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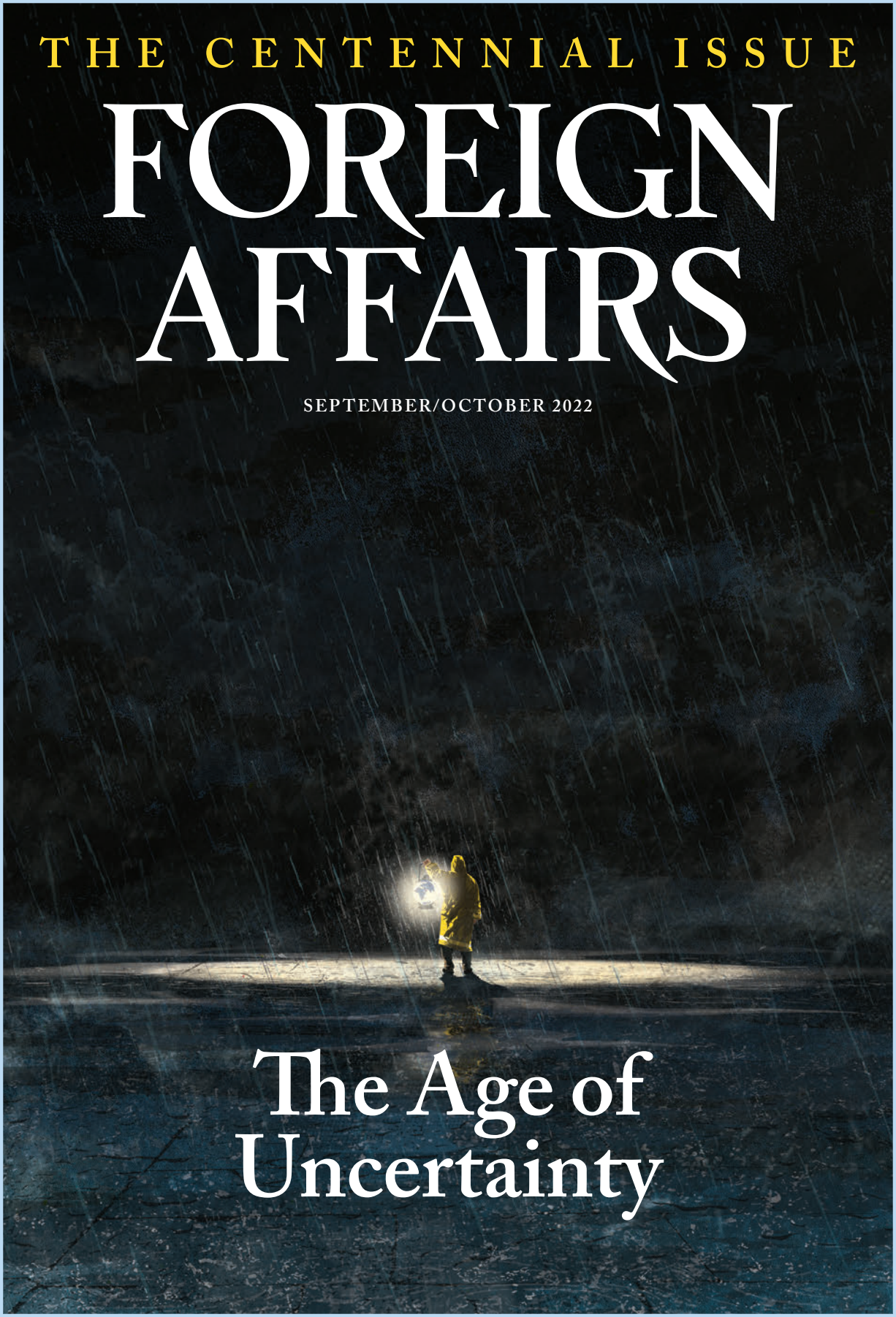
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2022



The Age of Uncertainty

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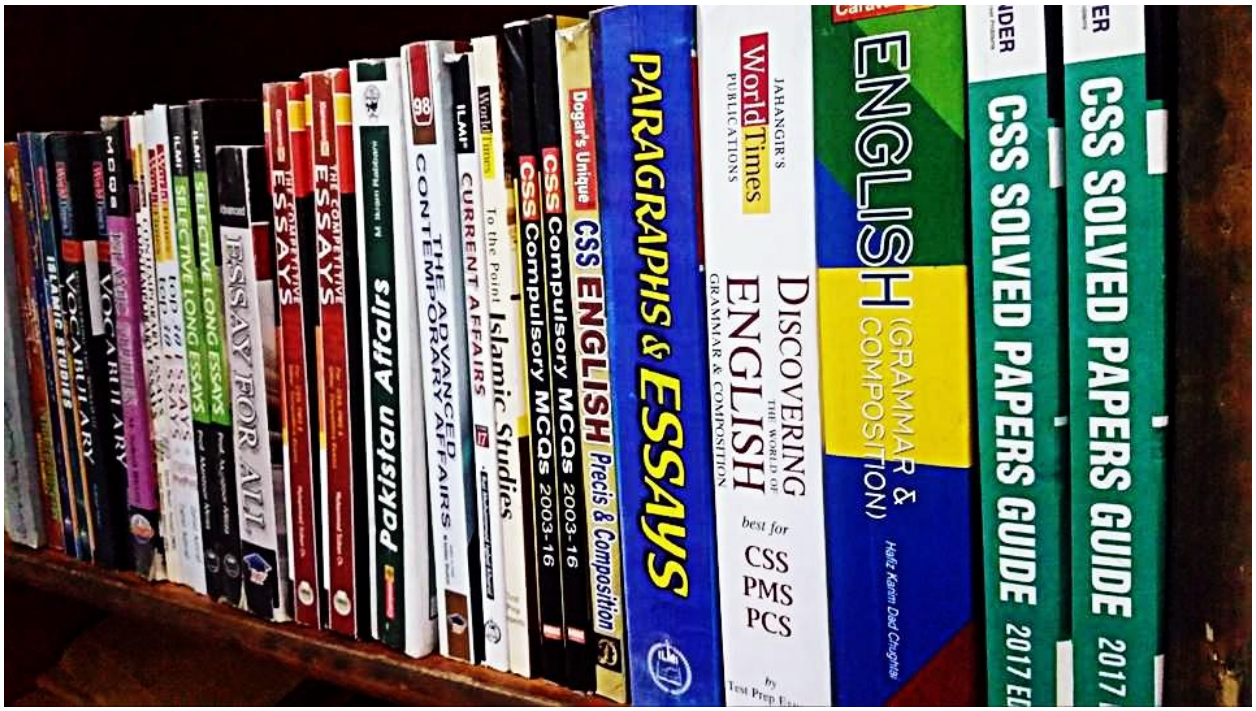

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Volume 101, Number 5

The Centennial Issue

Cover illustration by Mark Smith

The Centennial Issue

Reviews and Responses

"Foreign Affairs . . . *will tolerate wide differences of opinion. Its articles will not represent any consensus of beliefs. What is demanded of them is that they shall be competent and well informed, representing honest opinions seriously held and convincingly expressed. . . . It does not accept responsibility for the views expressed in any article, signed or unsigned, which appear in its pages. What it does accept is the responsibility for giving them a chance to appear there.*"

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

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Foreign Affairs at 100

One hundred years ago, former Secretary of State Elihu Root opened the first essay in the first issue of *Foreign Affairs* with what may have seemed, in September 1922, a striking claim: that the development of foreign policy could no longer be confined to foreign ministries. "Democracies determined to control their own destinies object to being led, without their knowledge, into situations where they have no choice," Root wrote. But such determination had to be matched by an effort to spread "knowledge of the fundamental and essential facts and principles upon which the relations of nations depend."

Since then, thousands of articles have appeared in these pages. Many have, for good and for ill, helped set the course of U.S. foreign policy and international relations—perhaps most famously, George Kennan's "X" article, which laid out Washington's Cold War strategy of containment. Others have challenged the thrust of policy or questioned assumptions about the world. All have taken up Root's basic charge, seeking to drive a debate that, by design, spans practitioners, experts, and a much broader engaged readership (hundreds of times larger than it was in Root's day), in the United States and around the world.

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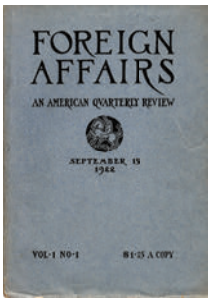
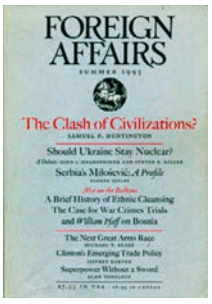




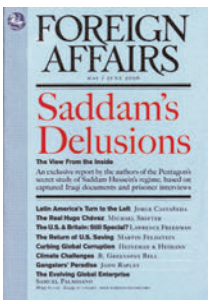
elaborate on their arguments in our podcast, the *Foreign Affairs Interview*, or in live events. You can discover gems from our archives in weekly newsletters. To all of these, we strive to bring the same ambition of argument, the same clarity of analysis, the same credibility of authorship borne of singular experience and expertise, the same eye to policy response—to what should be done, not just to admiring the problem.

With this issue, you'll notice a redesigned look for the print magazine, meant to reflect our tradition and to convey the substance and shelf life of what each copy contains. It comes at a moment when international relations are as fraught and uncertain, and U.S. foreign policy as vexed and challenged, as at any point in recent memory, when the forces of the past intersect with new ones in uniquely perilous ways.

Many of the essays in this issue trace the enduring influence of history—through American power, through democracy and technology, through China and Russia, through race and its impact on the foreign policy establishment (including this magazine). Our book reviewers, similarly, look both backward and forward, each naming a few titles essential to understanding the past century and a few essential to anticipating the century ahead. These contributions do "not represent any consensus of beliefs," in the words of founding editor Archibald Cary Coolidge; instead, they reflect his pledge to "tolerate wide differences of opinion . . . seriously held and convincingly expressed." *Foreign Affairs*, Coolidge stressed, "does not accept responsibility for the views expressed in any article, signed or unsigned, which appear in its pages. What it does accept is the responsibility for giving them the chance to appear there."

The central claim of the magazine's first-ever essay—that a good foreign policy demands deep, open, and broad debate—may no longer seem as striking as it did in September 1922. Yet all we do is meant to fulfill that commitment, one as vital now as it was 100 years ago.

—Daniel Kurtz-Phelan, Editor



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The Beginning of History

Surviving the Era of Catastrophic Risk

WILLIAM MACASKILL

We stand at the beginning of history. For every person alive today, ten have lived and died in the past. But if human beings survive as long as the average mammal species, then for every person alive today, a thousand people will live in the future. We are the ancients. On the scale of a typical human life, humanity today is barely an infant struggling to walk.

Although the future of our species may yet be long, it may instead be fleeting. Of the many developments that have occurred since this magazine's first issue a century ago, the most profound is humanity's ability to end itself. From climate change to nuclear war, engineered pandemics, uncontrolled artificial intelligence (AI), and other destructive technologies not yet foreseen, a worrying number of risks conspire to threaten the end of humanity.

WILLIAM MACASKILL is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Oxford University and a Senior Research Fellow at the Global Priorities Institute. He is the author of the forthcoming book *What We Owe the Future*.

Illustration by Keith Negley

Just over 30 years ago, as the Cold War came to an end, some thinkers saw the future unfurling in a far more placid way. The threat of apocalypse, so vivid in the Cold War imagination, had begun to recede. The end of communism a few decades after the defeat of fascism during World War II seemed to have settled the major ideological debates. Capitalism and democracy would spread inexorably. The political theorist Francis Fukuyama divided the world into "post-historical" and "historical" societies. War might persist in certain parts of the world in the shape of ethnic and sectarian conflicts, for instance. But large-scale wars would become a thing of the past as more and more countries joined the likes of France, Japan, and the United States on the other side of history. The future offered a narrow range of political possibilities, as it promised relative peace, prosperity, and ever-widening individual freedoms.

Humanity must avoid the fate of Icarus—but still fly.

The prospect of a timeless future has given way to visions of no future at all. Ideology remains a fault line in geopolitics, market globalization is fragmenting, and great-power conflict has become increasingly likely. But the threats to the future are bigger still, with the possibility of the eradication of the human species. In the face of that potential oblivion, the range of political and policy debates is likely to be wider in the years ahead than it has been in decades. The great ideological disputes are far from settled. In truth, we are likely to encounter bigger questions and be forced to consider more radical proposals that reflect the challenges posed by the transformations and perils ahead. Our horizons must expand, not shrink.

Chief among those challenges is how humanity manages the dangers of its own genius. Advances in weaponry, biology, and computing could spell the end of the species, either through deliberate misuse or a large-scale accident. Societies face risks whose sheer scale could paralyze any concerted action. But governments can and must take meaningful steps today to ensure the survival of the species without forgoing the benefits of technological progress. Indeed, the world will need innovation to overcome several cataclysmic dangers it already faces—humanity needs to be able to generate and store clean energy, detect novel diseases when they can still be contained, and maintain peace between the great

powers without relying on a delicate balance of nuclear-enabled mutually assured destruction.

Far from a safe resting place, the technological and institutional status quo is a precarious predicament from which societies need to escape. To lay the groundwork for this escape, governments must become more aware of the risks they face and develop a robust institutional apparatus for managing them. This includes embedding a concern for worst-case scenarios into relevant areas of policymaking and embracing an idea known as "differential technological development"—reining in work that would produce potentially dangerous outcomes, such as biological research that can be weaponized, while funding and otherwise accelerating those technologies that would help reduce risk, such as wastewater monitoring for pathogen detection.

The greatest shift needed is one of perspective. Fukuyama looked to the future a little mournfully, seeing a gray, undramatic expanse—a tableau for technocrats. "The end of history will be a very sad time," he wrote in 1989, in which "daring, courage, imagination, and idealism, will be replaced by economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands." But at this beginning of history, this critical juncture in the human story, it will take daring and imagination to meet the various challenges ahead. Contrary to what Fukuyama foresaw, the political horizon has not narrowed to a sliver. Enormous economic, social, and political transformations remain possible—and necessary. If we act wisely, the coming century will be defined by the recognition of what we owe the future, and our grandchildren's grandchildren will look back at us with gratitude and pride. If we mess up, they might never see the light of day.

THOSE WHO ARE YET TO COME

The fossil record indicates that the average mammal species lasts a million years. By this measure, we have about 700,000 years ahead of us. During this time, even if humanity remained earthbound at just one-tenth of the current world population, a staggering ten trillion people would be born in the future.

Moreover, our species is not the average mammal, and humans may well be able to outlast their relatives. If we survived until the expanding sun scorched the earth, humanity would persist for hundreds of millions of years. More time would separate us from our

last descendants than from the earliest dinosaurs. And if one day we settled space—entirely conceivable on the scale of thousands of years—earth-originating intelligent life could continue until the last stars burned out in tens of trillions of years.

Far from being an idle exercise in juggling unfathomable numbers, appreciating the potential scale of humanity's future is vital to understanding what is at stake. Actions today could affect whether and how trillions of our descendants might live—whether they will face poverty or abundance, war or peace, slavery or freedom—placing inordinate responsibility on the shoulders of the present. The profound consequences of such a shift in perspective are demonstrated by a striking experiment conducted in the small Japanese town of Yahaba. Before debating municipal policy, half the participants were asked to put on ceremonial robes and imagine they were from the future, representing the interests of the current citizens' grandchildren. Not only did researchers observe a "stark contrast in deliberation styles and priorities between the groups," the concern for future generations was infectious—among the measures on which consensus could be achieved, more than half were proposed by the imaginary grandchildren.

Thinking in the long term reveals how much societies can still achieve. As little as 500 years ago, it would have been inconceivable that one day incomes would double every few generations, that most people would live to see their grandchildren grow up, and that the world's leading countries would be secular societies whose leaders are chosen in free elections. Countries that now seem so permanent to their citizens may not last more than a few centuries. None of the world's various modes of social organization appeared in history fully formed. A short-term focus on days, months, or years obscures the potential for fundamental long-term change.

The fact that humanity is only in its infancy highlights what a tragedy its untimely death would be. There is so much life left to live, but in our youth, our attention flits quickly from one thing to the next, and we stumble around not realizing that some of our actions place us at serious risk. Our powers increase by the day, but our self-awareness and wisdom lag behind. Our story might end before it has truly begun.

HOW WE COULD END HISTORY

In contrast to Fukuyama's "end of history," other observers of international affairs have focused on the more literal meaning of the phrase:

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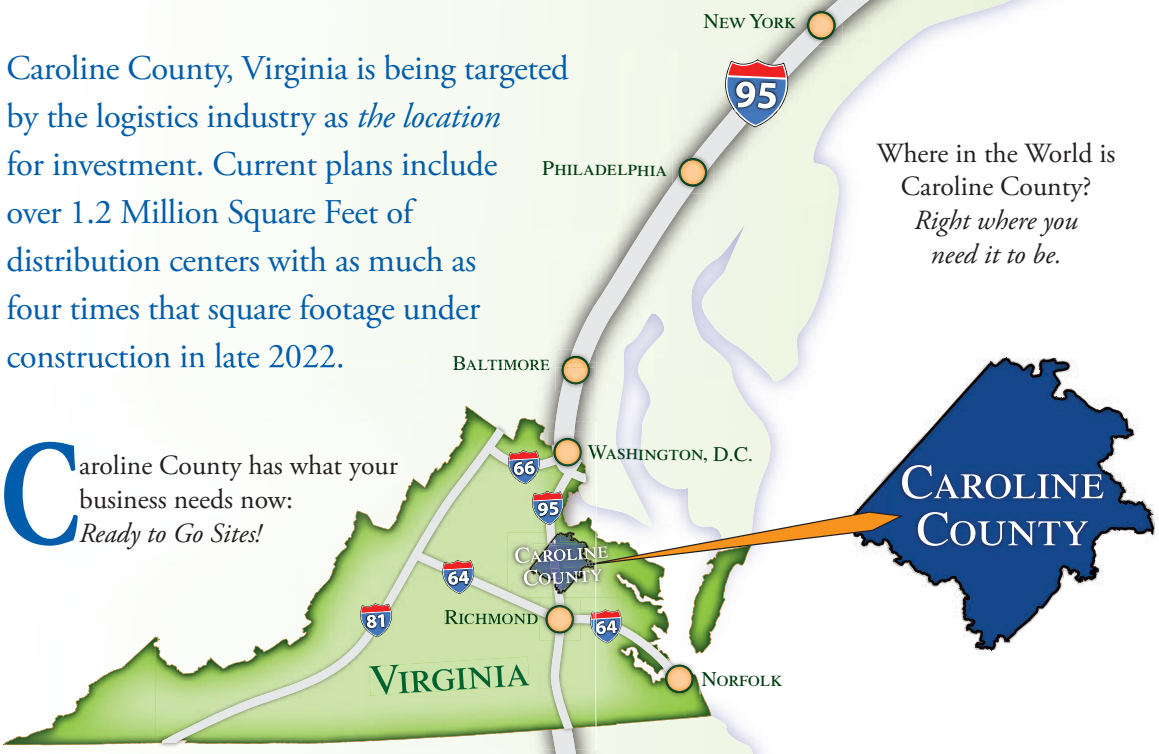

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the potential for humanity to perish altogether. Such views were especially prevalent at the dawn of the Cold War, shortly after nuclear scientists enabled a massive leap in humanity's destructive potential. As the British statesman Winston Churchill put it in 1946 with characteristic verve, "The Stone Age may return on the gleaming wings of science, and what might now shower immeasurable material blessings upon mankind, may even bring about its total destruction." A few years later, U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower echoed these concerns during his first inaugural address, in which he warned that "science seems ready to confer upon us, as its final gift, the power to erase human life from this planet."

The story of humanity might end before it has truly begun.

Human history is rife with catastrophe, from the horrors of the Black Death to those of slavery and colonialism. But barring a few highly unlikely natural events, such as supervolcano eruptions or meteors crashing into the planet, there were no plausible mechanisms by which humanity as a whole could perish. In his book *The Precipice*, the Oxford philosopher Toby Ord estimated that even accepting all the most pessimistic assumptions, the accumulated risks of naturally occurring extinction still afford humanity an expected lifespan of at least 100,000 years.

Serious concerns about "existential catastrophe"—defined by Ord as the permanent destruction of humanity's potential—emerged mainly in the second half of the twentieth century, hand in hand with an acceleration of technological progress. Lord Martin Rees, the former president of the Royal Society, wrote in 2003 that humanity's odds of surviving this century are "no better than 50-50." Ord estimated the likelihood of humanity wiping itself out or otherwise permanently derailing the course of civilization at one in six within the next hundred years. If either is right, the most likely way an American born today could die young is in a civilization-ending catastrophe.

Nuclear weapons exhibit several crucial properties that future technological threats may also possess. When invented in the middle of the twentieth century, they presented a sudden jump in destructive capabilities: the atomic bomb was thousands of times more powerful than pre-nuclear explosives; hydrogen bombs allowed for yields thousands of times again more explosive. Compared with the pace of increases in destructive power in the pre-nuclear age, 10,000 years of advances occurred within just a few decades.

These developments were hard to anticipate: the eminent physicist Ernest Rutherford dismissed the idea of atomic energy as "moonshine" as late as 1933, one year before Leo Szilard, another acclaimed physicist, patented the idea of a nuclear fission reactor. Once nuclear bombs had arrived, destruction could have been unleashed either deliberately, such as when U.S. generals advocated for a nuclear first strike on China during the 1958 Taiwan Strait crisis, or accidentally, as demonstrated by the harrowing track record of misfires in early warning systems. Even worse, measures to defend against a deliberate attack often came at the price of an increased risk of accidental nuclear Armageddon. Consider, for instance, the United States' airborne alert, its launch-on-warning doctrine, or the Soviet "Dead Hand" system, which guaranteed that if Moscow suffered a nuclear attack, it would automatically launch an all-out nuclear retaliation. The end of the Cold War did not fundamentally change this deadly calculus, and nuclear powers still balance safety and force readiness at the heart of their policies. Future technologies might impose even more dangerous tradeoffs between safety and performance.

APOCALYPSE SOON?

But nuclear weapons are far from the only risks we face. Several future technologies could be more destructive, easier to obtain for a wider range of actors, pose more dual-use concerns, or require fewer missteps to trigger the extinction of our species—and hence be much harder to govern. A recent report by the U.S. National Intelligence Council identified runaway artificial intelligence, engineered pandemics, and nanotechnology weapons, in addition to nuclear war, as sources of existential risks—"threats that could damage life on a global scale" and "challenge our ability to imagine and comprehend their potential scope and scale."

Take, for example, engineered pandemics. Progress in biotechnology has been extremely rapid, with key costs, such as for gene sequencing, falling ever faster. Further advances promise numerous benefits, such as gene therapies for as yet incurable diseases. But dual-use concerns loom large: some of the methods used in medical research could, in principle, be employed to identify or create pathogens that are more transmissible and lethal than anything in nature. This may be done as part of open scientific enterprises—in which scientists sometimes modify pathogens to learn how to

combat them—or with less noble intentions in terrorist or state-run bioweapons programs. (Such programs are not a thing of the past: a 2021 U.S. State Department report concluded that both North Korea and Russia maintain an offensive bioweapons program.) Research published with pro-social intentions could also be misused by bad actors, perhaps in ways the original authors never considered.

Unlike nuclear weapons, bacteria and viruses are self-replicating. As the COVID-19 pandemic tragically proved, once a new pathogen has infected a single human being, there may be no way to put the genie back in the bottle. And although just nine states have nuclear weapons—with Russia and the United States controlling more than 90 percent of all warheads—the world has thousands of biological laboratories. Of these, dozens—spread out over five continents—are licensed to experiment with the world's most dangerous pathogens.

Worse, the safety track record of biological research is even more dismal than that of nuclear weapons. In 2007, foot-and-mouth disease, which spreads rapidly through livestock populations and can easily cause billions of dollars of economic damage, leaked not once but twice from the same British laboratory within weeks, even after government intervention. And lab leaks have already led to the loss of human life, such as when weaponized anthrax escaped from a plant connected to the Soviet bioweapons program in Sverdlovsk in 1979, killing dozens. Perhaps most worrying, genetic evidence suggests that the 1977 "Russian flu" pandemic may have originated in human experiments involving an influenza strain that had circulated in the 1950s. Around 700,000 people died.

Altogether, hundreds of accidental infections have occurred in U.S. labs alone—one per 250 person-years of laboratory work. Since there are dozens of high-security labs in the world, each of which employs dozens, perhaps even hundreds, of scientists and other staff, such a rate amounts to multiple accidental infections per year. Societies must significantly reduce this rate. If these facilities ever start tinkering with extinction-level pathogens, humanity's premature end will be just a matter of time.

GOVERNANCE AT THE END OF THE WORLD

Despite this rising level of risk, it is far from assured that humanity will be able to take the necessary steps to protect itself. In fact, there are several obstacles to adequate risk mitigation.

The most fundamental issue is painfully familiar from the struggles of climate diplomacy in recent years. When burning fossil fuels, individual countries reap most of the benefits, but other countries and future generations will bear most of the costs. Similarly, engaging in risky biological research holds the promise of patentable drugs that could boost a country's economy and prestige—but a pathogen accidentally released in that country would not respect borders. In the language of economists, imposing a risk on the future is a negative externality, and providing risk-reduction measures, such as establishing an early warning system for novel diseases, is a global public good. (Consider how the whole world would have benefited if COVID-19, like SARS between 2002 and 2004, had been contained in a small number of countries and then eradicated.) This is precisely the sort of good that neither the market nor the international system will provide by default because countries have powerful incentives to free-ride on the contributions of others.

Humanity has a number of avenues for escaping this structural tragedy. To assuage concerns about losing ground in the struggle for security, countries could enter into agreements to collectively refrain from developing especially dangerous technologies such as bioweapons. Alternatively, a coalition of the willing could band together to form what the economist William Nordhaus has called a "club." Members of a club jointly help provide the global public good the club was formed to promote. At the same time, they commit to providing benefits to one another (such as economic growth or peace) while imposing costs (through measures such as tariffs) on nonmembers, thereby enticing them to join. For instance, clubs could be based on safety standards for artificial intelligence systems or on a moratorium on risky biological research.

Unfortunately, the resurgence of great-power competition casts doubt on the likelihood of these feats of global cooperation. Worse, geopolitical tensions could compel states to accept an increased level of risk to the world—and to themselves—if they perceive it as a gamble worth taking to further their security interests. (In the eight years during which the United States maintained bombers on continuous airborne alert, five aircraft crashed while carrying nuclear payloads.) And if even one state's bioweapons program experimented with extinction-level pathogens—perhaps on a foolhardy quest to develop the ultimate deterrent—the next laboratory accident could precipitate a global pandemic much worse than that of COVID-19.

In the worst case, the great powers could, in their struggle for global hegemony, resort to outright war. For people who grew up in the West after World War II, this notion might seem far-fetched. The psychologist Steven Pinker has popularized the claim that violence—including among states—has long been on the decline. Subsequent analysis by the political scientist Bear Braumoeller and others, however, has substantially complicated the picture. The researchers have suggested that the intensity of conflict appears to follow what is known as a "power law," meaning that after an interlude of relative peace, it is entirely possible that war might return in an even more deadly incarnation. Calculations by the computer scientist Aaron Clauset have indicated that the "long peace" that has followed World War II would need to endure for another century before it would constitute significant evidence of an actual long-term decline in war. Braumoeller asserted that it is "not at all unlikely that another war that would surpass the two World Wars in lethality will happen in your lifetime," noting that in the conclusion of his book on the topic he "briefly considered typing, 'We're all going to die,' and leaving it at that."

Staving off the risk of World War III while also achieving unprecedented innovations in international governance is a tall order. But like it or not, that is the challenge we face.

INNOVATE TO SURVIVE

One response to this daunting challenge is retreat. If it is so difficult to safely govern emerging technologies, some argue, then why don't we simply refrain from inventing them in the first place? Members of the "degrowth" movement take precisely this stance, decrying economic growth and technological progress as the main culprits behind alienation, environmental destruction, and all kinds of other harms. In 2019, 11,000 scientists from more than 150 countries signed an open letter demanding that the population of the world "be stabilized—and, ideally, gradually reduced" and that countries turn their priorities away "from GDP growth."

Despite its intuitive appeal, this response is unrealistic and dangerous. It is unrealistic because it simply fails to engage with the interdependence of states in the international system. Even if the world's countries came together temporarily to halt innovation, sooner or later someone would resume the pursuit of advanced technology.

Be that as it may, technological stagnation is not desirable anyway. To see why, note that new technologies can both exacerbate and reduce risk. Once a new technological danger has been introduced—such as by nuclear weapons—governments might require additional technologies to manage that risk. For example, the threat nuclear weapons pose to the survival of the human species would be greatly reduced if, during a potential nuclear winter, people were able to produce food without sunlight or if early warning systems could more reliably distinguish between intercontinental ballistic missiles and small scientific rockets. But if societies stop technological progress altogether, new technological threats may emerge that cannot be contained because the commensurate strides in defense have not been made. For instance, a wide variety of actors may be able to create unprecedentedly dangerous pathogens at a time when people have not made much progress in the early detection and eradication of novel diseases.

The status quo, in other words, is already heavily mined with potential catastrophes. And in the absence of defensive measures, threats from nature might eventually lead to human extinction as they have for many other species: to survive to their full potential, human beings will need to learn to perform such feats as deflecting asteroids and quickly fighting off new pandemics. They must avoid the fate of Icarus—but still fly.

The challenge is to continue reaping the fruits of technological advancement while protecting humanity against its downsides. Some experts refer to this as "differential technological development," the idea being that if people can't prevent destructive technology or accidents from happening in the first place, they can, with foresight and careful planning, at least attempt to develop beneficial and protective technologies first.

We're already in a game of what Richard Danzig, the former U.S. secretary of the navy, has called "technology roulette." No bullet has been fired yet, but that doesn't change how risky the game is. There are many more turns to pull the trigger in the future: a bad accident and perhaps a fatal one is inevitable unless our species changes the game.

WHAT WE OWE THE FUTURE

Game-changers have so far been in short supply. Given the stakes, societies have to date done scandalously little to protect their future. Consider, for instance, the Biological Weapons Convention, which

prohibits the development, storage, and acquisition of biological weapons. The national security expert Daniel Gerstein described it as "the most important arms control treaty of the twenty-first century," yet it lacks a verification mechanism, and its budget is dwarfed by that of the Met Gala. As if this weren't enough of a travesty, the BWC struggles to raise even the meager contributions it is due—a 2018 report by the convention's chair lamented the "precarious and worsening state of the financial situation of the BWC . . . due to long-standing non-payment of assessed contributions by some States Parties."

The management of nonbiological risks doesn't inspire confidence, either. Research aimed at preventing the loss of control over artificially intelligent systems remains a minuscule fraction of overall AI research. And militaries are using lethal autonomous weapons on the battlefield, while efforts to limit such weapons systems have stalled for years at the UN. The domestic situation doesn't look much better—less than one percent of the U.S. defense budget is dedicated to biodefense, and the majority of that goes to fending off chemical weapons such as anthrax. Even after COVID-19 killed one in every 500 people in the world and inflicted $16 trillion worth of economic damage in the United States alone, Congress couldn't agree to provide a modest $15 billion to bolster pandemic preparedness.

This kind of risk reduction is so neglected that opportunities for positive change abound. One success story of existential risk mitigation is NASA's Spaceguard program. At a cost of less than $5 million per year, between its inception in 1998 and 2010, scientists tracked more than 90 percent of extinction-threatening asteroids, in the process increasing the accuracy of their predictions and reducing the best estimate of the risk that one will strike the earth by a factor of ten. Consider also that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. government spent $18 billion on Operation Warp Speed to accelerate vaccine development. The program resulted in safe and effective vaccines that the United States and other countries were able to buy at a price constituting a small fraction of the vaccines' social benefits, which have been estimated to amount to tens of trillions of dollars. The economist Robert Barro has estimated that between September 2021 and February 2022, these vaccines saved American lives at a cost of between $55,000 and $200,000 each, more than 20 times above the cost-effectiveness threshold that lifesaving policies usually need to meet.

If the world's best and brightest step up and governments or the private sector provide funding, we can achieve even more impressive successes. For instance, although it still must overcome major technical hurdles, widespread metagenomic sequencing of wastewater would help detect novel diseases at a stage when they can still be contained and eradicated. The Nucleic Acid Observatory, based at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is pursuing just this vision. The public and private sectors should also develop better personal protective equipment and do further research on sterilization technology such as Far UV-C—an ionizing radiation process that, if successful, could offer a near-universal defense against pathogens and be installed in any building. Regarding artificial intelligence, research aimed at making systems safe and reliable must be scaled up tenfold. The common thread running through measures such as these is an emphasis on defensive strategies that do not themselves create or enhance other risks.

We are one of history's first generations.

Progress is also possible in other domains. Intelligence collection and analysis aimed at the known sources of large-scale risks will be critical. And although achieving complete certainty is impossible (as the astronomer Carl Sagan once quipped, "Theories that involve the end of the world are not amenable to experimental verification—or at least, not more than once"), scanning and forecasting what is on the horizon can help identify new concerns. In this vein, it is encouraging that the most recent Global Trends report by the National Intelligence Council included a discussion of the concept of existential risk, calling for "the development of resilient strategies to survive."

More governments, institutions, and firms need to take such ideas seriously. Regulatory reform will also be important. In *Averting Catastrophe*, Cass Sunstein, a former head of the regulatory office at the White House, showed how the government's current approach to cost-benefit analysis can't sufficiently account for potential catastrophic risks. Sunstein argued for what he called the "maximin principle": in the face of sufficiently extreme risks—and human extinction certainly qualifies as such—governments must focus on eliminating the very worst outcomes. As it happens, the White House is currently modernizing its framework for reviewing regulation. It should use this opportunity to make its approach to dealing with low-probability risks of extreme damage fit for the twenty-first

century, whether by adopting Sunstein's maximin principle or something similar that takes global catastrophic risks seriously.

Fukuyama prophesied "centuries of boredom at the end of history." Nothing could be further from the case. Powerful and destructive technologies will present an unprecedented challenge to the current political system. Advanced AI could undermine the balance of power that exists between individuals and states: an entirely automated workforce would give the government little reason to treat its citizens well; a dictatorship that possessed an AI army and police force could prevent the possibility of an uprising or a coup. Government could use the prospect of a third world war as a reason to expand the state and crack down on individual liberties such as free speech on the grounds of protecting national security. The possibility of easily accessible bioweapons could be used to justify universal surveillance.

With humanity's future in mind, we should resist such pressures. We must fight to ensure both that we have a future and that it is a future worth having. The cultural shift toward liberalism over the past three centuries created an engine of moral progress that led to the spread of democracy, the abolition of slavery, and expanded rights for women and people of color. That engine can't be turned off now. If anything, we need to go much further in promoting moral and political diversity and experimentation. Looking back millennia, moderns see the Romans' practices of slaveholding, torture for entertainment, and ultra-patriarchy as barbaric. Perhaps future generations will see many of our current practices as little better.

So we must walk a tightrope. We must ensure that global cooperation reduces the risks of global catastrophe to near zero while maintaining the freedom and diversity of thought and social structures that would enable us to build a future that our grandchildren's grandchildren would thank us for. Contemplating large-scale political change is daunting, but past innovations in governance, such as the UN system and the EU, provide reasons for hope.

We are not used to seeing ourselves as one of history's first generations; we tend to focus on what we have inherited from the past, not what we could bequeath to the future. This is a mistake. To tackle the task before us, we must reflect on where we stand in humanity's full lineage. We in the present day recklessly gamble, not just with our lives and our children's lives but with the very existence of all who are yet to come. Let us be the last generation to do so.

The Dangerous Decade

A Foreign Policy for a World in Crisis

RICHARD HAASS

"There are decades where nothing happens, and there are weeks where decades happen." Those words are apocryphally attributed to the Bolshevik revolutionary (and *Foreign Affairs* reader) Vladimir Lenin, referring to the rapid collapse of tsarist Russia just over 100 years ago. If he had actually said those words, Lenin might have added that there are also decades when centuries happen.

The world is in the midst of one such decade. As with other historical hinges, the danger today stems from a sharp decline in world order. But more than at any other recent moment, that decline threatens to become especially steep, owing to a confluence of old and new threats that have begun to intersect at a moment the United States is ill positioned to contend with them.

On the one hand, the world is witnessing the revival of some of the worst aspects of traditional geopolitics: great-power competition, imperial

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ambitions, fights over resources. Today, Russia is headed by a tyrant, President Vladimir Putin, who longs to re-create a Russian sphere of influence and perhaps even a Russian empire. Putin is willing to do almost anything to achieve that goal, and he is able to act as he pleases because internal constraints on his regime have mostly disappeared. Meanwhile, under President Xi Jinping, China has embarked on a quest for regional and potentially global primacy, putting itself on a trajectory that will lead to increased competition or even confrontation with the United States.

But that is not all—not by a long shot. These geopolitical risks are colliding with complex new challenges central to the contemporary era, such as climate change, pandemics, and nuclear proliferation. And not surprisingly, the diplomatic fallout from growing rivalries has made it nearly impossible for great powers to work together on regional and international challenges, even when it is in their interest to do so.

Further complicating the picture is the reality that American democracy and political cohesion are at risk to a degree not seen since the middle of the nineteenth century. This matters because the United States is not just one country among many: U.S. leadership has underpinned what order there has been in the world for the past 75 years and remains no less central today. A United States riven internally, however, will become ever less willing and able to lead on the international stage.

These conditions have set off a vicious circle: heightened geopolitical competition makes it even more difficult to produce the cooperation demanded by new global problems, and the deteriorating international environment further fuels geopolitical tensions—all at a time that the United States is weakened and distracted. The frightening gap between global challenges and the world's responses, the increased prospects for major-power wars in Europe and the Indo-Pacific, and the growing potential for Iran to cause instability in the Middle East have come together to produce the most dangerous moment since World War II. Call it a perfect—or, more accurately, an imperfect—storm.

To warn of danger is not to predict the future. Ideally, things will turn out for the better. But good things rarely happen on their own; to the contrary, left to their own devices, systems deteriorate. The task for U.S. policymakers, then, is to rediscover the principles and practice of statecraft: to marshal national power and collective action against the tendency toward disorder. The goal must be to manage the collision of old geopolitics and new challenges, to act with discipline in what is sought, and to build arrangements or, better yet, institutions where

there is sufficient consensus. To do all that, Washington will have to prioritize establishing order over fostering democracy abroad—at the same time as it works to shore up democracy at home.

DISORDER ON THE RISE

In August 1990, intent on territorial conquest, Iraq invaded its far smaller neighbor Kuwait. "This will not stand," U.S. President George H. W. Bush responded. He was right. Within weeks, Washington had organized wide-ranging international support for a military intervention around the limited objective of ejecting Iraqi forces from Kuwait. The 1990–91 Gulf War was marked by extensive cooperation, including from China and Russia, fostered by U.S. leadership under the aegis of the United Nations. In a matter of months, the coordinated response met with considerable success; Iraqi aggression was reversed and Kuwait's independence restored at minimal cost. The major powers upheld the norm that force cannot be used to change borders, a fundamental element of international order.

Nothing of that sort could take place in today's world, as the Ukraine crisis has made abundantly clear, and the fact that Russia is a much more powerful, influential country than Iraq was in 1990 only partly explains the difference. Although Russia's invasion has inspired a sense of solidarity and impressive levels of coordination among Western countries, the war in Ukraine has yielded nothing resembling the nearly universal embrace of the goals and institutions of the U.S.-led order that was spurred by the Gulf War. Instead, Beijing has aligned itself with Moscow, and much of the world has refused to sign on to the sanctions imposed on Russia by Washington and its partners. And with one of the permanent members of the UN Security Council blatantly violating international law and the principle that borders may not be changed through force, the UN remains mostly sidelined.

In a sense, the two wars serve as bookends to the post–Cold War Pax Americana. The United States' preponderance of power was bound to diminish, not owing to American decline but because of what the commentator Fareed Zakaria dubbed "the rise of the rest"—that is, the economic and military development of other countries and entities and the emergence of a world defined by a much greater diffusion of power. That said, the United States, by what it did and did not do in the world and at home, squandered much of its post–Cold War inheritance, failing to translate its primacy into an enduring order.

This failure is especially noticeable when it comes to Russia. In the years immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the juxtaposition of vast American power and staggering Russian weakness made it seem unlikely that, three decades later, world affairs would once again be dominated by hostility between the Kremlin and Western capitals. Debates rage about how this came to pass, with profound disagreements over how much blame the United States deserves and how much should be attributed to Putin or to Russian political culture more broadly. But whatever the cause, it is difficult to deny that six U.S. presidential administrations have little to show for all their efforts to build a successful post–Cold War relationship with Russia.

Older geopolitical risks are colliding with complex new challenges.

Today, under Putin, Russian behavior is fundamentally at odds with the most basic tenets of international order. Putin shows no interest in integrating Russia into the prevailing order but rather seeks to ignore it when he can—and when he cannot, to undermine or defeat it. He has repeatedly demonstrated a willingness to employ brutal military force against civilian populations in Europe and the Middle East. Putin's regime does not respect the borders and sovereignty of other countries, as witnessed with its ongoing invasion of Ukraine and attempt to annex parts of the country.

Russia's aggression has upended many assumptions that influenced thinking about international relations in the post–Cold War era. It has ended the holiday from history in which wars between countries were rare. It has hollowed out the norm against countries' acquiring territory by force. And it has demonstrated that economic interdependence is no bulwark against threats to world order. Many believed that Russia's reliance on western European markets for its energy exports would encourage restraint. In reality, such ties did no better in moderating Russian behavior than they did in preventing the outbreak of World War I. Worse yet, interdependence proved to be more of a constraint on countries that had allowed themselves to grow reliant on Russia (above all, Germany) than on Russia itself.

All that said, Russia will emerge weakened from what promises to be a long war with Ukraine. Unlike the Soviet Union, Russia is anything but a superpower. Even before Western countries imposed sanctions on Russia in response to its assault on Ukraine, the Russian economy was not among the ten largest in the world in terms of GDP; at least

in part because of those sanctions, it is expected to contract by up to ten percent over the course of 2022. Russia's economy remains heavily dependent on energy production; its armed forces have revealed themselves to be poorly led and organized and no match for NATO. Again, however, it is Russian weakness juxtaposed against Putin's willingness and ability to act recklessly with the military and nuclear strength he does possess that makes Russia such a danger.

Russia presents an acute, near-term problem for the United States. China, in contrast, poses a far more serious medium- and long-term challenge. The wager that integrating China into the world economy would make it more open politically, more market oriented, and more moderate in its foreign policy failed to pay off and has even backfired. Today, China is more repressive at home and has vested more power in the hands of one individual than at any time since the reign of Mao Zedong. State-owned enterprises, rather than being rolled up, remain omnipresent, while the government seeks to constrain private industry. China has regularly stolen and incorporated the intellectual property of others. Its conventional and nuclear military might has increased markedly. It has militarized the South China Sea, economically coerced its neighbors, fought a border clash with India, and crushed democracy in Hong Kong, and it continues to increase pressure on Taiwan.

Yet China also has significant internal weaknesses. After booming for decades, the country's economy is now beginning to stall, diluting a principal source of the regime's legitimacy. It is unclear how the Chinese Communist Party can restore strong economic growth, given the country's political constraints, which hamper innovation, and demographic realities, including a shrinking labor pool. China's aggressive foreign policy, meanwhile, has alienated many of its neighbors. And China is nearly certain to face a difficult leadership transition over the next decade. Like Putin, Xi has consolidated power in his own hands in ways that will complicate any succession and perhaps lead to a power struggle. The outcome is difficult to predict: an internal struggle could result in diminished international activism or the emergence of more benign leaders, but it could also lead to even more nationalist foreign policies designed to rally support or distract public attention.

What is certain is that Xi and other Chinese leaders seem to assume that China will pay little if any cost for its aggressive behavior, given that others are too dependent on its exports or on access to its market. So far, this assumption has been borne out. Yet a conflict between the

United States and China no longer seems like a remote possibility. Meanwhile, as Washington's relations with Moscow and Beijing grow tenser, Russia and China are growing closer. They share an animosity to a U.S.-led international system that they see as inhospitable to their political systems at home and their ambitions abroad. Increasingly, they are willing to act on their objections and do so in tandem. Unlike 40 or 50 years ago, it is the United States that now finds itself the odd man out when it comes to triangular diplomacy.

MIND THE GAP

As the geopolitical picture among great powers has darkened, a chasm has opened between global challenges and the machinery meant to contend with them. Take global health. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the limitations of the World Health Organization and the unwillingness or inability of even rich, developed countries to respond to a crisis that they had every reason to anticipate. Some 15 to 18 million people worldwide have thus far died as a result, millions of them unnecessarily. And nearly three years after the pandemic began, China's refusal to cooperate with an independent investigation means the world still does not know how the virus originated and initially spread, making it harder to prevent the next outbreak—and providing a prime example of how old, familiar geopolitical dysfunctions are combining with new problems.

Among other global challenges, climate change has arguably received the most international attention, and rightly so—yet there is little to show for it. Unless the world makes rapid progress on reducing greenhouse gas emissions during this decade, it will be much more difficult to preserve and protect life as we know it on this planet. But diplomatic efforts have come up short and show no sign of improving. Individual countries determine their own climate goals, and there is no price for setting them low or not meeting them. Generating post-pandemic economic growth and locking in energy supplies—a concern heightened by the war in Ukraine and the disruptions it has yielded in the energy sector—have increased countries' focus on energy security at the expense of climate considerations. Once again, a traditional geopolitical concern has collided with a new problem, making it harder to contend with either one.

When it comes to nuclear proliferation, the reality is more complex. Some scholars predicted that dozens of states would have developed nuclear weapons by now; in fact, only nine have developed full-fledged programs. Many advanced industrialized countries that could develop

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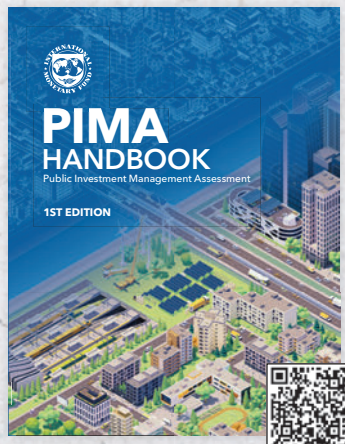

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nuclear weapons have chosen not to. No one has used a nuclear weapon since the United States did so in the final days of World War II. And no terrorist group has gained access to one.

But appearances can be deceiving: in the absence of proliferation, nuclear weapons have attained a new value. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, Ukraine gave up the Soviet nuclear weapons that remained on its territory; since then, it has been invaded twice by Russia, an outcome that might persuade others that giving up nuclear weapons decreases a country's security. Regimes in Iraq and Libya were ousted after abandoning their nuclear weapons programs, which could make other leaders hesitant to do so or encourage them to consider the advantages of developing or acquiring nuclear capabilities. North Korea remains secure as it continues to expand its nuclear arsenal and the means to deliver it. Russia, for its part, appears to be according nuclear weapons a larger role in its defense posture. And the U.S. decision to rule out direct military involvement in Ukraine out of a fear that dispatching troops or establishing a no-fly zone could lead to a nuclear World War III will be seen by China and others as evidence that possessing a substantial nuclear arsenal can deter Washington—or at least get it to act with greater restraint.

No wonder, then, that Iran is putting in place many of the prerequisites of a nuclear weapons program amid negotiations meant to revive the 2015 nuclear deal from which the United States withdrew in 2018. The talks seem to have hit a wall, but even if they succeed, the problem will not go away, as the accord features a number of sunset clauses. It is thus more a question of when, not if, Iran makes enough progress to provoke an attack intended to prevent Tehran's nuclear capability from reaching fruition. Or one or more of Iran's neighbors might decide they need nuclear weapons of their own to counter Iran should it be able to field nuclear weapons with little warning. The Middle East, for three decades the least stable region of the world, may well be on the cusp of an even more dangerous era.

TROUBLE AT HOME

As problems new and old collide and combine to challenge the U.S.-led order, perhaps the most worrisome changes are taking place inside the United States itself. The country retains many strengths. But some of its advantages—the rule of law, orderly transitions of power, the ability to attract and retain talented immigrants on a large scale, socioeconomic mobility—are now less certain than they once were, and problems such as gun violence, crime in urban areas, drug abuse, and illegal immigration

have become more pronounced. In addition, the country is held back by political divisions. A widespread refusal among Republicans to accept the results of the 2020 presidential election, which led to the attack on the Capitol on January 6, 2021, suggests the possible emergence of an American version of Northern Ireland's "Troubles." Localized, politically inspired violence might well become commonplace in the United States. Recent Supreme Court decisions and the diverging domestic reactions to them have reinforced the impression of a Disunited States of America.

As a result, the American political model has become less appealing, and democratic backsliding in the United States has contributed to backsliding elsewhere. Making matters worse, U.S. economic mismanagement led to the 2008 global financial crisis, and more recent missteps have allowed inflation to skyrocket, further damaging the country's reputation. Perhaps most worrisome is the erosion of faith in Washington's basic steadiness. Without a consensus among Americans on their country's proper role in the world, there have been wild swings in U.S. foreign policy, from the George W. Bush administration's catastrophic overreach in Iraq, to the Obama administration's debilitating underreach in the Middle East and elsewhere, to the Trump administration's incompetence and transactionalism, which led many to doubt whether precedent or standing commitments mattered anymore in Washington. The Biden administration has done much to prioritize alliances and partnerships, but it, too, has at times reinforced doubts about American steadfastness and competence, especially during the chaotic withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan last year.

The fact that it is impossible to predict who will occupy the Oval Office in the future is nothing new; what is new is that it is impossible to assume much about how that person will approach the United States' relationship with the world. The result is that U.S. allies and partners increasingly have no choice but to weigh continued reliance on Washington against other alternatives, such as greater self-sufficiency or deference to powerful neighbors. An additional risk is that Washington's ability to deter rivals will diminish as its foes come to see the United States as too divided or reluctant to act.

ONE BIG IDEA?

In the face of the geopolitical tumult and global challenges that seem certain to define this decade, no overarching doctrine or construct for American foreign policy will be able to play the role that contain-

Collision course: a broadcast of Xi in Hong Kong, July 2022

ment did during the Cold War, when the concept provided a good deal of clarity and consensus. Such constructs are useful for guiding policymakers, explaining policies to the public, reassuring allies, and signaling adversaries. But the contemporary world does not lend itself to such a simple frame: today, there are simply too many challenges of different sorts that do not sit inside a single construct. Accounting for this judgment is the reality that it is no longer possible to speak of world order as a single phenomenon: there is the traditional geopolitical order reflecting balances of power and the extent to which norms are shared, and there is what one might term the globalization order reflecting the breadth and depth of common effort to meet challenges such as climate change and pandemics. World order (or the lack of it) is increasingly the sum of the two.

That does not mean that the United States should simply wing it and approach every foreign policy issue in isolation. But instead of a single big idea, Washington should use a number of principles and practices to guide its foreign policy and reduce the risk that the coming decade will produce a calamity. This shift would translate into a foreign policy that is based largely on alliances to deter Russian and Chinese aggression and selective partnerships of the like-minded to address global challenges that the United States cannot ignore or handle on its own. In addition, democracy

PAUL YEUNG / REUTERS

promotion at home rather than abroad should be the focus of U.S. attention, since there is more to build on and more to lose if the effort fails.

The greatest immediate threat to global order stems from Russian aggression against Ukraine. Properly managing the war will require a delicate balance, one that blends determination with realism. The West must provide extensive military and economic support to Ukraine to ensure its continued viability as a sovereign state and to prevent Russia from controlling more territory than it already holds, but the West also needs to accept that military force alone cannot end the Russian occupation. That outcome would require political change in Moscow and the arrival of a leadership willing to reduce or end Russia's presence in Ukraine in exchange for sanctions relief. Putin will never accept such a deal. And to offer a worthwhile compromise to a hypothetical future regime in Moscow, Washington and its partners would need to levy far more draconian sanctions on all Russian energy exports—above all, a ban on natural gas exports to Europe.

On China, the United States likewise needs to strengthen the foundations of a regional order. That means prioritizing its alliance with Japan, the Quad (Australia, India, Japan, and the United States), and the AUKUS grouping (Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States). Applying the lessons gleaned from watching Europe's awkward dance with Russia, the United States needs to reduce its interdependence with China—which, in too many instances, looks an awful lot like dependence on China. This would mean scaling back economic relations so that imports from China and exports to it become less essential to the economic health of the United States and that of its partners—which will make it easier to stand up to China, or even sanction it, if need be. The United States and other Western countries must bolster the resiliency of supply chains in critical materials through a mix of diversification and redundancy, stockpiling, pooling arrangements, and, when necessary, increased domestic production. This is not economic decoupling so much as economic distancing.

Washington and its partners will also need to respond forcefully if China moves against Taiwan. Allowing China to capture the island would have massive ramifications: every American ally and partner would reconsider its security dependence on the United States and opt for either appeasement of China or some form of strategic autonomy, which would likely involve obtaining nuclear weapons. A conflict over Taiwan would also lead to a profound global economic shock owing to Taiwan's dominant role in manufacturing advanced semiconductors.

Preventing such a scenario—or, if required, defending against a Chinese attack—calls for Washington to adopt a posture of strategic clarity on Taiwan, leaving no doubt that the United States would intervene militarily to protect the island and putting in place the security and economic means to back up that pledge. More international involvement, not less, will be required, which should entail at a minimum coordinating a strong sanctions package with European and Asian allies.

Relations with both Russia and China will remain complex, as they will not be one-dimensional even if they are largely competitive or adversarial. High-level, private strategic dialogues should become a component of both bilateral relationships. The rationale for such dialogues has less to do with what they might accomplish than what they might prevent, although in the case of China, there could be greater scope for exploring rules to guide relations between the two powers. Diverging and competing U.S., Russian, and Chinese attitudes and ambitions may rule out more than limited collaboration on world order, but these fault lines arguably make communication among the three countries all the more vital to reduce the chance of a grave miscalculation on geopolitical matters.

Meanwhile, U.S. policy should not seek to transform Russia or China, not because doing so would be undesirable but because advocating for regime change would likely prove irrelevant or counterproductive. The United States must deal with Russia and China as they are, not as Washington would prefer them to be. The principal focus of U.S. foreign policy toward Russia and China should not be to reshape their societies but to influence their foreign policy choices.

Over time, it is possible that limiting their external success and avoiding confrontation with them will build pressures inside their political systems, which could lead to desirable change, much as four decades of containment did with the Soviet Union. But Washington ought not to pose an existential threat to either government lest it strengthen the hands of those in Moscow and Beijing who argue that they have nothing to lose by acting recklessly and that there is nothing to be gained from working selectively with the United States.

There is another reason for prioritizing the promotion of order over the promotion of democracy—one that has nothing to do directly with Russia and China. Efforts to build international order, be it for the purpose of resisting aggression and proliferation or combating climate change and infectious disease, have broad support among nondemocracies. A world order premised on respect for borders and common efforts

on global challenges is preferable to a liberal world order premised on neither. That so many countries have not participated in sanctioning Russia is revealing. Framing the crisis in Ukraine as one of democracy versus authoritarianism has, not surprisingly, fallen flat among many illiberal leaders. The same logic applies to the U.S. relationship with Saudi Arabia, which the Biden administration is belatedly working to repair: a preference for democracy and human rights is one thing, but a foreign policy based on such a preference in a world defined by geopolitics and global challenges is unwise and unsustainable.

A similarly clear-eyed view should determine how Washington approaches cooperation on global challenges. Multilateralism is far preferable to unilateralism, but narrow multilateralism is far more promising than universal or broad forms of collective action that rarely succeed; witness, for example, the course of climate-change diplomacy and trade. Better to pursue realistic partnerships of the like-minded, which can bring a degree of order to the world, including specific domains of limited order, if not quite world order. Here, too, realism must trump idealism.

This observation has direct implications for dealing with climate change. Climate change poses an existential threat, and although a global response would be best, geopolitics will continue to make such collaboration difficult. The United States and its partners should emphasize narrower diplomatic approaches, but progress on mitigation is more likely to stem from technological breakthroughs than from diplomacy. That owes not to a lack of possible policy tools but rather to a lack of political support in the United States and other countries for those measures or for trade pacts that could encourage mitigation by imposing taxes or tariffs on goods derived from fossil fuels or manufactured through energy-inefficient processes. As a result, the goal of adapting to climate change should receive more attention and resources, as should exploration of the technological possibility of reversing it.

FORGING AHEAD

Three last considerations fall most directly on the United States. As it works to untie the knots that bind old geopolitical dilemmas to newer problems, the United States will face a number of serious threats, not only from Russia and China but also from Iran and a number of failed states that could provide oxygen to terrorists in the greater Middle East, and from North Korea, whose conventional military and nuclear capabilities continue to grow. Security, therefore, will require

Washington to increase defense spending by as much as one percent of GDP: still considerably below Cold War levels, but a significant step up. U.S. allies will need to take similar steps.

In dealing with the many threats that will define this decade, the United States will also need to act with both greater caution and greater boldness in the economic realm. There is as yet no serious alternative to the dollar as the world's de facto reserve currency, but that day may come, especially if Washington continues to weaponize the dollar through the frequent imposition of sanctions, in particular those targeting central banks. If a competitor currency emerges, the United States will lose its ability to borrow at low rates and inflate its way out of its massive debt, which currently stands at more than $30 trillion. Even now this debt threatens to crowd out more productive government spending, since the cost of servicing it will rise along with interest rates. But fiscal caution should be combined with a more assertive approach to trade, which would ideally mean joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and fleshing out newly announced frameworks in the Indo-Pacific and the Americas so that they lower barriers to trade in goods and services, set standards for data, and meaningfully address climate change.

Ultimately, however, the biggest risk to U.S. security in the decade to come is to be found in the United States itself. A country divided against itself cannot stand; nor can it be effective in the world, as a fractious United States will not be viewed as a reliable or predictable partner or leader. Nor will it be able to tackle its domestic challenges. Bridging the country's divisions will take sustained effort on the part of politicians, educators, religious leaders, and parents. Most desired norms and behaviors cannot be mandated, but voters have the power to reward or penalize politicians according to their behavior. And some changes, including expanding civics education and opportunities for national service, could be formally introduced.

Navigating a decade that promises to be as demanding and dangerous as this one—a decade that will present old-fashioned geopolitical risks alongside growing global challenges—calls for a foreign policy that avoids the extremes of wanting to transform the world or ignoring it, of working alone or with everyone. It will ask a great deal of U.S. policymakers and diplomats at a time when the country they work for is deeply divided and easily distracted. What is certain is that the course of this decade and decades to come will depend on the quality of officials' political skills at home and their statecraft abroad.


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The China Trap

U.S. Foreign Policy and the Perilous Logic of Zero-Sum Competition

JESSICA CHEN WEISS

Competition with China has begun to consume U.S. foreign policy. Seized with the challenge of a near-peer rival whose interests and values diverge sharply from those of the United States, U.S. politicians and policymakers are becoming so focused on countering China that they risk losing sight of the affirmative interests and values that should underpin U.S. strategy. The current course will not just bring indefinite deterioration of the U.S.-Chinese relationship and a growing danger of catastrophic conflict; it also threatens to undermine the sustainability of American leadership in the world and the vitality of American society and democracy at home.

There is, of course, good reason why a more powerful China has become the central concern of policymakers and strategists in

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Illustration by Joan Wong

Washington (and plenty of other capitals). Under President Xi Jinping especially, Beijing has grown more authoritarian at home and more coercive abroad. It has brutally repressed Uyghurs in Xinjiang, crushed democratic freedoms in Hong Kong, rapidly expanded its conventional and nuclear arsenals, aggressively intercepted foreign military aircraft in the East and South China Seas, condoned Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine and amplified Russian disinformation, exported censorship and surveillance technology, denigrated democracies, worked to reshape international norms—the list could go on and will likely only get longer, especially if Xi secures a third five-year term and further solidifies his control later this year.

Yet well-warranted alarm risks morphing into a reflexive fear that could reshape American policy and society in counterproductive and ultimately harmful ways. In attempting to craft a national strategy suited to a more assertive and more powerful China, Washington has struggled to define success, or even a steady state, short of total victory or total defeat, that both governments could eventually accept and at a cost that citizens, businesses, and other stakeholders would be willing to bear. Without a clear sense of what it seeks or any semblance of a domestic consensus on how the United States should relate to the world, U.S. foreign policy has become reactive, spinning in circles rather than steering toward a desired destination.

To its credit, the Biden administration has acknowledged that the United States and its partners must provide an attractive alternative to what China is offering, and it has taken some steps in the right direction, such as multilateral initiatives on climate and hunger. Yet the instinct to counter every Chinese initiative, project, and provocation remains predominant, crowding out efforts to revitalize an inclusive international system that would protect U.S. interests and values even as global power shifts and evolves. Even with the war in Ukraine claiming considerable U.S. attention and resources, the conflict's broader effect has been to intensify focus on geopolitical competition, reinforced by Chinese-Russian convergence.

Leaders in both Washington and Beijing claim to want to avoid a new Cold War. The fact is that their countries are already engaged in a global struggle. The United States seeks to perpetuate its preeminence and an international system that privileges its interests and values; China sees U.S. leadership as weakened by hypocrisy and neglect, providing an opening to force others to accept its influence and legitimacy. On both sides, there is growing fatalism that a crisis is unavoidable and perhaps even necessary: that mutually accepted rules of fair play and

coexistence will come only after the kind of eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation that characterized the early years of the Cold War—survival of which was not guaranteed then and would be even less assured now.

Even in the absence of a crisis, a reactive posture has begun to drive a range of U.S. policies. Washington frequently falls into the trap of trying to counter Chinese efforts around the world without appreciating what local governments and populations want. Lacking a forward-looking vision aligned with a realistic assessment of the resources at its disposal, it struggles to prioritize across domains and regions. It too often compromises its own broader interests as fractious geopolitics make necessary progress on global challenges all but impossible. The long-term risk is that the United States will be unable to manage a decades-long competition without falling into habits of intolerance at home and overextension abroad. In attempting to out-China China, the United States could undermine the strengths and obscure the vision that should be the basis for sustained American leadership.

The lodestar for a better approach must be the world that the United States seeks: what it wants, rather than what it fears. Whether sanctions or tariffs or military moves, policies should be judged on the basis of whether they further progress toward that world rather than whether they undermine some Chinese interest or provide some advantage over Beijing. They should represent U.S. power at its best rather than mirroring the behavior it aims to avert. And rather than looking back nostalgically at its past preeminence, Washington must commit, with actions as well as words, to a positive-sum vision of a reformed international system that includes China and meets the existential need to tackle shared challenges.

That does not mean giving up well-calibrated efforts to deter Chinese aggression, enhance resilience against Chinese coercion, and reinforce U.S. alliances. But these must be paired with meaningful discussions with Beijing, not only about crisis communications and risk reduction but also about plausible terms of coexistence and the future of the international system—a future that Beijing will necessarily have some role in shaping. An inclusive and affirmative global vision would both discipline competition and make clear what Beijing has to lose.

Otherwise, as the relationship deteriorates and the sense of threat grows, the logic of zero-sum competition will become even more overwhelming, and the resulting escalatory spiral will undermine both American interests and American values. That logic will warp global priorities and erode the international system. It will fuel pervasive insecurity and

reinforce a tendency toward groupthink, damaging the pluralism and civic inclusion that are the bedrock of liberal democracy. And if not altered, it will perpetuate a vicious cycle that will eventually bring catastrophe.

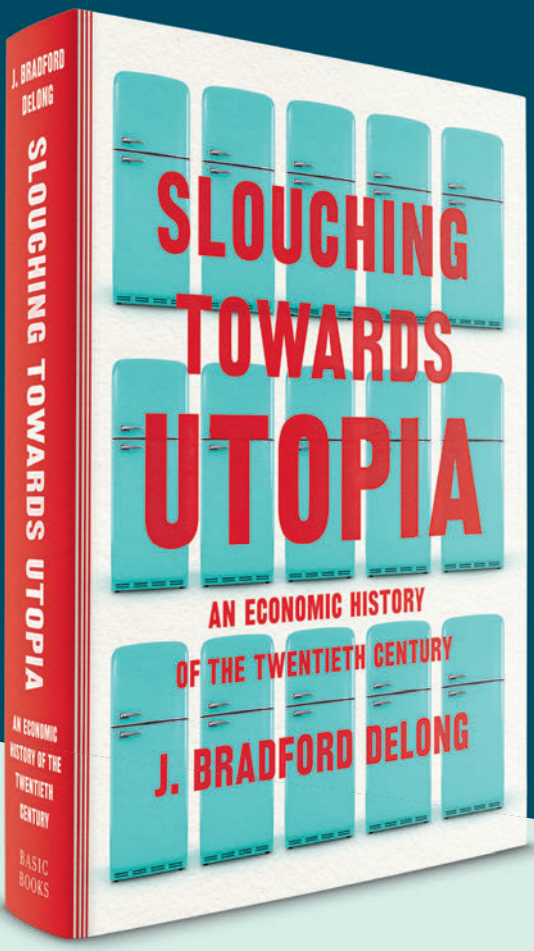
THE INEVITABLE RIVALRY?

In Washington, the standard account for why the relationship has gotten so bad is that China changed: in the past decade or two, Beijing has stopped "biding its time," becoming more repressive at home and assertive abroad even while continuing to take advantage of the relationships and institutions that have enabled China's economic growth.

That change is certainly part of the story, and it is as much a product of China's growing clout as of Xi's way of using that clout. But a complete account must also acknowledge corresponding changes in U.S. politics and policy as the United States has reacted to developments in China. Washington has met Beijing's actions with an array of punitive actions and protective policies, from tariffs and sanctions to restrictions on commercial and scientific exchanges. In the process, the United States has drifted further from the principles of openness and nondiscrimination that have long been a comparative advantage while reinforcing Beijing's conviction that the United States will never tolerate a more powerful China. Meanwhile, the United States has wavered in its support for the international institutions and agreements that have long structured global interdependence, driven in part by consternation over China's growing influence within the international system.

The more combative approach, on both sides, has produced a mirroring dynamic. While Beijing believes that only through protracted struggle will Americans be persuaded to coexist with a strong China, Washington believes that it must check Chinese power and influence to defend U.S. primacy. The result is a downward spiral, with each side's efforts to enhance its security prompting the other to take further steps to enhance its own.

In explaining growing U.S.-Chinese tensions, some scholars point to structural shifts in the balance of power. Graham Allison has written of "the Thucydides trap": the notion that when a rising state challenges an established power, a war for hegemony frequently results. Yet a focus on capabilities alone has trouble accounting for the twists and turns in U.S.-Chinese relations, which are also driven by shifting perceptions of threat, opportunity, and purpose. Following President Richard Nixon's 1972 visit to Beijing, Washington came to view China as a strategic



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partner in containing the Soviet Union. And as the post–Cold War era dawned, U.S. policymakers began hedging against growing Chinese military power even while seeking to encourage the country's economic and political liberalization through greater integration.

Throughout this period, Chinese leaders saw a strategic opportunity to prioritize China's development in a stable international environment. They opened the country's doors to foreign investment and capitalist practices, seeking to learn from foreign expertise while periodically campaigning against "spiritual pollution" and "bourgeois liberalization." Despite occasional attempts to signal resolve, including during the 1995–96 Taiwan Strait crisis and after the 1999 NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia, Chinese leaders largely adhered to the former leader Deng Xiaoping's lying-low strategy to avoid triggering the sense of threat that could precipitate efforts to strangle China's rise.

Without a clear sense of what it seeks, U.S. foreign policy has become reactive.

If there is a year that marked an inflection point in China's approach to the world, it is not 2012, when Xi came to power, but 2008. The global financial crisis prompted Beijing to discard any notion that China was the student and the United States the teacher when it came to economic governance. And the Beijing Olympics that year were meant to mark China's arrival on the world stage, but much of the world was focused instead on riots in Tibet, which Chinese officials chalked up to outside meddling, and on China's subsequent crackdown. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) became increasingly fixated on the idea that foreign forces were intent on thwarting China's rise.

In the years that followed, the halting movement toward liberalization went into reverse: the party cracked down on the teaching of liberal ideas and the activities of foreign nongovernmental organizations, crushed pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong, and built a sprawling surveillance state and system of internment camps in Xinjiang—all manifestations of a broader conception of "national security," animated by fears of unrest. Internationally, China gave up any semblance of strategic humility. It became more assertive in defending its territorial and maritime claims (along the Indian border, in the East and South China Seas, and with regard to Taiwan). Having surpassed Japan as the world's second-largest economy in 2010, it began wielding its economic power to compel deference to CCP interests. It ramped up development of

military capabilities that could counter U.S. intervention in the region, including expanding its once limited nuclear arsenal. The decision to develop many of these capabilities predated Xi, but it was under his leadership that Beijing embraced a more coercive and intolerant approach.

As it registered China's growing capabilities and willingness to use them, Washington increased its hedging. The Obama administration announced that it would "pivot" to Asia, and even as Washington sought a constructive role for China in the international system, the pace of China's rise quickly outstripped U.S. willingness to grant it a correspondingly significant voice. With Donald Trump's election as president, Washington's assessment became especially extreme: a Marxist-Leninist regime was, in Trump's telling, out to "rape" the United States, dominate the world, and subvert democracy. In response, the Trump administration started a trade war, began to talk of "decoupling" the U.S. and Chinese economies, and launched a series of initiatives aimed at countering Chinese influence and undermining the CCP. In speeches, senior U.S. officials hinted at regime change, calling for steps to "empower the Chinese people" to seek a different form of government and stressing that "Chinese history contains another path for China's people."

The Biden administration has stopped any talk of regime change in China and coordinated its approach closely with allies and partners, a contrast with Trump's unilateralism. But it has at the same time continued many of its predecessor's policies and endorsed the assessment that China's growing influence must be checked. Some lines of effort, such as the Justice Department's China Initiative, which sought to prosecute intellectual property theft and economic espionage, have been modified. But others have been sustained, including tariffs, export controls, and visa restrictions, or expanded, such as sanctions against Chinese officials and companies. In Congress, meanwhile, ever more vehement opposition to China may be the sole thing that Democrats and Republicans can agree on, though even this shared concern has produced only limited agreement (such as recent legislation on domestic semiconductor investments) on how the United States should compete.

Over five decades, the United States tried a combination of engagement and deterrence to bring China into an international system that broadly sustains U.S. interests and values. American policymakers knew well that their Chinese counterparts were committed to defending CCP rule, but Washington calculated that the world would be less dangerous with China inside rather than outside the system. That bet largely

succeeded—and is still better than the alternative. Yet many in Washington always hoped for, and to varying degrees sought to promote, China's liberal evolution as well. China's growing authoritarianism has thus fed the narrative of a comprehensive U.S. policy failure, and the focus on correcting that failure has entrenched Beijing's insecurity and belief that the United States and its allies will not accept China as a superpower.

Now, both countries are intent on doing whatever is necessary to demonstrate that any move by the other will not go unmet. Both U.S. and Chinese decision-makers believe that the other side respects only strength and interprets restraint as weakness. At this year's Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore in June, China's defense minister, General Wei Fenghe, pledged to "fight to the very end" over Taiwan a day after meeting with U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin.

TELL ME HOW THIS ENDS

Where the current trajectory leads is clear: a more dangerous and less habitable world defined by an ever-present risk of confrontation and crisis, with preparation for conflict taking precedence over tackling common challenges.

Most policymakers, at least those in Washington, are not seeking a crisis between the United States and China. But there is growing acceptance that a crisis is more or less inevitable. Its consequences would be enormous. Even if both sides want to avoid war, crises by definition offer little time for response amid intense public scrutiny, making it difficult to find pathways to deescalation. Even the limited application of force or coercion could set in motion an unpredictable set of responses across multiple domains—military, economic, diplomatic, informational. As leaders maneuver to show resolve and protect their domestic reputations, a crisis could prove very difficult to contain.

Taiwan is the most likely flash point, as changes in both Taipei and Beijing have increasingly put the island at the center of U.S.-Chinese tensions. Demographic and generational shifts in Taiwan, combined with China's crackdown in Hong Kong, have heightened Taiwan's resistance to the idea of Beijing's control and made peaceful unification seem increasingly fanciful. After Taiwan's traditionally pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won the presidency in 2016, Beijing took a hard line against the new president, Tsai Ing-wen, despite her careful efforts to avoid moves toward formal independence. Cross-strait channels of communication shut down, and Beijing relied on

increasingly coercive measures to punish and deter what it perceived as incremental moves toward Taiwan's permanent separation.

In response, the United States increased military patrols in and around the Taiwan Strait, loosened guidelines for interacting with Taiwanese officials, broadened U.S. declaratory policy to emphasize support for Taiwan, and continued to advocate for Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations, including the United Nations. Yet many well-intentioned U.S. efforts to support the island and deter China have instead fueled Beijing's sense of urgency about the need to send a shot across the bow to deter steadily growing U.S.-Taiwanese ties.

Even with an official U.S. policy of "strategic ambiguity" on whether the United States would intervene in the event of an attack on Taiwan, Chinese military planners expect U.S. involvement. Indeed, the anticipated difficulty of seizing Taiwan while also holding the United States at bay has long underpinned deterrence across the Taiwan Strait. But many U.S. actions intended to bolster the island's ability to resist coercion have been symbolic rather than substantive, doing more to provoke than deter Beijing. For example, the Trump administration's efforts to upend norms around U.S. engagement with Taiwan—in August 2020, Secretary for Health and Human Services Alex Azar became the highest-ranking cabinet member to visit Taiwan since full normalization of U.S.-Chinese relations in 1979—prompted China to send combat aircraft across the center line of the Taiwan Strait, ignoring an unofficial guardrail that had long served to facilitate safe operations in the waterway. Intrusions into Taiwan's Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) have become a frequent means for Beijing to register displeasure with growing U.S. support. In October 2021, Chinese intrusions into Taiwan's ADIZ hit a new high—93 aircraft over three days—in response to nearby U.S.-led military exercises.

This action-reaction cycle, driven by mutually reinforcing developments in Beijing, Taipei, and Washington, is accelerating the deterioration of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. In recent months, Chinese official rhetoric has become increasingly threatening, using phrases that have historically signaled China's intent to escalate. "Whoever plays with fire will get burnt," Xi has repeatedly told U.S. President Joe Biden. In May, after Biden implied an unconditional commitment to defend Taiwan, rather than simply expressing the longstanding U.S. obligation to provide the island with the military means to defend

itself and to maintain the U.S. capacity to resist any use of force, the Chinese Foreign Ministry stressed that Beijing "will take firm actions to safeguard its sovereignty and security interests."

Although Beijing continues to prefer peaceful unification, it is coming to believe that coercive measures may be necessary to halt moves toward Taiwan's permanent separation and compel steps toward unification, particularly given the Chinese perception that Washington's support for Taiwan is a means to contain China. Even if confidence in China's military and economic trajectory leads Beijing to believe that "time and momentum" remain on its side, political trends in Taiwan and in the United States make officials increasingly pessimistic about prospects for peaceful unification. Beijing has not set a timetable for seizing Taiwan and does not appear to be looking for an excuse to do so. Still, as the political scientist Taylor Fravel has shown, China has used force when it thinks its claims of sovereignty are being challenged. High-profile symbolic gestures of U.S. support for Taiwan are especially likely to be construed as an affront that must be answered. (As of this writing, Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, the first trip by a U.S. speaker of the house since 1997, has prompted Chinese warnings that "the Chinese military will never sit idly by," followed by unprecedently threatening military exercises and missile tests around Taiwan.)

As both the United States and Taiwan head into presidential elections in 2024, party politics could prompt more efforts to push the envelope on Taiwan's political status and de jure independence. It is far from clear whether Tsai's successor as president will be as steadfast as she has been in resisting pressure from strident advocates of independence. Even under Tsai, there have been troubling signs that DPP leaders are not content with the status quo despite its popularity with voters. DPP leaders have lobbied Washington to refrain from making statements that the United States does not support Taiwan independence. In March, Taipei's representative office in Washington gave former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo a hefty honorarium to visit Taiwan, where he called on the United States to offer the island "diplomatic recognition as a free and sovereign country."

The risk of a fatal collision in the air or at sea is also rising outside the Taiwan Strait. With the Chinese and U.S. militaries operating in proximity in the East and South China Seas, both intent on demonstrating their willingness to fight, pilots and operators are employing dangerous tactics that raise the risk of an inadvertent clash. In 2001, a

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Chinese fighter jet collided with a U.S. reconnaissance plane over the South China Sea, killing the Chinese pilot and leading to the 11-day detention of the U.S. crew. After initial grandstanding, the Chinese worked to head off a full-blown crisis, even cracking down on displays of anti-Americanism in the streets. It is much harder to imagine such a resolution today: the desire to display resolve and avoid showing weakness would make it exceedingly difficult to defuse a standoff.

THE CENTER CANNOT HOLD

Even if the two sides can avoid a crisis, continuation of the current course will reinforce geopolitical divisions while inhibiting cooperation on global problems. The United States is increasingly focused on rallying countries around the world to stand against China. But to the extent that a coalition to counter China forms, especially given the ideological framing that both the Trump and Biden administrations have adopted, that coalition is unlikely to include the range of partners that might stand to defend universal laws and institutions. "Asian countries do not want to be forced to choose between the two," Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong wrote of China and the United States in these pages in 2020. "And if either attempts to force such a choice—if Washington tries to contain China's rise or Beijing seeks to build an exclusive sphere of influence in Asia—they will begin a course of confrontation that will last decades and put the long-heralded Asian century in jeopardy."

The current approach to competition is also likely to strengthen the alignment between China and Russia. The Biden administration has managed to deter Chinese military assistance to Russia in Ukraine, and China has mostly complied with sanctions, demonstrating that there are in fact limits to Beijing and Moscow's "no limits" partnership. But so long as the two governments share a belief that they cannot be secure in a U.S.-led system, they will continue to deepen their cooperation. In the months since the invasion of Ukraine, they have carried out joint military patrols in the Pacific Ocean and worked to develop alternatives to the U.S.-controlled financial system.

Ultimately, Chinese-Russian relations will be shaped by how Beijing weighs its need to resist the United States against its need to preserve ties to international capital and technology that foster growth. China's alignment with Russia is not historically determined: there is an ongoing high-level debate within Beijing over how close to get to

Moscow, with the costs of full-fledged alignment producing consternation among some Chinese analysts. Yet unless Washington can credibly suggest that Beijing will see strategic benefits, not only strategic risks, from distancing itself from Moscow, advocates of closer Chinese-Russian cooperation will continue to win the argument.

Growing geopolitical tension also crowds out progress on common challenges, regardless of the Biden administration's desire to compartmentalize certain issues. Although U.S. climate envoy John Kerry has made some headway on climate cooperation with China, including a joint declaration at last year's climate summit in Glasgow, progress has been outweighed by acrimony in areas where previous joint efforts had borne fruit, including counternarcotics, nonproliferation, and North Korea. On both sides, too many policymakers fear that willingness to cooperate will be interpreted as a lack of resolve.

The climate of insecurity and fear has pernicious effects on democracy.

Such tensions are further eroding the already weak foundations of global governance. It is not clear how much longer the center of the international rules-based order can hold without a broad-based effort at its renewal. But as Beijing has grown more concerned that the United States seeks to contain or roll back its influence—by, for example, denying it a greater say in international economic governance—the more it has invested in alternative institutions, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Meanwhile, China's engagement with the multilateral system is increasingly aimed at discrediting U.S. leadership within it. Even though Beijing has not exactly demonstrated fealty to many of the principles it claims to support, the divide between the haves and have-nots has allowed it to cast the United States as protecting the privileges of a minority of powerful states. At the United Nations, Beijing and Washington too often strive to undercut each other's initiatives, launching symbolic battles that require third countries to choose between the two.

Last but far from least, a fixation on competition brings costs and dangers in the United States. Aggressive U.S. efforts to protect research security, combined with increased attacks against Asian Americans, are having a chilling effect on scientific research and international collaboration and are jeopardizing the appeal of the United States as a magnet for international talent. A 2021 survey by the American Physical Society found that 43 percent of inter-

national physics graduate students and early career scientists in the United States considered the country unwelcoming; around half of international early career scientists in the United States thought the government's approach to research security made them less likely to stay there over the long term. These effects are particularly pronounced among scientists of Chinese descent. A recent study by the Asian American Scholar Forum found that 67 percent of faculty of Chinese origin (including naturalized citizens and permanent residents) reported having considered leaving the United States.

As the United States has sought to shield itself from Chinese espionage, theft, and unfair trading practices, it has often insisted on reciprocity as a precondition for commercial, educational, and diplomatic exchanges with Beijing. But strict reciprocity with an increasingly closed system like China's comes at a cost to the United States' comparative advantage: the traditional openness, transparency, and equal opportunity of its society and economy, which drive innovation, productivity, and scientific progress.

The climate of insecurity and fear is also having pernicious effects on democracy and the quality of public debate about China and U.S. policy. The desire to avoid appearing "soft" on China permeates private and public policy discussions. The result is an echo chamber that encourages analysts, bureaucrats, and officials to be politically rather than analytically correct. When individuals feel the need to out-hawk one another to protect themselves and advance professionally, the result is groupthink. A policy environment that incentivizes self-censorship and reflexive positioning forecloses pluralistic debate and a vibrant marketplace for ideas, ingredients critical to the United States' national competitiveness.

From the World War II internment of Japanese Americans to the McCarthyism of the 1950s to hate crimes against Muslim and Sikh Americans after September 11, U.S. history is replete with examples of innocent Americans caught in the crossfire of exaggerated fears of the "enemy within." In each case, overreaction did as much as or more than the adversary to undermine U.S. democracy and unity. Although the Biden administration has condemned anti-Asian hate and stressed that policy must target behavior rather than ethnicity, some government agencies and U.S. politicians have continued to imply that an individual's ethnicity and ties to family abroad are grounds for heightened scrutiny.

If the United States and Soviet Union could arrive at détente, there is no reason that Washington and Beijing cannot do so as well. Early in the Cold War, President John F. Kennedy, hailing the need to "make the world safe for diversity," stressed that "our attitude is as essential as theirs." He warned Americans "not to see conflict as inevitable, accommodation as impossible, and communication as nothing more than an exchange of threats."

Even while making clear that Beijing will pay a high price if it resorts to force or other forms of coercion, Washington must present China with a real choice. Deterrence requires that threats be paired with assurances. To that end, U.S. policymakers should not be afraid of engaging directly with their Chinese counterparts to discuss terms on which the United States and China could coexist, including mutual bounds on competition. It was relatively easy for Americans to imagine coexistence with a China thought to be on a one-way path of liberalization. The United States and its partners now have the harder task of imagining coexistence with an authoritarian superpower, finding a new basis for bilateral interaction that focuses on shaping outward behavior rather than changing China's domestic system.

The most pressing need relates to Taiwan, where the United States must bolster deterrence while also clarifying that its "one China" policy has not changed. This means ensuring that Beijing knows how costly a crisis over Taiwan would be, putting at risk its broader development and modernization objectives—but also that if it refrains from coercive action, neither Washington nor Taipei will exploit the opportunity to push the envelope further. While Secretary of State Antony Blinken and other senior officials have affirmed that the United States does not support Taiwan's independence, other actions by the administration (especially Biden's repeated statements suggesting an end to "strategic ambiguity") have sown doubt.

While helping bolster Taiwan's resilience to Chinese coercion, Washington should avoid characterizing Taiwan as a vital asset for U.S. interests. Such statements feed Beijing's belief that the United States seeks to "use Taiwan to contain China," as China's ambassador to Washington put it in May. The United States should instead make clear its abiding interest in a peaceful process for resolving cross-strait differences rather than in a particular outcome. And as they highlight the costs Beijing can expect if it escalates its

coercive campaign against Taiwan, U.S. policymakers should also stress to Taipei that unilateral efforts to change Taiwan's political status, including calls for de jure independence, U.S. diplomatic recognition, or other symbolic steps to signal Taiwan's permanent separation from China, are counterproductive.

These steps will be necessary but not sufficient to pierce the growing fatalism regarding a crisis, given Beijing's hardening belief that the United States seeks to contain China and will use Taiwan to that end. To put a floor beneath the collapsing U.S.-China relationship will require a stronger effort to establish bounds of fair competition and a willingness to discuss terms of coexistence. Despite recent meetings and calls, senior U.S. officials do not yet have regular engagements with their counterparts that would facilitate such discussions. These discussions should be coordinated with U.S. allies and partners to prevent Beijing from trying to drive a wedge between the United States and others in Europe and Asia. But Washington should also forge a common understanding with its allies and partners around potential forms of coexistence with China.

The United States must do much more to invest in the power of its example.

Skeptics may say that there is no reason for the leadership in Beijing to play along, given its triumphalism and distrust. These are significant obstacles, but it is worth testing the proposition that Washington can take steps to stabilize escalating tensions without first experiencing multiple crises with a nuclear-armed competitor. There is reason to believe that Beijing cares enough about stabilizing relations to reciprocate. Despite its claim that the "East is rising and the West is declining," China remains the weaker party, especially given its uncertain economic trajectory. Domestic challenges have typically tended to restrain China's behavior rather than, as some Western commentators have speculated, prompting risky gambles. The political scientist Andrew Chubb has shown that when Chinese leaders have faced challenges to their legitimacy, they have acted less assertively in areas such as the South China Sea.

Because Beijing and Washington are loath to make unilateral concessions, fearing that they will be interpreted as a sign of weakness at home and by the other side, détente will require reciprocity. Both sides will have to take coordinated but unilateral steps to head off a

militarized crisis. For example, a tacit understanding could produce a reduction in Chinese and U.S. operations in and around the Taiwan Strait, lowering the temperature without signaling weakness. Military operations are necessary to demonstrate that the United States will continue to fly and sail wherever international law allows, including the Taiwan Strait. But ultimately, the United States' ability to deter and Taiwan's ability to defend against an attempt at armed unification by Beijing have little to do with whether the U.S. military transits the Taiwan Strait four, eight, 12, or 24 times a year.

In the current atmosphere of distrust, words must be matched by actions. In his November 2021 virtual meeting with Biden, Xi said, "We have patience and will strive for the prospect of peaceful reunification with utmost sincerity and efforts." But Beijing's actions since have undercut its credibility in Taipei and in Washington. Biden likewise told Xi that the United States does not seek a new Cold War or want to change Beijing's system. Yet subsequent U.S. actions (including efforts to diversify supply chains away from China and new visa restrictions on CCP officials) have undermined Washington's credibility among not just leaders in Beijing but also others in the region. It does not help that some administration officials continue to invoke Cold War parallels.

To bolster its own credibility, the Biden administration should also do more to preempt charges of hypocrisy and double standards. Consider U.S. policy to combat digital authoritarianism: Washington has targeted Chinese surveillance technology firms more harshly than similar companies based in the United States, Israel, and other Western democracies.

THE WORLD THAT OUGHT TO BE

So far, the Biden administration's order-building efforts have centered on arrangements that exclude China, such as the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework. Although officials have been careful to insist that these initiatives are not targeted at any one country, there is little sign of any corresponding effort to negotiate Beijing's role in the international or regional order. At the margins, there have been some signs that inclusive groupings can still deliver. (The World Trade Organization has struck agreements on fishing subsidies and COVID-19 vaccines.) But if investments in narrower, fit-for-purpose coalitions continue to take priority over broader, inclusive agreements and institutions, including those in which China and the United States

both have major roles to play, geopolitical tensions will break rather than reinvigorate the international system.

Renewing U.S. leadership will also require doing more to address criticism that a U.S.-led order means "rules for thee but not for me." Clear and humble acknowledgment of instances where the United States has violated the UN Charter, such as the invasion of Iraq, would be an important step to overcoming that resentment. And Washington must deliver value for citizens in developing countries, whether on COVID-19, climate, hunger, or technology, rather than simply urging them not to work with China. At home, Washington must work to rebuild bipartisan support for U.S. engagement with the international system.

As the United States reimagines its domestic and international purpose, it should do so on its own terms, not for the sake of besting China. Yet fleshing out an inclusive, affirmative vision of the world it seeks would also be a first step toward clarifying the conditions under which the United States would welcome or accept Chinese initiatives rather than reflexively opposing them. The countries' divergent interests and values would still result in the United States opposing many of Beijing's activities, but that opposition would be accompanied by a clear willingness to negotiate the terms of China's growing influence. The United States cannot cede so much influence to Beijing that international rules and institutions no longer reflect U.S. interests and values. But the greater risk today is that overzealous efforts to counter China's influence will undermine the system itself through a combination of paralysis and the promotion of alternate arrangements by major powers.

Finally, the United States must do much more to invest in the power of its example and to ensure that steps taken to counter China do not undermine that example by falling into the trap of trying to out-China China. Protective or punitive actions, whether military, economic, or diplomatic, should be assessed not just on the basis of whether they counter China but also on how they affect the broader system and whether they reflect fidelity to U.S. principles.

Competition cannot become an end in itself. So long as outcompeting China defines the United States' sense of purpose, Washington will continue to measure success on terms other than on its own. Rankings are a symbolic construct, not an objective condition. If the pursuit of human progress, peace, and prosperity is the ultimate objective, as Blinken has stated, then the United States does not need to beat China in order to win.

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Training in international affairs, policy, and related disciplines draws on the past to inform the future. It develops the ability to recognize cultural, economic, social, environmental, and political forces at work in the world over time. Its interdisciplinary curriculum and diverse community of people integrate differing perspectives and histories. Graduates distinguish themselves by their adaptability and flexibility.

As you search for the right degree, ask how the lessons of history link to current events in a program. Discover how students challenge traditional ideas of power. Look at how they bring different voices into the conversation. Examine how they cultivate leadership qualities in students, as well as engage current policymakers, to build the future of international relations.

The adage says that those who do not study history are doomed to repeat it. Students of international affairs and policy can lay out a new blueprint for success by learning from the past.

By **Carmen Iezzi Mezzera**
Executive Director
Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (@apsiainfo)

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Dr. Ethan Bueno de Mesquita

Deputy Dean
Harris School of Public Policy
University of Chicago

The Difference Between Doing Good and Feeling Good

What distinguishes Harris from its peer schools when it comes to training future leaders in global affairs and policy?

The Harris School of Public Policy has always been dedicated to the proposition that experience is no substitute for analysis. Training effective future leaders starts with rigorous, conceptual foundations that help us think clearly about the world and policy's place in it. We prepare graduate students in global affairs and policy with the intellectual fortitude to make the hard decisions necessary to address the world's most difficult problems.

How does an evidence-based approach to policy research and training prepare Harris students to face the most urgent global challenges?

I often talk with our students about the difference between "feeling good" and "doing good." Public policy deals with hard problems. Often, obvious-seeming solutions are not solutions at all. Pursuing obvious-seeming solution to important problem feels good, but actually doing good is serious business for serious people. It requires a rigorous skillset to spot subtle flaws and to find better solutions. Harris's approach to policy education is all about helping our students build those skills.

Meanwhile, technology is having a profound effect on every aspect of society and is forcing us to rethink many of our core assumptions, as both policymakers and citizens. But because the Harris toolkit is focused on fundamental principles, it is of enduring value even as the societal and technological landscape shift.

How does Harris approach diversity and inclusion, and why is that approach important to public policy?

Harris believes that fostering an environment that encourages rigorous inquiry requires the involvement and understanding of different experiences and viewpoints. As such, we have made major commitments to creating a diverse and inclusive environment, including curricular initiatives, efforts to diversify the pipeline of scholars entering policy academia, and the establishment of a diversity and inclusion roadmap, which tracks our progress and facilitates accountability.

What innovations has Harris brought to its curriculum and programming for those interested in studying conflict, international development, and related fields?

Over the past decade, Harris has made an enormous investment in the study and teaching of conflict and international development, including building a world-class faculty of nearly a dozen celebrated scholars, including two Nobel laureates. The Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflicts affords students unrivaled access to leading academics, policymakers, and practitioners. These efforts are deeply integrated with our complementary strengths in areas such as crime, political economy, energy and environment, health, and education. In all honesty, I believe that in the past decade, while maintaining our historic strength in domestic policy and politics, we have become one of the very best places in the world to learn about conflict, international development, and global policy.

Why Harris?

Policy is serious work for serious people. I truly believe there is nowhere on earth where people are more intellectually and personally dedicated to the hard work of creating ideas and training students that will make the world a better place. Why would anyone want to be anywhere else?

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
HARRIS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY
Social Impact, Down to a Science

Dr. Charles Kupchan
Professor of International Affairs
Walsh School of Foreign Service
Georgetown University

Readying Students for a Changing and Uncertain World

How is Russia's invasion of Ukraine changing the global landscape?

It's too soon to say whether this war will be a historical inflection point similar to the beginning of the Cold War, but it certainly has that potential. Liberal democracies may end up confronting not just Russia but an autocratic block anchored by Russia and China. Beijing, even if uncomfortable with the instability caused by the war, continues to support Moscow. In the meantime, the majority of the world's countries don't want to take sides and are refraining from enforcing sanctions against Russia. We're heading into a world that will be more multipolar than bipolar in character and practice.

The conflict in Ukraine has deep roots in history and national identity. How does the Walsh School of Foreign Service (SFS) prepare students for such complex international issues?

The SFS provides an education grounded in history and comparative politics. Our faculty believe in giving students the foundational skills and the knowledge they need to think conceptually about international problems in diverse fields and regions. Students graduate from SFS prepared to tackle thorny issues in rigorous and systematic ways.

You've served in the National Security Council under two presidents in addition to teaching at SFS for more than twenty-five years. How do these experiences inform your teaching?

The influence goes both ways. My background in academia leavens my ability to contribute in a policy setting because I can bring to the table considerable historical knowledge and study of international political dynamics. My government experience leavens my research and teaching by enabling me to better understand how policy is made and implemented. Like many of my SFS colleagues, I aim to keep a foot in both the academic world and the policy community in order to bring scholarly expertise into policy debates and real-world experience into the classroom.

On February 25th, you spoke at an SFS town hall where hundreds of students turned out to discuss Russia's invasion. What role do gatherings like these play in the SFS graduate student experience?

I have only one other memory that rivals the emotional salience of that town hall: teaching a section of Intro to International Relations soon after the terror attacks of September 11th. Understandably, we were all deeply shaken. Similarly, emotions were running high in the immediate aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Our community came together to share concerns and support each other, stand with Ukraine, and better understand the motivations behind and the implications of the war.

As this town hall demonstrated, SFS delivers not just the academic curriculum students need to thrive professionally but also a community of experts who respond in real time to world events. Students at SFS have access to high-caliber professors steeped in their academic disciplines, many of whom have served in the policy world. Due to Georgetown's location in Washington, DC, we also bring into the classroom experienced practitioners. It's a great and unique mix.

SFS | GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
Walsh School of Foreign Service

Caroline Freund
Dean
School of Global Policy and Strategy
UC San Diego

Finding Focus for Graduate School and Your Career in an Ever-Shifting Global Environment

What are the major global shifts students should consider in pursuing a career in international affairs or public policy?

The U.S. has been the single global leader for the last several decades. That dominance is changing, as China has grown rapidly and invested economically and politically in all regions around the world. Understanding how the U.S.-China relationship affects global growth, political and economic stability, and security will be important for anyone seeking to work in the international relations domain.

There are also long-term threats to our future that can only be addressed by massive policy shifts. Climate change is one, where current leaders have failed repeatedly to act. Our policymakers will need to pursue climate action using all available economic tools and to support new technologies to steer the world away from fossil fuels, while managing political realities.

Another threat is the demise of national and international institutions. We are living in a world where global cooperation is weak, and domestic political systems in many countries are unstable. Future leaders will need to consider how to address threats to governance from within, from other nations, and from new technologies.

How does your program prepare students to lead in this fast-changing world?

The UC San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy (GPS) is uniquely positioned to consider tomorrow's most pressing challenges. In terms of area studies, as well as current political, economic, and technological shifts, we provide students with the tools to understand tradeoffs, design effective policies, and become well-rounded, ethical leaders.

The U.S.-China axis will be the most important going forward. The school's origins lie in pacific studies, and GPS has world-class China scholars, a master's degree focused on Chinese economic and political affairs, and the preeminent 21st Century China Center that supports cutting-edge research and brings together academics, policymakers, and business leaders.

Given our prime location on the border with Mexico, we also offer students the opportunity to learn about U.S.-Mexico relations in an experiential way, with many opportunities to visit Mexico and forums bringing leaders from both sides of the border together.

GPS is at the forefront in considering the obstacles of the future: climate action and understanding swings in democratic governance around the world. Students can learn from and work with a wide variety of scholars focused on these issues. At the school, engineers, earth scientists, and political scientists come together to consider policy options and technological innovation to improve climate outcomes.

Political systems around the world are under extraordinary stress. The political scientists at GPS are doing incredible research on the different types of political systems and what makes them tick. The global student body at GPS learns with these scholars and takes away a strong understanding of successes and failures of different models of governance throughout the world and a robust toolbox to measure that.

UC San Diego
SCHOOL OF GLOBAL POLICY AND STRATEGY

Dr. Daniel Silverman
Assistant Professor
Institute for Politics and Strategy
Carnegie Mellon University

Too Many Problems to Study

Why is it important to study political science and international affairs?

One way to think about this is that politics seem to always get in the way. For the biggest problems that we face, the political sphere is rearing its head and disrupting our efforts to solve them. We don't need to look any further than COVID-19, where we have developed great technical solutions with effective vaccines—and where we also have this anti-vax movement, vaccine hesitancy, and political leaders not modeling appropriate behavior. We see that these concerns emanating from politics can keep us from reaching what we all know to be effective solutions to global problems.

What is it about today's current events that emphasizes the need for practitioners of international affairs and political science?

Look at the proliferation of problems that we have in the world. It's almost like there are too many problems to study for social scientists. We need more troops, more soldiers, in the fight of the social sciences against the big global challenges that affect us all—the pandemic, climate change—as well as recurring conflicts and instability in specific countries. Likewise, we can also look around the world and see many countries with massive protest movements that are demanding accountability and change. Countries like Iraq and Ukraine a few years ago before this crisis. We've seen this emerge recently in Lebanon and Sudan and many places. These big national protest movements that keep recurring are themselves a call for new ideas and solutions.

What about the Master of Science in International Relations and Politics program sets Carnegie Mellon University apart in preparing future international and political leaders?

I'd highlight a few things. We give students the methodological tools they're going to need to tackle these difficult problems—quantitative and statistical training as well as a full range of methods that will help them be competitive on the job market and successful in their careers. We also have a robust series of speakers that come through, including scholars and practitioners from around the world that our graduate students can engage with. So, we aim to give students a strong toolkit that builds up their rigor and aim to make things relevant for them, connected to pressing policy issues. Finally, we bring a broad global perspective. We have experts who can teach and who can guide student work in and on a number of geographical areas, from the Middle East to Latin America to East Asia, and that's only growing rapidly. All of this is situated in one of the top universities in the world, where students can engage with other great social science departments and world-class computer science and technical expertise to address problems that intersect the social and hard sciences.

IPS Carnegie Mellon University Institute for Politics and Strategy

Matsuo Watanabe, PhD
Associate Dean
Graduate School of International Relations (GSIR)
Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto Japan

Navigating Risk in a Historical Turning Point

What skills are needed to help students prepare to manage crises and global risk over time?

My short answer: to establish theoretical foundation with reference to the history. We are witnessing historical events in times of uncertainty. The unpredictable outbreak of the pandemic has had significant implications to the global economy and the expansionary fiscal/monetary policies in 2020 and beyond to address rapidly shrinking economic activities. While economists were ringing the alarm prior to the subsequent and "unprecedented" inflation, financial authorities appeared to be too optimistic about the abatement. The risk of inflation was, in other words, predictable—and would have been manageable, as it is a matter of probability.

We are also seeing the development of a new issue of economic security. Disruptions to global value chains due to the pandemic have reinforced calls for higher level of self-sufficiency and reshoring of production. In Asia, the risk of concentration of high-tech production in a single country has emerged as a security issue in association with the ongoing war in Ukraine and the confrontation between groups of countries.

There are diverse, often contradicting, discourses to explain these situations. To avoid misinterpretation of events and to make correct decisions, I believe it is beneficial for students to build a solid academic framework of reference.

What does GSIR offer to students seeking skills in times of historical changes?

Our new curriculum, launched in 2021, offers four clusters of programs in global international relations—global governance, sustainable development, culture, society, and media, and global Japanese studies—for students with diverse backgrounds and interests from over thirty-two countries, some of whom are working policymakers from overseas, sponsored by their own governments or by scholarship programs from the Japanese government.

The courses are provided by a range of scholars and practitioners, including experienced external lecturers, such as diplomats, economists, journalists, managers of nongovernmental organizations, and entrepreneurs from private sectors. This gives students opportunities to promote their understanding of what is really happening in the real world as well as encourages them to find clues to address global issues. We also offer more practical courses, such as professional training that provides hands-on training in international development in Asia and beyond, from practitioners who have experience working for national, regional, and international organizations. The global Japanese studies cluster encourages students to learn from the experiences of Japan and other Asian countries, developing alternative and critical insights into global affairs beyond the Western paradigms.

Furthermore, GSIR has been strengthening the dual master's degree program, which offers qualified students an opportunity to study at overseas partner universities and research institutes in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Asian and European nations. Through this program, students are able to earn two master's degrees in as short as two years. This program improves students' ability to respond to different situations and prepares them to work around the rapidly changing world. We continue to update our program to maintain relevance to the changing needs for professional school in international relations.

RITSUMEIKAN UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of
International Relations

Hope M. Harrison
Professor, History & International Affairs
The Elliott School
The George Washington University

The Power of History—and of Efforts to Control Narratives about the Past

How are the lessons of history linked to current events in your program?

History—or interpretations thereof—is regularly in the headlines. Just as the Black Lives Matter movement of recent years in the US and elsewhere has made clear that centuries old history can still impact the present, there are many ways that history and the lessons people draw from it (or the narratives global leaders legislate about it) matter in our world now. World leaders and private citizens alike feel compelled to vocalize their views on history, and in the case of some world leaders they have even created historical commissions and backed legislation that prescribes certain historical narratives. Students need to be prepared to assess the validity and motivation behind historical claims made at home and around the world, and we at the Elliott School of International Affairs are dedicated to providing our students with the necessary skills to do this.

Understanding the role of history in international affairs and how leaders seek to manipulate historical narratives are key parts of critical thinking for future leaders. We train the next generation to ask essential questions about historical claims and about what politicians and others may call "lessons of history." Whose lessons? How do historical narratives relate to power structures in various countries? What evidence is given when historical claims are made? How can you fact check the evidence given? All students in our MA program in International Affairs are required to take History 6030, a course that examines the uses and abuses of history in international affairs. Professors from the History Department teach sections of the class, as does the official Historian of the United States at the Department of State.

Russia's President Vladimir Putin, China's President Xi Jinping, former president Donald Trump, and many others have attempted to control views of the past, all in an effort to preserve or bolster their own power in the present. Indeed, Putin has insisted that Russian and Ukrainian history is the same and that Ukraine has no separate history. He has gone to war in part to try to force his view on the Ukrainians.

Elliott School students have the option of taking courses on the Cold War and on the history of the Soviet Union, courses that are now essential background to understanding Putin's war on Ukraine—both to highlight the similarities to these earlier periods but also some key differences. In addition, students benefit from the close ties Elliott School faculty have to the Wilson Center's History and Public Policy Program and to the National Security Archive (located at GW), both of which of which have large collections of primary source documents related to the Cold War and post-Cold War periods. Through courses, seminars, guest lectures, and conferences, we also help train graduate students to conduct their own archival research on contemporary history.

In all of these ways, Elliott School students have multiple options to enable them to make sense of the ongoing "history wars" in the US and around the world.

Elliott School of International Affairs
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Manuel Muñiz
Dean
IE School of Global and Public Affairs

Preparing Tomorrow's Global Leaders

IE School of Global and Public Affairs is where inquisitive students emerge as thoughtful leaders. With several graduate and undergraduate programs, a state-of-the-art research center, labs, and hundreds of events, students are fully engaged in international activity.

What makes IE School of Global and Public Affairs unique?

The school brings the concept of international learning and cosmopolitanism to new heights. Our global mindset is reflected strongly both inside and outside of the classroom: three quarters of our students are international, and over 140 nationalities are represented in our campuses in Madrid and Segovia.

Students are able to put theory to practice from the very start, with opportunities ranging from internships to networking sessions. Our immersion week and exchange options take learning global. Thanks to our connections to over two hundred prestigious universities in fifty countries worldwide, students enrich their learning with an international outlook and a global mindset.

What does IE School of Global and Public Affairs seek to achieve?

As our world becomes increasingly interconnected, the complex and changing roles of international relations, public affairs and economics have never been more important. Our programs enhance students' abilities to look at the world through an interconnected, multidimensional perspective. Our graduates think critically and analytically, work with data, and grasp the increasingly complex principles that underpin economics and global challenges in the digital and tech era.

What partnerships will students benefit from while attending IE School of Global and Public Affairs?

IE School of Global and Public Affairs partners with multilateral organizations, governmental organizations, private stakeholders, and nonprofits alike—putting students at the heart of an ecosystem of changemakers from day one. We develop our programs in close partnership with institutions, such as the United Nations and the OECD, allowing our students to work in the real world alongside forward-thinking organizations daily.

Our network and alliance connections give students the opportunities and expertise needed to fulfill their professional ambitions. This includes our memberships to the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (APSIA), the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), the European University of Social Sciences (CIVICA), and the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), among others.

We also partner with companies worldwide to offer real-world experiences. This includes capstone project support from organizations, such as Oxfam International and the Organization of American States (OAS), and firsthand work experience with dozens of institutions, including the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the Development Bank of Latin America, (CAF) or the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

How does IE School of Global and Public Affairs continue to influence students after graduation?

IE School of Global and Public Affairs is one of the most diverse academic institutions in the world and has almost 70,000 graduates occupying leading positions in businesses worldwide. Our students engage with and learn from peers and faculty working in organizations, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and different UN agencies or European institutions.

The IE Talent and Careers team offers students direct and up-to-date industry insights from top professionals in the global and public affairs arena. Joining the IE alumni community offers lifelong benefits and far-reaching connections.

ie UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GLOBAL & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Dr. Sanjeev Khagram
Director General and Dean
Thunderbird School of Global Management
Arizona State University

Shaping Higher Education for the Fourth Industrial Revolution

How is the role of technology in politics and international affairs changing?

The first Industrial Revolution was powered by the steam engine, the second by the automobile, and the third by the Internet and personal computer. Today, in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, we have at least twelve interacting technologies. From artificial intelligence to augmented reality and virtual reality, biotechnology, blockchain, distributed ledger and geoengineering, this is the most complex combination of transformative technologies ever witnessed in our planetary and human history.

Technologies are reshaping individual lives, transforming business processes, changing societal dynamics, and influencing government policies. At Thunderbird, we have one of the most technologically advanced global headquarters of any leadership, management or business school in the world. The F. Francis and Dionne Najafi Thunderbird Global Headquarters brings the world's leading technology directly to the hands of our students and faculty. The building spans five floors and features state-of-the-art flexible classrooms and 1,600 square feet of displays with more than twenty million pixels of direct-view LED screens showcasing presentations and events worldwide. The building features a green screen studio, a full XR production and development studio, and a volumetric capture studio that creates full three-dimensional renderings for faculty and student initiatives. This technology is used to incorporate immersive language learning, allowing Thunderbird students access to learn new languages and meet with students and faculty from every corner of the globe.

We in higher education can help by developing leaders who will put technology to work to solve our greatest challenges. We can help empower students, our current and future leaders, to positively impact our world by encouraging the desire to overcome boundaries and cooperate across disciplines and by fostering an entrepreneurial mindset in all that we do.

How does Thunderbird help students prepare to manage global challenges?

Businesses today compete in a global marketplace characterized by some combination of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. As we face political, environmental and technological challenges on a global scale, it is imperative that we have the right leaders to help guide the way.

Our job at Thunderbird is to prepare the next generation of global leaders. That includes young people but also people in the workforce looking to assume leadership positions and senior executives who are already facing crises and challenges of the current era. Thunderbird's degree programs are taught by world-renowned faculty with extensive experience in global business. They are action-oriented and thrive on developing solutions for the most complicated global scenarios. These leaders teach both career professionals and companies the specializations and tools necessary to obtain a true global mindset, the cornerstone of Thunderbird's degree offerings.

Our programs help train future leaders to resolve global challenges by sharing insight, knowledge and understanding of other cultures and languages, emphasizing the importance of the world beyond our borders, and enabling students to discover the value of an interconnected world. Our role at Thunderbird is to shape leaders who can leverage the new tools of this era in ways that will empower the most vulnerable workers, communities and societies—leaders who will make sure that everyone contributes and shares in the wealth of the future.

THUNDERBIRD
SCHOOL OF GLOBAL MANAGEMENT
A unit of the Arizona State University Enterprise

Dr. William Norris

Associate Professor
International Affairs at the Bush School
Texas A&M University

A New Center of Excellence at the Bush School: The Strategic Importance of Economic Statecraft

Founded by Dr. William Norris, The Bush School's Economic Statecraft Program is a national center of excellence for the study of economics and security that serves as a magnetic pole for bringing together and stimulating a growing body of scholarship on the topic of economic statecraft.

What is Economic Statecraft?

Economic statecraft focuses on the intersection of economics and security. Commercial actors (not states) conduct the vast majority of international economic activity. These interactions may carry important implications for states' strategic security interests. States can manipulate the incentives facing commercial actors in order to encourage (or discourage) particular patterns of behavior that generate security externalities that are conducive to the state's strategic interests.

Such manipulation is defined as economic statecraft.

Examples of economic statecraft include the rise of Chinese foreign investment (e.g. China's Belt & Road Initiative), the leveraging of SWIFT and sanctions against Russia in response to the invasion of Ukraine, and the creation of the post-World War II Bretton Woods institutional architecture.

Why have a program on Economic Statecraft?

Although Chinese economic statecraft has become a prominent feature of the global strategic landscape and emerging US-China competition, there was no clear academic center of gravity in the U.S. for studying the important emerging phenomenon of how nations leverage economic tools of national power. Efforts to understand the crossroads between economics and security are scattered across institutions, scholars, and geography. Present-day conflicts increasingly involve economic statecraft, making it a central phenomenon of interest to policymakers and students alike. As an institution dedicated to educating the next generation of public servants, the Bush School seeks to connect methodologically rigorous scholarship with policy needs through the Economic Statecraft Program.

What does the Economic Statecraft Program do?

The program supports, sponsors and coordinates an active scholarly effort engaged in policy-relevant work designed to advance state of the art understanding of economic tools of national power. ESP hosts two working groups: the China Working Group, which focuses on research questions related to China's economic statecraft, and the Eisenhower Working Group, which focuses on developing strategically sustainable responses to such developments. ESP works to establish partnerships and build stakeholder momentum across academia, policy, and business sectors. Key components of the program include our weekly "Tuesday Talks" speaker series and our annual symposium hosted at the Bush School's DC Teaching Site. ESP also supports the production of reports and academic papers on various theoretical and empirical aspects of economic statecraft. ESP frequently collaborates with other researchers in related fields in an effort to foster an integrated community of top scholars doing work at the intersection of China, economics, and security.

How does economic statecraft fit into your work?

My first book was on the subject of China's economic statecraft. The ESP has built on several of those insights and extended that research. I also work and teach on other aspects of China's grand strategy more broadly, including China's foreign policy and domestic politics as well as East Asian security. I enjoy working with our graduate students who aspire to careers in government working on these types of important issues.

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
The Bush School
of Government & Public Service

Michael Schroeder, PhD
SIS Associate Dean for Graduate Education
School of International Service
American University

Learning and Applying History's Lessons

How do SIS graduate programs link the lessons of history to current events?

Understanding the significance of the war in Ukraine or Sino-American relations today is impossible without an awareness of the larger historical context. At American University's School of International Service (SIS), students learn global history, analyzing a centuries-long story in which the Westphalian state system is but a recent chapter. For example, graduate students in our Global Governance, Politics, and Security program learn how history shapes current regional and international interactions as well as how history is used in policymaking.

What threats lie ahead for countries at the crosshairs of competition, and how might their responses spark long-lasting global transformation?

Great powers are important, but they are not the only actors determining how world events unfold. Ukraine's resistance to Russia's invasion demonstrates limits on great powers, and Ukraine's early military successes also mobilized the European Union, NATO, and the United States. Our U.S. Foreign Policy and National Security program and our International Peace and Conflict Resolution program each provide students with skills to understand and help end conflicts. The invasion of Ukraine also shows that regional expertise and hands-on experience are crucial to meeting tomorrow's global challenges. Our Comparative and Regional Studies (CRS) program provides both—particularly our new Global CRS: Europe track, in which students study and gain professional experience in-region.

What skills and leadership traits are needed to help students prepare to manage crises and global risk over time, and how does SIS help students develop these?

Alongside a passion for service, graduates need critical thinking, communication, and leadership skills—and the tools to adapt to a dynamic digital environment. Graduates of our Intercultural and International Communication program emerge well-equipped in these areas. These skills are also central to our practicum courses in which students complete deliverables for real clients. For students who wish to add more depth in particular areas, we offer the International Affairs Policy and Analysis program, a skills-based program in which students complete a professional competency track in an area such as data analytics or policy analysis. Also, our new International Economic Relations: Quantitative Methods degree gives student valuable data skills.

How should graduate programs address the changing role of technology in politics and international affairs within their curricula?

We have a strong research and teaching program in technology and security that cuts across the curriculum. Our graduates find exciting jobs blending a baseline understanding of technologies such as cyber, robotics, and artificial intelligence with expertise in policy areas such as security, human rights, development, and the environment. SIS students can study the evolution of technology, including processes of innovation and diffusion that are changing our world. Our graduate students just won first place in the Atlantic Council's prestigious Cyber 9/12 Competition. There's also our active Center for Security, Innovation, and New Technology, which focuses on the risks and opportunities of new technologies—everything from drones to synthetic biology—in which select students serve as fellows or interns.

SCHOOL *of* INTERNATIONAL SERVICE

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY • WASHINGTON, DC

Francis Fukuyama

Director, Ford Dorsey Master's in International Policy
Olivier Nomellini Senior Fellow, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies
Professor by Courtesy, Department of Political Science
Stanford University

Staying Prepared in the Face of New and Evolving Global Challenges

How are the lessons of history linked to current events in your program?

The past year has seen the return of two developments from the past that the current generation of students has not experienced in their lifetime: first, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which has led to large-scale conventional warfare between two European countries, and second, the return of inflation and the efforts to deal with it through rising interest rates and possible recession following the economic damage of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Stanford Master's in International Policy (MIP) deals with issues such as these in different ways. Like many programs, we offer courses in both international security and in international economics, which give students a structured way of thinking about policy issues that they may not have encountered previously. But we also provide the skills that allow students to use these high-level concepts to solve real-world problems. Through a three-course sequence, we present students first with case studies that put them in the position of decision-makers and introduce them to the MIP Policy Problem-Solving Framework. The latter is a structured approach to identifying problems, searching for solutions, and devising an implementation strategy that takes account of real-world constraints and local context. From this base, they go on to a two-quarter capstone, in which they are linked to external partners with whom they work to solve actual problems—not just as glorified research assistants—but as real partners who need help thinking through problems and solutions.

How is the role of technology in international politics changing?

Over the past few years, we have seen the weaponization of social media and sophisticated cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure across borders. We are now engaged in a complex form of hybrid warfare with geopolitical competitors such as China and Russia, as well as with terrorist and criminal organizations.

The MIP program offers a Cyber Policy track linked to the Cyber Policy Center at Stanford's Freeman Spogli Institute, which offers courses such as "Hacking for Security" that draw on the vast computer science resources at Stanford. Other courses look at issues like online platform content moderation, or work with the Stanford Internet Observatory that does real-time empirical research on how the Internet is being used for political purposes. In addition, many of our graduates find jobs with cutting-edge technology companies here in Silicon Valley, companies that are finding they need the kind of international expertise and policy awareness that our program provides. Technology is of course embedded in all aspects of the MIP program, and students can make use of Stanford's rich resources in this area.

Stanford | Ford Dorsey Master's in International Policy
Freeman Spogli Institute

Kristen Patel

Donald P. and Margaret Curry Gregg Professor of Practice
in Korean and East Asian Affairs
Maxwell School, Syracuse University
Former Regional Head of Research & Analytics
in Asia-Pacific for HSBC

Preparing for the Challenges of Emerging Technologies

Distinguished alumna Kristen Patel ('90 B.A. in economics and policy studies) spent twenty-five years leading intelligence and analytics programs for the CIA, the U.S. Treasury, and one of the world's largest banks, HSBC. Her work on illicit finance and national security has taken her from Syracuse, New York to Washington, DC, to Seoul and Hong Kong, and back again.

Patel returned to Maxwell to teach undergraduate and graduate courses on public policy and international affairs issues, in both New York and Washington, and to share her experiences with a new generation of leaders.

What are some of the new fronts in global competition and how does Maxwell prepare students to understand them?

Right now, a lot of countries are trying to figure out the best approach to regulate cryptocurrencies and adopt central bank digital currencies. These new technologies are going to transform the way the financial sector works. We're already starting to see it. The payment settlement of goods and services may not involve banks thirty years from now; trade may be conducted through blockchain. And it is a race: the country that develops the commonly accepted technical standards framework for these new technologies will dominate.

At Maxwell, I help our students understand the importance of these financial technologies and recognize the individuals they will collaborate with to develop effective policies. Students in our interdisciplinary policy studies and international relations programs benefit by learning from both practitioners like me and scholars from across the school's departments of public administration, history, economics, political science, and other social sciences.

How has technology changed the approach to politics and international affairs?

For an analyst, the most important thing is making sure you understand the technology, specifically the algorithms, used to push out information, so you are not getting a skewed view. I have fantastic colleagues within Maxwell, at the Newhouse School, and at other parts of the university who share insight, collaborate, and talk to my classes about their research on information sources, including social media. If you don't understand the information, you can make a bad policy call.

How can schools like Maxwell prepare students to manage global risk over time?

No one can be an expert at everything. The key is to help students think critically about global risk and identify the best people to work with to develop policy to address it. For students, that can start with the research centers at Maxwell that collaborate with other schools at Syracuse on specific problem sets. The Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs, for example, has a project called the Dark Spots Project, which looks at ungoverned areas of the world—parts of a country where the government doesn't go in because it's too dangerous. They're doing real-time research, and there is a lot of government interest in their work.

I think, at the core, everyone wants to work on something that matters, something that is applicable to the real world. Maxwell helps students develop problem-solving skills to be able to have an impact throughout their career.

Syracuse University
Maxwell School of
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Zeinab Azarbadegan, PhD

Postdoctoral Fellow in International Studies
Diplomatische Akademie Wien –
Vienna School of International Studies

"The past is never dead."

— William Faulkner

Graduate programs at the Diplomatische Akademie Wien – Vienna School of International Studies (DA) prepare students to excel in a range of international careers. Located in the heart of Vienna, the DA is near international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, diplomatic missions, and cultural institutions. With alumni from over 120 countries, the DA has a vast alumni network.

How are the lessons of history linked to current events in your program?

History is, at its core, related to understanding current events. In a multidisciplinary program such as the one at the DA, we teach students how the current international system, economies, and politics of different countries have been shaped by various ideas, people, and events. Instead of taking an anachronistic approach to history, where the past is discussed as a precursor inevitably leading to the present, we ask our students to critically analyze the contingencies and the specific contexts of each historical event. While many of the challenges we face today are a product of a certain set of trends, circumstances, and agents, history provides the opportunity to study epochs when we had previously faced similar challenges. No two events are the same, and history never fully repeats itself. However, we can certainly learn from the different ideas, reactions, and mistakes of our predecessors.

What skills are needed to help students prepare to manage crises and global risk over time? What leadership traits are needed to navigate uncertainty?

Managing crises and global risks requires a multifaceted understanding of current problems. The DA's multidisciplinary approach—where students gain skills and knowledge in history, economics, political science, and law—prepares our students to understand the complexity of the issues seen in the international arena. In an increasingly uncertain world, we aspire to train leaders in various areas by providing the opportunity for our students to specialize in different disciplines, regions, and approaches through our seminar courses and completion of their final theses. They also benefit from interacting and learning from the vibrant alumni network of the DA and the strong diplomatic community in Vienna.

How is the role of technology in politics and international affairs changing?

Technological advancement has shaped and transformed global and international affairs throughout history. One of the main areas where technology has affected politics and changed the definition of the public arena is communications. From the introduction of mass print to telegram, telephone, television, and—finally—internet, technology has transformed how people interact with the state and how states communicate with each other. Similar to our current issues with social media and cybersecurity, all these new technologies meant reaching out to more people over longer distances and quicker than previously conceivable. However, security issues such as interception and spread of misinformation became more and more acute as these technologies became more effective. While the communication technology has become more advanced and complex, many of the challenges and opportunities it has created in politics and international affairs can be seen in a long line of advancements throughout history. There is, therefore, much to learn from the past.

diplomatische akademie wien
Vienna School of International Studies
École des Hautes Études Internationales de Vienne

Amaney Jamal
Dean
School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA)
Princeton University

Advance Your Impact at Princeton

Events like the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan and Russia's invasion of Ukraine have had tragic impacts on the ground, as well as ripple effects worldwide. How can policy-oriented institutions react to these watershed moments?

History is being written every day: Long-standing ideals, such as the expansion of democracy or the relative peace Europe has enjoyed for decades, face challenges and imminent threats. Rebuilding in Afghanistan and Ukraine will require significant and sustained support across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, as well as evidence-based policy. This academic year, Princeton will be hosting displaced Ukrainian scholars in several departments, including SPIA; and I am proud we can provide safe refuge for their continued scholarship. At our Afghanistan Policy Lab, academic fellows from Afghanistan, who worked previously in support of U.S. government efforts there, are collaborating with members of our community on policy-relevant research focused on humanitarian aid, health, civic space, women, and national healing and reconciliation.

At the same time, we need to share our own faculty expertise globally. This spring, we produced an expert webinar series on implications of the war in Ukraine. Moderated by Razia Iqbal of the BBC World Service, the series received hundreds of thousands of views on YouTube and beyond.

Even as we address these global challenges, how can we prepare for what might come next?

We must anticipate the global power shifts to come, including the policy impacts on regions, countries, communities, and individuals. SPIA is uniquely positioned to do this, given our cutting-edge interdisciplinary scholarship that spans the globe. Our faculty's work is shaping public debates on topics such as U.S.-China relations and China's rise, democratic back-sliding and the rise of populism, race and gender, mis/disinformation, and poverty and inequality.

SPIA also has a long-held tradition to send our students abroad to study policy. We offer summer internships for graduate students, workshops where they contribute to solving a policy issue on behalf of a real client, and field work to supplement our formal curriculum. SPIA's graduate degrees are fully funded, and our students regularly connect with world leaders, institutions, and government officials—on campus and around the world.

One of your top priorities as dean is to "internationalize" the school. What does this mean, and why is it important to you?

For an institution to be at the forefront of the study of public policy, both internationally and domestically, its community needs expert representation from across the globe. Our graduate admissions team is focused on recruiting international students, paying particular attention to regions outside the OECD member countries. We're creating new institutional partnerships abroad and re-launching research centers, such as the Research Program in Development Economics, co-led by Seema Jayachandran and Pascaline Dupas—renowned development economists engaged in India and Africa, respectively.

We're also highly committed to amplifying our faculty's research on critical challenges—ranging from climate change and the global refugee crisis to international security and rising inflation.

SPIA is dedicated to welcoming and building new opportunities and partnerships for global engagement, exchanges, and outreach.

Princeton School of Public and International Affairs

Hatsue Shinohara
Professor
Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies
Waseda University

The Russian Invasion of Ukraine: A View from Tokyo

The war in Ukraine has been going on since February, and there seems to be no signs of a ceasefire or diplomatic negotiation toward settlement. Western states—as well as Japan—imposed sanctions against Russia.

Does history repeat itself?

On February 24, 2022, when I learned that Russia had started a military invasion of Ukraine, I could not believe something like that could happen in the twenty-first century. Russian military actions and the response by the United Nations (UN) reminded me of Japan's invasion of Manchuria in 1931. Russia's ambition to expand the sphere of influence in the neighboring country by military force was a war of imperialism that, I had thought, could be only found in international history textbooks. Russia did not respect the UN charter and international humanitarian law. Russian ambition and behavior were anachronistic, yet—as happened in 1931—the United Nations did not function well enough to stop Russia's military actions, mainly due to the veto power and disunity among Security Council members.

Is there anything different from the past?

Western nations have supported Ukraine by providing the country with heavy weaponry, such as tanks and missiles. Russia, on its part, has been determined to continue its so-called "special military operation" until it achieves its initial aims. Unlike in 1914, when the incident in Sarajevo escalated to 'total war,' the war in Ukraine will not result in escalation partly due to fear of nuclear war. While the war was going on, the first signatory countries' conference of the Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons was held in Vienna in June of this year. We are witnessing a war between Russia and Ukraine even as efforts are underway to strengthen international norms for a peaceful international order.

Are there any ramifications in the Asia-Pacific region?

When the war in Ukraine started, Japanese policymakers were concerned about the possibility of China taking a more assertive policy in line with Russia's action. In October 2021, Chinese and Russian fleets jointly sailed around Japan's coastal line, and that memory was still fresh enough to evoke concern. Other major powers in the region shared the apprehension. The Quad, or officially the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, is composed of Australia, India, Japan, and the United States; the four countries held a meeting in Tokyo on May 24 and issued a joint statement supporting the rule of law, territorial integrity, and peaceful settlements of disputes without the use of force.

In addition, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan attended the NATO summit meeting on June 29, indicating Japan's strong ties with Western nations. China, on its part, completed a security agreement with the Solomon Islands in the Southwestern Pacific in late April. China had established strong relations with Southeast Asian nations, such as Cambodia and Laos, but forging security arrangements with a country in the Pacific was a novelty. The war in Ukraine has seemingly accelerated diplomatic competition between China and other major powers. Still, it remains to be seen if this will turn to stability or instability in the region.

Waseda University
Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies
早稲田大学 大学院アジア太平洋研究科

Anne Marie Goetz
Clinical Professor
NYU School of Professional Studies
Center for Global Affairs

Analytical and Practical Training for Addressing Complex Crises

How are the lessons of history linked to current events in your program?

We face unprecedented social, political, economic, and ecological challenges, and little from the past has prepared us for them. At the same time, the past lays down tracks along which institutions, like trains, run. Understanding those patterns is vital to ensure institutions don't run into walls or ruin. The history of international relations, wars and their resolution, economic cycles of prosperity and depression, social change, and progress is at the foundation of core courses at the Center for Global Affairs (CGA)—courses on international relations, international political economy, and international law. Understanding past patterns is vital, for instance, in building scenarios for assessing possible futures in our courses on international relations and our practicums with the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate.

What skills are needed to help students prepare to manage crises and global risk?

Today's students will be at the frontlines of global crises as leaders, activists, commentators, and analysts, perhaps sooner than they think. A commitment to justice, inclusiveness, peace, and planetary survival is likely why they signed up in the first place for programs like the CGA's Master of Science in Global Affairs or in Global Security, Conflict, and Cybercrime. Commitment and conviction are important qualities, but students can acquire the skills needed for managing crises and global risk in the CGA's highly specialized courses on, for instance, mediation, nonviolent conflict resolution, data analysis, monitoring and evaluation, energy and climate security, anti-corruption, peacebuilding, gender analysis, and more.

But crisis management is not just about applying technical skills to a specific problem. The whole point about today's crises is that they are enormously complex and are beyond conventional technical fixes. The level of international cooperation required for solving climate, poverty, or population flow challenges calls for leaders who can build trust, generate and sustain partnerships, and engage broad and diverse publics behind common agendas. The courses at CGA and, perhaps more importantly, the opportunities we provide for internships, networking, and hands-on practical engagement through consulting practicums and capstones with a vast international community of decision-makers on global matters are all resources and access points for students seeking to hit the ground running in tackling pressing global challenges.

How is the role of technology in politics and international affairs changing?

Digital communication technology and artificial intelligence have profoundly transformed public decision-making and risk at national and international levels. These technologies have democratized and accelerated decision-making processes and enhanced the accessibility of vital information for those decisions. Simultaneously and paradoxically, they have made these processes and public decision-makers less reliable and credible because of the manipulation of information by malicious actors. This has exposed vulnerabilities in democratic public decision-making. We now understand more deeply than before the importance of truth.

The CGA's programs are highly sensitive to these critical current challenges and equip students with alerts and capacities for critical analysis of how technology shapes and can distort the framing of current crises.

NYU | SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES
CENTER FOR GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Margarita Balmaceda, PhD
Professor
School of Diplomacy and International Relations
Seton Hall University

Connecting with the Past, Preparing for the Future

As an expert on Eastern Europe and the author of the new book, *Russian Energy Chains,* what should students understand about Russia's war against Ukraine and its historical context?

The long-term trends and influences on Russia's behavior may be important in understanding the current situation. Also, decisions about energy supplies and infrastructure, which were made in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, affect how countries can react or may not be able to react. For many actors in western Europe and Ukraine, accessing Russian energy was an opportunity—a temptation that was advantageous for many people, from corrupt politicians to households that benefited from subsidized prices. This has made it difficult for western European states and Ukraine to move away from dependency on Russian energy. Also, the European Union is finally understanding the seriousness of Russia's aggression in a way that it apparently did not understand at the time of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea in 2014.

You teach a course on Russian foreign policy. How does history and the current crisis factor into classroom discussions?

I ask students to look back at the expansion of the Russian empire and how that affects relations with neighboring states. This is a basic building block of the way I teach foreign policy.

Your faculty colleagues include influential scholars and international affairs practitioners, you among them. How do students benefit from the research and field work being done at the School of Diplomacy?

We are deeply engaged in field research and practice, which helps students bridge the more academic components of their learning with very concrete policy challenges in a timeframe that is sometimes very urgent. One example of how that works is our National Security Fellows program, where graduate students share the results of their policy relevant research with State Department officials and provide operational briefs and policy recommendations.

How else can students prepare to navigate the risks and uncertainty we may face?

We are alerting students to the very unexpected ways in which different policy fields, economic areas, and geographic regions interrelate. Very few of us would have expected Russia's war in Ukraine would create a global crisis in energy, grain, timber, and even metals supply. We are preparing students to identify solutions that are not obvious on the surface, so that they can contribute into the future.

What advice can you give young professionals interested in studying international affairs?

Look for programs that are oriented toward innovative solutions to the challenges that are emerging. We do that at the School of Diplomacy by looking at new responses to the climate crisis. For instance, my new research project on the geopolitics of industrial decarbonization goes beyond our conventional interest in how to replace fossil fuels for electricity production. It looks at the much more complex issue of the use of fossil fuels as industrial feedstock—the last frontier of decarbonization.

We also study the ways new and emerging powers, such as China and India, respond to global challenges. Understanding their motivations helps us make policies more effective.

SCHOOL OF DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

Arne Westad
Professor of History
Yale Jackson School of Global Affairs

Connecting History with Policy

Yale University's Jackson School of Global Affairs offers interdisciplinary academic programs that inspire and prepare Yale students for global leadership and service. The school is home to Yale's Master in Public Policy (M.P.P.) in Global Affairs, Master of Advanced Study (M.A.S.) in Global Affairs, and the undergraduate major in global affairs.

We bring to Yale the most talented, passionate students from all over the globe, dedicated to making the world a better place. We prepare students to understand world events through academically rigorous programs taught by outstanding faculty who are leaders in their fields and by prominent practitioners of global affairs.

Our M.P.P. occupies a unique place among international affairs graduate programs. The four-course interdisciplinary core curriculum provides students with a shared intellectual foundation focused on acquisition of the ideas, ways of thinking, and skills needed for leadership in global affairs.

How are the lessons of history linked to current events in your program?

One of the flagship initiatives of Yale's new Jackson School of Global Affairs is International Security Studies (ISS), a center that concentrates on studying current security challenges in light of the past. ISS hosts young scholars, mostly historians, as post-doctoral fellows, and runs seminars and conferences that link the present to the past. It also runs the Grand Strategy program, a year-long class that studies historical change and contemporary security problems.

What threats lie ahead for those countries that see themselves in the crosshairs of competition?

As we enter an era of Great Power competition, we can assume that international instability will be much more significant than at any time since the Cold War ended. We are already seeing how rapid economic and technological change influence current security challenges. We will have more territorial conflict of the kind we now witness in Ukraine. And we will struggle with the difficulties of handling fundamental problems such as climate change and pandemics. The Jackson School sees understanding these new and sweeping changes as indispensable for future policymakers.

What skills are needed to help students prepare to manage crises and global risk over time?

Students need to study the different regions of the world in terms of their own contradictions and problems and not just as outgrowths of U.S. foreign policy. They need a more extensive knowledge of history and languages, not just to navigate current challenges but to obtain a more fundamental understanding of aims and ideas that differ from our own.

What leadership traits are needed to navigate uncertainty?

Given the difficulties in international affairs over the past generation, two of the qualities that are most called for are restraint and flexibility. The former demands training in setting priorities in a context of finite resources. The latter encourages us to grapple with uncertainty through an ability to adjust policies in order to achieve desired results on a larger scale. At the Jackson School, we instill the ability to differentiate and apply these approaches, though a unique program that combines scholarship and theory taught by distinguished faculty with practical training and professionals who have worked in the field.

Yale JACKSON SCHOOL OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Professor Henry Schwalbenberg
Director
The Graduate Program in International Political Economy and Development
Fordham University

Understanding Global Economic Issues Amidst Global Uncertainty

What sets Fordham IPED apart from other International Affairs programs?

Fordham's Graduate Program in International Political Economy and Development (Fordham IPED) offers a unique, rigorous, and innovative approach to analyzing contemporary global economic relations. Issues in international economic relations and in international development are understood from both a political and an economic perspective. Furthermore, we provide a strong quantitative methods foundation that allows our students to develop robust analytical skills in data analysis, project assessment, and computer programming. We also stress professional experience outside of the classroom. And we only admit a small select group of about 20 students each year.

How does Fordham IPED prepare its students to participate in promoting international cooperation amidst challenges posed by global uncertainties and shifting international affairs landscape?

Our core curriculum, consisting of economic, political, and quantitative courses, provides our students with an advanced interdisciplinary knowledge of global economic relations. Our electives allow students to specialize in the fields of international development studies, international and development economics, development and finance, international banking and finance, or in global environmental and resource economics. Amidst a tumultuous international affairs landscape, our curriculum equips our students with the critical expertise needed to promote workable and equitable solutions to pressing international issues in economic cooperation, development, and environmentally sustainable growth.

Through our Summer Intern Fellowship Program, we fund a number of field placements for our students to gain practical experience with international businesses, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations not only here in New York but also in Washington, DC, as well as in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America.

What unique advantages are available for students in the Fordham IPED Program?

Our curriculum and our location in New York City are ideal for anyone who wishes to be at the center of the world economy. Our location affords our students a wealth of internship opportunities, ranging from the United Nations and international nonprofit organizations to international think tanks and Wall Street.

We also complement our classes with a weekly lecture series and various career trips in New York and Washington, DC, that feature a broad range of professionals highlighting the practitioner perspective on contemporary issues in international affairs.

We have a small class size of roughly 20 students, providing the opportunity for close interactions with our supportive and distinguished faculty of experts. Our students, drawn from around the world, come from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds. We admit our students from among the top 40% of all applicants to U.S. graduate programs. We offer generous scholarships to exceptional students and provide funding for students' participation in internship placements, language immersion programs, and international fieldwork overseas.

Lastly, we have a strong alumni network and close association with various international organizations. Our placement record is strong, with about 40 percent of alumni in the private sector, 25 percent in the nonprofit sector, 22 percent in government, and the remaining 13 percent in academia. Our graduates also have a strong record of winning various prestigious awards such as Fulbright Fellowships, US Presidential Management Fellowships, and International Development Fellowships.

FORDHAM | IPED
THE GRADUATE PROGRAM IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT
FORDHAM UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK CITY

Lara Tiedens
Executive Director
Schwarzman Scholars

Leading Global Engagement: The Power of the Schwarzman Scholars Network

In 2022, perhaps more than in any other year since the end of the Cold War, it seems like the world order is being fundamentally reshaped in front of our eyes. In your view, what kinds of global leadership will be required to navigate this new reality effectively?

The global nature of the crises we face today requires that leaders have broad and deep knowledge of regions and cultures beyond their home countries. They need to understand other parties' aspirations, how they conceptualize problems, and what constraints they face in order to design satisfying solutions that don't further inflame existing tensions. We believe that it is particularly important for leaders from all nations to have a deep understanding of China and its people, as China is possibly the single most consequential nation for the future of global affairs in the twenty-first century. Our view is that leaders must engage with the people and issues that are the most complicated and difficult rather than walk away from them. They must engage with humility and curiosity, with a desire to learn, and with the goal of a more peaceful future for all.

How does the Schwarzman Scholars curriculum empower Scholars to develop leadership skills?

Leadership is a core part of the Schwarzman Scholars program. Along with courses on global affairs and the history of China's political economy, Scholars take courses on leadership designed to analyze issues from interdisciplinary and contextualized perspectives. From "Leadership in Public Crises and Emergencies" to "Leading the Social Innovation in China," these courses are designed to equip Scholars with the tools to enhance their understanding of the central issues facing leaders across a wide range of sectors. Schwarzman Scholars also develop their leadership capabilities through our Lingdaoli co-curricular program, building customized leadership plans, gaining interpersonal skills, and learning to navigate the complexities of leading in globally diverse contexts. Additionally, Scholars work with industry-specific mentors, who provide them with a personal perspective on how to lead in their fields. Scholars then put all this learning to practice in the intense and intimate community at Schwarzman College.

In ten years, what will the Schwarzman Scholars Alumni network look like?

With the graduation of the sixth cohort this June, Schwarzman Scholars has nearly eight hundred alumni spread across the globe. Our network comprises individuals from eighty-five nationalities and diverse professional and academic backgrounds. From earning doctorates to working for leading tech firms, launching their own nonprofits, creating policy, and working in governments around the world, Schwarzman Scholars alumni have already excelled in their careers. Ten years from now, our ever-expanding network of Scholars will have shaped various fields, serving as an interconnected group of leaders across the globe. Our graduates stay in touch with each other and us through the Alumni network, and we provide ongoing programming for our network so that our Scholars are always abreast of issues regarding global affairs and China and continue to develop their capacity as leaders.

SCHWARZMAN SCHOLARS
清华大学苏世民书院

Daniel W. Drezner, PhD
Professor of International Politics
The Fletcher School at Tufts University

Shaping Global Affairs to Meet the Needs of an Ever-Changing World

With a mission to produce the knowledge and leaders necessary to secure a more just and peaceful world, Fletcher has defined leadership in global affairs for nearly nine decades.

For students, employers, and our ever-changing world, Fletcher continues to innovate the teaching and practice of global affairs, delivering the essential knowledge, training, and networks required to lead effectively in the 21st century.

Why students choose Fletcher

Fletcher's faculty lead by example. As influential, sought-after advisors to world leaders in foreign affairs, business and finance, trade, aid, development, and defense, Fletcher faculty contribute to solving the world's most vexing problems, all while training the next generation.

Within a framework combining theory and practice, Fletcher students analyze problems through the intersections of areas as diverse as climate, energy, gender, economics, immigration, security, and tech—looking around corners, exploring across disciplines, and leveraging diplomacy in new ways to find paths to solutions.

Prepared with relevant knowledge and technical skills, historical contexts, and interdisciplinary analytical training, Fletcher graduates are unfazed by the growing complexity of an increasingly interconnected, interdependent world, making them uniquely valuable to employers.

A distinctly global community and a category-of-one alumni network

As members of our diverse global community, students see beyond traditional, transactional notions of international affairs and embrace perspectives not previously considered. Students learn from each other daily- inside and beyond the classroom.

Our global alumni network is uncommonly committed, connected, and dedicated to the success of each other and to that of our current students, bound by a collective mission of improving our world. At Fletcher, we don't just study global affairs, we shape them.

Daniel W. Drezner, PhD, Professor of International Politics, shares reflections on the current state of global affairs and on Fletcher as a world-class destination for research and scholarship in the 21st century.

What is the greatest challenge confronting today's leaders in global affairs?

"Over the past five years, the world has endured pandemics, wars, mass protests, climate change, supply chain stresses, and political instability within the most powerful country in the world. The only certainty about the near future is continued uncertainty. Amassing and wielding power in such an environment is a considerable challenge."

Learning from history

Drezner's courses prepare future leaders to draw new perspectives from history. He notes that the periods of achievement, such as the Renaissance, emerged from periods of tremendous uncertainty, pandemic, war, and religious oppression.

How does Fletcher prepare students to shape global affairs?

"The interdisciplinarity of The Fletcher School allows our faculty and students to think about these conundrums from an array of different perspectives. From the role of force to the role of history to the role of science to best business practices, Fletcher helps to prepare students how to troubleshoot the next wave of short-term crises—and, hopefully, lay the groundwork to avoid the deeper crises that loom on the horizon."

FLETCHER

The graduate school of global affairs at Tufts University

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About APSIA

The Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (APSIA) brings together the leading graduate programs dedicated to professional education in international affairs. Members have demonstrated excellence in multidisciplinary, policy-oriented international studies.

Visit **APSIA.org** to discover what you can do with an APSIA degree, learn about hiring APSIA students and alumni, register for admissions events around the world and online, and find fellowship and scholarship information.

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The Weakness of Xi Jinping

How Hubris and Paranoia Threaten China's Future

CAI XIA

Not long ago, Chinese President Xi Jinping was riding high. He had consolidated power within the Chinese Communist Party. He had elevated himself to the same official status as the CCP's iconic leader, Mao Zedong, and done away with presidential term limits, freeing him to lead China for the rest of his life. At home, he boasted of having made huge strides in reducing poverty; abroad, he claimed to be raising his country's international prestige to new heights. For many Chinese, Xi's strongman tactics were the acceptable price of national revival.

Outwardly, Xi still projects confidence. In a speech in January 2021, he declared China "invincible." But behind the scenes, his power is being questioned as never before. By discarding China's long tradition of collective rule and creating a cult of personality reminiscent of the one that surrounded Mao, Xi has rankled party insiders. A series of

CAI XIA was a Professor at the Central Party School of the Chinese Communist Party from 1998 to 2012.

policy missteps, meanwhile, have disappointed even supporters. Xi's reversal of economic reforms and his inept response to the COVID-19 pandemic have shattered his image as a hero of everyday people. In the shadows, resentment among CCP elites is rising.

I have long had a front-row seat to the CCP's court intrigue. For 15 years, I was a professor in the Central Party School, where I helped train thousands of high-ranking CCP cadres who staff China's bureaucracy. During my tenure at the school, I advised the CCP's top leadership on building the party, and I continued to do so after retiring in 2012. In 2020, after I criticized Xi, I was expelled from the party, stripped of my retirement benefits, and warned that my safety was in danger. I now live in exile in the United States, but I stay in touch with many of my contacts in China.

At the CCP's 20th National Party Congress this fall, Xi expects that he will be given a third five-year term. And even if the growing irritation among some party elites means that his bid will not go entirely uncontested, he will probably succeed. But that success will bring more turbulence down the road. Emboldened by the unprecedented additional term, Xi will likely tighten his grip even further domestically and raise his ambitions internationally. As Xi's rule becomes more extreme, the infighting and resentment he has already triggered will only grow stronger. The competition between various factions within the party will get more intense, complicated, and brutal than ever before.

At that point, China may experience a vicious cycle in which Xi reacts to the perceived sense of threat by taking ever bolder actions that generate even more pushback. Trapped in an echo chamber and desperately seeking redemption, he may even do something catastrophically ill advised, such as attack Taiwan. Xi may well ruin something China has earned over the course of four decades: a reputation for steady, competent leadership. In fact, he already has.

THE CHINESE MAFIA

In many respects, the CCP has changed little since the party took power in 1949. Now, as then, the party exercises absolute control over China, ruling over its military, its administration, and its rubber-stamp legislature. The party hierarchy, in turn, answers to the Politburo Standing Committee, the top decision-making body in China. Composed of anywhere from five to nine members of the broader Politburo, the Standing Committee is headed by the party's general secretary, China's paramount leader. Since 2012, that has been Xi.

The details of how the Standing Committee operates are a closely guarded secret, but it is widely known that many decisions are made through the circulation of documents dealing with major policy questions, in the margins of which the committee's members add comments. The papers are written by top leaders in ministries and other party organs, as well as experts from the best universities and think tanks, and to have one's memo circulated among the Standing Committee members is considered a credit to the writer's home institution. When I was a professor, the Central Party School set a quota for the production of such memos of about one a month. Authors whose memos were read by the Standing Committee were rewarded with the equivalent of roughly $1,500—more than a professor's monthly salary.

Another feature of the party system has remained constant: the importance of personal connections. When it comes to one's rise within the party hierarchy, individual relationships, including one's family reputation and Communist pedigree, matter as much as competence and ideology.

That was certainly the case with Xi's career. Contrary to Chinese propaganda and the assessment of many Western analysts that he rose through his talent, the opposite is true. Xi benefited immensely from the connections of his father, Xi Zhongxun, a CCP leader with impeccable revolutionary credentials who served briefly as propaganda minister under Mao. When Xi Jinping was a county party chief in the northern province of Hebei in the early 1980s, his mother wrote a note to the province's party chief asking him to take an interest in Xi's advancement. But that official, Gao Yang, ended up disclosing the note's content at a meeting of the province's Politburo Standing Committee. The revelation was a great embarrassment to the family since it violated the CCP's new campaign against seeking favors. (Xi would never forget the incident: in 2009, when Gao died, he pointedly declined to attend his funeral, a breach of custom given that both had served as president of the Central Party School.) Such a scandal would have ruined the average rising cadre's career, but Xi's connections came to the rescue: the father of Fujian's party chief had been a close confidant of Xi's father, and the families arranged a rare reassignment to that province.

Xi would continue to fail upward. In 1988, after losing his bid for deputy mayor in a local election, he was promoted to district party chief. Once there, however, Xi languished on account of his middling performance. In the CCP, moving from the district level to the provincial level is a major hurdle, and for years, he could not overcome it. But once

again, family connections intervened. In 1992, after Xi's mother wrote a plea to the new party leader in Fujian, Jia Qinglin, Xi was transferred to the provincial capital. At that point, his career took off.

As all lower-level cadres know, to climb the CCP ladder, one must find a higher-level boss. In Xi's case, this proved easy enough, since many party leaders held his father in high esteem. His first and most important mentor was Geng Biao, a top diplomatic and military official who had once worked for Xi's father. In 1979, he took on the younger Xi as a secretary. The need for such patrons early on has knock-on effects decades down the line. High-level officials each have their own "lineages," as insiders call these groups of protégés, which amount to de facto factions within the CCP. Indeed, disputes that are framed as ideological and policy debates within the CCP are often something much less sophisticated: power struggles among various lineages. Such a system can also lead to tangled webs of personal loyalty. If one's mentor falls out of favor, the effect is the professional equivalent of being orphaned.

Outsiders may find it helpful to think of the CCP as more of a mafia organization than a political party. The head of the party is the don, and below him sit the underbosses, or the Standing Committee. These men traditionally parcel out power, with each responsible for certain areas—foreign policy, the economy, personnel, anticorruption, and so on. They are also supposed to serve as the big boss's consiglieres, advising him on their areas of responsibility. Outside the Standing Committee are the other 18 members of the Politburo, who are next in the line of succession for the Standing Committee. They can be thought of as the mafia's capos, carrying out Xi's orders to eliminate perceived threats in the hope of staying in the good graces of the don. As a perk of their position, they are allowed to enrich themselves as they see fit, seizing property and businesses without penalty. And like the mafia, the party uses blunt tools to get what it wants: bribery, extortion, even violence.

SHARING IS CARING

Although the power of personal connections and the flexibility of formal rules have remained constant since Communist China's founding, one thing has shifted over time: the degree to which power is concentrated in a single man. From the mid-1960s onward, Mao had absolute control and the final say on all matters, even if he exercised his power episodically and was officially merely first among equals.

But when Deng Xiaoping became China's de facto leader in 1978, he chipped away at Mao's one-man, lifelong dictatorship.

Deng restricted China's presidency to two five-year terms and established a form of collective leadership, allowing other officials—first Hu Yaobang and then Zhao Ziyang—to serve as head of the party, even if he remained the power behind the throne. In 1987, the CCP decided to reform the process for selecting members of the Central Committee, the party's nominal overseer and the body from which Politburo members are chosen. For the first time, the party proposed more candidates than there were seats—hardly a democratic election, but a step in the right direction. Even the endorsement of Deng could not guarantee success: for example, Deng Liqun, a Maoist ideologue whom Deng Xiaoping had promised to promote to the Politburo, failed to earn enough votes and was forced to retire from political life. (It is worth noting that when the Central Committee held an election in 1997, Xi barely squeaked by. He had the fewest votes of all those selected to join, reflecting a general distaste within the party for "princelings," descendants of top CCP leaders who rose thanks to nepotism rather than merit.)

> The CCP is more of a mafia organization than a political party.

Seeking to avoid a repeat of the disastrous Cultural Revolution, when Maoist propaganda reached its apogee, Deng also sought to prevent any leader from forming a cult of personality. As early as 1978, a student from the Central Party School who was a close family friend noticed on a school trip to a pig farm in the Beijing suburbs that items that Hua Guofeng had used on an inspection visit—a hot water bottle, a teacup—were displayed in a glass cabinet, as if it were a religious shrine. My friend wrote to Hua criticizing the personal worship, and Hua had the display removed. In 1982, China's leaders went so far as to write into the party constitution a ban on cults of personality, which they viewed as uniquely dangerous.

Deng was willing to go only so far in sharing power, and he forced out Hu and Zhao successively when each proved too politically liberal. But Deng's successor, Jiang Zemin, deepened the political reforms. Jiang institutionalized his group of advisers to operate more as an executive office. He sought advice from all members of the Standing Committee, which now made decisions by majority vote, and he circulated draft speeches widely. Jiang also made the elections

to the Central Committee slightly more competitive by increasing the ratio of candidates to seats. Even princelings, including one of Deng's sons, lost their elections.

When Hu Jintao took over from Jiang in 2002, China moved even further toward collective leadership. Hu ruled with the consent of the nine members of the Standing Committee, a clique known as the "nine dragons controlling the water." There were downsides to this egalitarian approach. A single member of the Standing Committee could veto any decision, driving the perception of Hu as a weak leader unable to overcome gridlock. For nearly a decade, the economic reforms that began under Deng stalled. But there were upsides, too, since the need for consensus prevented careless decisions. When SARS broke out in China during his first year in office, for instance, Hu acted prudently, firing China's health minister for covering up the extent of the outbreak, and encouraging cadres to report infections truthfully.

Hu also sought to expand the use of term limits. Although he ran into resistance when he tried to institute term limits for members of the Politburo and its Standing Committee, he did manage to introduce them at the level of provincial ministers and below. More successfully, Hu established an unprecedented process by which the composition of the Politburo was first selected by a vote of senior party members.

Ironically, it was through this quasi-democratic system that Xi rose to the heights of power. In 2007, at an expanded meeting of the Central Committee, the CCP's top 400 or so leaders gathered in Beijing to cast votes recommending which ministerial-level officials from a list of 200 should join the 25-member Politburo. Xi received the most. The deciding factor, I suspect, was not his record as party chief of Zhejiang or Shanghai but the respect voters held for his father, along with the endorsement of (and pressure from) some key party elders. In a similar advisory election five years later, Xi got the most votes and, by the consensus of the outgoing leaders, ascended to the top of the pyramid. He swiftly got to work undoing decades of progress on collective leadership.

PARTY OF ONE

When Xi took the reins, many in the West hailed him as a Chinese Mikhail Gorbachev. Some imagined that, like the Soviet Union's final leader, Xi would embrace radical reforms, releasing the state's grip on the economy and democratizing the political system. That, of course, turned out to be a fantasy. Instead, Xi, a devoted student of Mao and

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just as eager to leave his mark on history, has worked to establish his absolute power. And because previous reforms failed to place real checks and balances on the party leader, he has succeeded. Now, as under Mao, China is a one-man show.

One part of Xi's plot to consolidate power was to solve what he characterized as an ideological crisis. The Internet, he said, was an existential threat to the CCP, having caused the party to lose control of people's minds. So Xi cracked down on bloggers and online activists, censored dissent, and strengthened China's "great firewall" to restrict access to foreign websites. The effect was to strangle a nascent civil society and eliminate public opinion as a check on Xi.

Xi and his deputies have demanded a degree of loyalty not seen since Mao.

Another step he took was to launch an anticorruption campaign, framing it as a mission to save the party from self-destruction. Since corruption was endemic in China, with nearly every official a potential target, Xi was able to use the campaign as a political purge. Official data show that from December 2012 to June 2021, the CCP investigated 393 leading cadres above the provincial ministerial level, officials who are often being groomed for top positions, as well as 631,000 section-level cadres, foot soldiers who implement the CCP's policies at the grassroots level. The purge has ensnared some of the most powerful officials whom Xi deemed threatening, including Zhou Yongkang, a former Standing Committee member and the head of China's security apparatus, and Sun Zhengcai, a Politburo member whom many saw as a rival and potential successor to Xi.

Tellingly, those who helped Xi rise have been left untouched. Jia Qinglin, Fujian's party chief in the 1990s and eventually a member of the Standing Committee, was instrumental in helping Xi climb the ranks of power. Although there is reason to believe that he and his family are exceedingly corrupt—the Panama Papers, the trove of leaked documents from a law firm, revealed that his granddaughter and son-in-law own several secret offshore companies—they have not been caught up in Xi's anticorruption campaign.

Xi's tactics are not subtle. As I learned from one party insider whom I cannot name for fear of getting him in trouble, around 2014, Xi's men went to a high-ranking official who had openly criticized Xi and threatened him with a corruption investigation if he didn't stop. (He shut up.) In pursuing their targets, Xi's subordinates often pressure officials' family

members and assistants. Wang Min, the party chief of Liaoning Province, whom I knew well from our days as students at the Central Party School, was arrested in 2016 on the basis of statements from his chauffeur, who said that while in the car, Wang had complained to a fellow passenger about being passed over for promotion. Wang was sentenced to life in prison, with one of the charges being resistance to Xi's leadership.

After ejecting his rivals from key positions, Xi installed his own people. Xi's lineage within the party is known as the "New Zhijiang Army." The group consists of his former subordinates during his time as governor of Fujian and Zhejiang Provinces and even university classmates and old friends going back to middle school. Since assuming power, Xi has quickly promoted his acolytes, often beyond their level of competence. His roommate from his days at Tsinghua University, Chen Xi, was named head of the CCP's Organization Department, a position that comes with a seat on the Politburo and the power to decide who can move up the hierarchy. Yet Chen has no relevant qualifications: his five immediate predecessors had experience with local party affairs, whereas he spent nearly all his career at Tsinghua University.

Xi undid another major reform: "the separation of party and state," an effort to reduce the degree to which ideologically driven party cadres interfered with technical and managerial decisions in government agencies. In an attempt to professionalize the bureaucracy, Deng and his successors tried, with varying degrees of success, to insulate the administration from CCP interference. Xi has backtracked, introducing some 40 ad hoc party commissions that end up directing governmental agencies. Unlike his predecessors, for example, he has his own team to handle issues regarding the South China Sea, bypassing the Foreign Ministry and the State Oceanic Administration.

The effect of these commissions has been to take significant power away from the head of China's government, Premier Li Keqiang, and turn what was once a position of co-captain into a sidekick. The change can be seen in the way Li comports himself in public appearances. Whereas Li's two immediate predecessors, Zhu Rongji and Wen Jiabao, stood side by side with Jiang and Hu, respectively, Li knows to keep his distance from Xi, as if to emphasize the power differential. Moreover, in the past, official communications and state media referred to the "Jiang-Zhu system" and the "Hu-Wen system," but almost no one today speaks of a "Xi-Li system." There has long been a push and pull between the party and the government in China—what insiders call

One-man show: posters of Xi in Shanghai, China, March 2016

the struggle between the "South Courtyard" and the "North Courtyard" of Zhongnanhai, the imperial compound that hosts the headquarters of both institutions. But by insisting that everyone look up to him as the highest authority, Xi has exacerbated tensions.

Xi has also changed the dynamic within the Standing Committee. For the first time in CCP history, all Politburo members, even those on the Standing Committee, must report directly to the head of the party by submitting periodic reports to Xi, who personally reviews their performance. Gone is the camaraderie and near equality among Standing Committee members that once prevailed. As one former official in Beijing told me, one of the committee's seven members—Wang Qishan, China's vice president and a longtime ally of Xi—has grumbled to friends that the dynamic between Xi and the lesser members is that of an emperor and his ministers.

The most brazen change Xi has ushered in is to remove China's presidential term limit. Like every paramount leader from Jiang onward, Xi holds three positions concurrently: president of China, leader of the party, and head of the military. Although the limit of two five-year terms applied only to the first of those three positions, beginning with Hu, there was an understanding that it must also apply to the other two to make it possible for the same person to hold all three posts.

ALY SONG / REUTERS

But in 2018, at Xi's behest, China's legislature amended the constitution to do away with the presidential term limit. The justification was laughable. The professed goal was to make the presidency consistent with the party and military positions, even though the obvious reform would have been the reverse: to add term limits to those positions.

Then there is the cult of personality. Even though the ban on such cults remains in the party constitution, Xi and his deputies have demanded a degree of loyalty and admiration for the leader not seen since Mao. Ever since 2016, when Xi was declared the party's "core leader" (a term never given to his predecessor, Hu), Xi has positioned himself in front of members of the Standing Committee in official portraits. His own portraits are hung everywhere, Mao style, in government offices, schools, religious sites, and homes. According to Radio France Internationale, Xi's subordinates have proposed renaming Tsinghua University, his alma mater and China's top school, Xi Jinping University. They have even argued for hanging his picture alongside Mao's in Tiananmen Square. Although neither idea went anywhere, Xi did manage to get Xi Jinping Thought enshrined in the party's constitution in 2017—joining Mao as the only other leader whose own ideology was added to the document while in office—and in the state constitution the next year. In one lengthy article published in Xinhua, the state media organ, in 2017, a propagandist crowned Xi with seven new North Korean–style titles that would have made his post-Mao predecessors blush: "groundbreaking leader," "diligent worker for the people's happiness," "chief architect of modernization in the new era," and so on.

Within the party, Xi's lineage is carrying out a fierce campaign insisting that he be allowed to stay in power to finish what he started: namely, "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." As their efforts intensify, their message is being simplified. In April, party officials in Guangxi proposed a new slogan: "Always support the leader, defend the leader, and follow the leader." In an echo of Mao's "little red book," they also issued a pocket-size collection of Xi quotations and invited citizens to memorize its contents. Xi seems to be positioning himself not as merely a great party leader but as a modern-day emperor.

THE EMPEROR HAS NO CLOTHES

The more a political system centers on a single leader, the more the flaws and peculiarities of that leader matter. And in the case of Xi, the leader is thin-skinned, stubborn, and dictatorial.

These qualities were in evidence even before he took office. In 2008, Xi became president of the Central Party School, where I taught. At a faculty meeting the next year, the number two official at the school conveyed Xi's threat to teachers that he would "never allow them to eat from the party's rice bowl while attempting to smash the party's cooking pot"—meaning taking government pay while discreetly criticizing the system. Angry about Xi's absurd notion that it was the party, not Chinese taxpayers, that bankrolled the state, I talked back from my seat. "Whose rice bowl does the Communist Party eat from?" I asked out loud. "The Communist Party eats from the people's rice bowl but smashes their cooking pot every day." No one reported me; my fellow professors agreed with me.

Once in office, Xi proved unwilling to brook criticism. Xi uses Standing Committee and Politburo meetings not as an opportunity to hash out policies but as a chance to deliver hours-long monologues. According to official data, between November 2012 and February 2022, he called for 80 "collective study sessions," in which he spoke at length on a given topic before the Politburo. He rejects any suggestions from subordinates that he thinks will make him look bad. According to an old friend of Wang Qishan, who as a Standing Committee member during Xi's first term was part of the inner circle, Wang once proposed that Xi's "eight-point regulation," a list of requirements for party members, be made an official party rule. But even this rather sycophantic suggestion was considered an affront by Xi because he had not come up with it himself, and he rebuked Wang on the spot.

Xi is also a micromanager. He acts as "chairman of everything," as many analysts have noted. In 2014, for example, he issued instructions on environmental protection 17 times—a remarkable degree of meddling, given all that is on his plate. Deng, Jiang, and Hu recognized that administering a country as vast as China requires taking local complexities into account. They emphasized that cadres at all levels should take instructions from the CCP's Central Committee but adapt them to specific situations as needed. Such flexibility was crucial for economic development, since it gave local officials room to innovate. But Xi insists that his instructions be obeyed to the letter. I know of a county party chief who in 2014 tried to create an exception to the central government's new rules on banquets because his county needed to host delegations of foreign investors. When Xi learned of the attempted innovation, he grew furious, accusing the official of "speaking ill of the CCP Central Committee's policy"—a serious charge that, as a result

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of this incident, was subsequently codified in the party's disciplinary regulations and is punishable by expulsion.

The CCP used to have a long tradition, dating back to Mao, in which cadres could write to the top leader with suggestions and even criticisms, but those who dared try this with Xi early in his tenure learned their lesson. Around 2017, Liu Yazhou, a general in the People's Liberation Army and a son-in-law of a former president, wrote to Xi recommending that China reverse its policy in Xinjiang and cease rounding up members of the Uyghur minority. He was warned not to speak ill of Xi's policies. Xi's refusal to accept such counsel removes an important method of self-correction.

Why, unlike his predecessors, is Xi so resistant to others' advice? Part of the reason, I suspect, is that he suffers from an inferiority complex, knowing that he is poorly educated in comparison with other top CCP leaders. Even though he studied chemical engineering at Tsinghua University, Xi attended as a "worker-peasant-soldier," a category of students admitted in the 1970s on the basis of political reliability and class background, not their academic merits. Jiang and Hu, by contrast, earned their spots in university through highly competitive exams. In 2002, when Xi was a provincial cadre, he received a doctoral degree in Marxist theory, also at Tsinghua, but as the British journalist Michael Sheridan has documented, Xi's dissertation was riddled with instances of suspected plagiarism. As I know from my time at the Central Party School, high-ranking officials routinely farm out their schoolwork to assistants while their professors turn a blind eye. Indeed, at the time he supposedly completed his dissertation, Xi held the busy job of governor of Fujian.

MR. WRONG

In any political system, unchecked power is dangerous. Detached from reality and freed from the constraint of consensus, a leader can act rashly, implementing policies that are unwise, unpopular, or both. Not surprisingly, then, Xi's know-it-all style of rule has led to a number of disastrous decisions. The common theme is an inability to grasp the practical effect of his directives.

Consider foreign policy. Breaking with Deng's dictum that China "hide its strength and bide its time," Xi has decided to directly challenge the United States and pursue a China-centric world order. That is why he has engaged in risky and aggressive behavior abroad, militarizing the South China Sea, threatening Taiwan, and encouraging his diplomats

to engage in an abrasive style of foreign policy known as "Wolf Warrior" diplomacy. Xi has formed a de facto alliance with Russian President Vladimir Putin, further alienating China from the international community. His Belt and Road Initiative has generated growing resistance as countries tire of the associated debt and corruption.

Xi's economic policies are similarly counterproductive. The introduction of market reforms was one of the CCP's signature achievements, allowing hundreds of millions of Chinese to escape poverty. But when Xi came to power, he came to see the private sector as a threat to his rule and revived the planned economy of the Maoist era. He strengthened state-owned enterprises and established party organizations in the private sector that direct the way businesses are run. Under the guise of fighting corruption and enforcing antitrust law, he has plundered assets from private companies and entrepreneurs. Over the past few years, some of China's most dynamic companies, including the Anbang Insurance Group and the conglomerate HNA Group, have effectively been forced to hand over control of their businesses to the state. Others, such as the conglomerate Tencent and the e-commerce giant Alibaba, have been brought to heel through a combination of new regulations, investigations, and fines. In 2020, Sun Dawu, the billionaire owner of an agricultural conglomerate who had publicly criticized Xi for his crackdown on human rights lawyers, was arrested on false charges and soon sentenced to 18 years in prison. His business was sold to a hastily formed state company in a sham auction for a fraction of its true value.

Predictably, China has seen its economic growth slow, and most analysts believe it will slow even more in the coming years. Although several factors are at play—including U.S. sanctions against Chinese tech companies, the war in Ukraine, and the COVID-19 pandemic—the fundamental problem is the CCP's interference in the economy. The government constantly meddles in the private sector to achieve political goals, a proven poison for productivity. Many Chinese entrepreneurs live in fear that their businesses will be seized or that they themselves will be detained, hardly the kind of mindset inclined to innovation. In April, as China's growth prospects worsened, Xi hosted a meeting of the Politburo to unveil his remedy for the country's economic woes: a combination of tax rebates, fee reductions, infrastructure investment, and monetary easing. But since none of these proposals solve the underlying problem of excessive state intervention in the economy, they are doomed to fail.

Nowhere has Xi's desire for control been more disastrous than in his reaction to COVID-19. When the disease first spread in the city of Wuhan in December 2019, Xi withheld information about it from the public in an attempt to preserve the image of a flourishing China. Local officials, meanwhile, were paralyzed. As Wuhan's mayor, Zhou Xianwang, admitted the next month on state television, without approval from above, he had been unable to publicly disclose the outbreak. When eight brave health professionals blew the whistle about it, the government detained and silenced them. One of the eight later revealed that he had been forced to sign a false confession.

Nowhere has Xi's desire for control been more disastrous than in his reaction to COVID-19.

Xi's tendency to micromanage also inhibited his response to the pandemic. Instead of leaving the details of policy to the government's health team, Xi insisted that he himself coordinate China's efforts. Later, Xi would boast that he "personally commanded, planned the response, oversaw the general situation, acted decisively, and pointed the way forward." To the extent that this was true, it was not for the better. In fact, his interference led to confusion and inaction, with local health officials receiving mixed messages from Beijing and refusing to act. As I learned from a source on the State Council (China's chief administrative authority), Premier Li Keqiang proposed activating an emergency-response protocol in early January 2020, but Xi refused to approve it for fear of spoiling the ongoing Chinese New Year celebrations.

When the Omicron variant of the virus surged in Shanghai in February 2022, Xi yet again chose a baffling way to respond. The details of the decision-making process were relayed to me by a contact who works at the State Council. In an online gathering of about 60 pandemic experts held shortly after the outbreak began, everyone agreed that if Shanghai simply followed the latest official guidelines, which relaxed the quarantine requirements, then life in the city could go on more or less as usual. Many of the city's party and health officials were on board with this approach. But when Xi heard about it, he became furious. Refusing to listen to the experts, he insisted on enforcing his "zero COVID" policy. Shanghai's tens of millions of residents were forbidden from going outside, even to get groceries or receive life-saving health care. Some died at the gates of hospitals; others leaped to their deaths from their apartment buildings.

Just like that, a modern, prosperous city was turned into the site of a humanitarian disaster, with people starving and babies separated from their parents. A leader more open to influence or subject to greater checks would not likely have implemented such a draconian policy, or at least would have corrected course once its costs and unpopularity became evident. But for Xi, backtracking would have been an unthinkable admission of error.

ACTION, REACTION

The CCP's leadership has never been a monolith. As Mao once said, "There are parties outside our party, and there are factions within our party, and this has always been the case." The main organizing principle of these factions is personal ties, but these groups tend to array themselves on a left-to-right continuum. Put differently, although Chinese politics are largely personalistic, there are real differences over the direction of national policy, and each lineage tends to associate itself with the ideas of its progenitor.

On the left are those who remain committed to orthodox Marxism. This faction dominated the party before the Deng era, and it advocates the continuation of class struggle and violent revolution. It includes subfactions named for Mao, Chen Yun (who was the second most powerful official under Deng), Bo Xilai (a former Politburo member who was sidelined and imprisoned before Xi took power), and Xi himself. At the grassroots level, the left also includes a small, politically powerless contingent of Marxist university students, as well as workers who were laid off as a result of Deng's reforms.

The center consists mainly of Deng's political descendants. Because most of today's cadres were trained under him, this is the faction that dominates the CCP bureaucracy. Centrists support full-throated economic reforms and limited political reforms, all with the goal of ensuring the party's permanent rule. Also in the center is a group descended from two retired top officials, Jiang and Zeng Qinghong (a former vice president), as well as a group called the Youth League Faction, consisting of supporters of former party leader Hu Jintao and the current premier Li.

Last are the subfactions on the right, which in the Chinese context means liberals who advocate a market economy and a softer form of authoritarianism (or even, in some cases, constitutional democracy). This camp, which I belong to, is the least powerful of the three. It includes followers of Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang, party leaders under Deng. It also arguably includes Wen Jiabao, who was China's premier from 2003 to 2013 and still

wields influence. When asked about his push for political reform in a 2010 interview, Wen responded, "I will not yield until the last day of my life."

Xi faces growing opposition from all three factions. The left, while initially supportive of his policies, now thinks he has not gone far enough in reviving Mao's policies, with some having become disenchanted after he cracked down on the labor movement. The center resents Xi's undoing of economic reforms. And the right has been completely silenced by Xi's elimination of even the slightest political debate.

Glimpses of these divides can be seen in the Standing Committee. One member, Han Zheng, is widely perceived as a member of Jiang's faction. Li in particular seems to diverge from Xi, and a row between the officials is breaking out into public view. Li has long quietly opposed Xi's zero-COVID policy, stressing the need to reopen businesses and protect the economy. In May, after Li told 100,000 party cadres at an online conference that the economy was in worse shape than expected, Xi's allies launched a counterattack. In Xinhua, they defended him by arguing, "China's economic development prospects will definitely be brighter." As a symbol of their resistance to Xi's COVID policy, Li and his entourage refuse to wear masks. In April, during a speech in the city of Nanchang, Li's aides could be seen asking attendees to remove their masks. So far, Li has taken Xi's imperiousness sitting down, always acquiescing out of necessity. But he may soon reach a breaking point.

Indignation at the elite level is replicating itself further down the bureaucracy. Early in Xi's tenure, as he began to shuffle power, many in the bureaucracy grew disgruntled and disillusioned. But their resistance was passive, expressed through inaction. Local cadres took sick leave en masse or came up with excuses to stall Xi's anticorruption initiatives. At the end of 2021, the CCP's disciplinary commission announced that in the first ten months of that year, it had found 247,000 cases of "ineffective implementation of Xi Jinping's and the Central Committee's important instructions." During the Shanghai lockdown, however, resistance became more overt. On social media, local officials openly criticized the zero-COVID policy. In April, members of the residents' committee of Sanlin Town, a neighborhood in Shanghai, collectively resigned, complaining in an open letter that they had been sealed in their offices for 24 days with no access to their families.

Even more troubling for Xi, elite dissatisfaction is now spreading to the general public. In an authoritarian state, it is impossible to accurately measure public opinion, but Xi's harsh COVID measures may well have

lost him the affection of most Chinese. An early note of dissent came in February 2020, when the real estate tycoon Ren Zhiqiang called him a "clown" for bungling the response to the pandemic. (After a one-day trial, Ren was sentenced to 18 years in prison.) Chinese social media platforms are awash in videos in which ordinary people beg Xi to end his zero-COVID policy. In May, a group calling itself the "Shanghai Self-Saving Autonomous Committee" released a manifesto online titled, "Don't be a slave—save yourself." The document called on the city's residents to fight the lockdown and form self-governing bodies to help one another. On social media, some Chinese have sarcastically proposed that the most effective plan for fighting the pandemic would be to convene the 20th National Congress as soon as possible to prevent Xi from staying in power.

Meanwhile, despite Xi's claims of having vanquished poverty, most Chinese continue to struggle to make ends meet. As Li revealed in 2020, 600 million people in China—some 40 percent of its population—barely earned $140 a month. According to data obtained by the *South China Morning Post*, a Hong Kong newspaper, some 4.4 million small businesses closed between January and November 2021, more than three times the number of newly registered companies in the same period. Facing a financial crisis, local governments have been forced to slash government salaries—sometimes by as much as 50 percent, including pay for teachers. They will likely resort to finding new ways of plundering wealth from the private sector and ordinary citizens, in turn generating even more economic misery.

After four decades of opening up, most Chinese don't want to go back to the days of Mao. Within the CCP elite, many resent Xi's disruption of the traditional power distribution and think his reckless policies are jeopardizing the future of the party. The result is that for the first time since the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, China's leader is facing not only internal dissent but also an intense popular backlash and a real risk of social unrest.

FIVE MORE YEARS?

Harboring resentment is one thing, but acting on it is another. Members of the party's upper echelons know that they can always be charged with corruption, so they have little incentive to maneuver against Xi. High-tech surveillance is presumed to be so pervasive that party elites, including retired national leaders, do not dare communicate with one another outside official events, even about mundane matters. The public, for its part, stays silent, held back by censorship, surveillance, and

the fear of arrest. That is why opponents of Xi are focused on the one legal avenue for removing him: denying him a third presidential term at the upcoming National Congress.

Perhaps sensing the growing disappointment, Xi has done everything he can to tilt the playing field in his favor. The most important constituency, of course, is his fellow Standing Committee members, who ultimately have the greatest say over whether he stays in office, in part because of their control over members of China's legislature. Xi has likely done what he can to ensure the support of Standing Committee members, from promising that they will stay in power to pledging not to investigate their families.

Within the CCP elite, many resent Xi's disruption of the traditional power distribution.

Nearly as important is the military, since denying Xi a third term would likely require the support of the generals. Propagandists routinely remind Chinese that "the party commands the gun," but China's leaders realize that in truth the gun is always pointed at the party's head. Although Xi has steadily replaced China's generals with his own men over the years, military officials' rhetoric still wavers between emphasizing personal loyalty to Xi and institutional loyalty to the Central Military Commission, the body, headed by Xi, that oversees them.

In one potential sign of lingering opposition within the ranks, I learned last December from several of my contacts in China that Liu, the military official whom Xi had rebuked for criticizing policy on the Uyghurs—had disappeared along with his younger brother, also a general. Both brothers' houses were raided. The news sent shock waves through the military, since as the son-in-law of a former president, Liu would normally have been considered untouchable. But by detaining him and his brother, Xi had issued his strongest warning yet to princelings and the top brass of the People's Liberation Army that they should get in line.

Xi has also ramped up his ostensible anticorruption drive. In the first half of 2022, the government has punished 21 cadres at or above the provincial ministerial level and 1,237 cadres at the district and departmental level. There has been a distinct focus on the security and intelligence agencies. In January, Chinese state television aired a confession by Sun Lijun, once a high-ranking security official, who had been charged with corruption and now faces the prospect of execution. His sin, according to the party's top disciplinary body, was that he had "formed a cabal to take control over several key departments," "harbored hugely inflated political

ambitions," and had "evil political qualities." In March, Fu Zhenghua, who as deputy minister of public security had been Sun's boss, was also charged with corruption, removed from office, and expelled from the CCP. The message was clear: obey or risk downfall.

Adding extra layers of insurance to his quest for a third term, Xi has issued a veiled threat to retired party cadres. Party elders have long wielded enormous clout in Chinese politics; it was retired elites who forced out Zhao in 1989, for example. In January, Xi took direct aim at this group, announcing that the government would "clean up systemic corruption and eliminate hidden risks" by retroactively investigating the past 20 years of cadres' lives. And in May, the party tightened the guidelines for retired cadres, warning them "not to discuss the general policies of the party Central Committee in an open manner, not to spread politically negative remarks, not to participate in the activities of illegal social organizations, and not to use their former authority or position influence to seek benefits for themselves and others, and to resolutely oppose and resist all kinds of wrong thinking."

Xi has also sought to guarantee the backing of the 2,300 CCP delegates invited to attend the National Congress, two-thirds of whom are high-level officials from across the country and one-third of whom are ordinary members who work at the grassroots level. The delegates have been carefully screened for their loyalty to Xi. And to prevent any surprises at the congress, a ban on "nonorganizational activities" forbids them from mingling outside of formal small-group meetings of their provincial delegations, limiting their ability to organize against a particular policy or leader.

In the months leading up to the congress, the CCP's stealth infighting will probably intensify. Xi could order more arrests and more trials of high-ranking officials, and his critics could leak more information and spread more rumors. Contrary to the conventional wisdom among Western analysts, he may not have locked up a third term. Xi's proliferating opponents could succeed in ushering him out of office, provided they either convince enough Standing Committee members that he has lost the support of the CCP's rank and file or persuade party elders to intervene. And there is always a chance that an economic crisis or widespread social unrest could turn even stalwart allies against him. Despite all this, the most likely outcome this fall is that Xi, having so rigged the process and intimidated his rivals, will get his third presidential term and, with it, the right to continue as head of the party and

the military for another term. And just like that, the only meaningful political reform made since Deng's rule will go up in smoke.

XI UNBOUND

What then? Xi will no doubt see his victory as a mandate to do whatever he wants to achieve the party's stated goal of rejuvenating China. His ambitions will rise to new heights. In a futile attempt to invigorate the economy without empowering the private sector, Xi will double down on his statist economic policies. To maintain his grip on power, he will continue to preemptively eliminate any potential rivals and tighten social control, making China look increasingly like North Korea. Xi might even try to stay in power well beyond a third term. An emboldened Xi may well accelerate his militarization of disputed areas of the South China Sea and try to forcibly take over Taiwan. As he continues China's quest for dominance, he will further its isolation from the rest of the world.

But none of these moves would make discontent within the party magically disappear. The feat of gaining a third term would not mollify those within the CCP who resent his accumulation of power and reject his cult of personality, nor would it solve his growing legitimacy problem among the people. In fact, the moves he would likely make in a third term would raise the odds of war, social unrest, and economic crisis, exacerbating existing grievances. Even in China, it takes more than sheer force and intimidation to stay in power; performance still matters. Mao and Deng earned their authority through accomplishments—Mao by liberating China from the Nationalists, and Deng by opening it up and unleashing an economic boom. But Xi can point to no such concrete triumphs. He has less margin for error.

The only viable way of changing course, so far as I can see, is also the scariest and deadliest: a humiliating defeat in a war. If Xi were to attack Taiwan, his likeliest target, there is a good chance that the war would not go as planned, and Taiwan, with American help, would be able to resist invasion and inflict grave damage on mainland China. In that event, the elites and the masses would abandon Xi, paving the way for not only his personal downfall but perhaps even the collapse of the CCP as we know it. For precedent, one would have to go back to the nineteenth century, when Emperor Qianlong failed in his quest to expand China's realm to Central Asia, Burma, and Vietnam. Predictably, China suffered a mortifying loss in the First Sino-Japanese War, setting the stage for the downfall of the Qing dynasty and kicking off a long period of political upheaval. Emperors are not always forever.

The World Putin Wants

How Distortions About the Past Feed Delusions About the Future

FIONA HILL AND ANGELA STENT

Vladimir Putin is determined to shape the future to look like his version of the past. Russia's president invaded Ukraine not because he felt threatened by NATO expansion or by Western "provocations." He ordered his "special military operation" because he believes that it is Russia's divine right to rule Ukraine, to wipe out the country's national identity, and to integrate its people into a Greater Russia.

He laid out this mission in a 5,000-word treatise, published in July 2021, entitled, "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians." In it, Putin insisted that Belarusians, Russians, and Ukrainians are

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all descendants of the Rus, an ancient people who settled the lands between the Black and Baltic Seas. He asserted that they are bound together by a common territory and language and the Orthodox Christian faith. In his version of history, Ukraine has never been sovereign, except for a few historical interludes when it tried—and failed—to become an independent state. Putin wrote that "Russia was robbed" of core territory when the Bolsheviks created the Soviet Union in 1922 and established a Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. In his telling, since the Soviet collapse, the West has used Ukraine as a platform to threaten Russia, and it has supported the rise of "neo-Nazis" there. Putin's essay, which every soldier sent to Ukraine is supposed to carry, ends by asserting that Ukraine can only be sovereign in partnership with Russia. "We are one people," Putin declares.

This treatise, and similar public statements, make clear that Putin wants a world where Russia presides over a new Slavic union composed of Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, and perhaps the northern part of Kazakhstan (which is heavily Slavic)—and where all the other post-Soviet states recognize Russia's suzerainty. He also wants the West and the global South to accept Russia's predominant regional role in Eurasia. This is more than a sphere of influence; it is a sphere of control, with a mixture of outright territorial reintegration of some places and dominance in the security, political, and economic spheres of others.

Putin is serious about achieving these goals by military and nonmilitary means. He has been at war in Ukraine since early 2014, when Russian forces, wearing green combat uniforms stripped of their insignia, took control of Crimea in a stealth operation. This attack was swiftly followed by covert operations to stir up civil disorder in Ukraine's eastern and southern regions close to the Russian border. Russia succeeded in fomenting revolt in the Donbas region and sparking an armed conflict that resulted in 14,000 deaths over the next eight years. All these regions have been targeted for assault and conquest since February 2022. Similarly, in Belarus, Putin took advantage of internal crises and large-scale protests in 2020 and 2021 to constrain its leader's room for maneuver. Belarus, which has a so-called union arrangement with Russia, was then used as the staging ground for the "special military operation" against Ukraine.

The Russian president has made it clear that his country is a revisionist power. In a March 2014 speech marking Crimea's annexation, Putin put the West on notice that Russia was on the offensive in

staking out its regional claims. To make this task easier, Putin later took steps that he believed would sanction-proof the Russian economy by reducing its exposure to the United States and Europe, including pushing for the domestic production of critical goods. He stepped up repression, conducting targeted assassinations and imprisoning opponents. He carried out disinformation operations and engaged in efforts to bribe and blackmail politicians abroad. Putin has constantly adapted his tactics to mitigate Western responses—to the point that on the eve of his invasion, as Russian troops massed on Ukraine's borders, he bragged to some European interlocutors that he had "bought off the West." There was nothing, he thought, that the United States or Europe could do to constrain him.

So far, the West's reaction to the invasion has generally been united and robust. Russia's aggressive attack on Ukraine was a wake-up call for the United States and its allies. But the West must understand that it is dealing with a leader who is trying to change the historical narrative of the last hundred years—not just of the period since the end of the Cold War. Vladimir Putin wants to make Ukraine, Europe, and indeed the whole world conform to his own version of history. Understanding his objectives is central to crafting the right response.

WHO CONTROLS THE PAST?

In Vladimir Putin's mind, history matters—that is, history as he sees it. Putin's conception of the past may be very different from what is generally accepted, but his narratives are a potent political weapon, and they underpin his legitimacy. Well before the full invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, Putin had been making intellectual forays into obscure periods of the past and manipulating key events to set up the domestic and international justification for his war. In 2010, at the annual meeting of the Kremlin-sponsored Valdai International Discussion Club, Putin's press spokesman told the audience that the Russian president reads books on Russian history "all the time." He makes frequent pronouncements about Russian history, including about his own place in it. Putin has put Kyiv at the center of his drive to "correct" what he says is a historical injustice: the separation of Ukraine from Russia during the 1922 formation of the Soviet Union.

The president's obsession with Russia's imperial past runs deep. In his Kremlin chambers, Putin has strategically placed statues of the Russian monarchs Peter the Great and Catherine the Great, who

conquered what are today Ukrainian territories in wars with the Swedish and Ottoman empires. He has also usurped Ukraine's history and appropriated some of its most prominent figures. In November 2016, for example, right outside the Kremlin gates, Putin erected a statue of Vladimir the Great, the tenth-century grand prince of the principality of Kyiv. In Putin's version of history, Grand Prince Vladimir converted to Christianity on behalf of all of ancient Rus in 988, making him the holy saint of Orthodox Christianity and a Russian, not a Ukrainian, figure. The conversion means that there is no Ukrainian nation separate from Russia. The grand prince belongs to Moscow, not to Kyiv.

Since the war, Putin has doubled down on his historical arguments. He deputized his former culture minister and close Kremlin aide, Vladimir Medinsky, to lead the Russian delegation in early talks with Ukraine. According to a well-informed Russian academic, Medinsky was one of the ghostwriters of a series of essays by Putin on Ukraine and its supposed fusion with Russia. As quickly became clear, Medinsky's brief was to press Russia's historical claims to Ukraine and defend Putin's distorted narratives, not just to negotiate a diplomatic solution.

Putin's assertions, of course, are historical miasmas, infused with a brew of temporal and factual contradictions. They ignore, for example, the fact that in 988, the idea of a unified Russian state and empire was centuries off in the future. Indeed, the first reference to Moscow as a place of any importance was not recorded until 1147.

BLAMING THE BOLSHEVIKS

On the eve of the invasion, Putin gave a speech accusing Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin of destroying the Russian empire by launching a revolution during World War I and then "separating, severing what is historically Russian land." As Putin put it, "Bolshevik, Communist Russia" created "a country that had never existed before"—Ukraine—by wedging Russian territories such as the Donbas region, a center of heavy industry, into a new Ukrainian socialist republic. In fact, Lenin and the Bolsheviks essentially recreated the Russian empire and just called it something else. They established separate Soviet Socialist Republics for Ukraine and other regions to contrast themselves with the imperial tsars, who reigned over a unified, Russified state and oppressed ethnic minorities. But for Putin, the Bolsheviks' decision was illegitimate, robbing Russia of its patrimony and stirring "zealous nationalists" in

Ukraine, who then developed dangerous ideas of independence. Putin claims he is reversing these century-old "strategic mistakes."

Narratives about NATO have also played a special role in Putin's version of history. Putin argues that NATO is a tool of U.S. imperialism and a means for the United States to continue its supposed Cold War occupation and domination of Europe. He claims that NATO compelled eastern European member countries to join the organization and accuses it of unilaterally expanding into Russia's sphere of influence. In reality, those countries, still fearful after decades of Soviet domination, clamored to become members. But according to Putin, these purported actions by the United States and NATO have forced Russia to defend itself against military encroachment; Moscow had "no other choice," he claims, but to invade Ukraine to forestall it from joining NATO, even though the organization was not going to admit the country. On July 7, 2022, Putin told Russian parliamentary leaders that the war in Ukraine was unleashed by "the collective West," which was trying to contain Russia and "impose its new world order on the rest of the world."

To Putin, Ukrainians are Nazis because they refuse to admit they are Russians.

But Putin also plays up Russia's imperial role. At a June 9, 2022, Moscow conference, Putin told young Russian entrepreneurs that Ukraine is a "colony," not a sovereign country. He likened himself to Peter the Great, who waged "the Great Northern War" for 21 years against Sweden—"returning and reinforcing" control over land that was part of Russia. This explanation also echoes what Putin told U.S. President George Bush at the April 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest: "Ukraine is not a real country."

The United States was, of course, once a colony of Great Britain. So were Australia, Canada, India, Ireland, and numerous other states that have been independent and sovereign for decades. That does not make them British or give the United Kingdom a contemporary claim to exert control over their destinies, even though many of these countries have English as their first or second language. Yet Putin insists that Ukraine's Russian speakers are all Moscow's subjects and that, globally, all Russian speakers are part of the "Russian world," with special ties to the motherland.

In Ukraine, however, his push has backfired. Since February 24, 2022, Putin's insistence that Ukrainians who speak Russian are Russians has,

on the contrary, helped to forge a new national identity in Ukraine centered on the Ukrainian language. The more that Putin tries to erase the Ukrainian national identity with bombs and artillery shells, the stronger it becomes.

CONJURING NAZIS

Ukraine and Ukrainians have a complicated history. Empires have come and gone, and borders have changed for centuries, so the people living on modern Ukrainian territory have fluid, compound identities. But Ukraine has been an independent state since 1991, and Putin is genuinely aggrieved that Ukrainians insist on their own statehood and civic identity.

Take Putin's frequent references to World War II. Since 2011, Putin has enshrined the "Great Fatherland War" as the seminal event for modern Russia. He has strictly enforced official narratives about the conflict. He has also portrayed his current operation as its successor; in Putin's telling, the invasion of Ukraine is designed to liberate the country from Nazis. But for Putin, Ukrainians are Nazis not because they follow the precepts of Adolf Hitler or espouse national socialism. They are Nazis because they are "zealous nationalists"—akin to the controversial World War II–era Ukrainian partisan Stepan Bandera, who fought with the Germans against Soviet forces. They are Nazis because they refuse to admit they are Russians.

Putin's conjuring of Ukrainian Nazis has gained more traction domestically than anywhere else. Yet internationally, Putin's assertions about NATO and proxy wars with the United States and the collective West have won a variety of adherents, from prominent academics to Pope Francis, who said in June 2022 that the Ukraine war was "perhaps somehow provoked." Western politicians and analysts continue to debate whether NATO is at fault for the war. These arguments persist even though Putin's 2014 annexation of Crimea came in response to Ukraine's efforts to associate with the European Union, not with NATO. And the debate has gone on, even though when Finland and Sweden applied to join the alliance in June 2022, despite months of threats from Russia, Putin told reporters that Kremlin officials "don't have problems with Sweden and Finland like we do with Ukraine."

Putin's problem, then, was not NATO in particular. It was that Ukraine wanted to associate with any entity or country other than Russia. Whether Ukraine wanted to join the European Union or NATO

or have bilateral relations with the United States—any of these efforts would have been an affront to Russia's history and dignity.

But Putin knows it will be difficult to negotiate a settlement in Ukraine based on his version of history and to reconcile fundamentally different stories of the past. Most modern European states emerged from the ruins of empires and the disintegration of larger multiethnic states. The war in Ukraine could lead to more Russian interference to stoke simmering conflicts in weak states such as Bosnia-Herzegovina and other Balkan countries, where history and territorial claims are also disputed.

Yet no matter the potential cost, Putin wants his past to prevail in Europe's political present. And to make sure that happens, the Russian military is in the field, in full force, fighting the regular Ukrainian army. Unlike the situation in Donbas from 2014 to 2022, when Russia falsely denied that it was involved, this war is a direct conflict between the two states. As Putin also told his Russian parliamentarians on July 7, he is determined to fight to the last Ukrainian, even though he purportedly sees Ukrainians as "brothers."

AT ANY COST

Putin abhors that the United States and European countries are supporting Ukraine militarily. In response, he has launched an economic and information war against the West, clearly signaling that this is not only a military conflict and a battle over who gets to "own history." Russia has weaponized energy, grain, and other commodities. It has spread disinformation, including by accusing Ukraine of committing the very atrocities that Russia has carried out on the battlefield and by blaming Western sanctions for exacerbating famines in Africa when it is Russia that has blocked Ukrainian grain shipments to the continent from the Black Sea. And in many parts of the world, Russia is winning the information war. So far, the West has not been able to be completely effective in the informational space.

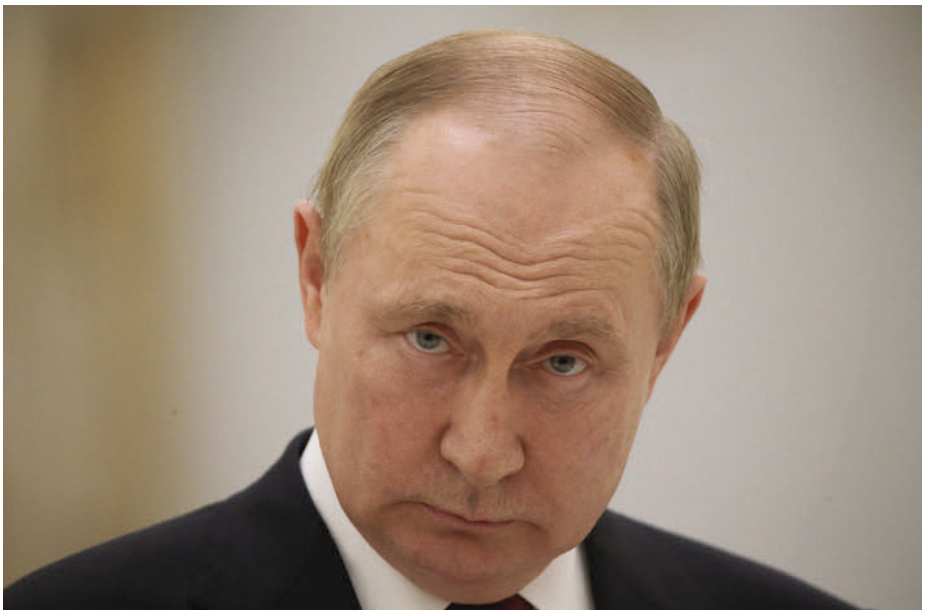
Nevertheless, Western support for Ukraine has been significant. This support has two major elements: weapons and sanctions, including the High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) from the United States, which have significantly increased Ukraine's ability to strike back at Russian targets. Other NATO members have also supplied weapons and humanitarian assistance. But Ukraine's constant need to replenish its arms has already begun to deplete the arsenals of donating countries.

Western energy, financial, and export control sanctions have been extensive, and they are affecting the Russian economy. But sanctions cannot alter Putin's view of history or his determination to subjugate Ukraine, so they have not changed his calculus or his war aims. Indeed, close observers say that Putin has rarely consulted his economic advisers during this war, apart from Elvira Nabiullina, the head of the central bank, who has astutely managed the value of the ruble. This is a stark break from the past, when Putin has always appeared extremely interested in the Russian economy and eager to discuss statistics and growth rates in great detail. Any concerns about the long-term economic impact of the war have receded from his view.

And to date, Russia's economy has weathered the sanctions, although growth rates are forecast to plunge this year. The real pinch from Western export controls will be felt in 2023, when Russia will lack the semiconductors and spare parts for its manufacturing sector, and its industrial plants will be forced to close. The country's oil industry will especially struggle as it loses out on technology and software from the international oil industry.

Europe and the United States have imposed wide-ranging energy sanctions on Russia, with the European Union committed to phasing out oil imports from Russia by the end of 2022. But limiting gas imports is much more challenging, as a number of countries, including Germany, have few alternatives to replace Russian gas in the short term, and Putin has weaponized energy by severely reducing gas supplies to Europe. For 50 years, the Soviet Union and Russia cast themselves as reliable suppliers of natural gas to Western Europe in a relationship of mutual dependence: Europe needed gas, and Moscow needed gas revenues. But that calculation is gone. Putin believes that Russia can forgo these revenues because countries still buying Russian oil and gas are paying higher prices for it—higher prices that he helped provoke by cutting back on Russia's exports to Europe. And even if Russia does eventually lose energy revenues, Putin appears willing to pay that price. What he ultimately cares about is undermining European support for Ukraine.

Russia's economic and energy warfare extends to the weaponization of nuclear power. Russia took over the Chernobyl plant in Ukraine at the beginning of the war, after recklessly sending Russian soldiers into the highly radioactive "red zone" and forcing the Ukrainian staff at the plant to work under dangerous conditions. Then, it abandoned



Revisionist in chief: Putin in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, June 2022

the plant after having exposed the soldiers to toxic radiation. Russia subsequently shelled and took over Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, Europe's largest, and turned it into a military base. By attacking the power plant and transforming it into a military garrison, Russia has created a safety crisis for the thousands of workers there.

Putin's broad-based campaign does not stop at nuclear energy. Russia has also weaponized food supplies, blockading Ukraine and preventing it from exporting its abundant grain and fertilizer stocks. In July 2022, Turkey and the United Nations brokered an agreement to allow Ukraine and Russia to export grain and fertilizer, but the implementation of this deal faced multiple obstacles, given the war raging in the Black Sea area. Indeed, immediately after the official signing of the agreement, Russia shelled some of the infrastructure at Ukraine's critical Odessa port.

Putin has fallen back on another historic Russian military tactic—bogging down opposing forces and waiting for winter. Much as his predecessors arranged for Napoleon's armies to be trapped in the snows near Moscow and for Nazi soldiers to freeze to death outside Stalingrad, Putin plans to have French and German citizens shivering in their homes. In his speech at the June 2022 St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, Putin predicted that, as Europeans

CONTRIBUTOR / GETTY IMAGES

face a cold winter and suffer the economic consequences of the sanctions their governments have imposed on Russia and on Russian gas exports, populist parties will rise, and new elites will come to power. The June 2022 parliamentary elections in France, when Marine Le Pen's extreme-right party increased its seats elevenfold—largely because of voters' unhappiness with their economic situation—reinforced Putin's convictions. The collapse of Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi's government in July 2022 and the possible return of a populist, pro-Russian prime minister in the fall were also considered results of popular economic discontent. The Kremlin aims to fracture Western unity against Russia under the pressure of energy shortages, high prices, and economic hardship.

In the meantime, Putin is confident that he can prevail. On the surface, popular support for the war inside Russia seems reasonably robust. Polling by the independent Levada Center shows that Putin's approval rating went up after the invasion began. Nonetheless, there is good reason for skepticism about the depth of active support for him. Hundreds of thousands of people who oppose the war have left the country. Many of them, in doing so, have explicitly said that they want to be part of Russia's future but not Vladimir Putin's version of the past. Russians who have stayed and publicly criticized the war have been harassed or imprisoned. Others are indifferent, or they passively support the war. Indeed, life for most people in Moscow and other big Russian cities goes on as normal. So far, the conscripts who have been sent to fight and die are not the children of Russia's elites or urban middle class. They are from poor, rural areas, and many of them are not ethnically Russian. Rumors after five months of combat that the Moscow-linked Wagner mercenary group was recruiting prisoners to fight suggested that Russia faced an acute manpower shortage. But the troops are urged on by propaganda that dehumanizes the Ukrainians and makes the fighting seem more palatable.

DIVIDE AND CONQUER

Despite calls by some for a negotiated settlement that would involve Ukrainian territorial concessions, Putin seems uninterested in a compromise that would leave Ukraine as a sovereign, independent state—whatever its borders. According to multiple former senior U.S. officials we spoke with, in April 2022, Russian and Ukrainian negotiators appeared to have tentatively agreed on the outlines of a

negotiated interim settlement: Russia would withdraw to its position on February 23, when it controlled part of the Donbas region and all of Crimea, and in exchange, Ukraine would promise not to seek NATO membership and instead receive security guarantees from a number of countries. But as Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stated in a July interview with his country's state media, this compromise is no longer an option. Even giving Russia all of the Donbas is not enough. "Now the geography is different," Lavrov asserted, in describing Russia's short-term military aims. "It's also Kherson and the Zaporizhzhya regions and a number of other territories." The goal is not negotiation, but Ukrainian capitulation.

At any point, negotiations with Russia—if not handled carefully and with continued strong Western support for Ukraine's defense and security—would merely facilitate an operational pause for Moscow. After a time, Russia would continue to try to undermine the Ukrainian government. Moscow would likely first attempt to take Odessa and other Black Sea ports with the goal of leaving Ukraine an economically inviable, landlocked country. If he succeeds in that, Putin would launch a renewed assault on Kyiv as well, with the aim of unseating the present government and installing a pro-Moscow puppet government. Putin's war in Ukraine, then, will likely grind on for a long time. The main challenge for the West will be maintaining resolve and unity, as well as expanding international support for Ukraine and preventing sanctions evasion.

This will not be easy. The longer the war lasts, the greater the impact domestic politics will have on its course. Russia, Ukraine, and the United States will all have presidential elections in 2024. Russia's and Ukraine's are usually slated for March. Russia's outcome is foreordained: either Putin will return to power, or he will be followed by a successor, likely from the security services, who supports the war and is hostile to the West. Zelensky remains popular in Ukraine as a wartime president, but he will be less likely to win an election if he makes territorial concessions. And if Donald Trump or a Republican with views like his becomes president of the United States in 2025, U.S. support for Ukraine will erode.

Domestic politics will also play a role outside these three countries—and, in fact, outside the West altogether. The United States and its allies may want to isolate Russia, but a large number of states in the global South, led by China, regard the Russia-Ukraine war as a

localized European conflict that does not affect them. China has even backed Russia rhetorically, refused to impose sanctions, and supported it in the United Nations. (One should not underestimate the durability and significance of Russia's alignment with China.) Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar summarized the attitude of many developing states when he said that Russia is a "very important partner in a number of areas." For much of the global South, concerns focus on fuel, food, fertilizer, and also arms. These countries are apparently not concerned that Russia has violated the UN Charter and international law by unleashing an unprovoked attack on a neighbor's territory.

Putin's goal is not negotiation but Ukrainian capitulation.

There's a reason these states have not joined the United States and Europe in isolating Moscow. Since 2014, Putin has assiduously courted "the rest"—the developing world—even as Russia's ties with the West have frayed. In 2015, for example, Russia sent its military to the Middle East to support Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in his country's civil war. Since then, Russia has cultivated ties with leaders on all sides of that region's disputes, becoming one of the only major powers able to talk to all parties. Russia has strong ties with Iran, but also with Iran's enemies: particularly Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and other Gulf states. In Africa, Russian paramilitary groups provide support to a number of leaders. And in Latin America, Russian influence has increased as more left-wing governments have come to power. There and elsewhere, Russia is still seen as a champion of the oppressed against the stereotype of U.S. imperialism. Many people in the global South view Russia as the heir to the Soviet Union, which supported their post-colonial national liberation movements, not a modern variant of imperial Russia.

Not only does much of the world refuse to criticize or sanction Russia; major countries simply do not accept the West's view of what caused the war or just how grave the conflict is. They instead criticize the United States and argue that what Russia is doing in Ukraine is no different from what the United States did in Iraq or Vietnam. They, like Moscow, justify Russia's invasion as a response to the threat from NATO. This is thanks in part to the Kremlin's propaganda, which has amplified Putin's narratives about NATO and proxy wars and the nefarious actions of the West.

International institutions have not been much more helpful than developing countries. The United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe proved incapable of preventing or stopping this war. They seem increasingly the victims of Putin's distorted view of the past as well as poorly structured to meet the challenges of the present.

DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR

Putin's manipulations of history suggest that his claims go beyond Ukraine, into Europe and Eurasia. The Baltic states might be on his colonial agenda, as well as Poland, part of which was ruled by Russia from 1772 to 1918. Much of present-day Moldova was part of the Russian empire, and Russian officials have suggested that this state could be next in their sights. Finland was also part of the Russian empire between 1809 and 1918. Putin may not be able to conquer these countries, but his extravagant remarks about taking back Russia's colonies are designed to intimidate his neighbors and throw them off balance. In Putin's ideal world, he will gain leverage and control over their politics by threatening them until they let Russia dictate their foreign and domestic policies.

In Putin's vision, the global South would, at a minimum, remain neutral in Russia's standoff with the West. Developing nations would actively support Moscow. With the BRICS organization—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—set to expand to include Argentina, Iran, and possibly Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, Russia may acquire even more partners, ones that together represent a significant percentage of global GDP and a large percentage of the world's population. Russia would then emerge as a leader of the developing world, as was the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

All this underlines why it is imperative that the West (Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, the United States, and Europe) redouble its efforts to remain united in supporting Ukraine and countering Russia. In the near term, that means working together to push back against Russian disinformation about the war and false historical narratives, as well as the Kremlin's other efforts to intimidate Europe—including through deliberate nuclear saber-rattling and energy cutoffs. In the medium to long term, the United States, its allies, and its partners should discuss how to restructure the international and European security

architecture to prevent Russia from attacking other neighbors that it deems within its sphere. But for now, NATO is the only institution that can guarantee Europe's security. Indeed, Finland's and Sweden's decision to join was in part motivated by that realization.

As he looks toward a quarter century in power, Putin seeks to build his version of a Russian empire. He is "gathering in the lands" as did his personal icons—the great Russian tsars—and overturning the legacy of Lenin, the Bolsheviks, and the post–Cold War settlement. In this way, Putin wants Russia to be the one exception to the inexorable rise and fall of imperial states. In the twentieth century, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire collapsed after World War I. Britain and France reluctantly gave up their empires after World War II. But Putin is insistent on bringing tsarist Russia back.

Regardless of whether he prevails in Ukraine, Putin's mission is already having a clear and ironic impact, both on Europe and on Russia's 22 years of economic advancement. In reasserting Russia's imperial position by seeking to reconquer Ukraine, Putin is reversing one of the greatest achievements of his professed greatest hero. During his reign, Peter the Great opened a window to the West by traveling to Europe, inviting Europeans to come to Russia and help develop its economy, and adopting and adapting European artisans' skills. Vladimir Putin's invasions and territorial expansions have slammed that window shut. They have sent Europeans and their companies back home and pushed a generation of talented Russians fleeing into exile. Peter took Russia into the future. Putin is pushing it back to the past.

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Ukraine Holds the Future

The War Between Democracy and Nihilism

TIMOTHY SNYDER

Russia, an aging tyranny, seeks to destroy Ukraine, a defiant democracy. A Ukrainian victory would confirm the principle of self-rule, allow the integration of Europe to proceed, and empower people of goodwill to return reinvigorated to other global challenges. A Russian victory, by contrast, would extend genocidal policies in Ukraine, subordinate Europeans, and render any vision of a geopolitical European Union obsolete. Should Russia continue its illegal blockade of the Black Sea, it could starve Africans and Asians, who depend on Ukrainian grain, precipitating a durable international crisis that will make it all but impossible to deal with common threats such as climate change. A Russian victory would strengthen fascists and other tyrants, as well as nihilists who see politics as nothing more than a spectacle designed by oligarchs to distract ordinary citizens from the destruction of the world. This war, in other words, is about establishing principles for

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Illustration by Ben Jones

the twenty-first century. It is about policies of mass death and about the meaning of life in politics. It is about the possibility of a democratic future.

Discussions of democracy often begin with the ancient city-states of Greece. According to the Athenian legend of origin, the deities Poseidon and Athena offered gifts to the citizens to win the status of patron. Poseidon, the god of the sea, struck the ground with his trident, causing the earth to tremble and saltwater to spring forth. He was offering Athenians the power of the sea and strength in war, but they blanched at the taste of brine. Then Athena planted an olive seed, which sprouted into an olive tree. It offered shade for contemplation, olives for eating, and oil for cooking. Athena's gift was deemed superior, and the city took her name and patronage.

The Greek legend suggests a vision of democracy as tranquility, a life of thoughtful deliberation and consumption. Yet Athens had to win wars to survive. The most famous defense of democracy, the funeral oration of Pericles, is about the harmony of risk and freedom. Poseidon had a point about war: sometimes the trident must be brought down. He was also making a case for interdependence. Prosperity, and sometimes survival, depends on sea trade. How, after all, could a small city-state such as Athens afford to devote its limited soil to olives? Ancient Athenians were nourished by grain brought from the north coast of the Black Sea, grown in the black earth of what is now southern Ukraine. Alongside the Jews, the Greeks are the longest known continuous inhabitants of Ukraine. Mariupol was their city, until the Russians destroyed it. The southern region of Kherson, where combat is now underway, bears a Greek name borrowed from a Greek city. In April, the Ukrainians sank the Russian flagship, the *Moskva*, with Neptune missiles—Neptune being the Roman name for Poseidon.

As it happens, Ukraine's national symbol is the trident. It can be found among relics of the state that Vikings founded at Kyiv about a thousand years ago. After receiving Christianity from Byzantium, the Greek-speaking eastern Roman Empire, Kyiv's rulers established secular law. The economy shifted from slavery to agriculture as the people became subject to taxation rather than capture. In subsequent centuries, after the fall of the Kyiv state, Ukrainian peasants were enserfed by Poles and then by Russians. When Ukrainian leaders founded a republic in 1918, they revived the trident as the national symbol. Independence meant not only freedom from bondage but the liberty to use the land as they saw fit. Yet the Ukrainian National Republic was short lived.

Like several other young republics established after the end of the Russian empire in 1917, it was destroyed by the Bolsheviks, and its lands were incorporated into the Soviet Union. Seeking to control Ukraine's fertile soil, Joseph Stalin brought about a political famine that killed about four million inhabitants of Soviet Ukraine in 1932 and 1933. Ukrainians were overrepresented in the Soviet concentration camps known as the gulag. When Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union, Adolf Hitler's goal was control of Ukrainian agriculture. Ukrainians were again overrepresented among the civilian victims—this time of the German occupiers and the Red Army soldiers who defeated the Germans. After World War II, Soviet Ukraine was nevertheless subjected to a slow process of Russification in which its culture was degraded.

When the Soviet Union came to an end in 1991, Ukrainians again seized on the trident as their national symbol. In the three decades since, Ukraine has moved, haltingly but unmistakably, in the direction of functional democracy. The generation that now runs the country knows the Soviet and pre-Soviet history but understands self-rule as self-evident. At a time when democracy is in decline around the world and threatened in the United States, Ukrainian resistance to Russian aggression provides a surprising (to many) affirmation of faith in democracy's principles and its future. In this sense, Ukraine is a challenge to those in the West who have forgotten the ethical basis of democracy and thereby, wittingly or unwittingly, ceded the field to oligarchy and empire at home and abroad. Ukrainian resistance is a welcome challenge, and a needed one.

THE APPEASEMENT TEST

The history of twentieth-century democracy offers a reminder of what happens when this challenge is not met. Like the period after 1991, the period after 1918 saw the rise and fall of democracy. Today, the turning point (one way or the other) is likely Ukraine; in interwar Europe, it was Czechoslovakia. Like Ukraine in 2022, Czechoslovakia in 1938 was an imperfect multilingual republic in a tough neighborhood. In 1938 and 1939, after European powers chose to appease Nazi Germany at Munich, Hitler's regime suppressed Czechoslovak democracy through intimidation, unresisted invasion, partition, and annexation. What actually happened in Czechoslovakia was similar to what Russia seems to have planned for Ukraine. Putin's rhetoric resembles Hitler's to the point of plagiarism: both claimed that a neighboring democracy was somehow tyrannical, both appealed to imaginary violations of

minority rights as a reason to invade, both argued that a neighboring nation did not really exist and that its state was illegitimate.

In 1938, Czechoslovakia had decent armed forces, the best arms industry in Europe, and natural defenses improved by fortifications. Nazi Germany might not have bested Czechoslovakia in an open war and certainly would not have done so quickly and easily. Yet Czechoslovakia's allies abandoned it, and its leaders fatefully chose exile over resistance. The defeat was, in a crucial sense, a moral one. And it enabled the physical transformation of a continent by war, creating some of the preconditions for the Holocaust of European Jews.

By the time Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, beginning World War II, Czechoslovakia no longer existed, and its territories and resources had been reassigned according to German preferences. Germany now had a longer border with Poland, a larger population, Czechoslovak tanks, and tens of thousands of Slovak soldiers. Hitler also now had a powerful ally in the Soviet Union, which joined in the destruction of Poland after invading from the east. During Germany's invasion of France and the Low Countries in 1940 and during the Battle of Britain later that year, German vehicles were fueled by Soviet oil and German soldiers fed by Soviet grain, almost all of which was extracted from Ukraine.

This sequence of events started with the easy German absorption of Czechoslovakia. World War II, at least in the form that it took, would have been impossible had the Czechoslovaks fought back. No one can know what would have happened had the Germans been bogged down in Bohemia in 1938. But we can be confident that Hitler would not have had the sense of irresistible momentum that gained him allies and frightened his foes. It would certainly have been harder for the Soviet leadership to justify an alliance. Hitler would not have been able to use Czechoslovak arms in his assault on Poland, which would have begun later, if at all. The United Kingdom and France would have had more time to prepare for war and perhaps to help Poland. By 1938, Europe was emerging from the Great Depression, which was the main force attracting people to the political extremes. Had Hitler's nose been bloodied in his first campaign, the appeal of the far right might have declined.

POSTMODERN TYRANTS

Unlike Czechoslovak leaders, Ukrainian leaders chose to fight and were supported, at least in some measure, by other democracies. In resisting, Ukrainians have staved off a number of very dark scenarios

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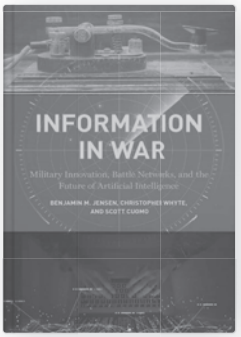

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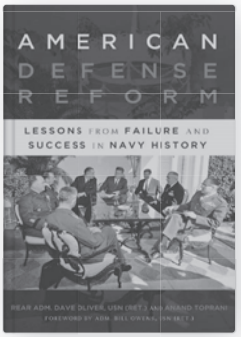

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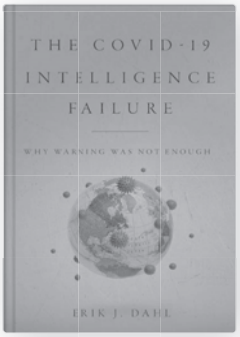

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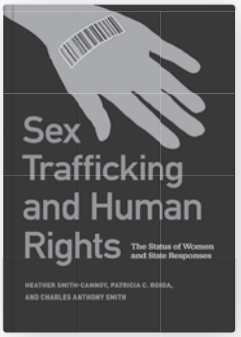

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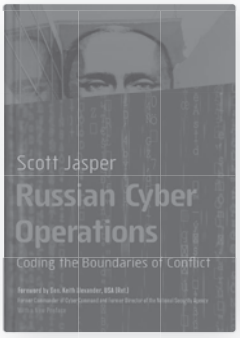

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and bought European and North American democracies valuable time to think and prepare. The full significance of the Ukrainian resistance of 2022, as with the appeasement of 1938, can be grasped only when one considers the futures it opens or forecloses. And to do that, one needs the past to make sense of the present.

The classical notion of tyranny and the modern concept of fascism are both helpful in understanding the Putin regime, but neither is sufficient. The basic weaknesses of tyrannies are generic and long known—recorded, for example, by Plato in his *Republic*. Tyrants resist good advice, become obsessive as they age and fall ill, and wish to leave an undying legacy. All of this is certainly evident in Putin's decision to invade Ukraine. Fascism, a specific form of tyranny, also helps to explain today's Russia, which is characterized by a cult of personality, a de facto single party, mass propaganda, the privileging of will over reason, and a politics of us-versus-them. Because fascism places violence over reason, it can be defeated only by force. Fascism was quite popular—and not just in fascist countries—until the end of World War II. It was discredited only because Germany and Italy lost the war.

Although Russia is fascist at the top, it is not fascist through and through. A specific emptiness lies at the center of Putin's regime. It is the emptiness in the eyes of Russian officials in photographs as they look into a vacant middle distance, a habit they believe projects masculine imperturbability. Putin's regime functions not by mobilizing society with the help of a single grand vision, as fascist Germany and Italy did, but by demobilizing individuals, assuring them that there are no certainties and no institutions that can be trusted. This habit of demobilization has been a problem for Russian leaders during the war in Ukraine because they have educated their citizens to watch television rather than take up arms. Even so, the nihilism that undergirds demobilization poses a direct threat to democracy.

The Putin regime is imperialist and oligarchic, dependent for its existence on propaganda that claims that all the world is ever such. While Russia's support of fascism, white nationalism, and chaos brings it a certain kind of supporter, its bottomless nihilism is what attracts citizens of democracies who are not sure where to find ethical landmarks—who have been taught, on the right, that democracy is a natural consequence of capitalism or, on the left, that all opinions are equally valid. The gift of Russian propagandists has been to take things apart, to peel away the layers of the onion until nothing is left but the tears

of others and their own cynical laughter. Russia won the propaganda war the last time it invaded Ukraine, in 2014, targeting vulnerable Europeans and Americans on social media with tales of Ukrainians as Nazis, Jews, feminists, and gays. But much has changed since then: a generation of younger Ukrainians has come to power that communicates better than the older Russians in the Kremlin.

The defense of Putin's regime has been offered by people operating as literary critics, ever disassembling and dissembling. Ukrainian resistance, embodied by President Volodymyr Zelensky, has been more like literature: careful attention to art, no doubt, but for the purpose of articulating values. If all one has is literary criticism, one accepts that everything melts into air and concedes the values that make democratic politics possible. But when one has literature, one experiences a certain solidity, a sense that embodying values is more interesting and more courageous than dismissing or mocking them.

The war in Ukraine is a test of whether a tyranny that claims to be a democracy can triumph.

Creation comes before critique and outlasts it; action is better than ridicule. As Pericles put it, "We rely not upon management or trickery, but upon our own hearts and hands." The contrast between the sly black suits of the Russian ideologues and propagandists and the earnest olive tones of Ukrainian leaders and soldiers calls to mind one of the most basic requirements of democracy: individuals must openly assert values despite the risk attendant upon doing so. The ancient philosophers understood that virtues were as important as material factors to the rise and fall of regimes. The Greeks knew that democracy could yield to oligarchy, the Romans knew that republics could become empires, and both knew that such transformations were moral as well as institutional. This knowledge is at the foundation of Western literary and philosophical traditions. As Aristotle recognized, truth was both necessary to democracy and vulnerable to propaganda. Every revival of democracy, including the American one of 1776 with its self-evident truths, has depended on ethical assertions: not that democracy was bound to exist, but that it should exist, as an expression of rebellious ethical commitment against the ubiquitous gravitational forces of oligarchy and empire.

This has been true of every revival of democracy except for the most recent one, which followed the eastern European revolutions of 1989 and

the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. At that point, as Russia and Ukraine emerged as independent states, a perverse faith was lodged in "the end of history," the lack of alternatives to democracy, and the nature of capitalism. Many Americans had lost the natural fear of oligarchy and empire (their own or others') and forgotten the organic connection of democracy to ethical commitment and physical courage. Late twentieth-century talk of democracy conflated the correct moral claim that the people should rule with the incorrect factual claim that democracy is the natural state of affairs or the inevitable condition of a favored nation. This misunderstanding made democracies vulnerable, whether old or new.

The current Russian regime is one consequence of the mistaken belief that democracy happens naturally and that all opinions are equally valid. If this were true, then Russia would indeed be a democracy, as Putin claims. The war in Ukraine is a test of whether a tyranny that claims to be a democracy can triumph and thereby spread its logical and ethical vacuum. Those who took democracy for granted were sleepwalking toward tyranny. The Ukrainian resistance is the wake-up call.

EARNEST STRUGGLE

On the Sunday before Russia began its latest invasion of Ukraine, I predicted on American television that Zelensky would remain in Kyiv if Russia invaded. I was mocked for this prediction, just as I was when I predicted the previous Russian invasion, the danger that U.S. President Donald Trump posed to American democracy, and Trump's coup attempt. Former advisers to Trump and President Barack Obama disagreed with me in a class at Yale University, where I teach. They were doing nothing more than reflecting the American consensus. Americans tend to see the war in Ukraine in the long shadow of the 9/11 attacks and the American moral and military failures that followed. In the Biden administration, officials feared that taking the side of Kyiv risked repeating the fall of Kabul. Among younger people and on the political left, a deeper unease arose from the lack of a national reckoning over the invasion of Iraq, justified at the time with the notion that destroying one regime would create a tabula rasa from which democracy would naturally emerge. The idiocy of this argument made a generation doubt the possibility that war and democracy could have something to do with each other. The unease with another military effort was perhaps understandable, but the resemblance between Iraq and Ukraine was only superficial. Ukrainians weren't imposing their

own vision on another country. They were protecting their right to choose their own leaders against an invasion designed to undo their democracy and eliminate their society.

The Trump administration had spread cynicism from the other direction. First Trump denied Ukraine weapons in order to blackmail Zelensky. Then he showed that a U.S. president would attempt a coup to stay in power after an electoral defeat. To watch fellow citizens die in an attempt to overthrow democracy is the opposite of risking one's life to protect it. Of course, if democracy is only about larger forces and not about ethics, then Trump's actions would make perfect sense. If one believes that capitalist selfishness automatically becomes democratic virtue, and that lying about who won an election is just expressing an opinion like any other, then Trump is a normal politician. In fact, he brazenly personifies the Russian idea that there are no values and no truth.

Americans had largely forgotten that democracy is a value for which an elected official—or a citizen, for that matter—might choose to live or die. By taking a risk, Zelensky transformed his role from that of a bit player in a Trump scandal to a hero of democracy. Americans assumed that he would want to flee because they had convinced themselves of the supremacy of impersonal forces: if they bring democracy, so much the better, but when they don't, people submit. "I need ammunition, not a ride" was Zelensky's response to U.S. urgings to leave Kyiv. This was perhaps not as eloquent as the funeral oration of Pericles, but it gets across the same point: there is honor in choosing the right way to die on behalf of a people seeking the right way to live.

For 30 years, too many Americans took for granted that democracy was something that someone else did—or rather, that something else did: history by ending, alternatives by disappearing, capitalism by some inexplicable magic. (Russia and China are capitalist, after all.) That era ended when Zelensky emerged one night in February to film himself saying, "The president is here." If a leader believes that democracy is just a result of larger factors, then he will flee when those larger factors seem to be against him. The issue of responsibility will never arise. But democracy demands "earnest struggle," as the American abolitionist Frederick Douglass said. Ukrainian resistance to what appeared to be overwhelming force reminded the world that democracy is not about accepting the apparent verdict of history. It is about making history; striving toward human values despite the weight of empire, oligarchy, and propaganda; and, in so doing, revealing previously unseen possibilities.

"LIVING IN TRUTH"

On the surface, Zelensky's simple truth that "the president is here" was meant to undo Russian propaganda, which was claiming that he had fled the city. But the video, shot in the open air as Kyiv was under attack, was also a recovery of the meaning of freedom of speech, which has been forgotten. The Greek playwright Euripides understood that the purpose of freedom of speech was to speak truth to power. The free speaker clarifies a dangerous world not only with what he says but by the risk he takes when he speaks. By saying "the president is here" as the bombs fell and the assassins approached, Zelensky was "living in truth," in the words of Vaclav Havel, or "walking the talk," as one of my students in prison put it. Havel's most famous essay on the topic, "The Power of the Powerless," was dedicated to the memory of the philosopher Jan Patocka, who died shortly after being interrogated by the communist Czechoslovak secret police. Putin, a KGB officer from 1975 until 1991, extends the sadistic tradition of interrogators: nothing is true, nothing is worthy of sacrifice, everything is a joke, everyone is for sale. Might makes right, only fools believe otherwise, and they should pay for being fools.

After 1991, the nihilism of late communism flowed together with the complacent Western idea that democracy was merely the result of impersonal forces. If it turned out that those forces pushed in different directions, for example, toward oligarchy or empire, what was there then to say? But in the tradition of Euripides or Havel or now Zelensky, it is taken for granted that the larger forces are always against the individual, and that citizenship is realized through the responsibility one takes for words and the risks one takes with deeds. Truth is not with power, but a defense against it. That is why freedom of speech is necessary: not to make excuses, not to conform, but to assert values into the world, because so doing is a precondition of self-rule.

In their post-1989 decadence, many citizens of North American and European democracies came to associate freedom of speech with the ability of the rich to exploit media to broadcast self-indulgent nonsense. When one recalls the purpose of freedom of speech, however, one cares less about how many social media followers an oligarch has and more about how that oligarch became wealthy in the first place. Oligarchs such as Putin and Trump do the opposite of speaking truth to power: they tell lies for power. Trump told a big lie about the election (that he won); Putin told a big lie about Ukraine (that it doesn't exist). Putin's fake history of eastern Europe, one of his justifications for the war, is so

outrageous that it provides a chance to recall the sense of freedom of speech. If one of the richest men in the world, in command of a huge army, claims that a neighboring country does not exist, this is not just an example of free expression. It is genocidal hate speech, a form of action that must be resisted by other forms of action.

In an essay published in July 2021, Putin argued that events of the tenth century predetermined the unity of Ukraine and Russia. This is grotesque as history, since the only human creativity it allows in the course of a thousand years and hundreds of millions of lives is that of the tyrant to retrospectively and arbitrarily choose his own genealogy of power. Nations are not determined by official myth, but created by people who make connections between past and future. As the French historian Ernest Renan put it, the nation is a "daily plebiscite." The German historian Frank Golczewski was right to say that national identity is not a reflection of "ethnicity, language, and religion" but rather an "assertion of a certain historical and political possibility." Something similar can be said of democracy: it can be made only by people who want to make it and in the name of values they affirm by taking risks for them.

The Ukrainian nation exists. The results of the daily plebiscite are clear, and the earnest struggle is evident. No society should have to resist a Russian invasion in order to be recognized. It should not have taken the deaths of dozens of journalists for us to see the basic truths that they were trying to report before and during the invasion. That it took so much effort (and so much unnecessary bloodshed) for the West to see Ukraine at all reveals the challenge that Russian nihilism poses. It shows how close the West came to conceding the tradition of democracy.

BIG LIES

If one forgets that the purpose of free speech is to speak truth to power, one fails to see that big lies told by powerful people weaken democracy. The Putin regime makes this clear by organizing politics around the shameless production of fiction. Russia's honesty, the argument goes, consists of accepting that there is no truth. Unlike the West, Russia avoids hypocrisy by dismissing all values at the outset. Putin stays in power by way of such strategic relativism: not by making his own country better but by making other countries look worse. Sometimes, that means acting to destabilize them—for instance, in Russia's failed electoral intervention in Ukraine in 2014, its successful digital support of Brexit in the United Kingdom in 2016, and its successful digital support of Trump in 2016.

This philosophical system enables Putin to act but also to protect himself. Russians can be told that Ukraine is the center of the world and then that Syria is the center of the world and then again that Ukraine is the center of the world. They can be told that when their armed forces intervene in Ukraine or Syria, the other side starts killing its own people. They can be told one day that war with Ukraine is impossible and the next that war with Ukraine is inevitable, as happened in February. They can be told that Ukrainians are really Russians who want to be invaded and also Nazi satanists who must be exterminated. Putin cannot be backed into a corner. Because Russian power is equivalent to control over a closed media system, he can simply declare victory and change the subject. If Russia loses the war with Ukraine, he will just claim that he has won, and Russians will believe him or pretend to do so.

Truth is not with power, but a defense against it.

For such a regime to survive, the notion that democracy rests on the courage to tell the truth must be eliminated with violence if it cannot be laughed out of existence. Night after night, Kremlin propagandists explain on television that there cannot be a person such as Zelensky, a nation such as Ukraine, or a system such as democracy. Self-rule must be a joke; Ukraine must be a joke; Zelensky must be a joke. If not, the Kremlin's whole story that Russia is superior because it accepts that nothing is true falls to pieces. If Ukrainians really can constitute a society and really can choose their leaders, then why shouldn't Russians do the same?

Russians must be deterred from such thoughts by arguments about Ukraine that are as repulsive as they are untrue. Russian war propaganda about Ukraine is deeply, aggressively, deliberately false, and that is its purpose: to make grotesque lying seem normal and to wear down the human capacity to make distinctions and check emotions. When Russia murders Ukrainian prisoners of war en masse and blames Ukraine, it is not really making a truth claim: it is just trying to draw Western journalists into reporting all sides equally so they will ignore the discoverable facts. The point is to make the whole war seem incomprehensible and dirty, thereby discouraging Western involvement. When Russian fascists call Ukrainians "fascists," they are playing this game, and too many others join in. It is ridiculous to treat Zelensky as part of both a world Jewish

conspiracy and a Nazi plot, but Russian propaganda routinely makes both claims. But the absurdity is the point.

Democracy and nationhood depend on the capacity of individuals to assess the world for themselves and take unexpected risks; their destruction depends on asserting grand falsehoods that are known to be such. Zelensky made this point in one of his evening addresses this March: that falsehood demands violence, not because violence can make falsehood true, but because it can kill or humiliate people who have the courage to speak truth to power. As the Russian thinker Mikhail Bakhtin has observed, to live inside a lie is to become the tool of someone else. To kill or die inside a lie is even worse, in that it enables a regime such as Russia's to reconstitute itself. Killing for lies has generational consequences for Russia, even beyond the tens of thousands of dead and mutilated young citizens. An older Russian generation is forcing a younger one through a gauntlet, leaving the political terrain so slippery with blood that the young can never advance, and the old can hold their places until death. Ukraine is already governed by a generation that is accustomed to choosing its own leaders, an experience Russians have never had. In this sense, too, the war is generational. Its violence, in all its forms, is meant to eliminate the Ukrainian future. Russian state media has made Moscow's genocidal aspiration plain, over and over again. In occupied territories, Russians execute male Ukrainian citizens or force them to go and die at the front. Russians rape Ukrainian women to prevent them from wishing to have children. The millions of Ukrainians forcibly deported to Russia, many of them women with young children or of child-bearing age, have to accept what they know to be false to avoid prison and torture. Less dramatic but still significant is Russia's deliberate destruction of Ukrainian archives, libraries, universities, and publishing houses. The war is fought to control territory but also wombs and minds—in other words, the future.

Russia embodies fascism while claiming to fight it; Russians commit genocide while claiming to prevent it. This propaganda is not entirely ineffective: the fact that Moscow claims to be fighting Nazis does distract many observers from the fascism of Putin's regime. And before North Americans and Europeans praise themselves for winning the battle of narratives, they should look to the global South. There, Putin's story of the war prevails, even as Asians and Africans pay a horrible price for the war that he has chosen.

FAMINE AND FICTION

Putin's propaganda machine, like the rest of his regime, is funded by revenue from oil and gas exports. The current Russian order, in other words, depends for its existence on a world that has not made the transition to sustainable energy. Russia's war on Ukraine can be understood as a kind of preview of what uncontrolled climate change will look like: petulant wars waged by mendacious hydrocarbon oligarchs, racial violence instead of the pursuit of human survival via technology, shortages and famine in much of the world, and catastrophe in parts of the global South.

In Ukrainian history, political fiction accompanies political famine. In the early 1930s, when Stalin undertook what he called an "internal colonization" of the Soviet Union, much was expected of Ukraine's fertile soil. And when his plan for rapid collectivization of agriculture failed, Stalin blamed a long list of ready scapegoats: first Ukrainian communists, then imaginary Ukrainian nationalists whom the communists supposedly served, then imaginary Polish agents whom the nationalists supposedly served. The Politburo, meanwhile, enforced requisitions and other punitive measures that ensured that about four million Ukrainians perished. Those abroad who tried to organize relief, including the Ukrainian feminist Milena Rudnytska, who happened to be of Jewish origin, were called Nazis. This list of fantasy enemies from 1933 is startlingly similar to Russia's list today.

There is a larger historical pattern here, one in which the exploitation of the fruits of Ukrainian soil is justified by fantasies about the land and the people. In ancient times, the Greeks imagined monsters and miracles in the lands that are now Ukraine. During the Renaissance, as Polish nobles enserfed Ukrainian peasants, they invented for themselves a myth of racial superiority. After the Russian empire claimed Ukrainian territory from a partitioned Poland, its scholars invented a convenient story of how the two lands were one, a canard that Putin recycled in his essay last year. Putin has copied Stalin's fantasies—and Hitler's, for that matter. Ukraine was the center of a Nazi hunger plan whereby Stalin's collective farms were to be seized and used to feed Germany and other European territories, causing tens of millions of Soviet citizens to starve. As they fought for control of Ukrainian foodstuffs, Nazis portrayed Ukrainians as a simple colonial people who would be happy to be ruled by their superiors. This was also Putin's view.

It appears that Putin has his own hunger plan. Ukraine is one of the most important exporters of agricultural goods in the world. But the Russian navy has blockaded Ukrainian ports in the Black Sea, Russian soldiers have set fire to Ukrainian fields, and Russian artillery has targeted grain silos and the rail infrastructure needed to get grain to the ports. Like Stalin in 1933, Putin has taken deliberate steps to risk the starvation of millions. Lebanon relies heavily on Ukrainian grain, as do Ethiopia, Yemen, and the fragile nations of the Sahel. Yet the spread of hunger is not simply a matter of Ukrainian food not reaching its normal markets. The anticipation of shortages drives up food prices everywhere. The Chinese can be expected to hoard food, driving prices higher still. The weakest and the poorest will suffer first. And that is the point. When those who have no voice die, those who rule by lethal spectacle choose the meaning of their deaths. And that is what Putin may do.

The war is fought to control territory but also wombs and minds.

Whereas Stalin covered up the Ukrainian famine of the 1930s with propaganda, Putin is using hunger itself as propaganda. For months now, Russian propagandists have blamed a looming famine on Ukraine. The horror of telling such a lie to vulnerable African and Asian populations is easier to understand in light of the Putin regime's racist, colonial mindset. This is, after all, a regime that allowed an image of Obama fellating a banana to be projected onto the wall of the U.S. embassy in Moscow, and whose media declared the last year of the Obama administration "the year of the monkey." Putin, like other white nationalists, is obsessed with demography and fears that his race will be outnumbered.

The war itself has followed a racial arithmetic. Some of the first Russian soldiers to be killed in battle were ethnic Asians from eastern Russia, and many of those who have died since were forcibly conscripted Ukrainians from the Donbas. Ukrainian women and children have been deported to Russia because they are seen as assimilable, people who can bolster the ranks of white Russians. To starve Africans and Asians, as Putin sees it, is a way to transfer the demographic stress to Europe by way of a wave of refugees fleeing hunger. The Russian bombing of Syrian civilians followed a similar logic.

Nothing in the hunger plan is hidden. At the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in June 2022, Margarita Simonyan, editor in chief of the state-run network RT, said that "all of our hope lies

in famine." As the skilled propagandist understands, the point of starving Africans and Asians is to create a backdrop for propaganda. As they begin to die, Ukrainians will be scapegoated. This might or might not work. All past fantasies about Ukraine and its foodstuffs were at one time believed by influential people. Russian propaganda today has an edge in the global South. In much of Africa, Russia is a known quantity, whereas Ukraine is not. Few African leaders have publicly opposed Putin's war, and some might be persuaded to parrot his talking points. Across the global South, it is not widely known that Ukraine is a leading exporter of food—nor that it is a poor country with a GDP per capita comparable to that of the countries it feeds, such as Egypt and Algeria.

There is some reason for hope. Ukrainians have been trying to communicate the reality of their position to people in the global South, so that they can speak the truth about Moscow's hunger plan and thereby make it impossible. And as Ukraine has gained better weapons from the United States and Europe, Russia's hold on the Black Sea has weakened. In July, Ukraine and Russia signed agreements with Turkey that should, in principle, allow some Ukrainian grain to leave the Black Sea and feed Africans and Asians. Yet the day after it signed the agreement, Russia fired missiles at the port of Odessa, from which Ukraine ships much of its grain. A few days after that, Russia killed Ukraine's leading agribusinessman in a missile strike. The only sure way to feed the world is for Ukrainian soldiers to fight their way through the province of Kherson to the Black Sea and to victory.

THE LAST IMPERIAL WAR

Ukraine is fighting a war against a tyranny that is also a colonial power. Self-rule means not just defending the democratic principle of choosing one's own rulers but also respecting the equality of states. Russian leaders have been clear that they believe that only some states are sovereign, and that Ukraine is nothing more than a colony. A Ukrainian victory would defend Ukrainian sovereignty in particular and the principle of sovereignty in general. It would also improve the prospects of other post-colonial states. As the economist Amartya Sen has argued, imperial famines result from political choices about distribution, not shortages of food. If Ukraine wins, it will resume exporting foodstuffs to the global South. By removing a great risk of suffering and instability in the global South, a

victorious Ukraine would preserve the possibility of global cooperation on shared problems such as climate change.

For Europe, it is also essential that Ukraine win and Russia lose. The European Union is a collection of post-imperial states: some of them former imperial metropoles, some of them post-imperial peripheries. Ukrainians understand that joining the European Union is the way to secure statehood from a vulnerable peripheral position. Victory for Ukraine will have to involve a prospect of EU membership. As many Russians understand, Russia must lose, and for similar reasons. The European states that today pride themselves on their traditions of law and tolerance only truly became democracies after losing their last imperial war. A Russia that is fighting an imperial war in Ukraine can never embrace the rule of law, and a Russia that controls Ukrainian territory will never allow free elections. A Russia that loses such a war, one in which Putinism is a negative legacy, has a chance. Despite what Russian propaganda claims, Moscow loses wars with some frequency, and every period of reform in modern Russian history has followed a military defeat.

Most urgently, a Ukrainian victory is needed to prevent further death and atrocity in Ukraine. But the outcome of the war matters throughout the world, not just in the physical realm of pain and hunger but also in the realm of values, where possible futures are enabled. Ukrainian resistance reminds us that democracy is about human risk and human principles, and a Ukrainian victory would give democracy a fresh wind. The Ukrainian trident, which adorns the uniforms of Ukrainians now at war, extends back through the country's traditions into ancient history, providing references that can be used to rethink and revive democracy.

Athena and Poseidon can be brought together. Athena, after all, was the goddess not only of justice but of just war. Poseidon had in mind not only violence but commerce. Athenians chose Athena as their patron but then built a fountain for Poseidon in the Acropolis—on the very spot, legend has it, where his trident struck. A victory for Ukraine would vindicate and recombine these values: Athena's of deliberation and prosperity, Poseidon's of decisiveness and trade. If Ukraine can win back its south, the sea-lanes that fed the ancient Greeks will be reopened, and the world will be enlightened by the Ukrainian example of risk-taking for self-rule. In the end, the olive tree will need the trident. Peace will only follow victory. The world might get an olive branch, but only if the Ukrainians can fight their way back to the sea.

How to Build a Better Order

Limiting Great Power Rivalry in an Anarchic World

DANI RODRIK AND STEPHEN M. WALT

The global order is deteriorating before our eyes. The relative decline of U.S. power and the concomitant rise of China have eroded the partially liberal, rules-based system once dominated by the United States and its allies. Repeated financial crises, rising inequality, renewed protectionism, the COVID-19 pandemic, and growing reliance on economic sanctions have brought the post-Cold War era of hyperglobalization to an end. Russia's invasion of Ukraine may have revitalized NATO, but it has also deepened the divide between East and West and North and South. Meanwhile, shifting domestic priorities in many countries and increasingly competitive geopolitics have halted the drive for greater economic integration and blocked collective efforts to address looming global dangers.

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Illustration by Harry Haysom

The international order that will emerge from these developments is impossible to predict. Looking ahead, it is easy to imagine a less prosperous and more dangerous world characterized by an increasingly hostile United States and China, a remilitarized Europe, inward-oriented regional economic blocs, a digital realm divided along geopolitical lines, and the growing weaponization of economic relations for strategic ends.

But one can also envision a more benign order in which the United States, China, and other world powers compete in some areas, cooperate in others, and observe new and more flexible rules of the road designed to preserve the main elements of an open world economy and prevent armed conflict while allowing countries greater leeway to address urgent economic and social priorities at home. More optimistically, one can even imagine a world in which the leading powers actively work together to limit the effects of climate change, improve global health, reduce the threat of weapons of mass destruction, and jointly manage regional crises.

Establishing such a new and more benign order is not as hard as it might sound. Drawing on the efforts of the U.S.-China Trade Policy Working Group—a forum convened in 2019 by New York University legal scholar Jeffrey S. Lehman, Chinese economist Yang Yao, and one of us (Dani Rodrik) to map out a more constructive approach to bilateral ties—we propose a simple, four-part framework to guide relations among major powers. This framework presupposes only minimal agreement on core principles—at least at first—and acknowledges that there will be enduring disagreements about how many issues should be addressed. Rather than imposing a detailed set of prescriptive rules (as the World Trade Organization and other international regimes do), this framework would function as a "meta-regime": a device for guiding a process through which rival states or even adversaries could seek agreement or accommodation on a host of issues. When they do not agree, as will often be the case, adopting the framework can still enhance communication among them, clarify why they disagree, and offer them incentives to avoid inflicting harm on others, even as they seek to protect their own interests.

Crucially, this framework could be put in place by the United States, China, and other major powers themselves, as they deal with a variety of contentious issues, including climate change and global security. As has already been shown on several occasions, the approach could

provide what a single-minded focus on great-power competition cannot: a way for rival powers and even adversaries to find common ground to maintain the physical conditions necessary for human existence, advance economic prosperity, and minimize the risks of major war, while preserving their own security.

Incentives to compete are ever present in a world lacking a central authority, and the strongest powers will no doubt continue to eye one another warily. If any of the major powers make economic and geopolitical dominance their overriding goal, the prospects for a more benign global order are slim. But systemic pressures to compete still leave considerable room for human agency, and political leaders can still decide whether to embrace the logic of all-out rivalry or strive for something better. Human beings cannot suspend the force of gravity, but they eventually learned to overcome its effects and took to the skies. The conditions that encourage states to compete cannot be eliminated, but political leaders can still take actions to mitigate them if they wish.

FEWER RULES, BETTER BEHAVIOR

According to many accounts, the international order that emerged in the 1990s has increasingly been eroded by the dynamics of great-power competition. Nonetheless, the deterioration of the rules-based order need not result in great-power conflict. Although the United States and China both prioritize security, that goal does not render irrelevant the national and international goals that both share. Moreover, a country that invested all its resources in military capabilities and neglected other objectives—such as an equitable and prosperous economy or the climate transition—would not be secure in the long run, even if it started out as a global power. The problem, then, is not the need for security in an uncertain world but the manner in which that goal is pursued and the tradeoffs states face when balancing security and other important goals.

It is increasingly clear that the existing, Western-oriented approach is no longer adequate to address the many forces governing international power relations. A future world order will need to accommodate non-Western powers and tolerate greater diversity in national institutional arrangements and practices. Western policy preferences will prevail less, the quest for harmonization across economies that defined the era of hyperglobalization will be attenuated, and each

country will have to be granted greater leeway in managing its economy, society, and political system. International institutions such as the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund will have to adapt to that reality. Rather than more conflict, however, these pressures could lead to a new and more stable order. Just as it is possible for major powers to achieve national security without seeking global primacy, it is possible and even advantageous for countries to reap the benefits of economic interdependence within looser, more permissive international rules.

In our framework, major global powers need not agree in advance on the detailed rules that would govern their interactions. Instead, as we have outlined in a working paper for the Harvard Kennedy School, they would agree only on an underlying approach to their relations in which all actions and issues would be grouped into four general categories: those that are prohibited, those in which mutual adjustments by two or more states could benefit all parties, those undertaken by a single state, and those that require multilateral involvement. This four-part approach does not assume that rival powers trust one another at the outset or even agree on which actions or issues belong in which category, but over time, successfully addressing disagreements within this framework would do much to increase trust and reduce the possibility of conflict.

The first category—prohibited actions—would draw on norms that are already widely accepted by the United States, China, and other major powers. At a minimum, these might include commitments embodied in the UN Charter (such as the ban on acquiring territory by conquest), violations of diplomatic immunity, the use of torture, or armed attacks on another country's ships or aircraft. States might also agree to forgo "beggar thy neighbor" economic policies in which domestic benefits come at the direct expense of harm done to others: the exercise of monopoly power in international trade, for instance, and deliberate currency manipulation. States will violate these prohibitions with some frequency, and governments will sometimes disagree on whether a particular action violates an established norm. But by recognizing this general category, they would be acknowledging that there are boundaries to acceptable actions and that crossing them has consequences.

The second category includes actions in which states stand to benefit by altering their own behavior in exchange for similar concessions by others. Obvious examples include bilateral trade accords and arms control agreements. Through mutual policy adjustments, rivals can reach

agreements that benefit each other economically or eliminate specific areas of vulnerability, thereby making both countries more prosperous and secure and allowing them to shift defense spending to other needs. In theory, one could imagine the United States and China (or another major power) agreeing to limit certain military deployments or activities—such as reconnaissance operations near the other's territory or harmful cyber-activities that could adversely affect the other's digital infrastructure—in exchange for equivalent limitations by the other side.

When two states cannot reach a mutually beneficial bargain, the framework offers a third category, in which either side is free to take independent actions to advance specific national goals, consistent with the principle of sovereignty but subject to any previously agreed-on prohibitions. Countries frequently take independent economic actions because of differing national priorities. For example, all states set their own highway speed limits and education policies according to domestic preferences, even though higher speed limits can raise the price of oil on world markets and improving educational standards can affect international competition in skill-intensive sectors. On matters of national security, meaningful agreements among adversaries or geopolitical rivals are especially hard to reach, and independent action is the norm. Even so, the framework dictates that such actions must be well calibrated: to prevent tit-for-tat, escalatory steps that risk a destabilizing military buildup or even open conflict, remedies should be proportional to the security threat at hand and not designed to damage or punish a rival.

A more stable global order could rest on negotiation, not rules.

Of course, what one country views as a well-calibrated response may be perceived as a provocation by an opponent, and worst-case estimates of a rival's long-term intentions may make it hard to respond in a measured fashion. Such pressures are already apparent in the growing military competition between the United States and China. Yet both have powerful incentives to limit their independent actions and objectives. Given that both are vast countries with large populations, considerable wealth, and sizable nuclear arsenals, neither can entertain any realistic hope of conquering the other or compelling it to change its political system. Mutual coexistence is the only realistic possibility, and all-out efforts by either side to gain strategic superiority would simply divert resources from important

social needs, forgo potential gains from cooperation, and raise the risk of a highly destructive war.

The fourth and final category concerns issues in which effective action requires the involvement of multiple states. Climate change and COVID-19 are obvious examples: in each case, the lack of an effective multilateral agreement has encouraged many states to free-ride, resulting in excessive carbon emissions in the former and inadequate global access to vaccines in the latter. In the security domain, multilateral agreements such as the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty have done much to limit the spread of nuclear weapons. Because any world order ultimately rests on norms, rules, and institutions that determine how most states act most of the time, multilateral participation on many key issues will remain indispensable.

Viewed as a whole, our framework enables rival powers to move beyond the simple dichotomy of "friend or foe." No doubt states will sometimes adopt policies with the express purpose of weakening a rival or gaining an enduring advantage over it. Our approach would not make this feature of international politics disappear entirely, neither for the major powers nor for many others. Nonetheless, by framing their relations around these four categories, rival powers such as the United States and China would be encouraged to explain their actions and clarify their motives to each other, thereby rendering many disputes less malign. Equally important, the framework increases the odds that cooperation would grow over time. A conversation structured along the lines we propose enables the parties to separate potential zones of cooperation from the more divisive or contentious issues, establish reputations, develop a degree of trust, and better understand the preferences and motives of their partners and rivals—as can be seen when considering concrete, real-world situations.

STRATEGIC TRANSPARENCY

Several recent conflicts clearly demonstrate the advantages of our approach. Consider the U.S.-Chinese competition over 5G wireless technology. The emergence of the Chinese company Huawei as a dominant force in global 5G networks has concerned U.S. and European policymakers not only because of the commercial consequences but also because of the national security implications: Huawei is believed to have close ties to the Chinese security establishment. But the hard-line response by the United States—which has sought to

cripple Huawei's international activities and pressure U.S. telecommunications operators not to do business with the company—has only ratcheted up tensions. By contrast, our framework, although it would allow Western countries considerable latitude in limiting the activities of Chinese firms such as Huawei within their own countries, largely on national security grounds, would also limit attempts by the United States and its allies to undermine Chinese industries through deliberate and poorly justified international restrictions.

In fact, the promise of a better calibrated strategy for dealing with the Huawei conflict has already been shown. In contrast to the actions taken by Washington, the British government entered an arrangement with Huawei in which the company's products in the British telecommunications market undergo an annual security evaluation. The evaluations are conducted by the Huawei Cyber Security Evaluation Centre, whose governing board includes a Huawei representative along with senior officials from the British government and the United Kingdom's telecommunications sector. If the annual evaluation finds areas of concern, officials must make them public and state their rationale. Thus, the 2019 HCSEC report found that Huawei's software and cybersecurity system posed risks to British operators and would require significant adjustments to address those risks. In July 2020, the United Kingdom decided to ban Huawei from its 5G network.

Ultimately, the decision may have had less to do with the HCSEC report than with direct U.S. pressure, but this example still illustrates the possibilities of a more transparent and less contentious approach. The technical reasoning on which a national security determination was made could be seen and evaluated by all parties, including domestic firms with a commercial stake in Huawei's investments, the Chinese government, and Huawei itself. This feature alone can help build trust as each party develops a fuller understanding of the motives and actions of the others. Transparency can also make it more difficult for home governments to invoke national security concerns as a cover for purely protectionist commercial considerations. And it may facilitate reaching mutually beneficial bargains in the long run.

Nonetheless, most actions in the high-tech sector are likely to end up in our third category, in which states take unilateral measures to advance or protect their own interests. Here, our framework requires the responses to be proportionate to actual or potential harms rather than a means to gain strategic advantage. The Trump administration

violated this principle by barring U.S. corporations from exporting microchips and other components to Huawei and its suppliers, regardless of where they operated or the purposes for which their products were used. Instead of seeking to protect the United States from espionage or some sort of cyberattack, the clear intention was to deliver a fatal blow to Huawei by starving it of essential inputs. Moreover, the U.S. campaign has had serious economic repercussions for other countries. Many low-income countries in Africa have benefited from Huawei's relatively inexpensive equipment. Since U.S. policy has important implications for these countries, Washington should have engaged in a multilateral process that acknowledged the costs that cracking down on Huawei would inflict on others—an approach that would have conserved global goodwill at little cost to U.S. national security.

ACTING, NOT ESCALATING

Our framework also suggests how the troubled relationship between the United States and Iran might be improved to benefit both parties. For starters, the present level of suspicion could be reduced if both sides publicly committed not to attempt to overthrow the other and to refrain from acts of terrorism or sabotage on the other's territory. An agreement along these lines should be easy to reach, at least in principle, given that such actions are already prohibited by the UN Charter; in addition, Iran lacks the capacity to attack the United States directly, and past U.S. efforts to undermine the Islamic Republic have repeatedly failed.

Although short-lived, the 2015 nuclear deal showed how even hardened adversaries can be brought together on a contentious issue through mutually beneficial adjustments. The deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was a perfect illustration of this negotiated approach: China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union agreed to lift economic sanctions linked to Iran's nuclear program, and Iran agreed to reduce its stockpile of enriched uranium and dismantle thousands of nuclear centrifuges, substantially lengthening the time it would take Tehran to produce enough weapons-grade uranium to build a bomb.

The JCPOA's proponents hoped the agreement would lead to a broader discussion of other areas of dispute: subsequent negotiations, for example, could have constrained Iran's ballistic missile programs and its other regional activities in exchange for further sanctions

relief or the restoration of diplomatic relations. At a minimum, talks along these lines would have allowed both sides to explain and justify their positions and given each a clearer understanding of the other's interests, redlines, and sensitivities. Unfortunately, these possibilities were foreclosed when the Trump administration unilaterally abandoned the JCPOA in March 2018.

Skeptics might claim that the fate of the JCPOA reveals the limits of this approach. Had the agreement been in both sides' interests, they might argue, it would still be in effect today. But the shortsighted U.S. withdrawal clearly left both sides worse off. Iran is much closer to producing a bomb than it was when the JCPOA was in force, the two countries are if anything even more suspicious of each other, and the risk of war is arguably higher. Even an objectively beneficial agreement will not endure if one or both parties do not understand its merits.

Given the current state of relations, the United States and Iran will continue to act independently to protect their interests. Still, there is reason to believe that both sides understand the principle that unilateral actions should be proportional. When the United States left the JCPOA in 2018, for example, Iran did not respond by immediately restarting its full nuclear program. Instead, it adhered to the original agreement for months afterward, in the hope that the United States would reconsider or that the other signatories would fulfill its terms. When this did not occur, Iran left the agreement in an incremental and visibly reversible fashion, signaling its willingness to return to full compliance if the United States also did so. Iran's reaction to the Trump administration's "maximum pressure" campaign was also measured. For example, the U.S. assassination of the high-ranking Iranian general Qasem Soleimani by a drone strike did not lead Iran to escalate; on the contrary, its response was limited to nonlethal missile attacks on bases housing U.S. forces in Iraq. The United States has occasionally shown restraint as well, as when the Trump administration chose not to retaliate when Iran downed a U.S. reconnaissance drone in June 2019. Despite deep animosity, up to now both sides have recognized the risks of escalation and the need to carefully calibrate their independent actions.

FROM AGGRESSION TO MEDIATION

There is no question that Russia's war in Ukraine has darkened the prospects for constructing a more benign world order. Moscow's act of aggression was a clear violation of the UN Charter, and some

Russian troops appear to be guilty of wartime atrocities. These actions demonstrate that even well-established norms against conquest or other war crimes do not always prevent them. Yet the international response to the invasion also shows that trampling on such norms can have powerful consequences.

The war also highlights the importance of our second category—negotiation and mutual adjustments—and what can happen when states do not exploit this option to the fullest. Western officials engaged with their Russian counterparts on several occasions before Russia's invasion, but they did not address Moscow's stated concern—namely, the threat it perceived from Western efforts to bring Ukraine into NATO and the EU. For its part, Russia made far-reaching demands that seemed to offer little room for negotiation. Instead of exploring a genuine compromise on this issue—such as a formal pledge by Kyiv and its Western allies that Ukraine would remain a neutral state combined with a de-escalation by Russia and renewed negotiations over the status of the territories Russia seized in 2014—both sides hardened their existing positions. On February 24, 2022, Russia launched its illegal invasion.

Even hardened adversaries can be brought together by mutual adjustment.

The failure to negotiate a compromise via mutual negotiation left Russia, Ukraine, and the Western powers in our framework's third category: independent action. Russia unilaterally invaded Ukraine, and the United States and NATO responded by imposing unprecedented sanctions on Russia and sending billions of dollars of arms and support to Ukraine. In keeping with our approach, however, even amid this exceptionally brutal conflict, each side has thus far sought to avoid escalation. At the outset, the Biden administration declared that it would not send U.S. troops to fight in Ukraine or impose a no-fly zone there; Russia refrained from conducting widespread cyberattacks, expanding the war beyond Ukrainian territory, and using weapons of mass destruction. As the war has continued, however, this sense of restraint has begun to break down, with U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin asserting that the United States has sought to weaken Russia over the long term and Russian officials hinting about the use of nuclear weapons and indicating that their war aims may be expanding.

Unilateral action in Ukraine has also caused significant harm to third parties. By dramatically raising the cost of energy, Western sanctions on Russia have dealt a severe blow to the economies of low- and middle-income countries, many of them already devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic. And Russian blockades of grain shipments out of Ukraine have exacerbated a growing world food crisis. Because the war has affected many other countries, ending the fighting and eventually lifting sanctions is likely to require multilateral engagement. Turkey has already helped mediate an agreement to allow the resumption of Ukrainian grain exports, and states that rely on these exports will no doubt seek arrangements that make future disruptions less likely. If a Ukrainian pledge to remain neutral is part of the deal, it will have to be endorsed by the United States and other NATO members. Kyiv will undoubtedly want assurances from its Western backers and other interested third parties or perhaps an endorsement in the form of a UN Security Council Resolution.

GREAT POWERS, GREATER UNDERSTANDING

The war in Ukraine is a sobering reminder that a framework such as ours cannot produce a more benign world order by itself. It cannot prevent states from blundering into a costly conflict or missing opportunities to improve relations. But using these broad categories to guide great-power relations, instead of trying to resurrect a U.S.-dominated liberal order or impose new norms of global governance from above, has many advantages. In part because the requirements for adhering to it are so minimal, the framework can reveal whether rival powers are seriously committed to creating a more benign order. A state that rejects our approach from the start or whose actions within it show that its expressed commitments are bogus would incur severe reputational costs and risk provoking greater opposition over time. By contrast, states that embrace the framework and implement its simple principles in good faith would be regarded by others more favorably and would likely retain greater international support.

Perhaps nowhere are the potential benefits of our framework more apparent than in U.S.-Chinese relations. Until now, the United States has failed to articulate a China policy aimed at safeguarding vital U.S. security and economic interests that does not also aim at restoring U.S. primacy by undermining the Chinese economy. Far from accommodating China within a multipolar system of flexible

rules, the current approach seeks to contain China, reduce its relative power, and narrow its strategic options. When the United States convenes a club of democracies aimed openly against China, it should not be surprising that Chinese President Xi Jinping cozies up to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

This is not the only way forward, however. Both China and the United States have emphasized the need to cooperate in key areas even as they compete in others, and our approach provides a practical template for doing just that. It directs the two rivals to look for points of agreement and actions that both recognize should be proscribed; it encourages them to seek mutually beneficial compromises; and it reminds them to keep their independent actions within reasonable limits. By committing to our framework, the United States and China would be signaling a shared desire to limit areas of contention and avoid a spiral of ever-growing animosity and suspicion. In addition to cooperating on climate change, pandemic preparedness, and other common interests and refraining from overt attempts to undermine each other's domestic prosperity or political legitimacy, Washington and Beijing could pursue a variety of arms control, crisis management, and risk-reduction measures through a process of negotiation and adjustment.

On the thorny issue of Taiwan, the United States should continue the deliberately ambiguous policy it has followed since the 1972 Shanghai Communiqué—aiding Taiwanese defense efforts and condemning attempts by Beijing at forced reunification while opposing unilateral Taiwanese independence. Abandoning this policy in favor of more direct recognition of Taiwan risks provoking a war in which no one would benefit. Our flexible approach would not help if China decides to invade Taiwan for purely internal reasons—but it would make it less likely that Beijing would take this fateful step in response to its own security concerns.

Managing U.S.-Chinese security competition has a multilateral dimension, as well. Although Asian countries are concerned by China's rising power and want U.S. protection, they do not want to have to choose between Washington and Beijing. Efforts to strengthen the U.S. position in Asia are bound to be alarming to China, but the magnitude of its concerns and the intensity of its response are not predetermined, and minimizing them (to the extent possible) is in everyone's interest. As Washington strives to shore up its Asian

alliances, therefore, it should also support regional efforts to reduce tensions in Asia and encourage its allies to avoid unnecessary quarrels with China or with one another. U.S.-promoted regional trade deals, such as the newly launched Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity, should focus on maximizing economic benefits rather than trying to isolate and exclude China.

Although we have emphasized state-to-state relations in this discussion, our approach could be equally productive for nonstate actors, civil society organizations, academics, thought leaders, and anyone with a stake in a particular issue area. It encourages members of the global community to go beyond the stark antinomy of conflict versus cooperation and focus on practical questions: What actions should be prohibited outright? What compromises or adjustments would be feasible and mutually beneficial? When is independent action to be expected and legitimate, and how can well-calibrated actions be distinguished from those that are excessive? And when will preferred outcomes require multilateral agreements to ensure that third parties are not adversely affected by the agreements or actions undertaken by others? Such conversations will not produce immediate or total consensus, but more structured exchanges on these questions could clarify tradeoffs, elicit clearer explanations or justifications for competing positions, and increase the odds of reaching mutually beneficial outcomes.

It is possible—some would say likely—that mutual suspicion, incompetent leadership, ignorance, or sheer bad luck will combine to produce a future world order that is significantly poorer and substantially more dangerous than the present one. But such an outcome is not inevitable. If political leaders and the countries they represent genuinely wish to construct a more prosperous and secure world, the tools to do so are available.

The Du Bois Doctrine

Race and the American Century

ZACHARIAH MAMPILLY

October 1961 was a momentous month for W. E. B. Du Bois. Since the early years of the twentieth century, Du Bois had been a towering figure among Black American intellectuals. A sociologist by training, he helped found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909. During the Jim Crow era, he became known for an uncompromising stance, demanding equal rights for Black Americans through his journalism and advocacy work while also making seminal contributions to various academic debates. In the years between the two world wars, his attention turned increasingly to international affairs, and his politics veered sharply left; by 1961, Du Bois had applied for membership in the Communist Party. Now, at the age of 93, an ailing Du Bois was

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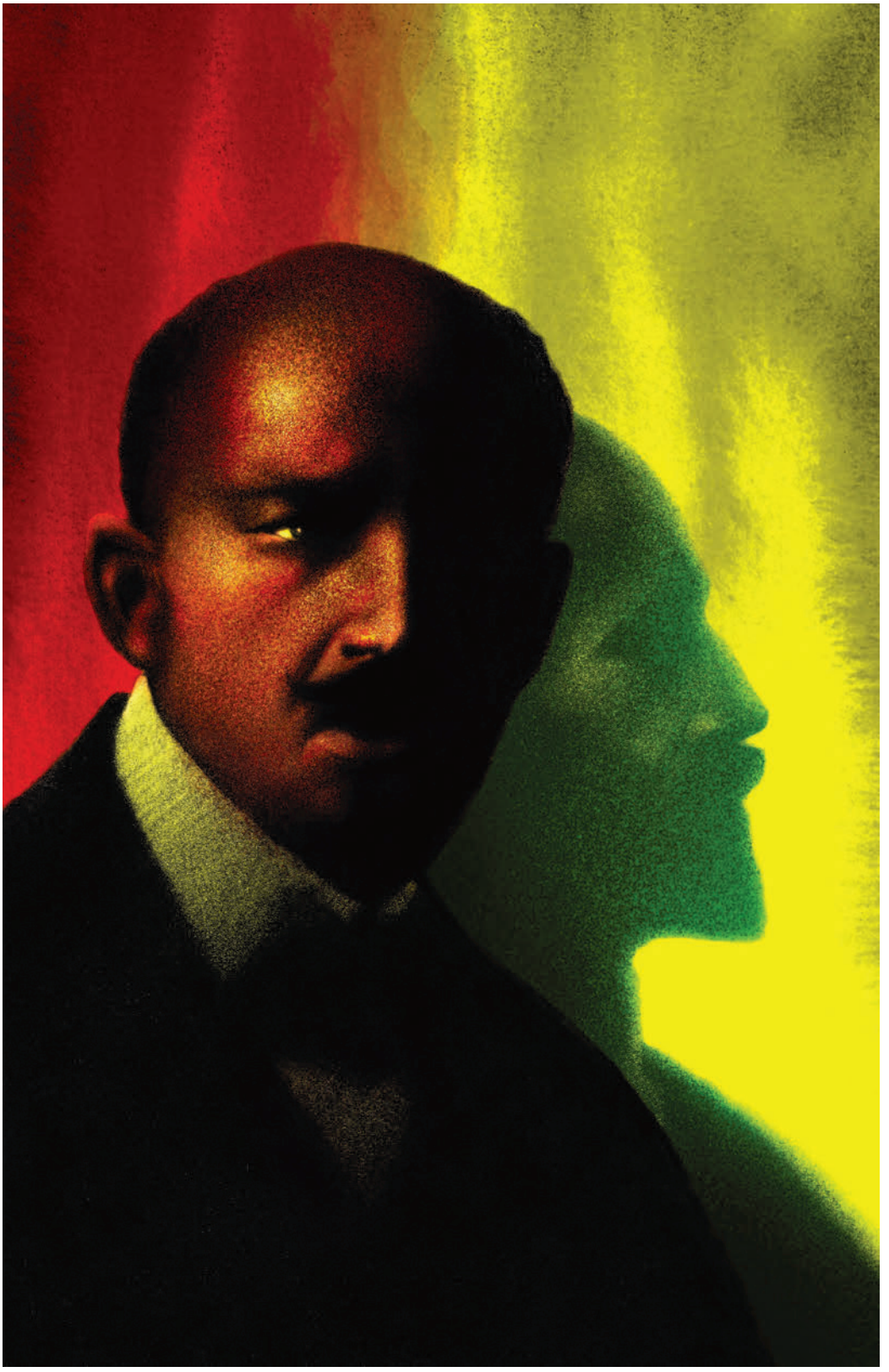

Illustration by Matt Williams

embarking on what would be his final journey. At the behest of Ghana's pan-Africanist president, Kwame Nkrumah, Du Bois moved to Ghana with the intention of beginning work on an "Encyclopedia Africana," which would combat the prevailing perception of Africans and people of African heritage as devoid of civilization. What had once been a dream project for Du Bois, however, had become more of a last resort. Hounded by the U.S. government and marginalized by the academic and policy establishments that once welcomed him, Du Bois was fleeing his homeland. It was a figurative exile that turned literal when the U.S. State Department refused to renew his passport, rendering him functionally stateless. He spent the next two years in Ghana, where local and international activists and thinkers embraced him warmly, but he made little progress. He died in 1963, one day before Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" address at the March on Washington.

Today, Du Bois's home in Accra is notionally a museum that, although scheduled for renovation next year, lies in a state of disrepair. Books, including many apparently owned by Du Bois, sit slowly decomposing in the heat. Photos of disparate Black and African leaders, including Du Bois's intellectual rival Booker T. Washington and the Libyan leader Muammar al-Qaddafi, hang haphazardly alongside illustrations of ancient Egyptian queens. Tourists, mostly interested in a crafts market behind the house, wander in and out, posing for selfies.

It's hard to argue that Du Bois, perhaps the most celebrated Black intellectual of all time, is underrecognized. His work remains a standard on syllabi across disciplines; prizes from academic associations bear his name. Despite the acclaim, however, Du Bois remains underappreciated—especially when it comes to his thinking on international politics. For a time, Du Bois was a regular contributor to *Foreign Affairs*, publishing five essays during the interwar period on topics ranging from European colonialism in Africa to the United States' role in the League of Nations. But Du Bois was an exception in this regard: during his lifetime, this magazine published very few Black voices—and its founding involved acquiring an existing journal that had occasionally trafficked in the racist pseudoscience that shaped the early years of international relations theory. Then, during World War II and amid the hysterical anticommunism of the early Cold War, *Foreign Affairs* joined the rest of the white American establishment in casting out Du Bois; partly as a result, his contributions to the field have received little attention from scholars in recent decades.

Du Bois is rightly still venerated for his work on civil rights. But the erasure of his contributions to debates on U.S. foreign policy and international order represents an enormous loss. By discarding him, the American foreign policy establishment robbed itself of one of the twentieth century's most perceptive and prescient critics of capitalism and imperialism. His now forgotten texts on world politics prefigured many of the ideas that later shaped international relations theory. They brim with insights on the importance of race, the effect of domestic politics on foreign policy, the limits of liberal institutions, and the relationship between political economy and world order. Revisiting them today reveals how racism marred the dawn of the so-called American century and the liberal internationalism that drove it—and the role of establishment institutions (including this magazine) in that history. And because many of the ills that Du Bois diagnosed in the imperial and Cold War orders persist in today's putatively liberal international order, rediscovering his work serves more than a purely historical purpose. A better order demands a more complete reckoning, and restoring Du Bois's rightful place in the international relations canon would be a step toward that goal.

STAMPED FROM THE BEGINNING?

Du Bois was born in 1868 in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, and his lifespan overlaps almost exactly with the Jim Crow era, a period during which Black Americans faced severe restrictions on their ability to participate in political, economic, and social life. Du Bois's youth also coincided with a period of domestic expansion after the Civil War, as the U.S. government, newly triumphant over the single greatest threat to its sovereignty, sent its armies west to put down various indigenous insurgencies.

The enlargement of the U.S. military that accompanied the pacification of rebellious southern whites and the defeat of Native American resistance did not recede once those projects were complete. Instead, the colonial projects that European countries were pursuing in Asia and Africa galvanized an envious United States to carve out its own colonies. In 1898, a year before Du Bois published his first major sociological study, *The Philadelphia Negro*, the United States' imperial ambitions produced the annexation of Hawaii and the acquisition of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines as spoils of the Spanish-American War.

At around that time, as the United States began to emerge as a leading global power, modern international relations theory started to take shape. As the political scientist Robert Vitalis has written, "The central

challenge defining the new field of 'imperial relations' was the efficient political administration and race development of subject peoples." Most early theorists, such as John Hobson, Alleyne Ireland, and Paul Reinsch, saw as major concerns two interlinked subjects: first, the question of whether the United States should secure a global empire in the manner of its European rivals, and second, the role of race in U.S. foreign policy. Writing in *Political Science Quarterly*, Hobson, for example, argued that the clear biological advantages enjoyed by the Anglo-Saxon race not merely justified colonial occupation but demanded it: "It is desirable that the earth should be peopled, governed and developed as far as possible by the races which can do their work best, that is, by the races of highest 'social efficiency'; these races must assert their right by conquering, ousting, subjugating or extinguishing races of lower social efficiency."

Today, many scholars dismiss the imperialist, racist logics propounded by the founders of modern international relations theory as merely reflecting the prejudices of an unenlightened era: sins not egregious enough to diminish the value of the sinners' good works. Vitalis, however, maintains that the origins of modern international relations theory cannot be cleaved from the junk race science and dubious anthropology that were, at the very least, present at its creation.

The same could be said about this magazine. In 1922, the Council on Foreign Relations launched *Foreign Affairs* after acquiring the future publication rights for an existing quarterly called the *Journal of International Relations*—which, until just a few years earlier, had been known as the *Journal of Race Development*. Established to be what its editor, George Blakeslee, described as a "forum for the discussion of the problems which relate to the progress of races and states generally considered backward," the *Journal of Race Development* published plenty of quackery: for example, articles that considered whether white people could adapt to the tropics and that explored the evolutionary origins of blond hair. But it was hardly a bastion of white supremacism. Indeed, one of its most prominent contributors was Du Bois; in one contribution in 1917, he argued that World War I had its origins in colonial exploitation. And when the publication changed its title, dropping "race development" in favor of "international relations," Du Bois was skeptical: "I am much more interested in the old name than in the new name of your journal," he wrote to Blakeslee. And despite Blakeslee's interest in publishing him, Du Bois did not contribute to the short-lived *Journal of International Relations*.

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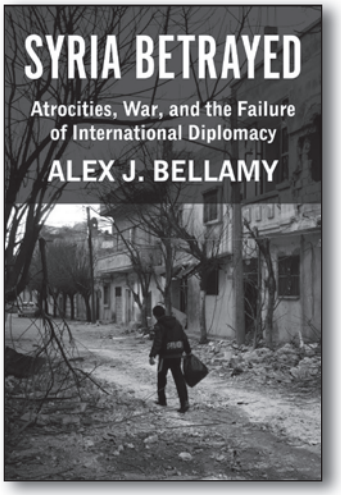

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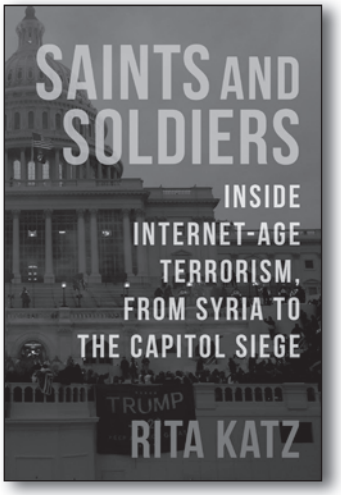

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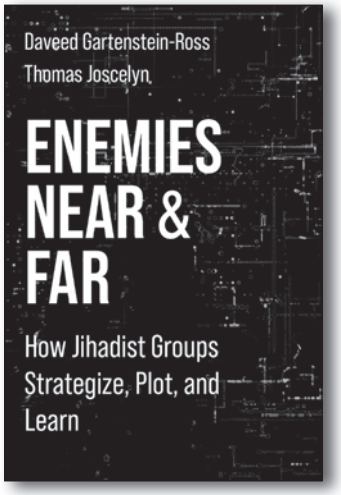

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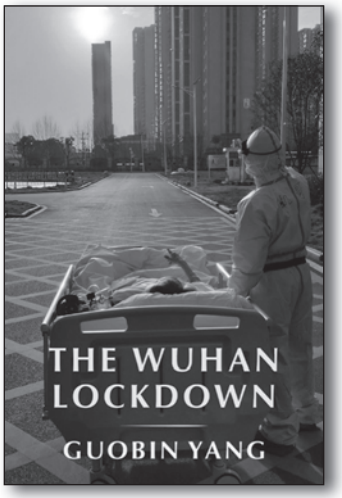
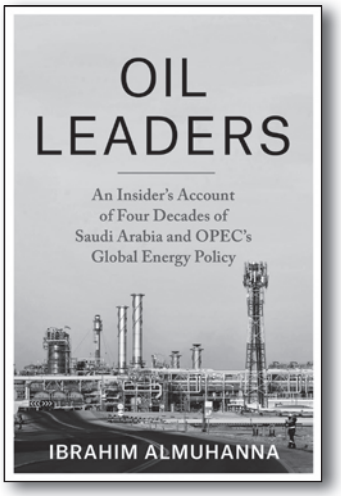


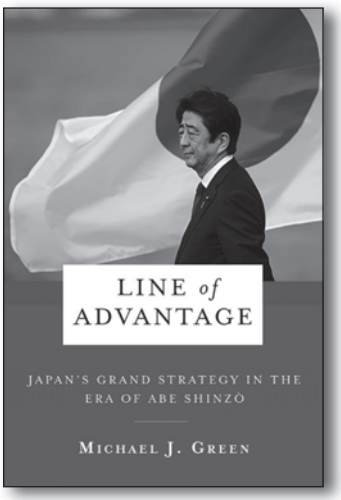
"Yang has crafted a fascinating portrait of modern China, capturing subtleties and sensitivities that mainstream European and North American media are typically content to ignore."

—*Lancet*



"This book offers unique insight into the thinking of key decision makers and sheds light on events that continue to shape the oil market to this day. ... indispensable."

—Bassam Fattouh, director of the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies



"A detailed and thoughtful analysis of the strategic ambitions of one of Japan's most important postwar political leaders."

—Sheila A. Smith, author of *Japan Rearmed*

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But a few years later, after *Foreign Affairs* had launched, Du Bois submitted an article titled "Worlds of Color," which revisited his concept of a global "color line" in light of the events of World War I. In a letter to Du Bois accepting the piece, the magazine's managing editor, Hamilton Fish Armstrong, praised "the admirable restraint with which you have expressed yourself." The essay was published in 1925, a quarter century after Du Bois had initially developed the concept, and it garnered a good deal of attention. In that piece and four others that he published in *Foreign Affairs* over the following two decades, Du Bois offered a real-time assessment of the emerging world order, decrying the yawning gap between its proponents' putatively liberal values and the order's actual consequences for the colonized world.

"BLACK AND POOR IN A RICH, WHITE WORLD"

One of the central questions that motivated Du Bois was why the white working class in the United States refused to align with formerly enslaved Black Americans to challenge their common oppression. His solution to this puzzle rested on his views about the nature of race and the tensions between democracy and capitalism. Unlike most of his white contemporaries, Du Bois did not see race as an immutable characteristic but as a social construct. "Humanity is mixed to its bones," he wrote in a 1935 article for *Foreign Affairs*. Race was not a product of primordial competition among different groups of humans but a useful fiction of sorts, employed by economic elites to justify hierarchies that served their interests. "The medieval world had no real race problems," he noted in the same article. "Its human problems were those of nationality and culture and religion, and it was mainly as the new economy of an expanding population demanded a laboring class that this class tended . . . to be composed of members of alien races." And later, writing on European colonialism, he argued, "The belief that racial and color differences made exploitation of colonies necessary and justifiable was too tempting to withstand. As a matter of fact, the opposite was the truth; namely, that the profit from exploitation was the main reason for the belief in race difference."

Du Bois saw this dynamic clearly at work in the United States, where white elites avoided economic redistribution and retained political power by offering white workers "a public and psychological wage" in the form of control over police forces, access to politicians, and flattering media portrayals. But white American elites did not rely solely on such tactics to secure the allegiance of the white working class: beginning after

the collapse of Reconstruction in the late 1870s, global capitalism and imperialism improved the living conditions of poorer white Americans by providing resources for their segregated schools, parks, and neighborhoods, all without meaningfully transferring power to them. In this way, Du Bois argued in his seminal 1935 work, *Black Reconstruction*, white elites in the United States had created a double proletariat divided by a racial line. On one side were poor and working-class whites, afforded some material gains but no genuine social mobility or political power. On the other were Black Americans, bereft of any hope for either economic or political gain. Through imperial war and capitalism, the United States—in concert with the European powers—had created a global system for upholding white supremacy.

In the interwar period, Du Bois initially placed his faith in the emergence of international institutions to redress these inequities. In 1921, he presented a petition to the newly created League of Nations on behalf of the Pan-African Congress, concluding that the league might spark a "revolution for the Negro race." But over the next decade, his views soured as the league failed to live up to its liberal ideals and became a tool of the superpowers.

In a 1933 *Foreign Affairs* essay on Liberia, he detailed an unholy alliance between the Firestone corporation, the league, and the U.S. government. Despite a league-commissioned investigation that found that Firestone, in connivance with Liberian elites, had used forced labor, the United States sided with the company against the league's plan for reform. The result was Liberia's indebtedness and loss of sovereignty. As Washington debated whether to increase its military involvement to resolve the consequent crisis in Liberia, Du Bois asked, scathingly: "Are we starting the United States Army toward Liberia to guarantee the Firestone Company's profits in a falling rubber market?" Long before such charges became a staple of left-wing criticisms of American hegemony, Du Bois foresaw the troubling effects of commingling U.S. military power with private interests and the ease with which major powers could employ international organizations to hide their imperialist agendas under a veneer of legitimacy. The exploitation that Du Bois detailed in his report on Liberia was something of a blueprint for how, long after the end of direct colonialism, global superpowers would use debt to guarantee the subservience of countries in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world.

By the time he published his *Foreign Affairs* piece on Liberia, Du Bois had come to see the promise of Western liberal internationalism as hollow.

"Liberia is not faultless," he wrote. "She lacks training, experience and thrift. But her chief crime is to be black and poor in a rich, white world; and in precisely that portion of the world where color is ruthlessly exploited as a foundation for American and European wealth. The success of Liberia as a Negro republic would be a blow to the whole colonial slave labor system."

In his final essay for *Foreign Affairs,* in 1943, Du Bois rejected the idea that World War II was a fight between liberal and illiberal powers, arguing that it was competition for colonies that produced the fighting instead. "Is it a white man's war?" he asked, rhetorically, on behalf of Africans and Asians. And by the time of the San Francisco Conference that birthed the United Nations in 1945, which he attended on behalf of the NAACP, Du Bois's skepticism of the emerging liberal order had calcified. Afterward, he wrote a letter to Armstrong, who had become the editor of *Foreign Affairs* in 1928 (and would stay in the position until 1972), pitching a critique of the nascent organization. In his estimation, the conference "took steps to prevent further wars" but "did not go nearly far enough in facing realistically the greatest potential cause of war, the colonial system." The magazine rejected the pitch, and Du Bois would never again publish in *Foreign Affairs*.

AGAINST EMPIRE, FOR DEMOCRACY

In exploring the relationship between race relations inside the United States and the country's quest for power in the international system, Du Bois anticipated the ways in which, in the mid-twentieth century, scholars of international relations would increasingly focus on domestic politics to explain countries' foreign policies. And he applied this lens to cases besides the United States. In trying to understand the costs of European competition for control over Africa, for example, Du Bois argued that domestic factors would undermine the clear military advantage European countries had over their colonial subjects. As a keen observer of emergent anticolonial struggles in India and elsewhere, Du Bois deduced how the occupation of foreign lands would engender resistance among the colonized. But Du Bois also saw another dilemma that imperialism created for European countries: colonial domination abroad often required the sacrifice of democracy at home. Imperialism inevitably led to increased racial and economic inequality at home: military adventures and opportunities for extracting natural resources empowered the capitalist class (and its favored segments of the underclass) and stoked racial prejudice that justified further interventions in foreign lands. As Du Bois put it in "Worlds of Color" in 1925: "One looks on present France and her African

shadow, then, as standing at the parting of tremendous ways; one way leads toward democracy for black as well as white—a thorny way made more difficult by the organized greed of the imperial profit-takers within and without the nation; the other road is the way of the white world, and of its contradictions and dangers English colonies may tell."

Du Bois's increasing engagement with international politics also shaped his evolving views of the United States and its racial and class hierarchies. Early in his career, Du Bois developed the concept of "the talented tenth," the idea that marginalized groups require their own internal elite to pull the rest of the group out of poverty. But his study of European colonialism in Africa forced him to reassess his faith in minority elites as a vehicle for racial uplift. In Liberia, Du Bois had initially supported Firestone's investment as a way to buttress the legitimacy of the ruling Americo-Liberian community. But by the 1940s, he had grown disenchanted with the idea of the talented tenth, warning that it would empower "a group of selfish, self-indulgent, well-to-do men." This change in his thinking dovetailed with the fact that, in his personal life, he was becoming increasingly estranged from Black elites in the United States, who he felt had not supported him during his investigation by the United States government.

Eventually, Du Bois embraced the strategy of "assigning transformative responsibilities to the international proletariat," as the political scientist Adolph Reed has put it. His change in thinking was reinforced by his interpretation of how international capitalism was developing: instead of a tool to uplift the darker races, it was the cause of their exploitation. As a result, long before he fully embraced communism, he had moved toward a form of democratic socialism.

Yet even as he developed a theory of working-class agency, Du Bois could never fully shake his faith in the idea of a chosen few leading the way toward emancipation or in the potential for global cooperation. But it would not be Western elites, with their attachment to racial and economic hierarchies, who would lead the way. Rather, he believed, it was the rising powers of Asia, as well as the Soviet Union, that would upend the global system of white supremacy and liberate Black Americans. This view is palpably present in one of his most personal works, the novel *Dark Princess*, which Du Bois wrote in 1928.

Inspired by his participation in the First Universal Races Congress in 1911 and in other forums, such as the League Against Imperialism in 1927, *Dark Princess* tells the story of Matthew Townes, an African American medical student in self-imposed exile in Germany, where

Du Bois had conducted some of his graduate studies. An obvious surrogate for Du Bois, Townes encounters elites from multiple African and Asian countries who seek to overthrow colonial rule but whose own prejudices prevent them from recognizing the potential of the Black working class in the United States. One of these characters is the Indian princess of the novel's title, who overcomes her prejudices and commits a form of class suicide, giving birth to a child fathered by Townes. Du Bois positions the child as a messiah figure who will someday rescue the oppressed darker races of the world. Because of their historic prejudices, Europe and the United States—as well as rich elites elsewhere—were denying not only themselves but all of humanity of the potential benefits of lifting up marginalized groups.

WHAT DU BOIS SAW

That Du Bois died a member of the Communist Party is no secret. But his journey to the left took decades. Du Bois first encountered socialism as a student in Germany in the 1890s, but it was not until the 1930s that he began to seriously engage with leftist politics. Given Du Bois's stature as the predominant Black intellectual of his time, his leftward drift was a source of suspicion for the U.S. government. The FBI began investigating Du Bois in 1942, following his visit to imperial Japan, where he delivered a speech praising the country as a potential friend to Black Americans. Despite concluding that there was "no evidence of subversive activity," the FBI continued to investigate Du Bois for the rest of his life, derailing his career and strengthening his anti-Americanism. During the McCarthy era in the early 1950s, U.S. authorities arrested Du Bois and charged him with being a secret Soviet agent after he circulated a petition calling for a ban on nuclear weapons. At his trial, a federal judge summarily acquitted Du Bois as soon as the prosecution rested its case, citing a lack of evidence. But the controversy rendered Du Bois persona non grata—and penniless.

The State Department refused to issue him a passport in 1952, a harsh blow for a man who had spent his entire adult life visiting and studying foreign countries. In 1957, Du Bois sought to regain his passport to attend Nkrumah's inauguration. Du Bois sent a personal appeal to Vice President Richard Nixon, who was scheduled to attend on behalf of the United States. But the State Department denied the request. The following year, the Supreme Court declared the policy of denying passports to suspected communists unconstitutional. Du Bois secured a new passport—although, in Ghana just a few years later, he would be unable to renew it—and

immediately embarked on a ten-week trip to China, where he met with both Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai. Having last visited the country in 1936, Du Bois was amazed by China's progress, praising its rising industrial prowess and calling the changes nothing short of a "miracle."

Du Bois's admiration for authoritarians such as Nkrumah and Mao, and his fulsome praise for the Soviet tyrant Joseph Stalin were inconsistent with his lifelong support for democracy. But his unfortunate embrace of such figures arguably represents a misapplication of his well-founded belief that democracy was incompatible with racial and economic inequality. His decades-long persecution at the hands of the United States also fed his misgivings about Western liberalism's ability to foster racial and economic equality.

In his writings on international politics, Du Bois argued that the domestic could never be divorced from the global, and that Washington's quest for a liberal order could never be reconciled with a Jim Crow system at home. Although American society has changed since Du Bois's time, that fundamental tension has never been resolved: from the Cold War to the "war on terror" and beyond, the United States has cast itself as a champion of freedom and equality, despite never meeting its own standards in its treatment of American citizens and despite routinely enabling and empowering authoritarians and other enemies of liberal values when doing so has served U.S. economic or national security interests, as defined by establishment elites. Realists often excuse or even demand such inconsistency and hypocrisy, suggesting that liberals are naive to believe that domestic values should guide foreign policy. Meanwhile, hawks of all stripes—from neoconservatives to liberal interventionists—refuse to acknowledge the inconsistency and hypocrisy at all, claim they are transient aberrations, or insist that they don't really matter.

By linking his devastating insights into the realities of American apartheid with his analysis of Western imperialism, Du Bois charted a unique course through this perennial debate. His work upends the liberal fantasy of the United States' inevitable progress toward a "more perfect union" that would inspire a just global order and gives the lie to the realist fantasy that how the country behaves internationally can be separated from domestic politics. For Du Bois, the success of democracy in the United States required that political and economic equality be extended not only to U.S. citizens but to all people around the world. It is an uncompromising and inspiring vision; embracing it cost Du Bois dearly. But it may be just what the country needs as it faces the waning of American imperium.

Spirals of Delusion

How AI Distorts Decision-Making and Makes Dictators More Dangerous

HENRY FARRELL, ABRAHAM NEWMAN, AND JEREMY WALLACE

In policy circles, discussions about artificial intelligence invariably pit China against the United States in a race for technological supremacy. If the key resource is data, then China, with its billion-plus citizens and lax protections against state surveillance, seems destined to win. Kai-Fu Lee, a famous computer scientist, has claimed that data is the new oil, and China the new OPEC. If superior technology is what provides the edge, however, then the United States, with its world class university system and talented workforce, still has a chance to come out ahead. For either country, pundits assume that superiority in AI will lead naturally to broader economic and military superiority.

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Illustration created by AI art generator Midjourney

But thinking about AI in terms of a race for dominance misses the more fundamental ways in which AI is transforming global politics. AI will not transform the rivalry between powers so much as it will transform the rivals themselves. The United States is a democracy, whereas China is an authoritarian regime, and machine learning challenges each political system in its own way. The challenges to democracies such as the United States are all too visible. Machine learning may increase polarization—reengineering the online world to promote political division. It will certainly increase disinformation in the future, generating convincing fake speech at scale. The challenges to autocracies are more subtle but possibly more corrosive. Just as machine learning reflects and reinforces the divisions of democracy, it may confound autocracies, creating a false appearance of consensus and concealing underlying societal fissures until it is too late.

Early pioneers of AI, including the political scientist Herbert Simon, realized that AI technology has more in common with markets, bureaucracies, and political institutions than with simple engineering applications. Another pioneer of artificial intelligence, Norbert Wiener, described AI as a "cybernetic" system—one that can respond and adapt to feedback. Neither Simon nor Wiener anticipated how machine learning would dominate AI, but its evolution fits with their way of thinking. Facebook and Google use machine learning as the analytic engine of a self-correcting system, which continually updates its understanding of the data depending on whether its predictions succeed or fail. It is this loop between statistical analysis and feedback from the environment that has made machine learning such a formidable force.

What is much less well understood is that democracy and authoritarianism are cybernetic systems, too. Under both forms of rule, governments enact policies and then try to figure out whether these policies have succeeded or failed. In democracies, votes and voices provide powerful feedback about whether a given approach is really working. Authoritarian systems have historically had a much harder time getting good feedback. Before the information age, they relied not just on domestic intelligence but also on petitions and clandestine opinion surveys to try to figure out what their citizens believed.

Now, machine learning is disrupting traditional forms of democratic feedback (voices and votes) as new technologies facilitate disinformation and worsen existing biases—taking prejudice hidden in data and confidently transforming it into incorrect assertions.

To autocrats fumbling in the dark, meanwhile, machine learning looks like an answer to their prayers. Such technology can tell rulers whether their subjects like what they are doing without the hassle of surveys or the political risks of open debates and elections. For this reason, many observers have fretted that advances in AI will only strengthen the hand of dictators and further enable them to control their societies.

The truth is more complicated. Bias is visibly a problem for democracies. But because it is more visible, citizens can mitigate it through other forms of feedback. When, for example, a racial group sees that hiring algorithms are biased against them, they can protest and seek redress with some chance of success. Authoritarian countries are probably at least as prone to bias as democracies are, perhaps more so. Much of this bias is likely to be invisible, especially to the decision-makers at the top. That makes it far more difficult to correct, even if leaders can see that something needs correcting.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, AI can seriously undermine autocratic regimes by reinforcing their own ideologies and fantasies at the expense of a finer understanding of the real world. Democratic countries may discover that, when it comes to AI, the key challenge of the twenty-first century is not winning the battle for technological dominance. Instead, they will have to contend with authoritarian countries that find themselves in the throes of an AI-fueled spiral of delusion.

BAD FEEDBACK

Most discussions about AI have to do with machine learning—statistical algorithms that extract relationships between data. These algorithms make guesses: Is there a dog in this photo? Will this chess strategy win the game in ten moves? What is the next word in this half-finished sentence? A so-called objective function, a mathematical means of scoring outcomes, can reward the algorithm if it guesses correctly. This process is how commercial AI works. YouTube, for example, wants to keep its users engaged, watching more videos so that they keep seeing ads. The objective function is designed to maximize user engagement. The algorithm tries to serve up content that keeps a user's eyes on the page. Depending on whether its guess was right or wrong, the algorithm updates its model of what the user is likely to respond to.

Machine learning's ability to automate this feedback loop with little or no human intervention has reshaped e-commerce. It may, someday, allow fully self-driving cars, although this advance has turned out to be

a much harder problem than engineers anticipated. Developing autonomous weapons is a harder problem still. When algorithms encounter truly unexpected information, they often fail to make sense of it. Information that a human can easily understand but that machine learning misclassifies—known as "adversarial examples"—can gum up the works badly. For example, black and white stickers placed on a stop sign can prevent a self-driving car's vision system from recognizing the sign. Such vulnerabilities suggest obvious limitations in AI's usefulness in wartime.

Diving into the complexities of machine learning helps make sense of the debates about technological dominance. It explains why some thinkers, such as the computer scientist Lee, believe that data is so important. The more data you have, the more quickly you can improve the performance of your algorithm, iterating tiny change upon tiny change until you have achieved a decisive advantage. But machine learning has its limits. For example, despite enormous investments by technology firms, algorithms are far less effective than is commonly understood at getting people to buy one nearly identical product over another. Reliably manipulating shallow preferences is hard, and it is probably far more difficult to change people's deeply held opinions and beliefs.

General AI, a system that might draw lessons from one context and apply them in a different one, as humans can, faces similar limitations. Netflix's statistical models of its users' inclinations and preferences are almost certainly dissimilar to Amazon's, even when both are trying to model the same people grappling with similar decisions. Dominance in one sector of AI, such as serving up short videos that keep teenagers hooked (a triumph of the app TikTok), does not easily translate into dominance in another, such as creating autonomous battlefield weapons systems. An algorithm's success often relies on the very human engineers who can translate lessons across different applications rather than on the technology itself. For now, these problems remain unsolved.

Bias can also creep into code. When Amazon tried to apply machine learning to recruitment, it trained the algorithm on data from résumés that human recruiters had evaluated. As a result, the system reproduced the biases implicit in the humans' decisions, discriminating against résumés from women. Such problems can be self-reinforcing. As the sociologist Ruha Benjamin has pointed out, if policymakers used machine learning to decide where to send police forces, the technology could guide them to allocate more police to neighborhoods with high arrest rates, in the

process sending more police to areas with racial groups whom the police have demonstrated biases against. This could lead to more arrests that, in turn, reinforce the algorithm in a vicious circle.

The old programming adage "garbage in, garbage out" has a different meaning in a world where the inputs influence the outputs and vice versa. Without appropriate outside correction, machine-learning algorithms can acquire a taste for the garbage that they themselves produce, generating a loop of bad decision-making. All too often, policymakers treat machine learning tools as wise and dispassionate oracles rather than as fallible instruments that can intensify the problems they purport to solve.

CALL AND RESPONSE

Political systems are feedback systems, too. In democracies, the public literally evaluates and scores leaders in elections that are supposed to be free and fair. Political parties make promises with the goal of winning power and holding on to it. A legal opposition highlights government mistakes, while a free press reports on controversies and misdeeds. Incumbents regularly face voters and learn whether they have earned or lost the public trust, in a continually repeating cycle.

But feedback in democratic societies does not work perfectly. The public may not have a deep understanding of politics, and it can punish governments for things beyond their control. Politicians and their staff may misunderstand what the public wants. The opposition has incentives to lie and exaggerate. Contesting elections costs money, and the real decisions are sometimes made behind closed doors. Media outlets may be biased or care more about entertaining their consumers than edifying them.

All the same, feedback makes learning possible. Politicians learn what the public wants. The public learns what it can and cannot expect. People can openly criticize government mistakes without being locked up. As new problems emerge, new groups can organize to publicize them and try to persuade others to solve them. All this allows policymakers and governments to engage with a complex and ever-changing world.

Feedback works very differently in autocracies. Leaders are chosen not through free and fair elections but through ruthless succession battles and often opaque systems for internal promotion. Even where opposition to the government is formally legal, it is discouraged, sometimes brutally. If media criticize the government, they risk legal action and violence. Elec-

tions, when they do occur, are systematically tilted in favor of incumbents. Citizens who oppose their leaders don't just face difficulties in organizing; they risk harsh penalties for speaking out, including imprisonment and death. For all these reasons, authoritarian governments often don't have a good sense of how the world works or what they and their citizens want.

Such systems therefore face a tradeoff between short-term political stability and effective policymaking; a desire for the former inclines authoritarian leaders to block outsiders from expressing political opinions, while the need for the latter requires them to have some idea of what is happening in the world and in their societies. Because of tight controls on information, authoritarian rulers cannot rely on citizens, media, and opposition voices to provide corrective feedback as democratic leaders can. The result is that they risk policy failures that can undermine their long-term legitimacy and ability to rule. Russian President Vladimir Putin's disastrous decision to invade Ukraine, for example, seems to have been based on an inaccurate assessment of Ukrainian morale and his own military's strength.

Authoritarian governments often don't have a good sense of how the world works.

Even before the invention of machine learning, authoritarian rulers used quantitative measures as a crude and imperfect proxy for public feedback. Take China, which for decades tried to combine a decentralized market economy with centralized political oversight of a few crucial statistics, notably GDP. Local officials could get promoted if their regions saw particularly rapid growth. But Beijing's limited quantified vision offered them little incentive to tackle festering issues such as corruption, debt, and pollution. Unsurprisingly, local officials often manipulated the statistics or pursued policies that boosted GDP in the short term while leaving the long-term problems for their successors.

The world caught a glimpse of this dynamic during the initial Chinese response to the COVID-19 pandemic that began in Hubei Province in late 2019. China had built an internet-based disease-reporting system following the 2003 SARS crisis, but instead of using that system, local authorities in Wuhan, Hubei's capital, punished the doctor who first reported the presence of a "SARS-like" contagion. The Wuhan government worked hard to prevent information about the outbreak from reaching Beijing, continually repeating that there were "no new cases" until after important local political meetings concluded. The doctor, Li Wenliang,

himself succumbed to the disease and died on February 7, triggering fierce outrage across the country.

Beijing then took over the response to the pandemic, adopting a "zero COVID" approach that used coercive measures to suppress case counts. The policy worked well in the short run, but with the Omicron variant's tremendous transmissibility, the zero-COVID policy increasingly seems to have led to only pyrrhic victories, requiring massive lockdowns that have left people hungry and the economy in shambles. But it remained successful at achieving one crucial if crude metric—keeping the number of infections low.

Data seem to provide objective measures that explain the world and its problems, with none of the political risks and inconveniences of elections or free media. But there is no such thing as decision-making devoid of politics. The messiness of democracy and the risk of deranged feedback processes are apparent to anyone who pays attention to U.S. politics. Autocracies suffer similar problems, although they are less immediately perceptible. Officials making up numbers or citizens declining to turn their anger into wide-scale protests can have serious consequences, making bad decisions more likely in the short run and regime failure more likely in the long run.

IT'S A TRAP?

The most urgent question is not whether the United States or China will win or lose in the race for AI dominance. It is how AI will change the different feedback loops that democracies and autocracies rely on to govern their societies. Many observers have suggested that as machine learning becomes more ubiquitous, it will inevitably hurt democracy and help autocracy. In their view, social media algorithms that optimize engagement, for instance, may undermine democracy by damaging the quality of citizen feedback. As people click through video after video, YouTube's algorithm offers up shocking and alarming content to keep them engaged. This content often involves conspiracy theories or extreme political views that lure citizens into a dark wonderland where everything is upside down.

By contrast, machine learning is supposed to help autocracies by facilitating greater control over their people. Historian Yuval Harari and a host of other scholars claim that AI "favors tyranny." According to this camp, AI centralizes data and power, allowing leaders to manipulate ordinary citizens by offering them information that is calculated

to push their "emotional buttons." This endlessly iterating process of feedback and response is supposed to produce an invisible and effective form of social control. In this account, social media allows authoritarian governments to take the public's pulse as well as capture its heart.

But these arguments rest on uncertain foundations. Although leaks from inside Facebook suggest that algorithms can indeed guide people toward radical content, recent research indicates that the algorithms don't themselves change what people are looking for. People who search for extreme YouTube videos are likely to be guided toward more of what they want, but people who aren't already interested in dangerous content are unlikely to follow the algorithms' recommendations. If feedback in democratic societies were to become increasingly deranged, machine learning would not be entirely at fault; it would only have lent a helping hand.

There is no good evidence that machine learning enables the sorts of generalized mind control that will hollow out democracy and strengthen authoritarianism. If algorithms are not very effective at getting people to buy things, they are probably much worse at getting them to change their minds about things that touch on closely held values, such as politics. The claims that Cambridge Analytica, a British political consulting firm, employed some magical technique to fix the 2016 U.S. presidential election for Donald Trump have unraveled. The firm's supposed secret sauce provided to the Trump campaign seemed to consist of standard psychometric targeting techniques—using personality surveys to categorize people—of limited utility.

Indeed, fully automated data-driven authoritarianism may turn out to be a trap for states such as China that concentrate authority in a tiny insulated group of decision-makers. Democratic countries have correction mechanisms—alternative forms of citizen feedback that can check governments if they go off track. Authoritarian governments, as they double down on machine learning, have no such mechanism. Although ubiquitous state surveillance could prove effective in the short term, the danger is that authoritarian states will be undermined by the forms of self-reinforcing bias that machine learning facilitates. As a state employs machine learning widely, the leader's ideology will shape how machine learning is used, the objectives around which it is optimized, and how it interprets results. The data that emerge through this process will likely reflect the leader's prejudices right back at him.

As the technologist Maciej Ceglowski has explained, machine learning is "money laundering for bias," a "clean, mathematical apparatus that gives the status quo the aura of logical inevitability." What will happen, for example, as states begin to use machine learning to spot social media complaints and remove them? Leaders will have a harder time seeing and remedying policy mistakes—even when the mistakes damage the regime. A 2013 study speculated that China has been slower to remove online complaints than one might expect, precisely because such griping provided useful information to the leadership. But now that Beijing is increasingly emphasizing social harmony and seeking to protect high officials, that hands-off approach will be harder to maintain.

The international politics of AI will not create a simple race for dominance.

Chinese President Xi Jinping is aware of these problems in at least some policy domains. He long claimed that his antipoverty campaign—an effort to eliminate rural impoverishment—was a signature victory powered by smart technologies, big data, and AI. But he has since acknowledged flaws in the campaign, including cases where officials pushed people out of their rural homes and stashed them in urban apartments to game poverty statistics. As the resettled fell back into poverty, Xi worried that "uniform quantitative targets" for poverty levels might not be the right approach in the future. Data may indeed be the new oil, but it may pollute rather than enhance a government's ability to rule.

This problem has implications for China's so-called social credit system, a set of institutions for keeping track of pro-social behavior that Western commentators depict as a perfectly functioning "AI-powered surveillance regime that violates human rights." As experts on information politics such as Shazeda Ahmed and Karen Hao have pointed out, the system is, in fact, much messier. The Chinese social credit system actually looks more like the U.S. credit system, which is regulated by laws such as the Fair Credit Reporting Act, than a perfect Orwellian dystopia.

More machine learning may also lead authoritarian regimes to double down on bad decisions. If machine learning is trained to identify possible dissidents on the basis of arrest records, it will likely generate self-reinforcing biases similar to those seen in democracies—reflecting and affirming administrators' beliefs about disfavored

social groups and inexorably perpetuating automated suspicion and backlash. In democracies, public pushback, however imperfect, is possible. In autocratic regimes, resistance is far harder; without it, these problems are invisible to those inside the system, where officials and algorithms share the same prejudices. Instead of good policy, this will lead to increasing pathologies, social dysfunction, resentment, and, eventually, unrest and instability.

WEAPONIZED AI

The international politics of AI will not create a simple race for dominance. The crude view that this technology is an economic and military weapon and that data is what powers it conceals a lot of the real action. In fact, AI's biggest political consequences are for the feedback mechanisms that both democratic and authoritarian countries rely on. Some evidence indicates that AI is disrupting feedback in democracies, although it doesn't play nearly as big a role as many suggest. By contrast, the more authoritarian governments rely on machine learning, the more they will propel themselves into an imaginary world founded on their own tech-magnified biases. The political scientist James Scott's classic 1998 book, *Seeing Like a State*, explained how twentieth-century states were blind to the consequences of their own actions in part because they could see the world through only bureaucratic categories and data. As sociologist Marion Fourcade and others have argued, machine learning may present the same problems but at an even greater scale.

This problem creates a very different set of international challenges for democracies such as the United States. Russia, for example, invested in disinformation campaigns designed to sow confusion and disarray among the Russian public while applying the same tools in democratic countries. Although free speech advocates long maintained that the answer to bad speech was more speech, Putin decided that the best response to more speech was more bad speech. Russia then took advantage of open feedback systems in democracies to pollute them with misinformation.

One rapidly emerging problem is how autocracies such as Russia might weaponize large language models, a new form of AI that can produce text or images in response to a verbal prompt, to generate disinformation at scale. As the computer scientist Timnit Gebru and her colleagues have warned, programs such as Open AI's GPT-3 system

can produce apparently fluent text that is difficult to distinguish from ordinary human writing. BLOOM, a new open-access large language model, has just been released for anyone to use. Its license requires people to avoid abuse, but it will be very hard to police.

These developments will produce serious problems for feedback in democracies. Current online policy-comment systems are almost certainly doomed, since they require little proof to establish whether the commenter is a real human being. Contractors for big telecommunications companies have already flooded the U.S. Federal Communications Commission with bogus comments linked to stolen email addresses as part of their campaign against net neutrality laws. Still, it was easy to identify subterfuge when tens of thousands of nearly identical comments were posted. Now, or in the very near future, it will be trivially simple to prompt a large language model to write, say, 20,000 different comments in the style of swing voters condemning net neutrality.

Artificial intelligence–fueled disinformation may poison the well for autocracies, too. As authoritarian governments seed their own public debate with disinformation, it will become easier to fracture opposition but harder to tell what the public actually believes, greatly complicating the policymaking process. It will be increasingly hard for authoritarian leaders to avoid getting high on their own supply, leading them to believe that citizens tolerate or even like deeply unpopular policies.

SHARED THREATS

What might it be like to share the world with authoritarian states such as China if they become increasingly trapped in their own unhealthy informational feedback loops? What happens when these processes cease to provide cybernetic guidance and instead reflect back the rulers' own fears and beliefs? One self-centered response by democratic competitors would be to leave autocrats to their own devices, seeing anything that weakens authoritarian governments as a net gain.

Such a reaction could result in humanitarian catastrophe, however. Many of the current biases of the Chinese state, such as its policies toward the Uyghurs, are actively malignant and might become far worse. Previous consequences of Beijing's blindness to reality include the great famine, which killed some 30 million people between 1959

and 1961 and was precipitated by ideologically driven policies and hidden by the unwillingness of provincial officials to report accurate statistics. Even die-hard cynics should recognize the dangers of AI-induced foreign policy catastrophes in China and elsewhere. By amplifying nationalist biases, for instance, AI could easily reinforce hawkish factions looking to engage in territorial conquest.

Perhaps, even more cynically, policymakers in the West may be tempted to exploit the closed loops of authoritarian information systems. So far, the United States has focused on promoting Internet freedom in autocratic societies. Instead, it might try to worsen the authoritarian information problem by reinforcing the bias loops that these regimes are prone to. It could do this by corrupting administrative data or seeding authoritarian social media with misinformation. Unfortunately, there is no virtual wall to separate democratic and autocratic systems. Not only might bad data and crazy beliefs leak into democratic societies from authoritarian ones, but terrible authoritarian decisions could have unpredictable consequences for democratic countries, too. As governments think about AI, they need to realize that we live in an interdependent world, where authoritarian governments' problems are likely to cascade into democracies.

A more intelligent approach, then, might look to mitigate the weaknesses of AI through shared arrangements for international governance. Currently, different parts of the Chinese state disagree on the appropriate response to regulating AI. China's Cyberspace Administration, its Academy of Information and Communications Technology, and its Ministry of Science and Technology, for instance, have all proposed principles for AI regulation. Some favor a top-down model that might limit the private sector and allow the government a free hand. Others, at least implicitly, recognize the dangers of AI for the government, too. Crafting broad international regulatory principles might help disseminate knowledge about the political risks of AI.

This cooperative approach may seem strange in the context of a growing U.S.-Chinese rivalry. But a carefully modulated policy might serve Washington and its allies well. One dangerous path would be for the United States to get sucked into a race for AI dominance, which would extend competitive relations still further. Another would be to try to make the feedback problems of authoritarianism worse. Both risk catastrophe and possible war. Far safer, then, for all governments to recognize AI's shared risks and work together to reduce them.

All Democracy Is Global

Why America Can't Shrink From the Fight for Freedom

LARRY DIAMOND

The world is mired in a deep, diffuse, and protracted democratic recession. According to Freedom House, 2021 was the 16th consecutive year in which more countries declined in freedom than gained. Tunisia, the sole democracy to emerge from the Arab Spring protests that began in 2010, is morphing into a dictatorship. In countries as diverse as Bangladesh, Hungary, and Turkey, elections have long ceased to be democratic. Autocrats in Algeria, Belarus, Ethiopia, Sudan, Turkey, and Zimbabwe have clung to power despite mounting public demands for democratization. In Africa, seven democracies have slid back into autocracy since 2015, including Benin and Burkina Faso.

Democracy is looking shaky even in countries that hold free and fair elections. In emerging-market behemoths such as Brazil, India, and

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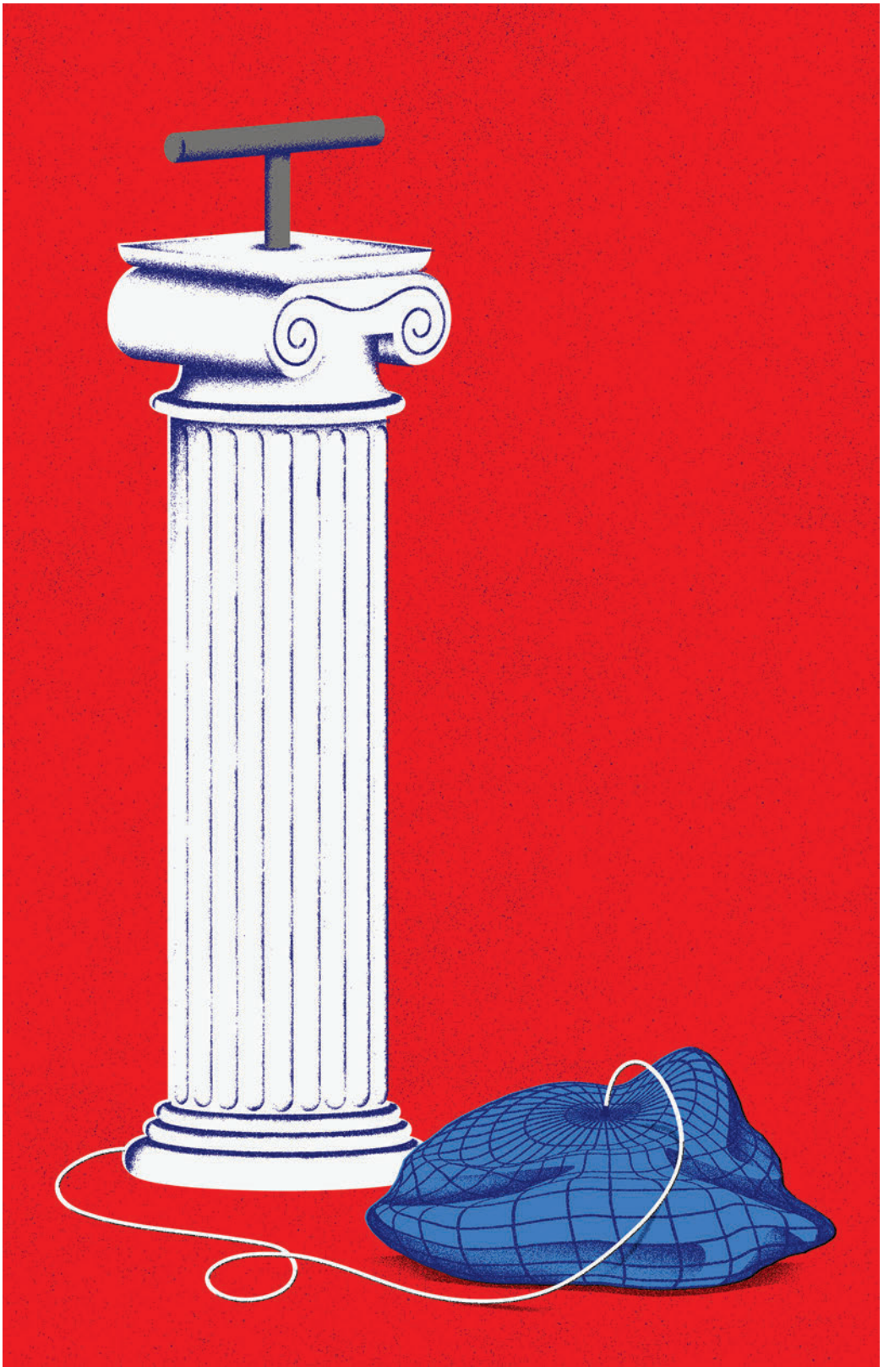

Illustration by Matt Chase

Mexico, democratic institutions and norms are under attack. Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has made threats of an *autogolpe* (self-coup) and a possible return to military rule if he does not win reelection in October. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has steadily chipped away at press freedoms, minority rights, judicial independence, the integrity of the civil service, and the autonomy of civil society. Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has attempted to silence critics and remove democratic checks and balances.

Can a country in the throes of democratic decay arrest the broader global decline?

Democratic prospects have risen and fallen in decades past, but they now confront a formidable new problem: democracy is at risk in the very country that has traditionally been its most ardent champion. Over the past dozen years, the United States has experienced one of the biggest declines in political rights and civil liberties of any country measured by the Freedom House annual survey. *The Economist* now ranks the United States as a "flawed democracy" behind Spain, Costa Rica, and Chile. U.S. President Donald Trump deserves much of the blame: he abused presidential power on a scale unprecedented in U.S. history and, after being voted out of office, propagated the "Big Lie" of election fraud and incited the violent rioters who stormed the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. But American democracy was in peril before Trump assumed office, with rising polarization exposing acute flaws in American democratic institutions. The Electoral College, the representational structure of the Senate, the Senate filibuster, the brazen gerrymandering of House districts, and lifetime appointments to the Supreme Court have all made it possible for a political minority to exert prolonged outsize influence.

Can a country in the throes of its own democratic decay do anything to arrest the broader global decline? For many, the answer is no. The United States needs to get its own house in order before it lectures others, members of this camp say. Lacking the moral standing to promote freedom abroad, Washington should focus on its own troubles, leaving other countries to deal with theirs. Besides, critics argue, anyone who still thinks the United States can competently promote democracy abroad must have forgotten the disaster that was the Iraq war.

But giving up the fight for freedom would be a tragic mistake. U.S. democracy has always been a work in progress, and the courageous political leaders, activists, journalists, and human rights defenders

seeking to achieve or preserve democracy in their countries can't wait for the United States to fix its own internal problems before it provides help. Most people around the world want political freedom, and they worry about its absence or fragility. Now more than ever, the world needs the United States to support democracy—and the United States needs a more muscular and imaginative approach to spreading it.

This is not to deny the urgent importance of defending and strengthening core features of democracy in the United States. This includes securing future elections against attempts to subvert or overturn them, ensuring that everyone eligible to vote has a fair opportunity to do so, sustaining the tradition of nonpartisan electoral administration, and protecting election officials and officeholders from threats of (not to mention acts of) violence, in part by punishing the perpetrators. Failing to do these things, and failing to strive for deeper reforms to diminish polarization and improve democratic functioning, will weaken the United States' leverage in the global struggle for democracy and render other countries more vulnerable to authoritarian propaganda.

American foreign policy is not always pro-democratic, however. Policymakers are continually considering what constitutes the United States' international interests, and in some cases they prioritize good relations with autocratic actors. That said, strong U.S. leadership is necessary—though not sufficient—for the health of global democracy.

Finally, it is not safe to assume that all Americans appreciate the importance of promoting democracy abroad. The case for doing so must be made to each new generation. Whatever happens to the economic aspects of globalization, the world will continue to shrink: people, information, ideas, innovations, and diverse forms of influence cross borders constantly. What was true during the twentieth century is even truer today: every political system is affected by every other, and powerful, aggressive autocracies pose an existential and expansive threat to the world's democracies. For evidence, look no further than Russia's war on Ukraine and China's pressure on Taiwan. A world in which democracy and the rule of law predominate will be friendlier to American interests and democratic values. And it will be a much more peaceful and economically secure world. Who is stealing American high technology and scientific breakthroughs? The greatest threat by far is from the world's most powerful autocracy, China. It is not the democracies of Asia, Europe, or anywhere else that threaten the security of U.S. supply chains for strategic minerals, semiconductors,

and so on. And it is not democratic allies that pose a military threat to the United States, but rather belligerent nuclear armed autocracies such as China, North Korea, Russia, and perhaps, soon, Iran. Morality aside, democracies are far more likely to ensure global peace, property rights, security, and shared prosperity.

SHIFTS IN THE ZEITGEIST

It is fair to ask whether the global struggle between two political systems, democracy and autocracy, is the best way to frame the U.S. national interest. Critics question whether the United States should begin a "new cold war," arguing that the current, multipolar world does not fit the old paradigm. And fewer countries are strongly aligned with any great power; U.S. policymakers need to be wary of forcing countries to choose between China and Russia on one hand and United States and Europe on the other. But the United States needs to defend the principles of freedom and territorial integrity, or the coming years will seem a lot more like the 1930s than the 1990s. The hard truth is that the world's two major autocracies—China and Russia—are waging sophisticated and well-resourced global campaigns to discredit and subvert democracy. And in this new century, the United States and its allies have been ill prepared to fight back. Esteem for American democracy has waned over the past two decades: the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, failed efforts at state building abroad, successive financial crises, and the rising pressures of internal populism and extremism have all hurt the United States' international image. Major European democracies have also been viewed as sluggish and weak in contrast to China, with its rapid modernization, and Russia, with its resurgence as a power on the international stage.

The result has been a major shift in the Zeitgeist. A narrative has been taking hold that democracies are corrupt and worn out, that they lack energy, capacity, and self-confidence. The future, the argument goes, therefore lies with stronger, more efficient authoritarian regimes—China, above all. To be sure, some global public opinion surveys have detected a backlash against China's neocolonial quest for natural resources, strategic assets, market dominance, and corrupt political influence. But in the developing world, many people now look to Beijing for partnership and inspiration.

The deference accorded to authoritarian powers can be discerned in the reaction to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Only a slim majority of Africa's 54 states backed the March 2022 UN General Assembly

resolution condemning this act of aggression. The next month, in a vote on suspending Russia from the UN Human Rights Council, 58 countries abstained, including prominent democracies and "semi-democracies" such as Brazil, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa. Ninety-three yes votes were enough to expel Russia from the council, but they were a minority of the UN's 193 members.

The lack of African support for censuring Russian President Vladimir Putin is a sign of the ties his regime has forged with the continent. In exchange for lucrative mining rights and economic access, Russia has provided roughly a dozen African autocrats with formal military assistance and mercenary fighters and has carried out social media disinformation campaigns to help them maintain their rule. Several African countries are also heavily dependent on Russian exports of fertilizer and wheat. Even Africa's most influential elected leader, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, blamed NATO expansion for Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Russian influence extends beyond Africa. The majority of intellectuals and leaders in the rest of the developing world refuse to sign up for anything that smacks of a new cold war against Russia or China. Many Latin Americans view Western sanctions as selective and politicized—"a tool of the U.S. hegemony," according to Guillaume Long, a former Ecuadorian foreign minister. Resentments against European colonialism and "Yankee imperialism" lurk beneath the surface, ready to be stirred by Russian and Chinese propaganda and resurgent leftist movements.

STARTING OVER

After a decade and a half of losing ground, democracy promotion needs to be reset. The guiding principle for the right strategy is simple: power matters. This is not to endorse using force to impose democracy. That approach almost always fails, and it discredits peaceful efforts. But as the political scientist Samuel Huntington noted, military and diplomatic power create the geopolitical context in which democracy thrives or founders. Preserving U.S. military strength—and the vigor and deterrent capabilities of U.S. alliances and partnerships—is vital to keeping democracies secure against authoritarian encroachment and intimidation. The United States must develop and deploy conventional and new-generation military assets, including a larger navy. This is necessary to deter authoritarian rivals, most of all, China.

In addition, policymakers must hone U.S. economic strength and technological leadership. Ensuring that the U.S. economy remains the world's most powerful—and that the dollar remains the dominant international currency—is vital. Along with its allies, the United States must continue to lead in such technological frontiers as advanced computing, artificial intelligence, bioengineering, robotics, and semiconductors. Staying ahead in these sectors is crucial to ensuring continued U.S. military superiority and overall global leadership. It also sends a message about the comparative advantage of democratic regimes. People and states like to go with a winner. The United States must demonstrate anew that the combination of democracy and private enterprise is a winning formula.

Wanton abusers of human rights must see that there is a price to pay for crushing dissent.

Maintaining a technological edge will require increased funding from the federal government. Financial resources should be earmarked for research and development, a national industrial strategy to steer and stimulate investment in critical U.S. technology industries, and the onshoring of at least some semiconductor and other high-tech manufacturing.

To realize these goals, Congress in late July finally passed the CHIPS Act, which provides more than $52 billion in funding to revive semiconductor manufacturing in the United States, plus tens of billions more in increased support for scientific research and development and for tax credits to further encourage U.S. investment in chip manufacturing. Ideally, in the future Congress will also pass a crucial provision from the original version of the House bill, the America Competes Act, that would lift green card caps for international students graduating from doctoral and many master's degree programs in science, technology, engineering, and math. U.S. universities draw tremendous talent from around the world, and the United States urgently needs skilled scientists and engineers to help win the race for technological dominance.

The United States also needs a supercharged international public engagement campaign to win over hearts and minds through innovative multilingual media operations. China and Russia have been gaining ground in the battle over ideas and values because they are investing more in it than the United States is. They are, furthermore, unconstrained by any fidelity to the truth. Unlike the often boring

truth, lurid disinformation quickly goes viral, and that gives the states that traffic in it an advantage.

But there are two deeper problems that U.S. policymakers can and should address. First, the media landscape in countries around the world has been increasingly distorted by overt censorship and covert efforts to intimidate, control, and corrupt professional journalists. Hence, the United States is losing its most critical allies in the battle for open societies: free and independent media in battleground countries. Second, the United States has no clear strategy to disseminate the values of democracy. Creating one will require a long-term effort, conducted with civic partners and indigenous voices on every continent.

Empowering and sustaining independent media is a critical priority. In partnership with other donors, Luminate, a global philanthropy established by the Omidyar Group, has launched the International Fund for Public Interest Media to fill the gap in financing for independent media around the world. It seeks initially to mobilize $1 billion in annual financing to grow—and in many cases save—independent media. There is no higher priority for democracy assistance than supporting credible and independent newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations, and new digital platforms that report the truth. Without them, the United States cannot rein in disinformation or help local movements resist and ultimately retire dictators.

In addition to fostering a healthy international media ecosystem, the U.S. government also needs to buttress its public diplomacy. Closing the U.S. Information Agency in 1999 was one of the biggest mistakes in American global engagement since the end of the Cold War. As James Clapper, the former U.S. director of national intelligence, stated during testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee in 2017, Washington needs a "USIA on steroids" that would "fight this information war a lot more aggressively." When the USIA was shuttered, it was merged into a section of the State Department led by the undersecretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs. Since then, 17 people have held that title, serving in the job for a little more than a year on average. Since December 2016, seven of the eight incumbents have been in acting rather than permanent roles.

There is no excuse for such apathy from presidential administrations of both parties. The United States needs a general in this global information campaign with the vision, stature, and authority to think boldly. This person must work to craft compelling narratives that tell

the United States' story, rebut false propaganda, foster democratic ideas, and illuminate democratic traditions, struggles, and voices within diverse cultures. These messages should be disseminated creatively, via new media and old. This may require technological leaps to scale the firewalls of state censorship and give people access to new ideas and objective information. Or it could be as simple as producing multimedia libraries of democratic ideas, models, experiences, and institutional forms, translating them into diverse languages, and loading them on thumb drives that could easily be mistaken for pens or lipstick. Civil and human rights groups on the ground and in exile could then find ways to circulate them, even inside dictatorships.

IT STARTS AT HOME

To be sure, the United States' ability to promote democratic values and practices abroad will be difficult if U.S. citizens do not revive their commitment to them at home. If American democracy sinks ever deeper into polarization, stalemate, subversion, and violence, the U.S. message will appear hypocritical, and U.S. allies will be demoralized. Democrats and Republicans cannot agree about how their own country should be governed, but they both favor peaceful efforts to promote democracy abroad, and they both recognize that the world's most powerful autocracies—particularly China and Russia—pose a grave danger to U.S. national security and the American way of life. What Washington needs is a return to the essential democratic norms of mutual tolerance and restraint in the exercise of power, coupled with an unequivocal commitment by all Republicans to accept future election outcomes.

U.S. policy must also expose and rebuff authoritarian efforts, particularly by China and Russia, to subvert open societies. This malign influence falls between the hard power of military and economic might and the soft power of engagement and persuasion. These states' covert tactics include pushing their propaganda as legitimate news, buying up local media companies, bribing politicians, intimidating businesses, forging partnerships with hidden agendas and secret conditions, threatening their own citizens abroad, and influencing what universities teach and think tanks publish. These forms of subversion seek not only to degrade resistance to Chinese and Russian global ambitions but also to erode democratic norms.

To fight disinformation and authoritarian propaganda, democracy education is crucial. Schools should teach the principles of human rights, free and fair elections, the rule of law, accountability,

transparency, and good governance and do so as much as possible through the lens of each country's history and culture. Students should learn the history of these ideas, their roots in diverse cultural and religious traditions, and their universal relevance. Through innovative techniques of instruction and engagement, young people should be equipped and inspired to participate in civic life. Authoritarian and illiberal governments will resist these educational endeavors. In some countries, democracy education may need to proceed entirely outside state-controlled classrooms.

Finally, U.S. policymakers should approach countries with empathy. It is imperative to strive to understand the ideologies, emotions, anxieties, and ambitions that motivate other states. Autocrats will never welcome Western demands that they, in essence, give up power. But wanton abusers of human rights must see that there is a price to pay for crushing dissent. Through resilient diplomacy and an artful application of carrots and sticks, U.S. policymakers should seek to persuade authoritarian rulers that if they ease repression and accept greater political pluralism, their countries will benefit economically. Then the United States will be better able to help them preserve their sovereignty and national security, and leaders will be more effective at governing.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR THEM?

A major reason China has won adherents abroad is that the country has offered lending, investment, and technological assistance through its Belt and Road Initiative. Of course, the roads, bridges, ports, and telecommunications networks across Africa, Asia, and Latin America come with strings attached. To participate in the Belt and Road Initiative, recipient countries must contract with Chinese construction firms and borrow money from China at commercial rates. This arrangement can land states in the kind of debt crisis that recently cost Sri Lanka its economic and political stability. Inflation in Sri Lanka is set to peak at 70 percent, and President Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled the country in July after nationwide protests.

The United States has long warned countries against entering into financial agreements with China but has offered little in the way of alternatives. Fortunately, that may be changing: U.S. President Joe Biden and the leaders of the other G-7 countries announced in 2022 that they would work with the private sector to invest $600 billion over the next five years in infrastructure projects in low- and middle-income countries.

The U.S. government has pledged $200 billion to this effort, under the rubric of the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment. Now the G-7 must follow through with these commitments.

The United States must also reform development assistance. Congress should reduce its earmarking of U.S. aid so that more of it can respond to the needs and priorities that recipient countries identify. This is, after all, in the spirit of the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation, which gives development aid in the form of grants to poor countries that adopt economic and political reforms and then facilitates society-wide consultations to select specific development projects to fund. Such development partnerships will make aid more effective and will make foreign leaders more receptive to an important warning: societies incur enormous risks to their privacy, freedom, and national sovereignty when Chinese companies such as Huawei build their telecommunications infrastructure or provide their police and state security with digital surveillance and facial recognition systems.

These initiatives can guide and sustain a grand strategy for democracy over the medium to the long run. But in the short run, democracy faces specific threats and challenges, the outcomes of which will greatly influence the future of world order.

WIN THE WARS

There is no more important priority than ensuring that Russia's brutal war against Ukraine's democracy ends in Moscow's defeat. In the four months following Russia's February 24 invasion, the United States committed $5.6 billion in military aid to Ukraine, including heavy artillery, drones, missiles, and aircraft. But U.S. delivery of that military aid has often been slow, and some of Ukraine's requests for advanced weapons have not been met. Meanwhile, Russia has continued its withering assault. Led by the United States, the NATO alliance must provide Ukraine with the arms, ammunition, and intelligence it needs to successfully counter Russian aggression.

Victory is not just imperative to protect the Ukrainians' right to self-governance. How the war ends will prompt other countries to draw conclusions about which way global politics is heading and which type of political system has the greater will and tenacity. If Ukraine emerges from this conflict substantially free and secure, with its prewar territory intact and with aid and investment flowing in to rebuild, several powerful lessons will become clear. Bystanders will realize that

democracy is not a weak system but provides the legitimacy, solidarity, and steadfastness necessary for victory, just as it did for the United Kingdom in World War II. The world will also see that the United States, its European allies, and their democratic partners will sacrifice to help an embattled democracy defend itself and to reaffirm the most vital principle of the international order, that territorial aggression will not stand. Finally, it will demonstrate the disastrous incompetence and miscalculation of Putin's authoritarian state and thus illustrate a larger lesson: when leaders are not constrained by checks and balances and alternative flows of information, they are prone to ruinous blunders.

For the sake of global democracy, failure is not an option in Ukraine.

There is another reason why failure is not an option in Ukraine, and it is the next and possibly imminent existential priority: Taiwan. China appears increasingly determined to "reunify" Taiwan with the mainland for symbolic, political, economic, and strategic reasons. Symbolically, the Chinese Communist Party's rulers claim that annexing Taiwan would end a long humiliation and restore China's rightful status as the dominant power in Asia. Politically, the Chinese leadership's absorption of Taiwan would extinguish the living proof that a Chinese society can govern itself as a liberal democracy. Economically, Taiwan hosts the world's most advanced semiconductor manufacturing facilities, producing roughly 90 percent of the world's most powerful chips. And strategically, taking Taiwan would enable China to break past the first island chain—the first chain of archipelagoes out from the East Asian continental mainland—and assert control over not only the South China Sea and its passageways to the Indian Ocean but also the entire western Pacific. China could then push the United States out of Asia and become the hegemon of the Indo-Pacific.

This prospect horrifies the countries of the region, beginning with Washington's vital democratic partner in East Asia, Japan. But if conquest looks inevitable or if Taiwan eventually falls, most regional states will opt to ride the wave of China's hegemonic ascent rather than be drowned by it. For this reason, preserving Taiwan's autonomy as a thriving democracy is an overriding strategic priority not just for the region but for the entire world. If Taiwan can maintain its current course of moderation, avoiding any hint of movement toward de jure independence, and if China can be deterred from attacking Taiwan, crucial time

will be purchased for China to change politically. With a rapidly shrinking and aging population and huge contradictions in its excessively state-dominated economy, China will increasingly face deep domestic challenges that may press it in the direction of pragmatism, reform, and a more enlightened vision of what constitutes national greatness.

To secure a democratic Taiwan, the United States and its strategic partners—including Australia, Japan, and allies in Europe—must avoid pointless provocation. This means adhering to the diplomatic status quo, including the "one China" policy, and avoiding the temptation to take steps such as announcing formal diplomatic recognition of Taiwan, which would be symbolically gratifying but would back China's leaders into a corner. It will also be important for Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen's successor to continue her stance of pragmatism and restraint in cross-strait relations.

At the same time, both the United States and Taiwan must address the deteriorating military balance with Beijing. China is modernizing militarily, acquiring the ships and weapons systems it would need to mount a cross-strait invasion of Taiwan. It is stepping up disinformation in Taiwan, with a continuous barrage of "news" and social media messages smearing Taiwan's democracy, trying to tilt its politics toward Beijing-friendly politicians, and portraying other democracies as weak and incompetent. Beijing is also escalating military intimidation, including repeated incursions into Taiwan's air defense identification zone. With support from Japan, the United States, and Europe, Taiwan needs to reshuffle this strategic picture. That means more emphasis on asymmetric warfare and larger military reserves. Above all, it means spending more on defense, which, at roughly 2.1 percent of GDP, is still a fraction of the 5.2 percent Taiwan spent in 1990.

Finally, Taiwan could change the dynamic of the political impasse with a dramatic gesture. Taking a page from the National Unification Guidelines adopted by Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui in 1991, Taiwan could establish that as a condition for negotiations on the future shape of its sovereignty, mainland China would have to be a democracy and guarantee fundamental human rights to its citizens. This would signal to the people of mainland China that the real obstacle to dialogue is China's authoritarian Communist Party, which does not respect the rule of law or political accountability and, therefore, as it showed in Hong Kong, cannot credibly commit to "one country, two systems." A U.S. information campaign could then puncture Beijing's social media firewall to amplify this message to the Chinese people.

DON'T FEED THE AUTHORITARIANS

In addition to helping those populations living in the shadow of authoritarian great powers, U.S. policymakers must pay attention to strategically important countries where democracy is struggling. The United States should prioritize Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, and—most of all—India, given the size of their populations, their economic potential, and their geopolitical heft. In all these countries, the United States should find innovative ways to support democratic principles, voices, and organizations that do not feed the illiberal nationalist discourses of authoritarian populists.

India poses the hardest challenge. For one thing, the Modi government has made it very difficult for its nongovernmental organizations to receive foreign funding. For another, India is part of the Quad (the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue), a strategic partnership that also includes Australia, Japan, and the United States and provides a crucial counterweight to China's hegemonic ambitions in the region. Thus, U.S. diplomats are wary of ruffling Modi's feathers. As it balances the tension between calling out Modi's authoritarian transgressions and maintaining his support on U.S. Indo-Pacific policy, the United States must signal that this new era of strategic cooperation is a long-run bet. But at the same time, the United States must make clear how much more would be possible in trade, investment, and technological cooperation if the current illiberal assaults on critics, opponents, and religious minorities in India were to abate.

The United States also needs to be more agile in response to threats and opportunities—even in countries with less geopolitical weight. Since July 2021, when Tunisian President Kais Saied suspended parliament and seized emergency powers, his actions have increasingly constituted an executive coup against democracy. To make clear the price that will be paid for a failure to restore democracy, the wealthy established democracies should block the International Monetary Fund bailout that Saied needs to manage the country's economic crisis. More generally, the U.S. government needs to be ready to move quickly, with its democratic allies and with democratic forces in these countries, to label coups for what they are and to preempt and reverse rollbacks of democracy before they congeal into new autocracies. And the United States needs to respond nimbly with incentives and aid when authoritarian divisions and mass demonstrations open new possibilities for democratic transitions.

THE TWILIGHT STRUGGLE

Global conditions for democracy are bad and getting worse. The United States needs to politically and financially support the people and organizations struggling, often at great risk, for freedom. This is a moral imperative. And it is in the United States' national interest to encourage transitions to more democratic, lawful, and accountable governments around the world. Policymakers can't predict when pivotal opportunities will emerge to champion democratic campaigns or when a backsliding democratic government might confront a crisis that would enable democrats to regain the momentum. Moreover, democrats around the world draw hope, institutional lessons, and tactical insights from interactions with one another. Support for them also reaffirms that political freedom and civil liberties are universal rights to which all people are entitled, irrespective of region and culture.

In his inaugural address, U.S. President John F. Kennedy called on Americans to carry on "a long twilight struggle" against tyranny. When he spoke those words in 1961, democracy was far worse off than it is now. Most countries were autocracies, nearly half of Europe was under Soviet domination, and it was not clear whether free or communist societies would win the Cold War. Today, despite a decade and a half of democratic erosion and recession, the picture is much brighter. About half of all countries are democracies, and even where authoritarian regimes predominate, opinion polls show broad popular support for democracy and the rule of law. Hence, most governments that are not democratic believe their legitimacy depends on claiming that they are. The gap between their claims and reality renders them vulnerable. Even if they are dissatisfied with democratic politicians and institutions, most people would still rather live in a democracy that offers protection for their rights. They want a democracy that is real and that works. The autocracies of the world—China, Egypt, Iran, and Russia, not to mention Venezuela and Zimbabwe and their unfolding calamities—face severe challenges precisely because of their lack of accountability and open debate. All this suggests that the Zeitgeist can shift back in favor of democracy. But it won't do so on its own. It requires American power, and a renewal of America's democratic purpose at home and abroad.

The Fractured Superpower

Federalism Is Remaking U.S. Democracy and Foreign Policy

JENNA BEDNAR AND MARIANO-FLORENTINO CUÉLLAR

Amid the continuing revelations about what led to the January 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol, one aspect of the crisis has received comparatively little attention: how the effort to negate the presidential election outcome was built on the malign use of the United States' federal system of government. Since the slates of electors that collectively certify the presidential election are chosen at the state level, the January 6 conspirators sought to appoint alternative slates of electors in several states to overturn the results. In the end, Republican state officials in Arizona, Georgia, and other states refused to undermine democracy on behalf of their partisans. But the conspiracy underscored the far-reaching

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Illustration by Nicolás Ortega

importance of the states in some of the most fundamental decisions of the U.S. government, as well as how much it matters who controls those governments and what interests they serve.

Although it was an extreme case, the January 6 crisis was not the only situation in recent years in which the states have played a crucial role in setting the direction of the country as a whole. In areas as varied as access to firearms, emergency health care, immigration enforcement, cryptocurrency regulation, and the climate crisis, states have been asserting their powers to influence, and in some cases to challenge, U.S. policy. State leaders aggressively litigate to block federal policy and are active in responding to federal developments that contrast with the preferences of state electoral majorities. And some of the largest states—California, Florida, New York, and Texas collectively account for about 37 percent of U.S. GDP—are becoming more involved in foreign affairs, not only on economic and social issues but also through the soft diplomacy of values and culture. In the summer of 2022, even as the Biden administration was reeling from West Virginia' s successful litigation before the U.S. Supreme Court to limit federal regulations on greenhouse gas emissions, the president asked California Governor Gavin Newsom to join a ministerial meeting on climate with Chinese Minister of Ecology and Environment Huang Runqiu.

To many observers, such examples may seem anomalous because—according to the most common understanding of the federal system—the U.S. government is the country's preeminent source of policy direction and bears sole responsibility for foreign affairs. Together with lawmakers in Congress, the president and senior executive branch officials are viewed as the key agenda-setters on U.S. leadership and how it is exercised in a tumultuous world. And since the rise of the United States as a global power is closely associated with the growing centralization and capacity of the federal government during the twentieth century, U.S. authority on the world stage has often been associated with a federal system in which Washington is dominant.

But this conventional understanding is both flawed and out of date. It is true that the federal government imposes a variety of constraints on the states and controls key levers of foreign policy. When it comes to policymaking capacity and on-the-ground implementation, however, states increasingly hold a decisive edge—particularly in an era of partisan gridlock in Washington. And in a

world in which economic, technological, and cultural influence is often spread through subnational regions, the largest U.S. states can make policies with direct global impact.

As the federal bargain moves in the direction of state power, it will have far-reaching consequences for the United States' global profile and the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. Harnessed in the right way, the states can enhance U.S. power, providing new and more dynamic ways to advance an international agenda at a time of federal gridlock, while strengthening U.S. democracy at home. But as the January 6 crisis illustrates, states can also be used to undermine the country's longstanding alliances or even to subvert the democratic process. How leaders in Washington, the courts, diplomatic circles in different regions, and local and state governments approach this shift will determine whether state-level action becomes a source of resilience or a destabilizing force for Americans and the world.

THE EVOLVING FEDERAL BARGAIN

By outward appearance, the expansion of federal powers in the twentieth century has given Washington the advantage in the federal-state balance. The Civil War, after all, established the federal government's control of the military as well as the illegality of unilateral secession by any state. And the civil rights movement cemented a broad understanding of federal power to enforce desegregation, voting rights, and school integration. Moreover, states are limited by balanced-budget requirements, as well as by their dependence on federal funds for between a quarter and a third of their budgets—giving the federal government considerable leverage in getting them to do its bidding. Congress has made liberal use of its spending powers, for example, to direct state policy on K–12 education, on the conduct of public officials through the Hatch Act, and on the expansion of Medicaid through the Affordable Care Act. Bolstered by constitutional provisions, such as the power to regulate interstate commerce and fund the military, the federal government can sometimes preempt state action.

But this account misses much of the story. For one thing, it is true that the federal government's overall spending is slightly higher than the combined total spending of states and local governments ($4.4 trillion to $3.3 trillion, respectively, in 2019). But states dwarf the federal government in their budgetary impact on voters: setting aside military funding, service on the national debt, and entitlements, in

most years states and their dependent local governments are responsible for the lion's share of government expenditures. Together, they also employ a far larger workforce. As of 2020, state and local governments employed nearly 20 million people, whereas the federal government had only about 2.2 million civilian employees and 1.3 million active-duty military personnel. State and local administrations, not the federal government, set most of the policies that affect the day-to-day lives of their residents, including policies relating to policing, education, land use, criminal justice, emergency response, and public health. States have far more control over education policy, providing over 90 percent of funding for schools in almost every state. Moreover, the federal government depends on states to implement nearly all major federal policies, including the most costly: health insurance and welfare. As states implement federal policy, they exercise discretion, adjusting it around the margins to suit their own interests. And thanks to their sizable economies, the largest states can make decisions that have an impact beyond their own borders. All this has meant that the federal system is far more adaptable, and states far more powerful, than has generally been recognized.

States fill in existing policy gaps when the federal government stalls.

Particularly striking is the extent to which states can be centers of policy innovation. They have distinct economies, and although they vary greatly in size, even the largest and most diverse states have populations whose interests and attitudes are more cohesive than those of the country at large. States also tend to be better at assembling big coalitions to support major policy action, and they do not have the kinds of procedural hindrances—the filibuster and the line-item veto—that often hamper the federal system. As a result, states have long been drivers of progress and change. As early as the nineteenth century, for example, Iowa, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania lifted bans on interracial marriage, even as other states imposed them. Over time, however, states with bans repealed them as public support for interracial marriage grew; the Supreme Court's landmark 1967 *Loving v. Virginia* decision extended the repeal to the federal level. Indeed, many of the most important federal policy changes—including ending slavery; expanding marriage rights, voting rights, and civil rights; changing health-care access, reproductive rights, and welfare coverage; reforming public education; and protecting the

environment—were first tried at the state level, making states what U.S. Justice Louis Brandeis called "laboratories of democracy."

But states do more than test new policy; they also fill in existing policy gaps when the federal government stalls. Consider the issue of immigration. Despite an economy that relies heavily on an immigrant workforce, the United States often leaves those seeking permanent status in legal limbo for years. As a result, states have filled the policy gap, with blue states such as California and New York offering access to health care and education for the undocumented, and red states such as Arizona and Texas using their own resources to increase border enforcement and internal patrols. Similarly, when the federal government failed to impose a strict national standard on auto emissions, California created its own and, because of the size of its market, was able to force automakers to manufacture cars nationwide that meet California's standards. And in the absence of federal policy to address social media companies' banning users because of their political viewpoints, Texas legislators enacted a law in 2021 limiting content moderation. (The law has been temporarily blocked, pending a lawsuit now making its way through the courts.)

Over the past two decades, states have also gained leverage to experiment in areas such as legalizing marijuana, despite conflicting federal law. The states are taking advantage of a federal government that has pulled back on marijuana-related enforcement unrelated to organized crime but has failed to repeal federal criminal penalties on marijuana possession and sale. And with federal action on climate change increasingly impeded—including, paradoxically, by state-led challenges, such as *West Virginia v. EPA*—states have new opportunities to fill the breach. Already, many states are decarbonizing their energy sources, and 21 states have set 100 percent clean energy goals. Some are enacting zoning rules that ban gas hookups in new buildings and are prohibiting new industry on the basis of greenhouse gas emissions; New York State denied construction permits to a cryptocurrency mining operation on the grounds that it was at odds with the state's sustainability goals. In this dance of adaptation and response between Washington and the states, the federal system builds in enough flexibility for U.S. policymakers to innovate and take on major issues facing the country, even when the federal government is hobbled by polarization, legislative gridlock, and court-imposed limits.

NETWORKS, NOT NATIONS

Despite their growing role in domestic policy, states may appear to have little sway in foreign affairs, where nation-to-nation diplomacy and hard power reign supreme. But in many regions of the world and on a host of issues such as aviation, ocean management, climate change, and refugee resettlement, those traditional tools now compete with other forms of influence. As the scholar Anne-Marie Slaughter has argued, networks of institutions and individuals—scholars and scientists, government officials, business executives, and the leaders of social movements—have long been sharing ideas and coordinating strategies across borders. In areas of technology policy, these networks have allowed smaller countries to have global influence that far exceeds their relative size and hard power: Estonia, for example, has played a leading part in counter-disinformation strategy, and South Korea has been a pioneering force in public-private partnerships for online authentication.

In the United States, international networks have become a critical way for the country to assert its leadership on many issues. When bolstered by state governments' power to develop policy experiments and set international standards, such cross-border exchanges can drive policy innovations—including in such areas as artificial intelligence (AI), biomedicine, block chain, and renewable energy—that are becoming more difficult to achieve at the federal level. It was in part to buttress such networks in the face of rising geopolitical competition that the U.S. government was spurred in May 2022 to create the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework—a loose arrangement to promote standard-setting, sustainable growth and broader economic connections between the United States and its allies in the region.

States with outsize stakes in energy, trade, and technology have special incentives to engage in foreign policy. In economic sectors that are underfunded or left unaddressed by Washington, larger states are seeking their own international partnerships or agreements to compensate. In 2014, California began a cap-and-trade agreement with Quebec, allowing the two regions jointly to create the largest carbon market in North America; in 2022, the Massachusetts Biotechnology Council launched a partnership with a European Union health industry trade body to promote cross-border biotechnology research. Although the U.S. Constitution prevents states from entering into formal treaty arrangements, the State Department has

interpreted these constraints to apply only to agreements that are "legally binding," leaving plenty of room for states to make international arrangements by other means.

Even in hard-power conflicts such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine, subnational networks can play an important role. Notably, since the war began, Western corporations, responding to pressure from shareholders and the public, have left the Russian market en masse. Civil society institutions are working with Ukrainian officials and technology companies to thwart Russian disinformation efforts. And local communities are signaling their openness to receiving refugees. Of course, different U.S. states have different geopolitical interests: a more open trade policy tends to benefit oil-producing Louisiana and Texas far more than it does Michigan or North Carolina, whose populations may fear losing more jobs overseas under such a policy. Rather than leading to greater centralization of power, then, the current age of growing geopolitical conflict and accelerating technological change seems likely to push more states to become involved in national and international affairs.

A HIDDEN ARSENAL

As states assert their interests even more actively in the coming years, they will have a variety of tools to choose from. For one thing, they can count on broad public support. Consider the impact over the past year of public discourse about such national controversies as school shootings, court decisions, business and environmental regulation, and natural disasters. Polling data suggest that the failure of the federal government to address these and other issues has alienated significant parts of the electorate. Gallup reports that 39 percent of Americans trust the federal government to handle domestic problems, down from the historical average of 53 percent. At the same time, more than half of Americans continue to have confidence in their state governments and two-thirds express trust in their local governments. Civil society and state leaders may therefore be emboldened to reject or refuse to comply with unpopular federal laws.

During the implementation of the U.S.A. Patriot Act following the September 11, 2001, attacks, for example, people began to question the act's loose definition of "domestic terrorism" and its provisions for information sharing, and they expressed concern that protest and civil disobedience would be classified as terrorist acts, dampening citizens'

First Amendment rights. Five states—Alaska, Colorado, Hawaii, Montana, and Vermont—passed resolutions questioning the act's constitutionality and limiting its application. In the last decade, with respect to immigration policy, 11 states and hundreds of cities and counties have declared themselves to be "sanctuaries" for undocumented people, meaning that they will not comply with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement requests to extend detention and will otherwise separate their law enforcement from federal deportation activities. And in response to the Supreme Court's overruling of *Roe v. Wade* in June 2022—which occurred despite recent polling by Gallup showing that a clear majority of Americans (55 percent) identify as pro-choice—nearly 100 elected prosecutors, including several state attorneys general, have pledged that they will not enforce abortion bans.

States are taking the lead on issues ranging from AI to biomedicine.

In fact, *West Virginia v. EPA* is only one of the most recent cases in which a state has successfully challenged a major federal policy. In 2007, Massachusetts successfully litigated a case forcing the EPA to plan regulatory measures addressing climate change. During the Obama administration, Texas challenged an executive action that protected certain undocumented immigrants from deportation. California challenged the Trump administration's move to reduce the state's flexibility to set vehicle emission standards. Under extreme circumstances, civil society leaders, candidates for local and state office, and state officeholders could support changes in state laws to limit cooperation between state and federal revenue authorities or even encourage companies and individuals not to comply with federal tax or regulatory mandates. They could draw on anti-commandeering doctrines enshrined in Supreme Court jurisprudence, establishing that the federal government cannot coerce states or state officials to adopt or enforce federal laws. With such a range of tools, states are well positioned to take advantage of the federal government's inability to act. As narrow majorities and growing polarization have made the federal government less functional, many states have become more politically homogeneous, with a single party now controlling both the legislature and the governor's office in 37 states, facilitating legislative action. At the same time, larger cities have found new ways to flex their economic muscle abroad, regardless of federal policy. In other words, the time is ripe for states and cities to assert themselves, and they are doing so.

FROM SACRAMENTO TO SEOUL

The growing power of states is already reshaping U.S. foreign policy. As states experiment with policies that the rest of the country isn't ready to support, they can exert an immediate impact abroad: California's zero emission vehicle policy, for example, was a blueprint for a similar scheme in China. Given the special regional and international ties of some metropolitan areas—consider greater Miami's profile in Latin America—states and their constituent cities can also leverage their soft power and convening capacity to facilitate policy coordination and form coalitions with like-minded foreign governments. And states can also use the flexibility in existing U.S. law to collaborate on international agreements to address problems of global significance neglected by Washington.

The potential for state-led action is large. Already, states have pledged adherence to international climate change treaty provisions and are forming agreements with foreign governments to achieve sustainability goals. Other areas in which states seem likely to take the lead include supply chain resilience and industrial policy coordination; regional trading arrangements; long-term research and development partnerships; international standard setting, as, for example, in environmental regulations; and new forms of international diplomacy. Just as important, however, are the risks that a more decentralized U.S. posture in the world could pose. Subnational diplomacy involving states and research institutions may conceivably complicate national strategies for safeguarding sensitive information from other countries. And as states increasingly use litigation to contest federal action, foreign governments may be able to exploit tensions between states and the federal government, for example, through disinformation operations. If functional federalism is a strategic asset, dysfunctional federalism could be a recipe for weakening U.S. power.

THE STATES STRIKE BACK

As the January 6, 2021, crisis revealed, federalism cuts both ways in the U.S. electoral process. In addition to designing and executing new policies in domains as varied as cryptocurrency, technology transfer, and immigrant integration, state officials are responsible for specific procedures to administer elections, count votes, and report results. For decades, Americans believed that the various democratic

safeguards rooted in the court system, the media, and civic norms allowed the country to navigate federal-state tensions with sagacity. But particularly after the assault on the U.S. Capitol, it's plausible to take a much darker view. With norms crumbling, a polarized public, and party leaders egging them on, many state officials could aggressively seek partisan advantage even if doing so means thwarting the public's vote. The Supreme Court may embrace the so-called independent state legislature doctrine, which would potentially countenance state legislative efforts to ignore the popular vote in their states and appoint desired slates of replacement electors. If current efforts to reform the rickety Electoral Count Act are unsuccessful, partisan federal lawmakers could argue that the act allows federal legislative majorities to ignore duly appointed electoral slates.

As the January 6 crisis revealed, federalism cuts both ways in the U.S. electoral process.

But in such a scenario, states could fight back. In *The Federalist Papers*, no. 45 and no. 46, James Madison argued that states play a crucial role as backstops against federal overreach and called on them to sound the alarm in response to undemocratic action by the federal government. A particularly vivid example concerns a future effort to manipulate a presidential election result. If in a presidential contest in which their candidate loses, Republicans try to stir up sufficient suspicion about the outcome in, say, Georgia or Arizona to certify rival electoral slates and take the presidency, other states such as California or New York could take a variety of extreme measures to resist. Among other steps, they could suspend cooperation with the federal government, opt out of or subvert federal-state agreements, sever connections between state and federal law enforcement, and symbolically seize federal property. Whether these actions spur greater risk of political violence within and across states—particularly if pursued simultaneously by multiple states—they would virtually guarantee that a unified American global strategy would be severely undermined.

But the larger point is that such a course of action, however damaging, would allow the states to play a critical role in sustaining the democratic process in the event of a national crisis. When an election is at risk of being overturned by extraconstitutional means, and federal-level political or judicial safeguards fail to defend democracy, the states can serve as a last resort, drawing on the integrity of local

officials and institutions as well as the states' latent capabilities to frustrate routine federal activity in extraordinary circumstances. State resistance can prove to be a democracy-preserving action.

RESILIENCE FROM BELOW

As policy innovators, shapers of foreign policy, and even defenders of U.S. democracy, states have far more influence than is commonly recognized, and they are poised to build on it in the years to come. To manage this growing role, the U.S. government, state leaders, and the voters themselves must approach the federal system strategically and mitigate the inherent risks of decentralization.

First, state governments should further develop their potential to act as "laboratories of democracy" in the U.S. federal system, collaborating with one another when they develop new policies and standards, to shape global developments in ways that advance U.S. interests. States can force action on international climate agreements, reinvigorate immigration strategies, and forge crucial international research partnerships. Doing so will help set the global agenda, but it will also help preserve the viability and strength of the United States in the world order.

Second, foreign governments can strengthen their long-term relationships with the United States, regardless of who is in power in Washington, by building ties with individual states and their dependent cities. Areas for collaboration include setting technology standards for AI and carbon footprint calculations, investment in scientific research and technology, and support for ideals such as humanitarian relief or freedom of religion through, say, assistance for refugee resettlement. In all these areas, states can be sources of progress as well as offer continuity in foreign relations.

Third, policymakers in Washington should recognize the value of allowing states to experiment on core issues and even engage with them globally. Congress should reestablish the Advisory Committee on Intergovernmental Relations—a federal panel defunded in 1996 that included state, local, and federal policymakers who periodically evaluated the current health of the federal system—to provide a further means for informal negotiation and sharing best practices. When congressional action on an issue isn't possible, federal agencies should partner with their state equivalents to pursue policy goals. Federal courts, too, would do well to bear in mind—to the extent relevant disputes allow—that states need room to maneuver within the federal system.

That said, leaders in major states should also plan for the possibility of severe or prolonged federal dysfunction, especially involving future disruptions of the electoral process. As a start, state policymakers can help the public become more educated about the federal system and how it could be manipulated for malign purposes. Although the federal-state balance is an underappreciated source of strength with the potential to drive progress on a host of global issues, it also raises difficult and sometimes painful questions for the United States and the world. In the United States, federalism also reflects a racist history, in which states were able to prevent Blacks from voting, receiving quality education, and fully participating in the economy, as well as restrict where they could live and socialize. As major states become more assertive, their actions will bring new risks as well as new possibilities. Whether this more complex federal system improves policy, bolsters democracy, and enhances America's role in the world depends on who uses the instruments of federalism and for what purposes. When citizens fail to pay attention, states are vulnerable to strategic abuse by those who would weaponize federalism for party or private interests, against the public and against democracy.

At its best, the constant interplay between the states and the federal government can provide a powerful strategic advantage to the United States. States can contribute to continued U.S. leadership on the most vital international policy challenges of our time, as well as ensure the resilience of the U.S. system, helping to preserve and defend democratic institutions and practices. In a more pessimistic scenario, however, the federal bargain could become a source of conflict and tension. And as other countries exploit growing rifts, key states could be left looking to each other and the world rather than to the federal government for leadership.

What no one should ignore is that U.S. states have the power as well as the motivation to both challenge Washington and shape the global policy agenda. State policymakers and leaders of countries large and small must consider the United States a vast entity with presumed national interests but also as an archipelago of powerful, competing jurisdictions, with certain shared ties, as well as an array of divergent interests and values. Increasingly, the story of U.S. democracy and U.S. leadership abroad will depend not only on developments on the shore of the Potomac but on how Americans and the world understand that archipelago—and how its various individual centers of power learn to use their own potential to shape and adapt to a fast-changing world.

REVIEW ESSAY

In Praise of Lesser Evils

Can Realism Repair Foreign Policy?

EMMA ASHFORD

An Unwritten Future: Realism and Uncertainty in World Politics
BY JONATHAN KIRSHNER. Princeton University Press, 2022, 336 pp.

The Atlantic Realists: Empire and International Political Thought Between Germany and the United States
BY MATTHEW SPECTER. Stanford University Press, 2022, 336 pp.

It's not a great time to be a realist. Although many prominent realist theorists of international relations correctly predicted the war in Ukraine, their focus on great-power politics over the rights of small states and their warnings about the risks of escalation have not been popular among the foreign policy commentariat. The insistence of some realists, chief among them John Mearsheimer, that the war is almost entirely the result of the structural factor of NATO's expansion rather than the bellicosity of Russian President Vladimir Putin has not endeared realism to a broader public audience, either. According to the scholar Tom Nichols, the war in Ukraine has proved that "realism is nonsense."

Some of this is just realism's normal public relations problem when it comes to ethics and human rights. One of the main philosophical traditions of international politics, realism sees power and security as being at the center of the international system. Although the school of thought comes in a variety of flavors, nearly all realists agree on a few core notions: that states are guided primarily by security and survival; that states act on the basis of national interest rather than principle; and that the international system is defined by anarchy.

None of these notions are pleasant or popular. The realist Robert Gilpin once titled an article "No One Loves a Political Realist." All too often, pointing out the harsh realities of international

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life or noting that states often act in barbaric ways is seen as an endorsement of selfish behavior rather than a simple diagnosis. As one of the school's founding fathers, Hans Morgenthau, put it, realists may see themselves as simply refusing to "identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the moral laws that govern the universe." But their critics often accuse them of having no morals at all, as the debate over Ukraine has shown.

As if on cue, two new books seek to address realism's flaws and its promise by looking back at the history of classical realism—an earlier version of realism that arrived at its pessimism not by way of its analysis of the international system but through a more broadly gloomy take on human nature. Matthew Specter's *The Atlantic Realists* explores the development of classical realism in the period after World War I, with a particular focus on the cross-pollination between German and American intellectuals and on the deeper and more malevolent historical roots of the concepts underlying this philosophy. Jonathan Kirshner's *An Unwritten Future*, by contrast, seeks to rehabilitate classical realism as a frame for understanding modern geopolitics, particularly in opposition to more modern structural versions of realism. Whereas Kirshner seeks to praise classical realism, Specter has come to bury it. But both authors draw on a central truth about realism, which the political scientist William Wohlforth has put this way: "The most important point is that realism is not now and never has been a single theory." Rather, it comprises a variety of models for thinking about the world, each characterized by pragmatism and the art of the possible, rather than grand and often doomed ideological crusades suggested by other schools of thought.

THE KREMLIN ON THE COUCH

Realists have been at the forefront in criticizing the United States' disastrous foreign policy in recent decades, highlighting the folly of trying to remake the world in its image. As a result, public and even elite views have begun to swing in a more pragmatic and realist direction over the last decade. In failing to adequately explain and respond to the war in Ukraine, however, realists may face a potential backlash to that shift.

Ukraine has long been a flash point for realist thought. Many realists argue that in the post–Cold War period, the United States has been too focused on an idealistic conception of European politics and too blasé about classic geopolitical concerns, such as the enduring meaning of borders and the military balance between Russia and its rivals. Policymakers who subscribed to liberal internationalism—the idea that trade, international institutions, or liberal norms can help build a world where power politics matter less—typically presented NATO's expansion as a matter of democratic choice for smaller central and eastern European states. Realists, in contrast, argued that it would present a legitimate security concern for Moscow; no matter how benevolent NATO might seem from the West's perspective, they would argue, no state would be happy with an opposing military alliance moving even closer to its borders.

These disputes became more rancorous after Russia's 2008 war in Georgia and its 2014 annexation of Crimea, with liberal internationalists arguing that these wars revealed Putin to be an imperialist, revisionist leader seeking to reconquer the Soviet empire. Many realists, however, maintained that these conflicts were Moscow's attempts to prevent its closest neighbors from joining NATO. Both arguments are plausible; the Kremlin's reasoning is hard to discern. Yet as diagnoses, they point to very different policy conclusions: if Putin is acting out of ambition, then the West should bolster deterrence and take a hard line against Russia, but if he is acting out of fear, it should compromise and accept limits on future expansion.

Since the February 24 invasion, there has been a new dimension to this criticism. The more thoughtful critiques of realism in the months after the war began noted that many realist analyses of the conflict are relatively unhelpful because they focus almost entirely on relations between the United States and Russia and ignore the internal and ideational factors that explain Putin's decision to invade and his conduct during the conflict. Realists are probably correct that NATO's expansion into the post-Soviet space contributed to the war, but that is at best a partial explanation. Other factors appear to have also loomed large in Russia's prewar decision-making: the prospect of NATO armaments or bases in Ukraine (with or without its formal membership), Western training for the Ukrainian military, Kyiv's corruption crackdown on oligarchs close to Putin, and Ukraine's increasing economic ties to the EU.

The war in Ukraine thus suggests that some realist theories are simply not as helpful as they could be during a time of global geopolitical upheaval; realists have the broad contours of the war in Ukraine right but get many of the details wrong. This is particularly unfortunate, as other approaches to the world—most notably the variants of liberal internationalism that dominated so much of the post–Cold War period—have also been found wanting. Proponents of primacy or liberal hegemony, for example, who argued that the United States could maintain its outsize military edge and prevent the rise of other powers, have been proved wrong by the rise of China. Liberal internationalists who endorsed wars of regime change in Afghanistan and Iraq or humanitarian interventions in Libya have seen their grand projects falter and fail. The realist theories presented in Specter's and Kirshner's books may not offer insights that are new, precisely, but they revise and update our understanding of a classical realist model whose pragmatism is in many ways a better fit for our newly multipolar world.

LET'S GET REAL

What today is called "realism"—the school of thought most undergraduates are taught in their International Relations 101 class—is in fact structural realism or neorealism, a version of realism outlined in the 1970s by the scholar Kenneth Waltz. Neorealism is further divided into "defensive" and "offensive" variants, depending on whether one believes that states primarily seek security through defensive means, such as military fortifications

Provocateurs? Polish soldiers during a NATO exercise in Orzysz, Poland, July 2022

and technology, or through an expansion that acquires power and territory. Both versions focus heavily on structural factors (the ways that states interact at the global level) and effectively ignore domestic politics, the quirks of bureaucratic decision-making, the psychology of leaders, global norms, and international institutions. Neorealism thus stands in stark contrast to the older school of classical realism, which counts Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Bismarck among its earliest practitioners, has strong roots in philosophy, and includes factors such as domestic politics and the role of human nature, prestige, and honor. It also contrasts with classical realism's more modern counterpart, "neoclassical realism" (a term coined by Gideon Rose, a former editor of this magazine), which seeks to marry the two variants by reincorporating domestic and ideational factors into structural theories.

Specter's and Kirshner's books both concern themselves with classical realism, in particular its role as the fount of all later realist theories. As if in a comic book, Specter seeks to unearth realism's origin story, with a focus on the intellectual underpinnings and biographies of key players such as Morgenthau and the German theorist Wilhelm Grewe. In doing so, his intent is to prove that the genesis of realism is a much darker tale than previously understood. In the commonly told story of classical realism, German-American émigrés such as Morgenthau reacted to the bloody wars of the early twentieth century by rejecting the unfounded idealism of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson and returning to the classic notions of realpolitik espoused by such thinkers as Machiavelli and Thucydides. This narrative, as presented most famously by the British historian Edward Hallett Carr, attributes the rise of the Nazis and

OMAR MARQUES / GETTY IMAGES

the outbreak of World War II to the failure of Wilson's idealistic efforts to create a League of Nations that would resolve conflict through laws and norms instead of through realpolitik and force.

But classical realism, Specter argues, is not actually a descendant of Bismarckian *Realpolitik*. Rather, it is an offshoot of the pursuit of *Weltpolitik*, the imperialist school of thought put into practice by the bumbling imperialist Wilhelm II in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Where the former emphasized skillful balancing between adversaries to avoid unnecessary conflict, the latter was driven more by social Darwinist notions that great powers have the right to expand and dominate. To make his case for realism's nefarious roots, Specter looks at the origins of central concepts of classical realism, exploring terms such as "the national interest" and "geopolitics." What he finds is that some of these terms did in fact originate decades before the mid-twentieth century, in debates about imperialism and the claims of politicians such as Wilson that rising powers like the United States and Germany were exceptional.

Likewise, Specter makes a solid case that the classical realists in many ways invented a noble lineage for themselves, identifying great historical philosophers whose work fit in with their notions of the world (such as Hobbes) while eliding or avoiding altogether their more questionable historical antecedents. He spends significant time exploring the linkages between the German philosopher Carl Schmitt's notions of *Grossraum*—more infamous in its later incarnation as *Lebensraum*, the doctrine that Hitler's Nazi government used to justify its conquests in eastern Europe—and the later realist thinkers' focus on geopolitics.

This intellectual genealogy of realism is an impressive contribution. But the lessons that Specter draws from it are less convincing. Although he is correct that the classical realists of the 1950s took concepts and ideas from earlier, less ethical theories of international relations, it is not clear why such borrowing undermines their later arguments. Specter proposes that, because of these nefarious ties, realism should be viewed not as "a storehouse of accumulated historical 'wisdom,' but rather a historical artifact—and one that has, tragically, exerted too much power over world politics." Yet all philosophers and scholars reach to the past for inspiration and support. So what if the classical realists looked backward for similar perspectives to bolster their case? They sought a longer, more diverse lineage for their ideas than the troubled history of the early twentieth century. It is hard to blame them for that.

Indeed, much of Specter's overall argument amounts to guilt by association. It is undoubtedly true that the classical realists couched their arguments in terms that would have been familiar to early-twentieth-century imperialists. But they added to that legacy, as Specter himself notes, "ethical seriousness" and "caution." These elements were as much a reaction against the ideas and events they had witnessed over the preceding decades as anything else. That there are darker variants of realism in history should not tarnish its more modern incarnations. Indeed, the same could be said for today's foreign policy debate. There are undoubt-

edly realist approaches to the world that espouse power-seeking and U.S. military primacy. But there are also more ethical and defensive variants that take the core insights of realism but do not accept the amorality or imperialist principles of realism's earliest roots. Some realists are heartless hawks who would sell their own mothers; others are thoughtful doves who regret the necessity of difficult choices. For every Henry Kissinger, there is a George Kennan.

IT'S COMPLICATED

Kirshner's targets in *An Unwritten Future* are closer to the present day. Kirshner savages the theories of structural realists, which he argues are excessive in their devotion to rationalist causes of war and cannot explain anything other than stasis in the international system. In stripping down realism to a more parsimonious model, one in which the only truly important variable is power, Kirshner argues, the structural realists have gone too far, producing a theory of little value. In proposing what he sees as a more useful way to assess the world, he draws on a wave of recent scholarship by academics who are agnostic about paradigms such as realism and liberalism. Instead, these scholars study the role of honor and prestige in international affairs, factors that were central to classical realism. Kirshner argues that contemporary thinkers should resurrect the classical realist models of the world, bringing in domestic political and ideational factors, and avoiding what he sees as the pitfalls of neorealism's "hyper-rationalist" view of the world.

In Kirshner's view, clashes between states may sometimes arise from misperceptions or from the security dilemma, in which one state's attempts to make itself secure unintentionally make a neighboring state less secure. But in addition to these causes, which structural realists would accept as relevant, he believes that war may as often arise from differing worldviews or different hierarchies of interests in different states, factors that structuralist realists tend to ignore. Kirshner also correctly identifies many of the core problems that structural realists have faced in recent years: how to reconcile morality with a fundamentally amoral theory, the malleability of the notion of the national interest, and the limits of realism as a guide to purposeful action rather than as a guide to what not to do.

Kirshner argues bluntly that structural realism is often better at pointing out the errors in others' approaches than at suggesting its own solutions, a criticism that will ring true to anyone who has followed the debates over the causes of the Ukraine invasion. Indeed, *An Unwritten Future* is at its strongest when arguing that war is a plunge into radical uncertainty. (It is weakest when playing inside baseball, pointing out internal contradictions in the ways structural realists have borrowed their models from economics.) Structural neorealism cannot fully explain why and when wars happen or how leaders and populations will react when they do. Six months ago, who would have believed that an actor whose primary claim to fame had been playing a president on television would have pulled Ukrainians together in defiance of an invasion, spurring the creation of a new

and unified national identity? War, as Kirshner underscores, can be understood only by incorporating human factors into the analysis.

Kirshner's problem with later generations of realists stems from their response to the challenge from liberalism. Liberals believe that states can rise above conflict and power politics, although they differ on whether that can be achieved through trade, international institutions, or international law; realists simply do not believe transcendence is possible. In the face of this disagreement, rather than accepting that the two schools were based on entirely different ideological assumptions, neorealists adopted social scientific language and framing, in the hopes of making their own beliefs seem scientific, rather than ideological, in nature. In fact, Kirshner says, both realism and liberalism have ideological bases, and contemporary realists should stop pretending to be scientists and return to the messier but more analytically rich terrain of classical realism.

THE DESIRABLE AND THE POSSIBLE

The debates over Ukraine, and over U.S. foreign policy more broadly, are in many ways simply rehashing long-running criticisms of realist or restraint-minded thinkers. As Kirshner highlights, because most realists emphasize prudence above all else, it is much easier for them to criticize than it is to offer a different, affirmative policy as a replacement. As a result, there is no one realist policy. For example, realists were clear and united in their criticisms of the war on terrorism—they nearly unanimously opposed the invasion of Iraq—but far less so on the question of what they believe should replace it. Some call for a new crusade against China, and others for a U.S. drawdown in many regions. This division makes it hard for realists to shape the policy process in this or future administrations.

Yet even if realism is largely present in today's policy debates as a foil, pushing U.S. foreign policymakers to justify their choices and perhaps adopt slightly more pragmatic options, that may be the best that realists can hope for. As Specter points out, realists have had a complicated relationship with policymaking. Kennan, who served as the U.S. State Department's director of policy planning, and Morgenthau, who worked under him, are among the best-known realist policymakers, and their influence has waxed and waned over time. The most realist administrations—those of Presidents Richard Nixon and George H. W. Bush—had some notable policy triumphs: ending the Vietnam War, managing the peaceful breakup of the Soviet Union, winning the Gulf War. But they also had mixed legacies, from Nixon's troubled domestic political record to Bush's 1992 electoral loss. That is still more than one can say for realist influence in the Clinton, George W. Bush, and Obama administrations, when unchallenged U.S. power allowed idealists to drive most policy. Yet as the world continues its shift toward multipolarity, realist insights will once again become more important for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy.

This makes Specter's and Kirshner's books particularly valuable. That both consider realism's antecedents and insights without using some variant of liberalism as a straw man is equally

impressive. "Paradigms are inescapable," Kirshner writes. "Paradigm wars are largely vacuous." Neither book wastes time in irresolvable philosophical disputes. Yet it is also ironic that both books are in some ways guilty of the very charge they level at realist theories: Specter and Kirshner provide excellent critical overviews of the problems with these theories but fall short in providing alternatives.

On this front, Kirshner's book performs notably better. With chapters on the rise of China, how to meld political economy questions into classical realist theories, and even exploring the potential weaknesses and shortfalls of classical realism, *An Unwritten Future* thoughtfully assesses the question of what it would mean in practice to reinsert classical realist perspectives into ongoing policy debates. Classical realism suggests that the United States should be extremely wary of China's rise and that Chinese ambition will rise with Chinese power. It also suggests that Washington should seriously consider ways to come to terms with and accommodate this rise, within limits, lest it accidentally provoke an earth-shattering great-power war like those in 1815, 1914, or 1939.

Despite these insights, Kirshner's conclusions are not earth shattering. Although arguing that "after three-quarters of a century, it is more than appropriate for any great power to reassess the nature of its global commitments," he ends by advocating that the United States maintain the status quo in foreign policy, contending that a leap into the unknown—in effect, any major changes—does not comport with realism's emphasis on prudence. This is a frustrating conclusion, as it suggests a level of stasis in the international system that the book itself belies when discussing the rise of China.

Specter, on the other hand, largely punts on the question of the future of U.S. foreign policy. In arguing that realism is too deferential to imperial approaches, too undemocratic, and too rooted in ethically questionable philosophy, he makes clear that he doesn't regard realism as a reasonable path forward, at least not until it incorporates postcolonial, feminist, and critical theoretical insights. This distaste mirrors much of the progressive unease with pragmatism and moderation in foreign policy when those notions come into conflict with universal values. At times, this tension has produced uncomfortable internal debates among progressives over humanitarian intervention—for example, in Syria—pitting those who argue that the United States has a responsibility to protect human rights around the world with those who argue that such interventions would do little but drag the country further into endless Middle Eastern wars.

But the realists have never been blind to this tension. As Morgenthau himself wrote in his classic treatise *Politics Among Nations*, "Political realism does not require, nor does it condone, indifference to political ideals and moral principles, but it requires indeed a sharp distinction between the desirable and the possible." Realists accept that foreign policy is often a choice between the lesser of evils. Pretending otherwise—pretending that moral principles or values can override all constraints of power and interest—is not political realism. It is political fantasy.

REVIEW ESSAY

Old World Order

The Real Origin of International Relations

VALERIE HANSEN

Before the West: The Rise and Fall of Eastern World Orders
BY AYSE ZARAKOL. Cambridge University Press, 2022, 313 pp.

How old is the modern world? Scholars of international relations tend to date the beginning of their field of study to around 500 years ago, when a handful of states in western Europe began to establish colonies in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. In their view, the transformations unleashed by European colonialism made the world what it is today. So, too, did the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, two treaties signed by feuding European powers that ended a series of bloody wars. That was the moment international relations truly began, the argument runs. Thanks to this settlement, states for the first time formally agreed to respect their mutual sovereignty over demarcated territories, laying the groundwork for the abiding "Westphalian order" of a world divided into sovereign nation-states.

This rather Eurocentric view of the past still shapes how most international relations scholars see the world. When searching for the history relevant to today's world events, they rarely look beyond the European world order constructed after 1500. Before then, they reason, politics did not happen on a global scale. And states outside Europe did not adhere to Westphalian principles. As a result, international relations scholars have deemed vast tracts of history largely irrelevant to the understanding of modern politics.

An exclusive focus on a world in which Europeans armed with guns and cannons dominated the various peoples they encountered misses much of what happened outside Europe and the places Europeans colonized. This focus reads history backward from the primacy of the West, as if all that happened

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before led inevitably to the hegemony of a handful of European and North American states. The rise of non-Western powers, such as China, India, and Japan in recent decades, has revealed how misguided such an approach is.

In *Before the West*, Ayse Zarakol, a professor of international relations at the University of Cambridge, proposes an ingenious way out of this intellectual impasse. Writing in clear, forceful prose, she considers the experience of earlier non-Western empires that sought to create world orders. Doing so makes it possible to present a new history of international relations beyond the Westphalian order. Her study reveals the telling ways that polities in non-Western parts of the world interacted with one another in the past, shaping how modern political leaders understand the international order today.

Zarakol challenges the view that the modern international system began in 1648 with the Peace of Westphalia. Instead, she proposes a provocative alternative, dating the beginning of the modern world order to 1206, when Genghis Khan was acclaimed ruler of all the Eurasian steppe peoples. Zarakol chooses to focus on the "Chinggisid order" he and his various successors brought into being. (Genghis Khan's name in Mongolian is Chinggis Khan, so scholars use the adjective Chinggisid to describe anything associated with him.)

She presents a stirring and original thesis but overlooks some crucial primary sources about diplomacy in the Mongol empire. Such evidence would sharpen her account of precisely how the Mongols and their successors interacted with diplomats from neighboring states in this fledgling world order.

Zarakol is right to point out the importance of the Chinggisid order as a parallel to the Westphalian order. Starting in the thirteenth century under Genghis Khan and his successors, the Mongols created the world's largest contiguous empire, which extended across the steppe from Hungary in the east to China in the west. Genghis Khan aspired to rule the entire world, and he conducted diplomatic relations with his neighbors on that basis. None of his successors managed to control as large a territory, but taking the Mongols as their model, they would create the Ming, Mughal, Safavid, and Timurid empires respectively in present-day China, India, Iran, and Uzbekistan. Most important for modern international relations today, the peoples now living in the former Mongol empire are fully aware of this past, as exemplified by the ambitions of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

THE WORLDS GENGHIS MADE

Zarakol's decision to focus on the Mongols allows her to break with Eurocentric conventions of diplomatic and international history in refreshing ways. Interested in Asian polities, she does not assume that their interactions with European actors were more important than their relations with one another. Nor does she make the mistake of assuming that earlier Asian powers were only regional powers. Genghis Khan and his successors all aspired to rule the globe as they knew it. True, they did not succeed (nor, for that matter, did any European power), but they led sprawling armies powered by mounted

warriors and established empires that engaged in diplomacy with multiple neighbors and with states far from the Eurasian steppes—a lasting model for subsequent Asian rulers.

The Chinggisid order, as Zarakol describes it, persisted for nearly 500 years (longer than its Westphalian counterpart to date) and had three different phases. The first was from around 1200 to 1400. It comprised both the unified Mongol empire ruled initially by Genghis Khan and, after the empire broke apart in 1260, its four successor states in modern-day China, Iran, Russia and Ukraine, and Central Asia. The rulers of the three western successor states eventually converted to Islam, while Kublai Khan, the ruler of the easternmost quadrant in modern-day China and Mongolia, supported Buddhists, Daoists, and Confucians, among other religious figures.

The peaceful coexistence of these quadrants in the fourteenth century marked "the beginning of modern international relations . . . when rational state interest trumped religious affiliation." Here, Zarakol overstates her claim: religious affiliation was often interwoven with "rational state interests" in polities of that time. A ruler's choice of which religion, or indeed religions, to patronize largely determined the choice of his political allies.

The second Chinggisid world order comprised the Timurid empire of Timur the Lame (also known as Tamerlane), who lived from 1336 to 1405, and the Ming dynasty in China, which reigned from 1368 to 1644. Timur modeled his state on that of Genghis Khan and even married one of his descendants to strengthen his association with the great khan. In sharp contrast, the rulers of the Ming dynasty in China concentrated all their resources on defeating various Mongol and Turkic adversaries (including Timur's warriors). Even so, the Ming emperors hoped to establish themselves as successors to the land empire of the Mongols, and they dispatched a fleet of treasure ships carrying 28,000 men as far as East Africa to display their might to the world. As different as their views of the Mongols were, Timur and the early Ming emperors all aspired to rule empires as large and as impressive as Genghis Khan's.

The third world order Zarakol proposes encompassed the millennial sovereigns, or *sahibkiran*, of the Mughals, the Ottomans, and the Safavids. With no family ties to the Mongols, these rulers did not explicitly style themselves after Genghis Khan, but all hoped to govern the world. They succeeded in harnessing the power of mounted warriors to conquer large spans of territory in modern-day India, Turkey, and Iran respectively, and their empires all posed serious competition to the European colonial powers. Appropriately, Zarakol ends her book with the weakening of these three dynasties around 1700.

Spanning five centuries, these Chinggisid states shared certain key features. Rather than choosing their ruler by primogeniture, as many European powers did, they selected new rulers through a system of "tanistry," a term (borrowed from the historical practices of Celtic tribes in the British Isles) that means that the best qualified individual should rule the group after the death of a leader. Although this sounds vaguely democratic, it was

Eastern emperor: a statue of Genghis Khan near Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, September 2019

anything but. In practice, it meant that anyone seeking power had to prevail in a violent free-for-all that could last years before all the warriors gathered to acclaim a new leader. The Mongols believed that heaven, or the cosmos, selected the ultimate victor in these succession struggles, and in their efforts to understand heaven better, the Chinggisid rulers invited foreign astronomers to visit their courts and financed the construction of massive observatories.

According to Zarakol, the Chinggisid rulers over the centuries shared "a particular vision of the whole world" and created, modified, and reproduced "political, economic, and social institutions." Historians have paid more attention to the granular reality of this political and institutional history, but Zarakol does a service by bringing it to the attention of scholars of international relations. In so doing, she moves beyond a Eurocentric vision of international relations by studying actors, specifically those in modern-day China, India, Iran, Russia, and Uzbekistan, who aspired to create world empires as impressive as that of the Mongols. Getting past narratives that are limited to a single country, race, or religion, she explains how different rulers in Asia interacted with each other and in the process created a diplomatic system comparable to the Westphalian order.

FELT BOOTS AND METAL PASSPORTS

Five centuries is a long timespan to cover, and the first part of *Before the West* bogs down as it recounts the major events of multiple dynasties and explains why they qualify (or do not) as Chinggisid. But rather striking in her survey is the lack of much material about diplomacy, the book's stated subject.

This omission is surprising because two detailed eyewitness accounts of

B. RENTSENDORJ / REUTERS

diplomatic visits to Chinggisid rulers are widely available in English translation. These narratives describe how the Chinggisid diplomatic order actually functioned—in contrast to Zarakol's often rosy-eyed claims about the efficiency of Mongol rule.

William of Rubruck, a Franciscan monk originally from Belgium, visited the court of Mongke, a grandson of Genghis Khan, near Karakorum in modern-day Mongolia between 1253 and 1255. The French crusader King Louis IX sent William as a missionary—and not an envoy—to the Mongols, but when he arrived at the port of Soldaia on the Black Sea, his Mongol hosts had already heard from local merchants that he was a diplomat. William decided to accept the privileges offered to emissaries rather than try to explain his hope to missionize. Like all Franciscan friars, he wore a brown robe and went barefoot, attire that made his trip across the freezing steppe especially difficult. (Eventually, he gave in and donned fur clothing and felt boots.)

Although much less well known than Marco Polo's travelogue, which was written some 50 years later, William of Rubruck's account runs nearly 300 pages in the 1990 translation by Peter Jackson. It offers the most perceptive and the most detailed description of the Mongol empire available today. An attentive observer, William wrote his dispassionate report for a one-person audience, his sponsor, Louis IX. As he explained of the Mongols, "When I came among them I really felt as if I were entering some other world." His account shows exactly how the Mongols treated the diplomats who entered their realm.

The Mongols granted a metal tablet of authority to all visiting envoys that entitled them to food and fresh horses at the postal stations located every 30 miles or so along the main roads traversing the empire. Those carrying such tablets could also spend the night at the postal stations. The system worked well but not flawlessly, as William discovered when he crossed the Don River and the locals refused him assistance. It took three days for him to obtain a fresh horse. Travel conditions were arduous. Once William began to travel at the pace of a Mongol warrior, he could cover 60 miles each day, changing horses two or three times. Breakfast was either broth or a light grain soup, and there was no lunch; the only solid food travelers received was at dinner.

In July 1253, when he arrived at the court of Batu, a great-grandson of Genghis Khan, William requested official permission to preach among the Mongols (some of whom already followed the teachings of the Church of the East, the branch of Christianity that spread through much of Asia after the fifth century AD.) Batu sent William to the capital at Karakorum, where his father Mongke, the great khan, presided over the Mongol empire. William does not explain Batu's decision, but presumably Batu, as a regional leader, handled all domestic matters related to his own jurisdiction but had to refer matters of international diplomacy to the great khan. Zarakol overstates the efficiency of Chinggisid rule: only the khan could make decisions on certain topics. If he was not available, no one else could decide for him.

William arrived at Mongke's winter court on the River Ongin in modern Mongolia; there, the great khan spent the season surrounded by his retinue and his own herds. William made his request to proselytize through an interpreter, but the interpreter and the khan were drunk, and William did not get a definite answer. Initially permitted to stay two months at the court, William remained there for three and spent an additional three at the Mongol capital of Karakorum. He participated in a debate over religion with Muslims, Buddhists, and other Christians—and for once he had a competent interpreter—but the debate was inconclusive, and William left without receiving permission to preach inside Mongol territory.

William's account captures the reality of Mongol governance. Mongol rulers may have aspired to create a world order, but their empire remained profoundly decentralized despite the efficient postal system that allowed messages and people such as William to cross the empire. The great khan did not administer his empire directly. Instead, he appointed local governors who ruled on their own, largely continuing the policies of whichever authorities had governed before the rise of the Mongols.

About 150 years later, a Spanish diplomat had an experience remarkably similar to William's. Ruy González de Clavijo visited Timur in Samarkand, a major trading emporium in modern-day Uzbekistan, for two months in 1404. Dispatched by Henry III of Castile, who hoped to form an alliance against the Ottomans, Clavijo and his entourage delivered a letter and gifts to Timur. The wealth of Timur's capital, where 50,000 of his supporters pitched their tents, impressed Clavijo deeply. Timur hosted the Spaniards generously, offering them ample supplies of meat and wine and inviting them to multiple receptions.

But when Timur fell ill, three of his advisers took over. Unable to exercise any real authority, they urged the Spaniards to return home—which Clavijo resisted because his mission was to obtain a response from Timur for Henry III. Just two months after he had arrived, the unsuccessful Clavijo set off for Spain, only to be caught in the conflicts that broke out among those who aspired to take over Timur's empire. Clavijo's experience mirrored William of Rubruck's: the only person who could decide anything about foreign relations was the khan himself.

Zarakol credits Genghis Khan with "disseminating, through his own example, the norm of the political ruler as the exclusive supreme authority, legitimized by world domination." She claims that he introduced "an extremely high degree of political centralization . . . subordinating all competing forms of authority to himself." During military campaigns, the khan had the power to lead, and he rewarded his followers with plunder. But during peacetime, the ruler had much less power. Still, Zarakol's views do not square with the experience of William of Rubruck and Clavijo. The khan maintained "supreme authority" in the sense that only he could decide on certain matters, such as giving a single Franciscan friar permission to preach or sending a letter to another ruler, but he never enforced policies that integrated the different parts of his empire in a meaningful way.

OTHER CENTERS, OTHER WORLDS

Scholars can debate whether a given interpretation of the past is accurate, but popular understandings of the past—especially among policymakers—often shape modern international relations. As Zarakol suggests, scholars need to ask of the period she covers, "What logics were operating in this era that are still operating in ours?" Her final chapter explores Eurasianism—a late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century intellectual movement that identified non-European precedents for world orders spanning both Europe and Asia—and, more specifically, how intellectuals in Japan, Russia, and Turkey understood the long-term impact of Mongol rule on their own societies.

This focus is particularly timely. Since the 1920s, Russian scholars, such as Nikolai Trubetzkoy, George Vernadsky, and Lev Gumilyov, have debated how two centuries of Mongol rule affected modern Russia. They have called for modern leaders to emulate Genghis Khan and to unify Russians so that they can build a new empire that spans Europe and Asia. Such thinking has gained enormous popularity since the collapse of communism, and Putin is regularly compared to Genghis Khan. Putin's advisers are not concerned with historical accuracy. In making the case for Eurasianism and how it will empower Russia, they invoke traditions that have nothing to do with the Treaty of Westphalia. Zarakol's point is well taken: the history underlying Eurasianism helps make sense of the events occurring in the territory once ruled by the Mongols.

Like any genuinely pioneering book, *Before the West* covers so much new ground that it does not get all the details straight. (In particular, it exaggerates the centralization of the Mongol empire.) Still, Zarakol has provided an important service: she has shown how the history of different parts of the world before 1500 informs the present and the future.

By starting in 1206, however, she risks overlooking the importance of even earlier events. When Prince Vladimir the Great (Putin's namesake) converted to Eastern orthodoxy in around 988, his capital lay in Kyiv. The Russian president's drive for a new Eurasian empire seeks to include the heartland of Russian orthodoxy, which formed in the late 900s.

That's precisely Zarakol's point: studying societies outside Europe that aspired to create world orders before 1500 reveals much about the modern world. The world orders that earlier rulers outside Europe established remain deeply relevant because the people who live in those regions today recall those past exploits and systems and sometimes try to recreate them. Paying attention to the diplomatic practices that earlier rulers, including the Chinggisids, developed provides a valuable counterbalance to the singular focus on the Westphalian order. In this multipolar world, U.S. leaders spend their days considering the next moves of their counterparts in Ankara, Beijing, Moscow, New Delhi, and Tokyo. And yet they rarely consider the histories of these parts of the world. The time has come for more people to follow Zarakol's lead and study the past of the many political and economic centers outside Europe.

REVIEW ESSAY

How Democracies Live

The Long Struggle for Equality Amid Diversity

DANIELLE ALLEN

The Great Experiment: Why Diverse Democracies Fall Apart and How They Can Endure
BY YASCHA MOUNK. Penguin Press, 2022, 368 pp.

Majority Minority
BY JUSTIN GEST. Oxford University Press, 2022, 424 pp.

This is not a fire drill. The U.S. political system really is burning. The country is sizzling with contention between hard-left progressives, left-leaning liberals, right-leaning liberals, and right-wing nationalists. Each faction sees itself as entrenched in fierce combat both internally—within its party of affiliation—and across the partisan divide. Americans who support former President Donald Trump cannot agree with those who are anti-Trump about virtually any issue: immigration, the proper role of religion and corporations in public life, the outcome of the 2020 election. Yet as polling shows, Americans do agree on one thing: U.S. democracy is extremely fragile.

Red alerts for U.S. democracy abound. Some have been public and collective, such as the January 6, 2021, storming of the U.S. Capitol, during which a group of insurrectionists attempted to keep Trump in power. Others have been political but also deeply personal. Far from the headlines, many Americans constantly live with the effects of democratic decay. In 2009, I lost a beloved younger cousin, whose bad choices were compounded by unjust policies that encourage mass incarceration and gun violence in a way that brought about his demise. This tragedy led me to join the fights against the country's so-called war on drugs and for criminal justice reform. Both movements have been broadly popular, and yet the government has been slow to act. For me, this experience showcased the state's diminishing effectiveness. Many other Americans

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have clearly picked up on the trend. In 2013, Congress's approval rating fell to a remarkably low nine percent: a clear sign of just how unresponsive the institution has become. Sadly, young people are the most disaffected from U.S. politics. According to 2017 research by the political scientists Yascha Mounk and Roberto Foa, roughly 70 percent of Americans born before World War II believe it is essential to live in a democracy. Among millennials, the figure is below 30 percent.

The United States has historically been the proof point that activists and leaders around the world look to when arguing that constitutional democracy can lead to durable, successful governance. Saving U.S. democracy is, therefore, critical to saving democracy worldwide. Now, one of the United States' biggest challenges is how to transition successfully from past and current demographic patterns, in which most Americans have identified and continue to identify as white, to a stable multicultural democracy in which no single ethnic or ethnoreligious subgroup is in the majority—and in which no group dominates any others.

Two excellent new books can help the country navigate this challenge: Mounk's *The Great Experiment* and Justin Gest's *Majority Minority*. Mounk, who holds an appointment at Johns Hopkins University, argues that justly managing increasing demographic diversity will be difficult. Most of the world's democracies are, after all, highly homogeneous, with one ethnic group making up the overwhelming share of the country's population. As I wrote in *The Washington Post* in the wake of the 2017 white supremacist violence in Charlottesville, Virginia, "the simple fact of the matter is that the world has never built a multiethnic democracy in which no particular ethnic group is in the majority and where political equality, social equality and economies that empower all have been achieved." This is the work ahead in the United States. Mounk's project in *The Great Experiment* is to provide Americans with a philosophical foundation and some practical actions for mastering this task.

Majority Minority also grapples with how the United States can grow more diverse without succumbing to authoritarian nationalism. Gest, a political scientist at George Mason University, notes that politicians across the country are using fear of newcomers to whip up support and win office, all with dangerous consequences. "Unless America's political, business, and civil society leaders change course," he argues, the United States risks adopting "an illiberal form of governance" that fully entrenches the minority rule of a political faction or ethnoreligious subgroup.

Both Mounk and Gest use the term "majority minority" throughout their books. It is a common phrase. I used it, too, in my 2016 essay, "Toward a Connected Society," in which I argued that maximizing bridge-building social ties is the appropriate goal for a highly pluralistic constitutional democracy in which no single ethnic group is in the majority. (Gest draws on this essay.)

Yet I have come to think that the phrase is a profound mistake, a term that obscures more than it illuminates. It encourages people to think

that demography is destiny when it very much is not; one cannot straightforwardly infer clear political implications from demographic patterns. To the contrary, ethnic and political affiliations are inevitably the result of the work of political entrepreneurs, as many scholars have shown and as both Gest and Mounk point out. The phrase also conveys an undue sense of political threat to white Americans, feeding a misguided anxiety among them that now they alone will be in the minority. Instead, the United States' coming political challenge is that everyone will begin "from the psychological position of fearing to be a member of a vulnerable minority," as I wrote in 2017. "Experiences of uncertainty, anxiety and endangerment are widely spread. Out of such soil grows the poison plant of extremism." As the United States works to build a stable constitutional democracy in conditions of significant pluralism, it needs to tamp down anxiety rather than trigger it. Scholars and commentators must abandon the term "majority-minority country" and acknowledge instead that Americans can know only that their country is likely to be a place where no single ethnic group or ethnoreligious group is in the majority.

Despite using this phrase, Mounk's and Gest's books offer substantial wisdom and good advice on how the United States can achieve a stable, inclusive, and egalitarian constitutional democracy in conditions of maximal diversity. Gest argues that although the United States is currently on a perilous political path, it is not too late for the country to change course. The United States, he writes, has "structural advantages" that make it possible to reimagine U.S. nationhood and reconcile the U.S. population as one people. These include the facts that the country's many minority groups are themselves incredibly diverse and do not form a single group (contrary to what the majority-minority label would imply); that recent immigration has been continuous and voluntary; and that the country has an increasing number of multiethnic and mixed-religion residents. Mounk is, ultimately, upbeat. "The great experiment can succeed," he writes.

Gest's sober analysis of the dynamics currently at play and Mounk's optimism are both well supported, and the authors are good partners in the fight to protect democracy. Yet their diagnoses fail to capture the true depth and scope of the problem. They both primarily approach the political challenges flowing from the United States' diversity as if they are largely contemporary and mostly driven by the growing share of the U.S. population that is foreign born. But the United States has grappled with significant, persistent racial disparities in opportunity and outcome since its founding. Establishing a truly diverse democracy will require not just integrating new (and relatively new) arrivals but also giving members of all the country's communities—including long-standing minority communities—equal political and economic power. This is a task at which the United States has fallen short for centuries. There is much to learn, then, from both the analyses of Mounk and Gest and from their limitations.

RECKONING WITH RACE

Mounk and Gest start their books by recognizing that the United States is in the midst of a dramatic transition. If current demographic projections hold, by 2045, white people will make up less than 50 percent of the U.S. population. It is a trend that many political observers, including Mounk, worry could strengthen ethnonationalist politicians. As he observes, humans have a tendency to form groups and turn against outsiders, a dynamic that can spur anarchy, domination, and fragmentation—especially in states in which the most powerful group fears it is losing power. It is easy, Mounk writes, to think that society "will forever be characterized by a clash between the historically dominant and historically oppressed."

Gest is also concerned that the United States will struggle to remain democratic while growing more diverse. He spends time on comparative empirical case studies of immigrant incorporation and demographic transitions, and he looks at multiple places where increased diversity has led to dangerous, oppressive policies. In Bahrain and Singapore, he writes, demographic change was met with political suppression. In Mauritius and Trinidad and Tobago, increased diversity made racial identity central to politics, leading to irresolvable social tensions. But Gest also explores optimistic scenarios. He argues, for example, that in Hawaii and New York City, immigrants and other minorities achieved full acceptance and access to opportunities. Gest sees both of the optimistic cases as templates for the United States at large. The successful resolution of social conflict, he writes, is "contingent on whether the state equally enfranchises the newcomer population and whether its subsequent redefinition of the national identity is inclusive or exclusive—according to the combination of state institutions and rhetoric." As the country grows more diverse, U.S. policymakers, he says, should actively redefine their country's identity to include people of color clearly. Mounk also sees hope in the United States' past, sketching out how the "great majority of African Americans" have by now entered the middle class, defined as the second through fourth quintiles of income distribution.

These parallels and examples do provide some insight into the challenges that can hinder—as well as the opportunities that can support—the full incorporation of minority communities. Yet the accounts by both authors also gloss over the depths of the country's difficult history when it comes to race. According to Gest, reconciliation in New York City was achieved in the period from 1890 to 1940 because the white majority repeatedly broadened its membership to include new ethnic groups: the Germans, the Greeks, the Irish, the Jews, and the Italians. He does not mention that this broadening took place while Asian, Black, and Mexican Americans were forcibly excluded. Expanding the definition of "white" sharpened their status as outsiders and others. This process, then, is better understood as an example of how the United States previously failed to achieve a democratic demographic transition because immigrant incorporation produced more racial domination.

Mounk's report on Black upward mobility is also incomplete. He fails to acknowledge that 20 percent of Black Americans still live below the poverty line (in contrast to about eight percent of non-Hispanic whites) and that if current incarceration rates remain unchanged, one out of every three Black boys can expect to be incarcerated in the future. Mounk may be right that most Black people don't live below the poverty line, but it is also true that far too many still do.

If it wants to stay democratic, the United States must transition to full power sharing across all segments of society, not just incorporate foreign-born residents and their children. The country needs to muster the institutional and cultural resources needed to achieve this broad shift. The question, then, is not only if Gest's and Mounk's advice assists in incorporating immigrants but also whether it can help the United States overcome the long-standing patterns of domination to which other minority communities have been subjected.

Contemporary politics makes solving this problem even more difficult. On the right, an emboldened populist vanguard is trying to resist power sharing and has captured a substantial swath of the Republican Party apparatus. On the left, radical activists seek total victory over old ways of doing things and have embraced practices of naming, blaming, and shaming that don't exactly call people into the project of participation and collaboration. It is too easy for people to make a career-destroying mistake without room for a second chance, and the result is that many potential allies just disengage. These are not equivalent threats: only the far right has actively tried to sabotage the peaceful transfer of power, the bedrock of any democratic system. But regardless of the differences in the two factions' strength and access to power, their persistence and growing influence will make it difficult for political leaders to construct a coalition that can both win and implement change.

LINK UP

Despite their shortcomings in diagnosing the United States' challenges, Gest and Mounk do offer valuable prescriptions that can help everyone. Gest calls on leaders to use "connectedness as a criterion of governance." Policymakers, he writes, should ask three related questions when making decisions: first, whether their actions "reinforce or break down social boundaries between people"; second, whether their decisions can "be adjusted to strengthen the sense of connection between people"; and third, whether their actions will lead people to "trust this institution more and participate in its efforts." If broadly applied, this framework will foster decisions that help groups better coexist and more fully engage in the U.S. political process.

Mounk shares Gest's interest in connectedness—although he does not use that vocabulary or go so far as to make it a formal principle. He calls on U.S. activists and policymakers to turn their political system into the governmental equivalent of a public park. The public park, he writes, is "open to everyone," "gives its visitors options," and "creates a vibrant space

Democratic despair: protesting in Austin, Texas, July 2022

TAMIR KALIFA / GETTY IMAGES

for encounter." He writes: "The best thing you can do to advance the lived reality of a thriving diverse democracy is, quite simply, to get out of your own bubble. Seek out opportunities to build bridges to members of other groups." Mounk recognizes that achieving this will require not just cultural commitments but real institutional change—including altering political institutions via implementing ranked-choice voting and ending gerrymandering, both of which could help reduce polarization.

Both authors also encourage a deep rethinking of U.S. strategies for political rhetoric in order to lower the temperature. As Gest puts it, political leaders should work to avoid "rhetoric-induced panic" and instead develop strategies of messaging to "construct unifying narratives about the nation and its identity." Mounk writes that as "polarization in many democracies intensifies, and extremists attempt to poison the tone of the public debate, there is a growing temptation to turn politics into a Manichean struggle between 'us' and 'them.'" To counter this, he offers principles for political speech, including "be willing to criticize your own" and "don't ridicule or vilify; engage and persuade."

Mounk's most striking suggestion has to do with immigration policy: he argues that advocates of diverse democracies should embrace tight controls over borders. "There appears to be a tight empirical link between border enforcement and public views of immigration," he writes. "Roughly speaking, countries that have weakened their determination to control their own borders have seen attitudes toward immigration turn more hostile. By contrast, countries that have strengthened control over their own

borders have seen citizens grow more welcoming of immigration."

Mounk's view is heterodox from the perspective of his intellectual community, and he deserves credit for offering it. He is also right that the time is here to revisit our approaches to immigration, which is at the root of many of the challenges in U.S. politics. Tech libertarians see recent levels of immigration as a great boon and evidence of the health of the country's institutions, but both the nationalist right and the left are dissatisfied with the present system. The former sees immigration as proof that U.S. institutions are out of sync with the country's needs, and the latter argues that the United States has failed to give 11 million undocumented people a right to participate, wronging these immigrants and dramatically reducing the voice of labor in politics. Mounk spends barely a page on his important and controversial proposal, so it is hard to evaluate in this spare form. But some of the immigration policies that most benefit Silicon Valley—for instance, having hosts (such as companies) sponsor immigrants—could be extended far more broadly through the immigration system to address problems that both the right and the left see.

CALLING IN

Building a truly multicultural U.S. democracy must begin with a renewed investment in political liberalism: the philosophical commitment to a government grounded in rights that protect people in their private lives and empower them to help govern public life. This style of government is not new to Americans. Over the course of U.S. history, both Democrats and Republicans have been liberals of various flavors, including classical liberals (the more conservative, pro-market variant), New Deal liberals (the big-state Democratic Party variant), and neoliberals (the economically globalizing, democracy-spreading, technocratic variant). Each one has held power at different points in history, shaping U.S. policy in different ways.

Each of these variants was also built on intellectual paradigms that led advocates to believe they could advance the rights of all while reserving power to the few. In the twentieth century, big-state left-leaning liberals repeated the error of exclusion, including by keeping Black Americans out of welfare programs—such as Social Security—for decades. Neoliberals have also developed exclusionary systems. In recent years, this has occurred when the country defers to technocracy, expecting that the best outcomes emerge when experts govern for rather than govern with the rest of the citizenry. The result has been policies that attempt to plan the lives of others.

But the error traces back to the founders, who set up a system they believed would protect the life and liberty of the unenfranchised even as it preserved slavery and kept power concentrated in the hands of white men with property. In a letter that Abigail Adams wrote to her husband, the early U.S. leader John Adams, during the country's revolution, she expressed skepticism that such a system could do both. Everyone needs "voice" and "representation," she said, if the government really would

protect the rights of all. She made her case on behalf of women, but the same argument has been made consistently for generations by members of a variety of groups suffering from political exclusion and domination.

What the United States requires, instead, is a power-sharing liberalism and a constitutional democracy that rests on it. Creating one will necessitate renovating the country's political culture, institutions, and economy so that each is fully inclusive, participatory, and effective. This won't be easy, but a democracy commission created by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, for which I served as a co-chair, recently laid out one practical path forward. The commission's membership spanned partisan viewpoints, geographies, and demographics. The members nonetheless unanimously endorsed 31 recommendations, each of which would improve the U.S. system.

The proposed reforms include items that are large and structural. The commission, for instance, recommended transitioning elections to ranked-choice voting, introducing multiple-member congressional districts, increasing the size of the U.S. House of Representatives (which would also rebalance the country's lopsided Electoral College), and establishing term limits for Supreme Court justices. It also recommended creating a system of universal national service for young Americans and redistributing advertising revenue from large technology companies to support local journalism. These changes would increase the proximity between representatives and the represented, create stronger incentives for elected officials to be responsive to the entire U.S. population, and fully include that diverse population in shared self-government. They would also help enable members of different demographic groups and political factions to share power effectively. And they would create more productive ways of structuring how Americans hear disagreements and work through them so that the country can achieve workable, functional, and stable resolutions.

In this time of urgency, Americans should closely look at these proposals. As Mounk and Gest make clear, it will take a lot of work and creativity for the United States to achieve the democracy renovation its people deserve.

REVIEW ESSAY

The Alternate History of China

Could Beijing Have Taken a Different Path?

ANDREW J. NATHAN

Never Turn Back: China and the Forbidden History of the 1980s
BY JULIAN GEWIRTZ. Harvard University Press, 2022, 432 pp.

On a visit to China in the summer of 1988, I encountered a widespread sense of drift and despair. The official inflation rate stood at 18.5 percent, and the actual rate was probably higher. State statistics said that 21 percent of urban workers had suffered a decline in living standards. In big cities, residents needed to routinely pay bribes if they wanted phone lines, electricity service, mail deliveries, or medical attention. Intellectuals were criticizing China's political leaders, its political system, and even its national culture and national character. "Nineteen-eighty-eight ushered in a season of discontent that is perhaps unique in China's post-revolutionary history," I wrote in an article published later that year.

Such a dark mood was surprising at the end of a decade of what the official propaganda apparatus called "reform and opening"—Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping's ambitious campaign to restructure China's economic system and open the country to global markets after the stagnation and autarky of the Mao Zedong years. Not an expert in economics, Deng relied on China's premier, Zhao Ziyang, to figure out how to reform the economy. Zhao contracted agricultural land to farming families to manage as they saw best; authorized villages and townships to set up small-scale, effectively private enterprises; and opened special economic zones such as Shenzhen and other production bases where investors from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other market economies could set up factories to import raw materials and export products free of tariffs. These and other reforms achieved remarkable success. From 1978 to 1988, China's GDP more than doubled.

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Illustration by John Lee

Then, in 1988, Zhao persuaded Deng to authorize another step forward: reforming China's price system. Under Zhao's proposed new regime, enterprises would receive a quota of inputs and would be required to sell a quota of outputs at state-set prices. After fulfilling their quotas, they could buy inputs and sell products at market prices. This "dual-track price reform" was supposed to eliminate incentives for corruption, spur production enthusiasm, and promote even faster growth by giving managers and workers a financial reason to improve their products and productivity, since they could now sell their goods for higher profits. But before the plan was even put into effect, enterprises started bribing suppliers for more inputs at plan costs in anticipation of the shift, and consumers flooded stores to buy everything they could find before prices went up. Corruption worsened, inflation surged, and Zhao canceled the reform. China seemed stuck with a dysfunctional hybrid economy: half planned and half market, with the worst features of both.

The sense of paralysis helped drive popular dissatisfaction. In 1989, students in Beijing launched pro-democracy demonstrations in Tiananmen Square. Thousands of workers and low- and mid-level government and party officials joined them, and soon, the unrest spread to hundreds of cities around the country. By that time, Zhao had been promoted to acting general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, officially the highest position in the Chinese party-state, although in reality, he remained overshadowed by Deng and a handful of other retired CCP elders. Still, Zhao was responsible for managing the crisis. He insisted that the students could be persuaded to leave the square peacefully. But Deng wanted to use force. He cashiered Zhao and ordered the People's Liberation Army to enter Beijing, where they put down the uprising, ending years of openness. Zhao spent the last 15 years of his life under house arrest. China, meanwhile, steadily evolved into the high-tech totalitarian system that it is today.

Did it have to be this way? In *Never Turn Back*, Julian Gewirtz says no. Gewirtz, a historian who now works on China policy in the White House, provides a vivid and readable account of the period from Mao's death until shortly after Tiananmen, with a focus on the role of Zhao. In Gewirtz's view, a more liberal development path was possible, and Beijing might have pursued it were it not for the quirks of history. "It is possible to imagine a China, even one ruled by the CCP, that rehabilitates Zhao Ziyang, praises the debate and contestation of ideas that characterized the 1980s, and even apologizes publicly for the violence of June 1989," he writes. "It is possible to imagine China once again experimenting with meaningful political reforms, increasing the independence of the judiciary and the media, and giving ordinary people a greater say over the country's direction."

But historical contingency is not the reason China has become what it is today. Zhao's conservative archrival Li Peng articulated a hard truth during the 1989 crisis. The pro-democracy demonstrators, Li said, "want to negate the leadership of the CCP and negate the entire socialist system."

Their aims were fundamentally at odds with the structure and philosophy of the one-party system. A regime that claims to possess an infallible ideology and is constructed on what Gewirtz describes as a system of "entrenched hierarchies" cannot survive if it opens up. Other CCP leaders knew this, even if Zhao did not.

DIFFERENT AND THE SAME

In devising measures to implement Deng Xiaoping's goal of modernizing the Chinese economy, Zhao was intellectually adventurous. He welcomed the advice of young think tank scholars and advisers. And as Gewirtz describes in his previous book, *Unlikely Partners: Chinese Reformers, Western Economists, and the Making of Global China*, Zhao invited prominent Western economists such as Milton Friedman and James Tobin and Eastern European experts including Janos Kornai and Ota Sik to discuss the pros and cons of market economics. He also became enamored of the ideas of the futurologists Alvin and Heidi Toffler, whom he entertained in Zhongnanhai. The Tofflers forecast a post-industrial society dominated by computers, the Internet, and digital media. Chinese translations of their books *Future Shock* and *The Third Wave*, along with John Naisbitt's similarly themed *Megatrends*, were enthusiastically received.

These writings may have predicted radical change. But they still fit well with the belief inherent in Leninist systems that once class conflict is eliminated, government is essentially technical, and leaders equipped with the science of Marxism—updated with

contemporary tools—can design and control society. Zhao was determined to use these insights to leapfrog Western states to the frontier of the "New Technological Revolution," in which, as Naisbitt put it, "the strategic resource is information." Zhao established the so-called 863 Program and other institutions to promote rapid development in seven key areas, including biotechnology, space technology, information technology, laser technology, automation, energy, and materials engineering. As Gewirtz acidly remarks, "At this point, the governments of the United States, Japan, and many other countries saw technology transfer to China as in their interests."

Although they introduced some market incentives into the economy, the reforms were in no way designed to challenge the primacy of the party. The state owned all the land in the country, which it leased to peasants and urban factories for production. It ran all major utilities, allocated credit through state banks, controlled the exchange value of the currency, and eased or tightened the flow of imports and exports with regulations and licenses. The state indirectly set the price and allocation of labor through household registration and social welfare systems. And as the private sector grew, the state kept strategically important enterprises in its own hands. The propaganda system ransacked Marx's writings to produce concepts such as "the initial stage of socialism," "the socialist market economy," and, most enduringly, "socialism with Chinese characteristics" to explain that what Zhao was doing was consistent with the ruling party's ideology.

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE

Deng understood that to successfully modernize the economy, the government would also have to make certain changes to the country's political system. Under the Maoist regime he inherited, the government made all its decisions based on ideology—including which crops to plant, where and how close to plant them, where to locate a factory, and how to run it. Local cadres would apply ideological principles even to decide whether to authorize a marriage, allow a couple to have a child, or permit a couple to get divorced.

As Mao kept revising the party's ideology, officials struggled to figure out how it applied to clearly unrelated technical and managerial decisions. This ad hoc micromanagement resulted in repeated disasters. In 1959, unsound agricultural requirements created a two-year famine that killed an estimated 30 to 45 million people. Mao's subsequent Cultural Revolution caused more mass death and paralyzed the government. Even when politics were relatively calm, Mao's politicized economic system fostered inefficiency and stifled innovation.

Deng sought to fix these problems by freeing up economic actors to pursue prosperity without undue interference from party officials. He first raised the subject of political reform in a 1980 intraparty speech that called for ending life tenure in political office, diffusing top-level power among a group of leaders, and stopping party officials in state-owned enterprises and government agencies from interfering in managerial and technical decisions. This last policy was particularly important,

and it came to be called "separation of party and government."

Deng had no intention of relinquishing the CCP's leadership over China. But his speech did have the effect of removing the long-standing ban on the independent discussion of politics. Senior officials and establishment intellectuals began to promote what were, in China, radical ideas. Vice Premier Wan Li said the party should let people "really exercise their constitutional right of free expression." Senior party researcher Liao Gailong called for an independent press, for a more independent judiciary, and for the National People's Congress—the rubber-stamp legislature—to function as an independent voice for diverse social interests. (Even the idea that socialist society could contain groups with diverse interests was radical.) Party scholars and journalists argued for establishing checks and balances among the three branches of government, and some even promoted multicandidate elections. The state-owned Central China Television broadcast a six-part documentary called *River Elegy* that attributed the country's "backwardness" to Chinese culture and called for Westernization. Chinese civilization, the documentary concluded, "needs a good scrubbing by a great flood."

In 1987, amid this intellectual turmoil, Deng again turned to Zhao, in his capacity as acting general secretary, to prepare a set of political reform proposals for an upcoming party congress. Zhao convened a team that privately heard uncensored testimony about different political systems, including from experts on Western systems. They considered a host of liberalizing measures, such as eliminating party cells from some institutions; allowing provincial people's congresses to consider more than one candidate for governor and vice governor; giving more power to minor, noncommunist political parties; and strengthening the ability of the party-run trade unions to promote the interests of workers instead of trying to suppress worker unrest. "A yearlong process at the highest levels of the Chinese leadership to develop proposals for remaking China's political system—building on nearly a decade of ferment, exploration, and new thinking—was on the verge of being approved by the 13th Party Congress," Gewirtz writes. "A transformation was in the offing."

But as Zhao prepared his proposals, Deng warned him not to consider ideas that "imitate[ed] the West." In the end, Zhao submitted only modest proposals, including creating a civil service to staff the government and giving more power to nonparty managers and experts. As Gewirtz writes, "These changes sought to strengthen the functioning of the CCP and the government so that both entities could more effectively lead the economic reforms." They did not soften the party's hold on power.

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

A leading purpose of Gewirtz's book is to correct exaggerations, by both Chinese and Western historians, of Deng Xiaoping's role in reforming his country. This distortion was no accident: it was the product of a concerted effort by the regime to portray Deng as the "chief architect of reform and opening" in order to erase Zhao's more liberal ideas from public memory.

Given Zhao's actual importance, it is easy to see why Gewirtz believes that had Zhao stayed in power, he would have fundamentally changed China.

There's no doubt that Zhao had a reformist bent. In his early career, the premier pioneered change in Sichuan Province, contracting land to the peasants at great political risk before party leaders had endorsed the policy. He was remarkably open in consulting Western economists and in listening to wide-ranging political reform proposals from party and nonparty intellectuals. During the 1980s, he embraced an ambiguous idea called neo-authoritarianism, which argued that authoritarian rule was needed to push a recalcitrant system forward toward democracy. And in what might be the only source on Zhao that Gewirtz's exceptionally well-researched book does not use—a series of interviews between Zhao and a loyal former subordinate named Zong Fengming conducted during Zhao's house arrest—Zhao remarked that he had been interested in something called "parliamentary democracy."

Despite his use of this term, Zhao did not have a multiparty democracy in mind. Describing his thinking in the late 1980s, he told Zong: "At this time my guiding ideas were, first, that the leading position of the CCP could not change, but the party's form of leadership must change; second, that a socialist state should be a rule of law state." As Gewirtz writes, Zhao's priorities were "to increase transparency, strengthen the ability of other political parties and social groups, from labor unions to women's organizations, to represent their members, raise the number of appointments made through elections, protect citizens' rights, and entrench the separation of party and state."

If these were Zhao's ideas, the possible future for China that was lost when Zhao was purged would not have been as democratic as Gewirtz seems to imagine. Had Zhao defeated Deng and realized his own political vision, China would still be a one-party state, facing the impossible task of reconciling popular political freedom with a monopoly on political power. This is not the kind of system that can square that circle. Zhao's downfall was inevitable—the act of a regime so dedicated to concentrating power and so convinced of its own righteousness that it cannot allow independent political activity and survive.

Although Zhao and his open-mindedness are gone, the system under current Chinese President Xi Jinping has a great deal of continuity with the one Zhao envisioned. Zhao's 863 technology project, which used top-down controls to promote rapid development in science and technology, has become Xi's "Made in China 2025." Xi's idea of "civilian-military integration," under which civil enterprises should develop advanced technology for the military, is an inversion of Zhao's idea that military institutions should share economically promising technology with the state's civilian enterprises. Today, as an official slogan puts it, "the state guides the market," as it did under Zhao. Zhao's vision of managing society like a machine has evolved into Xi's surveillance state. Zhao wasn't all that radical, but he was still too radical for the Chinese Communist Party.

Books for the Century

Our reviewers each selected a set of books essential to understanding the past century and another set essential for imagining the century ahead.

Political and Legal

G. JOHN IKENBERRY

The Great Transformation
BY KARL POLANYI. Farrar & Rinehart, 1944, 305 pp.

The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations
BY EDWARD HALLETT CARR. Macmillan, 1939, 312 pp.

Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience
BY KARL W. DEUTSCH, SIDNEY A. BURRELL, ROBERT A. KANN, MAURICE LEE, JR., MARTIN LICHTERMAN, RAYMOND E. LINDGREN, FRANCIS L. LOEWENHEIM, AND RICHARD W. VAN WAGENEN. Princeton University Press, 1957, 228 pp.

The pivotal transformations of the twentieth century saw the emergence of a liberal international order anchored in Europe and North America. Polanyi, the Hungarian economist, provided one of the most influential midcentury arguments about the deep forces that had imperiled liberal democracies in the interwar period. In this seminal work, published in 1944, Polanyi traces the roots of the crisis to the rise of modern capitalism and the breakdown of the world market system during World War I. The utopian liberal dream of a self-regulating market never emerged, Polanyi argued. Instead, the market was built and embedded in an international system of geopolitical power and social order. Market society was neither natural nor truly self-regulating but was "submerged" in social relationships. "Laissez-faire," Polanyi remarked, "was planned." The crisis of the interwar years was a consequence of the breakdown of this complex embedded system. Polanyi's message was clear: if capitalist society

was to be rebuilt after World War II, it would need to be through a social democratic project of cross-class institutions that emphasized protecting citizens from economic predation and fostering political solidarity within a wider collaborative international order. The long "golden era" of postwar economic growth and social welfare in the Western industrial societies vindicated his hopes, and the current breakdown of that era confirms his fears.

On the eve of war in 1939, the historian Carr published a portrait of the political and economic turmoil of the prior two decades. Like John Maynard Keynes's *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, Carr's work can be read as a polemic against the missteps and delusions of the Anglo-American peacemakers who crafted the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. Carr contended that liberals in the nineteenth century and again at Versailles thought that their international projects succeeded—and would again—because of the fundamental rationality of state actors and the harmony of their interests. But this was a delusion. The prewar international order was actually built on British hegemony and liberal ideology, forces that had dissipated by 1914. Carr's depiction of Wilsonian-era liberals as "utopians" has not stood up to subsequent scholarship, which finds post-1919 liberal internationalists as remarkably pragmatic, experimental, and in many ways more clear-eyed about the coming fascist threat than was Carr. But for generations, Carr's book has catalyzed debate over the role of authority, ideas, and power in the rise and fall of international order, and it remains a major contribution to the study of twentieth-century world politics. As Carr argues—and the twentieth century shows—powerful states do make international order, but if that order is to last, it will need to be backed by restraints on the abuse of power and infused with a shared sense of social purpose.

The emergence of precisely that kind of order after World War II ranks as one of the most important developments of the modern era. In the shadow of the Cold War, Western liberal democracies engaged in new and far-reaching forms of cooperation. They reopened the world economy, built regional and global institutions, launched the European project, turned former foes Germany and Japan into partners, and embedded their societies in a system of common security. In the 1950s, Deutsch's pioneering work marked the beginning of serious efforts by social scientists to map the logic and significance of the new rules-based order. In *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area*, Deutsch and his co-authors advanced the claim that states are not trapped in a world of anarchy; through trade, exchange, learning, and the exercise of political imagination, groups of states can establish durable zones of peace. Deutsch argued that the countries of the North Atlantic region offered the most advanced form of this effort to dampen and even eliminate the anarchic causes of war. He showed that anarchy is not a fixed condition in international relations but a historical outcome that coordinated political action can prevent.

War and Change in World Politics
BY ROBERT GILPIN. Cambridge University Press, 1981, 272 pp.

After Utopia: The Decline of Political Faith
BY JUDITH N. SHKLAR. Princeton University Press, 1957, 330 pp.

This Endangered Planet: Prospects and Proposals for Human Survival
BY RICHARD A. FALK. Vintage Books, 1972, 495 pp.

The years ahead will be shaped by China's ambitions, the continuing struggles of liberal democracy, and the climate crisis. The rise of China might well be a defining feature of the twenty-first century. If so, it is a drama that the world has seen before. The rise and decline of great powers and the struggles over international order have marked world politics since the age of Thucydides. No modern book of international relations theory offers a more sweeping, elegant, and influential account of these global power transitions than Gilpin's 1981 classic. Gilpin saw world politics as a succession of ordered systems created by leading (or hegemonic) states that emerge after war with the opportunity and capabilities to organize the rules and arrangements of interstate relations. Order is built not on the balance of power but on a structured asymmetry of power. These hierarchical orders can persist for decades and even centuries, but eventually the underlying material conditions of power shift, and the ordered relations of states break apart, sometimes violently. Gilpin's book encourages the reader to place upheavals in contemporary world politics in a deeper historical perspective. Change is inevitable, and no order lasts forever. The question Gilpin leaves the reader with is the most profound: "Is there any reason to hope that political change may be more benign in the future than it has been in the past?"

Not since the 1930s or the dark days of the Cold War has the future of liberal democracy seemed so uncertain. Political philosophers such as Shklar sought to defend liberalism in a world of rising violence and tyranny. In her many books and essays, Shklar argued that liberalism cannot remake societies or resolve fundamental moral disagreements. Instead, the liberal ethos of forbearance and magnanimity in negotiating differences provides the best institutional framework for protecting humans from the destructive forces of oppression. Shklar laid the groundwork for this view in her 1957 masterwork, in which she traced the religious and Romantic backlash to Enlightenment beliefs in human reason and social progress. Shklar showed that reactionary and critical thinkers have shadowed liberalism from the beginning, rejecting its alleged utopianism and opening the way for an illiberalism rooted in fatalism and social despair. Liberalism can only endure, she insisted, when anchored in people's mutual vulnerability to suffering and their aversion to the greatest of all "public vices," cruelty. Safeguarding the delicate accomplishment of liberal societies

will require the reaffirmation of the toleration of difference, a noble spirit that Shklar hoped could sustain liberal democracy even in an age of disillusionment.

Global warming and other environmental crises are threatening to radically change the way people live. In the early 1970s, a variety of thinkers began to offer warnings of the planetary-scale dangers generated by human activity, introducing terms such as "limits to growth" and "spaceship earth." Falk's evocative and illuminating 1971 book sounded the alarm and triggered a debate over the reform of the global political order. He argued that the threats to humanity were coming from a set of interlocking features of late-twentieth-century modernity, such as environmental degradation, militarization, population growth, and resource depletion—factors that were driven by the industrial state, military competition, and materialist ideologies of progress. For Falk, the world of sovereign states, with its nationalist impulses and short-termism, was the deep source of the global predicament. He called for a revolution in consciousness that would reimagine how peoples and societies could organize themselves for sustainable life. Falk hoped for a profound transformation in political organization beyond the constraints of nation-states and multilateral bodies, one driven by social movements and a global civil society in the service of "ecological humanism." To date, no such transformation has taken place. The fate of the earth may depend on whether it eventually does.

Economic, Social, and Environmental

BARRY EICHENGREEN

The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business
BY ALFRED D. CHANDLER, JR.
Harvard University Press, 1977, 608 pp.

The Soviet Economy
BY ALEC NOVE. George Allen & Unwin, 1961, 328 pp.

Technological Revolutions and Financial Capital: The Dynamics of Bubbles and Golden Ages
BY CARLOTA PEREZ. Edward Elgar, 2002, 224 pp.

The signal economic developments of the last century were the rise of the U.S. economy, the collapse of the Soviet economic system, and the increasingly complex interplay of technological progress, finance, and business-cycle instability.

Chandler's 1977 magnum opus remains the definitive account of U.S. managerial capitalism. The Pulitzer Prize–winning business historian emphasized the key role of corporate managerial decisions but also the structural advantages of the size and reach of U.S. companies, specifically for firms positioned to sell first to a continental market and then to the entire world. In explaining why some firms achieve market dominance, Chandler pointed to "first mover" investments (preempting the market by being first to invest), global distributional networks, and efficient management

hierarchies. His arguments were later challenged by critics who argued that new information and communication technologies vitiated the advantages of corporate size and hierarchical control. These new technologies, the skeptics suggested, put small firms on an equal footing with big ones. But the survival of large manufacturing firms that were Chandler's focus and the ascendancy of a new generation of even larger information technology companies essentially vindicated his claims.

Nove's work on the Soviet economy, originally published in 1961, has been revised and updated repeatedly; the final edition was released in 1992 in the wake of the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Nove dissected key episodes in Soviet economic history, from the New Economic Policy of the 1920s and farm collectivization in the 1930s to the heavy industry drive and abortive economic reforms under Nikita Khrushchev, Leonid Brezhnev, and other Soviet leaders. His successive editions also showed how scholarly views of the Soviet experiment evolved over time. Nove was able to reconcile the successful growth in the first half of the Soviet period—achieved, to be sure, at immense human cost—with the eventual decline and collapse of the Soviet economy and Soviet society. As he showed, central planning in general, and its Soviet variant in particular, had always been riddled with flaws. These faults came to the fore with a vengeance toward the end of twentieth century.

Neither Chandler nor Nove had much to say about the roles of finance and economic fluctuations in the development of technology. These issues were the focus of Perez's influential 2002 work. Like the economists Hyman Minsky and Charles Kindleberger before her, Perez emphasized the volatility of investor sentiment, the role of new technologies in precipitating investor manias, and the tendency for financial markets to go through cycles of boom and bust. She described how bubbles, when they burst, can be both destructive and generative: they leave behind not just the detritus of failed financial investments but also tangible infrastructures that underpin subsequent economic growth. The railway boom of the late nineteenth century and the dot-com bubble during the early years of this century illustrate her claim. The financial crashes and crises of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries may have been costly and disruptive, but they were integral elements of the ongoing, if unsteady, forward march of the market economy.

The Rise and Fall of American Economic Growth: The U.S. Standard of Living Since the Civil War
BY ROBERT J. GORDON. Princeton University Press, 2017, 784 pp.

The Race Between Education and Technology
BY CLAUDIA GOLDIN AND LAWRENCE F. KATZ. Harvard University Press, 2008, 488 pp.

The Great Rebalancing: Trade, Conflict, and the Perilous Road Ahead for the World Economy
BY MICHAEL PETTIS. Princeton University Press, 2013, 232 pp.

The Spirit of Green: The Economics of Collisions and Contagions in a Crowded World
BY WILLIAM D. NORDHAUS.
Princeton University Press, 2021, 368 pp.

To paraphrase the economist Paul Krugman: when it comes to economic growth, technological progress is not everything, but it is almost everything. Just as the pace and direction of technological change shaped the last economic century, it will equally shape the next.

Gordon advances a pessimistic view of the capacity for technological change to continue raising living standards at the rate to which Americans grew accustomed in the last century. He points to "one great wave" of inventions and innovations between 1870 and 1970, such as electricity, indoor plumbing, and the internal combustion engine, and questions whether current advances in artificial intelligence, human genomics, and robotics can improve living standards to the same extent. Many readers will find Gordon's skepticism regarding today's new technologies counterintuitive. But they will be forced to think again about the capacity of these developments to improve the human condition.

New technologies also have distributional consequences—as any early-twentieth-century horse-drawn carriage maker would attest. People must acquire skills and training to rise to the demands of new technological competition. Goldin and Katz view this interplay through the lens of U.S. history. They describe how the United States became a leader in the provision of universal education and how it pioneered the "high school movement." They show how educational attainment advanced faster than technology in the first half of the twentieth century, leading to a drop in economic inequality. In the latter half of the century, however, technology "sprinted ahead" and accentuated distributional problems. The book raises questions about whether educational systems can continue to successfully impart requisite skills and training, whether they will win the political support needed to do so, and how inequality will deepen in the event of their failure.

The global economic future will be shaped, in no small part, by the geostrategic contest between China and the United States and by the performance of their respective economic and political systems. One hesitates to recommend a book on the economic competition between these two countries, given the rapidity of change in their respective economies and polities and, no less, in their bilateral relations. But readers probably can't do better than Pettis's 2013 work. He emphasizes policy distortions that artificially boost saving and investment in China while depressing them in the United States, producing trade imbalances, financial weakness in China, and deindustrialization in the United States. Pettis did not predict the election of U.S. President Donald Trump or the economic and political clampdown under Chinese President Xi Jinping, but his analysis highlights the economic vulnerabilities of both countries as they face the next century.

Finally, any reckoning with the economic future of the planet must include the challenge of climate change, to which the recent book by Nordhaus, the Nobel Prize–winning economist, is an essential introduction.

Military, Scientific, and Technological

LAWRENCE D. FREEDMAN

The Twenty Years' Crisis: 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations
BY EDWARD HALLETT CARR.
Macmillan, 1939, 312 pp.

A Study of War
BY QUINCY WRIGHT. University of Chicago Press, 1964, 451 pp.

Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought From Machiavelli to Hitler
EDITED BY EDWARD MEAD EARLE.
Princeton University Press, 1943, 553 pp.

Three important approaches to the study of war were established by books published during World War II. Carr finished his classic, an analysis of how things had gone wrong since World War I, just as a new global conflagration was beginning. The book is now seen as one of the foundational texts of realism, although Carr described it more as a correction of the increasingly influential and, in his view, naive utopianism that devised schemes for world government without regard for the abiding importance of national interest. Carr's focus on military power, economic power, and the state's ability to shape public opinion reinforced the realist character of the book. He sought to revise utopian assumptions about the inevitability of progress, but he wasn't a total cynic: moral considerations, in his view, remained an important part of policymaking.

Wright's two-volume magnum opus, the result of years of meticulous and comprehensive research by his team at the University of Chicago, was published in 1943. This work had a utopian objective: to provide the evidence and analysis to make possible the prevention and limitation of war. Wright identified four key factors that determined the likelihood of conflict: technology (mainly military), law (mainly international), forms of political organization, and key values. Peace required maintaining an equilibrium "among the uncertain and fluctuating political and military forces within the system of states." Wright argued that leaders could make sound policy decisions only by paying attention, in granular and quantitative detail, to subjects as diverse as the properties of weapons systems, demographics, the observance of international law, polling data, and the content of newspapers. Later generations of scholars followed Wright's path in crafting a scientific approach to international relations that depended on thorough data gathering and rigorous analytical methodologies.

Earle brought together a remarkable collection of essays to help explain the origins of strategy. In some respects, the impact of new forms of warfare, including the first atomic bombs, soon dated the volume. But the book's abiding value was ensured by the ambitious historical sweep of Earle's approach, his expansive definition of strategy—incorporating economic considerations and political context—and the quality of the individual contributions, including some by the leading historians of the time.

The Strategy of Conflict
BY THOMAS SCHELLING. Harvard University Press, 1960, 309 pp.

On War
BY CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ. EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY MICHAEL HOWARD AND PETER PARET. Princeton University Press, 1976, 717 pp.

The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, U.S. MARINE CORPS. University of Chicago Press, 2007, 472 pp.

These three books capture the key themes that have emerged in Western thinking about strategy since the end of World War II. By far the most important development was the start of the nuclear age. The advent of the atomic bomb demanded a reappraisal of military strategy, an effort that was largely led by civilian analysts, of whom Schelling was the most original and imaginative. He was an economist with a lively mind and an eclectic approach, influenced by, but not bound to, game theory. The shared fear of nuclear war created incentives for the superpower antagonists to cooperate as well as compete; this interdependence was a fruitful area for game theory. Schelling addressed the key policy issues of the day, explored the credibility of commitments and tacit forms of bargaining, and developed such influential concepts as "the threat that leaves something to chance" (the risk of escalation that one cannot completely control) and "the reciprocal fear of surprise attack" (the idea that the probability of a surprise attack grows because each side fears what the other fears).

It might seem odd to include in this list the classic work of Carl von Clausewitz, the great Prussian theorist, first published in German in 1832. But the publication in 1976 of a new translation by Howard and Paret had a major impact on discourse about strategy. They made a book that had been generally described as dense and difficult accessible to a wider audience at a time when there was a revival of interest in conventional warfare. Their translation was controversial. Critics suggested that Howard and Paret distorted the meaning of the nineteenth-century text to make it more relevant to contemporary debates. Nonetheless, the significance of the work could not be denied. It reminded readers of some of Clausewitz's most telling observations, including the importance of political purpose; the interplay of reason, chance, and passion; the inherent strengths of defense; the need to identify the enemy's center of gravity as the best point to attack; and the importance of the culminating point when an advance runs out of steam.

Then there is the U.S. Army's field manual. It is not a work of independent scholarship but a government document, more a product of its time than an enduring contribution to strategic thought. Yet it captured the insights of the United States' senior military leadership as they struggled with the demands of two major counterinsurgency campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan in the first decade of the twenty-first century. The manual was drafted with substantial contributions from academics and nongovernmental organizations and stressed the need to avoid conventional thinking

about war. Instead, it drew on a tradition of thinking about revolutionary and guerrilla warfare that emphasized the importance of separating militants from the wider population, in part by relying more on a political process than on combat. The manual encouraged flexibility in military attitudes and behavior and pointed to the value of restraint. It was well received and widely read, and its lessons were applied successfully if briefly in Iraq during the 2007 surge of U.S. troops in the country. Afghanistan, however, exposed the problems when it came to applying its core messages.

The United States

JESSICA T. MATHEWS

Silent Spring
BY RACHEL CARSON. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1962, 400 pp.

The Pentagon Papers: Report of the Office of the Secretary of Defense Vietnam Task Force
BY THE VIETNAM TASK FORCE. Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2011, 47 volumes.

Nineteen Eighty-Four, A Novel
BY GEORGE ORWELL. Secker and Warburg, 1949, 328 pp.

Citizens' movements transformed the United States in the second half of the twentieth century, including the campaigns for civil rights, women's rights, and the environment. In the last case, the spark took the form of a single book: Carson's groundbreaking account of environmental destruction. Excerpted in *The New Yorker* before its publication in 1962, the book sold two million hardcover copies in two years. Carson was a little-known oceanographer who had spent much of her career writing brochures for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. But her book had a seismic impact with its elegant prose and well-documented depiction of a world bathed in toxic chemicals, of the deleterious consequences of those chemicals for human health, and of misinformation campaigns by the chemical industry that public officials passively accepted. Industry groups attempted to dismiss her as a communist or a hysterical woman, but the attacks did not prevent her work from winning the approval of the scientific community and from becoming not just mainstream but a classic still in print after more than half a century. The book led to the banning of the pesticide DDT, helped create the Environmental Protection Agency, and stoked broad concerns about clean air and water, land and wildlife conversation, and, eventually, climate change.

Also first published as excerpts, the Pentagon Papers had a similar impact. A massive internal history of U.S. political and military involvement in Vietnam from 1945 to 1967, the study was leaked by Daniel Ellsberg, a national security analyst, to *The New York Times* in 1971. Four presidential administrations, the study said, had actively misled the public about U.S. intentions and actions in Vietnam. The government of Lyndon Johnson had "systematically lied." In the government's own words, the study validated the arguments of the growing antiwar movement. More subtly, for enormous numbers of Americans,

the realization that their government could have lied to them for decades came as a visceral—in some cases life-changing—shock. Arguing that the Pentagon Papers were a direct threat to national security, the administration of Richard Nixon attempted to stop its publication. Within days, the Supreme Court ruled 6–3 against the government, writing that "paramount among the responsibilities of a free press is the duty to prevent any part of the government from deceiving the people." Followed quickly by the Watergate break-in and the subsequent scandal that ultimately forced Nixon's resignation, the Pentagon Papers helped spur the devastating decline in public trust in government that has continued to the present.

Distrust in state power permeated the culture. Orwell's classic novel has introduced more Americans to the essence of totalitarianism than any other work of fiction or nonfiction. Orwell meant to warn against what could happen through the perversion of a government of either the right or the left, but during the Cold War, most American readers understood the novel's references to Big Brother, the Thought Police, the Ministry of Truth, and the rewriting of history specifically as depictions of communist regimes. In the Trump era, however, the book acquired an entirely new resonance. Orwell's invocation of the "alterable" past echoes today as "alternative facts." "Newspeak" is identifiable as "fake news." Ubiquitous social media trolls and hackers are instantly recognizable as analogous to Orwell's "telescreen" that cannot be turned off. Lies propagated from unaccountable sources are as effective as government-controlled propaganda—perhaps more so. Torture isn't necessary: a public can voluntarily accept disinformation and submit to omnipresent surveillance. The world today is utterly transformed from 1949, but 70 years after its publication, Orwell's grim dystopia is still as chilling and as fresh as it was then.

The Avoidable War: The Dangers of a Catastrophic Conflict Between the United States and Xi Jinping's China
BY KEVIN RUDD. PublicAffairs, 2022, 432 pp.

AI 2041: Ten Visions for Our Future
BY KAI-FU LEE AND CHEN QIUFAN. Currency, 2021, 480 pp.

Anti-intellectualism in American Life
BY RICHARD HOFSTADTER. Knopf, 1963, 434 pp.

The Paranoid Style in American Politics, and Other Essays
BY RICHARD HOFSTADTER. Knopf, 1965, 314 pp.

The twenty-first century will be defined in part by the U.S.-Chinese relationship and its possible devolution into war. China's meteoric economic and technological rise over the past few decades, the end of U.S. global economic dominance, and the deepening cracks in American democracy make the threat all too real. Rudd offers the best available treatment of this potential clash and how it might be avoided. He speaks fluent Mandarin and has visited China more than 100 times during and after his stints as prime minister of Australia. His sober assessment of the high risk of war (Chinese President Xi Jinping is "a man in a hurry

when it comes to Taiwan") makes more urgent his call for much deeper mutual understanding "of the other side's strategic thinking" and the need to "conceptualize a world" where the two powers can "competitively coexist."

The ability of artificial intelligence to overturn every aspect of human society—from the nature of work to who (or what) makes decisions about war—will have even greater consequences in the years ahead. Lee, the Taiwanese-born, U.S.-educated and -trained former president of Google China, is a globally recognized AI expert who can write for the uninitiated. His book, a collaboration with Chinese science-fiction writer Chen, combines ten imaginary—often terrifying—stories of AI's potential impacts with Lee's clearheaded analysis of the issues each raises. He is surprisingly optimistic. "We are the masters of our fate," he writes, "and no technological revolution will ever change that." Theoretically, that should be true; in practice, it may not be.

Much of what the United States tries to do abroad in the coming century (and therefore what the international community can do collectively) depends on whether U.S. leaders can sort out their own house first. Extreme polarization in American society has eroded faith in the norms and institutions that make democracy possible. Much has been written about the evolving style of authoritarianism around the world, and many authors have tried to explain, without notable success, what motivates the legions of Americans who back former U.S. President Donald Trump. But few books go beyond the recent past to the deep roots of the United States' current political discontent. Two works by the historian Hofstadter written 60 years ago offer more answers about the future by probing further into the past. The books examine the long-standing opposition to ideas, to elites, to expertise, and to learning in U.S. political history; the powerful role of evangelical Christianity (long before it became an explicitly political movement) in opposition to school desegregation, civil and voting rights, women's rights, and abortion; and the constant pull of conspiracy theories on the right, principally, but also the left. Hofstadter's pinpointing of what moves "the arena of uncommonly angry minds" provides a clearer understanding of the United States' current polarization than the dozens of books focused on "Trumpism."

Western Europe

ANDREW MORAVCSIK

Diplomacy
BY HENRY KISSINGER. Simon & Schuster, 1994, 912 pp.

The Economic Consequences of the Peace
BY JOHN MAYNARD KEYNES. Harcourt, Brace, and Howe, 1919, 192 pp.

The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century
BY SHERI BERMAN. Cambridge University Press, 2006, 240 pp.

Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945
BY TONY JUDT. Penguin, 2005, 960 pp.

For millennia, Europe was a warring continent that featured shifting alliances among dynastic states ruthlessly striving for regional and global primacy. Over the past 75 years, however, the region has emerged as a zone of unmatched peace, prosperity, tolerance, and stability, with a benign global presence. Today, European countries dominate lists of the most admired political systems and most desirable places to live.

This extraordinary transformation sprang from a century-long domestic political evolution toward self-determination, social welfare provision, and liberal democracy. In each area, Europe learned and applied the lessons of its turbulent history.

These advances might not have been possible without a key underlying shift in the global balance of military power. In his 1994 history of foreign policy over the past two centuries, Kissinger insisted that Europe owes its period of peace to the emergence of a hegemonic United States, which tipped the military balance in two world wars and then provided a deterrent shield that kept "the Soviet Union out, the Americans in, and the Germans down," as NATO's first secretary-general, Lionel Ismay, put it. This realist view that Europe's stability was entirely dependent on U.S. military hegemony still circulates widely in the Washington establishment.

Military power may be essential, but in the end, it can do little more than preserve an armed status quo. To attain the deeper and permanent peace seen in Europe today—where war has become all but unthinkable, internal borders have become inconsequential, and goods, capital and people move freely—bigger changes were required.

Europeans had to renounce radically revisionist leaders such as Napoleon Bonaparte and Adolf Hitler—men who espoused extreme goals that could be achieved only by force of arms. Instead, Europeans learned to view the existing regional order as fundamentally legitimate and then committed themselves to intense cooperation within it.

Three social trends fueled this transformation in foreign policy. First was the spread of national self-determination. Starting around the turn of the nineteenth century, peoples began revolting against empires in order to establish their own nation-states. Even Kissinger, critical as he is of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's impatient idealism in crafting the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, cannot help but praise the president's prophetic awareness that self-determination would become the foundational norm of modern world politics. A century later, European nations are satisfied: no people dreams of altering borders or imposing extreme political ideologies by force—predatory Russian actions at the continent's eastern edge being the exception that proves the rule.

Second was the adoption of the welfare state across Europe. In his celebrated critique of the Treaty of Versailles, Keynes predicted that the post–World War I settlement could not last. In the modern era of mass politics and transnational interdependence, he reasoned, international economic stability and justice are preconditions for peace. Keynes prophesied that, given the severe economic demands placed on Germany, resentment of the

post-Versailles order, extreme inequality, social resistance, and macroeconomic shocks would inevitably disillusion moderates and breed radical politics—a prediction that proved correct when the Great Depression propelled Hitler into the German chancellery.

A generation later, the Marshall Plan, the creation of social welfare states, and the founding of the Bretton Woods system—in which Keynes again played an influential role—gave Europe a second chance. Berman traced the distinctive European character of the beliefs and institutions of modern social democracy, showing how deeply they are embedded in the European politics, and contends that it is the most successful political model in the world today.

Third was the spread of liberal democracy. In the interwar period, truly democratic governments were few and beleaguered. Yet World War II discredited the fascist right, and the Soviet threat tamed the communist left. In his magisterial account of European politics and society over the past 75 years, Judt shows how democracy, combined with self-determination and social welfare, ushered in three generations of moderate politics, economic prosperity, and social tolerance. As the Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant foresaw in the late eighteenth century, the result has been a seemingly perpetual peace heretofore unknown to Europe.

Combating Inequality: Rethinking Government's Role
EDITED BY OLIVIER BLANCHARD AND DANI RODRIK. MIT Press, 2021, 312 pp.

The Brussels Effect: How the European Union Rules the World
BY ANU BRADFORD. Oxford University Press, 2020, 424 pp.

Electoral Engineering: Voting Rules and Political Behavior
BY PIPPA NORRIS. Cambridge University Press, 2004, 375 pp.

Two Blankets, Three Sheets
BY RODAAN AL GALIDI. TRANSLATED BY JONATHAN REEDER. World Editions, 2020, 400 pp.

Will Europe's unique system of peace, prosperity, and tolerance flourish in the twenty-first century? Pessimists and skeptics cite slow economic growth, the reemergence of the radical right, and tensions within increasingly multicultural societies as evidence for the fragility of Europe's peaceful order. Yet the continent's robust response and remarkable resilience in the face of the last 15 years of crises is reassuring. The euro remains in place, migration has receded, populist forces have become more moderate, Brexit has inspired no imitators, former U.S. President Donald Trump backed down on his trade brinkmanship with European allies, U.S. tech giants now accept and implement European regulations, and Ukraine's vigorous defense of self-determination—whatever its outcome—demonstrates Russia's utter inability to pose a credible military threat to NATO.

Europeans do face, however, the basic political challenges common to all industrial countries. Although, for the moment, they appear to possess better institutional means to address

these difficulties than people in any other part of the world, three concerns stand out.

One is the problem of regulating globalization. A volume edited by Blanchard and Rodrik echoes Keynes's concern that governments must balance the benefits of globalization against the legitimate desires of individual countries to assure equality, stability, and regulatory protection in ways consistent with the local priorities of their citizens. But as Bradford's provocative work showed, Europe is well suited to manage this tension. It not only has supplanted the United States as the world's leading regulator but is succeeding in imposing its high regulatory standards internationally.

Another challenge is to encourage political moderation, particularly as far-right populists have grown in influence across the continent. Norris's rich classic reminds us that almost all European countries elect their governments through multiparty proportional representation systems and that such systems incentivize political moderation and compromise through coalition government. Surely it is not by chance that polarization and extremism are much more prevalent in the small number of European countries where politicians are elected by majorities in single-member districts, which generates a two-party politics—among them the United Kingdom and Hungary (and, farther afield, the United States).

Finally, as the percentage of foreign-born residents in Europe approaches that in the United States, European countries have struggled to accept and integrate migrants. Often, fiction and biography are best suited to capture the torturous physical and legal process by which migrants enter Europe, as well as the tension between their assimilation and their natural desire to retain their distinctive cultural traits. In his tragicomic memoir, Al Galidi, an Iraqi migrant to the Netherlands, captured the Kafkaesque alienation of the process of settling in Europe, an ordeal even though it was ultimately successful.

Europe must overcome these challenges because its continued success is essential to any realistic vision of a benign future for world politics. Europe matters not simply because it remains, for the moment, the major military ally of the United States, the world's largest trading economy, and the most capable source of nonmilitary influence. Rather, above all, Europe matters in the twenty-first century because its countries offer the most credible global model for progressive politics.

Since 1980, Europe has slowly supplanted the United States as the most legitimate model for nearly every essential element of modern democratic life. It now outperforms the United States (not to mention China and India) in fairness of elections; moderation of politics; provision of social welfare, medical care, and childcare; control of violence; domestic and international rule of law; minority rights; respect for the physical integrity of women; protection of the environment; regulation of technology; upward social mobility, provision of development assistance; enforcement of anticorruption measures; restraint on military intervention; and economic openness. Europe today is—to use Abraham's Lincoln's famous phrase—the "last best hope of earth."

Western Hemisphere

SHANNON O'NEIL

Dependency and Development in Latin America
BY FERNANDO HENRIQUE CARDOSO AND ENZO FALETTO. TRANSLATED BY MARJORY MATTINGLY URQUIDI. University of California Press, 1979, 277 pp.

Nunca Más: The Report of the Argentine National Commission on the Disappeared
BY THE ARGENTINE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE DISAPPEARED. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1986, 322 pp.

Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent
BY EDUARDO GALEANO. TRANSLATED BY CEDRIC BELFRAGE. Monthly Review Press, 1973, 317 pp.

Latin America's last hundred years were ones of fitful economic gains, brutal dictatorships and tentative democracies, and complicated relations with the ascendant global superpower next door, the United States. Three books captured these and other trends that helped shape the region's economic, political, and social trajectories.

For decades, dependency theory dominated Latin American economics, explaining the region's struggles largely as results of its subordinate position in the global economy and the inherent limits of foreign capital for generating broad-based and inclusive growth. Because of its sweeping theoretical framework and the success of at least one of its authors—Cardoso later became president of Brazil—*Dependency and Development in Latin America* is a model of the genre. Governments put the authors' views into practice through import-substitution industrialization, combining high import tariffs, quotas, and other protections with subsidies to boost domestic manufacturing. These measures spurred strong growth rates for a time, but the costs to public coffers and consumers alike precipitated a region-wide debt crisis and a lost economic decade in the 1980s. In the years that followed, many Latin American countries more fully embraced the market-oriented economic recommendations known as the Washington Consensus than did other developing regions.

In 1978, aside from the English-speaking Caribbean, only three Latin American countries were democratic. A mix of authoritarian civilian and military regimes held sway. *Nunca Más*, the report of a truth commission set up by newly elected President Raúl Alfonsín in 1983 as Argentina returned to democracy, chronicled the individual horrors and the systematic violation of human rights during one period of military rule between 1976 and 1983. Based on thousands of interviews and exhaustive research, this almost unbearable read became a surprise bestseller and a model for other truth commissions as countries emerged from repressive rule. Its devastating clarity bolstered support for democracy in

Argentina and throughout the region that remains strong, if somewhat diminished, today.

According to public opinion polls, most Latin Americans have a positive view of the United States and its people. Still, justified outrage over the country's actions in the past have left many people suspicious of its intentions in the region in the present. No book better depicted the rationale and raw emotion behind this distrust than Galeano's famous account, which chronicled centuries of exploitation by outsiders, from European conquistadors to U.S. multinational corporations. This memory of Latin America's victimhood remains politically salient and expedient; in 2019, Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador demanded that Spain apologize for its conquests and the atrocities committed by the conquistadors.

Redeemers: Ideas and Power in Latin America
BY ENRIQUE KRAUZE.
Harper, 2011, 560 pp.

Forgotten Continent: A History of the New Latin America
BY MICHAEL REID. Yale University Press, 2008, 400 pp.

Few authors have written about the region as a whole in recent years, nor have many laid out a vision for its future. In part, the paucity of works reflects a recognition of the region's great variety across dozens of countries; after all, few books have been written about Asia writ large, either. But this deficit also suggests a Latin America on the margins of today's global trends. Economic growth in the region has been too tepid to draw the serious investment by global companies. The lack of widespread terrorism and war has, in good ways, consigned it to the geopolitical sidelines. Meanwhile, governments in the region have turned inward to focus on their own political struggles and their failures to meet voters' demands for better public services, increased economic opportunities, and reduced corruption.

By delving into Latin America's intellectual history, Krauze illuminates the old ideas that continue to drive debates. Varied strains of anti-Americanism still pervade diplomatic relations and often stymie bilateral initiatives. Aspiring politicians on the left and the right today emulate the tactics of leaders such as Eva Perón, who served as Argentina's first lady from 1946 to 1952, and Hugo Chávez, the Venezuelan president from 2002 to 2013, who railed against elites and sought to channel the so-called popular will without the interference of pesky democratic checks and balances. A century ago, the Peruvian intellectual José Carlos Mariátegui argued for the rights of indigenous peoples, foreshadowing the identity politics now taking root. These theories, philosophies, and approaches remain alive and vital to understanding the region today.

Reid, a longtime Latin America reporter and editor for *The Economist*, wrote the best current history of the region. In his 2008 classic, he did not gloss over the region's

problems, but he also told a quieter story of falling poverty rates, slightly narrowing inequalities, expanding social services, and hard-fought democratic advances.

The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated health, education, and economic structures, threatening decades of gains in Latin America. Violence, corruption, and poor infrastructure and public services hold back economic opportunities and prosperity. The region has done little to prepare for the industrial and labor transformations that automation and technology will swiftly bring.

Still, Latin America can play a vital role in the global fight against climate change. It is home to many of the world's largest reserves of minerals essential for green technologies. And many of its countries have begun their own transition away from fossil fuels from an enviable base of already productive renewable energies. The region is well placed to take advantage of the once-in-a-generation unmooring of global supply chains now underway, with so many of its countries already free trade partners and democratic allies of the United States. Yet its political leaders, companies, workers, activists, and voters will need to grab the opportunities before other regions do to ensure that Latin America does not flatline while other parts of the world rise. As Reid notes in his 2017 revised edition, Latin America has surmounted considerable challenges in the past. And although democratic governance requires that reforms be incremental, Latin America's history shows such efforts can bring real, lasting, and positive change.

Eastern Europe and Former Soviet Republics

MARIA LIPMAN

The House of Government: A Saga of the Russian Revolution
BY YURI SLEZKINE. Princeton University Press, 2017, 1,128 pp.

Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation
BY ALEXEI YURCHAK. Princeton University Press, 2005, 352 pp.

The Russian state collapsed twice in the twentieth century: in 1917, the fall of the 300-year-old Russian empire was followed by fratricidal carnage and an attempt by the victorious Bolsheviks to build a futuristic kingdom of material abundance and universal justice. Compared with the Bolshevik Revolution, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 was undramatic, albeit surprising.

Slezkine's magnificent and strikingly original work of Soviet history tells the story of the thunderous rise of Russian communism and charts its decline. In his view, the early Bolsheviks—a closed group of compulsive readers, prolific writers, and utopian thinkers—were an apocalyptic sect, fervent and coercive proselytizers Slezkine likens to various millenarians, such as Münster Anabaptists or Branch Davidians. The Bolsheviks believed that they would manage to destroy everyday order and usher in eternal harmony in their lifetimes.

When this small sect improbably took charge of the vast Russian empire, its leaders vigorously preached to its new subjects about the imminent arrival of a communist paradise. The Bolsheviks' vision of that paradise remained vague, and so did their guidance on how to be a virtuous communist. Their own private lives, their households and the way they brought up their children were traditional, rather than futuristic—at great odds with their own utopian creed. In 1936, the Soviet regime unleashed the Great Terror, an orgy of mass executions that many historians have struggled to explain. In just over a year, hundreds of thousands were killed, beginning with the leading Bolsheviks themselves. According to Slezkine, the Great Terror, an act of self-destruction by sect founders, was caused by what he calls the Great Disappointment, when they realized that their prophecy would not be fulfilled.

The communist state outlasted the Bolshevik sectarians by several decades. It grew less violent and eventually began to stagnate. Soviet citizens might have lost their sense of purpose and faith in communism, but pledging allegiance to communist beliefs remained mandatory for people almost to the very end of the Soviet Union. Yurchak's groundbreaking anthropological study looks at daily life in the late Soviet Union, when communist indoctrination, its rituals, and its practices were ubiquitous but no longer coercive. Many Soviet citizens developed tastes and habits that appeared incompatible with the communist doctrine, first and foremost a fascination with the West, its pop culture and proverbial blue jeans. Yet they did not consider themselves dissidents, and they readily engaged in Soviet practices and rituals as well, even if they interpreted them somewhat differently. They lived, Yurchak asserts, at once within the system and outside it, and this arrangement appeared unconflicted and immutable. The Soviet Union, too, seemed as if it would be there forever. But this ambiguous position of what Yurchak called "inside-outside-ness" inevitably eroded a system built on rigorous dogma. The Soviet system disintegrated suddenly in the late 1980s, its collapse neither desired by the Soviet people nor anticipated by scholars of Russia.

Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984?
BY ANDREI AMALRIK.
Harper & Row, 1970, 93 pp.

The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order
BY SAMUEL P. HUNTINGTON.
Simon & Schuster, 1996, 368 pp.

The Day of the Oprichnik
BY VLADIMIR SOROKIN. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011, 208 pp.

As the world plunges into ever-deepening disorder, political forecasting looks increasingly like fortune telling. After the invasion of Ukraine, Russia's future has become even more inscrutable. Doomsday scenarios abound, from Russia's

disintegration to an impending nuclear war. Such premonitions of doom have long been an inspiration for prophecy. In his provocative 1970 article, Amalrik, a Soviet dissident, asserted that the Soviet empire had entered the last decade of its existence and was headed irrevocably toward death. Amalrik's conviction was astounding given that at the time—and for two more decades—few people inside or outside the Soviet Union expected it to crumble any time soon. But his notion of exactly how and why the Soviet Union would perish was far off the mark: he predicted that between 1975 and 1980, the Soviet Union would be destroyed by an expansionist and belligerent China.

The communist regime positioned itself as an artificially constructed civilization with no precedent in either the history of Russia or the world. The withering away of the goal of building communism made Russia unsure of its direction and national identity. Did Russia belong to the West, an overarching Christendom, a broad Eurasian identity, or a civilization of its own? In his most famous work, the political scientist Huntington argued that the post–Cold War world was taking an illiberal turn, thanks to the resurgence of non-Western countries and the rise of China. He insightfully emphasized the "cleft" quality of Ukraine and warned that the civilizational "fault line running through its heart" portended serious security risks. When it came to Russia, however, Huntington described the country as belonging to a "distinct Eurasian Orthodox civilization," but he also recognized Russia's perennial oscillations between the West and "Russianness" that make predicting its future development difficult.

But whereas an oscillating Russia confounds the forecasting power of political thinkers, a fiction writer can ignore such constraints and imagine a Russia that has finally made its civilizational choice. Sorokin's dystopian novel, published in Russian in 2006, portrays a Russia in 2028 that is eerily similar to Russia today. Isolated from Western influence, the Russia of the novel has radically rejected both its communist past and any attempts at Westernization. All Western supermarkets are gone. All Russians have burned the passports that would let them travel abroad. In some respects, Russia of 2028 has reverted to the way it was in the sixteenth century, before it had turned to the West in pursuit of modernization. This Russia is ruled by a worshiped monarch, whose power rests on the *oprichniki*, a kind of Praetorian Guard engaged in brutal purges. Censorship is rigorous. Russia has gone back to its traditional roots: the universal Orthodox faith, medieval clothes, and authentic Russian food. But despite the professed autarky of this Russian state, Russians look up to technologically superior China: they use extra sophisticated Chinese gadgets, fly Chinese-made planes, get high on drugs smuggled from China, and intersperse their archaic Russian with Chinese words. From Amalrik's possible conqueror of Russia to Sorokin's admired big brother, China looms ever larger in the Russian imagination.

Middle East

LISA ANDERSON

Losing the Long Game: The False Promise of Regime Change in the Middle East
BY PHILIP H. GORDON.
St. Martin's Press, 2020, 368 pp.

Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil
BY TIMOTHY MITCHELL.
Verso, 2011, 288 pp.

The Hundred Years' War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance, 1917–2017
BY RASHID KHALIDI. Metropolitan Books, 2020, 326 pp.

Cities of Salt
BY ABDELRAHMAN MUNIF.
TRANSLATED BY PETER THEROUX.
Random House, 1987, 627 pp.

Zaat: The Tale of One Woman's Life in Egypt During the Last 50 Years
BY SONALLAH IBRAHIM.
TRANSLATED BY ANTHONY CALDERBANK. American University in Cairo Press, 2001, 344 pp.

The last century was not kind to the Middle East. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire after World War I secured European control of the region, disrupting local political and economic arrangements and inserting a variety of alien interests and agendas. Chief among these were the Zionist settlements that would lead to the creation of Israel and the global military-industrial demand for oil that gave rise to local power brokers in the guise of royal dynasties in Iran, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Levant. The succession of the United States to global primacy and the formal independence of the largely European-designed states in the region after World War II obscured but did not end the region's extraordinarily circumscribed integration into world affairs. For much of the latter half of the twentieth century, regional development was sacrificed to Washington's desire for secure access to oil, the security of Israel, and the containment of the Soviet Union. The end of the Cold War produced a surge of U.S. interest in "democracy promotion," driven by the conviction that liberal values contributed to the triumph over the Soviet Union. The 9/11 attacks in 2001 refocused U.S. attention to what became known as the "global war on terror," an apparently unending battle against jihadist violence and Islamist political ambitions. The upheavals of the Arab uprisings in the second decade of the twenty-first century took everyone by surprise but ultimately changed little in U.S. policy, which continued to prize the Gulf's oil, Israel's security, and regional stability, even if those imperatives buttressed political autocracy and contributed to economic stagnation.

Not surprisingly, no single book captures this history. Mitchell, however, delivers a valuable analysis of just why the United States felt the need to micromanage the region's politics: the powerful pull of oil has left Western democracy contingent on an undemocratic Middle East. Gordon provides a clear and candid recounting of decades of repeated U.S. failure to remake the

Middle East. Khalidi traces the consequences of these contradictory policies through several generations of a notable Palestinian family—his own—in his frank and furious book.

Yet it falls to fiction to truly capture life in the Middle East over the last 100 years. Munif's evocative novel, for example, first published in Lebanon in 1984, recounts the devastating encounter of Bedouin inhabitants of a small desert town with Americans who discover oil there in the 1930s. Ibrahim's poignant depiction of the travails of an Egyptian woman under the regimes of three successive presidents—Gamal Abdel Nasser, Anwar Sadat, and Hosni Mubarak—provides a miniaturist's portrait of life in the second half of the century.

Money, Markets, and Monarchies: The Gulf Cooperation Council and the Political Economy of the Contemporary Middle East
BY ADAM HANIEH. Cambridge University Press, 2018, 304 pp.

The Crisis of Citizenship in the Arab World
EDITED BY ROEL MEIJER AND NILS BUTENSCHON. Brill, 2017, 534 pp.

Utopia
BY AHMED KHALED TAWFIK. TRANSLATED BY CHIP ROSSETTI. Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation, 2011, 192 pp.

The upheavals of the Arab uprisings came as a surprise to both the governments against which citizens rebelled and their U.S. and European patrons, but the results may have been more predictable. Some countries, such as Libya, Syria, and Yemen, collapsed into what appears to be interminable civil conflict. Others, including Iraq, Lebanon, and Israel-Palestine, teeter on the edge of barely contained violence. Elsewhere, autocracy secures civil peace, as in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, the Gulf states and, lately, Tunisia. These dynamics have exacerbated trends that began earlier and contributed to the uprisings in the first place: once the most egalitarian region in the world, the Middle East is now the most inequitable. Both across the region and within individual countries, inequality rose dramatically in the first decades of the twenty-first century, a trend that has accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

How long this disheartening trend will last is, of course, impossible to tell. But for now, it seems robust. Hanieh explores the sources and trajectory of the growing inequality in his provocative examination of how the governments of oil-producing Middle Eastern countries participate in the financialization of the global economy. Concerned more about private wealth than public prosperity, these regimes use oil revenues to underwrite investments across the region, and indeed around the world, shaping politics well beyond their own countries.

As the rich get richer, the poor not only get poorer but also seem to be losing what rights they enjoyed in the heady days of independence movements and mass politics. The erosion of human rights across the region is ably explored in a volume of essays edited by Meijer and Butenschon.

Civil, political, and economic rights have been supplanted with privileges distributed by class, sect, and kinship, which are designed to sustain autocratic regimes. Even in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings and their calls for "bread, dignity, freedom, and social justice," governments seem to have little appetite for extending, or even enforcing, the rights of citizenship.

Given the vulnerability of the economy and the environment of the Middle East to climate change, it's surprising how few books have focused on the region's manifold ecological and economic challenges. Once again, however, fiction provides a glimpse of what may lie ahead. *Utopia*, by the prolific Egyptian writer Tawfik, was published in Arabic in 2008 and, in a first for the novelist, translated into English in 2011. Set in the then distant future of 2023, the book starts after the United States has developed a new fuel source, making oil obsolete. The young protagonists live in Utopia, a gated colony protected by U.S. marines on the northern coast of Egypt to which the wealthy retreated after the government's collapse. Those outside Utopia, called the Others, live mired in disease, hunger, and violence. Looking for a thrill, several of Utopia's youth escape the gated compound to hunt Others, knowing that they can always call a parent to send a Marine helicopter to rescue them from the savages living in a Cairo without water or electricity, where drug addicts feed on stray dogs in the empty metro tunnels. Almost unimaginably bleak, the book was an instant bestseller and went through multiple printings. One can only hope it is not also prescient.

Asia and Pacific

ANDREW J. NATHAN

Ideology and Organization in Communist China
BY FRANZ SCHURMANN. University of California Press, 1966, 642 pp.

Asian Power and Politics: The Cultural Dimensions of Authority
BY LUCIAN W. PYE WITH MARY W. PYE. Harvard University Press, 1985, 414 pp.

Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts
BY JAMES C. SCOTT. Yale University Press, 1990, 251 pp.

In 1966, Schurmann's masterwork hit students of China with the force of revelation, laying bare for the first time the inner workings of the new communist state that had recently been created there. Now students and scholars could begin to analyze the Chinese Communist Party–led regime on its own terms, instead of as a pathological deviation from what was then considered the normal path of modernization. Particularly influential was Schurmann's insight into the CCP's use of ideology, not merely as a broad worldview but as an elaborate communication tool for coordinating a dispersed network of cadres across a vast landscape, as the central leadership tried—with limited success—to calibrate the rates of social change and revolutionary violence. The system Schurmann described was about to be blown up by Mao Zedong's Cultural

Revolution. Yet it came back strong after Mao and has become even more powerful today under Chinese President Xi Jinping. However vacuous Xi's ideological pronouncements sound to outsiders, for party members they are meaningful directives to be internalized and strictly implemented.

Lucian Pye, who reviewed books on Asia and the Pacific for the Recent Books section of *Foreign Affairs* from 1999 to 2008, was a leading proponent of political culture theory. He applied his scholarship to the entire sweep of Asia, from Pakistan to Japan, in a book co-authored with his wife, Mary. Unlike contemporary political scientists who use random samples, surveys, and regression analyses to measure the impact of cultural variables on political behavior, Pye used the older methods of historical synthesis, field observation, and interviews. He painted with the kind of broad—and often Freudian—brush that is out of fashion today, arguing, for example, that "the nurturing responsiveness of the mother must be the source of the ubiquitous phenomenon of narcissism in Indian culture" and that Asian societies exhibit "the common denominator of idealizing benevolent, paternalistic leadership, and of legitimizing dependency." But he knew Asia intimately and got many things right, including how deference to authority and fear of disorder have helped build support for authoritarian and semiauthoritarian regimes.

Scott is a leading Southeast Asia specialist who has produced numerous keen observations about peasants' moral convictions, how states operate, the functions of political corruption, and the politics of the Asian highland regions. One of his lesser-known but most fascinating books, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, ranges through history and geography, memoirs and fiction, psychology and politics to show that subordinates may bow to domination but never accept it. What looks like acceptance is often only resignation, and resignation is temporary. The oppressed—"slaves, serfs, peasants, and untouchables"—have found ways to express their dissatisfaction, even if only by showing exaggerated deference. When at some point someone makes the "hidden transcript" of resentment public, "an epidemic of political courage" may occur. Both tacit and open resistance to all kinds of domination have marked Asia's history, generating a persistent counterforce to authoritarianism.

The Great Demographic Reversal: Ageing Societies, Waning Inequality, and an Inflation Revival
BY CHARLES GOODHART AND MANOJ PRADHAN. Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, 260 pp.

Water: Asia's New Battleground
BY BRAHMA CHELLANEY. Georgetown University Press, 2011, 400 pp.

MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925–1975
BY CHALMERS JOHNSON. Stanford University Press, 1982, 412 pp.

The region's next century will be troubled by three trends with roots in the past that are now too far along to reverse. The first will be population decline in the advanced economies and many of the

emerging market economies, apart from India. The driving forces are urbanization, education, and female participation in the labor force, supercharged in China's case by the ill-advised one-child policy that was enforced from 1980 to 2015. Some of Goodhart and Pradhan's predictions are uncontroversial: where populations shrink and grow older, health and pension costs will rise, burdening government budgets and slowing economic growth; some jobs will move to India and Africa where populations are still young. Other predictions are more speculative: the end of the "sweet spot" that China created in the 1980s and after, as it poured cheap labor into the world economy and thereby kept the prices of consumer goods from rising, will have major ramifications around the world. As this sweet spot ends, cross-border trade and investment flows will diminish, rising labor costs will push up global interest rates and inflation, and when workers earn more, income inequality will decline within and across countries.

The second trend is shrinking water supplies. Growing populations, rising living standards, and wastefulness in agriculture and industry have generated a shortage throughout the region (which Chellaney defines as including much of the Middle East). Falling water tables threaten health and prosperity in cities from Beijing to Jakarta to Quetta. Overuse of Indus River waters by the Pakistani province of Punjab is driving separatist movements in the neighboring provinces of Baluchistan and Sindh. Chinese hydropower dams on the Brahmaputra and Mekong Rivers threaten the livelihoods of farmers and fisherfolk in other countries downriver. Climate change is worsening the situation by melting the Tibetan glaciers, which feed 11 rivers that support agricultural regions and coastal delta cities such as Bangkok, Dhaka, Kolkata, and Shanghai. The only way to avoid intensifying conflicts over water, Chellaney argues, is to adopt a cooperative, rules-based approach to water management—a hard sell even for provinces within a country, and all the more so for sovereign states.

The third trend will be more frequent clashes among countries over the legitimacy of different economic models. Johnson coined the term "developmental state" to describe how bureaucrats in post–World War II Japan used both direct and indirect control of capital, foreign exchange, imports, labor conditions, land, taxes, and even corporate strategy to shape both the behavior of specific enterprises and the overall structure of the economy. Bureaucrats before and just after the war had improvised economic control techniques as they responded to a series of financial and supply crises. Starting in the mid-1950s, they built what Johnson called "the best example of a state-guided market system" that was available as he was writing in the early 1980s, when Japan was the number two economy in the world and a perceived threat to the preeminence of the United States. Johnson's penetrating institutional analysis—full of sideswipes against cultural explanations—stimulated generations of research into the variations among capitalist systems, in Asia and beyond. Past is prologue: Asian countries will continue to use state-driven economic models, eliciting cries of unfair competition from the "regulatory states" of the West and fostering debates over which kind of system works best.

Africa

NICOLAS VAN DE WALLE

How Europe Underdeveloped Africa
BY WALTER RODNEY.
Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications, 1972, 316 pp.

False Start in Africa
BY RENE DUMONT. Praeger, 1966, 320 pp.

Political Topographies of the African State: Territorial Authority and Institutional Choice
BY CATHERINE BOONE. Cambridge University Press, 2003, 407 pp.

These seminal works provide a guide to Africa's evolution during the twentieth century and its current predicaments. Each has detractors, but their influence on how Africans and outsiders have come to view the region is undeniable.

Rodney's landmark work mounted a bold revisionist critique of the once prevailing view that the economic and political relationship between Europe and Africa was mostly benign. Slavery, for instance, was widely reviled as cruel and unjust, but Rodney was among the first to emphasize its devastating impact on African societies and economies before the formal colonization of the continent in the nineteenth century. Similarly, with colonialism, Rodney pushed back hard against arguments that the region had benefited from European administration, however exploitative. Rodney's mechanistic Marxism has not aged well, and his overarching argument that Europe achieved economic development as a result of its exploitation of Africa has little support among economic historians. But his sharp claims that the slave trade and European colonization delayed African development and that their negative consequences continue to hamper the region are now widely accepted.

Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, famously admonished his countrymen to "seek ye first the political kingdom and all things shall be added unto you," capturing well the immense optimism that greeted the transition of many African countries to independence from European colonialism beginning in the late 1950s. In the West, as well, observers believed that international expertise and finance would quickly bring about economic development and state building in Africa. Dumont, a French agronomist, rejected this hopeful view in his provocative book. His pessimism was grounded in three clear-eyed observations: first, that policies were not adequately addressing the biggest negative legacy of colonialism—the sorry state of education and human capital in the region; second, that the neglect of agriculture in favor of rapid industrialization was disastrous; and third, that the political elites who had taken over states were self-regarding and bent on wasting their countries' meager resources on perks and prestige spending on vanity projects that had little benefit for overall development. These failures would each contribute directly to the economic collapse, debt crisis, and state retrenchment that hit the region in the 1980s and remain significant obstacles to economic growth.

Both books generalize about Africa and are inattentive to the significant differences across and within countries, a common flaw of much mid-twentieth-century scholarship on the region. One such generalization was that African states were artificial and mainly foreign sets of institutions imposed on African societies by colonial rulers. Boone's study disagreed with this view, emphasizing the substantial variation in the cultural and historical roots of elites in the region. She showed that the nature of the linkages between provincial and national elites largely determined the legitimacy and effectiveness of the central state. Boone demonstrated convincingly that productive relations between these local and national elites resulted in more effective administration and policy. This theory explained the variation across the continent about where public services got delivered and where they did not; where the state was predatory and where, more rarely, it served the public effectively.

Digital Democracy, Analogue Politics: How the Internet Era Is Transforming Politics in Kenya
BY NANJALA NYABOLA. Zed Books, 2018, 304 pp.

Land, Investment, and Migration: Thirty-five Years of Village Life in Mali
BY CAMILLA TOULMIN. Oxford University Press, 2020, 288 pp.

Several contradictory trends coexist across the continent and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. The effects of climate change are already taking their toll on Africa, threatening to slow development and fuel instability. At the same time, cities are booming, and new urban middle classes are pushing to transform their countries.

Climate change is certainly a preoccupying reality in the Sahel region. The British economist Toulmin has been following a small peasant village in central Mali since the 1980s, with several long stays in the village; her perceptive and wonderfully evocative ethnography of the village suggests the growing likelihood of conflict, insecurity, and economic hardship as land pressures intensify because of population growth and the now frequently erratic and uncertain rainfall. On the one hand, the village seems remarkably stable despite seismic changes in recent decades, but her account is deeply foreboding. She worries that the worsening conditions are undermining the sense of community and solidarity in the village, leading to greater individualism and driving people to leave. She is skeptical of foreign aid and the focus of donors on large-scale irrigation schemes that never seem to deliver what they promise. She is also critical of the Malian administration, which she describes as authoritarian and unresponsive to the villagers' needs. Her description of the villagers' resilience and their adaptability to the tough conditions is often inspiring, but the prospects for more effective public action seem limited, and the future of the Sahel region seems dire, with large areas increasingly ceded to jihadis and warlords and economic stagnation leading to outmigration and the collapse of communities.

Nyabola's breezy account of civil society and the social media world in

urban Kenya describes a completely different African reality, in which an educated, young, and cosmopolitan middle class employs digital technologies to improve their lives and demand greater accountability from their governments. Africa's political class consists mostly of old men who have been in the game for decades. Nyabola captures well the self-confidence and optimism but also the growing impatience of young urban Africans with the old guard. Protests against governments in recent years, in countries as varied as Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, and Sudan, suggest the development of a contentious urban Africa. They reflect the expanding urban middle classes, their connections to the outside world through greater education and the large African diaspora that sends home new ideas along with remittances, which are now probably greater in total value than foreign aid. If governments can harness the energies of these urban middle classes, they can be the vanguard of a political and cultural revolution. Where their activism is suppressed, as now in Sudan, for instance, political and economic stagnation seems more likely.

FOR THE RECORD

The article "Will Putin Survive?" (July/August 2022) incorrectly stated that the Russian opposition activist Alexei Navalny was poisoned and arrested by Russian authorities in August 2021. Navalny was arrested then, but the poisoning took place a year earlier.

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THE ARCHIVE

September 1922

"A Requisite for the Success of Popular Diplomacy"

ELIHU ROOT

In the inaugural issue of Foreign Affairs, *former U.S. Senator and Secretary of State Elihu Root described the promise and the peril of a new era in international affairs. After the horrors of World War I, the American public demanded a greater say in foreign policy. But with greater democratic oversight, Root warned, came greater responsibility for average citizens. It was no longer only evil leaders who risked instigating war, but the people as well.*

"It is a familiar observation that in most wars each side believes itself to be right and both pray with equal sincerity for the blessing of heaven upon their arms. Back of this there must lie a mistake. However much ambition, trade competition, or sinister personal motives of whatever kind, may have led towards the warlike situation, two great bodies of human beings, without whose consent war cannot be carried on, can never have come to two diametrically opposed genuine beliefs as to the justice of the quarrel without one side or the other, and probably both, being mistaken about their country's rights and their country's duties. Here is the real advantage of the change from the old diplomacy to the new. Irresponsible governments may fight without being in the least degree mistaken about their rights and duties. They may be quite willing to make cannon fodder of their own people in order to get more territory or more power; but two democracies will not fight unless they believe themselves to be right. They may have been brought to their belief by misrepresentation as to facts, by a misunderstanding of rules of right conduct, or through having the blank of ignorance filled by racial or national prejudice and passion to the exclusion of inquiry and thought; but they will fight not because they mean to do wrong but because they think they are doing right. When foreign affairs were ruled by autocracies or oligarchies the danger of war was in sinister purpose. When foreign affairs are ruled by democracies the danger of war will be in mistaken beliefs."

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