Soviet Union would be courted. A better-designed league would be set up during the war, with American participation locked in from the start. And eventually, postwar harmony and prosperity would be maintained through a combination of democratic peace, great-power concert, institutionalized multilateral cooperation, and free trade.

By early 1945, the new framework seemed largely in place. Some things, such as Germany's future status, were left undecided because Roosevelt wanted it that way. (He liked to improvise.) But the gaps did not seem crucial. Although somewhat concerned about Soviet behavior in eastern Europe and the transition from a wartime to a peacetime economy, the president died in April confident his hopes would be realized.

Actually, there were lots of big problems looming, not least how to square the great juggler's own conflicting promises to different constituencies. Because Roosevelt had allowed no succession planning, the job of implementing his ambitious agenda in the actually existing postwar world fell to his successor, Truman. And the job was tough.

The United Kingdom was weaker than expected and rapidly shedding its remaining global commitments. Europe was in ruins, revolutionary nationalism was rising, the Soviets were playing hardball, and the American public was quickly turning inward again. After two years of watching the situation deteriorate, Washington decided to shift course, putting aside the grand universal institutional framework it had just constructed and building a smaller, more practical one in its place. The Bretton Woods system was thus supplemented by the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and NATO, a new set of arrangements designed to revive and protect an American sphere of influence run along liberal lines.

EXTENDING THE GAINS

Cooperation is difficult, especially with other people. Put together a group for a stag hunt, Rousseau noted, and somebody will run off to chase a hare, letting the stag escape and the others go hungry. Humans find it easier to bond over fear than hope. So a crucial moment for the order came when hope and fear got yoked together to pull it forward.

In 1947, the Truman administration moved forward with its plan to pump American capital into a revived and newly integrated European economy centered on Germany and France. It offered generous aid to any country in the region willing to play by the rules of the new system, and most grabbed the chance. But Moscow had no desire

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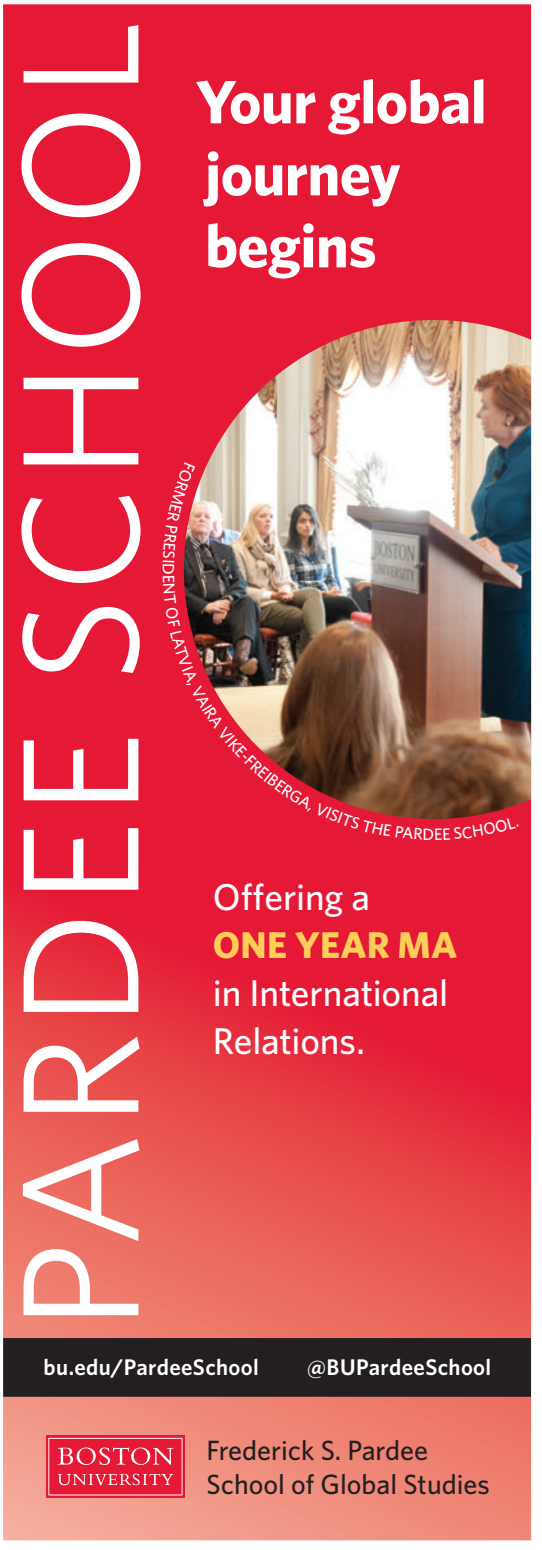
to be part of any American system, so it refused and ordered its minions to do the same. A relieved Washington then began building its order in the western half of the continent, as Moscow did the same in the East. And so the second phase of the order's history came to coincide with the geopolitical conflict known as the Cold War.

American policymakers did indeed come to see the Soviet Union as a threat during the late 1940s. But that threat was not to the U.S. homeland. It was to the order they were trying to build, which extended well beyond American borders to the major industrial power centers of Europe and Asia and the global commons and required a sustained forward presence to maintain. Neither Congress nor the American public was clamoring for the launch of such a grand new postwar project. They had their own problems and were skeptical about authorizing large amounts of money to get Europe back on its feet. So the Truman administration cleverly flipped the story, presenting its new approach not as an independent project of American order building but as a response to a growing Soviet threat. This got the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and other measures approved. But it distorted what was really going on.

Containment was necessary to protect the order. But once containment was established as Washington's strategic frame, it dominated the narrative. Cooperative integration was sold as something that was done to bind the American alliance together to win the conflict rather than as something valuable in its own right. This went on so long that when the Cold War finally ended, many were surprised that the order continued.



Nobody expected the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 or the collapse of the Soviet Union two years later. It was the sudden realization of the vision that the diplomat George Kennan had put forth decades earlier: the United States had held the line, waited, and eventually watched its opponent cede the field.

What should come next for American foreign policy? At the time, this seemed like an open question, and much ink was spilled in the "Kennan sweepstakes" as people proposed replacements for containment. But the question was not really open, because there was an obvious answer: stay the course.

The George H. W. Bush administration recognized that the Cold War had really been a challenge to the order, and so when the challenger gave up, the order was free to expand and flourish. Washington's mission now wasn't to write a new story. It was to write another chapter in the old one, as Brent Scowcroft, Bush's national security adviser, told the president in a memo in 1989:

> In his memoirs, *Present at the Creation*, Dean Acheson remarked that, in 1945, their task "began to appear as just a bit less formidable than that described in the first chapter of Genesis. That was to create a world out of chaos; ours, to create half a world, a free half, out of the same material without blowing the whole to pieces in the process." When those creators of the 1940s and 1950s rested, they had done much. We now have unprecedented opportunities to do more, to pick up the task where they left off, while doing what must be done to protect a handsome inheritance.

Bush's comment: "Brent—I read this with interest!"

During the 1990s, therefore, the Bush and Clinton administrations refounded the order for the post–Cold War era. They weren't sure how long unipolarity would last and faced a skeptical public and Congress. So the technocrats improvised and muddled through as best they could. Bush skillfully managed the Soviet collapse, made a reunified Germany a pillar of the order, led a coalition to stabilize the Persian Gulf after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, nudged Israel and the Arabs toward peace, and managed U.S. finances responsibly.

Clinton continued the same general course. He advanced North American economic integration, renewed the U.S.-Japanese alliance, expanded NATO to eastern Europe, contained regional security threats in the Middle East and Asia, promoted the Arab-Israeli peace process, and also managed U.S. finances responsibly. By the turn of the millennium, the United States and the order were stronger, richer, and more secure than ever.

THE GREAT UNRAVELING

Two decades on, it's complicated. By providing international public goods such as global and regional security, freedom of the commons, and a liberal trading system, the United States created what was by any historical standard a stable and benign global environment, a planet-sized petri dish for human and national development. From 1989 to 2016, global product more than tripled. Standards of living skyrocketed. More than a billion people were lifted out of poverty. Infant mortality plummeted. New technologies continuously im-

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proved daily life and connected people in extraordinary new ways.

We did not go back to the future or miss the Cold War. Europe was primed for peace; Asian rivalries did not ripen. Anarchy did not come; post–Cold War chaos was a myth. On the big-ticket items—great-power peace and global prosperity—the realist pessimists were wrong, and the liberal optimists were right.

But macrostability coexisted with regional disorder. The signal was hard to detect in all the noise. And the architects of the current phase of globalization forgot that the spread of capitalism is a net good, not an absolute one. Along with its gains come losses—of a sense of place, of social and psychological stability, of traditional bulwarks against life's vicissitudes. Absent some sort of state intervention, its benefits are not distributed steadily or evenly, producing anger and turbulence along with rising expectations. Washington turbocharged globalization even as it cut back the domestic safety net, shifting risk from the state back to the public just as the gales of creative destruction started to howl.

More money created more problems. Roman-level power led to Roman-level decadence. Uncontested dominance led to unnecessary, poorly planned crusades. Unregulated elites stumbled into a financial crisis. And the technocrats running things got so wrapped up in their cosmopolitan dream palaces that they missed how bad things were looking to many outside.

As a result, liberalism's project ended up getting hijacked by nationalism, just as Marxism's project had back in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Large segments of many Western populations came to think that the order wasn't working for them, and they increasingly saw no reason to defer to dysfunctional establishments bent on lining their own pockets. As one reader of *Foreign Affairs* recently commented, "I'll simplify it for you: the average American rejects your Globalist, anti-American, anti-constitution, politically correct VOMIT."

By the 2010s, the old arrangements were clearly broken, but thanks to political gridlock, nothing changed. President Barack Obama's foreign policy focused on trying to protect the order's core by retrenching from overextension in the periphery. And then came Trump, a self-taught political genius who rode to office as an outsider denouncing all existing government policy.

Foreign policy experts scoffed at Trump's instinctive embrace of "America first" as a campaign theme, because everybody knew that was the approach that had failed disastrously just before the order succeeded brilliantly. But Trump didn't care. The order is a positive-sum game, and he lives in a zero-sum world. It is based on sustained cooperation for mutual benefit, which is not something Trump does. Ever.

Trump's election thus created an interesting situation. The person now tasked with running U.S. foreign policy wanted to take it back to the halcyon days of the 1930s. He favored competition rather than cooperation, protectionism rather than free trade, authoritarianism rather than democracy. And he felt that his election allowed him to control the entire government by fiat and whim, the same way he controlled his company. Others disagreed, and the tensions have never been resolved. At one point, Trump's entire national security apparat gathered in the basement of the

Pentagon to explain the order to him. The president was bored and implacable. (That was the meeting his then secretary of state left calling him "a fucking moron," according to Bob Woodward.)

Over his first two years in office, the president gradually worked out functional power-sharing arrangements with Republicans in Congress, producing an administration devoted to tax cuts, deregulation, conservative courts, military spending, and restrictions on immigration and trade. Missing from the agenda: what one undocumented alien from the last century famously referred to as "truth, justice, and the American way."

In external affairs, torn between a volatile amateur president pulling one way and a sullen professional bureaucracy pulling the other, lacking a grand strategy or even strategists, the administration has offered little more than photo ops and irritable gestures. The routine operations of global-order maintenance continue, but to increasingly less effect, because everybody can see that the commander in chief scorns the underlying mission. Living in a constant transactional present, Trump deploys national power instinctively to grab whatever is in reach. Call it foreign policy as anti–social work.

NOW WHAT?

The next two years are likely to follow the same pattern, with Trump's increasing control of the executive branch offset by the Democrats' control of the House of Representatives. The order will not explode, but it will continue to corrode, heading toward what the political scientist Barry Posen has called "illiberal hegemony." And eventually, another president will come in and have to figure out what to do next.

It might seem that the cleverest post-Trump foreign policy would be a kinder, gentler Trumpism. The new president could pocket whatever gains Trump extracted, drop the trash talk for sweet talk, offer some concessions, and nod toward the old ideals—even while continuing to bargain hard with everybody about everything. The world would be relieved to get past the crazy and would praise the new occupant of the Oval Office just for not being Trump. With some token apologies for the unpleasantness and a renewal of vows, life could go on sort of as before. (Maybe even better, now that everybody remembers that the United States has claws beneath its mittens.)

That would be a huge mistake. For by the time Trump leaves office, the dial on U.S. foreign policy will have moved from supporting the order to undermining it. During Trump's tenure, the United States will have broken the bonds of trust needed to keep the common project moving forward, and without trust, the order will gradually start to come apart. Unless there is a major change in course, other countries will follow Washington's lead and chase after hares, and nobody will get to eat venison for a long time.

Repairing the damage will require more than being not Trump. It will require being reverse Trump: telling the truth, thinking for others as well as oneself, playing for the long term. Trumpism is about winning, which is something you do to others. The order requires leading, which is something you do with others. If the next administration appreciates that distinction, it will get the opportunity to restart it yet again.

Inconceivable, cry skeptics. Even if one buys this fairy-tale view of what

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the order once accomplished, its day is done. Americans don't want it. The world doesn't want it. U.S. power is declining; China's is rising. A return to great-power conflict is inevitable; the only question is how far things will go.

Such bold pronouncements, however, are rooted in an outdated conception of national power. Realists focus their analysis exclusively on material factors such as military forces and shares of global economic output. That might make sense in a world of billiard-ball states constantly knocking one another around. But it turns out that large parts of modern international life resemble not perfect competition but its opposite, what the political scientists Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye have called "complex interdependence." In those areas, countries are knit together in lots of relationships and networks, and life is an endless series of stag hunts. Survival is not just about winning individual immunity challenges; it requires a social game, the ability to bring groups together. And the United States turns out, ironically, to have a pretty good social game—so good that it has long since stopped conforming to realist theory and developed its own idiosyncratic approach, one academics scramble afterward to capture with theoretical griffins: empire by invitation, consensual hegemony, liberal leviathan.

The United States' hard power has indeed declined in relative terms from its postwar peak. But this fact does not have the significance realists assume, because the country's absolute hard power is greater than ever and is multiplied by its soft power. For generations, the United States has done what realist theory said was impossible, playing international

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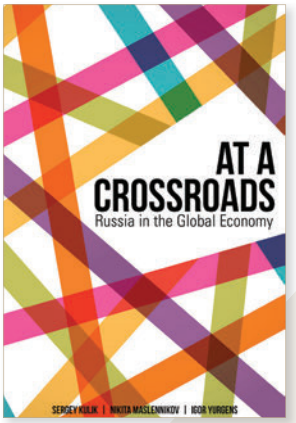
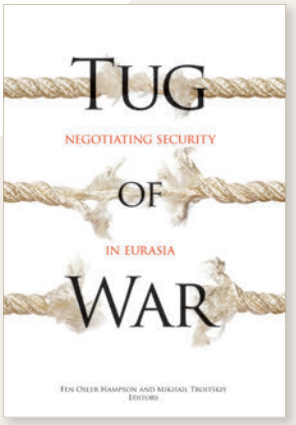
AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS of Russia's economy at a critical juncture.

By Sergey Kulik, Nikita Maslennikov and Igor Yurgens





A CRITICAL LOOK at the major international dynamics at play in Eurasia affecting peace and prosperity in the region.

Edited by Fen Osler Hampson and Mikhail Troitskiy

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politics as a team sport, not an individual one. On balance, it has considered its role in the order to be the protector of a community, not the exploiter of hapless marks; it has participated in alliances, not run a protection racket. Thanks to that, when it comes time for crucial tasks of system maintenance, it can add its friends' power to its own.

China's situation is different. The speed and scale of its rise over the last 40 years have been astonishing. China, too, took full advantage of the calm external environment and open trading order provided by the liberal hegemon of its day. And now it, too, has grown to become a global player, requiring a new strategy appropriate to its status. Yet because China plays as an individual, its own hard power is pretty much all it has to offer. Apart from North Korea, it has few allies; the cooperation it gets from others is purchased or commanded. But love is not for sale.

Squinting only at the bilateral material balance, one might see a power transition in the offing. But in the real world, Team Washington versus Team Beijing is a lopsided contest, with the order backed by three-quarters of global defense spending, most of the largest economies, and the world's reserve currency. What theorists call "the Thucydides trap" has been pried open by the possibilities of modernity.

Dealing with the Chinese challenge will involve the familiar task of herding international cats. The United States joined with the United Kingdom, France, and Russia to beat Wilhelmine Germany. It got the band back together plus nationalist China to beat Nazi Germany and imperial Japan. Then it brought together a larger group plus communist China to beat Soviet Russia. Now it needs to lead a still larger group in a dance with contemporary China.

But some things are different now. During the Cold War, the United States traded with its capitalist allies and glowered at its communist enemies. The modern fields of international economics and security studies emerged during this period as separate tool kits for each set of relationships. Now that China has risen to be an economic peer without liberalizing its regime, it is playing a mixed game of cooperation and competition, something that Washington has never had to deal with before at this level.

Neither engagement nor containment alone is a viable approach. The question is how to mix them without sliding into conflict. That means combining measures across issue areas into a coherent strategy, prioritizing objectives, and working closely with allies and regional partners, bringing them along not through bullying but by patiently working out a mutually acceptable compromise.

The order features an array of cooperative bilateral, regional, and functional groupings. Because it has so many aspects and points of entry, countries not ready to sign up for the whole package at once can ease into it over time, starting on the margins and progressing toward the core at their own pace. That's what the United States and its allies should try to get China to do, in hopes that one day, it may indeed play the role of responsible stakeholder in the system. If the approach succeeds, great. If not, blame for any future conflict will fall on Beijing, not Washington.

Policymakers will also need to address the other great challenge of the day, the turbulence and anxiety produced by the

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rapid advance of markets in the post–Cold War era. One of the lessons from the 1930s was that for economic liberalism to be politically sustainable in a democracy, the state had to step in to help shield citizens from being whipsawed by market forces. The Europeans insisted on acknowledgment of this as the price of their participation in the postwar system, and as a result, national economies were not forced to open up rapidly or completely.

Today's policymakers should recognize the wisdom of that earlier bargain, pairing their international cooperation with a commitment to repairing their torn domestic social safety nets and giving their societies time and space to catch their breath and regain a sense of control over the pace of onrushing economic, social, and technological change.

This domestic side of the project is both valuable on its own and necessary to maintain public support for the foreign policy side. For the real challenge to a fourth founding lies not in theory or policy but in politics. The order is not a nation-building project, just a functional set of cooperative arrangements designed to reduce the downsides of anarchy. As such, it attracts minds, not hearts. Moreover, although the story told here is true, the narrative thread is clearer in retrospect, so its truth is not universally acknowledged. Many Americans never bought into the project, and many still don't. Without the Cold War, it has proved ever more difficult to generate popular support for the country's actual foreign policy. And so each president since the collapse of the Soviet Union has come into office promising to do less abroad than the previous one—only to be dragged by events into doing more.

Since it is easier to mobilize on fear than on hope, some supporters of the order find a silver lining in the growing Chinese threat, reasoning that it might be possible to re-create a neo–Cold War consensus in yet another long, twilight struggle against a new opponent. That could be where things are heading regardless. But it would be far better for Washington to listen to the better angels of its nature and try to avert, rather than hasten, such an outcome.

In 1945, at the peak of its relative power, when it could have done anything it wanted, the United States rejected isolation and realpolitik and chose to live in a world of its design. It did so, the dying Roosevelt explained, because:

> We have learned that we cannot live alone, at peace; that our own well-being is dependent on the well-being of other nations far away. We have learned that we must live as men, not as ostriches, nor as dogs in the manger. We have learned to be citizens of the world, members of the human community. We have learned the simple truth, as Emerson said, that "The only way to have a friend is to be one."

When Roosevelt said it, he meant it—and because he meant it, others believed and joined him. The strategy of paying it forward worked. Three-quarters of a century later, the team of free countries he assembled now runs the world in a loose, patchy, inefficient consortium. When its members meet the next U.S. president, they will expect to hear the usual rhetoric, and will clap politely when they do. And then they'll watch to see whether there is anything left beyond words.

How a World Order Ends

And What Comes in Its Wake

Richard Haass

A stable world order is a rare thing. When one does arise, it tends to come after a great convulsion that creates both the conditions and the desire for something new. It requires a stable distribution of power and broad acceptance of the rules that govern the conduct of international relations. It also needs skillful statecraft, since an order is made, not born. And no matter how ripe the starting conditions or strong the initial desire, maintaining it demands creative diplomacy, functioning institutions, and effective action to adjust it when circumstances change and buttress it when challenges come.

Eventually, inevitably, even the best-managed order comes to an end. The balance of power underpinning it becomes imbalanced. The institutions supporting it fail to adapt to new conditions. Some countries fall, and others rise, the result of changing capacities, faltering wills, and growing ambitions. Those responsible for upholding the order make mistakes both in what they choose to do and in what they choose not to do.

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But if the end of every order is inevitable, the timing and the manner of its ending are not. Nor is what comes in its wake. Orders tend to expire in a prolonged deterioration rather than a sudden collapse. And just as maintaining the order depends on effective statecraft and effective action, good policy and proactive diplomacy can help determine how that deterioration unfolds and what it brings. Yet for that to happen, something else must come first: recognition that the old order is never coming back and that efforts to resurrect it will be in vain. As with any ending, acceptance must come before one can move on.

In the search for parallels to today's world, scholars and practitioners have looked as far afield as ancient Greece, where the rise of a new power resulted in war between Athens and Sparta, and the period after World War I, when an isolationist United States and much of Europe sat on their hands as Germany and Japan ignored agreements and invaded their neighbors. But the more illuminating parallel to the present is the Concert of Europe in the nineteenth century, the most important and successful effort to build and sustain world order until our own time. From 1815 until the outbreak of World War I a century later, the order established at the Congress of Vienna defined many international relationships and set (even if it often failed to enforce) basic rules for international conduct. It provides a model of how to collectively manage security in a multipolar world.

That order's demise and what followed offer instructive lessons for today—and an urgent warning. Just because an order is in irreversible decline does not mean that chaos or

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Concert crashers: British officers during the Crimean War, 1855

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calamity is inevitable. But if the deterioration is managed poorly, catastrophe could well follow.

OUT OF THE ASHES

The global order of the second half of the twentieth century and the first part of the twenty-first grew out of the wreckage of two world wars. The nineteenth-century order followed an earlier international convulsion: the Napoleonic Wars, which, after the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte, ravaged Europe for more than a decade. After defeating Napoleon and his armies, the victorious allies—Austria, Prussia, Russia, and the United Kingdom, the great powers of their day—came together in Vienna in 1814 and 1815. At the Congress of Vienna, they set out to ensure that France's military never again threatened their states and that revolutionary movements never again threatened their monarchies. The victorious powers also made the wise choice to integrate a defeated France, a course very different from the one taken with Germany following World War I and somewhat different from the one chosen with Russia in the wake of the Cold War.

The congress yielded a system known as the Concert of Europe. Although centered in Europe, it constituted the international order of its day given the dominant position of Europe and Europeans in the world. There was a set of shared understandings about relations between states, above all an agreement to rule out invasion of another country or involvement in the internal affairs of another without its permission. A rough military balance dissuaded any state tempted to overthrow the order from trying in the first place (and prevented

any state that did try from succeeding). Foreign ministers met (at what came to be called "congresses") whenever a major issue arose. The concert was conservative in every sense of the word. The Treaty of Vienna had made numerous territorial adjustments and then locked Europe's borders into place, allowing changes only if all signatories agreed. It also did what it could to back monarchies and encourage others to come to their aid (as France did in Spain in 1823) when they were threatened by popular revolt.

The concert worked not because there was complete agreement among the great powers on every point but because each state had its own reasons for supporting the overall system. Austria was most concerned with resisting the forces of liberalism, which threatened the ruling monarchy. The United Kingdom was focused on staving off a renewed challenge from France while also guarding against a potential threat from Russia (which meant not weakening France so much that it couldn't help offset the threat from Russia). But there was enough overlap in interests and consensus on first-order questions that the concert prevented war between the major powers of the day.

The concert technically lasted a century, until the eve of World War I. But it had ceased to play a meaningful role long before then. The revolutionary waves that swept Europe in 1830 and 1848 revealed the limits of what members would do to maintain the existing order within states in the face of public pressure. Then, more consequentially, came the Crimean War. Ostensibly fought over the fate of Christians living within the Ottoman Empire, in actuality it was much more about who would control territory as that empire decayed. The conflict pitted France, the United Kingdom, and the Ottoman Empire against Russia. It lasted two and a half years, from 1853 to 1856. It was a costly war that highlighted the limits of the concert's ability to prevent great-power war; the great-power comity that had made the concert possible no longer existed. Subsequent wars between Austria and Prussia and Prussia and France demonstrated that major-power conflict had returned to the heart of Europe after a long hiatus. Matters seemed to stabilize for a time after that, but this was an illusion. Beneath the surface, German power was rising and empires were rotting. The combination set the stage for World War I and the end of what had been the concert.

WHAT AILS THE ORDER?

What lessons can be drawn from this history? As much as anything else, the rise and fall of major powers determines the viability of the prevailing order, since changes in economic strength, political cohesion, and military power shape what states can and are willing to do beyond their borders. Over the second half of the nineteenth century and the start of the twentieth, a powerful, unified Germany and a modern Japan rose, the Ottoman Empire and tsarist Russia declined, and France and the United Kingdom grew stronger but not strong enough. Those changes upended the balance of power that had been the concert's foundation; Germany, in particular,

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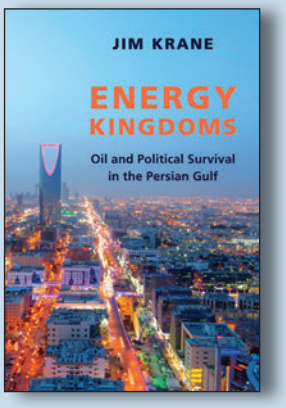
came to view the status quo as inconsistent with its interests.

Changes in the technological and political context also affected that underlying balance. Under the concert, popular demands for democratic participation and surges of nationalism threatened the status quo within countries, while new forms of transportation, communication, and armaments transformed politics, economics, and warfare. The conditions that helped give rise to the concert were gradually undone.

Yet it would be overly deterministic to attribute history to underlying conditions alone. Statecraft still matters. That the concert came into existence and lasted as long as it did underscores that people make a difference. The diplomats who crafted it—Metternich of Austria, Talleyrand of France, Castlereagh of the United Kingdom—were exceptional. The fact that the concert preserved peace despite the gap between two relatively liberal countries, France and the United Kingdom, and their more conservative partners shows that countries with different political systems and preferences can work together to maintain international order. Little that turns out to be good or bad in history is inevitable. The Crimean War might well have been avoided if more capable and careful leaders had been on the scene. It is far from clear that Russian actions warranted a military response by France and the United Kingdom of the nature and on the scale that took place. That the countries did what they did also underscores the power and dangers of nationalism. World War I broke out in no small part because the successors to German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck



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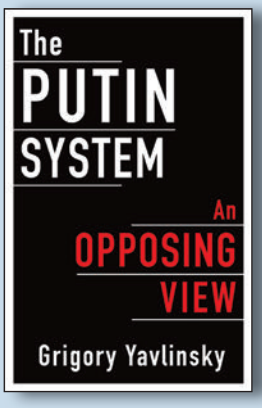

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—Strobe Talbott, Brookings Institution

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were unable to discipline the power of the modern German state he did so much to bring about.

Two other lessons stand out. First, it is not just core issues that can cause an order to deteriorate. The concert's great-power comity ended not because of disagreements over the social and political order within Europe but because of competition on the periphery. And second, because orders tend to end with a whimper rather than a bang, the process of deterioration is often not evident to decision-makers until it has advanced considerably. By the outbreak of World War I, when it became obvious that the Concert of Europe no longer held, it was far too late to save it—or even to manage its dissolution.

A TALE OF TWO ORDERS

The global order built in the aftermath of World War II consisted of two parallel orders for most of its history. One grew out of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. At its core was a rough balance of military strength in Europe and Asia, backed up by nuclear deterrence. The two sides showed a degree of restraint in their rivalry. "Rollback"—Cold War parlance for what today is called "regime change"—was rejected as both infeasible and reckless. Both sides followed informal rules of the road that included a healthy respect for each other's backyards and allies. Ultimately, they reached an understanding over the political order within Europe, the principal arena of Cold War competition, and in 1975 codified that mutual understanding in the Helsinki Accords. Even in a divided world, the two power centers agreed on how the competition would be waged; theirs was an order based on means rather than ends. That there were only two power centers made reaching such an agreement easier.

The other post–World War II order was the liberal order that operated alongside the Cold War order. Democracies were the main participants in this effort, which used aid and trade to strengthen ties and fostered respect for the rule of law both within and between countries. The economic dimension of this order was designed to bring about a world (or, more accurately, the noncommunist half of it) defined by trade, development, and well-functioning monetary operations. Free trade would be an engine of economic growth and bind countries together so that war would be deemed too costly to wage; the dollar was accepted as the de facto global currency.

The diplomatic dimension of the order gave prominence to the UN. The idea was that a standing global forum could prevent or resolve international disputes. The UN Security Council, with five great-power permanent members and additional seats for a rotating membership, would orchestrate international relations. Yet the order depended just as much on the willingness of the noncommunist world (and U.S. allies in particular) to accept American primacy. As it turns out, they were prepared to do this, as the United States was more often than not viewed as a relatively benign hegemon, one admired as much for what it was at home as for what it did abroad.

Both of these orders served the interests of the United States. The core peace was maintained in both Europe and Asia at a price that a growing U.S.

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economy could easily afford. Increased international trade and opportunities for investment contributed to U.S. economic growth. Over time, more countries joined the ranks of the democracies. Neither order reflected a perfect consensus; rather, each offered enough agreement so that it was not directly challenged. Where U.S. foreign policy got into trouble—such as in Vietnam and Iraq—it was not because of alliance commitments or considerations of order but because of ill-advised decisions to prosecute costly wars of choice.

SIGNS OF DECAY

Today, both orders have deteriorated. Although the Cold War itself ended long ago, the order it created came apart in a more piecemeal fashion—in part because Western efforts to integrate Russia into the liberal world order achieved little. One sign of the Cold War order's deterioration was Saddam Hussein's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, something Moscow likely would have prevented in previous years on the grounds that it was too risky. Although nuclear deterrence still holds, some of the arms control agreements buttressing it have been broken, and others are fraying.

Although Russia has avoided any direct military challenge to NATO, it has nonetheless shown a growing willingness to disrupt the status quo: through its use of force in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine since 2014, its often indiscriminate military intervention in Syria, and its aggressive use of cyberwarfare to attempt to affect political outcomes in the United States and Europe. All of these represent a rejection of the principal constraints associated with the old order. From a Russian perspective, the same might be said of NATO enlargement, an initiative clearly at odds with Winston Churchill's dictum "In victory, magnanimity." Russia also judged the 2003 Iraq war and the 2011 NATO military intervention in Libya, which was undertaken in the name of humanitarianism but quickly evolved into regime change, as acts of bad faith and illegality inconsistent with notions of world order as it understood them.

The liberal order is exhibiting its own signs of deterioration. Authoritarianism is on the rise not just in the obvious places, such as China and Russia, but also in the Philippines, Turkey, and eastern Europe. Global trade has grown, but recent rounds of trade talks have ended without agreement, and the World Trade Organization (WTO) has proved unable to deal with today's most pressing challenges, including nontariff barriers and the theft of intellectual property. Resentment over the United States' exploitation of the dollar to impose sanctions is growing, as is concern over the country's accumulation of debt.

The UN Security Council is of little relevance to most of the world's conflicts, and international arrangements have failed more broadly to contend with the challenges associated with globalization. The composition of the Security Council bears less and less resemblance to the real distribution of power. The world has put itself on the record as against genocide and has asserted a right to intervene when governments fail to live up to the "responsibility to protect" their citizens, but the talk has not translated into action. The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty allows only five states to have nuclear weapons, but there are now nine that do (and many others that could

follow suit if they chose to). The EU, by far the most significant regional arrangement, is struggling with Brexit and disputes over migration and sovereignty. And around the world, countries are increasingly resisting U.S. primacy.

POWER SHIFTS

Why is all this happening? It is instructive to look back to the gradual demise of the Concert of Europe. Today's world order has struggled to cope with power shifts: China's rise, the appearance of several medium powers (Iran and North Korea, in particular) that reject important aspects of the order, and the emergence of nonstate actors (from drug cartels to terrorist networks) that can pose a serious threat to order within and between states.

The technological and political context has changed in important ways, too. Globalization has had destabilizing effects, ranging from climate change to the spread of technology into far more hands than ever before, including a range of groups and people intent on disrupting the order. Nationalism and populism have surged—the result of greater inequality within countries, the dislocation associated with the 2008 financial crisis, job losses caused by trade and technology, increased flows of migrants and refugees, and the power of social media to spread hate.

Meanwhile, effective statecraft is conspicuously lacking. Institutions have failed to adapt. No one today would design a UN Security Council that looked like the current one; yet real reform is impossible, since those who would lose influence block any changes. Efforts to build effective frameworks to deal with the challenges of globalization, including climate change and cyberattacks, have come up short. Mistakes within the EU—namely, the decisions to establish a common currency without creating a common fiscal policy or a banking union and to permit nearly unlimited immigration to Germany—have created a powerful backlash against existing governments, open borders, and the EU itself.

The United States, for its part, has committed costly overreach in trying to remake Afghanistan, invading Iraq, and pursuing regime change in Libya. But it has also taken a step back from maintaining global order and in certain cases has been guilty of costly underreach. In most instances, U.S. reluctance to act has come not over core issues but over peripheral ones that leaders wrote off as not worth the costs involved, such as the strife in Syria, where the United States failed to respond meaningfully when Syria first used chemical weapons or to do more to help anti-regime groups. This reluctance has increased others' propensity to disregard U.S. concerns and act independently. The Saudi-led military intervention in Yemen is a case in point. Russian actions in Syria and Ukraine should also be seen in this light; it is interesting that Crimea marked the effective end of the Concert of Europe and signaled a dramatic setback in the current order. Doubts about U.S. reliability have multiplied under the Trump administration, thanks to its withdrawal from numerous international pacts and its conditional approach to once inviolable U.S. alliance commitments in Europe and Asia.

MANAGING THE DETERIORATION

Given these changes, resurrecting the old order will be impossible. It would

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also be insufficient, thanks to the emergence of new challenges. Once this is acknowledged, the long deterioration of the Concert of Europe should serve as a lesson and a warning.

For the United States to heed that warning would mean strengthening certain aspects of the old order and supplementing them with measures that account for changing power dynamics and new global problems. The United States would have to shore up arms control and nonproliferation agreements; strengthen its alliances in Europe and Asia; bolster weak states that cannot contend with terrorists, cartels, and gangs; and counter authoritarian powers' interference in the democratic process. Yet it should not give up trying to integrate China and Russia into regional and global aspects of the order. Such efforts will necessarily involve a mix of compromise, incentives, and pushback. The judgment that attempts to integrate China and Russia have mostly failed should not be grounds for rejecting future efforts, as the course of the twenty-first century will in no small part reflect how those efforts fare.

The United States also needs to reach out to others to address problems of globalization, especially climate change, trade, and cyber-operations. These will require not resurrecting the old order but building a new one. Efforts to limit, and adapt to, climate change need to be more ambitious. The WTO must be amended to address the sorts of issues raised by China's appropriation of technology, provision of subsidies to domestic firms, and use of nontariff barriers to trade. Rules of the road are needed to regulate cyberspace. Together, this is tantamount to a call for

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a modern-day concert. Such a call is ambitious but necessary.

The United States must show restraint and recapture a degree of respect in order to regain its reputation as a benign actor. This will require some sharp departures from the way U.S. foreign policy has been practiced in recent years: to start, no longer carelessly invading other countries and no longer weaponizing U.S. economic policy through the overuse of sanctions and tariffs. But more than anything else, the current reflexive opposition to multilateralism needs to be rethought. It is one thing for a world order to unravel slowly; it is quite another for the country that had a large hand in building it to take the lead in dismantling it.

All of this also requires that the United States get its own house in order—reducing government debt, rebuilding infrastructure, improving public education, investing more in the social safety net, adopting a smart immigration system that allows talented foreigners to come and stay, tackling political dysfunction by making it less difficult to vote, and undoing gerrymandering. The United States cannot effectively promote order abroad if it is divided at home, distracted by domestic problems, and lacking in resources.

The major alternatives to a modernized world order supported by the United States appear unlikely, unappealing, or both. A Chinese-led order, for example, would be an illiberal one, characterized by authoritarian domestic political systems and statist economies that place a premium on maintaining domestic stability. There would be a return to spheres of influence, with China attempting to dominate its region, likely resulting in clashes with other regional powers, such as India, Japan, and Vietnam, which would probably build up their conventional or even nuclear forces.

A new democratic, rules-based order fashioned and led by medium powers in Europe and Asia, as well as Canada, however attractive a concept, would simply lack the military capacity and domestic political will to get very far. A more likely alternative is a world with little order—a world of deeper disarray. Protectionism, nationalism, and populism would gain, and democracy would lose. Conflict within and across borders would become more common, and rivalry between great powers would increase. Cooperation on global challenges would be all but precluded. If this picture sounds familiar, that is because it increasingly corresponds to the world of today.

The deterioration of a world order can set in motion trends that spell catastrophe. World War I broke out some 60 years after the Concert of Europe had for all intents and purposes broken down in Crimea. What we are seeing today resembles the mid-nineteenth century in important ways: the post–World War II, post–Cold War order cannot be restored, but the world is not yet on the edge of a systemic crisis. Now is the time to make sure one never materializes, be it from a breakdown in U.S.-Chinese relations, a clash with Russia, a conflagration in the Middle East, or the cumulative effects of climate change. The good news is that it is far from inevitable that the world will eventually arrive at a catastrophe; the bad news is that it is far from certain that it will not.

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Return to Table of Contents

The Stealth Superpower

How China Hid Its Global Ambitions

Oriana Skylar Mastro

"China will not, repeat, not repeat the old practice of a strong country seeking hegemony," Wang Yi, China's foreign minister, said last September. It was a message that Chinese officials have been pushing ever since their country's spectacular rise began. For decades, they have been at pains to downplay China's power and reassure other countries—especially the United States—of its benign intentions. Jiang Zemin, China's leader in the 1990s, called for mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, and cooperation in the country's foreign relations. Under Hu Jintao, who took the reins of power in 2002, "peaceful development" became the phrase of the moment. The current president, Xi Jinping, insisted in September 2017 that China "lacks the gene" that drives great powers to seek hegemony.

It is easy to dismiss such protestations as simple deceit. In fact, however, Chinese leaders are telling the truth: Beijing truly does not want to replace Washington at the top of the international system. China has no interest in establishing a web of global alliances, sustaining a far-flung global military presence, sending troops thousands of miles from its borders, leading international institutions that would constrain its own behavior, or spreading its system of government abroad.

But to focus on this reluctance, and the reassuring Chinese statements reflecting it, is a mistake. Although China does not want to usurp the United States' position as the leader of a global order, its actual aim is nearly as consequential. In the Indo-Pacific region, China wants complete dominance; it wants to force the United States out and become the region's unchallenged political, economic, and military hegemon. And globally, even though it is happy to leave the United States in the driver's seat, it wants to be powerful enough to counter Washington when needed. As one Chinese official put it to me, "Being a great power means you get to do what you want, and no one can say anything about it." In other words, China is trying to displace, rather than replace, the United States.

The way that China has gone about this project has caused many observers to mistakenly conclude that the country is merely trying to coexist with American power rather than fundamentally overturn the order in Asia and compete with U.S. influence globally. In fact, ambiguity has been part of the strategy: Chinese leaders have recognized that in order to succeed, they must avoid provoking an unfavorable response, and so they have refrained from directly challenging the United States, replicating its order-building model, or matching its globally active military. Although Beijing has pursued an indirect and entrepreneurial

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strategy of accumulating power, make no mistake: the ultimate goal is to push the United States out of the Indo-Pacific and rival it on the global stage.

Until now, China has succeeded in growing without provoking. Yet there is a limit to how powerful a country can get without directly challenging the incumbent power, and China is now reaching that point. Under Xi, China has begun confronting American power head-on. Given the country's internal challenges, China's rise could still stall. But history has shown that in the vast majority of cases in which a country was able to sustain its rise, the rising power ended up overtaking the dominant power, whether peacefully or through war.

That does not mean that the United States cannot buck the historical trend. To remain dominant, Washington will have to change course. It will have to deepen, rather than lessen, its involvement in the liberal international order. It will have to double down on, rather than abandon, its commitment to American values. And perhaps most important, it will have to ensure that its leadership benefits others rather than pursue a strategy based on "America first."

HOW CHINA ROSE

Throughout history, would-be powers have invented new ways of growing. The Mongol Empire connected lands through trade, the Qing dynasty built a tributary system, the United Kingdom collected colonies, the Soviet Union created ideologically linked spheres of influence, and the United States established an institutionalized order and a global military presence. China, too, has looked for new sources of power and has used it in ways not previously attempted.

In the political realm, China has undertaken a combination of covert actions and public diplomacy to co-opt and neutralize foreign opposition. To shape the discourse on sensitive topics, it has set up hundreds of Confucius Institutes at universities around the world and launched English-language media outlets to disseminate the Chinese Communist Party's narrative. Chinese intelligence agents have even recruited Chinese citizens studying abroad to act as informants and pass along what Chinese students and professors are saying about their country. In Australia and New Zealand, China has sought to influence politics more directly, secretly donating money to preferred candidates.

Beijing has been especially innovative in its use of economic power. The strategy here has been to finance infrastructure in the developing world in order to create dependent, and thus compliant, foreign governments. Most recently, those efforts have taken the form of the Belt and Road Initiative, a massive regional infrastructure project launched in 2013. China has spent about $400 billion on the initiative (and pledged hundreds of billions of dollars more), and it has convinced 86 countries and international organizations to sign some 100 related cooperation agreements. Chinese aid, which primarily takes the form of loans from banks controlled by the Chinese Communist Party, doesn't come with the usual Western strings attached: there are no requirements for market reforms or better governance. What China does demand from recipients, however, is allegiance on a number of issues, including the nonrecognition of Taiwan.

As the analyst Nadège Rolland has written, the Belt and Road Initiative "is intended to enable China to better use

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Containing a superpower: at the Port of Shanghai, January 2011

ALY SONG / REUTERS

its growing economic clout to achieve its ultimate political aims without provoking a countervailing response or a military conflict." The key is that Beijing has left the military dimensions of this project ambiguous, generating uncertainty within Washington about its true intentions. Many observers have wondered whether the Belt and Road Initiative will eventually have a strong military component, but that misses the point. Even if the initiative is not the prelude to an American-style global military presence—and it probably isn't—China could still use the economic and political influence generated by the project to limit the reach of American power. For instance, it could pressure dependent states in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia to deny the U.S. military the right to enter their airspace or access their ground facilities.

China's entrepreneurialism is not limited to the economic and political realms; it also has a hard-power component. Indeed, perhaps nowhere has Beijing been more entrepreneurial than in its military strategy. Its "anti-access/area-denial" (A2/AD) doctrine, for one thing, was a masterstroke of innovation: by developing relatively low-cost asymmetric military capabilities, the country has been able to greatly complicate any U.S. plan to come to the aid of Japan, the Philippines, or Taiwan in the event of war. For another thing, instead of confronting the United States to push its military out of the Asia-Pacific region, China has engaged in subtler activities, such as harassing U.S. ships and aircraft with nonmilitary means, which allow it to maintain a degree of deniability and discourage a U.S. response. Thanks to

such tactics, China has made significant political and territorial gains without crossing the threshold into open conflict with the United States or its allies.

China has also avoided sparking a concerted response from the United States by deliberately delaying the modernization of its military. As Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping famously put it, "Hide your strength, bide your time." Since countries tend to draw inferences about a challenger's intentions from the size and nature of its armed forces, China opted to first build up other types of power—economic, political, and cultural—in order to project a less threatening image.

When, in the 1970s, Deng started pursuing the "four modernizations"—of agriculture, industry, science and technology, and national defense—he saved military modernization for last. Throughout the 1980s, China focused first on building its economy; it then supplemented its burgeoning economic power with political influence, joining international institutions throughout the 1990s and the first decade of this century. At the turn of the millennium, China's military was still remarkably backward. Its ships didn't have the capability to sail safely far beyond visual range of the coastline, its pilots were not adept at flying at night or over water, and its nuclear missiles relied on outmoded liquid fuel. Most of its ground units did not have modern, mechanized equipment, such as up-to-date tanks.

It was not until the late 1990s that China began modernizing its military in earnest. And even then, it focused on capabilities that were more appropriate for dominating Taiwan than projecting power more broadly. China also signaled that it sought to use its military for the global good, with Hu publicly announcing that its forces would focus more on peacekeeping and humanitarian relief than on war. Even China's infamous A2/AD doctrine was initially framed as a way of limiting the United States' ability to intervene in Asia rather than as a method for projecting Chinese power. China didn't launch its first aircraft carrier until 2012, and not until 2013 did it undertake the structural reforms that will eventually allow its military to contest U.S. primacy in the Indo-Pacific region in all domains.

MINDING THE GAP

Another key part of China's strategy of accumulating power concerns its relationship with the U.S.-led global order. Beijing has created uncertainty about its ultimate goals by supporting the order in some areas and undermining it in others. This pick-and-choose approach reflects the fact that China benefits greatly from parts of the current order. Permanent membership in the UN Security Council allows it to help set the international agenda and block resolutions it disagrees with. The World Bank has lent China tens of billions of dollars for domestic infrastructure projects. The World Trade Organization, which China joined in 2001, dramatically opened up the country's access to foreign markets, leading to a surge in exports that drove a decade plus of impressive economic growth. But there are parts of the global order that China wants to alter. And the country has discovered that by exploiting existing gaps, it can do so without triggering immediate concern.

The first type of gap in the order is geographic. Some parts of the world fall largely outside the order, either because they have chosen to absent themselves

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or because they have been low priorities for the United States. In those places, where the U.S. presence tends to be weak or nonexistent, China has found that it can make significant inroads without provoking the hegemon. Thus, China initially chose to focus on leveraging its economic power to build influence in Africa, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia. It also doubled down on close relationships with unsavory regimes that the international community had ostracized, such as Iran, North Korea, and Sudan, which allowed it to increase its political power without threatening the United States' position.

The second type of gap is thematic. In issue areas where the established order is weak, ambiguous, or nonexistent, China has sought to establish new standards, rules, norms, and processes that advantage it. Consider artificial intelligence. China is trying to shape the rules governing this new technology in ways that favor its own companies, legitimizing its use for domestic surveillance and weakening the voice of civil society groups that inform the debate about it in Europe and North America.

When it comes to the Internet, meanwhile, China has been pushing the notion of "cyber-sovereignty." In this view, which contrasts with the Western consensus, cyberspace should be governed primarily by states, rather than a coalition of stakeholders, and states have the right to regulate whatever content they wish within their borders. To shift the norm in this direction, China has put the brakes on U.S. efforts to include civil society groups in the UN Group of Governmental Experts, the main norm-setting body for Western governments in cyberspace. Since 2014, it has also held its own annual World Internet Conference, which promulgates the Chinese view of Internet regulation.

In the maritime realm, China is exploiting a lack of international consensus on the law of the sea. Although the United States insists that naval vessels' freedom of navigation is enshrined in international law, many other countries contend that warships have no automatic right of innocent passage through a country's territorial waters—an argument made not just by China but also by U.S. allies such as India. By taking advantage of these discrepancies (and the United States' failure to ratify the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea), China is able to contest U.S. freedom-of-navigation operations within the rubric of the existing international order.

THE NEW COMPETITION

Thanks to this novel strategy, China has been able to grow into one of the most powerful countries in the world, second, perhaps, only to the United States. And if it had chosen to persist with this strategy, the country would have continued to stay off the United States' radar screen. But rising powers can delay provocation for only so long, and the bad news for the United States—and for peace and security in Asia—is that China has now entered the beginning stages of a direct challenge to the U.S.-led order.

Under Xi, China is unabashedly undermining the U.S. alliance system in Asia. It has encouraged the Philippines to distance itself from the United States, it has supported South Korea's efforts to take a softer line toward North Korea, and it has backed Japan's stance against American protectionism. It is building offensive military systems

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capable of controlling the sea and airspace within the so-called first island chain and of projecting power past the second. It is blatantly militarizing the South China Sea, no longer relying on fishing vessels or domestic law enforcement agencies to exercise its conception of sovereignty. It has even started engaging in military activities outside Asia, including establishing its first overseas base, in Djibouti. All these moves suggest one thing: China is no longer content to play second fiddle to the United States and seeks to directly challenge its position in the Indo-Pacific region.

For the United States, competing with China today cannot be a matter of confronting the country or, as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in October 2018, opposing it "at every turn." Washington should focus on building U.S. power and influence everywhere else in the world—making the United States more attractive as a political, economic, and military partner—instead of undermining China's attempts to do the equivalent. By focusing on self-improvement over confrontation, Washington can reduce the risk of creating an enemy and triggering unnecessary conflict.

The first step is for the United States to expand the reach of the order it leads, thus reducing the gaps China can exploit. Contrary to the worldview of U.S. President Donald Trump, the world needs more order, not less. Washington should add new institutions to cover the parts of the order that have none and revise old ones for the parts that are outdated. It should, for example, lead an effort to update the Missile Technology Control Regime, a 1987 partnership to stop the proliferation of nuclear delivery systems, to better account for the advent for unmanned drones. It should also create new treaties aimed at preventing warfare in cyberspace (and in outer space, too, for that matter). And when China sets up its own institutions, as it did with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in 2016, the United States should join the new organizations early on to influence their development rather than attempt to undermine them. The goal should be to build a more comprehensive international order that cannot be pulled in China's illiberal direction.

The United States also needs to step up its economic game. China has nearly as many formal trade agreements in place as does the United States, which, in Asia, has struck bilateral free-trade agreements with only Australia, Singapore, and South Korea. The Trans-Pacific Partnership, signed by 12 countries in 2016, was a step in the right direction, but the Trump administration withdrew from the proposed deal, thus dooming what would have been the world's largest free-trade agreement, covering 40 percent of the global economy. Instead, the administration has preferred protectionist policies, which will serve only to facilitate Chinese economic dominance in Asia. As if on cue, China has launched its own version of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, which is set to include 16 Asian countries.

Washington should also rethink the way it offers economic assistance. To get more bang for its buck, it will need to coordinate more closely with its allies. In the Pacific Islands, for example, the United States lags well behind China in terms of trade, investment, and development assistance. But by pooling its resources with Australia, which has announced a massive infrastructure

project there, the United States could multiply its influence in the region. The same goes for Central Asia: if the United States coordinated its priorities with Japan, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom (all of which are major investors in the region), it could more effectively promote liberal political and economic policies there. Cooperation is not enough on its own, however; Washington also needs to increase its own unilateral aid.

Another way the United States can maintain its edge is to take a cue from China and become more entrepreneurial in how it acquires and exercises power. The standard playbook Washington has been following since the end of the Cold War will no longer do. If the United States is upset with a country over its human rights abuses, for example, reducing or even cutting off economic and diplomatic ties as punishment risks ceding influence to a less discriminating China. Instead, Washington should increase its engagement with the unsavory government, pursuing U.S. interests not just on a diplomatic level but also on a people-to-people level. Similarly, when it comes to military relations, the United States needs to upgrade its tool kit. Port visits, air shows, and even foreign military sales and joint exercises are often merely symbolic and fail to demonstrate the United States' commitment to a country. Far more effective in preparing for conflict would be efforts to create common threat perceptions through enhanced intelligence sharing and joint contingency planning.

U.S. policymakers must also undertake a thorough consideration of what costs would (and would not) be worth bearing in order to maintain the United States' dominant position in Asia. Most agree that the United States should try to maintain its preeminence in the region through competitive but peaceful means. The irony, however, is that if the United States succeeds in doing that, the likelihood of conflict with China may go up. That's because Chinese leaders emphatically believe that the failure to rejuvenate their nation is a fate worse than war, and they will not shy away from a conflict if that is what it takes to succeed. As a result, if U.S. leaders deem primacy in Asia worth protecting, they should brace themselves for the possibility that doing so may require the use of military force. The worst of all worlds would be to fail to compete in peacetime, thus accommodating Chinese power by default, and then—once a conflict erupts—decide that U.S. primacy is important, after all. By that time, however, the United States would be in a poor position to prevail.

The United States must also consider what costs it is willing to bear to defend the countries in Asia that are not its allies yet whose subjugation would threaten the bedrock principles of the international order. In the South China Sea, for example, the United States claims that its naval operations are aimed at defending the general principle of freedom of navigation, but in practice, it has proved willing to physically protect the passage rights only of U.S. and allied ships. Washington's failure to stand up for non-allies whose rights to sail freely are being restricted puts its preeminent position at risk. So the United States should start laying the groundwork for a coalition, similar to the antipiracy task force it developed in the Gulf of Aden, whose ships would escort any vessel in need of protection in the South China Sea, regardless of nationality.

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Other scenarios are even more dire. When China's first round of military reforms are completed, which is projected to be around 2025, Beijing will be tempted to test its new capabilities against a weak country that does not enjoy U.S. protection. Take Vietnam. Even though the United States has no obligation to defend the country, if China forcibly took an island in the South China Sea currently occupied by Vietnam and Washington stood by, its role as the guarantor of peace in the region would be thrown into question, and China would be emboldened. Washington thus needs to be prepared for the unfamiliar possibility of using military force to defend a country with which it has no alliance.

RISING TO THE OCCASION

Great-power competition is not just about military calculations or economic pull. The United States also needs to recommit to protecting its values. Some in the Washington establishment speak longingly about Beijing's ability to get things done, thanks in part to its disregard for liberal norms. Indeed, this sort of agnosticism does give China an advantage. It is able to win over Asian governments by doling out money with no strings attached, its state-owned enterprises receive not just state support but also proprietary information through espionage, and its authoritarian political system makes it far easier to control the narrative about its goals and missions both at home and abroad. But China has an Achilles' heel: its leaders have failed to articulate a vision of global dominance that is beneficial for any country but China. That is why, unlike the United States, it prefers to work with weak partners that can be easily controlled.

To be competitive, Washington cannot stoop to Beijing's level. The United States does not by any means have a perfect track record of living up to its values, but by and large, it has chosen to lead the world in a way that ensures that others also benefit. Now is not the time to abandon this inclusive approach. Washington should support the international institutions that make up the liberal order. It should dedicate greater resources to defending its allies and partners. And in its economic assistance, it should focus on quality over quantity, seeking to make sure that as many people as possible benefit from development. What has made the United States number one is that it thinks globally—not just about "America first." Only by expanding the reach of its own liberal values can the United States weather China's challenge.

The Age of Uneasy Peace

Chinese Power in a Divided World

Yan Xuetong

In early October 2018, U.S. Vice President Mike Pence delivered a searing speech at a Washington think tank, enumerating a long list of reproaches against China. From territorial disputes in the South China Sea to alleged Chinese meddling in U.S. elections, Pence accused Beijing of breaking international norms and acting against American interests. The tone was unusually blunt—blunt enough for some to interpret it as a harbinger of a new Cold War between China and the United States.

Such historical analogies are as popular as they are misleading, but the comparison contains a kernel of truth: the post–Cold War interregnum of U.S. hegemony is over, and bipolarity is set to return, with China playing the role of the junior superpower. The transition will be a tumultuous, perhaps even violent, affair, as China's rise sets the country on a collision course with the United States over a number of clashing interests. But as Washington slowly retreats from some of its diplomatic and military engagements abroad, Beijing has no clear plan for filling this leadership vacuum and shaping new international norms from the ground up.

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What kind of world order will this bring? Contrary to what more alarmist voices have suggested, a bipolar U.S.-Chinese world will not be a world on the brink of apocalyptic war. This is in large part because China's ambitions for the coming years are much narrower than many in the Western foreign policy establishment tend to assume. Rather than unseating the United States as the world's premier superpower, Chinese foreign policy in the coming decade will largely focus on maintaining the conditions necessary for the country's continued economic growth—a focus that will likely push leaders in Beijing to steer clear of open confrontation with the United States or its primary allies. Instead, the coming bipolarity will be an era of uneasy peace between the two superpowers. Both sides will build up their militaries but remain careful to manage tensions before they boil over into outright conflict. And rather than vie for global supremacy through opposing alliances, Beijing and Washington will largely carry out their competition in the economic and technological realms. At the same time, U.S.-Chinese bipolarity will likely spell the end of sustained multilateralism outside strictly economic realms, as the combination of nationalist populism in the West and China's commitment to national sovereignty will leave little space for the kind of political integration and norm setting that was once the hallmark of liberal internationalism.

WHAT CHINA WANTS

China's growing influence on the world stage has as much to do with the United States' abdication of its global leadership under President Donald Trump as with China's own economic rise. In material

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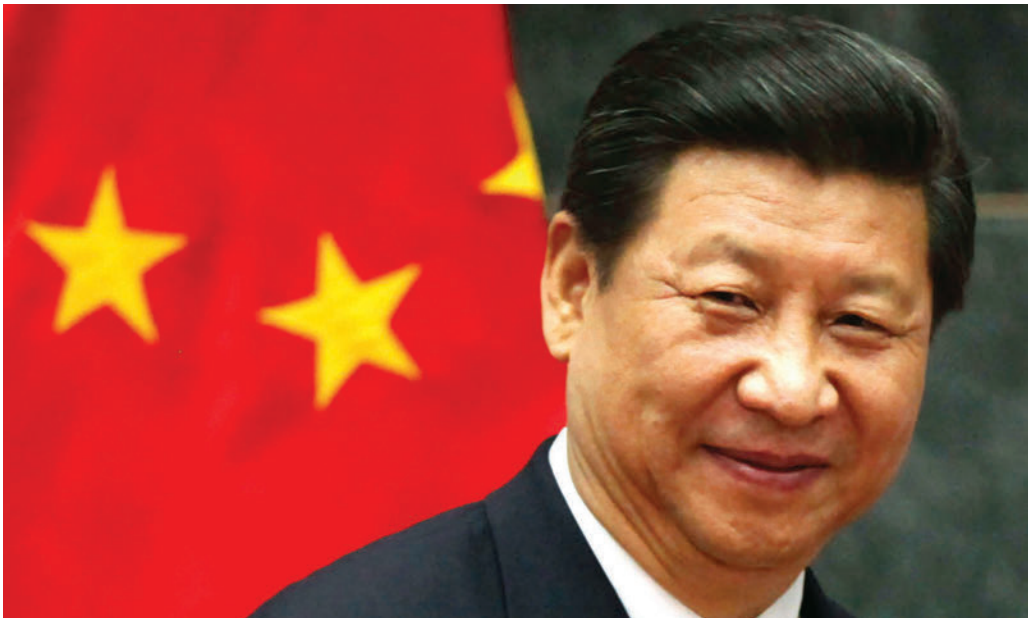

Dreaming of a new world order: Xi at a news conference in Mexico City, July 2018

EDGARD GARRIDO / REUTERS

terms, the gap between the two countries has not narrowed by much in recent years: since 2015, China's GDP growth has slowed to less than seven percent a year, and recent estimates put U.S. growth above the three percent mark. In the same period, the value of the renminbi has decreased by about ten percent against the U.S. dollar, undercutting China's import capacity and its currency's global strength. What has changed a great deal, however, is the expectation that the United States will continue to promote—through diplomacy and, if necessary, military power—an international order built for the most part around liberal internationalist principles. Under Trump, the country has broken with this tradition, questioning the value of free trade and embracing a virulent, no-holds-barred nationalism. The Trump administration is modernizing the U.S. nuclear arsenal, attempting to strong-arm friends and foes alike, and withdrawing from several international accords and institutions. In 2018 alone, it ditched the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the nuclear deal with Iran, and the UN Human Rights Council.

It is still unclear if this retrenchment is just a momentary lapse—a short-lived aberration from the norm—or a new U.S. foreign policy paradigm that could outlive Trump's tenure. But the global fallout of Trumpism has already pushed some countries toward China in ways that would have seemed inconceivable a few years ago. Take Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who effectively reversed Japan's relations with China, from barely hidden hostility to cooperation, during a state visit to Beijing in October 2018, when China and Japan signed over 50 agreements on economic cooperation. Meanwhile, structural factors keep widening the gap between the two global front-runners, China and the United States, and the rest of the world. Already, the two countries' military spending dwarfs everybody else's. By 2023, the U.S.

defense budget may reach $800 billion, and the Chinese one may exceed $300 billion, whereas no other global power will spend more than $80 billion on its forces. The question, then, is not whether a bipolar U.S.-Chinese order will come to be but what this order will look like.

At the top of Beijing's priorities is a liberal economic order built on free trade. China's economic transformation over the past decades from an agricultural society to a major global powerhouse—and the world's second-largest economy—was built on exports. The country has slowly worked its way up the value chain, its exports beginning to compete with those of highly advanced economies. Now as then, these exports are the lifeblood of the Chinese economy: they ensure a consistent trade surplus, and the jobs they create are a vital engine of domestic social stability. There is no indication that this will change in the coming decade. Even amid escalating trade tensions between Beijing and Washington, China's overall export volume continued to grow in 2018. U.S. tariffs may sting, but they will neither change Beijing's fundamental incentives nor portend a general turn away from global free trade on its part.

Quite to the contrary: because China's exports are vital to its economic and political success, one should expect Beijing to double down on its attempts to gain and maintain access to foreign markets. This strategic impetus is at the heart of the much-touted Belt and Road Initiative, through which China hopes to develop a vast network of land and sea routes that will connect its export hubs to far-flung markets. As of August 2018, some 70 countries and organizations had signed contracts with China for projects related to the initiative, and this number is set to increase in the coming years. At its 2017 National Congress, the Chinese Communist Party went so far as to enshrine a commitment to the initiative in its constitution—a signal that the party views the infrastructure project as more than a regular foreign policy. China is also willing to further open its domestic markets to foreign goods in exchange for greater access abroad. Just in time for a major trade fair in Shanghai in November 2018—designed to showcase the country's potential as a destination for foreign goods—China lowered its general tariff from 10.5 percent to 7.8 percent.

Given this enthusiasm for the global economy, the image of a revisionist China that has gained traction in many Western capitals is misleading. Beijing relies on a global network of trade ties, so it is loath to court direct confrontation with the United States. Chinese leaders fear—not without reason—that such a confrontation might cut off its access to U.S. markets and lead U.S. allies to band together against China rather than stay neutral, stripping it of important economic partnerships and valuable diplomatic connections. As a result, caution, not assertiveness or aggressiveness, will be the order of the day in Beijing's foreign policy in the coming years. Even as it continues to modernize and expand its military, China will carefully avoid pressing issues that might lead to war with the United States, such as those related to the South China Sea, cybersecurity, and the weaponization of space.

NEW RULES?

Indeed, much as Chinese leaders hope to be on par with their counterparts in

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Washington, they worry about the strategic implications of a bipolar U.S.-Chinese order. American leaders balk at the idea of relinquishing their position at the top of the global food chain and will likely go to great lengths to avoid having to accommodate China. Officials in Beijing, in no hurry to become the sole object of Washington's apprehension and scorn, would much rather see a multipolar world in which other challenges—and challengers—force the United States to cooperate with China.

In fact, the United States' own rise in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provides something of a model for how the coming power transition may take place. Because the United Kingdom, the world's undisputed hegemon at the time, was preoccupied with fending off a challenger in its vicinity—Germany—it did not bother much to contain the rise of a much bigger rival across the pond. China is hoping for a similar dynamic now, and recent history suggests it could indeed play out. In the early months of George W. Bush's presidency, for instance, relations between Beijing and Washington were souring over regional disputes in the South China Sea, reaching a boiling point when a Chinese air force pilot died in a midair collision with a U.S. surveillance plane in April 2001. Following the 9/11 attacks a few months later, however, Washington came to see China as a useful strategic partner in its global fight against terrorism, and relations improved significantly over the rest of Bush's two terms.

Today, unfortunately, the list of common threats that could force the two countries to cooperate is short. After 17 years of counterterrorism

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campaigns, the sense of urgency that once surrounded the issue has faded. Climate change is just as unlikely to make the list of top threats anytime soon. The most plausible scenario is that a new global economic crisis in the coming years will push U.S. and Chinese leaders to shelve their disagreements for a moment to avoid economic calamity—but this, too, remains a hypothetical.

To make matters worse, some points of potential conflict are here to stay—chief among them Taiwan. Relations between Beijing and Taipei, already tense, have taken a turn for the worse in recent years. Taiwan's current government, elected in 2016, has questioned the notion that mainland China and Taiwan form a single country, also known as the "one China" principle. A future government in Taipei might well push for de jure independence. Yet a Taiwanese independence referendum likely constitutes a redline for Beijing and may prompt it to take military action. If the United States were to respond by coming to Taiwan's aid, a military intervention by Beijing could easily spiral into a full-fledged U.S.-Chinese war. To avoid such a crisis, Beijing is determined to nip any Taiwanese independence aspirations in the bud by political and economic means. As a result, it is likely to continue lobbying third countries to cut off their diplomatic ties with Taipei, an approach it has already taken with several Latin American countries.

Cautious or not, China set somewhat different emphases in its approach to norms that undergird the international order. In particular, a more powerful China will push for a stronger emphasis on national sovereignty in international law. In recent years, some have interpreted public statements by Chinese leaders in support of globalization as a sign that Beijing seeks to fashion itself as the global liberal order's new custodian, yet such sweeping interpretations are wishful thinking: China is merely signaling its support for a liberal economic order, not for ever-increasing political integration. Beijing remains fearful of outside interference, particularly relating to Hong Kong, Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang, as well as on matters of press freedom and online regulations. As a result, it views national sovereignty, rather than international responsibilities and norms, as the fundamental principle on which the international order should rest. Even as a new superpower in the coming decade, China will therefore pursue a less interventionist foreign policy than the United States did at the apex of its power. Consider the case of Afghanistan: even though it is an open secret that the United States expects the Chinese military to shoulder some of the burden of maintaining stability there after U.S. troops leave the country, the Chinese government has shown no interest in this idea.

Increased Chinese clout may also bring attempts to promote a vision of world order that draws on ancient Chinese philosophical traditions and theories of statecraft. One term in particular has been making the rounds in Beijing: *wangdao*, or "humane authority." The word represents a view of China as an enlightened, benevolent hegemon whose power and legitimacy derive from its ability to fulfill other countries' security and economic needs—in exchange for their acquiescence to Chinese leadership.

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BIPOLARITY IN PRACTICE

Given the long shadow of nuclear escalation, the risk of a direct war between China and the United States will remain minimal, even as military, technological, and economic competition between them intensifies. Efforts on both sides to build ever more effective antimissile shields are unlikely to change this, since neither China nor the United States can improve its antimissile systems to the point of making the country completely impervious to a nuclear counterattack. If anything, the United States' withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty will encourage both sides to build up their nuclear forces and improve their second-strike capabilities, ensuring that neither side will be confident it can launch a nuclear attack on the other without suffering a devastating retaliation. The threat of nuclear war will also keep Chinese tensions with other nuclear-armed powers, such as India, from escalating into outright war.

Proxy wars, however, cannot be ruled out, nor can military skirmishes among lesser states. In fact, the latter are likely to become more frequent, as the two superpowers' restraint may embolden some smaller states to resolve local conflicts by force. Russia, in particular, may not shy away from war as it tries to regain its superpower status and maintain its influence in eastern Europe and the Middle East. Faced with calls to reform the UN Security Council, fraying powers such as France and the United Kingdom may seek to buttress their claim to permanent membership in the council through military interventions abroad. In the Middle East, meanwhile, the struggle for regional dominance among Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia shows no signs of abating. Across the globe, secessionist conflicts and terrorist attacks will continue to occur, the latter especially if competition between China and the United States reduces their cooperation on counterterrorism measures.

In the economic realm, export-driven economies, such as China, Germany, and Japan, will ensure the survival of a global liberal trade regime built on free-trade agreements and membership in the World Trade Organization—no matter what path the United States takes. On other matters of global governance, however, cooperation is likely to stall. Even if a future U.S. administration led a renewed push toward multilateralism and international norm setting, China's status as a junior superpower would make it difficult for the United States to sustain the strong leadership that has traditionally spurred such initiatives in the past. Differences in ideology and clashing security interests will prevent Beijing and Washington from leading jointly, but neither will have enough economic or military clout to lead on its own. To the extent that multilateral initiatives persist in such a world, they will be limited to either side's respective sphere of influence.

China's emphasis on national sovereignty, together with Western societies' turn away from globalism, will deal an additional blow to multilateralism. The European Union is already fraying, and a number of European countries have reintroduced border controls. In the coming decade, similar developments will come to pass in other domains. As technological innovation becomes the primary source of wealth, countries will become ever more protective of their intellectual property. Many

countries are also tightening control of capital flows as they brace for a global economic slump in the near future. And as concerns over immigration and unemployment threaten to undermine Western governments' legitimacy, more and more countries will increase visa restrictions for foreign workers.

Unlike the order that prevailed during the Cold War, a bipolar U.S.-Chinese order will be shaped by fluid, issue-specific alliances rather than rigid opposing blocs divided along clear ideological lines. Since the immediate risk of a U.S.-Chinese war is vanishingly small, neither side appears willing to build or maintain an extensive—and expensive—network of alliances. China still avoids forming explicit alliances, and the United States regularly complains about free-riding allies. Moreover, neither side is currently able to offer a grand narrative or global vision appealing to large majorities at home, let alone to a large number of states.

For some time to come, then, U.S.-Chinese bipolarity will not be an ideologically driven, existential conflict over the fundamental nature of the global order; rather, it will be a competition over consumer markets and technological advantages, playing out in disputes about the norms and rules governing trade, investment, employment, exchange rates, and intellectual property. And rather than form clearly defined military-economic blocs, most states will adopt a two-track foreign policy, siding with the United States on some issues and China on others. Western allies, for instance, are still closely aligned with the United States on traditional security matters inside NATO, and Australia, India, and Japan have supported the U.S. strategy in the Indo-Pacific. At the same time, these states still maintain close trade and investment relations with China, and several of them have sided with Beijing in trying to reform the World Trade Organization.

This two-track strategy shows just how far down the road to bipolarity the world has already advanced. And the fundamental driver of this process—the raw economic and military clout on which American and, increasingly, Chinese dominance rests—will further cement Beijing's and Washington's status as the two global heavyweights in the coming decade. Whether or not the United States recovers from its Trumpian fever and leads a renewed push for global liberalism is, ultimately, of little consequence to the outcome: opposed in their strategic interests but evenly matched in their power, China and the United States will be unable to challenge each other directly and settle the struggle for supremacy definitively. As during the Cold War, each side's nuclear warheads will prevent proxy conflicts from easily escalating into a direct confrontation between the two superpowers. More important still, China's leadership is acutely aware of the benefits its country derives from the status quo, for now—it is chief among the conditions for China's continued economic and soft-power expansion—and will avoid putting these benefits on the line anytime soon, unless China's core interests are in the balance. Chinese leaders will therefore work hard to avoid setting off alarm bells in already jittery Western capitals, and their foreign policy in the coming years will reflect this objective. Expect recurring tensions and fierce competition, yes, but not a descent into global chaos.

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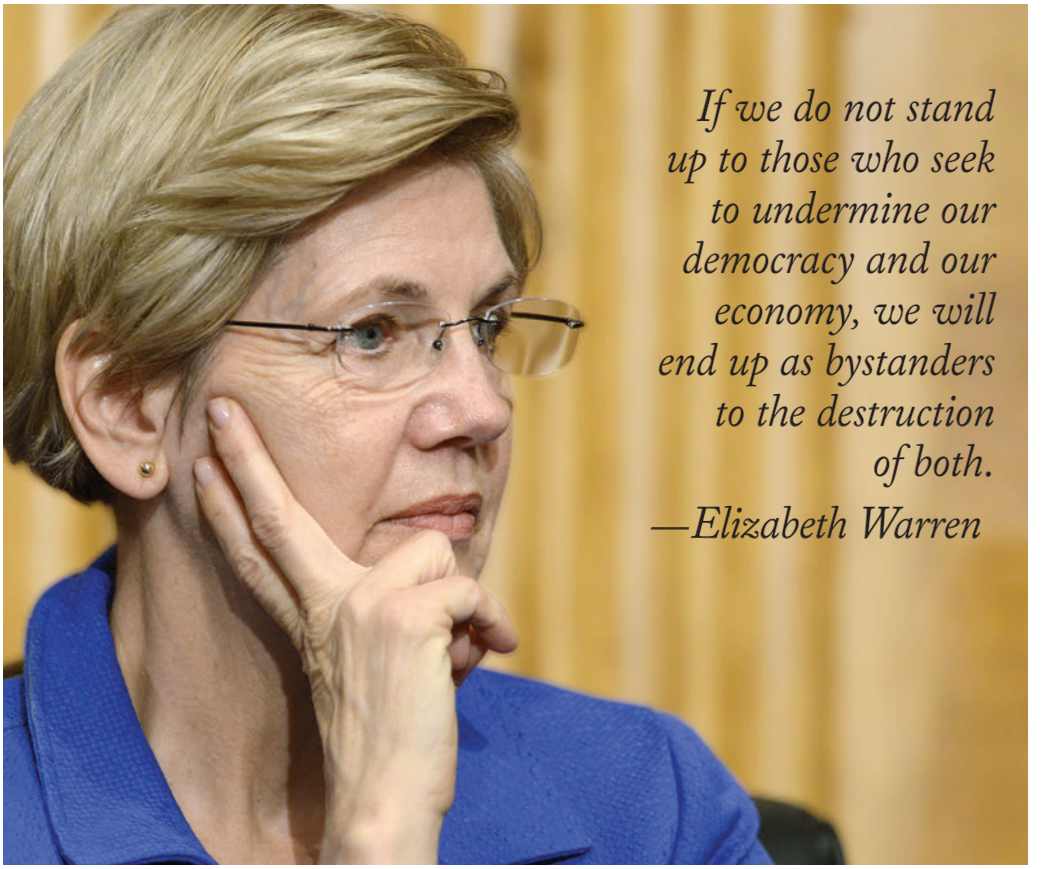

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A Foreign Policy for All

Strengthening Democracy—at Home and Abroad

Elizabeth Warren

Around the world, democracy is under assault. Authoritarian governments are gaining power, and right-wing demagogues are gaining strength. Movements toward openness and pluralism have stalled. Inequality is growing, transforming rule by the people into rule by wealthy elites. And here in the United States, many Americans seem to accept—even embrace—the politics of division and resentment.

How did we get here? There's a story Americans like to tell ourselves about how we built a liberal international order—one based on democratic principles, committed to civil and human rights, accountable to citizens, bound by the rule of law, and focused on economic prosperity for all. It's a good story, with deep roots. But in recent decades, Washington's focus has shifted from policies that benefit everyone to policies that benefit a handful of elites. After the Cold War, U.S. policymakers started to believe that because democracy had outlasted communism, it would be simple to build democracy anywhere and everywhere. They began to export a particular brand of capitalism, one that involved weak regulations, low taxes on the wealthy, and policies favoring multinational corporations. And the United States took on a series of seemingly endless wars, engaging in conflicts with mistaken or uncertain objectives and no obvious path to completion.

The impact of these policy changes has been devastating. While international economic policies and trade deals have worked gloriously well for elites around the world, they have left working people discouraged and disaffected. Efforts to promote the United States' own security have soaked up huge resources and destabilized entire regions,

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and meanwhile, U.S. technological dominance has quietly eroded. Inequality has grown worldwide, contributing to an unfolding nationalist backlash that seeks to upend democracy itself. It is little wonder that the American people have less faith in their government today than at any other time in modern U.S. history. The country is in a moment of crisis decades in the making.

To fight back, we need to pursue international economic policies that benefit all Americans, not merely an elite few. We need strong yet pragmatic security policies, amplified by diplomacy. And the United States can no longer maintain the comfortable assumption that its domestic and foreign policies are separate. Every decision the government makes should be grounded in the recognition that actions that undermine working families in this country ultimately erode American strength in the world. In other words, we need a foreign policy that works for all Americans.

The urgency of the moment cannot be overstated. At home and abroad, democracy is on the defense. The details of the problem vary from place to place, but one cause stands out everywhere: the systematic failure to understand and invest in the social, political, and economic foundations on which democracies rest. If we do not stand up to those who seek to undermine our democracy and our economy, we will end up as bystanders to the destruction of both.

MAKING GLOBALIZATION WORK

The globalization of trade has been tremendously profitable for the largest American corporations. It has opened up opportunity and lifted billions out of poverty around the world.

But U.S. trade and economic policies have not delivered for the middle class. For decades, both Democratic and Republican leaders asserted that free trade was a rising tide that would lift all boats. Great rhetoric, except that the trade deals they negotiated mainly lifted the boats of the wealthy while leaving millions of working Americans to drown. Policymakers were willing to sacrifice American jobs in hopes of lowering prices for consumer goods at home and spreading open markets abroad. They pushed former Soviet states to privatize as quickly as possible despite the risk of corruption, and they advocated China's accession to the World Trade Organization despite its unfair trading practices. They backed international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, even as those organizations pushed

austerity, deregulation, and privatization—policies that reduced public faith in both capitalism and democracy and left governments with fewer fiscal levers when economic crises hit.

And what has this brought us? Policymakers promised that open markets would lead to open societies. Instead, efforts to bring capitalism to the global stage unwittingly helped create the conditions for competitors to rise up and lash out. Russia became belligerent and resurgent. China weaponized its economy without ever loosening its domestic political constraints. Other countries' faith in both capitalism and democracy eroded. A program once aimed at promoting the forces of freedom ended up empowering the opposite.

Meanwhile, multinational corporations exploited their enormous influence on both sides of the negotiating table to ensure that the terms of trade between nations always favored their own bottom lines. Time after time, American workers got the short end of the stick. Median household income in the United States stagnated for a generation, and policymakers' choices helped the elite but put workers at an even greater disadvantage: decimated unions, lower labor standards, rising costs of living. Job training and transition assistance proved powerless against the onslaught of offshoring, providing little more than burial insurance for workers who lost their jobs. And as capital became more mobile, corporations and wealthy individuals sent trillions of dollars to offshore tax havens, robbing the U.S. government of needed resources to reinvest at home in updated infrastructure and public education. By the time the 2008 global financial crash came around, it only confirmed what millions of Americans already knew: the system was rigged against working people.

U.S. foreign policy should not prioritize corporate profits over American families.

Donald Trump campaigned against that rigged system. But after two years in office, it is clear that his economic policies are beyond inept; they are deliberately rigged in favor of his family and his wealthy friends. His renegotiated North American Free Trade Agreement raises drug prices for consumers while doing little to stem the flow of good jobs going to other countries. His tariffs have hit farming communities hard and driven trading partners into the arms of U.S. competitors. And his conflicts of interest with corrupt foreign governments—from expedited Chinese patent applications

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for his daughter Ivanka Trump to the millions in foreign money spent at the Trump family's Washington hotel—raise obvious questions about who he is really working for. This president may have campaigned on a promise to put "America first," but his policies have put the Trump family first and middle-class American families last.

A new approach should begin with a simple principle: U.S. foreign policy should not prioritize corporate profits over American families. To make sure that globalization benefits middle-class Americans, trade negotiations should be used to curtail the power of multinational monopolies and crack down on tax havens. Workers should be meaningfully represented at the negotiating table, and the resulting agreements should be used to raise and enforce labor standards. Washington should also work with like-minded allies to hold countries that cheat to account.

The United States' economic policies must also reflect the realities of the twenty-first century. To address corruption, it is critical to work closely with allies to require transparency about the movement of assets across borders. If we are serious about privacy, we must protect data rights from global technology companies and countries that seek to exploit technology as a means to control their populations. To make progress on climate change, we should leverage foreign countries' desire for access to U.S. markets as an opportunity to insist on meaningful environmental protections.

None of this requires sacrificing the interests of American businesses—although it will require some of them to take a longer view. U.S. businesses can compete with the best in the world when given a level playing field, and they are stronger when the American middle class is strong. If our trade and economic policies work for all Americans, shareholders and corporate executives will profit as well.

ENDING ENDLESS WAR

A foreign policy that works for all Americans must also be driven by honest assessments of the full costs and risks associated with going to war. All three of my brothers served in the military, and I know our service members and their families are smart, tough, and resourceful. But having a strong military doesn't mean we need to constantly use it. An effective deterrent also means showing the good judgment to exercise appropriate restraint.

Over the past two decades, the United States has been mired in a series of wars that have sapped its strength. The human cost of these

wars has been staggering: more than 6,900 killed in Afghanistan and Iraq, another 52,000 wounded, and many more who live every day with the invisible scars of war. By financing these conflicts while cutting taxes, the country has essentially charged the costs of war to a collective credit card for future generations to pay, diverting money that could have been invested in critical domestic priorities. This burden will create a drag on the economy that will last for generations.

The costs have been extraordinarily high, but these wars have not succeeded even on their own terms. We've "turned the corner" in Afghanistan so many times that it seems we're now going in circles. After years of constant war, Afghanistan hardly resembles a functioning state, and both poppy production and the Taliban are again on the rise. The invasion of Iraq destabilized and fragmented the Middle East, creating enormous suffering and precipitating the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. The region remains a tangled mess—the promise of the Arab Spring crushed, Iran emboldened, Syria devastated, the Islamic State (or ISIS) and its offshoots stubbornly resilient, and a massive refugee crisis threatening to destabilize Europe. Neither military nor civilian policymakers seem capable of defining success, but surely this is not it.

A singular focus on counterterrorism, meanwhile, has dangerously distorted U.S. policies. Here at home, we have allowed an imperial presidency to stretch the Constitution beyond recognition to justify the use of force, with little oversight from Congress. The government has at times defended tactics, such as torture, that are antithetical to American values. Washington has partnered with countries that share neither its goals nor its ideals. Counterterrorism efforts have often undermined other foreign policy priorities, such as reinforcing civilian governance, the rule of law, and human rights abroad. And in some cases, as with U.S. support for Saudi Arabia's proxy war in Yemen, U.S. policies risk generating even more extremism.

As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I have seen up close how 17 years of conflict have degraded equipment, sapped forces' readiness, and forced the postponement of investment in critical military capabilities. It has distracted Washington from growing dangers in other parts of the world: a long-term struggle for power in Asia, a revanchist Russia that threatens Europe, and looming unrest in the Western Hemisphere, including a collapsing state in Venezuela that threatens to disrupt its neighbors. Would-be rivals, for their part,

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have watched and learned, and they are hard at work developing technologies and tactics to leapfrog the United States, investing heavily in such areas as robotics, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, synthetic biology, and quantum computing. China is making massive bets in these and other areas in an effort to surpass the United States as a global technological power. Whether the United States will maintain its edge and harness these technologies for good remains an open question.

It is the job of the U.S. government to do what is necessary to protect Americans, but it is long past time to start asking what truly makes the country safer—and what does not. Military efforts alone will never fully succeed at ending terrorism, because it is not possible to fight one's way out of extremism. Some challenges, such as cyberattacks and nuclear proliferation, require much more than a strong military to combat. And other dangers, such as climate change and the spread of infectious diseases, cannot be solved through military action at all. The United States will spend more than $700 billion on defense in the 2018–19 fiscal year alone. That is more in real terms than was spent under President Ronald Reagan during the Cold War and more than all the rest of the country's discretionary budget put together. But even as Washington spends more and more, U.S. military leaders point out that funding a muscular military without robust diplomacy, economic statecraft, support for civil society, and development assistance only hamstrings American national power and undercuts any military gains.

It's time to seriously review the country's military commitments overseas.

As a candidate, Trump promised to bring U.S. troops home. As president, he has sent more troops into Afghanistan. On the campaign trail, Trump claimed he did not want to police the world. As president, he has expanded the United States' military footprint around the globe, from doubling the number of U.S. air strikes in Somalia to establishing a drone base in Niger. As a candidate, Trump promised to rebuild the military, but as president, he has gutted the diplomatic corps on which the Pentagon relies. He promised to reduce the threat of nuclear proliferation, but he has undermined a successful nuclear deal with Iran, has failed to roll back the North Korean nuclear program, and seems intent on spurring a new nuclear arms race with Russia.

These actions do not make Americans safer. It's time to seriously review the country's military commitments overseas, and that includes

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bringing U.S. troops home from Afghanistan and Iraq. They have fought with honor, but additional American blood spilled will not halt the violence or result in a functioning democratic government in either place.

Defense spending should be set at sustainable levels, and the money saved should be used to fund other forms of international engagement and critical domestic programs. The Pentagon's budget has been too large for too long. It is long overdue for an audit that would allow Congress to identify which programs actually benefit American security and which merely line the pockets of defense contractors. Rather than mindlessly buying more of yesterday's equipment and allowing foreign countries to dominate the development of critical new technologies, we should recommit to investing in cutting-edge science and technology capabilities at home. When it comes to nonproliferation, we should replace the current bluster and hostility toward nuclear diplomacy with a reinvestment in multilateral arms control and nonproliferation efforts for the twenty-first century, recommitting the United States to being a leader in the fight to create a world without nuclear weapons.

To achieve all these goals, it will be essential to reprioritize diplomacy and reinvest in the State Department and the development agencies; foreign policy should not be run out of the Pentagon alone. The United States spends only about one percent of its federal budget on foreign aid. Some Americans struggling to make ends meet understandably question the value of U.S. commitments and contributions abroad, and certainly we should expect our partners to pay their fair share. But diplomacy is not about charity; it is about advancing U.S. interests and preventing problems from morphing into costly wars. Similarly, alliances are not exclusively about principles; they are about safety in numbers. The world is a big, complicated place, and not even the strongest nation can solve everything on its own. As we face down antidemocratic forces around the world, we will need our allies on our side.

FOREIGN POLICY STARTS AT HOME

President John F. Kennedy, whose seat in the U.S. Senate I now hold, once wrote that "a nation can be no stronger abroad than she is at home." With American power increasingly challenged from within and without, we can no longer afford to think of our domestic agenda as separate from our foreign policy. A stronger economy, a

healthier democracy, and a united people—these are the engines that power the nation and will project American strength and values throughout the world.

Every day, shortsighted domestic policies weaken American national strength. The United States is in the midst of a reverse-Sputnik moment, reducing investments in education and scientific research even as potential adversaries expand them. At a time when growing inequality stifles economic growth, Congress' response has been a $1.5 trillion tax giveaway to the wealthiest Americans. Life expectancy in the United States is falling as overdose deaths skyrocket, and the country's health-care system remains ill equipped to respond. Climate change poses a threat to our survival, but the government is gutting environmental regulations and subsidizing fossil fuels at the bidding of wealthy campaign donors. The educational opportunity gap is widening, while politicians starve schools of resources and saddle an entire generation with crippling student debt. And in a desperate attempt to stave off the inevitable reckoning, the president seems bent on keeping Americans frightened and divided.

Investments at home strengthen the economy, but they also serve national security. A twenty-first-century industrial policy, for example, would produce good jobs that provide dignity, respect, and a living wage, and it would reinforce U.S. international economic might. When workers and families are more secure in their livelihoods, the country is stronger on the world stage.

The needs for investment are many: Infrastructure projects to increase connectivity and expand opportunity across the United States. Educational and job-training policies to produce skilled workers, encourage entrepreneurship, and grow the talent base. Immigration policies to yield a more robust economy and a more diversified work force. Higher education to equip the coming generations for the future without crushing them with debt. High-quality, affordable health care to ensure security and productivity for every person. An economy that is fair and open to entrepreneurs and businesses of all sizes. A progressive tax system that requires the wealthy to pay their fair share. A government that is not for sale to the highest bidder.

Underlying it all, we need to remain vigilant against threats to American democratic norms and processes. The 2016 election raised the alarm, reminding us that democracy is not a self-sustaining ma-

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chine. We must fight for it every single day. That means protecting the electoral process and making clear that there will be severe consequences for anyone, foreign or domestic, who meddles with it.

Our democratic norms also require us to renew our commitment to justice. Fractures in society—racial injustice, political polarization, economic inequality—damage us from within, leaving us vulnerable to a toxic stew of hatred and fear. Hateful rhetoric fuels domestic terrorism of all kinds, whether in Charleston or Orlando, Charlottesville or Pittsburgh. And we must strengthen our determination to ensure that every American has equal access to opportunity in society and equal justice and protection under the law. We must do that because it is morally right—and because it is essential to our national strength.

WHAT'S AT STAKE

The need to get our house in order is not theoretical. Whether our leaders recognize it or not, after years as the world's lone superpower, the United States is entering a new period of competition. Democracy is running headlong into the ideologies of nationalism, authoritarianism, and corruption. China is on the rise, using its economic might to bludgeon its way onto the world stage and offering a model in which economic gains legitimize oppression. To mask its decline, Russia is provoking the international community with opportunistic harassment and covert attacks. Both nations invest heavily in their militaries and other tools of national power. Both hope to shape spheres of influence in their own image and ultimately remake the global order to suit their own priorities. If we cannot make our government work for all Americans, they will almost certainly succeed.

The dictators who run those countries stay in power not simply because they hold unwilling populations under brutal control; they also maintain control through corrupt economic policies that favor the wealthy elites who keep them in power. In China, President Xi Jinping consolidates his power and talks of a "great rejuvenation," while corporations that answer to the state make billionaires out of Communist Party elites. In Russia, President Vladimir Putin attacks free speech and fans nationalism, but his real power derives from the careful intertwining of his government with state-run corporations conveniently overseen by friendly oligarchs.

Other countries have learned from this approach. From Hungary to Turkey, from the Philippines to Brazil, wealthy elites work together to grow the state's power, while the state works to grow the wealth of those who remain loyal to the leader. This marriage of authoritarianism and corrupt capitalism is a direct threat to the United States, because it undermines the very concept of democracy. It enables corruption to spread across borders and allows authoritarian leaders to foment a global crisis of confidence in democracy. Free and democratic societies, the United States' included, risk sliding toward corruption and kleptocracy, becoming democracies in name only.

Despite these growing threats, President Trump seems all too comfortable with this rising authoritarianism. He shamefully kowtows to Putin, even in the face of Russian attacks on American democracy. His trade policies toward China are hardly stopping Chinese economic malfeasance. Instead of strengthening crucial alliances with Japan, South Korea, and Europe, he is actively undermining them. And the president has displayed an unsettling enthusiasm for replicating authoritarian language and tactics at home, while autocrats abroad return the compliment by using the president's words to justify their own misdeeds.

The United States has lived through devastating wars in the past, and no sane person wishes to invite conflict between great powers in the future. In fact, many of the trials of our time will require cooperation. But it is essential that we are honest and clear-eyed about the challenges the United States faces. Our democratic allies share our values, and we should join forces to protect not only our collective security but also our shared ideals. In Europe, we should work with our allies to impose strong, targeted penalties on Russia for its attempts to subvert elections, and we should work to help our European allies develop energy independence. In Asia, we should encourage our allies to enhance their multilateral cooperation and build alternatives to China's coercive diplomacy. We should also respond to China's efforts to force foreign companies to hand over sensitive technology in order to gain access to the Chinese market and penalize its theft of U.S. intellectual property. Around the world, we should aggressively promote transparency, call out kleptocracy, and combat the creeping influence of corruption. And we should stand with those who bravely fight for openness and pluralism in Moscow, Beijing, and beyond.

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AFTER TRUMP

The world was changing before President Trump took office, and it will continue to change after he has gone. There is no going back, but we can shape the world we inherit.

We can adopt a foreign policy that works for all Americans, not just wealthy elites. We can protect American interests first and foremost, while recognizing that those interests are best served when we leverage the support of allies and partners. We can reform international institutions to make them more flexible and inclusive, while still preserving the United States' global leadership role. We can make smart investments to deter adversaries and defend the country, while balancing our ambitions with our resources. We can adapt to the technological demands and challenges of the twenty-first century, designing policies that reflect the world not as it once was but as it will be. And we can recognize that global power is generated here at home, recapitalizing the American economy and reinvesting in American democracy at its roots.

None of this will be easy, but we persist. "America is not a country which can be confounded by the appeasers, the defeatists, the back-stairs manufacturers of panic," President Franklin Roosevelt declared in 1941. He continued: "This will of the American people will not be frustrated, either by threats from powerful enemies abroad or by small, selfish groups or individuals at home." His words ring true today. Despite the threats on the horizon, I am confident that we can pursue a foreign policy that works for all Americans—one that, for generations to come, safeguards government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

The Eroding Balance of Terror

The Decline of Deterrence

Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr.

"Thus far the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars," the American nuclear strategist Bernard Brodie wrote in 1946. "From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them." Brodie's injunction summed up the grim lesson of the first five decades of the twentieth century: after two horrific world wars and the development of nuclear weapons, it was clear that the next major conflict would produce no winners—only survivors. As U.S. President John F. Kennedy put it a decade and a half later, in the midst of the Cuban missile crisis, "Even the fruits of victory would be ashes in our mouth." For decades, U.S. policymakers followed Brodie's and Kennedy's lead, putting deterrence—preventing rivals from attacking in the first place—at the center of U.S. defense strategy.

Applied effectively, deterrence discourages an adversary from pursuing an undesirable action. It works by changing the adversary's calculation of costs, benefits, and risks. A country can, for instance, convince its opponents that an attack is so unlikely to succeed that it is not even worth the attempt: deterrence through denial. Or a country may convince its opponents that defeating it would be so costly as to be a victory in name only: deterrence through punishment. In either case, a rational adversary will decide to stay put.

Through the threat of denial or punishment, deterrence has helped keep the peace among major powers for over seven decades. Even 30 years after the end of the Cold War, it remains at the heart of U.S. defense strategy. The 2018 National Defense Strategy, for instance,

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The future of war: unveiling a surveillance drone in Tokyo, May 2017

KYODO / AP

begins by declaring that "the Department of Defense's enduring mission is to provide combat-credible military forces needed to deter war and protect the security of our nation."

By now, that declaration has been made so many times, over so many decades, that it has become an article of faith. Like several of its recent predecessors, the Trump administration has spent little time explaining exactly how the United States intends to deter existing and future rivals. The assumption is that it needs no explaining: modern weapons are so destructive that no sane leader would risk igniting a general war—and so the requirements for deterrence are relatively modest.

But such confidence is profoundly misplaced. In fact, deterring aggression has become increasingly difficult, and it stands to become more difficult still, as a result of developments both technological and geopolitical. The era of unprecedented U.S. military dominance that followed the Cold War has ended, leading to renewed competition between the United States and two great revisionist powers, China and Russia. Military competition is expanding to several new domains, from space and cyberspace to the seabed, and new capabilities are making it harder to accurately gauge the military balance of power. Meanwhile, advances in cognitive science are challenging the theoretical underpinnings of deterrence by upending

our understanding of how humans behave in high-risk situations—such as when facing the possibility of war.

Taken together, these developments lead to an inescapable—and disturbing—conclusion: the greatest strategic challenge of the current era is neither the return of great-power rivalries nor the spread of advanced weaponry. It is the decline of deterrence.

MULTIPOLAR WORLD

During the Cold War, the military power of the United States and the Soviet Union dwarfed that of any other state or group of states. With the Soviet collapse, this duopoly gave way to unrivaled U.S. military dominance, especially in the conventional (that is, nonnuclear) realm. During the Cold War, Washington's defense strategy was built on deterring a single major rival; in the aftermath of the Cold War, U.S. policymakers didn't have to worry about major rivals at all.

Today, however, the United States confronts an international system with not one, or two, but multiple centers of gravity. Consider what has happened to the distribution of nuclear forces. For much of the Cold War, the two superpowers stockpiled over 20,000 warheads each, while the British, Chinese, and French arsenals numbered in the low hundreds. But a series of bilateral U.S.-Russian arms control agreements have radically reduced both countries' strategic nuclear forces to 1,550 deployed strategic weapons each, just as the Chinese, Indian, North Korean, and Pakistani nuclear arsenals are growing in size and sophistication. Among these, China's nuclear arsenal is the most worrisome. It is estimated at roughly 300 weapons, and the country has enough fissile material to produce several hundred more nuclear weapons a year without affecting its nuclear energy needs. China is also updating its delivery systems, complete with new ballistic missile submarines and land-based missiles. As in every other major area of military competition, Beijing seems unlikely to settle for second best.

In such a multipolar nuclear world, some of the key conditions that once ensured relative stability between Moscow and Washington will no longer obtain. Cold War nuclear deterrence was founded, as the nuclear strategist Albert Wohlstetter famously noted, on a "balance of terror," or "mutual assured destruction." As long as the Soviet Union and the United States could each suffer a surprise attack by the other and still retain sufficient nuclear forces for a devastating counterattack,

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neither side wanted to risk a strike: deterrence through punishment par excellence. To keep this delicate balance, both sides sought to maintain a rough parity in their nuclear forces, a goal that endures to this day in the New START agreement.

The emergence of China as a major nuclear power threatens to throw this balance of terror off-kilter, as Beijing, Moscow, and Washington each view the other two as rivals. If China continues to expand its nuclear forces, the United States—now forced to prepare for a possible attack on not one but two flanks—might respond with a significant buildup of its own. Any major increase in American nuclear forces would likely prompt Russia to follow suit in an attempt to maintain parity with the United States. Simply put, in a world with three nuclear great powers, none can maintain parity with the combined forces of the other two. In this multipolar environment, the three rivals will be less confident in being safe from a nuclear attack than the Cold War superpowers were.

WAR'S NEW FRONTIERS

Deterrence is ailing not just on account of new powers. New weapons have also done their part. Early on, high-tech weapons worked to the United States' advantage. The 1990–91 Gulf War, for instance, showcased the power of integrating high-end intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems with precision-strike weapons. Russian military theorists feared that such capabilities represented an alarming glimpse of what was to come. As these capabilities matured, the argument went, the United States would be able to conduct pinpoint strikes to eviscerate Russia's nuclear arsenal without having to go nuclear itself. Following such an attack, Russia could of course retaliate with whatever nuclear forces had survived. But this "broken-back" attack would be further diminished by U.S. air and missile defenses, and it would risk triggering a full-scale U.S. nuclear counterstrike that would be the end of Russia as a functioning society.

To offset this perceived disadvantage, Russia has designed nuclear weapons with very low yields and adopted a military doctrine that calls for such weapons to be used if Moscow fears that its nuclear arsenal is at risk or if it is losing a conventional war. A similar line of thinking may be taking hold in China, where political and military leaders have intimated that certain kinds of nuclear weapons are acceptable for use even in a conventional conflict, such as those

used to generate an electromagnetic pulse that can disable any nearby electronic equipment.

The result is that the firebreak between conventional and nuclear war is slowly disappearing—with worrying implications for deterrence. Both Beijing and Moscow may see conventional aggression as less risky, since they can employ certain types of nuclear weapons if things go badly. Many U.S. leaders, by contrast, still believe that the only purpose of maintaining nuclear weapons is to deter others from using them, a view that completely decouples nuclear from conventional war. As a result, U.S. leaders may enter a conventional war thinking that there's little risk of it escalating into a nuclear conflict. But Chinese and Russian leaders, finding themselves in such a war, may be far less hesitant to cross the nuclear threshold than the United States expects.

The firebreak between conventional and nuclear war is slowly disappearing.

Cyberweapons, with their enormous but untested potential to corrupt a state's early warning and command systems, muddy the waters of deterrence even further. Some have speculated, for instance, that Israel's 2007 air strike on a nuclear reactor under construction in Syria was accompanied by a cyberattack that blinded Syrian air defenses. Even though none of the Israeli aircraft was of stealth design, and even though they were attacking a high-value target, Syrian air defenses never fired at them. If other states think they can compromise a rival's early warning and command systems, as Israel seems to have done in Syria, the anticipated costs and risks of striking first in a crisis may fall dramatically.

The geographic location of today's nuclear powers is undermining deterrence, too. During the Cold War, valuable Soviet and U.S. homeland targets were far enough apart to guarantee some warning time ahead of an attack. The spread of nuclear and other strategic weapons to states located relatively close to their rivals means that attack warning times are much shorter today. This is especially true for nuclear-armed states fielding fast, accurate ballistic missiles capable of striking their rivals' nuclear forces. Short flight times may compel senior policymakers to place their strategic forces on heightened alert at all times, as well as to devolve to lower-ranking commanders the authority to release them. In theory, these decisions could enhance deterrence, but they would also increase the risk of an accidental or

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unauthorized use of strategic forces, thus undermining deterrence: faced with this risk in a moment of crisis, an adversary might decide that striking first was the safer bet.

The problems for deterrence do not end there. The emergence of new domains of warfare is also eroding its foundations. Today's major powers built their economic and military might on a vast but vulnerable network of satellites, as well as undersea pipelines and cables. The U.S. military, in particular, depends on government and commercial satellites for its operations. Other major militaries have followed suit, and national economies have come to rely on satellites for a wide range of services. Pipelines on the ocean floor carry over a quarter of the world's oil and natural gas supply. Economies and militaries rely on the Internet, and almost all transoceanic data flow through undersea cables.

Unfortunately, all this infrastructure is susceptible to disruption, and deterring aggression against it is not easy. Disabling a satellite, corrupting a computer network, or cutting an undersea data cable is often easier than fending off an attack, favoring the offense and undermining deterrence through denial. Deterrence through punishment is just as tricky in such cases. Quickly identifying and retaliating against an aggressor is far more difficult than in the case of conventional attacks via land, air, or sea. And because so many states are capable of operating effectively in these relatively new domains, attribution will be even more complicated.

LOSE SOME, WIN SOME?

In a sense, deterrence has become a victim of its own success. War serves as the ultimate test of military systems, force structures, and the doctrines governing their employment. The lack of a war between major powers since 1945 means that the true balance of conventional, nuclear, and cyber-military capabilities is uncertain. And if this is true for well-established technologies, it is doubly so for new capabilities that incorporate artificial intelligence, novel biological agents, laser weaponry, hypersonic speed, and robotics. Because few of these capabilities are thoroughly battle tested, future belligerents may have diverging beliefs about their benefits and dangers, increasing the likelihood that one side might opt for aggression. This is true particularly for risk-tolerant leaders who assume such uncertainties will work in their favor—undermining deterrence where it is most fragile.

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But the challenges to deterrence today go even deeper. Recent insights into the nature of human decision-making raise questions about the very logic of deterrence. As a theoretical concept, deterrence rests on the assumption that where risk is involved, humans act rationally, in the sense that they base their decisions on a cost-benefit calculus and act only when the expected gains outweigh the anticipated costs. Over the past 40 years, however, research in behavioral economics has cast great doubt on this assumption. Humans, it turns out, cannot be counted on to always maximize their prospective gains. And even when they do, they are remarkably inept at understanding how the other side—the opponent in a conflict—calculates its own costs, benefits, and risks. Human nature hasn't changed, but our understanding of it has—in ways that bode ill for defense strategies built on deterrence.

The first problem has to do with our understanding of how leaders conceive of losses. According to prospect theory, people will risk more to avoid losing what they already have than to gain something of equal value. Thus, for example, policymakers will run higher risks to retain their own territory than to seize foreign territory of equal value. In theory, this phenomenon would seem to strengthen deterrence, since it predicts that leaders generally prefer to stick with whatever land and resources they already own, rather than attempt to seize what belongs to another. But the matter does not end there.

This is because of how decision-makers set their so-called reference point, which determines whether they consider their current situation to be one of loss or gain. One might expect that people always base their reference point on the status quo—the state of things at the time they make a decision. After a series of gains, for instance, individuals normally adjust their reference point to the new status quo. Any subsequent setback looks to them like a loss rather than a gain forgone. We should therefore expect them to be relatively risk tolerant in their efforts to defend their latest gains, which they now see as a potential loss.

But this dynamic does not cut both ways. After individuals suffer losses, they tend not to adjust their reference point to the new, less favorable situation. Instead, they cling to the status quo ante. They therefore see their own attempts to retake what has been lost not as the pursuit of gains but as the avoidance of losses. As a result, they are often ready to take great risks and accept high costs to achieve this end.

For a historical example, consider the U.S. economic embargo against Japan in the summer of 1941 and Japan's decision to attack Pearl Harbor a few months later. In imposing the embargo, U.S. leaders were attempting to punish Japan for a series of invasions across East Asia, which the United States viewed as losses compared with the previous situation. Japan's leaders, however, had updated their reference point to include their most recent territorial gains and so saw the embargo as an American attempt to take from the Japanese what was now rightfully theirs. Both sides, in other words, were operating under a paradigm of loss, which made them more willing to risk war.

To understand how a similar dynamic could play out today, look to the South China Sea, where Beijing is occupying and fortifying disputed territory, apparently intent on creating new facts on the ground. The United States and its allies, however, continue to view China's actions as illegitimate and retain the original situation as their reference point. If the dispute comes to a head, both China and its opponents will be operating from a reference point of loss. So deterring either side from pressing the issue may prove difficult.

IRRATIONAL MINDS

The logic of deterrence also depends a great deal on the people in charge. Research in cognitive science suggests that political leaders are unusually optimistic and overly confident in their ability to control events—the very traits that helped them come to power. Given their built-in optimism, they are also prone to doubling down in the face of failure instead of cutting their losses. Needless to say, any one of these characteristics can undermine deterrence. Assuming that uncertainty will resolve itself in one's favor inflates the anticipated gains while reducing projected losses, making a risky path of action far more enticing.

This bias for optimism may be especially pronounced when the leader in question is a personalist dictator. To rise to the top in a cutthroat political environment, such leaders must be extremely risk tolerant and believe they can beat the odds. Once in power, they are often surrounded by sycophants who feed their egos and self-images as skillful strategists. Excessive optimism may partly explain Adolf Hitler's risky decision to remilitarize the Rhineland and annex Austria and Czechoslovakia while Germany was still weaker than France, Russia, and the United Kingdom. It may also provide some explanation for Joseph Stalin's attempt to cut off U.S. access to West

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Berlin at a time when his own country was in ruins and the United States enjoyed a nuclear monopoly. Saddam Hussein's willingness to take on the United States, not once but twice, suggests a propensity for high-stakes gambles, as does Mao Zedong's decision to plunge China into the Korean War barely a year after he seized power.

Indeed, the very notion that all humans share the same cognitive machinery, the same rational hard-wiring, is turning out to be just that: a notion, not a fact. Research in the behavioral sciences has found that one's cultural environment can lead to dramatic differences in one's cognitive processes, including in the ways people understand equity, costs, benefits, and risks.

Economics experiments show these differences in action. In the so-called ultimatum game, for instance, Player A is given an amount of money—say, $100—and is told to offer some of the cash, anywhere from $1 to $100, to Player B, who can accept the payout or reject it, in which case both players leave empty-handed. American subjects typically agreed on something close to a 50-50 split. When they were in the role of Player B, they were more likely to reject offers that were significantly less than a rough split of the money, even though accepting any offer above zero would have improved their financial situation. In some less developed societies, however, such as found in parts of Central Asia and Latin America, those in the Player A position were often far less charitable, yet their Player B counterparts rarely refused even much lower amounts. And in other tests involving societies in Central Asia, East Africa, and New Guinea, those on the receiving end at times refused the money even when offered more than half the cash.

Individuals are not utility-maximizing machines that pursue material gain above all else.

Individuals, in other words, are not necessarily utility-maximizing machines that rationally pursue material gain and expect others to do the same. They are prepared to reject what they perceive as unfairness or slights to their personal honor, even at a substantial cost to themselves. This is why leaders sometimes reject win-win deals in favor of seemingly irrational outcomes in which both sides lose.

The implications for deterrence are sobering. The 1962 Cuban missile crisis is a case in point. What motivated Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev was partly his sense that the balance of U.S. and Soviet

overseas missile deployments was unfair. The United States had positioned nuclear-armed missiles on the Soviet Union's southern flank, in Turkey, so Khrushchev expected U.S. leaders to tolerate the deployment of Soviet missiles in Cuba. When Kennedy demanded that Khrushchev remove the missiles from Cuba, both leaders found themselves playing a high-stakes version of the ultimatum game: Kennedy offered a guarantee that the United States would not invade Cuba in exchange for the Soviet Union's withdrawal of the missiles—a mutually beneficial outcome, albeit with a modest payout to the Soviets. Should Khrushchev refuse, the ultimate lose-lose outcome—war—appeared likely.

Khrushchev's choice should have been easy. Given the United States' enormous nuclear advantage over the Soviet Union, the U.S. missiles in Turkey were a nonissue. But because Khrushchev felt pressure to demonstrate to his colleagues in the Soviet Presidium (and, one suspects, to himself) that he had been treated fairly, the missiles in Turkey became a sticking point in negotiations to resolve the crisis. In the end, Kennedy committed to quietly withdrawing the missiles from Turkey, the Soviets removed their missiles from Cuba, and war was averted. The lessons of the episode are clear: even in matters of life and death, perceptions of fairness matter, and failing to account for them can push countries to the brink of nuclear war, overwhelming the rational calculus that underpins deterrence.

MIND THE GAP

Given all these theoretical and practical limitations, it may appear as if deterrence should be discarded altogether, at least as far as defense policy and strategy go. But to paraphrase Winston Churchill, deterrence may be the worst form of defense, except for all the others.

Yet policymakers must rethink their countries' deterrence strategies to account for changing conditions: the challenge of multipolarity, the introduction of advanced weaponry, and new knowledge about the psychology of decision-making. Any attempt to buttress deterrence must address these factors rather than wish them away.

For the United States, this means undertaking a comprehensive assessment of the military balance of power. This requires a better understanding of how the primary targets of U.S. deterrence strategy, China and Russia, calculate the military balance themselves and, by extension, the costs and risks associated with taking aggressive

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action. U.S. analysts, for example, tend to assess the strategic balance of power by focusing primarily on nuclear weapons. Their Russian counterparts, on the other hand, also incorporate ballistic missile defenses, early warning systems, cyberweapons, and precision-guided conventional weapons on strategic delivery systems into their assessments. Chinese strategists usually take a similarly comprehensive view of the strategic balance.

At a more theoretical level, policymakers must change how they think about escalation. Today's strategists still use the metaphor, developed during the Cold War, of an escalation ladder, whose rungs represent the gradual and linear stepping up of a war from the lower level of conventional conflict up until nuclear exchanges. In the age of precision munitions and cyberattacks, this linear metaphor is badly in need of revision. What will emerge may look less like a ladder than like a web of crosscutting paths. At each intersection, escalation in one domain, be it cyberspace, the seabed, or space, could trigger an escalatory response in another. This intersectional model would allow the United States to identify areas where it enjoys an advantage over its rivals and areas where it needs to take steps to strengthen deterrence.

The United States will also have to find ways to buy back warning time for incoming attacks and improve its ability to trace their origins. Eventually, advances in artificial intelligence and "big data" may prove useful for promptly detecting an attacker's fingerprints. By causing prospective aggressors to lose confidence in their ability to act with anonymity, such tools would enhance the threat of punishment and thus strengthen deterrence.

To reduce the uncertainty surrounding new, untested capabilities, the U.S. military must also train its forces for a wider range of conflict scenarios. Since 9/11, U.S. forces have devoted most of their attention to counterterrorism and counterinsurgency training, rather than the challenges posed by great-power rivals. Conducting realistic exercises at the operational level of war—the level at which military campaigns against advanced military forces are conducted—can reveal much about the effectiveness of various military doctrines, force structures, and capabilities.

As for human nature, there is of course little that can be done to change that. But policymakers should at least be aware of how humans make decisions under conditions of risk. This does not mean they must

immerse themselves in the behavioral and cognitive sciences any more than their predecessors at the dawn of the nuclear age had to develop a deep understanding of quantum physics. It does, however, mean they must have a clear awareness of what these fields' findings imply for a deterrence strategy's prospects for success. In particular, it is worth knowing what individual opponents, especially dictators, most value and fear losing. Such knowledge allows leaders to fine-tune their deterrence strategies based on punishment.

Since World War II, U.S. defense strategy has relied on communicating to rivals that any aggression would either fail or provoke a devastating counterattack—deterrence in a nutshell. The strategy's success until now has convinced many leaders in Washington that a major war is unlikely. In their eyes, deterrence is assured and needs little strengthening. But as revisionist great powers emerge and military competition expands to include new weaponry and unfamiliar domains, effective deterrence is becoming more and more challenging. The fears that once spurred strategists and politicians to embrace deterrence are still relevant. A new major-power war could still exact a horrific human and material toll, and U.S. policymakers are right to look for strategies to deter such a conflict. But doing so will require, above all, that they not take deterrence for granted.

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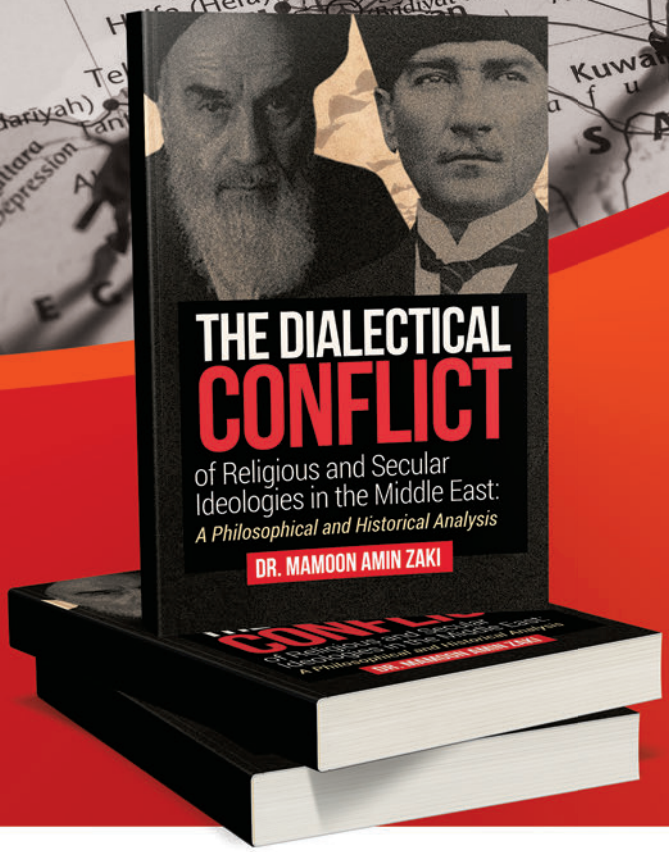

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How Congress Can Take Back Foreign Policy

A Playbook for Capitol Hill

Brian McKeon and Caroline Tess

On January 3, 2019, U.S. President Donald Trump will face a new reality: a chamber of Congress controlled by the opposition party. Confronting a hostile Democratic House of Representatives will be a rude awakening for a president who chafes at any limits on his authority. For the first two years of his presidency, Trump experienced little resistance from the Republican-controlled Congress as he sought to disrupt the established international order. Republicans largely stood by as Trump withdrew from vital international agreements, embraced autocrats while giving allies the cold shoulder, used Twitter to threaten friends and foes alike, and discarded democracy and human rights as core values of U.S. foreign policy.

His free rein is over. Now that Democrats have taken power in the House of Representatives, Congress has a chance to influence the administration's foreign policy. The Constitution gives Congress more authority over foreign affairs than most observers understand. It has the power of the purse, the power to declare war, and the power to regulate the armed forces, trade, and immigration. Congress can fund programs it supports and withhold money from those it doesn't. It can block initiatives that require legislation and use investigations to expose and curtail executive-branch wrongdoing. And it can reach out to allies and admonish adversaries.

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More recently, however, Congress' ability to govern has been eroded by a variety of factors, including increased partisanship, a 24-hour news cycle made more toxic by social media, and a permanent campaign requiring ever more fundraising and the need for regular travel to home districts. Congress must now rise to the occasion in order to pursue a single overriding imperative: to defend American national interests and values from a dangerous president. To do so, Democrats will have to stay disciplined and united—and use the powers the Constitution grants them in ways they have not done in years.

CONGRESS CAN CHECK AND BALANCE—WHEN IT WANTS TO

That Republicans in Congress have done little to rein in Trump should not be surprising. Their silence as Trump has trashed long-standing party orthodoxy on trade, democracy, and NATO may seem jarring. But members of Congress typically give a president of their own party substantial running room on foreign policy, especially early in an administration. Deference to Trump was also a sound political strategy for Republicans keen to avoid the wrath of the president and the party faithful who support him.

Congress has taken some steps to check Trump. In 2017, it imposed new sanctions on Russia—measures that Trump signed under protest and has been reluctant to implement. In July 2018, the Senate unanimously approved a resolution that rejected the idea that Russian law enforcement should be allowed to interrogate Michael McFaul, a former U.S. ambassador to Russia, who was accused by the Kremlin of "illegal activities." (The Kremlin provided no evidence for its accusation.) And in two successive budgets, Congress has rejected Trump's efforts to slash funding for diplomacy and international development; a bipartisan statement from the Senate Appropriations Committee in 2017 decried an "apparent doctrine of retreat" that would serve to "weaken America's standing in the world." Yet beyond these limited steps, Congress has proved unable to act.

Now, however, Democrats have won control of the House of Representatives, with its attendant committees and powers. History suggests there is a lot a determined Congress can do to stand up to a wayward president. In the 1970s, in response to overreach by President Richard Nixon, large Democratic majorities moved to rein in the so-called imperial presidency, undertaking a flurry of investigative and legislative activity. Congress passed the War Powers Resolution,

which sought to limit the circumstances in which the president could use military force without the consent of Congress; the Congressional Budget Act, which strengthened the ability of Congress to manage the budget process and restricted the president's ability to flout congressional funding decisions; the Arms Export Control Act, which provides an extensive congressional review process for major weapons exports, and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which created a new legal structure governing electronic surveillance in the United States for national security purposes. Congressional investigations led to reforms of the CIA and the FBI, too, particularly by restricting domestic spying, and created standing congressional intelligence committees to oversee the intelligence agencies.

In the 1990s, a Republican Congress sought to exert its own foreign policy priorities. It passed legislation requiring that various UN reforms be implemented before the United States would pay its back dues; reorganized the foreign affairs agencies, merging what had been separate agencies responsible for arms control and public diplomacy into the Department of State; blocked the Clinton administration's efforts to modify the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty; and rejected the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

THE POWER OF THE GAVEL

Much of that action required majorities in both houses of Congress. Without control of the Senate, Democrats will have fewer options, but they can still make a significant impact. Their first step should be returning to standard practice for oversight, a core function of the congressional committees. That means hearings, and lots of them. From January to November 2018, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held just 14 full committee hearings not related to nominations, allowing the administration to overhaul U.S. foreign policy without the need to explain itself in public. In 2004, by contrast, the chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Richard Lugar of Indiana—a Republican overseeing a Republican administration—held 14 hearings in the first three months of the year, often chairing two hearings in one day.

Congress has multiple committees that cover national security: Foreign Affairs and Foreign Relations, Armed Services, Intelligence, Homeland Security, and Appropriations, as well as the investigative committees. They should all hit the ground running in January. To

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Oversight: a Senate committee hearing in Washington, D.C., September 1974

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begin with, they should hold hearings on U.S. policy toward Iran, North Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Central America; the impact of tariffs on economic and foreign policy; and growing transnational threats, particularly climate change, cyberattacks, and terrorism.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee could set the tone early by holding two full committee hearings with senior State Department officials to discuss Iran and North Korea. Shockingly, in 2018, the committee did not hold a single hearing with administration officials dedicated to either topic. The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee will likely spend a good portion of its time investigating the Trump family businesses. It should prioritize taking a close look at the Chinese and Russians who have bought Trump properties in New York and elsewhere, as well as the lavish spending by foreign governments at the Trump International Hotel in Washington, D.C. A brief, preliminary report laying out the facts would establish a road map, allowing the media and members of Congress to connect the dots between Trump's private businesses and his official actions.

Congress can't match the president's bully pulpit. But hearings and investigations draw attention to neglected issues and can force administrations to rethink decisions. They can divert the executive branch from its priorities and focus the attention of the press, particularly when they stick to a limited set of issues and sustain the pressure. In 2004, for example, Henry Waxman of California, the senior Democratic member of the House Committee on Oversight

and Government Reform, carried out an investigation into weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, which revealed that the intelligence community had information that contradicted statements by the Bush administration about the threat posed by Iraq. In 2005, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee successfully derailed President George W. Bush's nomination of John Bolton as UN ambassador after an extensive investigation of Bolton's efforts as a senior State Department official to exaggerate intelligence findings to fit his policy views and of his attempts to remove analysts who disagreed with him. And Republicans' relentless use of congressional hearings over the last two decades to discredit the science of climate change demonstrates the impact that sustained congressional pressure can have on the public discourse.

Hearings and investigations draw attention to neglected issues and can force administrations to rethink decisions.

Democrats, now serving as committee chairs armed with subpoena power, will make extensive requests for information, interviews, and witnesses. Contrary to popular belief, the White House cannot fully control how agencies respond to Congress. Departments depend on Congress to fund them, approve their requests to repurpose existing funds, and confirm their senior staff. They strive to maintain working relationships with their oversight committees in both houses of Congress. Public fights over subpoenas are the exception, not the rule. Administration officials regularly agree to appear, provide documents, and cooperate with congressional investigators when faced with the possibility of onerous legislation and limits on their budgetary authority enacted through the appropriations process.

The congressional committees can also enlist other investigators, such as inspectors general (who are housed within departments and agencies and charged with rooting out fraud, waste, and abuse) and the Government Accountability Office (which audits the federal government and conducts program reviews), to dig into executive-branch activity. The GAO works for Congress, not the executive branch, and has the statutory authority to review the activities of most agencies. Inspectors general are independent of their agency's leadership; nearly all of them endeavor to protect that independence and respond to legitimate congressional requests.

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The challenge will be to focus investigations on a limited number of worthwhile topics. Congress should keep it simple, shining a spotlight on the ethical swamp under Trump's leadership and on policies that are causing long-term practical and reputational damage to the United States. This should include highlighting how foreign governments are influencing the administration by spending money at Trump properties; how U.S. foreign policy toward China, Russia, and the Persian Gulf is affected by Trump family business interests in those countries; the consequences of U.S. support for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates' war in Yemen; and the shameful reduction in the numbers of refugees admitted to the United States. Moreover, Democrats will need to exercise discipline. It is important to be focused and patient, as effective congressional investigations unfold slowly, often lasting months, even years, as new facts are discovered and new avenues of inquiry pursued.

Complementing the work of the full committees, energized subcommittee chairs can use their gavels to focus attention on important issues. The chair of the House subcommittee on human rights, for example, can shine a light on dark places by hearing testimony from leading dissidents and human rights defenders from China, Cuba, the Philippines, Russia, and Turkey. Such hearings would underscore the United States' long-standing commitment to human rights for people everywhere. In 2014, for example, the House Foreign Affairs Committee held hearings with a Syrian defector known only as "Ceasar" who had smuggled thousands of photos out of Syria that documented the Syrian government's brutality. The hearings drew widespread attention in Congress and the media to his work.

Congress should also step in to save the U.S. Foreign Service, which is bleeding senior talent thanks to efforts by the White House and the State Department to force out many senior diplomats. Attrition at senior levels has been higher than usual, with a number of notable public resignations. It will take years to regain the experience that has been lost among the diplomatic corps, but the foreign affairs committees can help arrest the decline. Each should designate a subcommittee to focus solely on the health of the Foreign Service. These subcommittees should hold hearings, make recommendations to the Appropriations Committees, and draft legislation to make sure that the service gets adequate funding to support recruitment, diversity, and career advancement for diplomats. They should also investigate specific problems:

not just the wholesale retirement of senior diplomats and the sidelining of talented officers who served honorably in the Obama administration but also the ongoing attacks on U.S. diplomats in China and Cuba (attributed in some reports to sonic or microwave radiation) and the Trump administration's lack of response.

Not all oversight can or should be conducted in public. The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, rather than continue Republican efforts to discredit the leadership of the FBI and Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, should focus on standard oversight of the intelligence community, including covert operations, the collection of sensitive intelligence, and the impartial analytic process.

In addition, all members of Congress should receive candid, regular, and thorough classified briefings. Congress should pay special attention to North Korea. Given the unclear status of the nuclear negotiations, members should seek in-depth briefings before and after any discussions with the North Korean leadership. That's what Congress demanded—and received—throughout the negotiation of the Iran nuclear agreement.

Even though Republicans retained control of the Senate, Democrats can still exert influence there. Nominations offer serious leverage to individual senators, no matter which party holds the majority. An individual senator can place a hold on a nomination to influence policy or force the administration to hand over information or provide witnesses for hearings. Senators should avoid delay for delay's sake, but using nominees as leverage on other issues is often an effective way to get an administration's attention.

THE POWER TO LEGISLATE

Congress must do more than conduct oversight; it must legislate. Every year, the appropriations process leads to must-pass bills that keep the government funded and give the legislative branch a chance to influence policy. Congress also passes annual defense and intelligence authorization bills, and in doing so frequently incorporates unrelated foreign policy legislation. In 2016, for example, Congress used the defense authorization bill to reorganize the government agency that conducts international broadcasting. And in October, it used a bill reauthorizing the Federal Aviation Administration to reauthorize and expand the mandate of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation

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to fund infrastructure projects in developing countries, part of an effort to counter growing Chinese influence.

The Democrats' majority in the House gives them significant leverage to include their priorities in must-pass legislation. For starters, Congress should incorporate language explicitly barring U.S. forces from refueling Saudi planes and from offering intelligence support to the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen in the annual defense authorization bill. Congress can also exert its prerogatives on Cuba, lifting the travel restrictions imposed by the Trump administration and preserving Americans' ability to travel freely through legislative provisions in any of the annual must-pass bills, rather than in freestanding legislation that Trump would surely veto.

At the top of the legislative calendar, the incoming Speaker of the House must schedule an early vote on legislation to protect the Mueller investigation. Trump has hinted that he may shut the investigation down prematurely. Congress must not allow that to happen. Building on the Russian sanctions it passed in 2017, Congress should also promptly consider the Defending American Security From Kremlin Aggression Act of 2018, bipartisan legislation introduced in the Senate in August 2018 that provides additional sanctions on the Russian energy sector and new tools to protect the U.S. electoral system from foreign interference.

More broadly, Congress should take steps to safeguard the United States' role in the international order. At the top of the list should be defending multilateral institutions. Congress should enact legislation to block Trump from pulling the United States out of NATO and the World Trade Organization—something he has reportedly considered doing. Some in Congress question whether Trump can withdraw from treaties unilaterally, but there is no doubt that Congress could pass a statute preventing him from taking such impulsive steps. Such legislation would send a strong signal abroad that the United States' long-standing commitment to international institutions and alliances remains strong.

Congress should not limit itself to directly countering Trump's foreign policy; it should also act positively on its own. One area where Congress can make a real difference is cybersecurity. The United States' infrastructure is deeply vulnerable to cyberattacks, and the government has been far too slow to respond. So Congress should enact comprehensive legislation that better enables the sharing of cybersecurity information between the government and the private sector and that strengthens the ability of law enforcement to fight cybercrime.

Perhaps the most potent tool Congress has is the power of the purse. The Constitution dictates that no money can be drawn from the Treasury without appropriations made by law. Congress thus has substantial authority to influence policy, subject only to executive-branch foot-dragging in executing congressional directives or the rare presidential veto. Controlling the purse is one way in which Congress has pushed back successfully against the Trump administration during its first two years. During the next two, the Appropriations Committees will likely do the same in both chambers.

In particular, the appropriations subcommittees that cover foreign operations, which handle the State Department and foreign aid budgets, are islands of bipartisanship. They protect diplomatic resources and quietly advance worthwhile causes such as ending river blindness, promoting democracy, supporting girls' education, and combating human trafficking. They also zealously guard their funding priorities. Administrations often want to use funds for projects other than their original purpose. The subcommittees regularly reject, delay, or modify these proposals. Through an informal process—dictated by laws requiring the executive branch to notify Congress before trying to shift funds in this way—these subcommittees have effectively established a form of legislative veto over some administration actions. This past summer, the Trump administration attempted to rescind billions of dollars in foreign aid money, a move that would have slashed the State Department and USAID budgets months after Trump had signed the appropriations bill funding them into law. Faced with bipartisan congressional outrage, the White House backed down.

Congress should safeguard the United States' role in the international order.

Similarly, Congress has substantial control over arms exports, which it should use to curtail U.S. support for the bloody war that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are waging in Yemen. The State Department must notify the foreign affairs committees of every weapons sale over a certain dollar threshold and wait a certain period of time to allow for possible congressional votes on a resolution of disapproval. This process also includes an informal "prenotification" before a formal notice is submitted to the committees, which can lead to adjustments to the proposal. In rare cases, Congress can try to formally reject a sale, although it almost never succeeds, since the president usually vetoes such attempts.

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ENDING CONGRESSIONAL IRRELEVANCE

Congress should do more than use the powers it already has; it should reclaim those that have been ceded to the executive. The constitutional historian Edward Corwin once wrote that the Constitution creates an "invitation to struggle" among the political branches. A Congress that delegates its powers or consistently acquiesces in the face of executive action not only ignores that invitation; it abdicates its responsibilities.

Trade offers a case in point. The Constitution grants Congress the power to "lay and collect" duties and regulate foreign commerce. The president has no express constitutional power over foreign trade; rather, the Constitution gives him a general authority to negotiate treaties. Until the 1930s, Congress imposed tariffs directly by statute. But in the last several decades, Congress has delegated substantial authority in this area to the president, allowing him to impose retaliatory tariffs and to negotiate trade agreements under what is known as "fast-track" authority. The agreements are then considered in Congress in an expedited process in which no amendments are allowed. This sort of delegation is not unusual; the growth of the federal government and the complexity of the modern economy have led Congress to yield significant power in many areas to the executive branch and administrative agencies.

Yet what Congress can give, Congress can take away. In 1980, for example, alarmed by President Jimmy Carter's announcement that he would impose a fee on crude oil imports in an attempt to limit U.S. dependence on foreign oil, Congress created a mechanism by which it could override presidential actions on crude oil imports. Today, Trump has abused his trade authority. He has invoked bogus claims of national security to impose sweeping tariffs on allies and partners while giving little consideration to the harm his actions will inflict on the U.S. economy. Congress should limit or even revoke the president's authority to enact retaliatory tariffs, increase the burden of proof he must meet, or create a mechanism for Congress to reject proposed tariffs.

Congress should also reclaim its control over military action. Article 1 of the Constitution gives Congress not merely the authority to declare war but also substantial power over the use of force and the regulation of the armed forces. The framers would not recognize the practice that has developed over the last few decades, with presidents directing extensive U.S. military actions while Congress often sits on the sidelines.

The most immediate task is to repeal and replace the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force, which Congress passed just after 9/11 to give the president the power to defend the country against those who planned the 9/11 attacks and anyone who aided them. The law remains in effect, and has been used far beyond its original intent. The executive branch has invoked it to justify counterterrorism operations in a long list of countries, as well as the continued detention of terrorist suspects at Guantánamo Bay. Congress should replace it with a statute that is more narrowly tailored, limiting it to such conflicts as that in Afghanistan and the campaign in Iraq and Syria against the Islamic State (also known as ISIS). A bipartisan effort in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during the current Congress would be a good starting point.

The aspect of foreign policy over which the president has the greatest control is probably diplomacy, both because the executive carries out negotiations with other governments and because it has a large bureaucracy to help it. But here, too, Congress is not without power. Leading members of Congress should recognize that they can help reassure allies and repair damaged relationships. The new Speaker of the House should issue an early invitation to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to address a joint meeting of Congress. Congress should award the Congressional Medal of Honor to NATO service members in recognition of the 17 years they have spent fighting alongside U.S. forces in Afghanistan. The Speaker should also personally lead a bipartisan delegation to visit NATO allies early in the year and designate senior members to lead delegations to reassure countries in other regions of the world.

The U.S. Constitution gives the president considerable power over foreign policy. In recent years, successive presidents have expanded that authority. Trump has used those powers to begin remaking the United States' global image and role. Yet the framers of the Constitution wisely vested Congress with powers of its own to influence and check the executive. Americans have voted. Now Congress must act.

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Return to Table of Contents

America's Middle East Purgatory

The Case for Doing Less

Mara Karlin and Tamara Cofman Wittes

When U.S. President Donald Trump talks about the Middle East, he typically pairs bellicose threats against Iran and the Islamic State (or ISIS) with fulsome pledges of support for the United States' regional partners, such as Israel and Saudi Arabia. But the tough talk is misleading: there is little reason to think that Trump actually wants the United States to get more involved in the region.

He pulled the United States out of the Iran nuclear deal but has shown no eagerness for a conflict with the Islamic Republic. He has continued U.S. President Barack Obama's support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen but resisted calls for deeper military engagement there. Despite his promise of a "deal of the century," a U.S. proposal on Arab-Israeli peace remains on the shelf. His support for an "Arab NATO," a security alliance among Egypt, Jordan, and six Gulf states, has been stymied by deepening rifts among the Gulf countries. His vacillating approach toward Syria has led to confusion over the U.S. military's mission there. The Defense Department has scaled back U.S. military capabilities in the Middle East in order to redirect resources to the increasing threats posed by China and Russia, leaving partners in the region wondering about Washington's commitment to their security. For all the aggressive rhetoric, Trump's Middle East policies have proved remarkably reserved.

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Leaving on a jet plane: an F-18 on its way to the Persian Gulf, March 2017

JON GAMBRELL / AP

In that regard, Trump is strikingly like his predecessor. Trump may talk about the Middle East differently than Obama did. But the two seem to share the view that the United States is too involved in the region and should devote fewer resources and less time to it. And there is every reason to believe that the next president will agree. The reduced appetite for U.S. engagement in the region reflects not an ideological predilection or an idiosyncrasy of these two presidents but a deeper change in both regional dynamics and broader U.S. interests. Although the Middle East still matters to the United States, it matters markedly less than it used to.

U.S. strategy toward the Middle East, however, has yet to catch up with these changes. The United States thus exists in a kind of Middle Eastern purgatory—too distracted by regional crises to pivot to other global priorities but not invested enough to move the region in a better direction. This worst-of-both-worlds approach exacts a heavy price. It sows uncertainty among Washington's Middle Eastern partners, which encourages them to act in risky and aggressive ways. (Just look at Saudi Arabia's brazen assassination of the journalist Jamal Khashoggi or its bloody campaign in Yemen.) It deepens the American public's frustration with the region's endless turmoil, as well as with U.S. efforts to address it. It diverts resources that could otherwise be devoted to confronting a rising China and a revanchist Russia. And all the while,

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by remaining unclear about the limits of its commitments, the United States risks getting dragged into yet another Middle Eastern conflict.

To say that the Middle East matters less to the United States does not mean that decreased U.S. involvement will necessarily be good for the region. The Middle East is in the midst of its greatest upheaval in half a century, generating an all-out battle for power among its major players. The region's governments, worried about what Washington's growing disregard for the Middle East means for their own stability, are working hard to draw the hegemon back in. But it is time for Washington to put an end to wishful thinking about its ability to establish order on its own terms or to transform self-interested and shortsighted regional partners into reliable allies—at least without incurring enormous costs and long-term commitments. That means making some ugly choices to craft a strategy that will protect the most important U.S. interests in the region, without sending the United States back into purgatory.

A LESS RELEVANT REGION

In response to the Iraq war, the United States has aimed to reduce its role in the Middle East. Three factors have made that course both more alluring and more possible. First, interstate conflicts that directly threatened U.S. interests in the past have largely been replaced by substate security threats. Second, other rising regions, especially Asia, have taken on more importance to U.S. global strategy. And third, the diversification of global energy markets has weakened oil as a driver of U.S. policy.

During the Cold War, traditional state-based threats pushed the United States to play a major role in the Middle East. That role involved not only ensuring the stable supply of energy to Western markets but also working to prevent the spread of communist influence and tamping down the Arab-Israeli conflict so as to help stabilize friendly states. These efforts were largely successful. Beginning in the 1970s, the United States nudged Egypt out of the pro-Soviet camp, oversaw the first Arab-Israeli peace treaty, and solidified its hegemony in the region. Despite challenges from Iran after its 1979 revolution and from Saddam Hussein's Iraq throughout the 1990s, U.S. dominance was never seriously in question. The United States contained the Arab-Israeli conflict, countered Saddam's bid to gain territory through force in the 1990–91 Gulf War, and built a seemingly permanent

military presence in the Gulf that deterred Iran and muffled disputes among the Gulf Arab states. Thanks to all these efforts, the chances of deliberate interstate war in the Middle East are perhaps lower now than at any time in the past 50 years.

But today, the chief threat in the Middle East is not a state-on-state conflict but the growing substate violence spilling across borders—a challenge that is harder to solve from the outside. The terrorism and civil war plaguing the Middle East have spread easily in a permissive environment of state weakness. This environment was fostered by the U.S. invasion of Iraq and then, more generally, by the dysfunctional governance that led to the Arab uprisings of 2010–12 and the subsequent repressive responses. The region's most violent hot spots are those where dictators met demands from their citizens with force and drove them to take up arms. The United States cannot fundamentally alter this permissive environment for terrorism and chaos without investing in state building at a level far beyond what either the American public or broader foreign policy considerations would allow. And so it simply cannot hope to do much to counter the Middle East's violence or instability.

Change will have to come from the Arab states themselves.

Some of the chaos directly threatens U.S. partners. Jordan's vulnerability skyrocketed in 2014 as hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees fled there (which is the reason the United States ramped up its aid to the country). Saudi Arabia's critical infrastructure has proved dangerously exposed (which is why the United States deepened its support there, as well). But today, the primary threats to these partners are internal. In Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere, dysfunctional state-led economic systems and unaccountable governments are failing to meet the needs or aspirations of a large, young, reasonably healthy, and globally connected generation. Change will have to come from the Arab states themselves, and although the United States can support reformers within Arab societies, it cannot drive this kind of transformation from the outside.

Some argue that these problems still matter a lot to the United States and that there is still much it could do to solve them if it were willing to go all in. Proponents of this maximalist approach believe that with sufficient resources, the United States could decisively defeat

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ISIS and other extremists, stabilize and reconstruct liberated communities, and lay the foundations for a lasting peace by pushing states to overhaul the social contract between rulers and ruled. This outcome is not impossible to imagine. But the experience of the United States in Iraq, Libya, and Syria suggests that this path would be rockier than it might first appear and that it would be extremely challenging to sustain domestic political support for the large, long-term investments that these goals would require.

Even as the Middle East's problems have become less susceptible to constructive outside influence, the United States' global interests have also changed—most of all when it comes to Asia. For decades, U.S. policymakers debated whether China could rise peacefully, but the country's destabilizing behavior, especially its insistence that its neighbors accept its territorial claims in the South China Sea and over Taiwan, have led many to worry that it will not. Both Obama and Trump recognized that Asia has become more important to U.S. grand strategy. As the former put it when announcing what became known as the "rebalance" to Asia, "After a decade in which we fought two wars that cost us dearly, in blood and treasure, the United States is turning our attention to the vast potential of the Asia-Pacific region." Russia, meanwhile, has generated growing concern ever since its invasion of Crimea in 2014, and fears about European security and stability have pushed the Middle East even further down the list of U.S. priorities.

Then there is oil—the fuel that first drew the United States into the Middle East after World War II. Middle Eastern oil remains an important commodity in the global economy, but it is weakening as a driver of U.S. policy. One reason is the more abundant global supply, including new domestic sources aided by technologies such as fracking. Another is a widely anticipated stall in global demand, as technological advances and concerns about greenhouse gas emissions cause countries to shift away from fossil fuels. The result is a Middle East that is less central to global energy markets and less able to control pricing—and a United States that can afford to worry less about protecting the flow of oil from the region.

Many of the things that mattered to the United States when it first became involved in the Middle East still matter today. The United States should still care about protecting freedom of navigation in the region's major maritime passages, preventing oil producers or trouble-

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makers from suddenly turning off the flow, and containing would-be regional hegemons and other actors hostile to Washington. The question is how crucial these priorities are relative to other ones, and how much the United States should invest in them. The answer is that the United States should probably be less involved in shaping the trajectory of the region than it is.

LOST ILLUSIONS

For a long time, policymakers have been tempted by the notion that there is some kind of golden mean for U.S. engagement in the Middle East. Somehow, the argument runs, the United States can develop a strategy that keeps it involved in the most critical issues but avoids allowing it to be drawn into the region's more internecine battles. In this scenario, the United States could reduce its military presence while retaining a "surge" capacity, relying more on local partners to deter threats and using aid and trade incentives to build coalitions among local actors to advance stabilizing policies, such as conflict resolution.

But this Goldilocks approach rests on the false assumption that there is such a thing as a purely operational U.S. military presence in the Middle East. In reality, U.S. military bases across the Gulf countries have strategic implications because they create a moral hazard: they encourage the region's leaders to act in ways they otherwise might not, safe in the knowledge that the United States is invested in the stability of their regimes. In 2011, for example, the Bahrainis and the Saudis clearly understood the message of support sent by the U.S. naval base in Bahrain when they ignored Obama's disapproval and crushed Shiite protests there. In Yemen, U.S. support for the Emirati and Saudi military campaign shows how offering help can put the United States in profound dilemmas: the United States is implicated in air strikes that kill civilians, but any proposal to halt its supplies of its precision-guided missiles is met with the charge that denying Saudi Arabia smarter munitions might only increase collateral civilian casualties. U.S. efforts to train, equip, and advise the Syrian Democratic Forces in the fight against ISIS are yet another reminder that none of Washington's partnerships has purely operational consequences: U.S. support of the SDF, seen by Ankara as a sister to the Kurdistan Workers' Party, has made the United States' relationship with Turkey knottier than ever.

Supporters of the Goldilocks approach also suggest that the United States can substitute military engagement with vigorous diplomacy. But U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry's experience with the negotiations over the Syrian civil war, where his efforts were undercut by Obama's reluctance to involve the United States, demonstrated that diplomacy without teeth doesn't get you very far. Goldilocks proponents imagine that the United States can somehow escape the push-pull dynamic of Middle Eastern involvement, but all this approach ends up accomplishing is prolonging the time in purgatory. Yet it is not enough to simply propose that the United States do less in the region without explaining what that would look like in practice. It is clear that Washington should reduce its role in the Middle East; how it scales back and to what end are the critical questions.

A superpower must make tough choices, prioritizing the conflicts and issues that matter most for its global strategy.

A new approach to the region should begin with accepting a painful tradeoff: that what is good for the United States may not be good for the Middle East. U.S. policymakers and the public already seem surprisingly comfortable watching repressive Arab rulers consolidate power in some countries, while brutal insurgents displace civilians and destroy cities in others. But a superpower must make tough choices, prioritizing the conflicts and issues that matter most for its global strategy. During the Cold War, for example, the United States took a relatively hands-off approach to most of Africa, backing anticommunist strongmen and proxies in a few places even at the cost of long-term stability. This had terrible consequences for the people of, say, Angola or what was then Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), but it was a tolerable decision for U.S. interests. The same is likely to be true in the Middle East today.

It is not enough to just set limits on its commitments; the United States must also clearly communicate those limits to other countries. At a summit at Camp David in 2015, Obama alarmed Gulf partners when he told them that the United States would protect them from external threats but pointedly declined to mention internecine ones. Obama was right to put the onus on Gulf states to address their own internal challenges and to make clear that the United States had no dog in most of their regional fights. Today, likewise, the United States

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should put its regional partners on notice that it will not back some of their pet political projects, such as the United Arab Emirates' attempt to resuscitate the Palestinian politician Mohammad Dahlan in the Gaza Strip or its effort, along with Egypt, to back the military commander Khalifa Haftar in Libya. Washington must also set clear guidelines about when it will and won't use force. It should clarify, for example, that it will target terrorists who threaten the United States or its partners but will not intervene militarily in civil wars except to contain them (as opposed to resolving them through force).

Since a less engaged United States will have to leave more of the business of Middle Eastern security to partners in the region, it must rethink how it works with them. For example, the U.S. military is fond of talking about a "by, with, and through" approach to working with local partners—meaning military "operations are led by our partners, state or nonstate, with enabling support from the United States or U.S.-led coalitions, and through U.S. authorities and partner agreements," as General Joseph Votel, commander of U.S. Central Command, explained in an article in *Joint Force Quarterly* in 2018. But that model works only if the partners on the ground share Washington's priorities. Consider the Defense Department's doomed program to train and equip rebels in Syria. Rightly mistrustful of those partners, fearing they might drag the United States into a war with Bashar al-Assad, Washington was unwilling to provide sophisticated support. And although the fighters were instructed to prioritize attacking ISIS over regime forces that were shelling their hometowns, they changed course when Turkey invaded Afrin and began fighting the Turks instead, stalling the campaign against ISIS elsewhere. The United States has worked well with Kurdish militias in the fight against ISIS in northeastern Syria—but as soon as Trump expressed his desire to pull U.S. forces out, the rebels began to explore cutting a deal with Damascus.

It is also crucial that the United States accept the limitations of its partners and see them for what they truly are, warts and all. Sometimes, these partners won't be able to confront security challenges without direct help from the United States. In these cases, U.S. policymakers will have to accept that if the effort is imperative for U.S. national security interests, Washington will have to do the work itself. For example, the United States has spent decades trying to build a security alliance among Gulf states. Even before the current Gulf rift began, this effort had started going off the rails, with many countries

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allowing mutual hatreds to get in the way of a cooperative effort against Iran. Now that Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates are blockading Qatar, this alliance is looking even more like a pipe dream.

A clear-eyed approach also requires accepting that China or Russia (or both) will likely gain more of a footing in the Middle East as the United States pulls back. The good news is that neither power is likely to make a real bid for regional hegemony. So far, China has established itself in the region by gingerly stepping around multiple conflicts, seeking friendships and trade relationships while carefully avoiding taking sides in any rivalries. The crass views of power and money evident in Russia's involvement in Syria, where Kremlin-linked mercenary firms have fought for Assad and gained lucrative oil profits, suggest that regional governments will face a strict quid pro quo from Moscow, not the kind of reliable partnerships the United States has traditionally provided. Setting Syria aside, Russia's role in the region has been similar to China's: free-riding on U.S. security guarantees while using diplomacy and commercial ties to make friends as widely as possible without offering unique guarantees to any one party. Given the relatively limited ambitions of China and Russia, and how well the United States has demonstrated the immense price of being the regional security manager, Washington should be able to retain the preponderance of power in the Middle East even after pulling back. Yet if one of its core partners or interests is threatened, it will need to be prepared to change course.

WHAT STILL MATTERS

These recommendations all involve accepting what doesn't matter to U.S. interests. But there are issues in the Middle East that still greatly concern the United States. Those who prefer that Washington withdraw from the region entirely underestimate how dangerous the resulting power vacuum could be. The United States does have important interests in the region to protect.

One of them is sustaining freedom of navigation for the U.S. Navy and for global commercial traffic through the Middle East's major maritime passages—the Strait of Hormuz, the Bab el Mandeb Strait, and the Suez Canal. Fortunately, this is a global priority. Outside the Persian Gulf itself, the littoral states and other concerned parties across Asia and Europe share Washington's objective. Chinese naval forces have participated in antipiracy efforts in the Horn of Africa, and the Chinese navy

recently built its first overseas base to support that mission, in Djibouti. The United States could encourage China to participate in the 33-member Combined Maritime Forces and Combined Task Force 151, which fight piracy in the Gulf of Aden and off the eastern coast of Somalia, to ensure that China's activities are focused on shared maritime security. This would allow the United States to rely more on other concerned parties to address the piracy challenge. Still, doing so would come with its own costs—particularly as China has sought to rewrite the rules on freedom of navigation in its own region.

Fighting terrorism also remains a priority. To secure the American people, including U.S. forces stationed abroad, and the most important U.S. partners, the United States will have to prevent new threats from emerging in the Middle East. Like the Obama administration, the Trump administration has emphasized the need to lower the level of U.S. involvement in counterterrorism efforts. But this approach has its limits. Washington should recognize that its partners will inevitably permit or even encourage the activities of terrorist groups if doing so aligns with their short-term interests. Qatar, for example, has proved willing to work with extremist groups that, at a minimum, give aid to terrorist groups with international ambitions. The United States should recognize that it cannot control everything its partners do and focus its efforts on discouraging their relationships with terrorist groups that might pursue operations beyond their immediate neighborhood or acquire game-changing capabilities.

Finally, the United States still has an interest in seeing its main partners—however imperfect they are—stable and secure, and it should weigh its investments in security cooperation and economic aid accordingly. Washington also needs to ensure that problems in the Middle East don't spill over into neighboring regions (a lesson from the Bosnian war in the 1990s that policymakers forgot when confronted with the Syrian war). Preventing conflicts from spreading does not mean launching all-out military interventions. But it will sometimes require the United States to actively contain the fighting and engage in coercive diplomacy designed to bring civil wars to a swifter end.

THE DEVIL WE DON'T KNOW

Ultimately, lasting stability and security for the Middle East will come only if the relationship between rulers and the ruled changes. That will require more transparent, responsive, accountable, and participatory

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governments that give citizens a reason to buy into the system, instead of encouraging them to work around it through corruption, leave it behind through emigration, or try to tear it down through violence.

But that change cannot be driven by the United States without far more carrots and sticks than Washington is prepared to deploy. U.S. policymakers should instead support those who are proposing constructive solutions and work to shape the environment in which local actors will make their own choices about reordering the region. That work could involve others with a stake in Middle Eastern stability—Europe, for example. But for the foreseeable future, policymakers must accept that the Middle East will likely remain mired in dysfunction and that U.S. partners there will bow less and less to Washington's preferences. The United States will also have to abandon the fairy-dusted prospect of a negotiated agreement to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and settle for constraining the worst impulses of both sides as they reckon with recalcitrant domestic politics. The Iran nuclear deal did not put an end to Iran's destabilizing behavior or permanently box in its nuclear ambitions. But it did—and does—offer meaningful, verifiable constraints on Iranian nuclear activity for a significant period of time, better than can be expected from U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's list of demands backed by "maximum pressure." The United States should return to the agreement and continue efforts to roll back Iran's bad behavior both alone and with partners.

Heavy U.S. involvement in the Middle East over the past two decades has been painful and ugly for the United States and for the region. But it is the devil we know, and so U.S. policymakers have grown accustomed to the costs associated with it. Pulling back, however, is the devil we don't know, and so everyone instinctively resists this position. It, too, will be painful and ugly for the Middle East, but compared with staying the course, it will be less so for the United States. It's time for the United States to begin the difficult work of getting out of purgatory.

The Crisis of Peacekeeping

Why the UN Can't End Wars

Séverine Autesserre

In nearly 50 conflict zones around the world, some one and a half billion people live under the threat of violence. In many of these places, the primary enforcers of order are not police officers or government soldiers but the blue-helmeted troops of the United Nations. With more than 78,000 soldiers and 25,000 civilians scattered across 14 countries, UN peacekeepers make up the second-largest military force deployed abroad, after the U.S. military.

The ambition of their task is immense. From Haiti to Mali, from Kosovo to South Sudan, UN peacekeepers are invited into war-torn countries and charged with maintaining peace and security. In most cases, that means nothing less than transforming states and societies. Peacekeepers set out to protect civilians, train police forces, disarm militias, monitor human rights abuses, organize elections, provide emergency relief, rebuild court systems, inspect prisons, and promote gender equality. And they attempt all of that in places where enduring chaos has defied easy solution; otherwise, they wouldn't be there to begin with.

Unfortunately, this endeavor has a spotty track record. Global leaders continue to call on "the blue helmets" as the go-to solution whenever violence flares in the developing world. U.S. President Barack Obama praised UN peacekeeping as "one of the world's most important tools to address armed conflict," and the UN itself claims that it has "helped end conflicts and foster reconciliation by conducting successful peacekeeping operations in dozens of countries." But in fact, UN peacekeepers too often fail to meet their most basic objectives. On many deployments, they end up watching helplessly while war rages. On others, they organize elections and declare victory, but

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without having fixed the root causes that brought them there—making it all too likely that fighting will flare again before long.

Part of the reason for this failure is a lack of resources. It is hard to fault the UN for that, since it relies on contributions from its members. The larger problem, however, is a fundamental misunderstanding about what makes for a sustained peace. The UN's strategy favors top-down deals struck with elites and fixates on elections. But that neglects what should be the other main component of their approach: embracing bottom-up strategies that draw on local knowledge and letting the people themselves determine how best to promote peace.

THE RISE OF THE BLUE HELMETS

When the UN was created, in 1945, it was never intended to have its own fighting force; the UN Charter makes no mention of peacekeeping. But it quickly became clear that some such capacity would be essential if the organization was to have any hope of meeting its simplest goals. In 1948, the UN's mediator in Palestine asked for a small group of UN guards to monitor the truce between Israel and its Arab neighbors, an ad hoc mission that marked the birth of peacekeeping. Most deployments over the next few decades followed a similar pattern: at the invitation of the host government and with the agreement of all warring parties, the UN would send in soldiers after a cease-fire or a peace settlement was reached, provided that no permanent member of the Security Council vetoed the idea.

The possibility of a veto meant that intervention was limited to places not caught up in the East-West rivalry, and as a result, peacekeeping missions were rare during the Cold War. Only 13 were set up between 1948 and 1978, and none at all between 1979 and 1987. The missions that did exist were fairly unintrusive. A small number of unarmed observers would monitor cease-fire lines and troop withdrawals, as in Kashmir in 1949, or lightly armed soldiers would try to insert themselves between national armies, as in Lebanon in 1978. Sometimes, the presence of UN soldiers helped prevent further conflict, while at other times, it did not. The 1973 Yom Kippur War embodied this mixed track record: UN peacekeepers succeeded in enforcing the cease-fire along the Egyptian-Israeli border in the Sinai, but they failed to do the same at the Israeli-Syrian border in the Golan Heights. Even though the UN peacekeeping forces were awarded the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize, their global impact remained limited.

The end of the Cold War heralded a new era. With U.S.-Soviet tensions no longer paralyzing the UN, the organization would finally, its leaders thought, be able to do its job. And so in the span of roughly two years, from April 1991 to October 1993, it launched 15 new peacekeeping operations—more than it had in the first 40 years of its history. In many countries, the missions worked: in Namibia, El Salvador, Cambodia, and Mozambique, peacekeepers helped decrease violence by disarming combatants and brokering agreements. Owing to the sheer number of missions, peacekeeping became institutionalized. It acquired a dedicated department within the UN and its own staff, budget, and standard operating procedures—all the bureaucratic trappings of a global priority.

The optimism soon faded. First came the events in Somalia, where the UN would send approximately 28,000 troops to monitor a cease-fire in the country's long-running civil war and provide humanitarian relief. In June 1993, two dozen Pakistani peacekeepers were killed by

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militants there, and a few months later, in the "Black Hawk down" episode, so were 18 U.S. soldiers supporting the UN mission. Then came the massacres in Rwanda in 1994 and in Srebrenica in 1995, when UN peacekeepers stood by and watched as local armed groups perpetrated genocide.

Observers began to sour on peacekeeping. The people living where peacekeepers operated were not much kinder, portraying them as meek foreigners uninterested in their work. Salvadorans nicknamed the UN mission in their country "Vacaciones Unidas" (United Vacations), Cypriots spoke of "beach keepers," and Bosnians mocked the "Smurfs." Yet because major powers preferred UN operations to the type of full-scale interventions they had no interest in doing, the Security Council continued to generate missions at a fast pace—authorizing 16 of them between 1994 and 1998.

When the UN was created, in 1945, it was never intended to have its own fighting force.

By 1999, the UN realized it had to rethink its approach. That year, leaders in Kosovo, East Timor, Sierra Leone, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo finally reached peace agreements and asked for the UN's help in implementing them. The organization's secretary-general, Kofi Annan, who had previously headed its peacekeeping department, wanted to prevent new failures, so he requested two major reviews of international intervention. The first resulted in the Brahimi report (named after the Algerian diplomat who led the initiative), which detailed reforms to make UN peacekeeping more effective. The second produced the "responsibility to protect" doctrine: the idea that the so-called international community is morally obligated to help people living in states that are unable or unwilling to protect their citizens from serious violations of human rights.

These reports, and the debates they launched, transformed the UN's approach to peacekeeping. No longer should peacekeepers merely monitor cease-fire lines passively. Instead, they should take a proactive stance, using military force to prevent combatants from perpetrating violence. To avoid another Rwanda or Bosnia, where overly restrictive rules of engagement had led to disaster, peacekeeping forces should have strong mandates and ample resources.

The result of these developments is that peacekeeping is now very different from what it was during the Cold War. Instead of trying to

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end war primarily between states, peacekeepers now focus on maintaining peace within states. Their duties have expanded to include a laundry lists of tasks, from reorganizing armies to protecting populations to arranging elections. The personnel have evolved accordingly. In addition to soldiers and military officers, UN missions now hire experts on development, gender, politics, economics, administration, justice, human rights, land-mine removal, elections, media, and communication. In postwar East Timor and Kosovo, the UN even served as a de facto transitional government overseeing the new states' functions. And of the 18 missions deployed since 2000, an increasing number have been given "enforcement" mandates: instead of relying on the consent of all the warring parties to implement peace agreements and using their military might only in self-defense, UN soldiers can employ lethal force to defeat combatants. In the Central African Republic, Congo, and Mali, UN troops have ended up fighting rebel groups on the side of—or on behalf of—the government.

Peacekeepers can't hold the Security Council responsible for all their shortcomings.

Despite all these supposed improvements, today, just like 20 years ago, peacekeepers often fail to meet the high expectations set for them. Experts all use different definitions of success and thus arrive at different conclusions, so whether or not a UN mission can be considered a failure is a matter of interpretation. Some scholars have arrived at positive assessments. Michael Gilligan and Ernest Sergenti, for instance, have calculated that 85 percent of UN operations have resulted in prolonged periods of peace or shortened periods of war. Page Fortna has determined that, all else being equal, the presence of peacekeepers decreases the risk of another war breaking out by 55–62 percent. Lisa Hultman, Jacob Kathman, and Megan Shannon have shown that the deployment of UN troops reduces both battlefield deaths and civilian killings. Other scholars have come to more dispiriting conclusions. Jeremy Weinstein discovered that 75 percent of the civil wars in which the UN intervened resumed within ten years of stopping. Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis studied 138 peace processes and found that roughly half of those that had peacekeepers failed to decrease the violence or further democracy. Roland Paris analyzed 11 UN missions in depth and found that only two were able to build a sustainable peace.

What's more, missions that are celebrated as successful on the national and international levels do not necessarily improve conditions on the ground. In a study of Liberia, Eric Mvukiyehe and Cyrus Samii showed that, despite some positive outcomes, peacekeeping deployments at the municipal level did not promote security or help restore local authority.

Finally, even the success stories tend to fall apart on closer inspection. The mission in Cyprus, which began in 1964, is often heralded for having reduced fighting between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, but it can hardly be called a triumph. The island is divided in two, and political reunification looks almost as distant as it did 50 years ago. The 2004–6 operation in Burundi used to be the poster child for UN peacekeeping, credited with tamping down violence after years of civil war and helping the country transition to democracy. A decade later, however, Burundi is back to dictatorship and war. The bottom line is that UN missions do help, at times, to some extent, but they could do far better.

PEACEKEEPING ON THE CHEAP

The UN's defenders rightly point out that peacekeepers have one of the hardest jobs in the world. They operate in places rife with ruthless militias, abusive armies, corrupt officials, and shabby infrastructure. Instructions from the Security Council to support the host government further complicate their task, since rebels are less inclined to cooperate when they believe that the UN is aiding the enemy. Moreover, since great powers tend to care little about the crises the UN is sent to address, peacekeepers are given precious few resources with which to accomplish their ambitious mandates. At $7 billion annually, the UN peacekeeping budget may seem impressive. But it equals less than 0.5 percent of global military spending, and with it, the organization is expected to help resolve more than a quarter of all ongoing wars.

The main consequence is too few people on the ground, which makes it difficult for the UN to even scratch the surface of its mandates. In Congo, for example, the UN mission's gender office in the province of North Kivu—where sexual violence is pervasive—was staffed by one lone UN volunteer for years. Meanwhile, the number of UN soldiers is usually paltry given the size of the territories they're supposed to monitor or pacify. There is roughly one peacekeeper per 400 square

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miles in Western Sahara, one per 50 square miles in Congo, and one per 30 square miles in South Sudan. Compare that to the peak of the U.S. war in Afghanistan, when there was one foreign soldier per two square miles, or to the United States itself, where there is one law enforcement officer per four square miles.

Since the UN does not have its own pool of soldiers, it must rely on the goodwill of its member states to provide them. Countries are reluctant to risk the lives of their troops in conflicts in which they have no stake, and so it often takes months for the UN to muster the forces it needs. When it finally does, it almost always ends up with poorly trained and poorly paid soldiers from developing countries. (In 2018, the top troop contributors to the UN were Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Rwanda.) These troops are often poorly equipped, too—forced to get by without helicopters and to make do with outdated vehicles.

To make matters worse, their commanders report not just to the UN leadership but also to their own country's chain of command. These officers know what their countries expect from them: to bring their troops back home safe. When they have to choose between fulfilling the UN mandate and avoiding casualties, they generally choose the latter. That is what happened in Srebrenica in 1995, when the Dutch commander of a peacekeeping battalion, outnumbered and outgunned, had his soldiers stand by as Serbian forces rounded up and killed some 8,000 Muslim men and boys.

Worst of all, some peacekeepers harm those they are meant to help. In the Central African Republic, Congo, and Somalia, they have engaged in torture. In Bosnia, Haiti, and Kosovo, they have been implicated in sex-trafficking rings. In fact, over the past 12 years, the UN has received nearly 1,000 allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation by peacekeepers. Those who commit such horrible acts are a minority, but the bad apples have done grave harm to the UN's reputation.

THE WRONG STRATEGY

Both the peacekeeping leadership in New York and the rank and file in the field tend to blame all these woes on the Security Council, which provides neither adequate resources nor clear mandates. To ensure success, they say, peacekeepers need more money, more logistical support, and more people, along with more realistic instructions. And, they add, the Security Council needs to force countries that contribute

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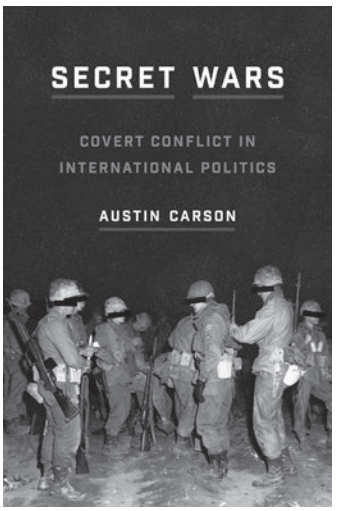

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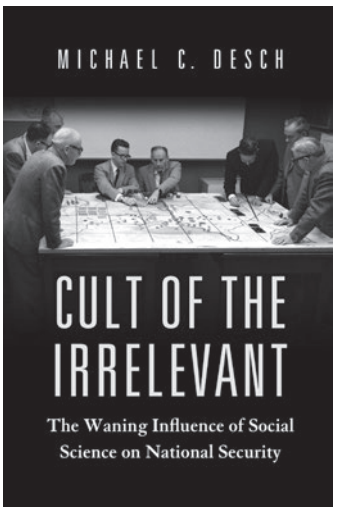

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troops to stop interfering with the operations on the ground and instead tell their officers to respect the UN chain of command. But peacekeepers can't hold the Security Council responsible for all their shortcomings. Because they are the product of compromise, mandates are always vague, and they always need to be interpreted. Besides, even when powerful states and troop-contributing countries devote ample resources to a UN mission, the resulting efforts often fail.

The problem is bigger than mandates and resources. Above all, it has to do with two strategic choices the UN frequently makes: first, to work with national elites to stop violence from the top down and, second, to push for quick elections as a way to consolidate the peace. The standard UN approach to ending wars is to host large, costly conferences in order to strike agreements between governments and rebel leaders and then organize a national vote and declare victory. Both tendencies are based on faulty assumptions.

Pushing for a vote before a country is ready may do more harm than good.

The weakness of the top-down approach is that warfare is often the result of not just national or international competition but local competition, too. In many conflict zones, the fight is over such issues as land, water, livestock, and low-level traditional and administrative power. In South Sudan, for example, it is not only tensions between President Salva Kiir and the former vice president and now rebel leader Riek Machar that fuel the current fighting; it is also clan rivalries and countless spats between herders and farmers.

When it comes to the UN's fixation on elections, the problem is that pushing for a vote before a country is ready may do more harm than good. In Angola in 1992, a premature vote triggered a resumption of fighting between the ruling party and the main rebel group (resulting in more deaths in two years than there were in the 17-year war that the UN had supposedly ended).

Both of these errors are on full display today in Congo, the site of both the world's deadliest conflict since World War II and the largest peacekeeping mission in the world. The UN attributes strife there to national and international factors: a weak central government, tensions between Congolese President Joseph Kabila and his opponents, and disputes with neighboring Rwanda and Uganda. It views elections, which Kabila has delayed for years, as a sort of cure-all. In fact, much

of the violence in Congo is local in origin. Disputes often center on who will control neighboring land, the exploitation of local mining sites, or the traditional or administrative power over a village or a district. These tensions often result in localized fighting in one village or territory but frequently escalate into generalized conflict across a whole province and even at times spill over into neighboring countries.

Compounding these mistakes is the UN's overriding disdain for all things local. Because subject-area experience is valued more than country expertise, management positions almost always go to foreigners, who usually have no in-depth knowledge of their host societies, cultures, or institutions. Often, staff lack the language skills to communicate with local people—or even, at times, with one another. In the mission in Cyprus, for example, few peacekeepers speak Greek or Turkish; the same is true for Arabic or Nuer in South Sudan, Albanian or Serbo-Croatian in Kosovo, and French or Haitian Creole in Haiti.

Peacekeepers' everyday behavior only adds to the problem. Both the UN's military personnel and its civilian personnel live in fortified compounds and gather information mainly from elites. Sometimes, the result is that they thoughtlessly apply universal templates. For example, on seeing the success of so-called disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs in Burundi and Sierra Leone, the UN attempted similar initiatives in Haiti and South Sudan, where conditions were different; the efforts failed. At other times, dangerous groupthink takes hold. In Congo, for instance, between the last two rounds of elections, from 2006 to 2011, most peacekeepers held a simplistic view of the primary cause of the violence (the illegal exploitation of mineral resources), the main consequence (sexual abuse of women and girls), and the best solution (a stronger state). By empowering the Congolese government and its army, the strategy that emerged from this view actually led to an uptick in human rights violations, including sexual abuse.

The preponderance of foreign staff and foreign ideas also generates resentment among local partners. In country after country, residents complain that peacekeepers are arrogant and demeaning, live in lavish accommodations, drive fancy SUVs, and spend far too much time relaxing and far too little actually doing their jobs. They regularly disparage peacekeepers as neocolonial; local media portray them as parasites at best and thugs at worst. Fair or unfair, these views often cause local

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people to refuse to cooperate with UN initiatives, even when they support the underlying goals.

In recent years, insiders and outsiders have attempted to change the standard UN approach. Certain low-level staff and high-ranking leaders within field missions have tried to promote local conflict resolution. A 2015 independent review of peacekeeping, commissioned by the UN, emphasized the importance of customizing projects to each context and interacting with everyday people. Apart from a few marginal cases, however, the UN is largely paying lip service to the importance of these ideas instead of actually implementing them.

THINK LOCALLY, ACT LOCALLY

Peacekeeping is broken, but that doesn't mean the world should give up on it. In many conflict zones, peacekeepers are the only ones protecting populations against abuse by national armies and rebel groups—even if sporadically and imperfectly. (In the Central African Republic and Congo, people have protested or rioted at the mere hint that the UN might close a nearby base.) What's more, there's no alternative body or mechanism for reestablishing peace in conflict-ridden countries. The goal should be not to eliminate peacekeeping but to rethink it.

The main problem is that the UN looks at its efforts backward. It has a cookie-cutter approach that begins with international best practices and tries to apply them to a local situation. Instead, it should start with local realities and then create a customized strategy. For inspiration, the UN need only look to the pockets of peace that already exist in many war-torn places.

Consider the island of Idjwi, in Lake Kivu in eastern Congo. Since war broke out in Congo in 1996, a conflict that has killed anywhere from two million to five million people, Idjwi has avoided the brunt of the violence, even as other islands in nearby lakes have not. Idjwi has all the same factors that have fueled fighting around it: a geostrategic location, mineral resources, ethnic tensions, a lack of state authority, extreme poverty, disputes over land and traditional power. But the island's residents, including the poorest and least powerful, have set up various grass-roots organizations—religious networks, women's associations, youth groups, and so on—to help resolve disputes. They also draw on strong traditional beliefs—for example, forming blood pacts through which different families

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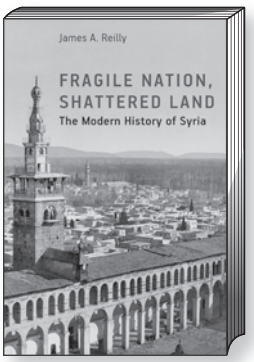

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promise never to hurt one another. They have worked to foster what they call a "culture of peace."

There are similar examples: The inhabitants of the autonomous region of Somaliland, in war-torn Somalia, have reduced violence through a twin process of bottom-up peace building and state building and by relying on ordinary people and local leaders to help maintain their hard-won stability. In Colombia, residents of the rural community of San José de Apartadó have created a zone of peace in the middle of a region controlled by militias. Contrary to the UN's standard procedures, building peace doesn't require billions of dollars in aid or massive international interventions. It often involves empowering average citizens.

The UN currently views such bottom-up peace-building efforts as a sideshow. Instead, it should see them as an essential complement to its current top-down efforts to stop fighting. In practice, this means acknowledging that resolving local disputes is just as important—and just as much a part of peacekeepers' job—as addressing broader issues. It also means devoting money to local conflict resolution. Both at headquarters and on the ground, the UN should create specialized offices or departments for bottom-up peacemaking and staff them with experts in the analysis and resolution of grass-roots conflicts. This new staff, in turn, should produce guidelines and organize training for their colleagues. The Security Council should also mandate that all missions support bottom-up peace building financially and logistically. And the UN leadership should emphasize to all staff members that doing so within their own areas of expertise, whether that be elections or gender, is mandatory.

As peacekeepers seek to bolster local peace efforts, they must resist the temptation to impose universal approaches. They can take their cues from the Life and Peace Institute, a Swedish peace-building agency that grounds its actions in in-depth local expertise. In Congo, it relies heavily on local employees and does not implement projects directly, instead working with a few handpicked on-the-ground organizations. These organizations then empower ordinary citizens to come to their own conclusions about the causes of their communities' conflicts, agree on the right solutions, and put them into practice. It's not foreigners based in capitals and headquarters who conceive, design, and implement peace initiatives; it's the intended beneficiaries themselves, with an assist from outside organizations.

For the UN, this model would mean stepping up efforts to recruit staff who have an in-depth understanding of local contexts and a command of local languages, even as it continues to hire people with subject-specific expertise, as well. When considering retention and promotion, it should value time spent in a given area more than the number of missions completed in different countries. And it should give preference to nationals over foreigners when filling posts for a given mission (and among nationals, it should give preference to those who come from the specific area where they will be working). Foreigners should be hired only for positions for which no local person with the necessary skills can be found or for those in which outsider status is an asset—for example, a recruiting post in which a local employee would face inordinate pressure to hire friends or family, a political job in which a local staff member might worry about retribution when standing up to a warlord, or a position in which contributing ideas from elsewhere is key. Even if the UN paid its local recruits a salary equivalent to that of its foreign staff, as it should, this measure would still save the organization money, since it currently spends a great deal on extras for foreigners, such as insurance premiums and hardship allowances.

The UN has a cookie-cutter approach that begins with international best practices and tries to apply them to a local situation.

The UN should also rethink how it uses local hires. As things stand now, foreigners tend to make decisions, while local staff execute them. Although this makes sense for diplomatic missions seeking to uphold their countries' interests, it is a bad idea for an international organization whose main mandate is to promote peace. The prevailing practice should be inverted: local people should be in the driver's seat, and foreigners should remain in the back. Instead of imposing or strongly advocating one idea, peacekeepers should use their technical expertise in a different way: to suggest several options, explain the pros and cons of each, and offer support—financial, logistical, military, and technical—in implementing whichever plans the local stakeholders agree on.

Letting the intended beneficiaries of international intervention decide is all the more important when there are hard choices to make between two worthy goals—for instance, between democracy and peace or between peace and justice. In the current setup, foreign peacekeepers

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and diplomats, rather than ordinary citizens, are typically the ones who choose between these goals. Far better to let those who have to live with the consequences of a decision be the ones making it. For example, in places where a focus on elections would come at the expense of addressing other pressing sources of conflict (such as poverty), the UN should recognize the tradeoff. If the demand truly exists for elections, they can be set up quickly, with the understanding that the risk of violence may grow. But if people seem to care more about solving other problems, then the UN should put democracy on the back burner and apply its scarce resources toward solving those underlying causes of war.

A BETTER WAY

The consequences of conflict rarely stay within national borders. What initially looks like contained fighting can quickly destabilize vital regions, and war creates a breeding ground for terrorists and illicit traffickers. In just the past five years, armed conflicts have spawned the worst refugee crisis since World War II. Partially in response to all these events, hateful nationalist political movements have surged in the United States and Europe.

In many cases, calling on the blue helmets has become merely a convenient substitute for a serious grappling with what it would take to bring peace. The same story thus repeats itself, whether in Bosnia, Congo, East Timor, Kosovo, Rwanda, Somalia, or South Sudan. After the outbreak of war, donor countries pledge millions of dollars in aid and ask the UN for help. Eventually, the warring parties call for cease-fires, sign agreements, and hold elections. But soon, sometimes just days later, violence flares up again. Often, it has never actually ended; in many cases, it lasts for years.

The international community's preferred strategy for dealing with conflict simply isn't working: peacekeeping as currently practiced is a Band-Aid on a gaping wound. The good news is that there is a way to rethink the current strategy so that it has a better shot at establishing lasting peace: rely more on the very people it is ostensibly trying to protect.

PHILIPPINES

A PREDICTABLE SUCCESS

Over the past decade, the Philippines has posted a year-on-year GDP growth of between six and seven percent, nearly twice the world average over the same period. Such GDP figures are not uncommon among emerging markets that benefit from a demographic dividend and rising spending power.

The Philippines, however, stands out as a star player in the ASEAN region because of its exceptional advantages, like its skilled workers, thousands of whom operate ships, fly planes and run hospitals across the world. The 100 million-plus Filipinos also possess a comfortable familiarity with the English language, a plus for Western investors in a region that is both geographically and linguistically fragmented.

Villaraza & Angangco Managing Partner Alejandro Navarro

With technology advancing rapidly, driving the world towards greater convergence and integration, the Philippines, an archipelago of more than 7,100 islands, cannot ignore geopolitical and economic movements in the region and beyond, for better or worse.

Amid the much discussed rise of populism around the world - as seen in the Donald Trump election phenomenon - and the growth of Eurosceptic movement, many have accepted that liberal politics and globalization have not provided the vast majority with their expected benefits. Around the world, millions voiced their anger through the ballot box.

Two years into the Duterte Administration, the Philippines appears to have diverged from familiar policies, particularly in the fields of politics and diplomacy, without abandoning its commitment to free market economics. And as a trade war rages between the United States and China, and the rising standard of living in China has resulted in higher labor costs, Southeast Asian economies position themselves as alternative locations for manufacturing and assembling finished goods.

Filipino policy makers and business leaders are identifying growth opportunities in a global economy that is no longer dominated by the United States but driven by several players, be they single countries, like China, or regional blocs, like the EU.

Like the narrative of many developing

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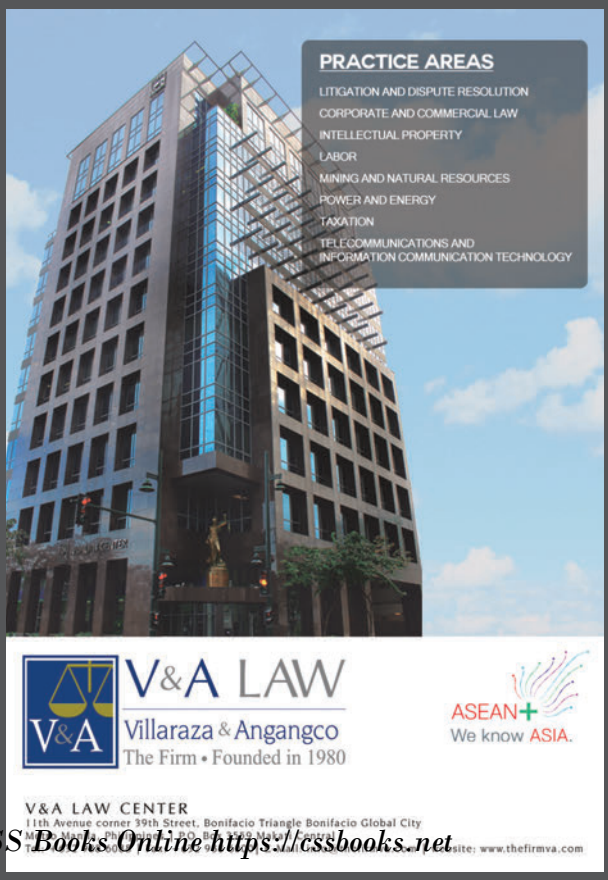

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A predictable success

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countries, the benefits of economic growth in the Philippines have not been inclusive. To correct that, the current administration enacted the first package of a tax reform law that cut the personal income tax rate for low earners and raised the rates for high earners. The main objective of the new tax law was to raise revenue for the government's ambitious, multi-billion dollar "Build, Build, Build" infrastructure program.

With the announcement and rollout of several infrastructure projects, companies and investors have had to enlist the services of local law firms, many of whom go beyond advice on basic legal compliance but provide cross-disciplinary expertise and strong connections across Southeast Asia.

Founded in 1980, **Villaraza & Anganco** has grown into a full-service law firm that has developed a deep and extensive knowledge of issues and challenges that face the business community in the Philippines. As such, they are able to formulate strategies that help their clients surmount unfamiliar difficulties.

"Our direct involvement in issues of national concern has given us a broader outlook in solving our clients' problem. We look at our clients' problems not just from a purely legal point of view but also from a strategic point of view, as we consider regulatory and administrative aspects. We take a multi-disciplinary and tailored approach to each problem," **Villaraza & Angangco Managing Partner Alejandro Navarro** explained.

Despite the unexpected headwinds the Philippine economy is facing, Navarro remains optimistic, "Just like any market, there are some challenges. The 2018 tax reform law's effects are being felt by way of inflation. The second package of this tax reform will reduce the corporate income tax rate and lessen fiscal incentives. This will support the growth of local SMEs and affect businesses in export processing zones.

"While there may be some negative aspects, our economy has the fundamentals and potential for exponential growth. In the Philippines, we're seeing growth in tourism all around the country. This is an area that is open for even more investment and development," he added.

Cruz, Marcelo & Tenefrancia Senior Partner Patricia Bunye

Aside from the traditional economic sectors like manufacturing, tourism and retail, the fintech and blockchain sectors have presented new investment opportunities in the Philippines, most notably in energy, transportation, logistics and banking. With more than 100 million consumers, of which more than 10 million work overseas, the country is an ideal place to develop idea-to-market applications.

Because Philippine laws prohibit full foreign ownership in certain vital industries, finding the right local partner is essential for international investors. While it may appear a hindrance, this requirement, in the long term, will encourage serious commitment to the national economy and local communities.

For deals in energy, transportation and natural resources, **Cruz, Marcelo & Tenefrancia** has gained a reputation for being the go-to law firm for must-win cases and for ironing out successful deals that have benefitted both the foreign investor and the local community.

"The competitive advantage of the Philippines is the mining sector. The economy has been focused on BPOs and OFWs. But we have something here that is largely untapped. If you keep the minerals underground, they're of no use to us. But if they are extracted, developed and utilized, that's great wealth for the country," **Cruz, Marcelo & Tenefrancia Senior Partner Patricia Bunye** said.

"It is fundamental that foreign firms seeking to enter the Philippine market find the right partners. This involves due diligence and background intelligence. Law firms such as CMT play an important role in that we have helped companies, both big and small, navigate the local jungle, so to speak, and have made sure that they are aware of all the applicable laws in sectors they would like to enter," Bunye added.

"Law firms help vet local partners to avoid deals going sour. Without the right professional advice, issues can develop in later stages of the deal. As much as we would only like to present the advantages and possible benefits of coming to the Philippines, we also need to be upfront about the potential pitfalls so that all expectations are managed throughout," she also said.

Higher levels of unpredictability usually accompany investment and financial commitments to emerging markets. The right partners provide a predictable winning investment, securing excellent legal guidance and obtaining extensive due diligence. ■

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The Free-Trade Paradox

The Bad Politics of a Good Idea

Alan S. Blinder

"We must always take heed that we buy no more of strangers than we sell them, for so we should impoverish ourselves and enrich them." Those words, written in 1549 and attributed to the English diplomat Sir Thomas Smith, are one of the earliest known expressions of what came to be called "mercantilism." Update the language, and they could easily have been tweeted by U.S. President Donald Trump, the most prominent mercantilist of today. Trump believes—or at least says—that the United States "loses" when it runs trade deficits with other countries. Many Americans seem to agree.

Yet the economists Adam Smith and David Ricardo made the definitive case against mercantilism and for free trade more than 200 years ago. Their arguments have convinced virtually every economist ever since, but they seem to have made only limited inroads with the broader public. Polls show only tenuous public support for free trade and even less understanding of its virtues.

Some of the problem comes from the nature of the case for trade. Unlike other economic concepts, such as supply and demand, the idea of comparative advantage—which holds that two countries can both benefit from trade even when one can produce everything more cheaply than the other—is counterintuitive. Defenders of free trade also have to contend with populist politicians and well-financed opponents who find foreign workers and firms easy scapegoats for domestic economic woes. Worst of all, economists may be fundamentally misunderstanding what most people value in the economy. These are hard problems to solve. Governments should do more to help those hurt by trade, but building the necessary political coalitions

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to do so is tricky. Economists should do a better job communicating with the public, but at the end of the day, they may simply have to accept the inevitable: convincing most people of the value of free trade is a losing fight.

THEN AND NOW

A belief in the virtues of international trade (and steps to encourage it) has dominated the policies of most Western governments since World War II. After the Great Depression, which was deepened and lengthened by a rash of restrictions on trade, and after the almost total breakdown of international trade during World War II, a frightened world set out to build a new, stronger trading system. The results were impressive: the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, or GATT (which was later superseded by the World Trade Organization, or WTO); the European Economic Community (the forerunner to the European Union); the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA; and many other trade-opening deals.

Throughout this period, U.S. policy was broadly internationalist and pro-trade, at least when viewed from 30,000 feet. Indeed, the United States often took the lead among the big countries. The average tariffs levied by the United States have been falling, with only minor interruptions, since the notorious Smoot-Hawley tariffs of the 1930s. Washington led the negotiations that resulted in the GATT and later the WTO and did the same in several subsequent rounds of trade talks. It signed numerous bilateral trade agreements.

But when seen up close, U.S. trade policy looked (and still looks) rather more protectionist. Take NAFTA, which came into force in 1994. That agreement marked a huge step toward freer trade in the Western Hemisphere. But there are still many Mexican farmers who can't export their tomatoes to the United States because of quotas, for example, and Mexican truckers who can't drive their cargoes across the U.S. border despite NAFTA's provisions to the contrary.

Despite these limitations, both Democratic and Republican leaders by and large backed freer trade—until recently. But not Trump. During the 2016 presidential campaign, his protectionist outcries shocked many observers, who saw them as far outside the mainstream. Yet he did not hide them; he ran on them. And he won. Since taking office, Trump has kept to his anti-trade agenda. He withdrew the United States from the painstakingly negotiated Trans-Pacific Partnership

and threatened to upend NAFTA before negotiating a new trade deal with Canada and Mexico; he has slapped tariffs on imported steel and aluminum, started a trade war with China, and expressed hostility toward other trade agreements. Despite traditional GOP support for free trade, Republican members of Congress have seemed to go along with Trump's attacks on trade, and he seems to have paid little or no political price for them.

Trump was able to push so many Americans into sixteenth-century thinking because most Americans' belief in free trade is a mile wide but an inch deep. Polls show that the level of support depends on what is meant by "free trade," how the question is posed, and when it is asked. Taken in isolation, the phrase "free trade" seems to meet with approval. For example, a poll by NBC and *The Wall Street Journal* in February 2017 asked Americans, "In general, do you think that free trade between the United States and foreign countries has helped the United States, has hurt the United States, or has not made much of a difference either way?" Free trade won: 43 percent of respondents said it helped, and 34 percent said it hurt. That's not overwhelming, but it's good news for free traders.

Most Americans' belief in free trade is a mile wide but an inch deep.

Use the word "globalization," however, and attitudes change. A poll by CBS and *The New York Times* in July 2016 defined "globalization" as "the increase of trade, communication, travel and other things among countries around the world." It then asked, "In general, has the United States gained more or lost more because of globalization?" Globalization lost this poll decisively: 55 percent to 35 percent.

Put any mention of jobs into the question, and the results for international trade get even worse. A CBS poll in 2016 asked Americans, "Overall, would you say U.S. trade with other countries creates more jobs for the U.S., loses more jobs for the U.S., or does U.S. trade with other countries have no effect on U.S. jobs?" About 15 percent of respondents gave what economists would call the right answer: trade has little or no effect on the number of jobs. About seven percent were unsure. Among the others, 29 percent thought trade created jobs and 48 percent thought it destroyed them. And in a poll conducted that same year by Bloomberg, which juxtaposed the costs of restrictions on imports and protecting American jobs, trade restrictions won: 65 percent to 22 percent.

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It seems that Americans favor trade in the abstract but often not in the concrete. And support fades fast if trade is connected to jobs or globalization. Most important, in almost every case, public beliefs about international trade differ enormously from the lessons of Economics 101. So if the case for free trade is so compelling, why have economists failed to sell it?

IT JUST DOESN'T SOUND RIGHT

The most obvious reason is that comparative advantage is counterintuitive. That isn't true of most big ideas in economics. The notion that demand declines and supply increases as prices rise makes intuitive sense. So does Adam Smith's concept of the invisible hand—the idea that decentralized markets produce a dazzling variety of goods and services efficiently and get them into the hands of the consumers who want (and can afford) them.

The case for trade is harder to grasp. Suppose Country A can produce every product more cheaply than Country B, thanks either to its lower wages or to its greater efficiency. Will both countries gain from trade? Or will jobs gravitate to Country A, leaving the higher-paid workers of Country B jobless? Ricardo argued that it's the former, as each country exploits its comparative advantage by specializing in producing different goods. But naive intuition says it's the latter. After all, won't free markets send the business to the cheapest producers?

It takes some time to understand why Ricardo was right. His basic insight was this: if Countries A and B trade with each other, Country A can specialize in producing what it is best at, Country B can specialize in producing what it is least bad at, and then the two countries can trade to their mutual advantage. My economics students have to listen patiently for 50 minutes while I explain comparative advantage and rebut the arguments against it. Viewers of 30-second TV ads are under no such obligation. The hard truth is that complicated ideas are tough to sell.

Yet lack of understanding is not the only reason for public skepticism about the virtues of trade. Some people may understand the theory tolerably well but still have good reasons to oppose trade openings. Elementary trade theory shows that every move toward freer trade creates both winners and losers, just like almost any economic change. If the United States cuts or eliminates tariffs on steel, for example, the arrival of more foreign steel will hurt domestic steel companies

The spoils of trade: imported frozen seafood in Vernon, California, September 2018

MIKE BLAKE / REUTERS

and cost some American steelworkers their jobs. Those people will rightly see themselves as victims of trade. That other Americans—automakers and their employees, say—are winners from that same trade will be little consolation.

The theory of comparative advantage holds that the gains from trade to the nation as a whole exceed the losses. That opens up a possibility that U.S. policy has rarely exploited: the winners could, in principle, compensate the losers and still have something left over for themselves. Doing so would allow everyone to gain from trade. But successive U.S. administrations, like the governments of other countries, have failed to do anything remotely close to that.

The United States does have some meager compensation programs. Trade Adjustment Assistance, for instance, offers people who have lost their jobs to foreign competition money for retraining and extra income while they are unemployed. But TAA is poorly funded, is hard to access, and reaches few displaced workers. In principle, Washington could improve it. In practice, however, Republicans don't like the program, and organized labor sometimes scoffs at it, calling it "burial insurance." Unions prefer jobs to "welfare." This attitude, although understandable, creates an insuperable barrier to creating a better policy. A pro-labor program that organized labor won't support will get nowhere politically.

The way the gains and losses from trade liberalization are distributed makes the politics of trade agreements even more difficult. More often

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than not, the gains are widespread but small for each individual, making them almost invisible to most people. The losses, by contrast, are concentrated, are highly visible, and hit well-defined groups. When it comes to totting up these gains and losses, the economic calculus virtually always favors freer trade, but the political calculus often does not. The gains and losses are the same, but the economics and the politics place enormously different weights on them. This is likely an insoluble problem.

Take the United States' notorious sugar quotas. Virtually every American family pays more for sugar because of them. Add it all up and it comes to a lot of money. But no individual sugar buyer will be moved to political action to save a few dollars a year. Contrast that with the U.S. beet sugar industry. The quotas may be the only thing standing between its firms and extinction and between its workers and unemployment. To them, it is worth going to the political mat to preserve the quotas. So yes, free trade serves the broad public interest. But there will always be firms and workers who are hurt by trade and clamor for protection.

The economic calculus virtually always favors freer trade, but the political calculus often does not.

What's more, economists and other supporters of free trade are not the only salespeople—and certainly not the most vocal. In a famous passage from *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith observed that the case for free trade "is so very manifest that it . . . could [never] have been called into question had not the interested sophistry of merchants and manufacturers confounded the common sense of mankind." Interested sophistry did not end in 1776, when that book was published. In fact, modern mass communication and lobbying-based democratic politics have made it more powerful than ever. It's certainly more powerful than pure logic.

The schism between economic and political attitudes is deepened by what the economist Charles Schultze once called the "'do no direct harm' principle." In the hurly-burly of a modern economy, people are constantly being hurt by economic changes beyond their control. Most of the time, that harm doesn't have an obvious cause. But if it can be traced directly to government actions, there will be political hell to pay—and politicians know it.

In one sense, trade shouldn't suffer from this problem. After all, free trade is the natural state of affairs, even if most people don't realize it. If governments didn't erect barriers at borders, goods and services would flow freely across them. Just watch the trucks going back and forth through the Lincoln Tunnel between New York and New Jersey every day. This natural trade constantly creates winners and losers, without any government action. But trade agreements are different. They are deliberate, noticeable actions by governments. They have "made in Washington" stamped all over them. So the losers know exactly whom to blame.

The way trade deals get made doesn't help their popularity, either. In order to make it through Congress, trade agreements need political backing. But consumer interest groups are typically silent or impotent. So supporters turn to big companies seeking access to foreign markets. This sort of coalition building can work, but it has downsides. First, by treating higher exports as the main goal, it adds political heft to mercantilist attitudes. Second, it strengthens the left's image of free trade as part of the corporate agenda. Before Trump, after all, protectionist sentiment in the United States came mainly from Democrats.

LUDDITES AND MERCANTILISTS

There's a striking difference between the failure of the Luddites, those nineteenth-century textile workers who smashed mechanical weavers in England, and the enduring allure of mercantilism. Technology and trade seem to occupy very different places in the public mind. Ned Lud lost the argument. Sir Thomas Smith is hanging in there.

New technologies destroy (and create) far more jobs than trade does. But despite sporadic fears of robots, it is hard to find anyone today who advocates blocking technological progress on the grounds that it will cost jobs. Rather, job losses caused by technological advances are shrugged off as inevitable, part of the price of progress. But job losses due to trade are blamed on specific villains, and people try to prevent them.

Economists see technological improvements and freer trade as similar in their effects. They both offer higher living standards to the majority at the expense of job displacement for the minority. Improvements in technology, moreover, have been prime drivers of expanded international trade. The invention of ships capable of traveling long distances, jet aircraft, shipping containers, and

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telecommunications probably did more to boost trade than all the trade agreements ever negotiated.

But most people—and therefore the politicians who represent them—see no contradiction in supporting technological advances while opposing freer trade. Raging at the machine seems stupid, but raging at foreigners does not. The politics also work better. Unlike Silicon Valley, foreign exporters have no representatives in Congress (although they do hire lobbyists) and make convenient scapegoats for demagogues such as Trump.

DIFFERENT WORLDS

As important as the lack of public understanding and the perverse political incentives are, the single biggest reason why economists can't sell free trade may be philosophical: the worldview that underpins the discipline of economics differs dramatically from the worldview of most people.

Economists see the central goals of an economic system as producing goods and services at the lowest possible cost and then distributing them to the people who want them. Every elementary economics textbook describes those goals, touts how well free markets accomplish them, and then notes some problem areas in which markets don't get it quite right (pollution, for example). Economists' focus is squarely on the well-being of consumers.

The well-being of producers is secondary—if it enters the picture at all. In the economists' vision, firms exist to serve the ultimate goal of consumer welfare. Work is something people do to earn the income they need to support their consumption. It is not an end in itself, nor a direct source of satisfaction or self-worth. The interests of producers, including the value people get from their jobs, count for little or nothing in standard economic calculus. In fact, work is scored as a negative—something people dislike and do only to support their consumption.

But what if economists have this wrong? What if people care as much (or more) about their role as producers—about their jobs—as they do about the goods and services they consume? That would mean economists have been barking up the wrong tree for more than two centuries. Maybe the public sees the central goal of an economic system as providing well-paid jobs, not producing cheap goods. If so, the standard case for free trade evaporates. The argument for trade

would then have to be based on the idea—also found in Ricardo—that comparative advantage moves people into jobs where they are more productive and therefore earn more. That seems a harder sell and, in any case, is not the pitch economists have been making for centuries.

The producer perspective seems to dominate public opinion. A 2016 Bloomberg poll, for example, asked Americans whether they would pay a little more for domestically produced merchandise. Even with no direct mention of saving jobs, the results were lopsided: 82 percent of respondents said they were willing to pay a little more; only 13 percent wanted the lowest prices. A Quinnipiac poll that same year posed a similar question, asking respondents whether they supported renegotiating trade deals, even if that meant paying higher prices. Again, neither jobs nor imports were mentioned directly. But again, public opinion was overwhelmingly protectionist: 64 percent were willing to pay more for U.S.-made products; only 28 percent weren't.

Talk is cheap, of course. Maybe consumers would not be willing to shell out more to buy domestic rather than foreign goods. After all, they frequent Walmart and other big retailers where imports line the shelves. But even if the attitudes that show up in polling don't have much effect on how people shop, those attitudes may still resonate with politicians.

CAN THE SALE BE MADE?

Although there aren't any quick fixes to the problem of selling free trade to the public—it's just too difficult—there are some things economists and policymakers can and should do that might soften the opposition to free trade at the margins.

Washington should devote more money to the TAA program, make it simpler and easier to access, and boost efforts to get displaced workers into new jobs. Right now, TAA is a bureaucratic maze to navigate—and underfunded to boot. It should be easier for those who need the benefits to access them.

Economists could also try to tie trade closer to technology in people's minds. The hope here is that hammering home the similarities between the two might generate some innocence by association. For example, shopping online is becoming increasingly popular. If the goods are made abroad, online shopping becomes just the latest technological innovation that spurs trade. Do people want to give up

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Amazon? Such a campaign probably wouldn't work, but it wouldn't cost much to try.

It would cost even less to get economists to stop using the dismissive term "transition costs" to refer to job losses from trade. A 55-year-old steelworker who loses his job in Ohio won't find solace in the fact that new jobs are popping up in aircraft manufacturing in Seattle. Nor should he. To him, the "transition" may last the rest of his working life.

These are all things economists and policymakers can do, although it's not clear if they would work. Sadly, there is a longer, and much more important, list of things that probably can't be changed. The principle of comparative advantage really is counterintuitive and therefore hard to sell to a public that has many other demands on its attention. The political calculus really is inherently biased against freer trade. Politicians who vote for trade agreements can't avoid taking the blame for any losses that result. The left will always believe that trade favors big business. For centuries, demagogues have blamed foreigners for domestic woes; they aren't going to stop anytime soon. And most fundamental, if consumers care more about good jobs than cheap goods, the standard arguments for trade won't persuade them. Given all of this, maybe economists should feel lucky that international trade is not in even worse shape than it already is.

Trump Versus the Government

Can America Get Its Story Straight?

Elliott Abrams

As he reaches the halfway mark of his first term, President Donald Trump is finding the vast U.S. government to be both an instrument of and a frequent barrier to the implementation of policies that he desires. Reflecting on his frustrations, he might be amused by an old anecdote about the struggles of one of his predecessors. As the diplomat Charles Frankel recalled in his memoir, a White House visitor once presented a proposal to President John F. Kennedy. "That's a first-rate idea," Kennedy said. "Now we must see whether we can get the government to accept it."

The distinction between the president and the government is not a product of the Trump era, but it has become one of the administration's defining characteristics. Rhetorically, the president has often squarely rejected the U.S. foreign policy consensus of recent decades. He has questioned the United States' commitment to allies in Asia and Europe, fumed about U.S. wars in the Middle East, and lauded the leaders of Washington's geopolitical rivals. But speeches are one thing and official action is another. Although Trump's pronouncements have ruffled feathers, his administration's policy has been marked more by continuity than by change. The United States remains in NATO, thousands of U.S. troops are still deployed throughout the Middle East, and Washington is pursuing a hard line against China and Russia.

What explains this divergence? In part, it may be the result of an intentional ploy by a president who thrives on chaos—a good cop,

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bad cop routine in which Trump states a maximalist position and then leaves it to his subordinates to discover a compromise. Part of the gap, however, appears to be the result of an effort by some within the government, and even in Trump's own cabinet, to blunt his initiatives, carrying on business as usual in direct opposition to the wishes of the president.

Trump's opponents may applaud this internal resistance, but it brings with it problems of its own—namely, uncertainty as to where the United States really stands. When foreign states cannot predict what mix of Trump's objectives and the United States' more traditional goals will ultimately be translated into policy, allies will be slow to support U.S. initiatives and enemies may take chances that a clearer stance from Washington would have led them to avoid.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S TWO FACES

There is a long history of conflict between U.S. presidents and the U.S. government. In January 1977, President Jimmy Carter announced his intention to follow through on a campaign promise to withdraw U.S. troops from South Korea, despite widespread resistance to the move at the CIA and the Department of Defense. As Morton Abramowitz, a top Pentagon official at the time, later recalled, "We began a rear-guard action—delay it, water it down, mitigate the decision as much as possible." Faced with stonewalling, Carter eventually abandoned the policy. The pattern is familiar, and it is limited neither to the United States nor to democracies. "All the irate decrees of Frederick the Great concerning the 'abolition of serfdom' were derailed," the sociologist Max Weber wrote about eighteenth-century Prussia, "because the official mechanism simply ignored them as the occasional ideas of a dilettante."

"Dilettante" is no doubt a kinder description than what many in the federal government would use for the president, yet the dynamic documented by Weber is on full display in Washington. For years before assuming the presidency, Trump called for an end to the war in Afghanistan; in 2013, he tweeted, "Let's get out of Afghanistan. Our troops are being killed by the Afghanis we train and we waste billions there." But after eight months in office and what he called "many meetings" with "my cabinet and generals," Trump concluded that "the consequences of a rapid exit are both predictable and unacceptable." Similarly, he has long wanted U.S. troops out of Syria, and in March

Dissent in the ranks: Trump and Mattis in the Oval Office, March 2017

CARLOS BARRIA / REUTERS

2018, he said they would be leaving the country "very soon." But in September, the administration's Syria envoy, James Jeffrey, stated that "the new policy is we're no longer pulling out by the end of the year."

Perhaps the clearest example of the gap between the president and the government is the United States' Russia policy. To the horror of his domestic critics, Trump has often praised Russian President Vladimir Putin and expressed a desire for improved relations with Moscow, sometimes going so far as to publicly support Russian positions. Just before the 2018 G-7 summit in Canada, Trump stunned his counterparts by telling them, "Russia should be in this meeting," even though the country was kicked out of the G-8 in 2014 for annexing Crimea. And after the media reported that Trump said that Crimea is Russian because everyone living there speaks Russian, John Bolton, his national security adviser, was forced to clarify: "That's not the position of the United States."

Yet at the same time as Trump was sounding dovish notes at the G-7, U.S. troops were in northern Poland participating in Trojan Footprint, "the largest NATO special forces training exercise in recent memory," in the words of Anne Applebaum, a *Washington Post* columnist and forceful Trump critic. A June 2018 editorial in *The Wall Street Journal* correctly pointed out that Trump's Russia policy "has been tougher than Barack Obama's." It continued: "He's signed off on

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strengthening NATO deployments to Eastern Europe and admitting Macedonia to the alliance. He has dispatched Javelin antitank missiles to Ukraine, let the Pentagon attack Russian mercenaries in Syria, sanctioned Vladimir Putin's cronies, and expelled Russian spies in solidarity with Britain." Even Michael McFaul, who served as U.S. ambassador to Russia during the Obama administration, has called the Trump administration's Russia policy, "pretty good." "I support almost all aspects of it," he admitted in an interview. "It's just that the president doesn't seem to agree with it."

IN SEARCH OF A TRUMP DOCTRINE

The divide between the president's words and his administration's actions raises the question, What is Trump's actual policy? Have his officials convinced him of the need to be tough with Russia, or are those sanctions and exercises and deployments the product of cabinet members, such as Bolton, Secretary of Defense James Mattis, and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, struggling to maintain the policy they favor despite the president's own views?

Some evidence points to the latter. In September 2018, an anonymous Trump administration staffer wrote in a *New York Times* op-ed that "many of the senior officials in [Trump's] own administration are working diligently from within to frustrate parts of his agenda and his worst inclinations." Such resistance is unsurprising. The president has a Hobbesian worldview and is skeptical of allowing international commitments and diplomatic pleasantries to stand in the way of pursuing what he perceives to be U.S. national interests. This runs counter to the instincts of most career diplomats, military officers, and analysts, who see alliances as the very heart of U.S. power and influence. The resulting tension within the administration is often on public display. In a graduation speech at the U.S. Naval War College last spring, Mattis mentioned Tadeusz Kosciuszko, the Marquis de Lafayette, the Comte de Rochambeau, and Baron von Steuben—foreign veterans of the U.S. Revolutionary War whose statues stand in Lafayette Square, across from the White House—as "reminders . . . that America does not stand alone." It was pretty clear whom he was reminding.

In some cases, Trump's conflict with the government reflects a populist impulse to represent the views of voters who feel left behind by an out-of-touch elite. On trade, for instance, Trump has bucked the bipartisan consensus by criticizing "unfair" deals, imposing tariffs,

and adopting an aggressive negotiating stance toward allies and rivals alike. Most in Washington agree that the global trading order has greatly benefited the United States, but there are millions of Americans it has harmed. They rightly believe that their concerns have been ignored by the great and the good in government, at universities, and on Wall Street. In June, *The Economist* chided Trump to "remember the words of Henry Kissinger: order cannot simply be ordained; to be enduring, it must be accepted as just." But that is precisely the point: to many Americans, the system that elites ordained for them has come to seem unjust.

Trump has similarly channeled popular frustrations about the cost of U.S. alliances. At NATO's July 2018 summit in Brussels, he reportedly threatened to leave the alliance unless the Europeans stepped up their defense spending. Although shocking to seasoned diplomats, such rhetoric resonates with Americans who recognize that alliances are critical for Western security but who also feel that the United States has disproportionately borne the burden of paying for them. As rich a country as Germany, for example, spends only 1.2 percent of its GDP on defense, compared with the United States' 3.5 percent.

The divide between the president's words and his administration's actions raises the question, What is Trump's actual policy?

Despite Trump's unorthodox rhetoric, moreover, many of his positions fall well within the Republican and, indeed, the U.S. foreign policy mainstream. In 2011, Robert Gates, who served as secretary of defense under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, warned of "a dim if not dismal future" for NATO unless the Europeans spent more. And although Trump has been criticized for his friendly relations with enemies, including Putin, North Korea's Kim Jong Un, and Chinese President Xi Jinping, such outreach was celebrated when Obama made similar overtures to Cuba and Iran. Trump's novel combination of harsh and undiplomatic language, hard bargaining with friends, and outreach to foes can sometimes bring clear benefits: thanks in part to Trump's tough line, NATO members increased their overall defense spending as a percentage of GDP for a second consecutive year in 2017, after zero increases from 2009 to 2016.

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In fact, defenders of the administration argue that in most respects, Trump is a normal president. He is tougher on Russia—and far tougher on Iran—than Obama was. And despite stating his desire to disengage from what he sees as endless and unproductive wars, he has kept U.S. troops in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. His administration's official foreign policy documents, including the 2017 National Security Strategy and the 2018 National Defense Strategy, reflect the Republican consensus.

Where he diverges, his supporters claim, is merely in his push to right certain imbalances that have built up over recent decades. This has led to real accomplishments—not just greater defense spending by NATO allies but also a new, renamed North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and a better trade deal with South Korea—and to reasonable demands, including for fairer trade relations with China. Trump's style has provoked enraged criticism from the self-proclaimed resistance (comprising most of the mainstream media and nearly all elected Democrats), which treats every minor breach of protocol as a prelude to the apocalypse. But if one looks past the hysteria—so the argument goes—there is far more continuity, and far more success, in the current administration's foreign policy than Trump's critics will ever acknowledge. In many cases, animosity toward the president has precluded balanced policy analysis.

AMERICA THE UNPREDICTABLE

Trump's defenders make a fair point. Many of the attacks on Trump are exaggerated, and the media spectacle surrounding his presidency has done little to illuminate the strengths and weaknesses of his administration. There are of course such weaknesses—but constructive criticism of the president should ideally come from those who sympathize with Trump and his policies and would like to see them succeed.

Unfortunately, there are too few of these people in office. One of the real problems with the Trump administration has been its inability to find and retain qualified staff. As George Shultz, who served as secretary of state under U.S. President Ronald Reagan, wrote in his memoir, "In the end, it is the president's foreign policy, so key people who help him shape it and carry it out . . . should be on his political wavelength." Finding like-minded staff has been difficult for the president. Many Republicans do not wish to serve in his administration, and many who would be willing to do so have been excluded for

opposing him in 2016. And then there are those, such as the anonymous official writing in *The New York Times*, who go in, only to discover that they are not on his wavelength after all; turnover has been high. As a result, the administration has struggled to employ qualified and effective implementers of Trump's foreign policy vision. Instead, it has been slow to fill vacancies and has often had to rely on acting officials who are veterans of the establishment and oppose the president's worldview.

Trump's critics may see this as a blessing. It is not. More than a traditional president, Trump relies on excellent staff work. His leadership style seems to assume that bureaucratic conservatism and even resistance come with the territory. He innovates, breaks china, tries new approaches to enemies, and offends allies, leaving it to his advisers to figure out when and where to mend fences or even reverse course. A leader leads, and then subordinate officials work out the details. In such a system, the loyalty and skill of those officials are especially critical.

Trump's foreign policy remains a work in progress.

Staffing problems have, in turn, exacerbated the danger of unpredictability. Because no one knows whether officials at various levels of the administration are implementing a version of Trump's orders or simply ignoring his preferences in favor of their own, neither U.S. officials nor foreigners can be sure where U.S. policy stands or where it will end up. For instance, is the United States permanently committed to NATO, or only so long as Mattis is running the Pentagon? When, this past July, Trump was asked on Fox News about defending Montenegro, a NATO member, the president responded by hanging the Montenegrins out to dry: "They're very aggressive people. They may get aggressive. And, congratulations, you're in World War III." Although the Trump administration's support for NATO has in many ways been quite strong, such comments may cause Montenegro and other NATO members, not to mention Putin, to wonder how the president would react in a crisis.

This unpredictability is fed by a sense that Trump does not see the United States' alliances as the enormous assets that they are. In October, Mattis reminded an audience at a security conference in Bahrain, "Over more than four decades in uniform, I never fought in a solely American formation." But the president sometimes speaks of

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alliances as an unfair burden rather than a source of real and potential strength. "Our allies care about themselves. They don't care about us," he said in March 2018. On other occasions, he has referred to the United States' "so-called allies."

If U.S. policy came to reflect that view consistently—which it has not during the first two years of the Trump administration—no amount of bureaucratic resistance could prevent those alliances from eroding in ways that would be hard to repair. As Mattis suggested in his speech to the Naval War College, alliances are the foundation of U.S. security and one of the chief features that distinguish the United States from China, Iran, and Russia, all of which have few allies.

Trump similarly goes too far in his suspicion of trade. It is perfectly appropriate for him to take a tougher line in trade negotiations, especially given his support among blue-collar Americans who feel that they have been harmed by previous deals. But not every single bilateral relationship must show a positive trade balance every year. Trump himself has stated that his tariffs are tools for getting fairer deals, not ends in themselves, and his success in renegotiating NAFTA is evidence that his more aggressive line can work. But China will be the ultimate test. Here, rather than the bilateral negotiations favored by the president, a more productive approach would be to work with partners such as Canada, Japan, and the EU to force China to play by the rules. But whether acting alone or in a coalition, if Trump can use huge tariffs to win Chinese concessions on trade and investment, he will have won a significant victory.

Finally, Trump has still not grasped that enormous benefits come from having a moral foundation for U.S. foreign policy. He has too often acted as if the United States were merely one nation among many, out solely to maximize its wealth and power. Yet the world's most powerful country needs to uphold a global system that condemns, and tries to prevent, some forms of aggressive conduct and growing tyranny. Washington's opponents clearly recognize that the spread of democracy is in the United States' interest, which is why they try to subvert democracy when and where they can. Trump has sometimes indicated his own support for democracy and human rights—criticizing, for instance, the abysmal human rights records of Cuba, Iran, Syria, and Venezuela. He should understand that supporting these values more generally will help put "America first." Nixonian realpolitik, moreover, is not a political winner; Americans do not actually

believe that there are no moral distinctions between the tyrants of the world and the United States and its democratic allies.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Trump's foreign policy remains a work in progress. He did not assemble the current team until Bolton arrived in April 2018, and now, for the first time, the president appears to have senior advisers he fully trusts. The number of vacancies on the National Security Council staff and at the State Department is slowly but steadily falling, and it is possible that during the second half of Trump's term, the gap between the president and the government will shrink, in both size and importance. Trump's views on U.S. troop commitments, for instance, have already shown an evolution toward the government's stance. When, in March 2017, he announced that he would not be withdrawing from Afghanistan, he explained, "All my life I've heard that decisions are much different when you sit behind the desk in the Oval Office, in other words, when you're president of the United States."

But Trump's foreign policy will not be a regression to the mean. He will never be persuaded that he should seek, or care about, popularity at Davos or in Brussels; he will always try to extract the last ounce of U.S. advantage from allies as well as opponents; he will remain mistrustful of multilateral agreements that limit the United States' options; and he will not abandon the rhetoric that got him elected and that so alarms his critics at home and abroad.

In his first two years as president, Trump has had one great piece of luck: there has been no great international crisis to test his nerves and his approach to world politics. If none arises in the next two years, he will be able to show American voters in 2020 that despite all the criticism, his foreign policy did not lead to tangible defeats or to war. Furthermore, he will be able to argue that the gains of a more aggressively nationalist stance outweigh its costs. His critics, including his opponent in 2020, will face the difficult task of convincing Americans that the costs of Trump's foreign policy, many of them intangible, were unacceptably high.

That is a debate worth having, but the critics' refusal to weigh Trump's foreign policy fairly and their focus on his rhetoric and personality make it extremely unlikely to happen. A more nuanced argument about the president will have to await his departure from office two—or, perhaps more likely, six—years from now.

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Return to Table of Contents

America's Long Goodbye

The Real Crisis of the Trump Era

Eliot A. Cohen

In the end, 2018 was not the year of U.S. foreign policy apocalypse. Normally, this would not be a cause for celebration. But given the anxiety about President Donald Trump and what his administration might do—pull out of NATO, start a war with Iran or North Korea—it was something to be grateful for. In fact, Trump's first two years in office have been marked by a surprising degree of stability. The president has proved himself to be what many critics have long accused him of being: belligerent, bullying, impatient, irresponsible, intellectually lazy, short-tempered, and self-obsessed. Remarkably, however, those shortcomings have not yet translated into obvious disaster.

But the surface-level calm of the last two years should not distract from a building crisis of U.S. foreign policy, of which Trump is both a symptom and a cause. The president has outlined a deeply misguided foreign policy vision that is distrustful of U.S. allies, scornful of international institutions, and indifferent, if not downright hostile, to the liberal international order that the United States has sustained for nearly eight decades. The real tragedy, however, is not that the president has brought this flawed vision to the fore; it is that his is merely one mangled interpretation of what is rapidly emerging as a new consensus on the left and the right: that the United States should accept a more modest role in world affairs.

One can and should hope that the forces that have constrained Trump so far will continue to limit the damage of his remaining years in office, but the push for a U.S. retreat from the world did not begin with the president and will not end with his exit. The crisis of

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the United States' post–Cold War foreign policy has been a long time in the making, and it will last beyond Trump.

LIVING DANGEROUSLY

Although the worst has not come to pass, the president's foreign policy has been curious and in some ways disturbing. On trade, his administration blew up the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), only to replace it with the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, which includes somewhat better terms for American dairy farmers but mostly mirrors the original deal. What is more serious, Trump began a steadily mounting trade war with China while intensifying U.S. complaints about intellectual property theft, all in the context of increasingly aggressive interactions between Chinese forces and U.S. warships in the South China Sea. Such moves are risky, but they have not yet come back to bite him.

Trump's diplomacy with U.S. rivals has been similarly erratic, but here, too, the damage so far has been limited. On North Korea, Trump dialed back his initial threats to unleash "fire and fury" and abruptly shifted toward placating the regime. He suspended U.S.–South Korean joint military exercises, met with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, and declared at a September 2018 rally that he and Kim "fell in love." (These actions do not appear to have had any real effect on the North Korean nuclear program, however.) On Iran, Trump reversed the Obama administration's more accommodating policy, pulling out of the nuclear deal with the country in May 2018 and hitting Tehran with a barrage of financial sanctions throughout the summer and fall. And on Russia, the government has continued with a confrontational policy despite the president's friendly rhetoric.

U.S. relations with some allies, especially those in Europe, have at times been strained, but those with others have continued unimpaired. The United States has grown closer to India and strengthened relations with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The right-wing government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu could not be happier with the Trump administration, which moved the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, cut funding to Palestinian charities, and looked the other way as Israel denied entry to young Americans affiliated with the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement. And Japan, whose prime minister, Shinzo Abe, has developed

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a friendly personal relationship with Trump, has managed, for now, to avoid the president's wrath.

The United States' wars have also continued. U.S. campaigns against the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Islamic State (or ISIS) in Iraq and Syria, and Islamist movements in Africa carry on apace, with little change from the Obama administration. In April 2018, when asked what he wanted to do with U.S. troops in Syria, Trump said, "I want to get out," but then he reversed course, and today over 2,000 U.S. soldiers remain in the country, with an eye toward countering Iranian influence.

There is an idea behind Trump's foreign policy ("America first") but not a concept of geopolitics—a plan or set of priorities based on calculation and reflection. Under his leadership, the United States has picked fights not only with China and Russia but also with allies such as Canada, Mexico, and the EU. His hopes of denuclearizing North Korea and resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict strike most observers as quixotic. His policy seems driven by sporadic fits of belligerence or enthusiasm, unrelated to any coherent set of objectives or methods for achieving them. Yet on many questions of substance, the Trump administration, erratic though it is, has kept U.S. foreign policy more or less intact.

The crisis of U.S. foreign policy has been a long time in the making, and it will last beyond Trump.

HOW TRUMP STAYED ON TRACK

What explains this continuity? Part of the reason is that Trump seems to have a short attention span, little understanding of how the federal government works, and a tendency to get distracted by domestic political fights. Insider accounts of the administration should be taken with a grain of salt, but they paint a consistent picture. In an anonymous *New York Times* op-ed, one insider described being told by a "top official" that "there is literally no telling whether [Trump] might change his mind from one minute to the next." It is unsurprising that a man who by some accounts gets most of his news from television cannot get a grip on the vast complexity of the U.S. government.

The *Times* op-ed points to a second, undeniable fact: Trump faces unprecedented opposition from within his own administration. This opposition has only grown as Trump has replaced his initial cadre of advisers. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and National Security Ad-

America alone: Trump at a campaign rally in Missoula, Montana, October 2018

JONATHAN ERNST / REUTERS

viser John Bolton are both more familiar with Washington than their predecessors and more adept at telling the president what he wants to hear. Both hold views of foreign policy that are not wildly distant from those of establishment Republicans; they just take care not to rub them in Trump's face. Here, they are following the lead of Secretary of Defense James Mattis, who has avoided the White House, declined to contradict the president, and quietly fought for status quo positions on everything from troop levels in the Middle East to the U.S. commitment to NATO. The administration's internal conflicts are most visible in its Russia policy: Trump lavishes praise on Russian President Vladimir Putin and then more or less goes along with the hard line pushed by his subordinates.

Another explanation for the administration's continuity with past administrations is that foreign leaders, like Trump's officials, have learned to manipulate the president. For example, Polish President Andrzej Duda proposed establishing a permanent U.S. base on Polish soil and naming it "Fort Trump"—an appealing suggestion for a U.S. president who, misgivings about NATO aside, likes to plaster his name on buildings. French President Emmanuel Macron has impressed Trump by inviting him to the sorts of military parades he would like to throw in the United States. And North Korea's Kim has flattered Trump by writing him warm personal letters. Female leaders, on the other hand—including British Prime Minister Theresa May, Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland, and German Chancellor Angela

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Merkel—have had trouble connecting with a president who has made a cult out of his own pugnacious but unmartial masculinity.

Trump has also benefited from the continuing recovery of the U.S. economy, which has defused much of the anxiety that his trade wars might have otherwise provoked. The months and months of a booming stock market, low unemployment, and consistent growth have not only deflected attention from Trump's erratic behavior on the world stage; they have also given the president leverage. It was always possible that a sufficiently aggressive U.S. president could bully Canada and Mexico into renegotiating NAFTA, given the relative sizes of the three economies. Doing so was much easier given the United States' current prosperity.

Finally, Trump himself may not get enough credit for his tactical circumspection. He is, in certain respects, risk averse. He has been hesitant to use military force and has expressed his desire to pull out of not just Syria but Afghanistan and Iraq, too. Although he reportedly toyed with the idea of a military intervention in Venezuela, he was quickly talked out of it. He clearly does not want a war on the Korean Peninsula; if anything, he wants to be the president who finally ends the Korean War. As a real estate developer whose business career was built on heavy borrowing—effectively making others carry his risk—Trump has evaded genuine hazards throughout his life, which may also explain his failure to visit U.S. troops in war zones.

A NEW NORMAL?

The short-term damage of Trump's first two years has, thankfully and against all odds, been less than what many feared. In the long term, however, his malign influence will not be escaped so easily. For one thing, his antics and rhetoric have undermined U.S. credibility. According to a 2018 survey by the Pew Research Center, which polled respondents in 25 countries, the international public places more faith not only in Macron and Merkel relative to Trump but also in Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping. To a stunning degree, the Trump administration has diminished the sense of U.S. constancy that has been indispensable to the postwar liberal order. The effects of that lost credibility are intangible for now, but they will become manifest in the event of a crisis—when, for instance, U.S. allies do not answer a call for help or, worse, when they choose to appease or accommodate rival powers such as China and Russia.

Other dangers loom. If U.S. Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into possible collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia ends with a credible accusation against the president or one of his family members, it will mean a domestic political crisis with spillover effects on foreign policy. There are also the sheer uncertainties of the world—terrorist attacks, military escalations, nuclear tests, and the like. Such incidents have surprised presidents in the past, and they might surprise this one, too. Trump's past performance is no guarantee of future results.

Yet even if the Trump administration is not hit with an international crisis or a devastating domestic scandal, Trump's presidency does not bode well for the future of U.S. foreign policy—for reasons having less to do with his concrete actions than with what he represents. Behind the day-to-day chaos of the administration lies a more or less unified vision. Trump summarized this worldview succinctly in his September 2018 speech to the UN General Assembly, when he called on the world to "choose a future of patriotism, prosperity, and pride." Patriotism he opposed to global governance, prosperity to bad deals that cheat the United States, and national pride to universalistic visions of humanity.

U.S. foreign policy elites have forgotten how to argue for a global order that has existed for longer than most of them have been alive.

What's most dangerous about Trump's worldview is not its incoherent or erratic elements but its coherent and consistent ones—the appeal of which is not limited to the president and his right-wing populist supporters. Indeed, in many respects, his worldview is not all that different from that of his predecessor: Trump believes, as Barack Obama did, that most U.S. interventions abroad have been costly and stupid and that the United States should focus on nation building at home. Although the Obama administration had a gentler touch than the current one, its emphasis on "leading from behind" allowed the present disaster in Syria to unfold. It also practiced its own form of retrenchment, evident in its decision to delay securing the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal until after it was already too late.

This suggests that Trump's emphasis on putting "America first" is not simply the mistake of a foreign policy rookie but an expression of

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something deeper and more consequential: a permanent shift, among American leaders, away from the dominant postwar conception of U.S. foreign policy. In other hands, and with a more intelligent articulation, Trump's foreign policy vision would amount to a doctrine—one in which the United States is merely one great power among others. In this view, Washington should pursue its own interests, stand for freedom chiefly at home and only intermittently abroad, and reject as a matter of principle the international organizations that previous generations of U.S. leaders so carefully built.

THE GREATEST GENERATION

Trump is unlikely to change his views while in office; indeed, he seems positively incapable of doing so. That means, at best, that the United States can expect either two or six more years of fecklessness, in which the country is erratic, unfocused, economically aggressive, and indifferent to the international norms and institutions that it helped create. That's not nearly as bad as the chimera of a nuclear war conjured up by some of the president's early critics. But it is scary enough.

The more disturbing sign for the future, however, is that although Trump has made nearly every aspect of U.S. foreign policy worse, he is not the sole cause of the United States' increasingly erratic, shortsighted, and selfish behavior. He has merely accelerated a trend—that of Washington's retreat from its global responsibilities—that was already developing by the time he took office and that will outlast him. Indeed, this trend is only likely to continue, since its roots lie not in passing political events but in the extinction of the living memory of World War II, a world-historical event that revolutionized U.S. foreign policy and shaped its course for most of the twentieth century.

The generation of American statesmen that shaped the postwar order had learned some hard lessons from the war. They learned from their experience with imperial Japan, Nazi Germany, and, later, the Soviet Union that it was incumbent on free nations to stand up to ideologies and governments hostile to individual freedom. They learned from the Great Depression and the economic nationalism of the 1930s that beggar-thy-neighbor policies and a focus on state advantage, rather than systemic rules, could create the conditions for totalitarian ideologies to flourish. And they learned from the geopolitical chaos of the interwar years that in order to secure peace, the United States would have to step up and guarantee it through a U.S.-led set of permanent

alliances and international institutions. These might not always favor U.S. policies, but American leaders recognized that they would, in the long run, favor U.S. interests.

That generation learned the right lessons, as the peace and prosperity of the last 70 years attest. Yet in truth, the foreign policy they created was alien to the United States' pre-1940s traditions, which saw the country as primarily a commercial power with little interest in global power politics, save as a means of protecting itself and preserving its sphere of influence in the Western Hemisphere. Breaking free of those traditions required the lived experiences of those who had witnessed the poverty of the Depression and the destruction of the war years firsthand. Today, however, those lessons are no longer living truths; they are dead dogmas, as the philosopher John Stuart Mill might have put it. Most U.S. foreign policy elites have forgotten how to make the argument for a global order that has existed for longer than most of them have been alive; many have forgotten that they needed to argue for it at all. So when Trump came along shouting, "Make America great again!" and demanding to know why maintaining the global order was worth Washington's time and effort, elites were at a loss for how to respond.

GOODBYE TO ALL THAT

Above all, the generation that came of age during and immediately after World War II had a visceral awareness of just how terrible the world could become if the United States chose not to lead. They learned this the hard way, in a war that cost the United States over 400,000 dead and other countries millions more. Their passing, and the fading of the subsequent generation that they directly molded, is the most consequential fact of all for the future of U.S. foreign policy.

An omen of this change came on August 25, 2018, when Arizona Senator John McCain died at the age of 81. Born in 1936 to a naval officer who would go on to serve with distinction in World War II, McCain was a man shaped by the experiences of his parents' generation, which led him not only to advocate American engagement in the world but also to tirelessly represent the United States abroad. There are no votes to be won by visiting crisis zones or simply tending to alliance relationships, but McCain was indefatigable in doing those things. He has no successor in either party. Nor are there any contemporary politicians as unambiguously committed to bipartisanship in foreign policy.

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Inertia is a powerful force, especially when it comes to institutions. And for the moment, it continues to constrain Trump's efforts to remake the international system along more nationalist, self-interested lines. But once he is gone, there will be no snapping back to the consensus of the 1990s or the early years of this century, which was sustained by men and women with personal memories of what the world looked like without U.S. leadership. Indeed, the erratic "America first" of today's populist right may well be replaced in 2020 or 2024 by a no less erratic "America first" of the populist left. This tendency is already visible in figures such as Representative Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii, a populist Democrat who met with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in January 2017 and who later cast doubt on Assad's responsibility for his regime's chemical attacks against Syrian civilians—all under the guise of anti-interventionism.

Eventually, both may be replaced by an "America first" of the exhausted middle. This version might be marked by more moderation and a greater amount of handwringing than its left- and right-wing cousins, but its chief characteristic would be a return to the mindset of the late 1930s. The United States would engage economically with the world but react with indifference to massacres or even genocide; withdraw psychologically, if not formally, from international institutions; and convince itself that other countries could not affect its liberties or interests as long as its military remained strong.

This last belief, in particular, will be proved untrue. To some extent, foreign interference in the U.S. political process has already proved it untrue. But it will be proved untrue in other, possibly more violent ways, too, as foreign countries come to believe that they can use force in aggressive or vicious ways without provoking an American response. This has happened before when the United States has failed to lead, and the results were not happy ones. Unfortunately, those who remember those unhappy results will soon be gone. It is to be hoped, but not to be expected, that the hard lessons they learned will not go along with them.

Deepfakes and the New Disinformation War

The Coming Age of Post-Truth Geopolitics

Robert Chesney and Danielle Citron

A picture may be worth a thousand words, but there is nothing that persuades quite like an audio or video recording of an event. At a time when partisans can barely agree on facts, such persuasiveness might seem as if it could bring a welcome clarity. Audio and video recordings allow people to become firsthand witnesses of an event, sparing them the need to decide whether to trust someone else's account of it. And thanks to smartphones, which make it easy to capture audio and video content, and social media platforms, which allow that content to be shared and consumed, people today can rely on their own eyes and ears to an unprecedented degree.

Therein lies a great danger. Imagine a video depicting the Israeli prime minister in private conversation with a colleague, seemingly revealing a plan to carry out a series of political assassinations in Tehran. Or an audio clip of Iranian officials planning a covert operation to kill Sunni leaders in a particular province of Iraq. Or a video showing an American general in Afghanistan burning a Koran. In a world already primed for violence, such recordings would have a powerful potential for incitement. Now imagine that these recordings could be faked using tools available to almost anyone with a laptop and access to the Internet—and that the resulting fakes are so convincing that they are impossible to distinguish from the real thing.

Advances in digital technology could soon make this nightmare a reality. Thanks to the rise of "deepfakes"—highly realistic and difficult-

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to-detect digital manipulations of audio or video—it is becoming easier than ever to portray someone saying or doing something he or she never said or did. Worse, the means to create deepfakes are likely to proliferate quickly, producing an ever-widening circle of actors capable of deploying them for political purposes. Disinformation is an ancient art, of course, and one with a renewed relevance today. But as deepfake technology develops and spreads, the current disinformation wars may soon look like the propaganda equivalent of the era of swords and shields.

DAWN OF THE DEEPFAKES

Deepfakes are the product of recent advances in a form of artificial intelligence known as "deep learning," in which sets of algorithms called "neural networks" learn to infer rules and replicate patterns by sifting through large data sets. (Google, for instance, has used this technique to develop powerful image-classification algorithms for its search engine.) Deepfakes emerge from a specific type of deep learning in which pairs of algorithms are pitted against each other in "generative adversarial networks," or GANs. In a GAN, one algorithm, the "generator," creates content modeled on source data (for instance, making artificial images of cats from a database of real cat pictures), while a second algorithm, the "discriminator," tries to spot the artificial content (pick out the fake cat images). Since each algorithm is constantly training against the other, such pairings can lead to rapid improvement, allowing GANs to produce highly realistic yet fake audio and video content.

This technology has the potential to proliferate widely. Commercial and even free deepfake services have already appeared in the open market, and versions with alarmingly few safeguards are likely to emerge on the black market. The spread of these services will lower the barriers to entry, meaning that soon, the only practical constraint on one's ability to produce a deepfake will be access to training materials—that is, audio and video of the person to be modeled—to feed the GAN. The capacity to create professional-grade forgeries will come within reach of nearly anyone with sufficient interest and the knowledge of where to go for help.

Deepfakes have a number of worthy applications. Modified audio or video of a historical figure, for example, could be created for the purpose of educating children. One company even claims that it can use the technology to restore speech to individuals who have lost their

True lies: stills of a deepfake video of Barack Obama created by researchers in 2017

voice to disease. But deepfakes can and will be used for darker purposes, as well. Users have already employed deepfake technology to insert people's faces into pornography without their consent or knowledge, and the growing ease of making fake audio and video content will create ample opportunities for blackmail, intimidation, and sabotage. The most frightening applications of deepfake technology, however, may well be in the realms of politics and international affairs. There, deepfakes may be used to create unusually effective lies capable of inciting violence, discrediting leaders and institutions, or even tipping elections.

Deepfakes have the potential to be especially destructive because they are arriving at a time when it already is becoming harder to separate fact from fiction. For much of the twentieth century, magazines, newspapers, and television broadcasters managed the flow of information to the public. Journalists established rigorous professional standards to control the quality of news, and the relatively small number of mass media outlets meant that only a limited number of individuals and organizations could distribute information widely. Over the last decade, however, more and more people have begun to get their information from social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, which depend on a vast array of users to generate relatively unfiltered content. Users tend to curate their experiences so that they mostly encounter perspectives they already agree with (a tendency heightened by the platforms' algorithms), turning their social

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media feeds into echo chambers. These platforms are also susceptible to so-called information cascades, whereby people pass along information shared by others without bothering to check if it is true, making it appear more credible in the process. The end result is that falsehoods can spread faster than ever before.

These dynamics will make social media fertile ground for circulating deepfakes, with potentially explosive implications for politics. Russia's attempt to influence the 2016 U.S. presidential election—spreading divisive and politically inflammatory messages on Facebook and Twitter—already demonstrated how easily disinformation can be injected into the social media bloodstream. The deepfakes of tomorrow will be more vivid and realistic and thus more shareable than the fake news of 2016. And because people are especially prone to sharing negative and novel information, the more salacious the deepfakes, the better.

DEMOCRATIZING FRAUD

The use of fraud, forgery, and other forms of deception to influence politics is nothing new, of course. When the USS *Maine* exploded in Havana Harbor in 1898, American tabloids used misleading accounts of the incident to incite the public toward war with Spain. The anti-Semitic tract *Protocols of the Elders of Zion,* which described a fictional Jewish conspiracy, circulated widely during the first half of the twentieth century. More recently, technologies such as Photoshop have made doctoring images as easy as forging text. What makes deepfakes unprecedented is their combination of quality, applicability to persuasive formats such as audio and video, and resistance to detection. And as deepfake technology spreads, an ever-increasing number of actors will be able to convincingly manipulate audio and video content in a way that once was restricted to Hollywood studios or the most well-funded intelligence agencies.

Deepfakes will be particularly useful to nonstate actors, such as insurgent groups and terrorist organizations, which have historically lacked the resources to make and disseminate fraudulent yet credible audio or video content. These groups will be able to depict their adversaries—including government officials—spouting inflammatory words or engaging in provocative actions, with the specific content carefully chosen to maximize the galvanizing impact on their target audiences. An affiliate of the Islamic State (or

ISIS), for instance, could create a video depicting a U.S. soldier shooting civilians or discussing a plan to bomb a mosque, thereby aiding the terrorist group's recruitment. Such videos will be especially difficult to debunk in cases where the target audience already distrusts the person shown in the deepfake. States can and no doubt will make parallel use of deepfakes to undermine their nonstate opponents.

Deepfakes will also exacerbate the disinformation wars that increasingly disrupt domestic politics in the United States and elsewhere. In 2016, Russia's state-sponsored disinformation operations were remarkably successful in deepening existing social cleavages in the United States. To cite just one example, fake Russian accounts on social media claiming to be affiliated with the Black Lives Matter movement shared inflammatory content purposely designed to stoke racial tensions. Next time, instead of tweets and Facebook posts, such disinformation could come in the form of a fake video of a white police officer shouting racial slurs or a Black Lives Matter activist calling for violence.

Social media will be fertile ground for circulating deepfakes, with explosive implications for politics.

Perhaps the most acute threat associated with deepfakes is the possibility that a well-timed forgery could tip an election. In May 2017, Moscow attempted something along these lines. On the eve of the French election, Russian hackers tried to undermine the presidential campaign of Emmanuel Macron by releasing a cache of stolen documents, many of them doctored. That effort failed for a number of reasons, including the relatively boring nature of the documents and the effects of a French media law that prohibits election coverage in the 44 hours immediately before a vote. But in most countries, most of the time, there is no media blackout, and the nature of deepfakes means that damaging content can be guaranteed to be salacious or worse. A convincing video in which Macron appeared to admit to corruption, released on social media only 24 hours before the election, could have spread like wildfire and proved impossible to debunk in time.

Deepfakes may also erode democracy in other, less direct ways. The problem is not just that deepfakes can be used to stoke social and ideological divisions. They can create a "liar's dividend": as people

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become more aware of the existence of deepfakes, public figures caught in genuine recordings of misbehavior will find it easier to cast doubt on the evidence against them. (If deepfakes were prevalent during the 2016 U.S. presidential election, imagine how much easier it would have been for Donald Trump to have disputed the authenticity of the infamous audiotape in which he brags about groping women.) More broadly, as the public becomes sensitized to the threat of deepfakes, it may become less inclined to trust news in general. And journalists, for their part, may become more wary about relying on, let alone publishing, audio or video of fast-breaking events for fear that the evidence will turn out to have been faked.

DEEP FIX

There is no silver bullet for countering deepfakes. There are several legal and technological approaches—some already existing, others likely to emerge—that can help mitigate the threat. But none will overcome the problem altogether. Instead of full solutions, the rise of deepfakes calls for resilience.

Three technological approaches deserve special attention. The first relates to forensic technology, or the detection of forgeries through technical means. Just as researchers are putting a great deal of time and effort into creating credible fakes, so, too, are they developing methods of enhanced detection. In June 2018, computer scientists at Dartmouth and the University at Albany, SUNY, announced that they had created a program that detects deepfakes by looking for abnormal patterns of eyelid movement when the subject of a video blinks. In the deepfakes arms race, however, such advances serve only to inform the next wave of innovation. In the future, GANs will be fed training videos that include examples of normal blinking. And even if extremely capable detection algorithms emerge, the speed with which deepfakes can circulate on social media will make debunking them an uphill battle. By the time the forensic alarm bell rings, the damage may already be done.

A second technological remedy involves authenticating content before it ever spreads—an approach sometimes referred to as a "digital provenance" solution. Companies such as Truepic are developing ways to digitally watermark audio, photo, and video content at the moment of its creation, using metadata that can be logged immutably on a distributed ledger, or blockchain. In other words, one could effec-

tively stamp content with a record of authenticity that could be used later as a reference to compare to suspected fakes.

In theory, digital provenance solutions are an ideal fix. In practice, they face two big obstacles. First, they would need to be ubiquitously deployed in the vast array of devices that capture content, including laptops and smartphones. Second, their use would need to be made a precondition for uploading content to the most popular digital platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Neither condition is likely to be met. Device makers, absent some legal or regulatory obligation, will not adopt digital authentication until they know it is affordable, in demand, and unlikely to interfere with the performance of their products. And few social media platforms will want to block people from uploading unauthenticated content, especially when the first one to do so will risk losing market share to less rigorous competitors.

A third, more speculative technological approach involves what has been called "authenticated alibi services," which might soon begin emerging from the private sector. Consider that deepfakes are especially dangerous to high-profile individuals, such as politicians and celebrities, with valuable but fragile reputations. To protect themselves against deepfakes, some of these individuals may choose to engage in enhanced forms of "lifelogging"—the practice of recording nearly every aspect of one's life—in order to prove where they were and what they were saying or doing at any given time. Companies might begin offering bundles of alibi services, including wearables to make lifelogging convenient, storage to cope with the vast amount of resulting data, and credible authentication of those data. These bundles could even include partnerships with major news and social media platforms, which would enable rapid confirmation or debunking of content.

Such logging would be deeply invasive, and many people would want nothing to do with it. But in addition to the high-profile individuals who choose to adopt lifelogging to protect themselves, some employers might begin insisting on it for certain categories of employees, much as police departments increasingly require officers to use body cameras. And even if only a relatively small number of people took up intensive lifelogging, they would produce vast repositories of data in which the rest of us would find ourselves inadvertently caught, creating a massive peer-to-peer surveillance network for constantly recording our activities.

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LAYING DOWN THE LAW

If these technological fixes have limited upsides, what about legal remedies? Depending on the circumstances, making or sharing a deepfake could constitute defamation, fraud, or misappropriation of a person's likeness, among other civil and criminal violations. In theory, one could close any remaining gaps by criminalizing (or attaching civil liability to) specific acts—for instance, creating a deepfake of a real person with the intent to deceive a viewer or listener and with the expectation that this deception would cause some specific kind of harm. But it could be hard to make these claims or charges stick in practice. To begin with, it will likely prove very difficult to attribute the creation of a deepfake to a particular person or group. And even if perpetrators are identified, they may be beyond a court's reach, as in the case of foreign individuals or governments.

Another legal solution could involve incentivizing social media platforms to do more to identify and remove deepfakes or fraudulent content more generally. Under current U.S. law, the companies that own these platforms are largely immune from liability for the content they host, thanks to Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act of 1996. Congress could modify this immunity, perhaps by amending Section 230 to make companies liable for harmful and fraudulent information distributed through their platforms unless they have made reasonable efforts to detect and remove it. Other countries have used a similar approach for a different problem: in 2017, for instance, Germany passed a law imposing stiff fines on social media companies that failed to remove racist or threatening content within 24 hours of it being reported.

Yet this approach would bring challenges of its own. Most notably, it could lead to excessive censorship. Companies anxious to avoid legal liability would likely err on the side of policing content too aggressively, and users themselves might begin to self-censor in order to avoid the risk of having their content suppressed. It is far from obvious that the notional benefits of improved fraud protection would justify these costs to free expression. Such a system would also run the risk of insulating incumbent platforms, which have the resources to police content and pay for legal battles, against competition from smaller firms.

LIVING WITH LIES

The unavoidable conclusion is that deepfakes spell trouble. As interest in the technology mounts, deepfakes will improve in quality, become

ever cheaper and easier to make, and be disseminated widely through both commercial services and the black markets of the Dark Web, where deepfake production is likely to emerge as a service for hire. The result will be a rising tide of false yet highly realistic audio and video content, ready to be weaponized for political purposes and spread on social media.

But although deepfakes are dangerous, they will not necessarily be disastrous. Detection will improve, prosecutors and plaintiffs will occasionally win legal victories against the creators of harmful fakes, and the major social media platforms will gradually get better at flagging and removing fraudulent content. And digital provenance solutions could, if widely adopted, provide a more durable fix at some point in the future.

In the meantime, democratic societies will have to learn resilience. On the one hand, this will mean accepting that audio and video content cannot be taken at face value; on the other, it will mean fighting the descent into a post-truth world, in which citizens retreat to their private information bubbles and regard as fact only that which flatters their own beliefs. In short, democracies will have to accept an uncomfortable truth: in order to survive the threat of deepfakes, they are going to have to learn how to live with lies.

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Return to Table of Contents

The Unhackable Election

What It Takes to Defend Democracy

Michael Chertoff and Anders Fogh Rasmussen

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014 marked a sharp break with the past: the post–Cold War interlude, a time when peace and democracy spread across the globe, was over, and a new, more aggressive era, had begun. Since then, Western governments have had to relearn the forgotten art of deterring attacks and protecting their countries' borders. They have failed to see, however, that the attacks can also be aimed at their democratic institutions. Liberal democracy may remain the world's preferred model of governance, but it is under debilitating pressure from threats both internal and external.

A poll released by Dalia Research in 2018 highlighted just how much citizens of democracies have lost faith in their governments. Sixty-four percent of respondents living in democracies said their governments rarely or never act in the public interest, whereas only 41 percent of those in autocracies said the same. Politicians in democracies are partly to blame: there is more than a grain of truth to the view that they have ignored concerns about such issues as living standards and immigration and that they often say one thing and do another.

But malign foreign powers—led by Russia—have worsened the problem, by weaponizing the infrastructure that underpins democratic societies. They have hacked the Internet, media, and even voting databases to sow discombobulation, discontent, and disunity. From the 2016 Brexit referendum, to the 2016 U.S. presidential primaries and general election, to the 2017 French presidential election, foreign meddlers have systematically sought to skew the democratic debate.

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The Kremlin has been testing its interference playbook in countries throughout eastern Europe, and especially Ukraine, ever since those states escaped Soviet rule in the early 1990s. Only in recent years has it begun following that playbook in western Europe and the United States. The attacks are an assault on every citizen's fundamental right to elect his or her own representatives. Yet even though democracies on both sides of the Atlantic have been targeted, their responses have lacked urgency and coordination. Meddlers have sought to undermine mainstream political parties on both the left and the right, but the question of what to do about this interference remains a partisan issue, especially in the United Kingdom and the United States. Meanwhile, governments and technology companies keep talking past each other, with the former preferring overzealous state edicts and the latter inadequate self-regulation.

In the next two years, more than 20 elections will take place across Europe and North America. Many of them will offer voters a stark choice between candidates who support openness and multilateralism and those who advocate isolationism, populism, and nationalism. Russia and other autocratic regimes have a clear stake in these elections, and there is every indication that they will continue to interfere in them. Individual countries and political campaigns can do more to protect themselves, but ultimately, a collective effort to defend democratic institutions is necessary—a bipartisan, transatlantic response to foreign meddling. Countries must work together to undertake broad assessments of the vulnerabilities of their electoral systems. Foreign governments and civil society groups should provide direct support to help protect countries that are particularly vulnerable to foreign meddling, such as Ukraine. Policymakers should collaborate with technology companies to give citizens the tools they need to inoculate themselves against false information. And politicians, finally, should work to address the root causes of the societal cleavages that Russia and other malign actors are trying to exploit.

THE NEW INFORMATION WARFARE

Foreign meddling in elections is not a new phenomenon. During the Cold War, both superpowers relied heavily on information warfare. The Kremlin spread false conspiracy theories claiming, for example, that the CIA was the source of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, and that it assassinated U.S. President John F. Kennedy. The United States

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and the United Kingdom both developed sophisticated intelligence campaigns to spread anticommunist propaganda in Chile, Haiti, Italy, and elsewhere.

The fall of communism led many Western countries to believe that Russian interference had been consigned to history. But in the past several years, the Kremlin—faced with an expanding democratic world and Russia's diminishing status as a global power—has dusted off its old playbook and wielded its strategies against the source of the Western world's strength: its unity.

The new Russian meddling combines tried-and-true methods with modern technology. Some tactics are familiar from the Soviet era: supporting factions sympathetic to Russia's interests, promoting media outlets that peddle fake news, sponsoring coups, stirring up diaspora communities. But now, the Kremlin has new tools for manipulating social media, such as armies of robotic accounts and paid trolls. Because the Internet and automation enable aggressors to act anonymously on a large scale, technology has significantly reduced the costs and risks of election meddling.

The scope of Russia's social media disinformation campaigns is staggering.

Adding to the difficulties of preventing interference, foreign meddling operations tend to be carried out in an operational gray zone. This makes it hard to attribute responsibility to one specific government agency. In Russia, the military intelligence agency (GRU) is responsible for both human intelligence, which includes information gathering and carrying out physical missions, and digital spying, which includes fabricating websites. Meanwhile, hacking collectives and criminal networks, such as Fancy Bear, or APT28, actually develop and deploy the malware used in election meddling. There are some links between the intelligence agencies and the hacking collectives, but their exact nature remains unclear.

The scope of Russia's social media disinformation campaigns is staggering. In the lead-up to the Italian election in March 2018, bots were responsible for 15 percent of Twitter activity promoting far-right candidates. Fake Twitter accounts generated 30 percent of the tweets and retweets about the August 2018 assassination of Alexander Zakharchenko, a pro-Russian rebel leader in Ukraine. In Macedonia, there was a surge in new accounts about 40 days before the September 2018 referendum on whether to change the country's name, a

move that Russia opposed because it would ease the way for Macedonia to join NATO. Automated accounts mostly encouraged voters to boycott the referendum, suggesting that they were part of a Russian-sponsored voter suppression effort. Similar spikes in bot activity occurred in the lead-up to elections in Sweden in September and Bosnia and Herzegovina in October.

In some cases, foreign meddlers have tried to directly boost whichever candidate or party was most likely to adopt a soft stance on Russia. However, in most cases, their strategy is simply to discredit the entire democratic process. In the 2016 U.S. presidential primaries, for example, Russian operatives supported both the Republican candidate Donald Trump and the Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders, with the goal of radicalizing the political debate.

Election meddling can have unintended consequences. In France, hackers' repeated efforts to thwart French President Emmanuel Macron's campaign undoubtedly hardened his stance toward Moscow. In the United States, meddling in the 2016 election caused Congress to strong-arm the Trump administration into adopting a more aggressive posture toward Russia, including providing Javelin antitank missiles to Ukraine, introducing new sanctions against Russia, and increasing funding for U.S. troops in Europe.

But there is growing evidence that other states are gravitating toward Russia's high-impact, low-cost strategy. In Mexico, two weeks before the country's July 2018 presidential election, there was a surge in bot accounts on Twitter sharing stories that cast doubt about the presidential candidate Andrés Manuel Lopéz Obrador's grasp of economics and spreading news that his opponents had already lost. The majority of the news sources shared by these bots originated not in Mexico but in Argentina, Iran, and Venezuela (as well as Russia). In August, John Bolton, the U.S. national security adviser, announced that there was a "sufficient national security concern about Chinese meddling, Iranian meddling, and North Korean meddling" and said that the U.S. government was working to crack down on it. That same month, Twitter suspended 284 fake accounts with apparent links to Iran, and Facebook discovered 76 fake Instagram accounts originating in Iran. The discourse surrounding the Catalan independence referendum in 2017 saw an unprecedented level of trolling on social media and spreading of distorted facts, all originating in Venezuela. A study by the scholar Javier Lesaca showed that Venezuela likely allowed

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Russia to operate its disinformation campaign against the referendum using Venezuelan networks.

For now, foreign meddling operations remain largely the preserve of state actors and their proxies, but other actors will enter the fray in the near future as new technology and artificial intelligence lower the barriers to entry. So-called deepfake videos or audio files—artificial video or audio material generated by an algorithm rather than a video production team—are fast becoming the new frontier in information manipulation. Right now, producing deepfakes requires sophisticated video-editing skills and software and a convincing voice actor. But within a few years, new technologies could enable a programmer to feed a computer a public figure's speeches to synthesize voice patterns and create a convincing fake video. According to a test carried out by ASI Data Science, using two hours of recordings over five days of work, an algorithm could produce a credible audio file of Trump declaring nuclear war against Russia. The prospect is chilling: a teenager in his bedroom could force the world's most powerful individuals to say anything he wants.

A WEAK RESPONSE

Given the scale of the threat posed by foreign meddling, the response of the transatlantic community has been woeful. In the United States and Italy, denial at the highest levels of government has impeded progress. Trump has spent considerable energy denying any interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election out of fear that recognition of Russian meddling in his favor may be interpreted as a tacit admission of collusion between Russia and his campaign team. Italy's Matteo Salvini, the deputy prime minister and head of the governing right-wing party, Lega Nord (Northern League), has similarly denied Russian meddling in Italy's March 2018 election or fundraising for Lega Nord. In the case of Salvini, his publicly avowed appreciation for Russia has stymied any progress in fortifying Italy's electoral infrastructure. Across Europe, leaders have approached the challenge through the outdated and simplistic 2016 lens of fake news. When they have taken action, their efforts have been uncoordinated and often geared toward fighting the last pattern of interference rather than the next one.

The result is a patchwork of remedies that have either come up short or been overzealous. Although progress has been made, leaders in the United States, for their part, made insufficient preparations to

protect November's midterm elections. As of October, eight election-related bills, many of them bipartisan, were still languishing in Congress. Inadequate electoral infrastructure is also a problem: decentralized voting systems preclude uniform security measures, leaving them more vulnerable to manipulation or attack. For example, the electronic voting systems in some U.S. states could be easily infected with malware simply by someone inserting a USB drive into a voting machine, thereby enabling attackers to stuff virtual ballot boxes. Local officials' resistance to what they perceive as federal interference in their states hampers uniform planning.

The European response has also been patchy. The EU's team tasked with countering propaganda and disinformation in eastern Europe is limited by its miserly budget of $1.3 million per year. The European Commission (the EU's executive body) has proposed a code of conduct for social media platforms that would commit them to taking prescribed action to fight fake news and has required EU-funded, pan-European political parties to follow a common set of practices designed to protect against interference. Some member states have taken individual measures: the United Kingdom created a national security unit to combat fake news; France banned electronic voting for citizens living abroad; the Netherlands banned it entirely; and the Czech Republic, Ireland, and Sweden are considering legislation to fight fake news. Others may have gone too far, ending up curbing freedom of speech: France and Germany have passed legislation that civil society and the media have criticized as overzealous. In typical EU fashion, each country has taken its own piecemeal actions and failed to coordinate with its allies.

Meanwhile, lawmakers have criticized technology companies for their inaction and de facto complicity in spreading highly partisan narratives and outright fake news. Some companies have now begun to accept responsibility for reducing the amount of disinformation on their platforms. In April 2018, Microsoft launched the Defending Democracy Program in order to prevent hacking, increase advertising transparency online, and explore technological solutions to protect elections and identify cyberattacks.

In response to significant pressure from lawmakers and the public, Facebook, Google, and Twitter have also stepped up their efforts to police their platforms. They have made some progress, removing more fake accounts, taking more domains offline, and thwarting more hacking efforts. Yet these efforts remain largely voluntary. Protective of their

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business models, these companies are releasing too little information about the extent of the problem, such as the number of fake accounts. Furthermore, politicians' lack of understanding about how technology platforms work impedes collaboration with the private sector. Earlier this year, for example, Mark Zuckerberg, the CEO of Facebook, appeared before the U.S. Congress for a hearing on Facebook's treatment of user data. At the hearing, senators asked Zuckerberg simplistic questions about Facebook's business model instead of diving deep into the company's sophisticated data practices, revealing the limits of their understanding of the technology.

The advent of artificial intelligence offers an array of possible solutions to the threats posed by meddling. Machines are able to scan the Internet more accurately and faster than humans, processing and synthesizing macro-level patterns in a way humans cannot. But without cooperation between politicians and entrepreneurs to enact laws and build security measures into such software, new technologies themselves will remain vulnerable. This could exacerbate the challenges that new technologies pose rather than solve them.

SAFEGUARDING DEMOCRACY

With the future of democracy in the United States and Europe at stake, it's time to start developing a more forward-thinking strategy for dealing with foreign interference. Prevention starts with political campaigns themselves. As they head into election season, they must understand that foreign meddlers are systematically targeting them through phishing attacks (fraudulent attempts to obtain sensitive information by impersonating a trusted entity) and server hacks. All it takes to bring down an entire campaign is a single employee clicking on one malicious link. Smart cyberdefense is as critical to today's political parties as clever campaign slogans and billboards.

But individual countries, let alone parties and organizations, can do only so much to protect themselves. What is required is a collective, bipartisan, transatlantic response to foreign meddling. This is why, in June 2018, we brought together leaders from politics, media, academia, and business from a cross section of parties and backgrounds on both sides of the Atlantic to create the Transatlantic Commission on Election Integrity. The aim is to bridge the gaps that have so far prevented a collective response to election meddling and to avoid relitigating past elections and instead focus on future ones.

Transatlantic cooperation will be central to this effort. At the June 2018 G-7 meeting in Quebec, leaders took an important first step in agreeing to better coordinate national efforts to fight election meddling. But the commitment to this fight remains limited, and the concern, too low on the priority list of transatlantic business. At a meeting cohosted by the Atlantic Council and the Transatlantic Commission in mid-July, we brought together a bipartisan group of U.S. senators from the Senate Intelligence Committee and a dozen European parliamentarians in an attempt to broaden the scope of cooperation. For the first time, U.S. and European lawmakers shared their assessments of the threat and agreed on a series of far-reaching recommendations, including more government contingency planning, new legislation with immediate sanctions for meddlers, and more state funding for countering interference. These recommendations would bring together diverse parties, including civil society and technology companies, to monitor and report on activities that spread disinformation and to promote the sharing of best practices among governments.

Too many governments are either still in denial or don't fully understand the extent of the threat posed by election meddling.

Too many governments are either still in denial or don't fully understand the extent of the threat posed by election meddling. Most have a surprisingly vague sense of the vulnerabilities of their own democratic infrastructure. National intelligence agencies may be better positioned than governments to assess and follow the threats, but their findings do not reach the rest of government or civil society and political parties. To help fill these gaps, the Transatlantic Commission will conduct national assessments of democracies with critical upcoming elections. These assessments will analyze different factors related to elections and democratic processes in each country, including legislation, the vulnerability of cyberspace and social media platforms, and the presence of anti-Western groups within the country that might be looking to influence or disrupt the election. The purpose of these assessments is not to embarrass governments or fuel opposition parties but to help prevent foreign powers from exploiting weaknesses.

Some countries in eastern Europe are particularly vulnerable to foreign meddling and require more active support, from both other

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governments and civil society. Take Ukraine. Its presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for 2019 will be critical for a country that is in the midst of its biggest political transformation since it achieved independence in 1991. This point is surely not lost on Moscow, which is almost certain to take all possible measures to undermine the validity of the elections and skew their results. The Transatlantic Commission is thus working with a group of experts to monitor and actively report interference activities in the lead-up to Ukraine's election.

The commission is also seeking to bridge the gap between the public and private sectors. We have deployed technological tools to monitor real-time disinformation, tracking the number of bot accounts created on social media, the messages they are disseminating, and their country of origin. With these insights, political leaders and civil society can fight back against disinformation campaigns more effectively. One of the best ways to defend against meddling is for citizens to inoculate themselves against disinformation. To help with that effort, the Transatlantic Commission is partnering with companies such as ASI Data Science to develop an algorithm that can distinguish deepfakes from real videos, allowing citizens to identify machine-generated content.

All these efforts should help prevent adversaries from exploiting the cleavages that exist in democratic societies. But it is important to remember that although Kremlin-sponsored interference may help populist parties, it does not create them. Populism is typically a symptom of a failing political system, not its cause. The greatest challenge for mainstream politicians, then, is to tackle societal cleavages at their source by addressing the issues that drive antipathy toward mainstream parties.

Across Europe and North America, democracy is being hacked. Citizens and governments can either sit back and accept foreign meddling in elections as an uncomfortable side effect of the digital age or they can safeguard their electoral systems. If history has taught anything, it is that individual countries cannot face such challenges alone. The goal of election meddling is to sow confusion and fear, which, in turn, drive support for candidates and parties that break down the alliances and undermine the values that have kept the West free, prosperous, and relatively peaceful for 70 years. Unless the transatlantic community stands together, malign foreign powers will continue to pick off democracies one by one. This is not hyperbole; it is already the reality.

H.E. Erzhan Kazykhanov, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to the United States of America

An Interview With

Erzhan Kazykhanov,

Ambassador of Kazakhstan to the United States of America

The future of trade in Asia could depend heavily on what becomes of China's expansive One Belt, One Road initiative, which calls for massive investment in and development of trade routes in the region. How can Kazakhstan capitalize on such initiatives? What policy innovations and private-sector initiatives are needed if Kazakhstan's manufacturers are to compete globally and fully integrate global value chains?

Strategically located between East and West, Kazakhstan was historically interlinked with major communication routes and paths of trade that are known today as the ancient Silk Road. Experts argue that the route along Kazakhstan's vast land carried more than just merchandise and precious commodities. Connecting eastern and western markets, spurring immense wealth, and fostering innovation, intellectual and cultural exchange, made Kazakhstan one of the epicenters of the first waves of globalization. It is therefore not a coincidence that the vision for engaging the world in recreating the ancient Silk Road was presented by President Xi Jinping in Kazakhstan in September 2013. This initiative was supported by President Nursultan Nazarbayev who has been a strong champion of Eurasian integration and increased economic connectivity since the very early days of the country's independence. Five years since the launch, Belt and Road Initiative set the stage for a sprawling network of railroads, highways, gas and oil pipelines, cities and investments in modern infrastructure to re-

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vive the hugely successful ancient Silk Road with a 21st century strategy and outlook.

In the past several years, the country's foreign policy has proven effective in balancing international interests as Kazakhstan continues to forge its path in international and regional organizations. What have been the most significant foreign policy successes during your tenure and how do you see Kazakhstan's role on the global stage in the coming years?

Indeed, Kazakhstan is a textbook example of how a multi-ethnic nation – the ninth largest country in the world – can live in peace and stability as well as secure a major standing on the international arena, thanks to its balanced and multi-vector foreign policy.

As the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the newly independent Kazakhstan emerged overnight as the fourth-largest nuclear power in the world that could, in theory, pose a serious threat to humankind. But Kazakhstan did not pursue this destructive path. Instead, as a firm believer in confidence-building measures, dialogue and partnership, President Nursultan Nazarbayev laid down a comprehensive long-term strategy aimed at the complete dismantlement and removal of one of the world's largest nuclear arsenals, establishing his nation as a reliable global partner. Years on, this decision is still highly praised by the members of the international community. Addressing the UN General Assembly last year, the 69th US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson noted positively that Kazakhstan is a particularly illustrative example of the wisdom of relinquishing nuclear weapons and of a modern nation making a substantial contribution to regional and international peace and prosperity.

As a member of the UN Security Council for 2017-2018, we have continued our pioneering model to address issues with worldwide implications. Chairing the high-level briefing of the UN Security Council in January 2018, President Nazarbayev noted that as the first country from Central Asia ever elected to the council, we became the voice of our people in this high office and laid down a comprehensive conflict prevention strategy. In addition to early warning, preventive deployment, mediation, peacekeeping, post-conflict peacebuilding, and accountability measures, for the first time this strategy included the issue of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This is what makes the adopted document unique.

Furthermore, in line with its commitments to promote global peace and prosperity, Kazakhstan continues to play a major role in stabilizing Afghanistan. Acknowledging that only an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process will bring stability and security, Kazakhstan remains at the forefront when it comes to consolidating international efforts.

Last month, the nation's capital of Astana hosted the Regional Conference on Empowering Women in Afghanistan, which produced a powerful and inclusive effort aimed at elevating voices and perspectives from across all sectors and levels to stress the importance of full engagement of women in the reconciliation process, as well as in the social and economic life of Afghanistan. The US firmly supported this initiative by sending top State Department officials, while the special address was made by the Assistant to the President Mrs. Ivanka Trump, who acknowledged the efforts of Kazakhstan's government for championing this important cause.

Kazakhstan has been widely praised for these efforts and its exemplary role in building a safe and secure world during its presidency of some of the most respected international organizations and institutions, including the OSCE, OIC and now the UNSC. Kazakhstan will not cease to work closely with the international community and all actors involved in putting forward these important initiatives.

The United States was the first country to establish diplomatic relations with Kazakhstan after its independence 25 years ago. This relationship has grown in large part because American and Kazakhstani officials and companies have continued to work well together in a cooperative partnership. Can you please provide an overview of US-Kazakhstan bilateral relations?

The US was indeed the first country to recognize our independence and open its Embassy in Kazakhstan. Throughout the past twenty-six years, relations between our countries have grown profoundly both in substance and significance.

Recognizing this positive trend in Kazakh-American relations and upon the formal invitation from the White House, President Nursultan Nazarbayev made an official visit to Washington, DC early this year to meet President Donald Trump, Vice President Mike Pence and a large number of America's top business executives.

Distinctively, these meetings cemented our country's commitment to foster our cooperation in many areas of mutual interest, such as global politics and regional integration, defense and security, trade and investment, strategic energy dialogue, cultural and humanitarian links, and people-to-people relations. Most importantly, this high-level commitment was reflected through the adoption of the milestone document entitled, "United States and Kazakhstan: An Enhanced Strategic Partnership for the 21st Century," which not only outlines the goals and priorities of our bilateral agenda but also sets a long-term vision to build a common future.

In terms of future plans, the visit reinforced close commercial and trade ties between Kazakhstan and the United States as an important way to create jobs and accelerate economic growth in both countries. For example, we signed numerous deals with far-reaching implications for both economies worth more than 7 billion US dollars.

Almost a year on since this high-level visit, I am delighted to see that both countries are continuing to unlock the immense potential for mutually beneficial cooperation with great enthusiasm. We have established the High Level Working Group on the Enhanced Strategic Partnership between Kazakhstan and the United States to ensure successful implementation of all agreements.

In just the past 9 months, both countries have exchanged an unprecedented number of highly successful bilateral visits and B2B communication in healthcare, agriculture, education, trade, culture and sciences. Later this month, US Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross will lead one of the largest certified trade missions to Kazakhstan. We are also expanding our presence in the United States by opening Kazakhstan's Consulate General in San Francisco to boost cooperation in technology, startups, innovation and tech policy.

As we look forward to continue working together for shared growth and prosperity, I am positive that the spirit of enhanced partnership and cooperation that exists between our nations will continue to thrive.

REVIEWS & RESPONSES

Where does U.S. grand strategy go from here? The prevailing sentiment is not for just more of the same.

—Jake Sullivan

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Return to Table of Contents

More, Less, or Different?

Where U.S. Foreign Policy Should—and Shouldn't—Go From Here

Jake Sullivan

The Hell of Good Intentions: America's Foreign Policy Elite and the Decline of U.S. Primacy
BY STEPHEN M. WALT. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018, 400 pp.

The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities
BY JOHN J. MEARSHEIMER. Yale University Press, 2018, 328 pp.

Since November 2016, the U.S. foreign policy community has embarked on an extended voyage of soul-searching, filling the pages of publications like this one with essays on the past, present, and future of the liberal international order and the related question of where U.S. grand strategy goes from here. The prevailing sentiment is not for just more of the same. Big questions are up for debate in ways they have not been for many years. What is the purpose of U.S. foreign policy? Are there fundamental changes in the world that demand a corresponding change in approach?

Into this earnest and reflective conversation enter Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer, each with a new book, each making his long-standing argument about the failures of U.S. foreign policy with renewed ferocity. Walt's is called *The Hell of Good Intentions: America's Foreign Policy Elite and the Decline of U.S. Primacy*; Mearsheimer's is *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities*. The titles give clear hints of the cases they lay out: against democracy promotion, humanitarian intervention, nation building, and NATO expansion; for restraint and offshore balancing.

Each of the two books does add something new. Walt's contains an extended attack on the foreign policy community, painting a dark picture, across multiple chapters, of a priesthood gripped by various pathologies, leading the country astray. Mearsheimer, meanwhile, turns to political theory to explore the relationship among liberalism, nationalism, and realism. Liberalism, he says, cannot alter or abolish nationalism and realism, and where the three meet, the latter two will prevail over the former. (Although he takes pains to stress that he is talking about liberalism in the classical sense, not as it is understood in American politics, his repeated assaults on "social engineering" reveal that he may mean it both ways.) For Mearsheimer, analysis of the three isms ultimately provides an alternative route to arrive at the conclusion that a strategy of liberal hegemony is bound to fail—and has, in fact, failed for the United States.

Both authors make a number of fair points. But their books also suffer from

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a failure to distinguish between clear mistakes—such as the war in Iraq—and flawed outcomes flowing from imperfect options, which are the norm in a messy business like foreign policy. They also too frequently succumb to the temptation of caricature, playing up interventions and playing down institution building, which was a more persistent and widespread feature of the United States' post–Cold War approach. The biggest disappointment, however, is that neither author really engages with the new debates currently preoccupying the foreign policy community or the vexing questions about U.S. strategy going forward.

BAD FAITH AND THE BLOB

Walt and Mearsheimer have been fixtures in the foreign policy debate for a long time. Setting aside their joint polemic on U.S.-Israeli relations, published in book form in 2007, the two have provided the sort of iconoclasm that is essential to public discourse, forcing proponents of a forward-leaning foreign policy to sharpen their arguments, think about mistakes, and face hard questions they would rather gloss over. Mearsheimer has been especially powerful, including in this new book, in pointing out that too many liberal internationalists have failed to contend with the enduring power of nationalism and identity. Recent history has proved him more right and the American foreign policy community more wrong. On this and many other points, practitioners owe these scholars (and the academy in general) a fuller hearing and more thorough consideration—even if they don't end up agreeing with them. By the same token, these scholars (and the academy in general) owe policymakers a presumption of good faith and honest service—even if they find plenty of fault with their decisions.

This is what makes the new dimension of Walt's argument so troubling. Walt defines the object of his scorn—the "foreign policy community"—as those "*individuals and organizations that actively engage on a regular basis with issues of international affairs*." It is hard to come up with a broader definition than that. But then Walt names names. Lots of names. He fills pages with lists of think tanks, advocacy organizations, foundations, and specific individuals who compose "the Blob," a term originally coined by Ben Rhodes, who was deputy national security adviser in the Obama administration, but embraced and invoked repeatedly by Walt. And although the phrase "good intentions" appears in the title of his book, he ascribes anything but. After an obligatory proviso that "most foreign policy professionals are genuine patriots," Walt zeroes in on what he sees as a key motivation for their decision-making:

> The busier the U.S. government is abroad, the more jobs there will be for foreign policy experts, the greater the share of national wealth that will be devoted to addressing global problems, and the greater their potential influence will be. A more restrained foreign policy would give the entire foreign policy community less to do, reduce its status and prominence, . . . and might even lead some prominent philanthropies to devote less money to these topics. In this sense, liberal hegemony and unceasing global activism constitute a full-employment strategy for the entire foreign policy community.

Full disclosure: Walt would certainly assign me a place in this group. So I

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cannot be entirely objective in assessing his ad hominem indictment. But experience and common sense tell me that it is simply wrong. Walt has not spent time working in the Pentagon or the State Department or the Situation Room, alongside Foreign Service officers and civil servants—and, yes, political appointees—who believe sincerely that an active foreign policy serves the national interest and the cause of global peace and progress. If he did, I'm convinced he would revise his view about what drives these officials.

It's true that there is a bias for action in government. But Walt would learn how much practitioners struggle with the decisions they face, and how they earnestly debate the merits of doing something more, less, or different. He would be surprised, contrary to his claim, that unorthodox ideas really do get a hearing in Washington, including Walt's own ideas about pulling back from the Middle East, and that the reason his proposals don't become policy isn't because they aren't considered. He would find evidence that the causal chain runs in the opposite direction from the one he assumes: policymakers don't advocate a more ambitious approach because foreign policy is their career; they tend to make foreign policy their career because they believe it can accomplish ambitious things. Practitioners do themselves no favors when they caricature academic critics; the same applies in reverse.

Walt's assignment of bad faith to the Blob causes him to miss the churn in the community since 2016. He makes reasonable points about the ways in which the Washington foreign policy conversation has too often been gripped by groupthink, how conventional wisdom can harden and why departing from it can be difficult, and how a number of basic assumptions about geopolitical trends and the innate appeal of democracy have been taken for granted for too long. But he is wrong that the intentions and motives of foreign policy professionals mean their views are immutable, that they cannot learn, adapt, and grow.

Both Walt and Mearsheimer have neglected the recent shifts in the center of gravity of the Washington foreign policy consensus. The debates of 2018 are not the debates of 2002. Their passionate case against the U.S. invasion of Iraq, for example, seems frozen in time. Most in the foreign policy community would oppose another conflict of choice in the Middle East. The debate now is over how to pursue an effective counterterrorism strategy that relies less and less on direct military force. The same goes for their argument for the need to emphasize investments at home: since 2016, liberal internationalists have been reflecting much more explicitly on the relationship between foreign policy and domestic policy.

POLICYMAKERS ARE FROM MARS

It's often hard for policymakers—even those sympathetic to some of the critiques—to know what to do with Walt and Mearsheimer. They make promises about their approach, including rosy results from drastic actions such as military withdrawal from Europe, with a certitude that resembles the exaggerated portrait they paint of liberal internationalists. And their style of argument inflames the problem of incumbency: they blame U.S. decision-makers for every problem, tragedy, and unanticipated side

effect, while taking for granted every achievement reached or disaster averted. Sins of commission count, whereas sins of omission don't, or at least not very much, so that action leading to unintended consequences is treated differently from inaction leading to unintended consequences. The intervention in Libya contributed in unanticipated ways to the refugee crisis in Europe, but the lack of intervention in Syria may have done so, too.

These disconnects contribute to a core challenge: virtually every argument policymakers make in response to the scholars' critique has to lean on counterfactuals. If Washington hadn't expanded NATO, would what is happening in Ukraine today be happening in the Baltics or Poland instead? If it had pulled out of Japan in the 1990s, what kind of hand would it have to play against China now? "The alternative would have been worse!" is never a fun argument to resort to in a debate, and yet sometimes it's just the right answer. Consider the cases of postwar Germany and Japan, which Mearsheimer downplays with a fleeting reference halfway through his book. Imagine the second half of the twentieth century if the United States had followed Walt's and Mearsheimer's prescriptions for these countries in 1945, by withdrawing U.S. forces and letting Europe and Asia solve their own problems. The regions would look far different, and possibly far darker, today.

Walt's and Mearsheimer's basic strategic premise appears to be that U.S. withdrawal would probably make the world more dangerous, but given its geography and its power, the United States could both avoid the resulting risks and manipulate them to its advantage. Setting aside the grim quality of this logic, it's not at all clear that it's right. Walt cites the first half of the twentieth century as proof that offshore balancing—the hands-off approach to regional security that he prefers—has a "reassuring history." But is there anything reassuring in two catastrophic world wars that inevitably drew in the United States? It is difficult to embrace an approach that counts the 1930s as a success.

There are other reasons for the Mars-Venus quality of the conversation between policymakers and these two scholars. Walt and Mearsheimer can gloss over the expense of bringing U.S. troops home from around the world and then sending them back out when trouble arises, while policymakers have to take those costs into account. Walt and Mearsheimer can downplay the instability that would come from a country like Iran acquiring nuclear weapons, while policymakers think about worst-case scenarios, including a regional arms race and the possibility of the bomb falling into the hands of terrorists. They can argue for stripping liberalism out of U.S. foreign policy, but policymakers have to deal with the fact that the United States' system, and not just its strategy, points toward liberalism. That is, authoritarian governments face pressure not just from the U.S. government but also from U.S. society—*The New York Times*, for example, is not going to stop investigating corruption in the Chinese Communist Party, and the release of the Panama Papers provoked Russian President Vladimir Putin's ire as much as NATO expansion did—and that's not going to stop. Finally, when Walt writes that

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Presidents George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump are basically indistinguishable in their approach to foreign policy, he is operating at a level of such extreme generality that the analysis loses meaning.

HARD CHOICES

But in a way, all that is something of a distraction. The battle lines between the realists and the liberal internationalists have been so well drawn, the debates so well rehearsed, that it is hard to add much to them now. Fighting over how things would have looked today had Washington adopted the Walt and Mearsheimer approach over the last 25 years is not as productive as debating what it should do for the next 25. And even as they insist that it would be easy for policymakers to get things right if only they followed a few simple rules, both authors have remarkably little to say about the central debates in U.S. foreign policy today—the vexing questions that the Blob has been wrestling with since 2016.

The first is how to shape a deteriorating U.S.-Chinese relationship so that it advances U.S. interests without turning into outright confrontation. The "responsible stakeholder" consensus in the American strategic community, premised on integrating China into a U.S.-led order, has come apart. The emerging theme is that Washington got China wrong, and the watchword of the day is "strategic competition" (although competition to what end is not clear, especially if one assumes that China, unlike the Soviet Union, is not destined to fail). It has been disorienting to watch the pendulum swing so fast from a benign view of China to a dark one. The books are surprisingly short on guidance for how to proceed in this new context.

Walt basically throws up his hands, writing that "Asia may be the one place where U.S. leadership is indeed 'indispensable.'" (For someone who must hate the words "indispensable" and "leadership," that is quite a statement.) If Walt has to carve out an exception for the biggest national security issue of our time, this suggests that his overall approach may need rethinking. Mearsheimer, who was a China hawk before it was fashionable, has argued in the past that realism and restraint have to diverge when it comes to China. But in this most recent book, he is so fixated on destroying "liberal hegemony" that he comes close to rooting for China's continued rise, seeing an increasingly powerful China as less of a threat to international stability than sustained American unipolarity. That may or may not be sound as an argument from the perspective of the international system, but it is not particularly useful for U.S. policymakers looking out for national interests. Nor does either author help policymakers prepare for competition on an emerging field of play that is as much about economics, technology, and ideas as it is about traditional security considerations. That is a serious gap in their analysis, as geopolitics unfolds across an expanding range of domains—cyberspace, space, economics and energy, and so on.

This flaw leads to a second hard question, inextricably tied to the first: To what extent are the United States' main competitors systematically exporting their illiberalism, and what are the implications for U.S. strategy? Observers such as Kelly Magsamen and her coauthors at the Center for American

Progress are increasingly emphasizing that both China and Russia have an overriding objective of maintaining their authoritarian models, which creates incentives for them to increase the pressure on liberalism abroad as a means of reducing the pressure on their regimes at home. As Thomas Wright of the Brookings Institution has put it, China and Russia "share the objective of targeting free and open societies to make the world a safer place for authoritarianism," and therefore U.S. foreign policy needs to privilege the defense of democracy in the context of great-power competition.

Both Walt and Mearsheimer presume that the United States' major competitors are acting largely according to realist dictates, that domestic politics isn't a major factor. As a result, they offer a backward-looking critique of the American "impulse to spread democracy," as Mearsheimer puts it, without really addressing the challenge of defending democracy against increasingly ambitious, organized, and effective dictatorships. The foreign policy community's emerging diagnosis may be wrong or overstated, but if it is, neither of these two authors explains why. They don't deal with the range of practices that U.S. competitors are pursuing to put pressure on the American economic and political system, from direct election interference to the strategic use of corruption and state capitalism as tools for building leverage and influence. And if the emerging diagnosis is right, would their preferred strategy of unraveling NATO, pulling out of Europe, and telling like-minded allies to bid for U.S. affection really be a logical next step?

Mearsheimer does posit that pursuing "liberalism abroad undermines liberalism at home." But his modern-day examples of domestic consequences (wiretapping, government secrecy, the "deep state") relate to the war on terrorism, which was hardly a liberal project. That raises a third hard question: Given their constrained bandwidth, how should decision-makers deal with the gap between the objective threat posed by terrorism and the subjective threat felt by the American public? Both Walt and Mearsheimer develop an elaborate caricature of a bloodthirsty foreign policy community dragging a more pacifistic public into foreign military adventures. But when it comes to fighting terrorism abroad, the public—encouraged by politicians who themselves are skeptics of liberal internationalism—sees terrorism as an urgent, even existential priority that requires the use of military force. The foreign policy community is increasingly responding to that demand rather than driving it.

Consider Obama's experience with Iraq. He had taken a page out of the Walt/Mearsheimer playbook by pulling every last U.S. troop out in 2011. Then, in the summer of 2014, the Islamic State, or ISIS, swept into Mosul and shot to the center of the American public consciousness. Those of us on the president's national security team had vigorous debates about whether and how to respond with U.S. military force. But that debate was quickly swamped by public sentiment: after the beheading of two American journalists, the public demanded action, swift and decisive, not to contain ISIS but to defeat it. In that instance, the public was more right, more quickly than the professionals. But the broader dynamic remains: the

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political dimensions of the terrorism issue, and its susceptibility to demagoguery, mean that policymakers have to place it in a different category from other national security challenges, and objective measures of the threat have their limits. In debates about strategy and resources in the years ahead, figuring out how to manage this dynamic will be essential. It is a blind spot for both Walt and Mearsheimer.

Another blind spot concerns a fourth question that policymakers are presently grappling with: In light of both rising geopolitical competition among states and the diffusion of power away from states, how do policymakers design effective mechanisms to address major threats shared by all? Cooperation is required to tackle climate change, pandemic disease, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and the risk of another global economic crisis. At least in the context of mobilizing this kind of collective action, Mearsheimer misses that the motivating theory for many in the foreign policy community may actually be closer to classical republicanism—with its emphasis on institutions, interdependence, and the rule of law—than to classical liberalism. And neither Walt nor Mearsheimer provides a convincing explanation for how such cooperation will come about without U.S. leadership, or without sound rules rooted in sound institutions, or without taking into account the roles of nonstate and substate actors.

They do both pay homage to effective diplomacy, but neither gives a credible account of how a significant U.S. retrenchment would enhance, rather than detract from, the United States' ability to conduct it. Walt, for example, seems to like the Iran nuclear deal, but he gives little credit to the role that crippling sanctions, combined with the credible threat of military force, played in helping bring it about. The demonstration of reassurance and resolve in the service of diplomacy is a key advantage of having U.S. forces deployed globally, and it raises the question, Which does Walt value more—making it harder to make mistakes like Libya or making it easier to engage in successful diplomacy like Iran?

The final area where Walt and Mearsheimer offer surprisingly little guidance is on the future of humanitarian intervention. After the last 25 years, Washington is grappling with the question, What is the right set of conditions, if any, for U.S. military intervention on humanitarian grounds? Criticizing past interventions is a central pillar in both scholars' cases against liberal internationalism. And yet neither comes out and says that such interventions should never be attempted. Mearsheimer's critique of the Libya operation is not that the United States shouldn't have intervened to stop a massacre. Instead, he simply declares that the threat of a massacre was a "false pretext"—in other words, it was all made up. This provides a convenient way for him to avoid the real question.

As for Walt, he is surprisingly supportive of the use of American power to "prevent wars, halt genocides, or persuade other countries to improve their human rights performance." Indeed, he would "countenance using force to halt mass killings when (1) the danger was imminent, (2) the anticipated costs to the United States were modest, (3) the ratio of foreign lives saved to U.S. lives risked was high, and (4) it was clear that intervention would not make things worse or lead to an open-ended

commitment." These are the same criteria that policymakers have applied to each of the humanitarian interventions the United States has pursued over the last quarter century. (Iraq belongs in a separate category because it was not a war waged on humanitarian grounds.) The various post–Cold War interventions mainly met the first three criteria. Walt provides no more guidance on the fourth, which is where most of the debate over whether to act (Libya) or not act (Syria) takes place, and where most of the difficult tradeoffs lie. There is also the problem that neither scholar considers that humanitarian interventions can also have strategic motives. Letting Syria burn didn't just risk a massive loss of life; it also risked destabilizing not one but two areas (Europe and the Persian Gulf) that both Walt and Mearsheimer consider vital.

THE NEW CONVERGENCE

This list of hard questions is hardly exhaustive. The Trump era, along with broader changes in the international environment, has put many assumptions back up for debate. Walt, especially, sees this moment as a golden opportunity for progressives, libertarians, and academic realists to join together to defeat the liberal internationalists. The real trend appears to be going in a different direction. A number of recent meditations, including foreign policy commentaries by Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, point the way toward a kind of convergence of the left and the center. This convergence will hardly be complete, but some common priorities are coming into focus: an elevated concern for the distributional effects of international economic policy, a concentration on combating corruption and kleptocracy and neofascism, an emphasis on diplomacy over the use of military force, an enduring commitment to democratic allies. Perhaps most important, the left and the center share a growing recognition and appreciation of the fact that many successes of the liberal project have been profound—such as the advances against global poverty and disease and the enduring peace between France and Germany, which formed the European Union rather than being doomed to compete.

None of this is to discount the role that Walt and Mearsheimer can and should play in the debates to come. Their focus on first principles is especially important at a moment when so much is up for grabs. Their admonition to think differently is useful in a time of rapid change. Policymakers should read these books and consider their arguments carefully. And Walt and Mearsheimer, for their part, should welcome the chance, in good faith and with goodwill, to engage with policymakers on the difficult questions about how to approach the decades ahead.

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Return to Table of Contents

Snake-Oil Economics

The Bad Math Behind Trump's Policies

N. Gregory Mankiw

Trumponomics: Inside the America First Plan to Revive Our Economy
BY STEPHEN MOORE AND ARTHUR B. LAFFER. All Points Books, 2018, 287 pp.

When economists write, they can decide among three possible voices to convey their message. The choice is crucial, because it affects how readers receive their work.

The first voice might be called the textbook authority. Here, economists act as ambassadors for their profession. They faithfully present the wide range of views professional economists hold, acknowledging the pros and cons of each. These authors do their best to hide their personal biases and admit that there is still plenty that economists do not know. According to this perspective, reasonable people can disagree; it is the author's job to explain the basis for that disagreement and help readers make an informed judgment.

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The second voice is that of the nuanced advocate. In this case, economists advance a point of view while recognizing the diversity of thought among reasonable people. They use state-of-the-art theory and evidence to try to persuade the undecided and shake the faith of those who disagree. They take a stand without pretending to be omniscient. They acknowledge that their intellectual opponents have some serious arguments and respond to them calmly and without vitriol.

The third voice is that of the rah-rah partisan. Rah-rah partisans do not build their analysis on the foundation of professional consensus or serious studies from peer-reviewed journals. They deny that people who disagree with them may have some logical points and that there may be weaknesses in their own arguments. In their view, the world is simple, and the opposition is just wrong, wrong, wrong. Rah-rah partisans do not aim to persuade the undecided. They aim to rally the faithful.

Unfortunately, this last voice is the one the economists Stephen Moore and Arthur Laffer chose in writing their new book, *Trumponomics*. The book's over-the-top enthusiasm for U.S. President Donald Trump's sketchy economic agenda is not likely to convince anyone not already sporting a "Make America Great Again" hat.

ECONOMIC TRIBALISM

Moore and Laffer served as economic advisers to Trump during his campaign and after he was elected president (along with Larry Kudlow, the current director of the National Economic Council, who wrote the book's foreword). From this experience, Moore and Laffer apparently

Seller in chief: Trump promoting his tax cut package in Hialeah, Florida, April 2018

PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVAIS / AP

learned the importance of flattering the boss. In the first chapter alone, they tell us that Trump is a "gifted orator" who is always "dressed immaculately." He is "shrewd," "open-minded," "no-nonsense," and "bigger than life." He is a "common-sense conservative" who welcomes "honest and fair-minded policy debates." He is the "Mick Jagger of politics" with a contagious "enthusiasm and can-doism."

The authors' approach to policy is similarly bereft of nuance. In Chapter 3, they sum it up by proudly recounting what Moore told Trump about U.S. President Barack Obama during the campaign: "Donald, just look at all the things that Obama has done on the economy over the past eight years, and then do just the opposite."

It is hard to imagine more simplistic, misguided advice. To be sure, Moore and Laffer can reasonably hold policy positions and political values to the right of those of Obama. (As someone who chaired the White House Council of Economic Advisers during the George W. Bush administration, so do I.) But the Obama administration was filled with prominent economic advisers who were well within the bounds of mainstream economics: Jason Furman, Austan Goolsbee, Alan Krueger, Christina Romer, and Lawrence Summers, to name but a few. It is not tenable to suggest that with all this talent, the administration made only wrong decisions, and that they were wrong simply because those who made them were Democrats.

The tribalism of Moore and Laffer's approach stems primarily from their devotion to a single issue: the level of taxation. Obama pursued higher taxes, especially on higher-income households. His goal was to fund a federal government that was larger and more active than many Republicans would prefer and to use the tax system to "spread the wealth around," as he famously told Joe Wurzelbacher, known as Joe the Plumber, a man he encountered at a campaign stop in

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Ohio in 2008. By contrast, Moore and Laffer want lower taxes, especially on businesses, which in their view would promote faster economic growth.

The debate over taxes reflects a classic, ongoing disagreement between the left and the right. In 1975, Arthur Okun, a Brookings economist and former adviser to President Lyndon Johnson, wrote a short book called *Equality and Efficiency: The Big Tradeoff*. Okun argued that by using taxes and transfers of wealth to equalize economic outcomes, the government distorts incentives—or that, to put it metaphorically, the harder the government tries to ensure that the economic pie is cut into slices of a similar size, the smaller the pie becomes. Based on this argument, the main priority of the Democratic Party is to equalize the slices, whereas the main priority of the Republican Party is to grow the pie.

Yet Moore and Laffer aren't willing to admit that making policy requires confronting such difficult tradeoffs. Laffer is famous for his eponymous curve, which shows that tax rates can reach levels high enough that cutting them would yield enough growth to actually increase tax revenue. In that scenario, the tradeoff between equality and efficiency vanishes. The government can cut taxes, increase growth, and use the greater tax revenue to help the less fortunate. Everyone is better off.

The Laffer curve is undeniable as a matter of economic theory. There is certainly some level of taxation at which cutting tax rates would be win-win. But few economists believe that tax rates in the United States have reached such heights in recent years; to the contrary, they are likely below the revenue-maximizing level. In practice, the big tradeoff between equality and efficiency just won't go away.

LESSONS FROM ECON 101

Trumponomics is full of exhortations about the importance of economic growth. Why, Moore and Laffer ask, should Americans settle for the two percent growth that many economists have been projecting? Wouldn't every problem be easier to solve with a more rapidly expanding economy? The book quotes Trump as claiming, when announcing his tax plan in December 2017, that it would not increase the budget deficit because it would raise growth rates to "three, or four, five, or even six percent."

The authors offer no credible evidence that the tax changes passed will lead to such high growth. Most studies yield far more modest projections. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the Trump tax cuts will increase growth rates by 0.2 percentage points per year over the first five years. A study by Robert Barro (a conservative economist at Harvard) and Furman (a liberal economist at Harvard) published in 2018 estimates that the tax bill will increase annual growth by 0.13 percentage points over a decade. And that is if the changes are made permanent. Barro and Furman estimate that as the legislation is written, with many of the provisions set to expire in 2025, it will increase annual growth by a mere 0.04 percentage points over ten years.

It is conceivable that standard economic models underestimate the impact of tax cuts on growth. A research paper by the economists Christina Romer and David Romer published in 2010 examined historical tax changes and found that they had larger effects on economic activity

than standard models suggest. (It is worth noting that these two authors' political leanings are left of center, so their findings are not the result of ideological taint.) One might reasonably argue that Trump's tax cuts will increase growth over the next decade by as much as half a percentage point per year. But that is a long way from the one- to four-percentage-point boost that the president and his associates have bragged of, and that Moore and Laffer quote without explanation, caveat, or apology.

The authors of *Trumponomics* do depart from the president on one piece of his agenda: his approach to international trade. Moore and Laffer are ardent free traders; as such, their views are well within the mainstream of modern economics. Ever since Adam Smith took on the mercantilists in *The Wealth of Nations* in 1776, most economists have come to believe that international trade is win-win. They reject the idea that a trade imbalance between two nations means that one of them must be the loser, and they applaud agreements, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and international organizations, such as the World Trade Organization, that reduce trade barriers around the world.

Moore and Laffer recognized early in the campaign that Trump rejects this consensus. To their credit, they do not back down from their views in *Trumponomics*. They acknowledge that the president is playing a "high-stakes game of poker" and that "if it doesn't work, the ramifications scare us to death." But they also give Trump the benefit of the doubt by expressing the hope that his belligerent approach toward U.S. trading partners will somehow lead to better deals and freer trade.

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Hostility to globalization did not, of course, begin with Trump. It may be hard to remember now, but when Obama was a senator, he opposed many free-trade initiatives advanced by the administration of then U.S. President George W. Bush, such as the Dominican Republic–Central America Free Trade Agreement. When Obama ran for president in 2008, he spoke about the need to renegotiate NAFTA, although he quickly put that goal aside after moving into the White House. Similarly, during the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign, Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont made hostility to free trade a central tenet of his platform. So popular did that position prove among Democrats that he managed to pressure the Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton into opposing the Trans-Pacific Partnership—the very trade deal she had backed as secretary of state during the Obama administration. The bottom line is that for a politician seeking election, opposing free trade is a lot easier than supporting it. Many voters are more likely to view foreign nations as threats to U.S. prosperity than as potential partners for mutually advantageous trade. Economists have a long way to go to persuade the body politic of some basic lessons from Econ 101.

To be fair to Trump and other anti-globalization zealots, amid all their misinformation and bluster is a kernel of truth. The United States produces a lot of intellectual property, including movies, software, and pharmaceuticals. The failure of countries, especially China, to enforce the copyrights and patents that protect intellectual property constitutes a loss to the United States similar to outright theft. The Commission on the Theft of American Intellectual Property puts the loss at up to $600 billion per year. If Trump were able to negotiate trade deals that solved this problem, the accomplishment would be significant. But in light of how much other nations benefit from not protecting U.S. intellectual property, a negotiated solution won't come easy.

GIVING THE PRESIDENT A PASS

Perhaps the most disappointing aspect of *Trumponomics* is the long list of crucial issues on which the authors are largely silent. They offer no cogent plans to deal with global climate change, the long-term fiscal imbalance from growing entitlement spending, or the increase in economic inequality that has occurred over the past half century. Many reasonable Republicans would support a tax on carbon emissions, for example. Such a policy would slow climate change by incentivizing the movement toward cleaner energy, as well as provide revenue that could be used to close the fiscal gap or to help those struggling at the bottom of the economic ladder.

Rather than suggesting coherent policies, Moore and Laffer seem to hope that a much more rapidly growing economy will provide the resources to address all these problems, and they seem to believe that this growth will follow ineluctably from the lower taxes and deregulation that lie at the heart of Trump's agenda. It would be wonderful if that were possible. Maybe rah-rah partisans really believe it is. But more likely, it is just wishful thinking. Trump appears eager to avoid most of the economic problems facing the nation. By banking on so much growth from cutting taxes, Moore and Laffer are, in effect, giving him a pass and kicking the can down the road to a future leader more interested in confronting hard policy choices.

When Empires End

The Last Days of British India

Maya Jasanoff

The Last Englishmen: Love, War, and the End of Empire
BY DEBORAH BAKER. Graywolf Press, 2018, 352 pp.

The pupils of Miss Higgins' School in Calcutta had lined up neatly for the photograph, the girls' shoulders draped by braids, the boys' knees peeping below shorts. Their tropical uniforms blazed brightly in the black-and-white photograph. Many of the children, including my mother and my uncle, were Bengali. Some were European, and at least one was half-Bengali, like me. "Her uncle was W. H. Auden," my grandmother said, pointing to a girl named Anita.

If I didn't know who the poet W. H. Auden was when I first saw these pictures from my mother's 1950s schooldays, I knew nothing whatsoever about his brother John Bicknell Auden, Anita's father, until reading *The Last Englishmen* by Deborah Baker. Auden is one of the leading characters in this group biography of young British men who set out for India in the 1920s to work as imperial administrators. They went expecting to do their bit maintaining the "jewel in the crown" of the British Empire, as generations had done before them. Instead, they found themselves witnessing the demise of the British Raj, when a long nationalist struggle culminated in 1947 with the partition of British India and the independence of India and Pakistan.

Fighting for independence from oppressive imperial rule can look in retrospect like one of those black-and-white choices—resisting fascism is another—where it seems obvious what stand anyone with principle would take. What the deeply researched, marvelously portrayed life stories recounted in *The Last Englishmen* show is just how muddled these world-historical changes actually look when you're living in the middle of them. That makes the book a valuable supplement to the more conventional accounts of decolonization as a process driven by clear-eyed activists and historical logic. If anything, histories like Baker's may be precisely what are needed in the present heated moment, as reminders of the many ways in which people find their way through political transformation.

IMPERIAL MEN

John Auden was fresh out of Cambridge when he traveled to Bengal, the most populous province in the Raj, in 1926. He was there to take a job with the Geological Survey of India. His first assignment had him surveying steamy, smoky coalfields north of Calcutta, but he dreamed of exploring the fractured peaks of the Himalayas. Auden was one of many young Europeans fired up by an intensifying competition among European powers to be the first to summit Mount Everest. Whoever

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climbed Everest, ran the implicit logic, was on top of the world.

Baker finds a perfect narrative foil to Auden amid the incestuous ranks of the British upper-middle class. Michael Spender was a schoolmate of W. H. Auden and the brother of a different poet, Stephen Spender. An Oxford graduate to John Auden's Cambridge, a geographer to his geologist, Michael Spender trained in mapmaking and aerial photography in the Alps and went on to land the post that Auden craved, when, in 1935, he was chosen as the chief surveyor for an expedition to reconnoiter Everest.

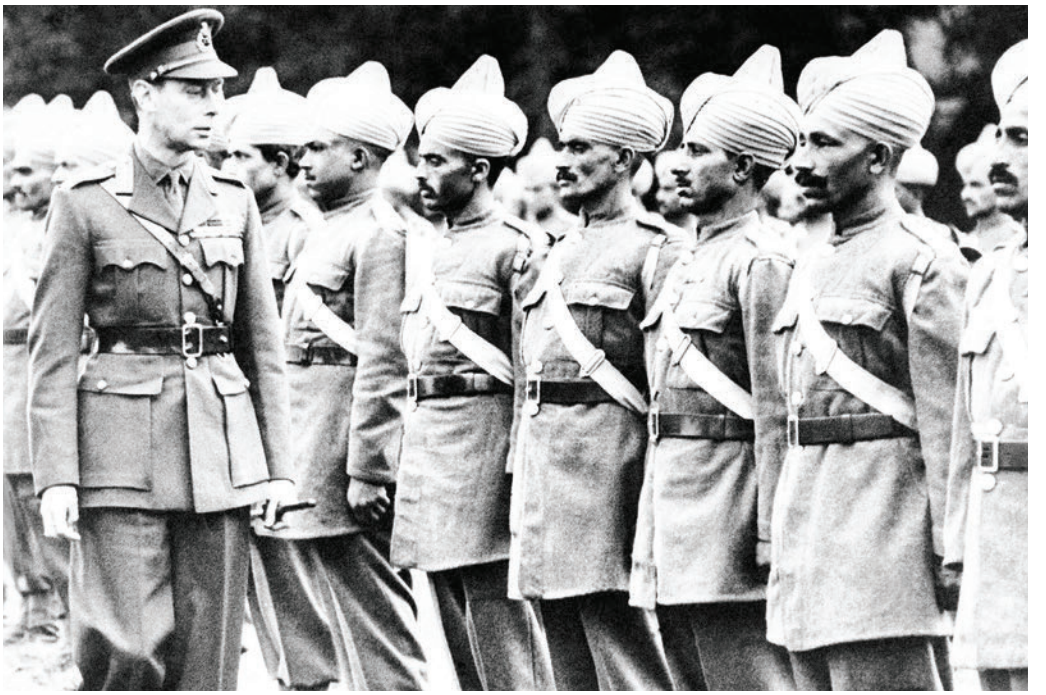
Auden and Spender weren't simply among the last Englishmen to be employed by the colonial state. They were among the last propelled into adulthood on a tail wind of imperial self-confidence. They came of age after World War I, when the British Empire was larger than ever on paper, with a clutch of former Ottoman and German colonies transferred into British hands as League of Nations mandates. The British Empire was being managed more liberally, too, with self-government (or "home rule") having been extended to the so-called white colonies of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Ireland. Few Britons at the end of the war supported independence for tropical colonies. If anything, they may have expected that a new era of enlightened administration was just getting under way.

In practice, however, the imperial edifice was cracking under pressure from nationalists—and nowhere more consequentially than in India, the biggest, most valuable colony of all. India had contributed massively to the war effort, and in exchange, Indian political leaders hoped for substantive steps toward home rule. Instead, British administrators granted only moderate reforms, which were offset by enhanced policing of dissent. In 1919, British troops opened fire on a peaceful nationalist gathering in the city of Amritsar and killed nearly 400 unarmed protesters. The massacre galvanized the first India-wide protest led by Mahatma Gandhi, who applied his philosophy of nonviolence to the nationalist cause.

The 1920s and 1930s would be marked by a cat-and-mouse game of protests, crackdowns, and compromises. British authorities jailed independence leaders, then freed them under duress. Gandhi orchestrated ever-larger civil disobedience campaigns and won further legislative reforms. But these still fell short of home rule, and when British authorities unilaterally brought India into World War II, without promising independence in return, the thread of nationalist patience snapped. In 1942, Gandhi called for the British to "quit India" and deliver immediate home rule. By then, the Bengali militant Subhas Chandra Bose was gathering an army, with Japanese support, to drive out the British by force.

A CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE

In any history of British India, these events appear as milestones on the road to independence. In *The Last Englishmen*, they're pebbles in the streams of the protagonists' lives. "If the nineteenth century had been all about piling up one scarcely credible heroic exploit after another," Baker writes, "the twentieth century . . . seemed to be all about sitting down and taking apart one's motives." Auden started psychoanalysis during a furlough in Paris and used his journal



At His Majesty's service: King George VI inspecting Indian troops, 1940

writing as a kind of therapy. Spender met the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung on a ship from India and began a course of Jungian analysis.

Auden's and Spender's self-examinations reflected a more general crisis of confidence in the imperial system. Another member of the Auden-Spender social circle, Michael Carritt, became a minor district officer in Bengal, where (like George Orwell in Burma) he grew disgusted with the performance of white supremacy. Carritt became an informant for the Communist Party of India and funneled notes to the radical League Against Imperialism in London. His specific trajectory from imperial servant to anti-imperial activist aligns with a broader turn in British opinion. As Gandhi was launching the Quit India movement, the Labour Party passed the Charter of Freedom for Colonial Peoples at its 1942 conference, calling for social equality and democratic government across the empire.

It wasn't only the British who underwent transformations during these fraught years. Baker also introduces readers to Sudhindranath Datta, a member of Calcutta's English-educated Indian elite, whose family fortunes had grown in step with British imperialism in Bengal. In 1929, Datta toured the United States with the Nobel Prize–winning poet Rabindranath Tagore, but he returned disgusted both by Western Orientalism and by what he saw as Calcutta's decay. He started a literary magazine and an *adda* (salon) in his family mansion in North Calcutta. On Friday nights, between bookshelves with serried volumes of Sir Walter Scott and Alfred Lord Tennyson, the Bengali intelligentsia (and a suspected English police informant) gathered to debate Indian politics and world affairs. The *adda* acted as a

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barometer of Indian anticolonialism, where Gandhi's gradualist vision for independence competed with the ideas of militant rivals, including the Communists and Bose.

Although Auden and Spender are nominally the book's centerpieces, perhaps the most compelling figure to animate *The Last Englishmen* is an Englishwoman who connected with them both. Nancy Coldstream, née Sharp, daughter of a Cornish country doctor, moved to London in 1928 to enroll as a student in the Slade School of Fine Art. Canny about the reality that a woman's path to fortune depended on attaching herself to the right man, she swiftly married the most promising artist in the class, Bill Coldstream. Almost equally promptly, the couple ran out of money and into marital difficulties. Nancy's time for art making got consumed by caring for an infant daughter. Bill's creativity sputtered, although he persisted doggedly enough that when he couldn't find a blank canvas, he took one of Nancy's best portraits and painted over it "without a second thought."

Things started looking up for the Coldstreams in 1935, when Bill took a job editing films for the British postal system's documentary unit and brought a new colleague home to lodge with them: W. H. Auden. Auden and Nancy became fast friends, and through him, Nancy met a series of men who would change the course of her life. First came Auden's friend Louis MacNeice, a young Irish poet, who fell madly in love with her and began an affair, declaring that "until he'd met Nancy, he'd been color blind." Then came Auden's brother John, who was promptly "bewitched" by Nancy. She started an affair with him, too, and promised him her ongoing affections "as long as it doesn't hurt Louis or interfere with Bill." It was an impossible calculus, and when John returned to India, his place was taken by another man to whom he himself had introduced Nancy. That, inevitably, was Michael Spender.

Was Nancy Coldstream also a "last"? For all the women's liberation of the interwar years—including the right to vote and a relaxing of divorce laws in women's favor—hers was a classic case of a career irretrievably curtailed by marriage and childbearing. And although Baker notes in a postscript that Nancy was "memorialized as one of the most underrated painters of her generation," the story of her life, at least as described in these pages, is the story of the men she loved. Given how many of the constraints she faced still ring true today, it's no coincidence that women's history is more often told in "firsts" than "lasts."

LOOSE ENDS

Baker has a gift for scene writing and designs the book accordingly, breaking each chapter into segments headed by an address and a date, as if in a play. She conjures up "rippling curtains of rain" draping over the countryside and the "silken currents of the Brahmaputra" running "through loosening skeins toward the Bay of Bengal," as well as the crush of urban India, where "every veranda held a crowd, every window a curious face" and "grocers slept among vegetables in elevated bamboo huts along crowded roadways." A trove of wonderfully candid diaries and letters lets Baker get deep inside the characters' heads and hearts. Reading *The Last Englishmen*, one can almost screen the television adaptation in one's head.

But a powerful drama needs its scenes to build into acts, and it's often hard to know where *The Last Englishmen* is going—both figuratively and literally. A given chapter might start in a London neighborhood, leap to a Himalayan pass, stop by a Calcutta office, and end up in a Darjeeling boarding house (Chapter 10), or it might open in a Cornish home before staying in a New York hotel, visiting the viceroy's palace in New Delhi, and attending Datta's *adda* (Chapter 14). Baker's taste for one-line paragraphs enhances the staccato feel. It's a rhetorical technique that can be very effective in ramping up anticipation or nailing down a point, but here it reads too often as an interruption or an irrelevance.

This is a particular liability when it comes to extracting what, if anything, Baker wants to conclude about the nature of Indian independence. One promise of this book lies in its potential to explore how people make sense of their roles in a system that is failing. Yet for all the vividness of their professional and romantic travails (or perhaps because of it), it is rather difficult to glean how self-conscious Auden and Spender really were about their positions as agents of British power in a period of escalating opposition. Maybe the lesson is a timeless one, that history happens to people far more than people happen to make history. Or maybe it's that political scruples alone seldom stall the complex engine of life, greased by love, ambition, curiosity, desire, loyalty, anxiety, and hope.

With the onset of World War II, the engine whirred fast and furiously. Nancy Coldstream becomes an ambulance driver. Spender reads aerial photographs for the Royal Air Force. Auden, despite

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being an amateur flyer, fails the RAF's pilot test. Meanwhile, in India, violence reaches a new pitch. Japanese bombers strafe Calcutta. Famine devastates Bengal, killing more than three million people; Datta will see the starving straggle into the stairwells of his apartment building to avoid being scooped up by vans sent to drive them out to the countryside to die. When the war ends, the violence does not: in the Great Calcutta Killings of 1946, up to 15,000 people, mostly Muslims, are slaughtered in communal riots.

To give away specific characters' endings would spoil the plot, but it won't surprise anyone that the book wraps up with independence in 1947 (at which time, incidentally, Mount Everest had still not been summited, despite the imperial competition of the prewar years). For all that Gandhi had charted a course to freedom on the principle of nonviolence, the independence of India and Pakistan—and the drawing of borders between them—was accompanied by mass migration and horrific violence. This was "liberty *and* death," as the cover of *Time* indelibly put it.

It was neither an Auden nor a Spender who saw the transfer of power up closest; it was their acquaintance MacNeice. Sent by the BBC to report on the transition, he watched celebratory fireworks in New Delhi and interviewed Jawaharlal Nehru, independent India's first prime minister, before heading to Pakistan. In a refugee camp near the new border, MacNeice encountered the horrifying obverse of freedom: hundreds of men, women, and children "shot, stabbed, speared, clubbed, or set on fire" on their way to India, crammed into a tiny field hospital with just one doctor to attend them. "Night falls on Kipling's Grand Trunk Road and all the deserted cantonments," MacNeice wrote in a verse in his diary. "On jute mill and ashram, on cross and lingam . . . / On the man who has never left the forest / On the last Englishman to leave."

But they didn't all leave just yet. Early in 1939, Datta had introduced Auden to the woman who finally became his wife. She was a vivacious Bengali painter named Sheila Bonnerjee, and she had recently returned from studying in London. Auden himself was surprised when his mother accepted the news of his marriage to an Indian without batting an eye, "telling him that people treated the subject rather differently nowadays." The couple's daughter Anita was born in 1941; a second daughter, Rita, in 1942. I wonder if they would have looked back at a photo of their schooldays and seen it as I did, as empire's shadow in a postcolonial dawn.

Life After Liberation

The Long Shadow of Eastern Europe's Communist Past

Timothy Garton Ash

Dancing Bears: True Stories of People Nostalgic for Life Under Tyranny
BY WITOLD SZABLOWSKI. TRANSLATED BY ANTONIA LLOYD-JONES. Penguin Books, 2018, 256 pp.

Welcome to the Wild East. First, there are Bulgarian Gypsies with dancing bears. Then there is a Polish village whose inhabitants dress up as Hobbits from *The Lord of the Rings*, along with Gandalf, played by a woman, and Gollum—in private life a farmer who receives European Union subsidies. There are hundreds of thousands of communist-era bunkers in Albania, some of them now being demolished by men in search of rebar. Meanwhile, a Serbian remembers being "treated" by the former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic in Belgrade, where the notorious war criminal was in hiding, disguised in a ponytail and beard and pretending to be a faith healer: "At one point he told me that cosmic energy came to him via the hair and beard." And to cap it all off, a Georgian woman dreams of Joseph Stalin visiting her at night: "He gazes at me, puffs on his pipe, and twirls his moustache. He smiles, and then heads for the door. Then I weep and cry for him to stay."

Dancing Bears, the latest book by the Polish journalist Witold Szablowski, is never dull. This is Tom Wolfe meets Franz Kafka, or perhaps a Milan Kundera remake of *Dances With Wolves*. The excellent English version by Antonia Lloyd-Jones, a leading translator from Polish, perfectly captures Szablowski's pithy, staccato prose.

Yet niggling questions remain. The subtitle of the American edition promises readers "true stories of people nostalgic for life under tyranny." Szablowski's account hardly bears out this diagnosis. As a collection of vivid, skillfully crafted reportage from the wilder corners of the postcommunist world, *Dancing Bears* is a rattling good read. But in what sense, precisely, are these stories true, and what do they actually tell us about life in postcommunist Europe?

EXOTIC EAST

Szablowski's report is divided into two halves. The first is about the dancing bears once kept by Bulgarian Gypsies (now more politely called Roma). After Bulgaria joined the European Union in 2007, animal-rights activists persuaded the last remaining bear keepers to hand their animals over to a reserve, the Dancing Bears Park, in Belitsa, in southwestern Bulgaria. "The animals were taught how a free bear is supposed to move about," Szablowski writes. "How to hibernate. How to copulate. How to obtain food. The park at Belitsa became an unusual

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'freedom research lab.'" Yet "for every retired dancing bear, the moment comes when freedom starts to cause it pain. What does it do then? It gets up on its hind legs and starts to dance."

When Szablowski heard about this story, it occurred to him that the bears were in the same condition as the people of eastern Europe. "Ever since the transition from socialism to democracy began in Poland in 1989," he writes, "our lives have been a kind of freedom research project—a never-ending course in what freedom is, how to make use of it, and what sort of price is paid for it."

The dancing bears therefore serve as an allegorical leitmotif in the book's second half. The chapters in Part 2 have the same titles—"Love," "Freedom," "Negotiations," "Hibernation," "Castration"—as those in Part 1, and each has an epigraph with a putatively apt quotation from the earlier description of the bears and their keepers. But this time, Szablowski whizzes around the postcommunist world, from Cuba—assuming we can now call Cuba postcommunist—to Ukraine, Albania, Serbia, Kosovo, Estonia, Georgia, and that Polish Hobbit village. At the end of his tour, Szablowski takes an unexpected turn to Greece, where he finds a young architecture student, Maria, protesting for an end to capitalism. The book closes with her prophecy: "We're starting a landslide here that will engulf the entire world."

No wonder Szablowski's previous reporting received the Polish Press Agency's Ryszard Kapuscinski Award. Kapuscinski is the founding father and presiding deity of the contemporary Polish school of reportage, of which Szablowski is now a leading practitioner. Take *Dancing Bears* in one hand and Kapuscinski's 1992 book, *The Soccer War*, in the other. There are the same short paragraphs, punchy prose, surreal stories, and first-person narration; the same short, apparently disconnected chapters, presented in a strictly nonlinear order; the same devotion to showing, not telling.

But there is a problem with Kapuscinski. The maestro played fast and loose with the facts; he borrowed anecdotes and turned them into what looked like his own reporting; he embroidered, fabricated, and fabulated. The scholar Abbas Milani, an authority on the shah of Iran, once told Kapuscinski's biographer, Artur Domoslawski, that "you can open [Kapuscinski's] *Shah of Shahs* at any page, point to a passage, and I will tell you what is wrong or inaccurate." A resident of Addis Ababa complained that Kapuscinski's celebrated book about the Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie is "like a tale from *The Thousand and One Nights*." The biographer showed the former Bolivian guerilla Osvaldo Peredo what Kapuscinski wrote about his family. "This is fiction," an indignant Peredo responded. "It may be colorfully written, but it's entirely untrue. Well, almost entirely."

Distinguished wordsmiths still defend Kapuscinski on the grounds that this was Literature, with a capital *L*, not mere reporting. But that's not what it says on the label. When his work was translated into English, Kapuscinski was celebrated as a great reporter: someone who had seen, heard, endured, and accurately recorded everything he wrote about.

In these times of industrial-scale online disinformation, hyperpolarization, and general all-around "Trumpery," such

trespassing is more dangerous than ever. We writers of nonfiction need to guard the bright line between fact and fiction with every weapon at our disposal.

This is not to suggest that Szablowski willingly distorts facts or misleads his readers as Kapuscinski did. But he certainly operates within the loose conventions of the Kapuscinski school of reporting. Leave aside, as enjoyable ludic ursology, several passages in which he tells us what individual bears "probably" thought and felt. ("Misho is not capable of getting his head around Dimitar's death. Probably all he knows is that the man was there . . . and then suddenly that man was gone.") But take those Albanian bunkers. "In a country slightly smaller than Maryland, inhabited by barely three million people," readers are told, "the Communists built about 750,000 of them." That would be roughly one bunker for every four inhabitants. Yet at the end of the same paragraph, Szablowski quotes his source as saying, "Someone once suggested that there are 750,000 of them, and now everyone keeps repeating that." Why include this figure if it represents an unfounded and obviously ridiculous claim?

Another symptom of mild Kapuscinskiitis is the author's self-dramatization as an intrepid reporter risking his neck on the reader's behalf. When Szablowski makes a trip to the Estonian city of Narva, he excitedly reports warnings

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of "Mafiosi, hired assassins, polluted air, and exploding cars." He suggests he was "probably the first hitchhiker in independent Kosovo." As someone who hitched several rides in Kosovo immediately after the 1999 NATO invasion, I beg to differ. However harmless these individual exaggerations may be, taken together, they contribute to a narrative in which everything becomes wilder, more extreme, and more exotic. The British writer John Ryle, in his analysis of Kapuscinski's writings about Africa, called this style "tropical baroque." One might also call it Orientalism.

There is a long tradition, stretching back to the Enlightenment, of western Europeans and North Americans orientalizing eastern Europe, as Voltaire did with Russia and Rousseau did with Poland. What is unusual about Szablowski is that he is orientalizing his own region. *Dancing Bears* is, so to speak, the self-orientalization of eastern Europe (perhaps better in German: *die Selbstorientalisierung Osteuropas*.) Odder still, Szablowski is writing his account at a time when eastern Europe—or at least east-central Europe, from Poland to Bulgaria—has never been closer to the West. All of its states have some version of the political and economic system prevalent in the West, and most of them are members of the same political, economic, and security communities—the EU, NATO—as their western neighbors, something unprecedented in European history. How nice, then, for Westerners to be reassured that they are, after all, still on a higher plane of civilization, reason, and Enlightenment, while eastern Europeans remain, under their L'Oréal-smoothed skin, the same old dancing bears.

WEEPING FOR TYRANNY?

This brings us to the strange matter of the subtitle of the American edition: *True Stories of People Nostalgic for Life Under Tyranny*. Very few of the protagonists in Szablowski's political reportage seem to fit this bill. A Ukrainian who works as a cleaning lady in Poland admires how EU membership has transformed the country: "You Poles are looking better. And you're eating better too. These days every Biedronka supermarket sells olive oil." And she concludes: "I pray for the EU to come to us too." In the Polish Hobbit village, the author sits on a bench with Gollum (AKA Zenon Pusz, a villager), drinking beer, smoking Marlboros, and "remembering the days when in the countryside you smoked filterless cigarettes and drank cheap wine known as 'brainfuck.'" Nostalgic for brainfuck, anyone?

Nor will readers find much evidence here that the Serbs—let alone the Bosnians—are nostalgic for Karadzic, even in his capacity as a faith healer, or that the Kosovar Albanians are pining for the days of domination by Serbia. Yes, some of the ethnic Russians the author meets in Estonia are indeed nostalgic for the Soviet Union, and Szablowski is rightly critical of the early years of Estonian policy toward the country's Russian minority. But even among that minority, we encounter the figure of "Asya's mom," a presumably middle-aged or elderly Russian woman who passes her Estonian language exam on the seventh attempt, opening the door to Estonian citizenship.

One of Szablowski's finest characters, and a testament to his empathetic reporter's eye, is an old woman who hails from the provincial Polish town of Pabianice

but now spends her life on the streets around the Victoria coach and railway stations in London. She goes by the name Lady Peron (*peron* means "railway platform" in Polish). Is she nostalgic for life under communism? Apparently not: "Suddenly the Lady falls silent, smiles, and takes me by the arm. 'But tell me frankly, mister. Many a healthy person hasn't seen as much of the world as this cripple from Pabianice.'"

Only two people in the pages of *Dancing Bears* genuinely are nostalgic for tyranny: first, the widow of the Albanian dictator Enver Hoxha, and second, the Georgian woman who works at the Joseph Stalin Museum and is visited in her dreams by the mustache-twirling charmer Uncle Joe. Well, they would be nostalgic, wouldn't they?

To be sure, some people in postcommunist Europe will say that they miss some good things about the bad old days. They may, for example, mention a kind of rudimentary economic security—"we pretend to work, and they pretend to pay us," as the old quip went—or say that their lives were once less stressful. Others may recall a sense of equality and solidarity among those below the small communist ruling class, the nomenklatura. There's an interesting subject there, one for another, less colorful, but perhaps deeper, book.

THE ROOTS OF DISCONTENT

Such a book might start by asking how it could happen that as we approach the 30th anniversary of the revolutions of 1989, leaders such as Viktor Orban in Hungary and Jaroslaw Kaczynski in Poland have achieved high levels of electoral support while systematically eroding the checks and balances of their

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countries' still fragile liberal democracies. To what extent are these leaders part of a wider populist and antiliberal movement that includes such figures as Donald Trump in the United States, Nigel Farage in the United Kingdom, and Matteo Salvini in Italy? And how much of their success is due to the specific circumstances of postcommunist central and eastern Europe?

Did the absence of a major public reckoning with Hungary's and Poland's communist past open the door to a pseudo-revolutionary politics in which a turn to illiberalism is justified as the only way to end the legacy of communism? How significant is it that societies behind the Iron Curtain had relatively little experience of immigration, let alone western European–style multiculturalism, so that nativistic sentiment is now easily mobilized against potential newcomers—especially Muslim ones? Or is the cause more a wounded national pride, a sense of humiliation, of being perceived only as poor copies of western European societies, and a desire for a new, heroic role as the true defenders of a more traditional, Christian Europe? This narrative upends former U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's famous comment dismissing disgruntled western European allies as "old Europe": instead, populist leaders in Budapest and Warsaw claim they are defending the old Europe, while decadent, multicultural western Europe is the new.

How far are we simply witnessing an understandable human reaction against so much rapid change—liberalization, globalization, Europeanization, digitalization—all hitting at once? Or is it the atomization of consumer society, especially in the digital age, that is leading people back to the old familiar solidarities of Christian churches and ethnically defined national communities? A new saying is making the rounds in Warsaw: "Where do Poles meet? Answer: only at the gas station."

For an author, it is always supremely irritating to be criticized on the grounds that you did not write a different book—the one the reviewer would have liked to read. I raise the alternative here only because the American publisher gave Szablowski's book that subtitle about nostalgia for tyranny, suggesting a thesis the book does not advance, let alone sustain. The original Polish edition had no subtitle, whereas a more recent Polish edition has a subtitle that translates roughly as *Freedom Means New Challenges, New Smells, New Sounds, a New Great Adventure*. Notice that there's no mention of nostalgia for tyranny, a notion that most Polish readers would laugh out of court.

A skilled reporter such as Szablowski could potentially do a fascinating job of talking to the voters for Kaczynski's Law and Justice party in his own country and unpacking the warp and woof of their discontents. I enjoyed this book, but I would love that to be his next one. The explanation of what is happening in eastern Europe today lies not in dancing bears but, perhaps, in stationary people who feel the world is dancing around them.

Recent Books

Political and Legal

G. John Ikenberry

Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment
BY FRANCIS FUKUYAMA. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018, 240 pp.

In the decades since writing his famous essay "The End of History?," Fukuyama has explored an often forgotten yet critical dimension of liberal democracy: the desire for dignity. In an ideal world, citizens would ground their identity in their shared humanity. But now, people are seeking recognition in narrow identity groups, based on nationality, religion, sect, race, ethnicity, and gender. Identity politics has always existed, but leaders on the left and the right have exploited the fears created by economic and social upheavals to build political coalitions around particular groups and their demands for recognition. For Fukuyama, this is the greatest threat to liberal democracy. He sees the politics of resentment being expressed by Vladimir Putin in Russia, Xi Jinping in China, and Viktor Orban in Hungary—and, in only slightly less overt ways, in established liberal democracies. As Fukuyama writes, a sense of nation is essential for liberal democracy, precisely because it speaks to the human desire for identity and respect. The challenge is to foster an inclusive and civic-minded nationalism that appeals to humanity's most generous spirit. Great forces of history are arrayed against that endeavor, so leaders and people across the liberal democratic world must turn it into an active political project.

Authoritarianism: What Everyone Needs to Know
BY ERICA FRANTZ. Oxford University Press, 2018, 200 pp.

After decades of retreat, authoritarianism is on the rise. This poses a political challenge to liberal democracies. But it also poses an intellectual challenge to scholars. In this short study, Frantz provides an illuminating guide to today's authoritarian wave. Authoritarianism, she shows, is a moving target. It can take the form of strongman rulers, as in sub-Saharan Africa; autocratic regimes led by a party or the military, as in Latin America; or hereditary dictators, as in North Korea. Frantz is at her most insightful in her description of the ways in which authoritarian regimes have taken on "pseudo-democratic" characteristics in order to survive. Today, over 80 percent of dictatorships hold elections, for example. How authoritarianism arrives has changed, too. Military or elite coups are out of fashion, replaced by more gradual usurpations of power carried out through rigged elections and biased political rules. Turkey and the Philippines fit this model, with elected populists slowly dismantling the institutions of democracy. Authoritarians have new tools: the co-optation of institutions, the use of patronage networks, and the control of information. It is harder to fight back against this subtle democratic subversion, because a single moment of truth never occurs.

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Chaos in the Liberal Order: The Trump Presidency and International Politics in the Twenty-first Century
EDITED BY ROBERT JERVIS, FRANCIS J. GAVIN, JOSHUA ROVNER, AND DIANE LABROSSE. Columbia University Press, 2018, 448 pp.

This sprawling set of 32 short essays is one of the first scholarly efforts to reckon with the Trump administration's assault on the international liberal order. It is as lively as it is incoherent and inconclusive. As Jervis argues in the introduction, the Trump years provide, if nothing else, a chance for political scientists and historians to test their theories. The essays show that scholars differ on the sources of the crisis—whether President Donald Trump is the cause or the effect—and the scope of it. Realists look to the long-term decline of U.S. power. Others focus on Trump and the institution of the presidency, examining how the national security state constrains its leader. Scholars of international institutions see Trump's presidency as a test of the theory that institutions and long-standing strategic bargains will prove resilient. Michael Barnett suggests that Trump is so unusual that he escapes the confines of most international relations theory—realist, liberal, or otherwise. The book also features a good debate over the resiliency of the liberal order; like most of the volume's other discussions, it hinges on each author's assumptions about the sources of political order and whether domestic political coalitions can be rebuilt around internationalism.

The Myth of International Order: Why Weak States Persist and Alternatives to the State Fade Away
BY ARJUN CHOWDHURY. Oxford University Press, 2018, 272 pp.

The title of this book is exactly backward. Chowdhury makes a convincing case for the reality, not the myth, of international order. He notes that most countries in the world are weak, with wobbly central governments that fail to provide basic economic and social services—and yet they muddle through, thanks to an international order that protects all sovereign territorial states against their rivals. The myth that Chowdhury exposes is the realist narrative in which countries compete for survival in a state of Hobbesian anarchy. As Chowdhury shows, this classic model fits the European experience but little else. He argues that the wars of modern Europe convinced citizens to support centralized power and pay high taxes, whereas states outside the West, because they developed later, did not go through this cycle of war making and state building. That means the modern international order hits young countries with a double whammy: by dampening conflict, it makes it harder for them to grow strong while also raising the expectations for what governments must do when it comes to education, health care, and other social services. Chowdhury is surely correct that state building is harder now than a century ago. The challenge is to find peaceful incentives for effective governance.

Protean Power: Exploring the Uncertain and Unexpected in World Politics
EDITED BY PETER J. KATZENSTEIN AND LUCIA A. SEYBERT. Cambridge University Press, 2018, 382 pp.

International relations scholars have repeatedly found themselves surprised by grand historical upheavals: the Russian Revolution, the end of the Cold War, the 2008 financial crisis, the Arab Spring, Brexit, the election of Donald Trump. In this ambitious book, Katzenstein and Seybert argue that scholars need to rethink their assumptions about knowledge and uncertainty in world politics and equip themselves with new ideas about power and innovation. Theorists tend to see a world in which uncertainty can be reduced to calculable risk. This view of knowledge is like throwing a die: we don't know what a specific throw will yield, but we do know the probability of each outcome. Katzenstein and Seybert argue that the world is just too complex and contingent for this kind of social inquiry. If the world is seen this way, leaders need to adopt more open-ended and improvisational forms of decision-making—what the authors call "protean power": "a creatively generated shift in accepted problem-solving that circulates across different sites of political life."

Economic, Social, and Environmental

Richard N. Cooper

Money and Government: The Past and Future of Economics
BY ROBERT SKIDELSKY. Yale University Press, 2018, 512 pp.

This masterly exposition of the history of economic thought—and the context in which it developed—goes back to the seventeenth century but concentrates on the last hundred years. It sketches the historical background to the emergence of classical economics, monetarism, Keynesianism, and neoclassical economics. Skidelsky wrote a biography of John Maynard Keynes, so it's not surprising that his interpretations of Keynes' thought are especially subtle. As Skidelsky writes, Keynes emphasized unknowable uncertainty about the future, a contrast to the deterministic way that his theory, which served as the origin of modern macroeconomics, is usually presented in textbooks and taught to students. Skidelsky also offers an illuminating treatment of the 2008 financial crisis, the ways in which economists were blindsided by it, the monetary and fiscal policies that governments adopted in response, and the fragile and sometimes faltering recovery.

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The Globotics Upheaval: Globalization, Robotics, and the Future of Work
BY RICHARD BALDWIN. Oxford University Press, 2019, 304 pp.

This speculative book attempts to describe the future of work and explain how to prepare for it. Baldwin lays out various different attributes of working life, according to the different talents and industries involved. He then characterizes what kinds of things intelligent robots and remote workers, helped by better software and communications technology, can and can't do today and what they'll be able to do within the next few decades. Finally, he matches the two up to see which tasks and jobs will fall to automation. Baldwin argues that in the last century, most people moved from relying on their hands in their work to relying on their heads. In the future, they will have to rely on their hearts, because machines won't be able to replicate such human abilities as nonverbal communication, compassion, creativity, and face-to-face contact. Many jobs that rely on these attributes will be safe from robots for decades. Artificial intelligence excels at classifying what it sees, searching huge databases, and recognizing patterns, but it cannot copy other, more human qualities.

Discreet Power: How the World Economic Forum Shapes Market Agendas
BY CHRISTINA GARSTEN AND ADRIENNE SORBOM. Stanford University Press, 2018, 240 pp.

For more than half a century, the World Economic Forum has organized an annual gathering of politicians, business executives, experts, and policymakers in Davos, Switzerland. The WEF has no formal authority, but it has become a major forum for elites to discuss policy ideas and priorities. In this informative study, Garsten and Sorbom explore both the inner workings and the communication strategies of the WEF. They are troubled by its lack of democratic accountability, but it is difficult to replicate democratic institutions such as elected parliaments in international bodies. As appealing as an international parliament might be, the world is not likely to see one anytime soon, especially not one that can discuss complex issues in a common language rather than simply make speeches designed for domestic constituents. In the end, the authors conclude that the WEF does perform a useful service, even if it is biased toward elite perceptions.

The Willing World: Shaping and Sharing a Sustainable Global Prosperity
BY JAMES BACCHUS. Cambridge University Press, 2018, 524 pp.

Bacchus, a former U.S. congressman and former chair of the appeals court of the World Trade Organization, is a strong advocate for international law, which he views as necessary for sustained global economic growth. In this book, he champions free foreign trade and free foreign investment, as long as they are subject to international rules and the right institutions are set up to settle inevitable disputes. He argues that the rules should be formulated to ensure sustainability and suggests that they should accord with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, which set global targets for social and economic development by 2030. He also makes a

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persuasive case that international policies to address environmental issues, including both the global problem of climate change and more local ones, can boost economic growth rather than hurt it.

Fiber: The Coming Tech Revolution—and Why America Might Miss It
BY SUSAN CRAWFORD. Yale University Press, 2019, 264 pp.

This trenchant and personal book describes the powerful benefits that result from bringing ultrafast fiber-optic Internet cables directly to households and small firms. Singapore, Stockholm, and Tokyo; parts of South Korea; and a scattering of U.S. cities have accomplished this. Crawford, who has visited many of those places and interviewed many people involved, castigates U.S. telephone and cable companies and their lawyers for actively discouraging the rollout of fiber-optic cables to houses and offices (even as they themselves use them). She berates them for their high prices, which they can charge because they often operate as local monopolies, which they want to preserve. Crawford ends her indictment of the current state of affairs—and the political system that permits it—with a call for a new federal initiative to install fiber-optic cables throughout the United States, modeled on past infrastructure programs, such as rural electrification and the building of the interstate highway system.

Military, Scientific, and Technological

Lawrence D. Freedman

Haig's Enemy: Crown Prince Rupprecht and Germany's War on the Western Front
BY JONATHAN BOFF. Oxford University Press, 2018, 400 pp.

The First Soldier: Hitler as Military Leader
BY STEPHEN G. FRITZ. Yale University Press, 2018, 480 pp.

Military history tends to be seen through the eyes of the victors, but these two books show the two world wars from the perspective of the defeated Germans. Archival research on German military decision-making during World War I has been hampered by the destruction of the bulk of the records in World War II. Boff has managed to fill some of the gaps by supplementing standard sources with the detailed diaries of Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria. Rupprecht, who ended the war as a field marshal in the German army, was a constant presence on the western front, from the failure to achieve the planned gains in the original German offensive of 1914 to General Erich Ludendorff's final push in 1918. This led to the Allied offensive that ended with Germany's capitulation. Recent historians have argued that the Allies adapted well to the demands of this attritional warfare. Boff picks up on this theme by demonstrating that,

despite their assumed operational superiority, the Germans adapted poorly.

Adolf Hitler's role as an active military leader clearly added to the stress of being a German commander in World War II. But Hitler left no memoir of his own, and those of his generals were self-serving. So a narrative has emerged that Germany's professional soldiers struggled to cope with the Führer's manic interference. Yet Fritz's original and compelling account of Hitler's military strategy demonstrates that, as often as not, his judgment was as good as those of his senior commanders. He could be well informed and imaginative and had flashes of real strategic insight. By avoiding caricature, Fritz shines a new light on Hitler's arguments with his generals, from the early preparations for war to his determination to fight to the bitter end. Early on, he could be realistic about the obstacles and, at times, cautious. But he refused to abandon his expansive ambitions and fought on in Russia when all hope of victory had gone. He was prepared for the Third Reich to go down in flames, regretting only that he would not die fighting.

Vietnam: An Epic Tragedy, 1945–1975
BY MAX HASTINGS. Harper, 2018, 896 pp.

Road to Disaster: A New History of America's Descent Into Vietnam
BY BRIAN VANDEMARK. Custom House, 2018, 656 pp.

These two books take on a familiar topic but manage to be original and thought provoking—and very different from each other. Hastings covers the war from the Communists' uprising against the French in 1945 to their victory over the South in 1975. As a foreign correspondent, he was one of the last to leave Saigon. In this masterly and engrossing account, he uses the same techniques that have served him well in his histories of the two world wars, exploring the war from the bottom up as well as the top down. He is scathing about delusionary U.S. decision-making and the hopeless efforts to compensate for the South's political weakness by military means. But he is also harsh in his depiction of the callous North Vietnamese and the Vietcong. The strengths of the book lie in Hastings' ability to describe, with extensive use of diaries, memoirs, and interviews, the chaos of battle in a war of ambushes and without obvious frontlines.

VanDeMark is returning to a story he has told before, notably in partnership with former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, but now with new material. He sticks largely to the Kennedy and Johnson administrations and focuses on the question of how smart men could have not only misread the conflict so badly but also refused to change course when their mistakes became evident. He opens with the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, in 1961, in Cuba, which might have served as warning enough of how schemes that sound great in a briefing can go horribly wrong in practice. He then moves through the assassination of South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem, the U.S. bombing campaign, the Tet Offensive, and the first tentative peace negotiations. Throughout, he shows how little the key players in Washington understood what was happening on the

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ground. VanDeMark's extensive use of research on the psychology of decision-making can be interesting, although it sometimes interrupts the flow of his narrative. The sense of introspection it provides adds poignancy to the records of meetings and field trips by U.S. civilian and military leaders, who never quite came to grips with the unfolding tragedy.

Terrorism, Betrayal, and Resilience: My Story of the 1998 U.S. Embassy Bombings
BY PRUDENCE BUSHNELL. Potomac Books, 2018, 288 pp.

Despite the overwhelming focus on al Qaeda's role in the 9/11 attacks, far less has been written about the group's attacks against the U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam three years earlier. Bushnell was the U.S. ambassador to Kenya at the time and was caught up in the blast that killed 213 people and left some 4,000 wounded. She describes how she had pressed for a more secure embassy before the bombing, the experience of the day itself, and the painful aftermath. The book is an autobiography, an investigation into the origins of the attack, and a lament about bureaucratic failings at the U.S. State Department, along with a discussion of how these might be addressed with better leadership. It is an angry book. Bushnell was told that she was overloading the circuits by pressing for better security, and the sloppy departmental response to the blasts still stings. Yet she also makes a compelling case that good diplomats can make a difference.

The United States

Walter Russell Mead

Fear: Trump in the White House
BY BOB WOODWARD. Simon & Schuster, 2018, 448 pp.

In this, the latest of Woodward's 12 books of instant history based on insider access to the White House, the author spotlights the struggles of the often dysfunctional Trump administration. Some of the divisions he chronicles pit professional staffers against Trump family members. Others reflect the personality clashes typical of every high-pressure workplace, although they are more acute than usual in the Trump White House because the president's inner circle includes so many outsize egos. The most significant battles, in Woodward's telling, were those between a protectionist, "America first" president and his like-minded staffers on one side and the more globalist and pro-free-trade officials on the other. Trump sought to make policy choices, such as withdrawing from the World Trade Organization, that filled his staff with horror. Like Sir Humphrey Appleby in the British television show *Yes Minister*, the internationalists did what they could to delay him. His impulses thwarted, Trump grew frustrated and lashed out. There matters rested when Woodward finished his book; since then, it appears, Trump has started imposing his will on his officials. It will be interesting, to put it mildly, to see what comes next.

Reconstruction: A Concise History
BY ALLEN C. GUELZO. Oxford University Press, 2018, 192 pp.

The failure of Reconstruction remains a pivotal event in U.S. history, and the changing ways in which successive generations of historians have understood the period illustrate the dramatic shifts in American attitudes on race over the last 140 years. For almost a century after the Civil War, white southerners and their allies dominated the study of Reconstruction. Their narrative—of southern whites uniting to overthrow corrupt and incompetent governments that were maintained by federal bayonets—was received almost everywhere as gospel. Beginning in the civil rights era, however, historians shifted their focus to the nobility of Reconstruction's central aim: ensuring equal rights for newly freed slaves. Guelzo offers a concise, clear, and temperate account of one of the most complex periods in U.S. history. Unlike earlier historians, he never loses sight of the cause of the newly free. But he points to the lack of political experience that left Reconstruction-era southern governments vulnerable to pressure from wealthy and wily white oligarchs. Guelzo also underscores the collapse of political will in the North for a long-term occupation, which is what a serious Reconstruction strategy would have required. In his telling, Reconstruction emerges as a terrible but probably inevitable tragedy.

Lords of the Desert: The Battle Between the United States and Great Britain for Supremacy in the Modern Middle East
BY JAMES BARR. Basic Books, 2018, 464 pp.

The British Labour government that took power in the summer of 1945 soon concluded that keeping as much of the Middle East's oil as possible under British rule—and thus within the sterling zone—offered the best, perhaps the only, hope of maintaining the United Kingdom's place in the first rank of world powers. This conviction became the lodestar of postwar British policy. At first, the prospects looked good. Pro-British monarchs ruled in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, and the Gulf kingdoms. There were, however, two problems with the plan: Arab nationalists wanted no part of British rule, and the United States was willing and able to displace the United Kingdom as the dominant regional power. As Barr describes, the United States did indeed gradually marginalize the United Kingdom in the Middle East. This is a gripping story, and Barr, a gifted narrative historian, tells it well, casting light on both the history of the U.S. presence in the modern Middle East and the dilemmas U.S. policy continues to face there today.

Grand Improvisation: America Confronts the British Superpower, 1945–1957
BY DEREK LEEBAERT. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018, 624 pp.

Contemporaries experience the history of their times as full of chaos and improvisation; historians try to find patterns in the maelstrom. The decade after World War II was especially uncertain. Nobody in 1946 understood the depth of the

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United Kingdom's exhaustion or the severity of the Soviet challenge. American public opinion strongly favored rapid demobilization and military withdrawal from Europe. Leebaert's history of the U.S.-British relationship from V-E Day to the aftermath of the 1956 Suez crisis highlights this complexity and attacks the widespread view that the immediate postwar period saw a smooth handoff of world power from London to Washington. In his telling, far from ceding the world to the Americans, the British fought tenaciously to preserve their strategic independence. American strategists were ambivalent, confused, and lacked the coherent grand designs for a liberal international order that historians would later attribute to them. Leebaert's revisionism is not always convincing, but he is right to challenge the narrative of a seamless transition—and right, too, that a sentimentalized vision of this history will make it harder for policymakers to deal with the enormous challenges facing the United States in the twenty-first century.

The Ideas That Made America: A Brief History
BY JENNIFER RATNER-ROSENHAGEN. Oxford University Press, 2019, 240 pp.

Ratner-Rosenhagen teaches intellectual history at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and if this concise book is any indication of what her courses are like, her students can count themselves fortunate. She offers a brisk walk through the American intellectual tradition, from New England Puritanism to modern pragmatism. Ratner-Rosenhagen's determination to incorporate the full spectrum of American thought—for example, from the abolitionist Frederick Douglass to the pro-slavery theorist George Fitzhugh—clashes with her desire to impose order on her procession of thinkers, and some of her assessments, such as the high place she gives the critic and journalist Margaret Fuller in American intellectual history, would be more convincing if she provided readers with a more expansive account of the work in question. Nevertheless, her curiosity about ideas, her determination to understand a diverse set of authors and points of view on their own terms, and her conviction that the messiness of the American intellectual tradition is an essential feature of American life make this book a stimulating read.

Western Europe

Andrew Moravcsik

Plugging In the British: Completing the Circuit
BY SOPHIA BESCH, IAN BOND, AND CAMINO MORTERA-MARTINEZ. Centre for European Reform, 2018, 98 pp.

Brexit has proved surprisingly difficult to implement, not just in economic affairs, where analysts always expected problems, but in many other areas, too. The EU quietly coordinates European policy on development, human rights, sanctions, policing, human trafficking, external border control, military missions, diplomacy, the UN, defense industries, cybersecurity,

intelligence sharing, space exploration, scientific research, judicial cooperation, and much more. Many of these policies were created with strong British support. So Brexiteers confront the same basic dilemma that they face on economic issues: defending vital British interests requires that most cooperation with Europe remain unchanged, yet domestic politics dictates that the final result be spun as something totally new. Even limiting the exercise to mere political rebranding requires changes in the legal form or underlying substance of thousands of rules, regulations, and procedures. Since it would be unacceptable to the other 27 EU members for London to pick and choose when and how it cooperates with its neighbors, the result has been a series of deadlocked talks. This tidy little report summarizes the major issues. The authors show that sober negotiations could preserve most current cooperation under another name—but that the changes that must occur will generally disadvantage the United Kingdom.

Berlin
BY JASON LUTES. Drawn & Quarterly, 2018, 580 pp.

Berlin under the Weimar Republic was a crucible that helped forge modern society and politics. Its violent partisan conflicts, extreme disparities between social classes, floods of rural and foreign migrants, and fluid cultural and gender identities set the tone for urban life ever after. Lutes, a legendary artist, devoted two decades to this magisterial graphic novel. Its multilayered story line follows a set of loosely connected characters in Berlin between 1928 and 1933. A young girl from the provinces arrives in Berlin and is swept up in a world of convinced Communists, militant Nazis, disillusioned Social Democrats, conservative businessmen, impoverished workers, dissipated elites, spirited youth exploring new lifestyles, and Jews seeking to preserve ancient identities—as well as cruel police, tortured drug addicts, wounded veterans, black jazz musicians, and closeted gay people. Some of the events Lutes portrays are grim, others inspiring, and still others confusing and troubling. Throughout, one is constantly aware of an eerie resemblance to today's world.

Empires of the Weak: The Real Story of European Expansion and the Creation of the New World Order
BY J. C. SHARMAN. Princeton University Press, 2019, 216 pp.

The imperialism through which France, Spain, the United Kingdom, and other European countries came to dominate the globe was not simply a function of superior military technology, naval power, or administrative organization. Europeans were rarely in a position to dominate the world solely by means of their military might. Instead, they subtly co-opted foreign elites by trading with them, hiring them as mercenaries, supporting them in their struggles against local enemies, and, if all else failed, bribing them or blockading their ports. Sometimes the spread of infectious diseases did the work. This adds up to a more nuanced story than one might think, although Sharman does admit that this informal imperialism ran out of steam in the late nineteenth century, when Europe simply rolled over Africa. Anyone even slightly familiar with the historical literature will

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be baffled by the book's repeated claims of originality for a thesis that echoes (daringly, without citation) the ideas of Karl Marx, Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, and generations of eminent historians of empire. Yet in an era when great-power competition seems to be on the rise, this book reminds readers that few, if any, modern nations have ever been strong enough to dominate all those around them through brute force alone.

The Empire's New Clothes: The Myth of the Commonwealth
BY PHILIP MURPHY. Oxford University Press, 2018, 256 pp.

Murphy, the director of the University of London's Institute of Commonwealth Studies, argues that the Commonwealth of Nations does not exist. Formally, to be sure, the organization encompasses one-third of the world's population in its 53 postimperial member states. Queen Elizabeth II is its titular head, Prince Charles is her presumed successor, and Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, are freshly minted Commonwealth youth ambassadors. Euroskeptics profess a deep faith that Brexit offers a golden opportunity for the United Kingdom to reembrace the Commonwealth, thereby unleashing a bonanza of trade and investment. Yet all of this, Murphy argues, is little more than pomp and circumstance. Commonwealth members disagree about almost everything, even basic human rights. The organization coddles "a grim collection of charlatans, chancers and outright villains." Decades ago, citizens of member countries could immigrate to the United Kingdom, but no more. The United Kingdom still grants Commonwealth members preferential tariffs, but only through common EU rules: the threat of exclusion from the European market means Commonwealth leaders have unanimously denounced Brexit. Murphy ends by encouraging the United Kingdom to shed its postimperial delusions—even though that may put him out of a job.

Islamist Terrorism in Europe
BY PETTER NESSER. Oxford University Press, 2018, 320 pp.

This sober and detailed analysis of Islamist terrorism in Europe generalizes not just from the attacks that have succeeded but also from the over two-thirds of planned attacks that have been foiled. Nesser shows that although their basic goals are constant, Islamist terrorists adapt their tactics with the times. In recent years, heightened security has made complex bombings and aircraft hijackings all but impossible—so terrorists have gone minimalist. Attacks today tend to be one-man operations, carried out with vans and knives. Most perpetrators are refugees or European-born jihadists. They are almost always motivated by religion, and they communicate with outside groups through encrypted messaging tools, such as WhatsApp. This form of terrorism is, as Nesser says, "less lethal, but almost impossible to stop." So although the annual European death toll from terrorism is far below what it was during the 1970s and 1980s, the number of attacks is higher than ever. Nesser concludes that military operations abroad do less to quash terrorism than sound policing at home. Police, he says, should focus on stopping "entrepreneurs"—skilled jihadist activists who assist perpetrators—through aggressive surveillance. He ends

on a pessimistic note, but perhaps the striking decline in successful European terrorist attacks over the past year would lead him to reconsider his conclusion.

Western Hemisphere

Richard Feinberg

Detain and Punish: Haitian Refugees and the Rise of the World's Largest Immigration Detention System
BY CARL LINDSKOOG. University of Florida Press, 2018, 220 pp.

Immigration Policy in the Age of Punishment: Detention, Deportation, and Border Control
EDITED BY DAVID C. BROTHERTON AND PHILIP KRETSEDEMAS. Columbia University Press, 2018, 344 pp.

Each year, the United States incarcerates more than 400,000 people in a network of over 200 detention facilities for immigration-related offenses, even more than it imprisons for drug crimes. In Lindskoog's view, prolonged detention—rather than release into the community on parole—violates international norms of human rights and U.S. constitutional guarantees of due process. Lindskoog examines the precedents for the system of mass incarceration of immigrants in U.S. policies toward Haitian immigrants since the 1970s and in the use of Guantánamo Bay for extraterritorial detention. Both Democratic and Republican administrations have resorted to detention to enforce immigration laws and deter additional waves of undocumented immigrants. Lindskoog provides a valuable road map of the tangled law and politics of U.S. immigration policies. He fails, however, to detail more humane alternatives to cope with the burgeoning flows of immigrants.

The 15 essays in *Immigration Policy in the Age of Punishment* argue that contemporary immigration policies in some late-capitalist countries exemplify broader trends toward bureaucratic authoritarianism. The volume's sociologists (following the French social theorist Michel Foucault) view detention and deportation as disciplinary measures designed to foster law-abiding behavior and productivity in the broader immigrant community. Anticipating U.S. President Donald Trump, they also detect a strong emotional and theatrical theme in punitive anti-immigrant policies and racially tinged vindictiveness among administrative judges and other law enforcement officials. Yet they do not just fault Republicans in the United States. In her contribution, Tanya Golash-Boza names former U.S. President Barack Obama "the Deporter in Chief," since his administration expelled some three million immigrants. Essays on Australia, Canada, France, and the United Kingdom find a global trend of more restrictive attitudes toward immigrants, including asylum seekers, although not all the case studies are fully convincing. Overall, the volume is more denunciatory than prescriptive, but one essay, by Brotherton and Sarah Tosh, does laud those western European countries whose detention facilities pay more attention than most

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to the consequences for the families of those detained.

We Fed an Island: The True Story of Rebuilding Puerto Rico, One Meal at a Time
BY JOSÉ ANDRÉS WITH RICHARD WOLFFE. Anthony Bourdain Books, 2018, 288 pp.

This book tells the inspiring story of the rapid response by Andrés, a celebrity chef and restaurateur, to the humanitarian crisis in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria. Although it isn't a full-blown business school case study, it illustrates Andrés' preferred model of social enterprise. He argues that those attempting to feed large populations should use professional supply-chain management, source ingredients locally, and hire expert chefs to prepare nutritious, high-calorie meals (in Puerto Rico, meat-and-vegetable stew, chicken-and-rice paella, and ham-and-cheese sandwiches). Andrés employed 20,000 volunteers across 24 kitchens, relying on seven local food trucks for distribution. Yet the book is more than the story of Andrés' heroic efforts to feed Puerto Rico. It also offers a forceful indictment of the actions of the Trump administration and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, as well as those of various nongovernmental organizations. Andrés accuses U.S. President Donald Trump and his public relations team of carrying out blatantly misleading celebrations of the government's grossly inadequate relief efforts and of cronyism in awarding FEMA contracts.

After Insurgency: Revolution and Electoral Politics in El Salvador
BY RALPH SPRENKELS. University of Notre Dame Press, 2018, 484 pp.

In 1992, a negotiated peace concluded El Salvador's prolonged, bloody civil war and paved the way for an electoral democracy. The leftist insurgents emerged as a political party and eventually took the presidency. Sprenkels, who aided the guerrilla forces during the war, used his grass-roots contacts to conduct revealing interviews with wartime combatants. The book gives a nuanced, humane assessment of the lives of former revolutionaries in peacetime. Sprenkels avoids the simple tropes of postrevolutionary political disillusionment and moral decay. Rather, he identifies five peacetime narratives, each of which shows up among the former revolutionaries: permanent revolutionary pride amid social tensions; persistent civil war animosities and loyalties; the tendency to see politics as a conspiracy, often of the powerful against the poor; reliance on a system of patronage, with its logic of reciprocal exchange; and an emphasis on democratic citizenship. Particularly interesting is his discussion of the conversion of clandestine trust networks between former insurgent commanders and the rank and file into patronage systems. Sprenkels asks, "To what extent should we interpret post-insurgent clientelism as distinctly new?" Or were the former rebels simply absorbed into age-old methods of machine politics?

Eastern Europe and Former Soviet Republics

Robert Legvold

Russian "Hybrid Warfare": Resurgence and Politicisation
BY OFER FRIDMAN. Oxford University Press, 2018, 288 pp.

According to widespread belief in the United States and Europe, Vladimir Putin's Russia has unleashed "hybrid war" against the West. The concept covers all forms of assault short of war itself: cyberattacks, targeted propaganda, "little green men" (Russian "volunteers" appearing in Ukraine without insignia), aid to fringe opposition parties, and military threats. In this disciplined study, Fridman does not deny that Russia does all these things, but he is more interested in scraping away the misunderstandings surrounding the concept itself. He explains where the notion of hybrid war comes from, how Americans and Russians understand it differently, and, above all, why and how it has been deployed and politicized in the war in Ukraine. The idea of combining military force with other resources to sap an opponent's will to fight is as old as war itself. But the modern concept of war fought by multiple means, on and off the battlefield, originated with the U.S. military over the course of several wars. The current, more expansive Russian version reflects what its Russian authors believe were the West's own methods of waging the Cold War, which they now see being used against Russia once again.

The Kremlin Letters: Stalin's Wartime Correspondence With Churchill and Roosevelt
EDITED BY DAVID REYNOLDS AND VLADIMIR PECHATNOV. Yale University Press, 2018, 680 pp.

This is the most ambitious and important book from Yale University Press' invaluable series of documentary histories drawn from the Soviet archives. Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, and Joseph Stalin exchanged 682 messages between Nazi Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, in June 1941, and Roosevelt's death, in April 1945. Three-quarters of them are published here. Beyond the messages themselves, what makes this volume so valuable are the editors' brisk and penetrating historical introductions and the context they provide for each message: the author's mood and calculations, the political advice each leader was receiving, and sometimes the hidden diplomacy complementing the message. Scarcely any aspect of World War II has been more thoroughly written about than the relationships among these three leaders, but documenting their wartime communication in such detail gives new depth to this history. Stalin's more cordial attitude toward Roosevelt than Churchill, for example, is unmistakable, as is the subtle shift in the dynamic among the three in Stalin's favor beginning in 1943.

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Laboratory of Socialist Development: Cold War Politics and Decolonization in Soviet Tajikistan
BY ARTEMY M. KALINOVSKY. Cornell University Press, 2018, 336 pp.

In the 1950s and 1960s, during the postwar wave of decolonization, the United States and other Western countries attempted to foster economic development in newly independent but poor countries. In the Soviet Union, something similar occurred in the less developed regions of the country, not least because Moscow wanted to prove that it could engineer economic development better than its capitalist competitors. In this original contribution, Kalinovsky outlines the calculations of the national and local figures who led the effort and then looks at the case of Tajikistan to explore how it worked in practice. He assesses specific elements of Soviet plans, such as the massive Nurek Dam, and their effects on the lives of those involved and the broader population. By the 1980s, in both the West and the East, early illusions about how easily the Western or the Soviet model of economic modernity could be cut and pasted onto traditional cultures had faded. As Kalinovsky shows, in the Soviet case, policymakers came to the awkward realization that instituting markets and at least partly preserving local traditions promised better results than state planning. But as the country came apart under Premier Mikhail Gorbachev, this belated awareness quickly succumbed to recriminations over the entire enterprise.

A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism
BY PAUL HANEBRINK. Harvard University Press, 2018, 368 pp.

The long history of anti-Semitism includes many strains. One of the more virulent and enduring is the phantasm of Judeo-Bolshevism—the notion that communism was, and remains, a Jewish plot. Hanebrink follows the myth's twisted course from its European origins in the immediate aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution, through the jaundiced politics of the interwar period, to its devastating culmination in Nazi Germany. Yet World War II did not kill it, and he picks up the story with its reappearance in postwar Eastern European politics, where it was exploited by those on both sides of the ideological divide. He argues that it survives today in the resurgent right-wing nationalism cropping up in many Western countries. From the start, the fantasy held that an alien element—the Jews—aimed to subvert the cultural values and national identities of Western societies. As Hanebrink points out, this theme is echoed in modern anti-Muslim conspiracy theories. The writers, politicians, and shills whose poisonous ideas he exhumes have many contemporary admirers.

The Spy and the Traitor: The Greatest Espionage Story of the Cold War
BY BEN MACINTYRE. Crown, 2018, 368 pp.

Even a reader not enamored of spy stories will have trouble putting this one down. Oleg Gordievsky was a true child of the KGB; his father and his brother were both dedicated lifelong officers. Gordievsky joined the international arm of the agency

in the early 1960s, but he began to have doubts about the system he was serving. In 1973, while posted in Denmark, he was recruited by British intelligence. He would eventually rise to head the KGB operation in London. Over the years, he provided critical information to the West, bringing down Soviet spy operations in several European countries and in one instance alerting London and Washington to Moscow's dangerous misreading of a NATO war game that could have led to nuclear disaster. The whole story, including Gordievsky's return to Moscow, where, unbeknownst to him, he had been unmasked to the KGB by Aldrich Ames, their man in the CIA, followed by his harrowing, made-for-Hollywood escape from the Soviet Union, unfolds with a pace and drama that recall the novels of John le Carré.

No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions Since 1989
BY WILLIAM H. HILL. Columbia University Press, 2018, 536 pp.

Hill offers a balanced history of the sad devolution of relations between Russia and the West, from the high hopes in the years after the Cold War to today's fractured situation. The stark divisions between eastern and western Europe, he argues, are the result of decisions taken by each of the participants that "made very good sense at the time" and "were the product of a conscious choice between important alternatives." Often leaders were oblivious to "unforeseen and unintended" consequences. Sometimes, they simply followed "the path of least resistance." Hill uses abundant examples to trace more thoroughly than any other historian what has happened inside Russia and in its relations with NATO, the EU, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe over the last 25 years. If Russia and Europe are to recover from their failures and build a system that includes Moscow, he concludes, these institutions will have to be either refurbished or replaced.

Middle East

John Waterbury

The Burning Shores: Inside the Battle for the New Libya
BY FREDERIC WEHREY. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018, 352 pp.

Wehrey brings the eye of a military professional, a scholar, and a journalist to this vivid depiction of the Libyan conflict. He describes the places and people at the center of the struggle, from jihadists to secular feminists. His lengthy account of the death of U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens, in 2012, shows that Stevens was aware of the dangers he faced in Benghazi and took the calculated risk to go there anyway. Wehrey also gives a good sense of Libya's division into two dominant factions, one based in Benghazi and aligned with Khalifa Haftar, the head of the Libyan National Army, and the other based in Misurata and Tripoli and with a major Islamist element. Wehrey sees Haftar as a real danger, a would-be military dictator in the mold of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, with the backing of Egypt, Saudi Arabia,

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and the United Arab Emirates. On top of the domestic conflict, Wehrey shows that the Islamic State (or ISIS) has managed to establish a foothold in Libya between the two factions. Although he explains this mess effectively, Wehrey offers no way out of it.

Talaat Pasha: Father of Modern Turkey, Architect of Genocide
BY HANS-LUKAS KIESER. Princeton University Press, 2018, 552 pp.

In 1910, Mehmed Talaat, a leader of the Young Turks movement and future grand vizier (essentially, the prime minister) of the Ottoman Empire, began planning the extermination of the empire's Armenians. In 1915, he began to implement his scheme. Kieser's portrait of Talaat shows this architect of genocide as a charming monster, brilliant tactician, and fanatical ideologue. Kieser's prose is sometimes tangled, and his narrative can be confusing, but his tale is gripping and well researched. Talaat traded a wartime alliance with Germany for German silence in the face of an estimated 800,000 Armenian deaths. His actions left Weimar Germany morally blemished, and they scuttled the possibility that the Ottoman Empire might turn in a more liberal direction. After fleeing to exile in Berlin, Talaat was assassinated in 1921 by an Armenian militant. Even in death, Talaat cast a long shadow. Kieser argues that his movement served as "a paradigm" for the Nazi Party. He also debunks the notion that the rise of Kemal Ataturk in the 1920s marked a rupture with the Young Turks; rather, it was a continuation. Likewise, today, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan invokes the Ottoman nationalist themes popularized by Talaat.

Destroying a Nation: The Civil War in Syria
BY NIKOLAOS VAN DAM. I.B. Tauris, 2017, 256 pp.

This concise guide to Syria's intractable conflict provides a nuanced analysis of Syrian sectarianism and national identity. It also offers a useful history of the Baath Party's dominance in Syria since 1966 and the near-total capture of the military and intelligence infrastructure by the minority Alawite sect, which was led first by Hafez al-Assad and since 2000 has been led by his son Bashar. Van Dam chronicles the efforts since 2011 to find a negotiated solution to the civil war, which has claimed at least 450,000 lives and displaced some six million people. He dismisses the possibility of an insider coup against Assad by the Alawites themselves and deplores the excessive idealism and lack of realpolitik displayed by outside forces, especially Western governments' refusal to include Assad in any negotiated transition. Van Dam sees no way out in the short term, but nor does he feel that Assad can sustain a military victory even if, with Iranian and Russian help, he achieves one.

Iran Rising: The Survival and Future of the Islamic Republic
BY AMIN SAIKAL. Princeton University Press, 2019, 344 pp.

This survey of Iranian politics and society relies on secondary sources and so offers little new material. Its value comes from its lucid exposition of the Islamic Republic's two main ideological

and policy axes: the *jihadists*, embodied by the country's founder, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, and the *ijtihadists*, the more flexible and rational pragmatists, two of whom, Mohammad Khatami and Hassan Rouhani, have been elected president. The current supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, bridges both camps but favors the *jihadists*. Saikal gives a good explanation of Iran's illiberal pluralism and the checks and balances that operate among its institutions. He also leads the reader through a careful analysis of Iran's relations with regional and global powers. Throughout, he rightly stresses the country's resilience in the face of conflict and sanctions. For any foreign country, he says, war with this middle power would be extremely costly. He does not anticipate regime change, only shifts in the balance of power back and forth between the *jihadists* and the *ijtihadists*.

Environmental Politics in the Middle East: Local Struggles, Global Connections
EDITED BY HARRY VERHOEVEN. Hurst, 2018, 336 pp.

Many of the essays in this interesting collection are only tenuously linked to the overall environmental theme. Yet that does not detract from their quality. In a particularly excellent contribution, Francis Ghilès and Eckart Woertz analyze Tunisia's phosphate-rich region of Gafsa, which is vital to the country's economy but neglected by the central government, so it consistently produces labor activism and jihadism. Other contributors examine the illegal charcoal trade between Somalia and the United Arab Emirates, the oil-rich dictatorships around the Caspian Sea, the dynamics of cross-border environmental protests, the new social contract within the Gulf states, illegal fishing and piracy off the coast of Somalia, and the impact of energy subsidies on economic growth. The collection offers no big takeaways; indeed, there is no concluding chapter. Each story is one of almost bewildering complexity and contingency.

Asia and Pacific

Andrew J. Nathan

A Misunderstood Friendship: Mao Zedong, Kim Il-sung, and Sino–North Korean Relations, 1949–1976
BY ZHIHUA SHEN AND YAFENG XIA. Columbia University Press, 2018, 376 pp.

Mao and the Sino-Soviet Split, 1959–1973: A New History
BY DANHUI LI AND YAFENG XIA. Lexington Books, 2018, 342 pp.

These two books extend their authors' series of important contributions to Cold War history. Shen and Xia reveal harsh conflicts between the leaders of China and North Korea during the Korean War over who would command the two countries' troops, who would control Korean railways, and how far to chase the Americans as they retreated in the face of the initial Chinese attack. In 1956, Mao Zedong was so angry with Kim Il Sung that he told Moscow he might use the 400,000 Chinese troops still in North Korea to "help Kim Il-sung

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correct his mistakes," a thinly veiled proposal to depose him. But Mao later came to regard Kim as a loyal son, to the point of promising him that if the United States attacked the North, Kim could use China's northeastern provinces as a rear area under his own command. Relations between Beijing and Pyongyang were strongest in the first half of the 1970s, when Mao and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai took advantage of their negotiations with the United States to press North Korea's case with Washington. In those years, Chinese aid helped North Korea reach what turned out to be the height of its prestige as a development model among some Third World nations.

Li and Xia track each twist and turn in the painful and public divorce that China and the Soviet Union underwent in the 1960s and 1970s. The big puzzle is that both countries lost more from the split than they gained. Not only did the collapse of the alliance hand a strategic advantage to the United States; it also put pressure on Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev to move his domestic policies leftward and encouraged Mao to launch the disastrous Cultural Revolution. In explaining why the two countries pursued a seemingly irrational split, Li and Xia argue that state-to-state relations in the socialist camp during the Cold War differed from those in the capitalist world. Communist parties saw themselves not just as national parties but also as members of a global movement guided by a scientifically correct ideology. When divergent personalities, domestic politics, and state interests gave rise to disagreements on matters of ideological principle, communist party leaders could not compromise for the sake of mere national interests. On matters of ideology, only one party could be correct.

Gandhi: The Years That Changed the World, 1914–1948
BY RAMACHANDRA GUHA. Knopf, 2018, 1,104 pp.

This second and final volume of Guha's huge, definitive biography of Mahatma Gandhi draws on every imaginable source, including a recently opened archive of letters to and from Gandhi. The narrative is dramatic and detailed, with little explicit judgment or analysis. Vivid impressions emerge: of Gandhi's restless energy and frequent bouts of ill health; of his willingness to treat his wife, children, helpers, and followers as instruments of his will; of his hold over all sectors of India's fissiparous population; and of the restraint with which the British treated him despite their anger at his constant troublemaking. Guha reveals Gandhi's inconsistencies and confusions, as well as his titanic self-regard. Many other talented contenders for leadership in India disapproved of his behavior and politics. But Gandhi had remarkable success in promoting his idiosyncratic views on economics, caste, diet, sexuality, and political action. Although he failed to heal the tragic rift between Hindus and Muslims, he did much to create the overarching sense of national identity that has so far held India together.

Dynasties and Democracy: The Inherited Incumbency Advantage in Japan
BY DANIEL M. SMITH. Stanford University Press, 2018, 384 pp.

The ability of prominent politicians to pass their government positions on to their wives, children, and grandchildren is a phenomenon found everywhere, but understanding why it occurs in

democracies as well as autocracies is something of a puzzle. Part of the answer is that legacy politicians in democracies are able to exploit their families' name recognition and local networks in their campaigns. Smith tests this insight by looking at how legacy candidates fared in Japan before and after 1994, when the country reformed its system for electing delegates to the lower house of the Diet. Under the pre-1994 system, each district elected more than one representative to the lower house, which enabled candidates to win with less than a majority and thus advantaged those with strong networks based on family connections. Legacy candidates became less numerous after the switch in 1994 to single-member districts. Even so, political dynasties still have an advantage, because local politicians have resisted the efforts of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's central party apparatus to nominate candidates with broader national appeal. And legacy candidates who make it to the Diet still have a better chance of being promoted to cabinet posts.

North Korean Human Rights: Activists and Networks
EDITED BY ANDREW YEO AND DANIELLE CHUBB. Cambridge University Press, 2018, 330 pp.

This book describes the international advocacy movement that has emerged over the past two decades to combat human rights violations in North Korea. The movement is made up of North Korean defectors joined by activists from not only South Korea but also Canada, Japan, the United States, and Europe. They pursue a range of goals, from humanitarian assistance to regime change, and use a variety of methods, from smuggling information to the North Korean population through broadcasts and thumb drives to lobbying the UN Human Rights Council. Seoul and Washington support the activists when they want to put pressure on Pyongyang—and regard them as an inconvenience when they want to negotiate. Despite the movement's lack of coordination, it has had some successes. Human rights conditions in the North are now more widely known. In 2013, the UN created a commission of inquiry on human rights in the country, which issued a devastating report on the abuses. Pyongyang has responded with diplomatic and propaganda pushback and some cosmetic legal changes. But as is often the case with human rights work, the real impact on conditions on the ground awaits a political breakthrough in the North.

Where the Party Rules: The Rank and File of China's Communist State
BY DANIEL KOSS. Cambridge University Press, 2018, 408 pp.

The disciplined, top-down Chinese Communist Party, some 90 million strong, extends throughout the Chinese government, society, and economy like a nervous system: its health determines how well the central authorities can control what goes on in every part of the country. Scholars tend to think of the CCP as omnipresent, but Koss uses extensive archival and statistical research to show that its power varies from place to place. When the (now abandoned) one-child policy was in effect, for example, the ban on sex-selective abortions was implemented more fully where the

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local party apparatus was strong than where it was weak. Koss also shows that strong local party organizations are correlated with lower levels of tax evasion. But powerful local cells may also resist central policy more effectively than weak ones, as happened during the Great Famine of 1958–61 and the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s. Surprisingly, variations in local party strength can be traced all the way back to the Sino-Japanese War of 1937–45, when peasant resistance to the Japanese spurred strong party growth in the areas immediately threatened by Japanese troops, whereas those areas outside the war zone did not have the same catalyst. Koss adds an important dimension to scholars' understanding of how the Chinese system works—and of its vulnerabilities.

Red China's Green Revolution: Technological Innovation, Institutional Change, and Economic Development Under the Commune
BY JOSHUA EISENMAN. Columbia University Press, 2018, 472 pp.

At the start of the Great Leap Forward, in 1958, China formed communes to organize agriculture. Because of the huge famine caused by the campaign, historians have given the communes a bad name. But Eisenman argues that after the famine, and especially in the early 1970s, the reorganized communes fostered a green revolution that laid the basis for the rapid economic growth of the post-Mao era. He uses previously unexamined data on the production of grain, pork, and edible oils to show that the communes enabled the state to take most of the farmers' profits away from them, thereby suppressing rural consumption, and reinvest it in an effective agricultural extension program that popularized the use of new seeds, fertilizers, and machinery. This in turn freed some of the rural work force up for light industry. Starting in 1978, however, the communes were dissolved because, Eisenman argues, Deng Xiaoping's faction wanted to remove the cap on peasant consumption in order to generate support for economic reforms. Eisenman's analysis implies that Western scholars who once held up Maoist practices as a model for developing countries were not entirely wrong, at least when it came to lifting traditional peasant farmers out of the trap of low productivity and low investment.

Africa

Nicolas van de Walle

The Kenyan TJRC: An Outsider's View From the Inside
BY RONALD C. SLYE. Cambridge University Press, 2018, 308 pp.

In the wake of the violence surrounding the 2007 Kenyan presidential election, the country created the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission. It was tasked with examining the recent events but also given a daunting broader mandate: to examine all forms of egregious bad government in Kenya since 1963. That meant that it was always likely to come under enormous pressure from Kenya's corrupt and entrenched political class. The commission delivered its report in 2013. Slye, a

legal expert, was its sole non-African member. This fascinating book delves into the fissures that emerged among the commissioners, why the international members of the commission issued a dissent from some of the body's findings, and the broader implications of the commission's work for Kenya and other postconflict societies. Slye's book makes for compelling reading, whether he is discussing the personal foibles of the commissioners, the backroom negotiations and compromises that mark such work, the legal issues involved, or the broader context of Kenyan politics.

Taxing Africa: Coercion, Reform, and Development
BY MICK MOORE, WILSON PRICHARD, AND ODD-HELGE FJELDSTAD. Zed Books, 2018, 288 pp.

Although taxes are a fundamental part of any modern economy, taxation in Africa remains poorly understood. The authors of this concise and masterly introduction to the topic go some way toward filling that gap. The book starts by showing how international tax law disadvantages African governments. It then discusses the attempts by African states to tax multinational corporations, especially in the oil and mining sectors. The book then turns to formal and informal domestic tax systems. It has a tendency to gloss over the variation among countries, but it does provide powerful evidence for several important generalizations. First, foreign companies, especially in the extractive industries, pay remarkably little in taxes. Second, the richest Africans also pay very little and have managed to park enormous sums abroad. Third, African fiscal systems have done much better at taxing average Africans than they get credit for. Finally, that means African tax systems are highly regressive, with poorer citizens paying much higher rates than richer ones.

Reel Pleasures: Cinema Audiences and Entrepreneurs in Twentieth-Century Urban Tanzania
BY LAURA FAIR. Ohio University Press, 2018, 472 pp.

Fair's superb social history of cinema in Tanzania is rich with keen insights into urban life in East Africa throughout the twentieth century. From the late 1910s onward, Tanzania had more cinemas than any other country in Africa, except South Africa, as well as a less segregated film-going experience, which allowed whites, Africans, and South Asians to attend the same shows. Fair recounts efforts by South Asian businesspeople to import films from India in the early twentieth century, and later from the entire world, to show on Tanzanian screens. By the 1950s, eight movie theaters catered to 16,000 people a week in the capital, Dar es Salaam, and became the city's center of social and cultural life. Indian films, with their singing and dancing, were long local favorites, although American westerns were popular, as well. In the 1970s, blaxploitation movies, such as *Shaft* and *Hell Up in Harlem*, arrived and began to shape the fashion tastes of the young. Fair's impressive versatility means she is equally at ease discussing midcentury international film distribution networks as she is explaining the local appeal of obscure Indian movies.

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Africa: War and Conflict in the Twentieth Century
BY TIMOTHY STAPLETON. Routledge, 2018, 202 pp.

This concise history of warfare in Africa in the twentieth century covers a large number of conflicts, from the wars of colonial conquest waged by European armies in the earliest parts of the century, to the participation of African troops in World War I and World War II, to interstate wars since decolonization. Some of these conflicts are well known; others, such as the wars to quell various rebellions during the colonial era, get little academic or popular attention. Given Stapleton's previous scholarly work on South African military history, it is not surprising that the long section on the Second Boer War, from 1899 to 1902, is rather more detailed than the book's cursory treatment of several bloodier conflicts, most notably the First and Second Congo Wars, from 1996 to 2003. Although maps of the different campaigns would have made the book easier to follow, Stapleton nonetheless offers a useful introduction to an important topic.

Africa Through an Economic Lens
BY AMADOU SY. Brookings Institution Press, 2018, 224 pp.

Sy, a former career International Monetary Fund economist, lays out the optimistic vision of how economic growth could transform Africa. The book can feel a little haphazard—it is partly cobbled together from a blog Sy wrote at the Brookings Institution—but it offers interesting prescriptions for how Africa can overcome the constraints to faster growth, from improving infrastructure to addressing the massive structural unemployment that results from Africa's continuing rapid population growth. Sy often returns to the problem of mobilizing enough foreign and domestic investment, as capital shortages remain the most significant constraint on the rapid growth he thinks Africa can achieve. He is so bullish about the returns on investment in Africa that he does not view the rising debt burdens of countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, and Zambia as posing serious problems.

Letters to the Editor

WOULD CHINA GO NUCLEAR?

To the Editor:

I read with interest Caitlin Talmadge's article "Beijing's Nuclear Option" (November/December 2018), in which she quotes me estimating in 2015 that the odds of a U.S.-Chinese nuclear exchange were "somewhere between nil and zero." She then goes on to make a case against remaining complacent in the face of the risk of escalation, with no discussion of what is in fact a very high nuclear threshold in a U.S.-Chinese confrontation or conflict. I continue to believe that the chances of nuclear use are very small.

Talmadge's basic argument is that in any conflict with China, the United States will immediately launch a full-scale air and missile assault against military targets in mainland China and against Chinese attack submarines at sea. In so doing, she argues, the United States will inadvertently hit either China's ballistic missile submarines or its mobile nuclear missiles. That, in turn, will present Chinese leaders with a "use it or lose it" dilemma concerning their nuclear arsenal, and they may well decide to launch a nuclear attack against the United States.

Such a scenario is extremely unlikely; indeed, I would say the odds are somewhere between nil and zero. A U.S.-Chinese conflict would be a maritime campaign in which the two sides tried to conquer or defend islands. Attacks on land targets beyond the contested islands and the waters around them, whether carried out by the United States against Chinese territory or by China against U.S. overseas bases, would be aimed at military installations and systems that supported the maritime campaign—ports, air bases, and command-and-control centers. The intercontinental nuclear deterrent forces of both countries are physically separate from these facilities.

In addition, U.S. planners are very mindful of the danger of attacking any state's nuclear arsenal and take extraordinary precautions to avoid doing so. Although there is always a chance for an isolated mistake, it is in fact possible to distinguish nuclear-armed submarines from conventional ones. Likewise, it is possible to distinguish the shorter-range, dual-use missiles that threaten Taiwan, China's neighbors, and U.S. bases in the Pacific from the intercontinental missiles that threaten the United States.

If by mistake a U.S. strike destroyed a land-based medium-range nuclear missile or sank a ballistic missile submarine, China would be greatly concerned, but it is highly unlikely that Beijing would respond by reflexively launching a nuclear attack against the United States. Rather, before even considering violating their long-held "no first use" doctrine, Chinese leaders would wait to see if a concerted, sustained U.S. campaign against their nuclear arsenal was under way. The United States has no incentive to attempt such a campaign and in fact would take every precaution to avoid it.

The real danger of escalation in these conflicts would be when a Chinese attempt to capture a disputed island—Taiwan, one of the Diaoyu/Senkaku

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Islands, or an island in the South China Sea—was failing. A failed attempt to regain territory that the Chinese government has claimed as its own would undermine the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party and could make Beijing desperate enough to threaten the use of nuclear weapons. Again, U.S. planners are aware of that danger and would seek to manage the end of a maritime conflict with China in a way that minimized the incentives for escalation.

DENNIS C. BLAIR

Chair of the Board, Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA; U.S. Director of National Intelligence, 2009–10; Commander of U.S. Pacific Command, 1999–2002

Talmadge replies:

Dennis Blair's letter reflects the conventional wisdom about a potential U.S.-Chinese war: virtual certainty that if the United States picked the right set of targets, China would understand that the war was limited, and nuclear weapons would be irrelevant. Everyone should hope that Blair is right, but amid the fog and suspicion of war, China's views of both U.S. intentions and nuclear deterrence could change radically. Were a U.S. campaign to erode significant components of China's deterrent capability, Chinese leaders could conclude—reluctantly—that limited escalation, such as a demonstration strike at sea, was a viable option.

Blair downplays growing linkages between China's nuclear forces and its conventional forces. He states that in a maritime conflict, the United States would attack only Chinese ports, air bases, and command-and-control centers on the mainland, ignoring that some of

these onshore assets support China's nuclear-armed submarines, not just its conventional naval forces. With respect to a land-based conflict, I agree with Blair that the United States can distinguish China's intermediate-range nuclear missiles from its intercontinental nuclear missiles. The question, however, is whether the United States can distinguish among different types of intermediate-range missiles, attacking only conventional ones while leaving the nuclear ones untouched. If it cannot do that—and as I explained in my article, it probably cannot—the question becomes whether China would worry about the security of its small force of nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missiles once the intermediate-range missiles and their air defenses were degraded.

Nevertheless, Blair overstates our differences in some places. I concur, for example, that "it is . . . possible to distinguish nuclear-armed submarines from conventional ones," and I agree that "there is always a chance for an isolated mistake." Where we depart, however, is on how China might react to such a mistake, one that would eliminate a quarter of the country's naval nuclear deterrent.

My article explicitly notes that the likelihood of Chinese nuclear escalation is not high in absolute terms. The danger is of high consequence, not high probability. Yet the likelihood of a nuclear confrontation will grow if the United States confidently assumes, as Blair does, that China's behavior will be both predictable and proportional.

FOR THE RECORD

An article by Darren Walker ("Old Money, New Order," November/December 2018) misnamed the Chinese organization to which the Ford Foundation has provided seed funding. It is the China Foundation Center, not the China Global Philanthropy Institute.

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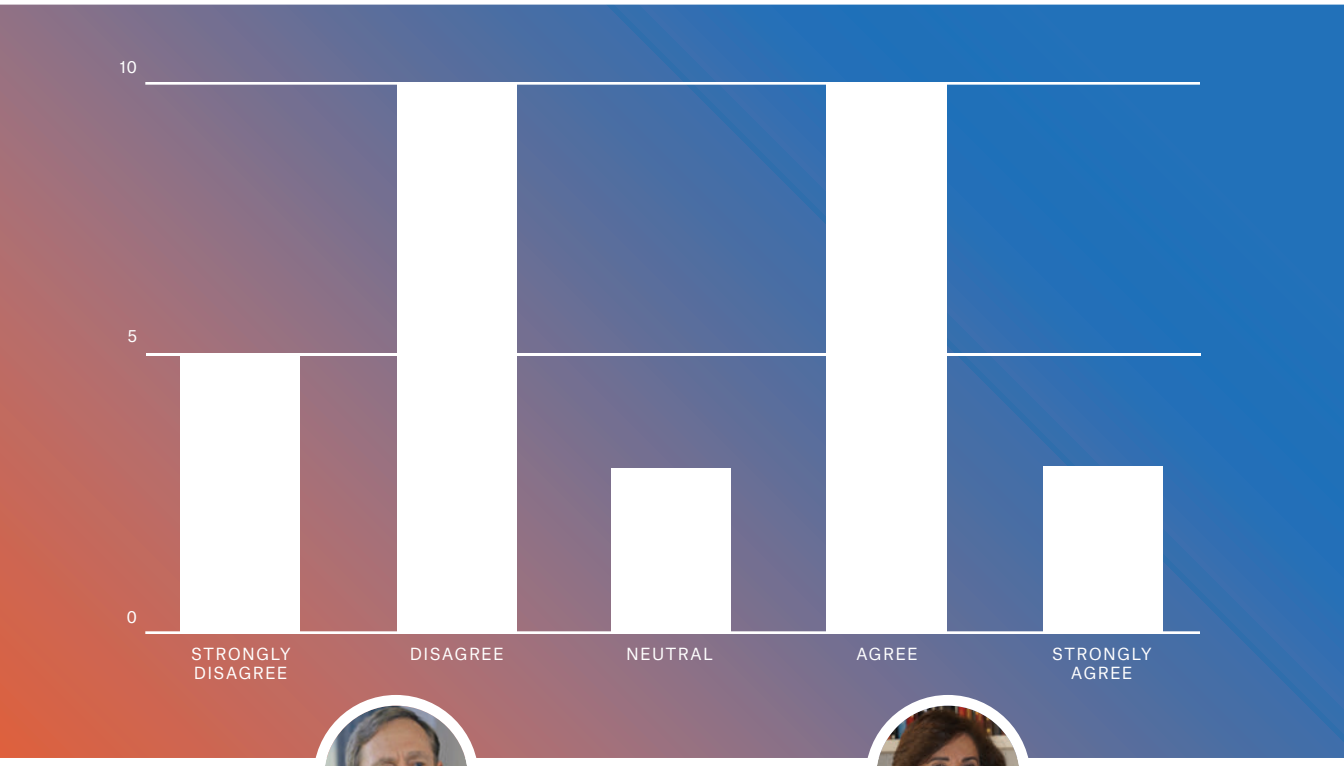
The Wrong Middle East Strategy?

Foreign Affairs Brain Trust

We asked dozens of experts whether they agreed or disagreed that the United States should stop trying to solve the regional problems of the Middle East. The results from those who responded are below.



STRONGLY DISAGREE, CONFIDENCE LEVEL 9

David Petraeus

Former Commander of Coalition Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan and former Commander of U.S. Central Command

"The situation in the Middle East is exceedingly complex, and the various conflicts and challenges often seem intractable; we have seen, however, what happens when the United States and its allies withdraw prematurely from situations there and when they seek to avoid engagement in others."

STRONGLY AGREE, CONFIDENCE LEVEL 10

Madawi al-Rasheed

Visiting Professor at the Middle East Centre, London School of Economics

"Consider the United States' previous record, in which diplomatic and military interventions proved to be futile. From Camp David to the occupation of Iraq, success was in short supply."

→**See the full responses at ForeignAffairs.com/USMiddleEastStrategy**