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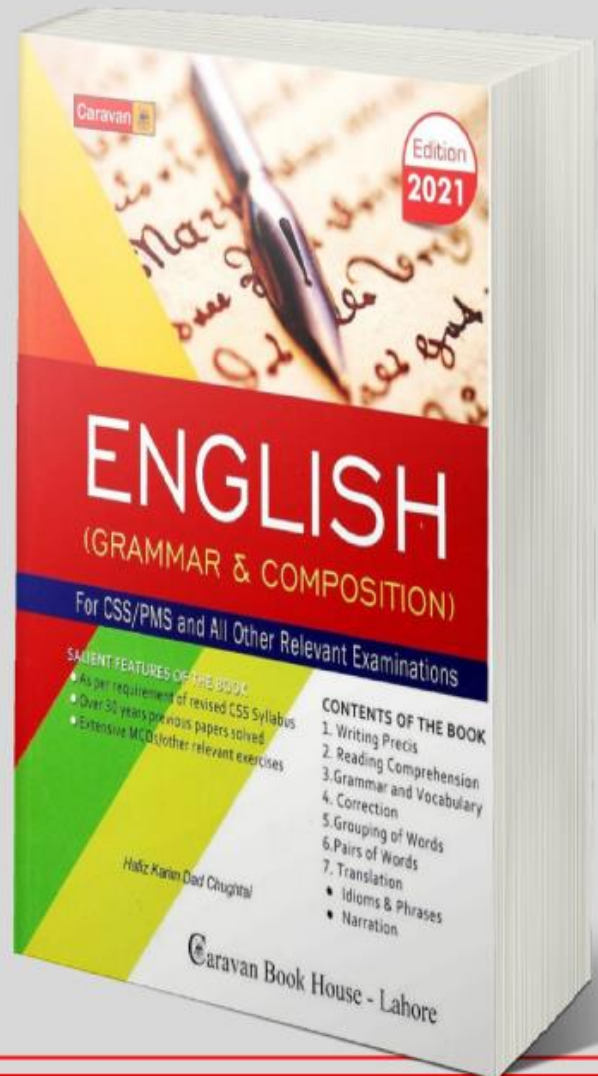
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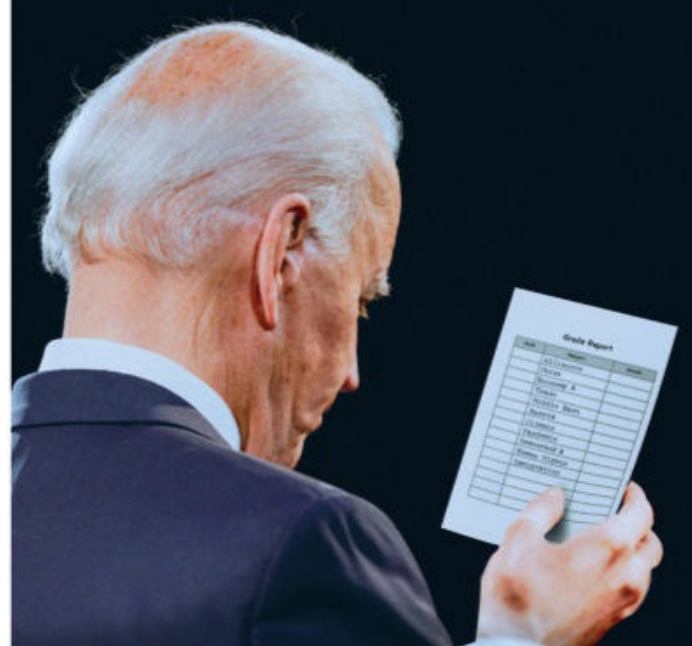
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WHEN U.S. PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN TOOK OFFICE on Jan. 20, I couldn't help but feel a little sorry for him. He was, after all, assuming power after a deadly siege on the Capitol—a horrific event that marked the country's first-ever violent transfer of power. Biden was also entering the White House amid the deadliest pandemic in a century and the worst job market in decades. His task was to not only fix those historic crises but rebuild Washington's alliances abroad, tackle climate change, and address the growing challenge presented by China. Plus, to deal with all these issues, he had to somehow unite a deeply divided Congress, even as polls revealed that 3 out of 4 Republicans believed he was not the legitimate winner of the election.

That's a lot of bad luck.

On the other hand, Biden was in a sense *lucky* to follow a president who left office with an approval rating of 34 percent—the lowest ever polled by Gallup since it began tracking U.S. presidents in 1938. With eight years as vice president and 36 as a senator, Biden is among the most experienced new presidents in U.S. history. And he's more a doer than a talker, decent rather than bombastic; in short, a man for the moment, a familiar face who won as the change candidate.

As FP's **Michael Hirsh** writes in this issue (Page 32), the only other president with such an epic task ahead of him was Franklin D. Roosevelt, who took his oath in the throes of the Great Depression. It was FDR who came up with the tidy, now global, concept of judging a leader's promise by his or her first 100 days.

And grading Biden is what we've set out to do in this issue's main feature (Page 22). It's a bit gimmicky, sure, but it's also an important early assessment and a useful way for us policy wonks to discuss and debate everything from U.S. alliances to the economy, the pandemic response to the global decline of democracy, Russia and China, climate change and immigration, and more. Twenty-five experts and practitioners bravely assigned the new White House a grade and an explanation for how they got there. There are A's, B's, and even some C's, I'm afraid. But the good news is it's just the first semester, and healthy feedback can often lead to improved performance.



There's much more in the magazine. In the front, you'll find our selection of the very best Arguments of the quarter. The Argument is FOREIGN POLICY's signature piece—a pithy and hopefully persuasive point of view on an issue in the news. In addition to the new administration's report card, we also have a feature from **Mark Perry** on Biden's at times uneasy relationship with the military (Page 36) and a magisterial essay by **Adam Tooze** on the parallel trajectories of U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi, two central bankers whose latter turns to politics may wind up redefining the role of finance in government (Page 40).

Our latest columnist **Janine di Giovanni**, one of the world's foremost foreign correspondents, considers the necessarily extraordinary paths of three trailblazing women in the uber-macho world of war reporting (Page 84). And in our latest Decoder, **Nikhil Kumar** explains the meaning of the suddenly ubiquitous Hindi word *jumla*. As Kumar writes, *jumla* has come to stand in for all the tall tales told by Narendra Modi—and considering its usage gives us a clue as to why the Indian leader seems to keep getting away with them (Page 112).

As always, I hope you're staying safe and are either vaccinated or soon to be so. Here's to shots in the arm and brighter days ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ravi Agrawal'.

Ravi Agrawal

ARGUMENTS

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Thousands of people gather at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington on Aug. 28, 2020, to call for reforms to policing and criminal justice.

Biden's Policy Must Center Racial Justice

By Alexandra Byrne, Bilen Zerie, and Kelebogile Zvobgo

As soon as they were inaugurated, U.S. President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris started making good on their campaign promises. They reentered the Paris climate accord, renewed U.S. support for the World Health Organization, and ended the Trump administration's travel bans targeting nationals of select Muslim-majority and African nations. Racial justice was also

high on the list of issues that they identified as most pressing and requiring action in their first 100 days.

On Jan. 26, Biden rolled out his administration's first steps to advance racial equity and promote national unity and reconciliation. He issued four executive orders spanning issues that affect multiple racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States, namely Black, Latino, Indigenous, Asian, and Pacific Islander Americans.

The first executive order directed the Department of Housing and Urban Development to remedy racism in federal housing policy and practice, while the second instructed the Justice Department to end contracts with private prisons. The third renewed the federal government's "commitment to tribal sovereignty and consultation," and the fourth ordered the Justice Department to combat anti-Asian racism and xenophobia. Beyond the four orders, Biden and Harris have called for a whole-of-government approach to redressing structural racism and systemic inequality.

Biden opened his remarks on signing the orders by acknowledging racial disparities in health and the economy, noting disproportionate rates of coronavirus infections and deaths, food insecurity, and job losses among Americans of color. He invoked the memory of George Floyd, who was killed by Minneapolis police in May 2020 and whose death, Biden affirmed, marked a turning point for the United States. The president urged, "Now is the time to act ... because that's what faith and morality call us to do."

The administration is off to a strong start, but it has a long way to go. Fortunately, Biden and Harris's team doesn't have to reinvent the wheel. Rather, it can look to historical cases of transitional justice in racially divided societies.

To give two examples of how transitional justice could work in the United States—and the impact it could have on racial justice—consider policy reforms in South Africa during the transition from apartheid and white-minority rule to democracy and Black-majority rule in the mid-1990s.

After nearly 50 years of violence and discrimination against Black and other nonwhite South Africans, the first post-apartheid government, led by President Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress (ANC), undertook a range of reforms relating to housing and criminal justice. Parts of the Biden plan resemble these early initiatives.

Here's what worked, what didn't,



The anti-apartheid activist Nelson Mandela hugs a girl in Soweto, South Africa, on Oct. 4, 1990. Mandela's government made progress—and faced pitfalls—on housing discrimination.

and what the implications are for the United States today.

First, Mandela and the ANC introduced several policies to redress discrimination in housing—from granting developer subsidies to ending redlining, the practice of denying housing loans to entire communities. At the time, the country faced a housing shortage of roughly 1.5 million units and a shambles of a public housing system. To fill in the gaps, the new government relied heavily on private sector investment and the work of nongovernmental organizations.

But progress on these policies stalled. Government subsidies did not produce housing quickly enough, and disagreement among local, provincial, and national governments further slowed momentum. What housing was developed was far from centers of economic opportunity. Above all, residents denounced the lack of community consultation in the process.

Biden's executive order is the first step of many in responding to the U.S. housing crisis, whose effects have been especially devastating for Americans of color. The Biden-Harris campaign's housing plan echoed many of the ANC's

early policies, including \$100 billion in grants and tax incentives to build affordable housing. But subsidies without a strategy aren't enough.

It wasn't until the 1998 People's Housing Process—four years after Mandela came into office—that South Africans in need were given a voice in the development of their homes. The Biden administration should not make the same mistake; it must put community needs at the center of its efforts in order to produce better-quality housing and avoid years of wasted time.

Second, the new South African government ushered in a number of prison reforms. It moved quickly to abolish the death penalty and reduce inhumane treatment of inmates, which again disproportionately affected Black South Africans. The government also began educating prison staff on human rights and attempted to transform the correctional system from one based on punishment to one based on rehabilitation. For petty offenders especially, the government sought to prioritize skills training, education, and diversion programs.

Regrettably, many of the ANC's efforts to reform prisons were ultimately hampered by political pressure to take a harsher stance amid a rising crime rate. Facing an outcry from the white population, the government established maximum security private prisons and encouraged judges to grant longer sentences. This tougher approach led to increasingly overcrowded prisons that remain racially imbalanced: As of 2016, nearly 98 percent of prisoners were Black or coloured, much higher than their 85 percent share of the population.

Biden's move to eliminate private prisons and his campaign's broader criminal justice plan are just the beginning when it comes to dismantling a fundamentally racist and overly punitive incarceration state. Some of his proposed initiatives parallel measures supported by the ANC in early post-apartheid South Africa, including a focus on rehabilitation and an

interest in alternatives to detention.

To succeed, however, the new administration must resist the dog-whistle politics behind many Republicans' tough-on-crime stances. And, in contrast to South Africa, Biden should tackle structural inequities that perpetuate racial disparities in the prison system today.

So far, it appears that the Biden-Harris team is committed to reforms to deliver racial equity. Still to be revealed is whether the administration is also committed to repairing historical inequity. In South Africa and many other countries that have undergone political transitions—some violent, like the one the United States recently underwent—reforms have been accompanied by truth commissions, judicial accountability for wrongdoers, and economic and symbolic reparations. These are part of what scholars and practitioners call the transitional justice toolkit.

Among these, reparations are very important. Biden's plan is nicely poised to prevent harm in the future—and that's important. But so, too, is remedying harm that took place in the past. How will the administration repair what has been broken and provide restitution—for victims of housing discrimination, the incarceration state, encroachments on sovereign Indigenous land, xenophobia, and more?

Scholars have developed detailed suggestions. Whether Biden and Harris, in partnership with the U.S. Congress, adopt them remains to be seen. But a crucial lesson from South Africa is that the lack of a serious and comprehensive reparations plan can decrease affected communities' confidence in reforms and diminish their trust in the government more generally. That undermines national unity and reconciliation. ■

ALEXANDRA BYRNE and **BILEN ZERIE** are research fellows at William & Mary's International Justice Lab, where **KELEBOGILE ZVOBGO** is the founder and director.



Western Companies Should Leave China

By *Elisabeth Braw*

In a February survey, 96 percent of German businesses active in China said they planned to stay there. That's because there's money to be made. There is, alas, also the matter of image. In a 2020 report, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) reported that 27 factories in nine Chinese provinces were using Uyghur workers from Xinjiang, including forcibly interned ones. "Those factories claim to be part of the supply chain of 82 well-known global brands," ASPI found, and "some factories appear to be using Uyghur workers sent directly from 're-education camps.'"

Although Beijing does not allow outside observers access to the camps, ex-inmates who have managed to leave China have provided harrowing accounts of systematic rape of female detainees and other crimes. The brands identified by ASPI include Abercrombie & Fitch, Acer, Adidas, Amazon, Apple, Asus, BMW, Bosch, Calvin Klein, Cerruti 1881, Cisco, Dell, Electrolux, Gap, General Motors, Google,

H&M, Hitachi, HP, HTC, Jaguar, L.L.Bean, Lacoste, Land Rover, Mercedes-Benz, MG, Microsoft, Mitsubishi, Mitsumi, Nike, Nintendo, Nokia, Panasonic, Polo Ralph Lauren, Puma, Samsung, Sharp, Siemens, Skechers, Sony, TDK, Tommy Hilfiger, Toshiba, Uniqlo, Victoria's Secret, Vivo, Volkswagen, and Zara.

In short, corporate giants' understandable desire for access to China also involves the risk of coercion and brand damage.

Here's a modest proposal for the many Western consumer-product companies doing business in China: Get out. Initially, it may cause you production headaches and loss of revenue. But global consumers will reward you. And you won't have to worry about ending up in the increasingly busy line of geopolitical fire.

The survey of German businesses, conducted by the German Chamber of Commerce in China, also found that 72 percent of German companies active in the country planned further investments. This may be connected to the fact that 77 percent of German companies active in China expect the market there to develop significantly better than in other economies this year. That's a logical assumption, considering that the International Monetary Fund predicts China's GDP to grow by 7.9 percent this year.

A few months after the ASPI report's release, a BBC correspondent asked Volkswagen's China CEO, Stephan Wöllenstein, about the matter. Wöllenstein replied that he couldn't be sure that none of the Uyghurs in Volkswagen's plant in Urumqi, Xinjiang's capital, had been transferred there from one of the camps. Soon social media was exploding with comments by angry consumers vowing to boycott the carmaker.

Other Western firms including Nike, Apple, and Coca-Cola—which operates a bottling plant in Xinjiang—have in recent months acquitted themselves rather poorly in the court of public opinion. The three mighty brands have lobbied the U.S. Congress to weaken the

Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, though without much success: Last September, the House passed the bill by an overwhelming majority, and it's reported to have majority support in the Senate as well.

The icons of Western market economies should brace themselves for more China-related woes. Beijing has been pressuring Ericsson's CEO, Borje Ekholm, to lobby the Swedish government for a reversal of the country's Huawei ban. Starbucks is in a similar situation. One can only guess how many similar cases haven't come to the public's attention.

Is the Chinese market worth such risks? It sounds like a crazy question: A market with 1.4 billion people and outstanding manufacturing infrastructure that has made China known as "the world's factory" can't be beaten. Which other country would be able to offer attractive incentives to a range of car-makers, appliance-makers, and others whose plants require enormous investment in technology?

That is the wrong question. A more appropriate one for Western business leaders is this: How can executives and boards of Western companies map business strategies when they face the risk of being coerced by Beijing as it seeks to extract concessions from their home governments? If they've received investment incentives for their plants, businesses are even more vulnerable to pressure. And it's hard to develop strategies when Beijing disrupts even the best-laid plans through wanton measures in retaliation against their home governments, as has happened to a plethora of Australian food exporters.

The only way to halt this snowballing process of corporate coercion is for one of the West's leading consumer brands to leave. Yes, it's a risk, but the company would liberate itself from the constant risk of geopolitically motivated coercion and punishment. And if it's one of the foreign brands identified by ASPI, it could cleanse the brand in the process, too. It is, in other words, a

strategy for long-term health.

Australia is already making the shift. "Whether China continues to reduce its purchases of Australian food and agriproducts in coming years—as we think likely—or not, the risks of supplying this market have definitely increased. 2021 will likely mark a watershed year, in which Australia starts to reduce its reliance on China, voluntarily or otherwise," Tim Hunt, the head of food and agribusiness research at the Netherlands-based global bank Rabobank, said in January.

Citizens all over the West, meanwhile, have taken a radically dimmer view of China than was the case even a few years ago. In a poll conducted last summer by the Pew Research Center, 81 percent of Australians had unfavorable views of China, up from 32 percent in 2017. So did 85 percent of Swedes, up from 49 percent; 74 percent of Britons, up from 37 percent; 73 percent of Americans, up from 47 percent; 73 percent of Canadians, up from 40 percent; and 71 percent of Germans, up from 53 percent. The Chinese government's recent ban on the BBC won't win any hearts or minds—quite the opposite.

Such views matter. Western consumers are not only taking a stronger interest in current affairs but want the businesses they buy from to do the same. In its 2021 Global Marketing Trends report, the consulting firm Deloitte advises

that "organizations should view themselves as human entities that mirror—and support—the values of those they are built to serve." And it reports that consumers are paying close attention to businesses' activities: 79 percent of consumers polled recalled instances of brands positively responding to COVID-19 to help their customers, workforces, and communities. That translated to 23 percent saying their perception of the brand changed and 19 percent saying it strongly influenced their brand purchase behavior. But the opposite is true as well: 66 percent of consumers recalled instances of brands behaving negatively, 31 percent reported that it affected their perception of the brand, and 26 percent said it strongly influenced their purchase behavior.

What could be more negative than being associated with 21st-century concentration camps? Sure, not too many Western consumers keep a tally of which brands have factories that might be using Uyghur labor, but there will likely be more damaging news coverage like the Wöllenstein interview and Uyghur rape victims' accounts. Indeed, Disney's much-touted *Mulan* movie last year gained headlines for entirely the wrong reasons. Not only had the film been shot in Xinjiang; in the credits, the studio also thanked the Turpan Municipal Bureau of Public Security, which



The activist Irade Kashgary waves a Uyghur flag during a protest outside an Apple Store in Washington on July 30, 2020.

operates the concentration camps and was sanctioned by the U.S. Commerce Department in 2019.

If a brand has even the faintest whiff of concentration camp, one-quarter of Western customers are—based on Deloitte’s figures—likely to defect. Such negativity can damage the brand, and what’s more, it will make institutional investors nervous. In the 1980s, apartheid South Africa had become so toxic that powerful institutional investors including Harvard University partially divested from firms with links to the regime. All this poses a risk to firms’ share price. And when the share price dips, the board notices.

Admittedly, packing up and leaving involves some effort, even for apparel firms that don’t have highly complex equipment. And there’s a big difference between giving up manufacturing in China and not selling to the Chinese market. For a food and drink chain such as Starbucks, leaving China would clearly mean forgoing Chinese consumers altogether.

Yet many businesses are already moving parts of their production elsewhere, primarily to other Asian countries, not for political reasons but because China is losing its allure as the world’s factory. Vietnam is becoming a clothes-making hub and has since 2018 been Adidas and Nike’s main manufacturing base. Thailand is attracting carmakers, and India is solidifying its position as a hub for tech and pharmaceuticals. In January, the Serum Institute of India, the world’s largest vaccine manufacturer, received permission to make AstraZeneca’s COVID-19 vaccine.

And, yes, initially a consumer brand leaving the world’s largest consumer market would lose shareholders interested only in instant gains. But it would possibly gain better ones, with an interest in long-term performance. And let’s not forget that major investors are beginning to focus more on ethics, even if only to please public opinion. In 2019, Norway’s powerful sovereign

wealth fund sold its fossil fuel holdings.

Which company is going to be the first consumer brand to make the leap? The reward would not only be long-term stability but immediate positive headlines as well. That’s more than can be expected for those brands that stay and greet every day in the knowledge it could bring evidence of Chinese coercion or more damaging revelations of concentration camp labor. Not even 7.9 percent growth rates can offset such headaches. ■

ELISABETH BRAW is a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and a columnist at FOREIGN POLICY.

The Rise of the Patriotic Blockbuster

By Amanda Morrison

It’s no coincidence—or secret—that China is churning out patriotic blockbusters, which have overtaken Hollywood films at the Chinese box office in recent years. But it’s not as explicit as Beijing handing out orders. Instead, the government has shifted its approach from direct intervention to indirect incentivization by shaping the economic conditions of the film industry to favor patriotic cinema.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) faced a trade-off between economic liberalization and social control of the film industry, especially after the Tiananmen Square uprising in 1989. Rejecting the contradiction, the party pursued both—a balancing act that would come to define the Chinese development experiment across sectors. In 1990, the head of the Ministry of Radio, Film, and Television’s film bureau told the *New York Times* that the Chinese film

industry was facing a “colossal” financial crisis because of the dominance of party-line ideological films that few people actually wanted to watch.

State-run companies were responsible for delivering patriotic productions, or “main melody films,” which became mandatory viewing for students during Jiang Zemin’s patriotic education campaign in the 1990s. Meanwhile, China opened its doors to Hollywood in 1994 on a revenue-sharing basis, which accelerated the development of the domestic industry. To stave off unwelcome foreign influence, the first official censorship system was implemented in 1996.

Just one year later, the Chinese government banned Disney, Columbia, and MGM because of certain movies, such as *Kundun* and *Seven Years in Tibet*, that were deemed biased against China. A memo issued by the then-Ministry of Radio, Film, and Television (today, after several name changes, the National Radio and Television Administration, or NRTA) stated, “In order to protect Chinese national overall interests, it has been decided that all business cooperation with these three companies [will] be ceased temporarily without exception.”

Both now and then, Chinese authorities bring down a cleaver to send a resounding message. But most of the time, the state acts—in the notable words of the East Asian studies professor Perry Link—as an “anaconda in the chandelier.” The giant snake does not move, but everyone in its shadow fears provoking it.

As the industry developed, privately owned film companies—not state-run studios—began spearheading the production of nationalistic cinema. Two decades ago, party-approved message films were viewed as the source of the industry’s failure. As recently as 2013, three films celebrating the soldier and propaganda icon Lei Feng flopped despite state directives urging cinemas to promote them. Yet the state redoubled its efforts to nurture the marketable patriotic blockbuster.

From public apologies to anti-corruption crackdowns, the CCP has tightened its grip over the film industry using many of the same tools it wields to assert control across sectors and society. In 2018, the state called for “self-examination and self-correction” in the industry and demanded movie moguls cough up \$1.7 billion to the government.

But for those who toe the line, there’s plenty of profit to be had, as a slew of big-budget films dubbed “too red to fail” proved in 2019. What does it mean to be “too red to fail”? Film authorities ensure that big box office receipts go to films that align with the state’s interests. Indirect censorship mechanisms become financial incentives for profit-seeking producers to create content that will succeed in the economic environment crafted by the state.

The people running the Chinese film industry increasingly represent state interests. New restrictions on foreign investors mitigate outside influence, which grew in the 2000s when the investment landscape enjoyed a relatively free flow of capital, technology, expertise, and ideas. Since 2011, foreign investors have been prohibited from investing in film distribution companies and theater chains. Restrictions

tightened even further under the 2015 Foreign Investment Law.

Meanwhile, members of the political elite, such as Jiang’s son and former Vice President Zeng Qinghong’s brother, have stepped in to share the tremendous profits of China’s film industry, memorably described as “the new playground for princelings.” Propaganda officials have reportedly asked their children to produce films that they then approve.

In China’s saturated film market (2,308 films were produced in 2019), the state influences the visibility—and, in turn, profitability—of the releases. Distribution remains largely controlled by state-owned enterprises. Cinema managers collude with state-run distributors to ensure that optimal screening schedules are reserved for those films, while independent films may secure as few as 0.2 percent of national cinemas.

In 2018, the then-State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film, and Television, now the NRTA, designated 5,000 cinemas as the “People’s Theater Line” to receive subsidies to promote screenings of main melody films. A leaked administration directive in 2015 revealed that it had ordered movie theater chains to use

“any means necessary” to maximize box office returns for a propaganda war film to evoke “feelings of patriotism and national sentiment.” State directives also ordered the media to praise patriotic films and prohibit coverage of films considered disagreeable. A sensitive film is not a threat if no one watches it—not because it’s banned but because no one even knows of it.

Audiences appear to welcome and even favor films infused with patriotic themes—although with options increasingly limited and critical film sites often blocked, it’s hard to gauge genuine opinion. “Being patriotic is fashionable,” wrote one Chinese student on her blog while studying abroad. “I don’t want to be the uncool person in my generation.” Directors are playing into the dependable formula, dropping social commentary for patriotic fanfare. A cohort of up-and-coming directors—including Peter Chan, Stephen Chow, and John Wu—have moved away from genre films aimed at global appeal to produce films exclusively for the Chinese market.

Stars behind and in front of the camera are chasing and propelling the trend. “Popular Chinese actors are converting in droves to serve as red avatars that instill positive energy in the audience,” reported an article in the state-run tabloid *Global Times* about the industry’s patriotic makeover. The celebrity Fan Bingbing posted an image on Weibo of a map of China including Taiwan and the “nine-dash line” with the hashtag “China, not even a dot can be missing.” Her overt support of China’s territorial claims in the South China Sea came on the heels of an apology after she was accused of evading taxes and disappeared from the public’s eye for three months in 2018.

Disney’s recent live-action remake of *Mulan* fell victim to the state’s need for control. In 2019, the film’s star, Liu Yifei, proclaimed her support for the Hong Kong police on Weibo, calling the pro-democracy demonstrations a “shame” for Hong Kong. Her comments



Movigoers watch a film in Taiyuan, China, on Feb. 12, the first day of the Lunar New Year. China’s box office revenue hit a record \$9.2 billion in 2019.

—whether genuine or strategic—gave rise to the hashtag #BoycottMulan, which resurged in January when viewers decried the recognition of Xinjiang government entities in the film’s credits. Chinese authorities promptly banned the hashtag and ordered media outlets not to cover the release.

The state instead threw its weight behind *The Eight Hundred*, a Chinese war epic that was the first major film to screen in movie theaters since COVID-19 caused monthslong closures nationwide. In June 2019, the film was pulled from the Shanghai International Film Festival minutes before its premiere for glorifying the Nationalist—not the Communist—army in the final scene. The Huayi Brothers studio, at risk of losing its \$80 million investment in the film, removed 13 minutes from the film, which granted its grand release last summer. It also helped that the company committed to “integrate party-building work into every aspect and step of the process of film and TV content creation.”

If you come around on their terms, the authorities are usually ready to welcome you back into their good graces. When Disney was expelled from China in 1997, the entertainment titan apologized and hired former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to help normalize relations for the second time—but this time between the Magic Kingdom and the Middle Kingdom. “In Chinese law, if you own up to your mistakes, your sentence gets reduced,” a film industry insider in Beijing told the *Washington Post* in February 1999.

The state’s deliberate jostling of the industry has not come without push-back. Amid the pandemic in June 2020, the vice president of Bona Film Group jumped to his death in Beijing after decrying the government on social media for failing to support the wavering film industry. But dissension rarely lasts as businesspeople consent to the hand-in-glove relationship that paves the way for their future success.

Propaganda is most effective when people are swayed one way but believe they arrived there on their own. Nationalism is most enduring when it bubbles up from the bottom. The production of patriotic cinema is undergoing a similar phenomenon: Producers are making it, and audiences are viewing it on their own accord. And in so doing, a chorus of voices is replaced by a single melody. ■

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The New Anti-China Alliance Will Fail

By Kishore Mahbubani

Australia, India, Japan, and the United States have perfectly legitimate concerns about China. It will be uncomfortable living with a more powerful China. And it’s equally legitimate for them to hedge by cooperating in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, informally known as the Quad. Unfortunately, the Quad will not alter the course of Asian history for two simple reasons: First, the four countries

have different geopolitical interests and vulnerabilities. Second, and more fundamentally, they are in the wrong game. The big strategic game in Asia isn’t military but economic.

Australia is the most vulnerable. Its economy is highly dependent on China. Australians have been proud of their remarkable three decades of recession-free growth. That happened only because Australia became, functionally, an economic province of China: In 2018-2019, 33 percent of its exports went to China, whereas only 5 percent went to the United States.

This is why it was unwise for Australia to slap China in the face publicly by calling for an international inquiry into the origins of COVID-19. It would have been wiser and more prudent to make such a call privately. Now Australia has dug itself into a hole. All of Asia is watching intently to see who will blink in the current Australia-China standoff. In many ways, the outcome is predetermined. If Beijing blinks, other countries may follow Australia in humiliating China. Hence, effectively, Australia has blocked it into a corner.

And China can afford to wait. As the Australian scholar Hugh White said: “The problem for Canberra is that China holds most of the cards. Power in international relations lies with the country that can impose high costs on another country at a low cost to itself. This is what China can do to Australia, but [Australian Prime Minister] Scott Morrison and his colleagues do not seem to understand that.” Significantly, in November 2019, former Prime Minister Paul Keating warned his fellow Australians that the Quad would not work. “More broadly, the so-called ‘Quadrilateral’ is not taking off,” he told the Australian Strategic Forum. “India remains ambivalent about the U.S. agenda on China and will hedge in any activism against China. A rapprochement between Japan and China is also in evidence ... so Japan is not signing up to any program of containment

of China.” While India has clearly hardened its position on China since Keating spoke in 2019, it is unlikely to become a clear U.S. ally.

Japan is also vulnerable but in a different way. Australia is fortunate to have friendly neighbors in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Japan has only unfriendly neighbors: China, Russia, and South Korea. It has difficult, even tense, relations with all three. It can manage difficult relations with Russia and South Korea; both have smaller economies. But the Japanese are acutely aware that they now have to adjust to a much more powerful China again. Yet this is not a new phenomenon. With the exception of the first half of the 20th century, Japan has almost always lived in peace with its more powerful neighbor, China.

As the East Asia scholar Ezra Vogel wrote in 2019, “No countries can compare with China and Japan in terms of the length of their historical contact: 1,500 years.” As he observed in his book *China and Japan*, the two countries maintained deep cultural ties throughout much of their past, but China, with its great civilization and resources, had the upper hand. If, for most of 1,500 years, Japan could live in peace with China, it can revert to that pattern again for the next 1,000 years. However, as in the famously slow Kabuki plays in Japan, the changes in the relationship will be very slight and incremental, with both sides moving gradually and subtly into a new *modus vivendi*. They will not become friends anytime soon, but Japan will signal subtly that it understands China’s core interests. Yes, there will be bumps along the way, but China and Japan will adjust slowly and steadily.

India and China have the opposite problem. As two old civilizations, they have also lived side by side over millennia. However, they had few direct contacts, effectively kept apart by the Himalayas. Unfortunately, modern technology has made the Himalayas surmountable. Hence, the increasing

number of face-to-face encounters between Chinese and Indian soldiers along the border. Such encounters always lead to accidents, one of which happened in June 2020. Since then, a tsunami of anti-China sentiment has swept across India. Over the next few years, relations will go downhill. The avalanche has been triggered.

Yet China will be patient because time is working in its favor. In 1980, the economies of China and India were the same size. By 2020, China’s had grown five times larger. The longer-term relationship between two powers always depends, in the long run, on the relative sizes of the two economies. The Soviet Union lost the Cold War because the U.S. economy could vastly outspend it. Similarly, just as the United States presented China with a major geopolitical gift by withdrawing from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement in 2017, India did China a major geopolitical favor by not joining the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Economics is where the big game is being played. With the United States staying out of TPP and India out of RCEP, a massive economic ecosystem centered on China is evolving in the region. Here’s one statistic to ponder on: In 2009, the size of the retail goods market in China was \$1.8 trillion compared with \$4 trillion for that market in the United States. Ten years later, the respective numbers were \$6 trillion and \$5.5 trillion. China’s total imports in the coming decade will likely exceed \$22 trillion. Just as the massive U.S. consumer market in the 1970s and 1980s defeated the Soviet Union, the massive and growing Chinese consumer market will be the ultimate decider of the big geopolitical game.

This is why the Quad’s naval exercises in the Indian Ocean—or its plans, announced in March, to support coronavirus vaccine production in Asia—will not move the needle of Asian history. Over time, the different economic

interests and historical vulnerabilities of the four countries will make the rationale for the Quad less and less tenable. Here’s one leading indicator: No other Asian country—not even the staunchest U.S. ally, South Korea—is rushing to join the Quad. The future of Asia will be written in four letters, RCEP, and not the four letters in Quad. ■

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British Prime Minister Is a Broken Job

By Mark Garnett

If and when British Prime Minister Boris Johnson leads the Conservative Party into another election, the contest will almost certainly be dominated by his handling of the coronavirus pandemic. Prior to his government’s seemingly effective vaccination campaign, Johnson’s performance did not have many defenders: Britain suffered proportionally more deaths in each of the successive waves of outbreaks than many countries in Europe and endured more severe lockdowns as well. For Johnson’s critics, this was more than a product of poor

luck but rather entirely in keeping with his eccentric personality and absent-minded approach to governance when denied his preferred role as the purveyor of positive news.

Johnson hasn't made it easy for his supporters to defend his managerial skills. But there is another line of defense available, one that the British public deserves to consider. The problem might not be solely that Johnson has performed the job of prime minister poorly during this latest national crisis but rather that the job of prime minister, even in normal circumstances, has become too dysfunctional for anyone to fulfill.

One of the most serious problems British leaders face is almost entirely self-inflicted. Every prime minister since 1945 has succumbed, to different degrees, to a self-defeating compulsion to overestimate Britain's capacity to influence global developments. Successive prime ministers and their speechwriters have indulged in rhetoric suggesting the country has vast stores of international influence. Intended to please the public, it has instead merely set the country up for disappointment. Nationalist rhetoric formed a significant part of the mood music that convinced a narrow majority of voters in 2016 that Brexit would be a risk-free venture.

Even relatively levelheaded Prime Minister David Cameron regularly expressed this type of nationalism, which contributed to his own inability to eventually rebuff the Brexiteer slogan of "Take Back Control" in the 2016 referendum. Cameron was better placed than anyone to argue that the British state had limited capacity to take control of anything beyond the pay and pensions of its employees—but if he had attempted this crucial step into the real world, he would have looked like one of the so-called defeatists who, allegedly, had sold Britain short since 1945.

In large part, of course, the inability of the British state to exercise more than a modicum of control over its decisions



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson takes questions during a news conference at No. 10 Downing St. in London on Feb. 22.

is a consequence of globalization, of which the United Kingdom had been a pioneer in the 19th century but which, inexorably, would have reduced its relative status even without the impact of two ruinous world wars. The country's acute vulnerability to developments outside its borders should have been common knowledge among 2016 voters, thanks to the damage inflicted by the credit crunch that began to affect financial institutions in 2007.

The prime minister at the time, Gordon Brown, demonstrated Britain's continued relevance by promoting a coordinated global response to this economic disaster. However, his efforts were not appreciated by British voters, who had been taught that the world automatically looked toward Britain in times of trouble. Far from congratulating Brown on his initiatives, before the 2010 general election, Cameron and the Conservatives were widely believed when they blamed the prime minister and his colleagues for economic developments that were far beyond Britain's control.

The hobbling of the office of prime minister accelerated profoundly during the tenure of Cameron's Conservative predecessor, Margaret Thatcher, from 1979 to 1990. By inspiring an attack on the competence of the British state, she contributed to its deterioration and ultimately left it incapable of meeting

challenges like the coronavirus pandemic. Having convinced herself that Britain's political establishment was complicit in, and indeed had compounded, the country's postwar decline, she identified unelected bureaucrats as the easiest target for reform and embarked on a coordinated assault. Over time, this turned public servants devoted to the long-term national interest into unquestioning enforcers of the whims of the party that happened to hold office at any given time.

This hollowing out of the British state was partly institutional; government departments were broken up into numerous semi-autonomous agencies purportedly in the interests of efficiency. However, the only beneficiaries of this process were elected ministers, who could now pass the buck for glaring errors committed within their departmental remits. At the same time, the reduction of direct control over policy outcomes made it more difficult for the elected heads of government departments to claim any credit for policies that (through accident more than design) achieved their stated objectives. As a logical consequence, ministers began to equate success with favorable short-term media responses to policy announcements. Rather than consulting civil servants with relevant knowledge, they closeted themselves with special advisors and spin doctors, who were paid from the public purse to massage their tender egos. This tendency began under Thatcher but found its full fruition during the premiership of Tony Blair (1997-2007), who established the ethos for every member of his administration by letting it be known that he only wanted to be associated with positive news stories.

The undermining of state authority is not unique to Britain among liberal democracies, but it is more noteworthy since the British state (unlike its continental counterparts) was highly reputed for its wartime performance and this feeling took much longer to

fade away. Even during the Thatcher years, individual ministers were well-known figures who commanded considerable public respect, and many people continued to think that “Whitehall knows best” (a reference to the seat of the British civil service). Since then, ministerial profiles have declined in tandem with the undermining of the state so that under Johnson the best-known figures tend to be the ones who are held up to the greatest ridicule because of ill-advised utterances or failed policies. The old idea that the British prime minister should be “first among equals” in a functioning cabinet system can no longer be squared with developments that no senior politician can resist. Only the Treasury retains any of its old reputation because its decisions have a direct impact on the public rather than being implemented through a network of arm’s-length institutions that may or may not comply with a minister’s bidding.

As the cabinet has lost repute individually and collectively, the prime minister has become ever more prominent in media coverage of British politics—without enjoying a modicum of the power to realize the expectations of the public. Above all, the popularity of the prime minister has come to be viewed as the key factor in the electoral fortunes of his or her party. The hollowing out of the state’s governing capacity has coincided with demographic changes that have eroded the old link between social class and partisan allegiance. Since few voters now give automatic support to the party that supposedly upholds the interests of their class, increasingly they base their electoral choices on perceptions of competence. The most convenient way to assess the competing parties is to judge the qualities of rival leaders.

Thus, even though Britain retains a parliamentary system of government, since 1979 it has gradually adopted presidential-style elections. The key landmark in the process was the introduction

of televised leader debates in 2010. However, the weekly Prime Minister’s Questions (PMQs), though still ostensibly a parliamentary occasion, have become presidential bids for electoral support since the proceedings of the House of Commons were first televised in 1989. Johnson has completed the task of making PMQs into a weekly version of electoral leader debates by refusing to answer questions from Labour’s Sir Keir Starmer, the leader of the opposition, and instead asking what Starmer would do if his party were in office.

Compared with the situation before 1979, Britain is now a country that does not lend itself to two-party politics. Proportional representation in general elections is only opposed by people with a vested interest in the continuation of a system that forces the best informed and least tribal voters to vote against the party they dislike the most. A well-advised prime minister would campaign energetically for reform (unlike Cameron, who spoke against even a modest departure from the first-past-the-post system in a 2011 referendum) since the current situation of perpetual head-to-head campaigning against the opposition leader is a demeaning exercise that impairs the governance of the country. Once the current global crisis is over, parties should also remove the final choice of leader from their grassroots party members. These reforms, adopted by both major U.K. parties since 1979 in desperate attempts to keep their members happy, have done nothing for the morale of ordinary voters, who are now faced with unpopularity contests like the December 2019 general election between Johnson and Jeremy Corbyn.

Johnson’s supporters continue to insist that British voters dodged a bullet by siding with the incumbent prime minister rather than the former Labour leader. One would hope that there were other, more objective observers who spent their enforced solitude during Johnson’s repeated semi-lockdowns wondering about the systemic

malfunctions that have turned palpably underqualified individuals like Johnson and Corbyn into plausible applicants for the top job in British politics in the first place and how public expectations of governments and their leaders have been lowered so far that Johnson’s political career might still survive his disastrous handling of the pandemic. ■

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Where Face Masks Are Required but Burqas Are Banned

By Rim-Sarah Alouane

Switzerland, hard-hit by the coronavirus pandemic, has been in a partial shutdown since January. Face masks are mandatory in most public spaces, including on mass transit and the country’s idyllic ski slopes. But that reality didn’t stop a slim majority of Swiss voters from approving a ban on full-face coverings in public spaces in a March 7 referendum.

The new ban wasn’t motivated by anti-mask sentiment. In fact, it won’t apply to facial coverings worn for health reasons—now or after the pandemic. Rather, the measure was aimed at a minuscule minority of Muslim women who wear the burqa or niqab. And while similar initiatives in neighboring countries have always been controversial, the deeply ironic timing of Switzerland’s burqa ban

proves once and for all that efforts to ban face coverings were never about security concerns. At their core, burqa bans have always been an attempt to marginalize Muslim women—and they have succeeded in bringing anti-Muslim sentiment into the mainstream.

Switzerland's referendum was the product of a people's initiative launched by the Egerkinger Komitee, an advocacy group that includes members of the right-wing Swiss People's Party (SVP) and aims to organize against "political Islam in Switzerland." Arguing that "free people show their face" and "the burqa and niqab are not normal clothes," the group in 2017 collected the required 100,000 petition signatures to put the issue to a referendum. On March 7, just over 51 percent of Swiss voters approved it.

Clamping down on the visibility of Muslims in Switzerland is nothing new. Swiss Muslims have been under scrutiny since 2004, when Switzerland held a pair of referendums on measures that would have eased access to citizenship for second- and third-generation immigrants. The SVP's strong mobilization against the initiatives transformed them instead into cultural referendums on whether Muslims were part of the Swiss national community, a notion the majority of Swiss voters rejected. Then, in 2009, the Egerkinger Komitee proposed an initiative to ban minarets on the grounds that they symbolized "political Islam." It was approved by 57.5 percent of Swiss voters despite opposition from religious groups.

In December 2014, the SVP first sought to prohibit full-face coverings via a parliamentary initiative, arguing that burqas were a threat to national security. But the Swiss Council of States rejected it in March 2017 because the small number of burqa-clad women in Switzerland meant public order was not disturbed. There was also concern that a ban would have a negative impact on tourism from Gulf countries.

Though the SVP and Egerkinger Komitee have been active for decades, Switzerland's burqa referendum can't

A woman walks past a poster reading "Stop extremism!" in German in Zurich, Switzerland, on March 3, just before a nationwide vote to ban full-face coverings in public.



be explained without the broader regional context: namely, Europe's crisis of identity in a globalized, multicultural world. Switzerland is only the latest country to express and assuage this cultural insecurity by managing the visibility of Islam in the name of safeguarding European values.

Muslims have been part of the fabric of Europe for centuries, but they continue to be misunderstood and misrepresented in media and politics, where Islam is often framed as an inherently violent religion and Muslims are portrayed as incapable of integrating into European societies. While there is certainly some cultural anxiety—the natural result of rapidly changing demographics on the continent—most of the sensationalism is constructed, encouraged, and egged on by political parties that have a vested interest in creating a supposed "Muslim problem." The purveyors of these ideas seek to convince the broad populace that Islam and Muslims are at odds with Western values. Right now, they are winning.

In Switzerland, demonizing Muslims as hostile to human rights and freedom—of expression, religion, and sexual orientation—has long been a pillar of the SVP's electoral strategy, as well as that of other populist national conservative

parties such as the Federal Democratic Union of Switzerland and the Ticino League. Because this fixation has contributed to countless electoral victories for the SVP—transforming it into one of the most powerful parties in the country—others have adopted its strategy.

In left-wing circles, too, there is now a narrative claiming that Islam violates democratic standards and practices. Many Swiss leftists believe that Muslims are particularly susceptible to the use of violence and that they seek to create a society based on religion as a pillar of the sociocultural and political order. In Geneva, the far-left is split between advocates of hard-line secularism—like the Swiss Party of Labor and its coalition partners—and those supportive of an inclusive model that recognizes multiculturalism, like the Solidarity party.

The nascent Swiss debate about secularism mirrors that of its more established French neighbor. In France, the promotion of *laïcité*—the French brand of secularism—has become a rallying cry for the political and intellectual elite who wish to erase Muslim visibility and enforce assimilation under the guise of legal neutrality.

Once a liberal tool that protected religious freedom and freedom of conscience, *laïcité* has been weaponized

to target the public expressions of Islam that are deemed incompatible with French values, however vaguely defined. In recent years, both the right and the secularist left have expressed support for a more restrictive understanding of *laïcité* that effectively makes religious Muslims—especially women—disappear from public spaces.

The French debate about *laïcité* and Islamic dress reached a fever pitch in the summer of 2016, when several cities across France banned the wearing of burkinis, or full-body swimsuits. The bans, which have since been overturned by the Council of State, were introduced as an ostensible effort to curb “political Islam.” Likewise, in Switzerland, the new burqa ban was won through allusions to the specter of political Islam. Across Europe, the term has proved an effective electoral weapon.

The problem is that political Islam is a vague notion that can mean virtually anything when alluded to under the mantra of fighting terrorism. For some, wearing a visible Muslim religious garment, eating halal food, or simply having conservative social beliefs is considered a step too far. As a result, authorities can interpret a mandate against political Islam very broadly, which risks curtailing civil liberties. France’s controversial new bill “strengthening republican principles,” which purports to fight “separatism,” is a case in point.

Keeping political Islam ill-defined is also a boon for Islamophobes. The SVP’s initiatives have succeeded largely because the party has been able to convince broad swaths of the public that Muslims who choose to make their presence visible by practicing their religion—whether by constructing a minaret or wearing a burqa—are attempting to Islamize the Swiss public. Then come referendums aimed at erasing any sign of a Muslim presence in Switzerland, with the implication that Muslims must remain invisible to fit into Swiss society. But these bans create an inevitable paradox: Targeting Muslims makes them

even more visible, only contributing to an increase of racism and Islamophobia. The process is cyclical.

While Muslims are targeted as a collective, veiled Muslim women bear the brunt of Islamophobic outrage—framed as being victims of patriarchal norms or blindly following religious dictates. But far from liberating, burqa and burkini bans often only serve to exclude Muslim women from public life. Politicians claim to want to “free” Muslim women without including them in that process. And if these women do speak up, there is a systematic distrust of the true freedom of their choice and therefore of their moral autonomy.

In all of this, it is important to remember that the number of Muslim women who conceal their faces remains vanishingly small in Europe. In 2009, the French newspaper *Le Figaro* estimated that only 2,000 women in France—out of a total population of 65 million—wore a face veil for religious or philosophical reasons. In Switzerland, population 8.5 million, that number is estimated between 21 and 37. These are fractions so small they barely register.

If the statistical insignificance of Europe’s burqa-clad population seems surprising, that’s because anti-Muslim parties across the political spectrum have successfully inflated the Muslim population in order to provoke fear in voters. In a 2017 survey conducted by Tamedia, a Swiss media company, respondents estimated—on average—that Muslims made up 17.2 percent of the Swiss population. In reality, that number lies at 5.1 percent, according to the Swiss Federal Statistical Office.

Besides burqa bans, it’s hard to think of another instance where the public would support a government initiative that targets so few people. But it makes sense in a climate where political success depends on fear—convincing voters that the traditional culture of Europe (whatever that may be) is in decline.

What Europe must recognize is that the hypersecuritization of Islam will

only jeopardize the very liberal values it claims to stand for. Switzerland’s burqa ban is proof that the continent has yet to view its Muslim citizens as capable of autonomy and self-determination. If Europe really wants to save itself from cultural decline, recognizing Muslims as full citizens is where it should start. ■

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MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA



The Arab Moment Has Passed

By Vali Nasr

For more than two decades, the United States has seen the politics of the Middle East as a tug of war between moderation and radicalism—Arabs against Iran. But for the four years of Donald Trump’s presidency, it was blind to different, more profound fissures growing among the region’s three non-Arab powers: Iran, Israel, and Turkey.

For the quarter century after the 1956 Suez crisis, Iran, Israel, and Turkey joined forces to strike a balance against the Arab world with U.S. help.

But Arab states have been sliding deeper into paralysis and chaos since the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, followed by the failed Arab Spring, leading to new fault lines. Indeed, the competition most likely to shape the Middle East is no longer between Arab states and Israel or Sunnis and Shiites—but among the three non-Arab rivals.

The emerging competitions for power and influence have become severe enough to disrupt the post-World War I order, when the Ottoman Empire was split into shards that European powers picked up as they sought to control the region. European rule deepened cleavages of ethnicity and sects and shaped rivalries and battle lines that have survived to this day. The colonial experience also animated Arab nationalism, which swept across the region after World War II and placed the Arab world at the heart of U.S. strategy in the Middle East.

All of that is now changing. The Arab moment has passed. It is now the non-Arab powers that are ascendant, and it is the Arabs who are feeling threatened as Iran expands its reach into the region and the United States reduces its commitment. Last year, after Iran was identified as responsible for attacks on tankers and oil installations in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, Abu Dhabi cited the Iranian threat as a reason to forge a historic normalization agreement with Israel.

But the Abraham Accords are as much a bulwark against Turkey as they are against Iran. Rather than set the region on a new course toward peace, as the Trump administration claimed, the agreement signals an intensification of rivalry among Arabs, Iranians, Israelis, and Turks that the previous administration failed to take into consideration. In fact, it could lead to larger and more dangerous regional arms races and wars that the United States neither wants nor can afford to get entangled in.

Iran's pursuit of a nuclear capability and its use of clients and proxies to influence the Arab world and attack

U.S. interests and Israel are now familiar. What is new is Turkey's emergence as an unpredictable disrupter of stability across a much larger region. No longer envisioning a future in the West, Turkey is now more decidedly embracing its Islamic past, looking past lines and borders drawn a century ago. Its claim to the influence it had in the onetime domains of the Ottoman Empire can no longer be dismissed as rhetoric. Turkish ambition is now a force to be reckoned with.

For example, Turkey now occupies parts of Syria, has influence in Iraq, and is pushing back against Iran's influence in both Damascus and Baghdad. Turkey has increased military operations against Kurds in Iraq and accused Iran of giving refuge to Turkey's Kurdish nemesis, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

Turkey has inserted itself in Libya's civil war and most recently intervened decisively in the dispute in the Caucasus between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. Officials in Ankara

are also eyeing expanded roles in the Horn of Africa and Lebanon while Arab rulers worry about Turkish support for the Muslim Brotherhood and its claim to have a say in Arab politics.

Each of the three non-Arab states has justified such encroachments as necessary for security, but there are also economic motivations—for example, access to the Iraqi market for Iran or pole positions for Israel and Turkey in harnessing the rich gas fields in the Mediterranean seabed.

Predictably, Turkish expansionism runs up against Iranian regional interests in the Levant and the Caucasus in ways that evoke Turkey's imperial past.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been for some time suggesting that Mustafa Kemal Ataturk was wrong to give up Ottoman Arab territories as far south as Mosul. In reviving Turkish interest in those territories, Erdogan is claiming greater patriotism than that of the founder of modern Turkey.



A protester holds Turkish and Libyan flags in Tripoli on Jan. 10, 2020, during a demonstration against Libyan Gen. Khalifa Haftar and in support of the U.N.-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA). Turkey's influence in Libya has grown after its military intervention in support of the GNA in the country's civil war.

In the Caucasus, as in Syria, Turkish and Iranian interests are interwoven with those of Russia. The Kremlin's interest in the Middle East is expanding, not only in conflicts in Libya, Syria, and Nagorno-Karabakh but also on the diplomatic scene from OPEC to Afghanistan. Moscow maintains close ties with all of the region's key actors, sometimes tilting in favor of one and then the other. With U.S. attention on the wane, Moscow's complex web of ties is poised to play an outsized role in shaping the region's future.

Israel, too, has expanded its footprint in the Arab world. In 2019, Trump recognized Israel's half-century-old claim to the Golan Heights, which it seized from Syria in 1967, and now Israeli leaders are planning out loud to expand their borders by formally annexing parts of the West Bank. But the Abraham Accords suggest that the Arabs are looking past all of that to shore up their own position against Iran and Turkey. They see in Israel a crutch to keep them in the great game for regional influence.

The tensions between Iran and Israel have escalated markedly in recent years as Iran has reached further into the Arab world. The two are now engaged in a war of attrition, in Syria and in cyberspace.

But the scramble for the Middle East is not just about Iran. Turkey's current regional posture—extending into Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and the Horn of Africa while staunchly defending Qatar and the Tripoli government in Libya's civil war—is in direct conflict with policies pursued by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt.

This all suggests that the driving force in the Middle East is no longer ideology or religion but old-fashioned realpolitik. If Israel boosts the Saudi-Emirati position, those countries that feel threatened by it, such as Qatar or Oman, can be expected to rely on Iran and Turkey for protection. But if the Israeli-Arab alignment gives Iran and Turkey reason to make common cause, Ankara's aggressive posture in the Caucasus and Iraq could become a worry for Tehran.

Turkey's military support for Azerbaijan now aligns with Israel's support for Baku, and Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE have found themselves in agreement worrying about the implications of Turkey's successful maneuver in that conflict.

As these overlapping rivalries crisscross the region, competitions are likely to become more unpredictable, as will the pattern of tactical alliances. In turn, that might invite meddling by Russia, which has already proved adept at exploiting the region's fissures to its advantage. China, too, may follow suit. The United States thinks of China in terms of the Pacific, but the Middle East abuts China's western frontier, and it is through that gateway that Beijing will pursue its vision for a Eurasian zone of influence.

The Biden administration could play a key role in reducing tensions by encouraging regional dialogue and—when possible—use its influence to end conflicts and repair relations.

Although relations with Turkey have frayed, it remains a NATO ally. Washington should focus on improving ties between not just Israel and Turkey but also among Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE—and that means pushing Riyadh and Abu Dhabi to truly mend ties with Qatar. The Gulf rivals have declared a truce, but fundamental issues that divided them persist, and

unless those are fully resolved, their differences could cause another breach.

Iran is a harder problem. U.S. officials will have to first contend with the future of the nuclear deal, but sooner rather than later Tehran and Washington will have to talk about Iran's expansionist push in the broader region and its ballistic missiles. Ultimately reining in Iran's proxies and limiting its missiles can be achieved through regional arms control and building a regional security architecture. The United States should facilitate and support that process, but regional actors have to embrace it.

Whether the Middle East's future is peaceful hinges on what course the United States follows. If the Biden administration wants to avoid endless U.S. engagements in the region, it must counterintuitively invest more time and diplomatic resources there now. It has to start by taking a broader view of regional dynamics and making the lessening of new regional power rivalries its priority. ■

VALI NASR is the Majid Khadduri professor of Middle East studies and international affairs at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies and the author of *The Dispensable Nation: American Foreign Policy in Retreat*.



Russian President Vladimir Putin (from left), Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani meet in Ankara, Turkey, on Sept. 16, 2019. Moscow's close ties to the region's key actors could play an outsized role in shaping the future of the Middle East.

AMERICAS



Latin America Is Caught in the Middle of a Tech War

By Oliver Stuenkel

For most policymakers in Latin America, the best way to react to growing geopolitical tensions between the United States and China is obvious: stay neutral. Given Latin America's geographic proximity to the United States, growing economic dependence on China, and historic aversion to long-standing alliances that limit strategic autonomy, leaders across the ideological spectrum have largely decided to embrace a pragmatic stance and maintain friendly ties with both Washington and Beijing.

With few exceptions, this strategy was largely seen to be a winning formula in recent years. Chile's right-wing president, Sebastián Piñera, for example, sought to present himself as the region's most trusted interlocutor for both former U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping. Mauricio Macri, Argentina's center-right former president, and his center-left successor, Alberto Fernández, have likewise been keen to main-

tain constructive ties with the United States and China simultaneously. In Colombia, right-wing President Iván Duque preserved Bogotá's historically close security cooperation with the United States but also made clear his administration had no plans to preemptively exclude Huawei as the country prepares to build its 5G network, a stance surely welcomed in Beijing.

Even Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, who projected himself as Trump's greatest ally, tasked his vice president, Hamilton Mourão, with protecting Brazil's ties to China. Along with most of Brazil's foreign-policy establishment, Mourão has long been an advocate of neutrality as tensions between Washington and Beijing have intensified. So even as Bolsonaro made deals with Trump—including an agreement to facilitate trade and to consolidate the United States' role as a leading investor in the country, a space cooperation agreement allowing the United States to use a launch site in Brazil, and the designation of Brazil as a major non-NATO ally—the country's economic dependence on China deepened considerably. China is now the destination of almost a third of Brazil's exports, while only about 10 percent go to the United States, the second biggest buyer of Brazilian products.

China has also become the most important trading partner for Chile, Peru, and Uruguay. In Mexico, on the other hand, the United States remains the largest trading partner by far, even though China has recently made inroads. Although trade with third parties like the European Union remains important to Latin American economies, the last two decades saw Europe lose significant market share in the region.

Given the importance of both China and the United States to Latin America, it makes sense that policymakers in the region would try to maintain a productive relationship with both. But it is unclear how sustainable the strategy will be in the long term. Latin

American governments have largely sought to position themselves above the fray as the U.S.-Chinese diplomatic relationship has worsened, quietly consolidating ties with both sides. This year, however, that strategic neutrality faces an unprecedented challenge. After being subject to diplomatic pressure from both the United States and China over the past few years, numerous Latin American governments will have to finally decide whether to allow Huawei to provide equipment for the construction of their 5G cellular networks. This pits the Chinese firm, which has a long-standing presence in Latin America's main markets, directly against U.S.-backed competitors—and there will be no pleasing both sides.

Across the region, 5G technology and Huawei's role have increasingly entered the public debate, shaped both by frequent U.S. warnings about Huawei and Beijing's repeated denials of allegations that the Chinese telecommunications company would help China spy on Latin American citizens and governments. As the U.S. government ramped up its vaguely defined threats about "consequences" if Latin American countries did not bar Huawei from their networks and pick Western technology instead, Chinese diplomats began to lash out against the United States; China's ambassador to Chile, Xu Bu, accused former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo of having "lost his mind" after the former official attacked Huawei during a visit to Chile in 2019. Huawei's founder, Ren Zhengfei, said during an interview with a Brazilian newspaper that "the United States treats Latin America as its backyard. ... Our goal is to help Latin America get out of this trap and maintain the sovereignty of each country."

No matter which side Latin American governments eventually take, it will inevitably harm one of their two most important geopolitical relationships.

Some countries have made it clear that they will simply side with the highest bidder—but even that calculation

can be tempered by diplomatic priorities. In Ecuador, for example, the U.S. International Development Finance Corp. negotiated a framework deal in January that involved helping Quito to repay billions of dollars in loans to China in exchange for excluding Huawei from Ecuador's telecom networks, but the deal has been criticized for potentially creating the incentive for countries to build up debt, among other things. In Brazil, the Trump administration convinced Bolsonaro to join the U.S.-led Clean Network initiative to exclude Huawei, which so far includes more than 50 countries, but in a humiliating backtrack Bolsonaro later toned down his rhetoric against the Chinese firm and decided not to limit Huawei's role in Brazil in what was seen as an effort to avoid delays in the delivery of Chinese-made COVID-19 vaccines.

Mexico faces similar pressures. Although President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has not joined the Clean Network initiative so far—other than Brazil, only Ecuador and the Dominican Republic have done so in the region—the United States does possess significant leverage over Mexico given the country's far greater economic dependence on its northern neighbor. The Dominican Republic also decided later on to backtrack.

Paraguay, for its part, has opted for a somewhat peculiar compromise between Washington and Beijing. Although it maintains full diplomatic ties with Taiwan, it imports more from China than from anywhere else, and the government in Asunción is thought to strongly favor working with Huawei in its 5G rollout, largely due to its competitive pricing compared with its main rivals.

The decisions made now could color relations for decades. The debate around initial 5G building contracts is merely the starting point of a broader standoff. The United States and China are on track to build their respective technological spheres of influence with different technological standards not



Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro listens to Chinese President Xi Jinping during his visit to Brasília on Nov. 13, 2019. Bolsonaro backtracked on plans to limit Huawei amid a need for Chinese-made COVID-19 vaccines.

only for 5G but also with regard to any technological innovations that follow, such as artificial intelligence and quantum computing. Huawei has filed more standard essential patents for 5G than any other 5G-related company. And China submits more technical documents to the International Telecommunication Union—which serves as the basis for debates about new standards—than any other nation, a move seen as an attempt to internationalize its own standards and make its companies more competitive.

The U.S. response—seeking to isolate Huawei and push for its own standards—has raised concerns about the negative consequences of two separate technological spheres. Perhaps even worse for Latin America in particular, it is possible that the region's nations will opt to join different spheres, which could make their technologies largely incompatible further down the line. Latin America has already paid a heavy price for its inability to jointly tackle challenges, as raging transnational crime, refugee crises, and incoherent

responses to political crises suggest. Yet the geopolitical toll of diverging 5G decisions could be greater still, creating irreversible obstacles to greater regional cooperation in the future. After all, a significant part of the global economy will be tied to new technologies—from autonomous cars and drones used for transport and warfare to communication and global finance—and all of them will be subject to the new rules of the emerging tech war.

Although the global tech industry will be the most exposed, other sectors will feel the pain as well. Growing restrictions on technological firms have quickly seeped into other related areas: Broader restrictions in banking and venture capital funding are already emerging, a trend that will inevitably grow to include other industries. For example, the United States might be expected to consider limiting intelligence sharing with Latin American countries that use Huawei technology, a move that could affect the fight against the region's powerful drug cartels.

After Chile began its 5G auction last year without banning Huawei from supplying components, most Latin American countries are now in the process of defining the rules of their own bidding processes. Aware of the potential backlash their decisions may have on ties to Beijing or Washington, governments will likely either attempt to include caveats—for example, not banning Chinese suppliers but establishing monitoring mechanisms in an attempt to appease Washington—or attempt to negotiate generous financial support from Washington in exchange for limiting or banning Huawei outright. Whatever they decide, it is bound to have far-reaching consequences not only for individual nations but for Latin America as a whole. ■

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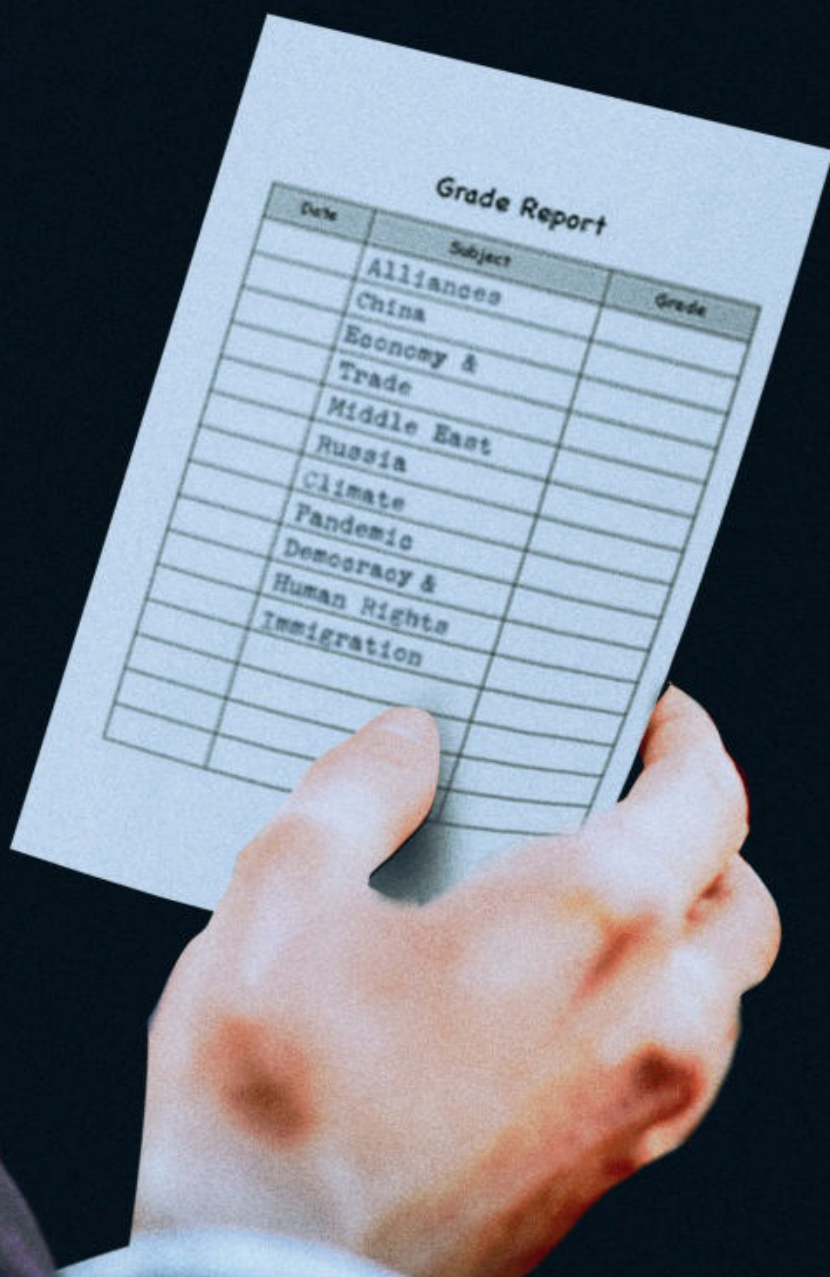
BBS





THE BIDEN PROGRESS REPORT

*We asked 25 experts
to grade the new team's
start on foreign policy.*



President Joe Biden’s foreign-policy motto is “America is back.” And he is losing no time: In perhaps the busiest start of a new administration since Ronald Reagan’s in 1981, Biden and his nascent national security team have corralled allies in Asia and Europe, rejoined global institutions, and turned up the heat on authoritarian regimes. He has moved quickly to revoke the Trump administration’s immigration bans and pledge cash to vaccinate the world’s poorest. What’s more, he has done all that amid what is still a devastating pandemic—and following the first violent presidential transition in U.S. history.

Around the world, Biden is being met with a wave of goodwill. In the aftermath of his election victory, 79 percent of Germans, for example, said they trusted him to “do the right thing” in world affairs—compared with only 10 percent who said that of President Donald Trump a few months earlier, according to polls by the Pew Research Center. The sense of relief is especially strong among allies in Asia and Europe, whose citizens watched the Jan. 6 insurrection in the capital of the world’s leading democracy with a mix of horror and fascination.

It’s as if Trump has been forgotten—and not just because Twitter has taken away his megaphone. Rather, it’s the exigencies of global politics that have old allies and new partners looking to Washington for leadership again. An increasingly confident, aggressive, and technologically sophisticated China is challenging the Western-dominated global order on a growing number of fronts. Across the democratic world, angry populists continue to mobilize—and the United States just gave them a model for challenging election results they don’t like. It’s a very different world from the last time Biden held office.

There is skepticism as well. Some governments were very happy with the Trump team’s policies, such as those of Israel and the Arab world, which struck historic, U.S.-brokered peace deals in the Middle East. In Asia, Trump’s tough tone on China had many fans. And it’s still unclear how Biden will bridge the chasms between the moderate political middle for which he has long stood, the powerful progressive wing of his party, and the challenge from the nationalist right.

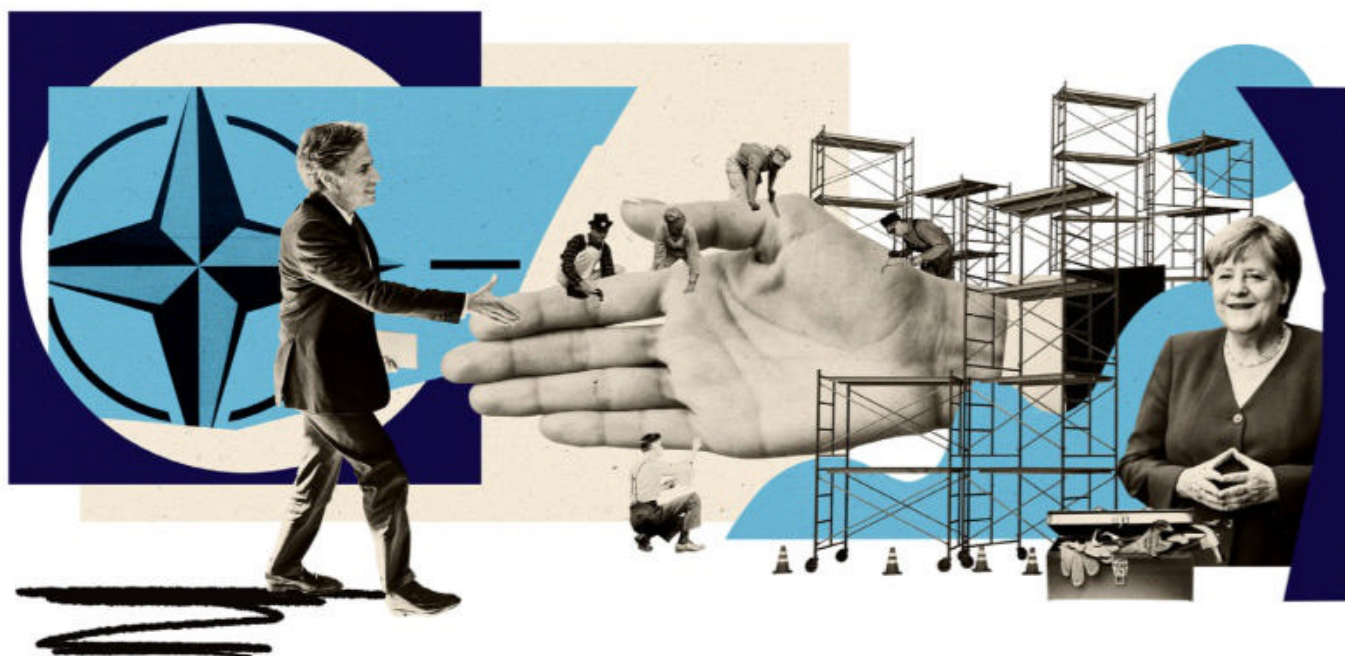
That will affect, for example, the U.S. position on the trade agreements on which many countries’ prosperity depends.

The new administration’s speed at moving to heal alliances and reassert the U.S. global role is a surprise to many at home and abroad who expected Biden to be busy nursing the country’s wounds—a botched pandemic response, a half-frozen economy, and a society riven by racial and political divides—before turning his attention outward. Instead, a strong and experienced team led by Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan (who, like many others in the new administration, has written in *FOREIGN POLICY*) has unleashed a flurry of real and virtual diplomacy.

As a result, the contours of a Biden-era foreign policy are fast coming into focus. Great-power competition between the United States and China—simultaneously a global contest between democratic and illiberal models of government—has emerged as central to U.S. policy. Add to that a new emphasis on climate change, human rights, and using trade to create jobs at home. Biden seeks to strike a new balance between U.S. interests and values, between domestic concerns and global engagement.

On the following pages, prominent experts from around the world take a closer look at Biden’s foreign-policy agenda—from restoring alliances to handling China to combating climate change. *FOREIGN POLICY* asked 25 thinkers to give us their takes on his first steps on nine key issues and grade the administration on its start.

—*Stefan Theil, deputy editor*



A

Alliances: Leadership Restored

BY ANDERS FOGH RASMUSSEN, FORMER NATO SECRETARY-GENERAL AND THE CEO OF RASMUSSEN GLOBAL

Despite a packed domestic agenda, Biden has made great strides to restore the United States' determined global leadership. The world needed it. But the big tests are still ahead.

Biden's personnel choices are faultless. Having worked with many of them, I can attest to their skill and understanding of their country's indispensable role in the world.

We've already seen the Biden administration coordinate more closely with allies, from Secretary of State Blinken's intensive conversations with European Union foreign ministers to Biden's virtual appearance at the Munich Security Conference and first-ever summit meeting of the Indo-Pacific Quad. This administration has set out clearly where it stands on some critical fault lines between freedom and autocracy, including on Taiwan and Ukraine.

NATO is also finally in a position to move on and build its new strategic concept without having to worry about presidential tweets and tantrums. However, Washington's European allies are also under no illusion that Biden will

go soft on their commitments to spend more on defense.

Biden has taken the first steps to rebuild and reform our multilateral world, not least by rejoining it. He needs to build on these steps to drag multilateralism out of its malaise. We need strong action by the free world to formulate new multilateral standards—for example, in the regulation of emerging technology.

Biden's commitment to building the global democratic alliance is personal and unwavering. Some say he should first focus on rebuilding U.S. democracy at home rather than convening his promised Summit for Democracy later this year. I disagree. The events in Washington on Jan. 6 gave us all a glimpse of democracy's fragility and the urgent need to form a common, mutually reinforcing front line in its defense. However, we will soon need to see the Biden administration flesh out a clear action plan for how the summit will work in practice. The Copenhagen Democracy Summit on May 10-11 would offer that opportunity.

A

G. JOHN IKENBERRY,
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

Biden has brought back the core convictions guiding U.S. foreign policy since World War II: The country advances its interests by building and leading the international order; alliances and institutions make U.S. power more effective, durable, and legitimate; and global engagement sustains this order. So far, these convictions are promissory notes, but the new team is looking very creditworthy.

A

ANDREA KENDALL-TAYLOR,
CENTER FOR A
NEW AMERICAN SECURITY

The Biden administration is working to revitalize alliances and multilateral institutions. Its actions are generating helpful headwinds to Russia's and China's efforts to weaken cohesion among democracies and dilute U.S. influence in key regions and international bodies. Already, the combative responses from Beijing and Moscow suggest that Washington has gotten their attention.

A-**Economy: Tough Love on Trade**BY **ESWAR PRASAD**, PROFESSOR OF TRADE POLICY AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY AND SENIOR FELLOW AT THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

Biden's strategy for global reengagement on economic policy has two elements. The first is reasserting U.S. leadership—subtly, not aggressively, as Washington needs to rebuild trust. The second element is to link trade with Biden's other priorities, such as creating jobs and cutting emissions. Not only has he rejoined the Paris climate agreement, but he also plans to reengage with the World Trade Organization—and work with allies to reform it. But while these actions reflect the administration's affinity for multilateralism, Biden isn't going soft on trade. His executive order reinforcing Buy American provisions for government procurement signals his intent to forcefully protect U.S. commercial interests. Biden's agenda puts on notice U.S. trading partners that might have hoped for a less aggressive approach

on trade and investment. The administration also intends to fold labor protections, climate policies, and human rights into trade negotiations. Beijing's hopes of a de-escalation of trade disputes have already given way to the prospect of rising tensions as Washington brings a broader range of issues to the table. Some changes are in the air: Tough but substantive negotiations will replace the hotheaded rhetoric and unilateral sanctions that defined the Trump administration's approach to trade and economic disputes. Biden is likely to work with allies to pressure China to change its economic practices. Contentious issues won't necessarily be resolved more easily or quickly. But it will be a more rational and concerted approach—perhaps with more effective and durable solutions.

B**SHANNON K. O'NEIL**,
COUNCIL ON
FOREIGN RELATIONS

Biden's team has smartly launched a long-overdue review of global supply chains. But its reflexive opposition to trade is a knock against it. Exports create middle-class jobs. The United States needs more free trade agreements—before other nations rewrite the rules in their favor.

A-**MOHAMED A. EL-ERIAN**, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Biden's historic fiscal relief package will turbocharge U.S. growth and serve as a needed engine for the global economy. His team could quickly earn an even higher grade with measures to promote productivity, defend against the growing risk of financial instability, and reinvigorate multilateral institutions.

B+**Pandemic: Making Up for Lost Time**BY **LAURIE GARRETT**, SCIENCE WRITER AND COLUMNIST AT *FOREIGN POLICY*

Biden's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has unfolded at a breathtaking pace and scope, domestically and internationally. Even more important than the \$4 billion he committed to the COVAX Facility—which aims to level the playing field for global vaccine access—are his administration's many diplomatic health engagements. For global health efforts that have long relied on U.S. leadership for financing, innovation, and policy, Washington's absence over the last four years created a vacuum at the top. Now, America is back—not only inside the World Health Organization and

A-**ASHISH JHA**,
BROWN UNIVERSITY

Biden is doing a great job maximizing the response at home but could be more global-leaning. Engaging WHO and COVAX are good steps. What's still needed is more aggressive action to combat the pandemic worldwide—including by pressuring Brazil to better control its outbreak and by ramping up global vaccine production.

with an open checkbook but throughout the multilateral systems. Washington is discussing pharmaceutical patents in the World Trade Organization and drug distribution at the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The Biden team is pushing to include health issues in the COP26 negotiations in Glasgow, Scotland, in November and backing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, which include a wide range of global public health priorities—from raising vaccination rates to lowering child mortality to improving access to clean water and nutrition. As Biden said on Feb. 19: "You can't build a wall or a fence high enough to keep a pandemic out." He reminded us of what should have been clear all along—that every country remains at risk as long as the coronavirus circulates and mutates anywhere else in the world.



B

Democracy & Human Rights: Enlist Europe

BY ANNE-MARIE SLAUGHTER, CEO OF NEW AMERICA

Biden's team gets an A for rhetoric—putting democracy and human rights at the forefront of public statements on the Xinjiang genocide, the Myanmar coup, the destruction of democracy in Hong Kong, the imprisonment of the Russian opposition politician Alexey Navalny, and the assassination of the Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Words matter: They create pressure to act when others demand that you live up to them.

Some of that action has been forthcoming. The U.S. Treasury has imposed or expanded sanctions against China, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, and others while maintaining Trump administration sanctions on many more, mostly related to democracy or human rights.

The problem is that these sanctions are not stopping or deterring democracy suppression and human rights abuses. Only when Washington and its allies go all out and try to shut down a country's economy—as with Iran—can a government be brought to the bargaining table. The recent U.S.-Canadian-European sanctions against China for its genocide of the Uyghurs were an important but largely symbolic step.

Which brings us to Biden's greatest failing so far. The single most important thing he could do to promote democracy and human rights globally is to reach a long-term accord with the European Union so that serious economic and regulatory pressure can be coordinated. Europe is both Russia's and China's largest trading partner. With U.S.-European alignment on values, interests, and policies, the opportunities for successfully promoting democracy and human rights are far greater. Mobilizing the Quad is fine, but it is a marriage of anti-China convenience and lacks the ability to act as an alliance.

Yet where is the EU in Biden's plans? No czar for Europe in the White House, no special envoy. Instead of going toe-to-toe with Chinese officials in Alaska, Biden would do better back-channeling with Brussels, Berlin, and Paris, sending top officials with the clout and credibility to start the long process of negotiating a serious long-term economic and political alliance. It will be long, slow, and frustrating—far less flashy than macho displays of great-power competition but far more consequential.

B-

NATHAN LAW, FORMER POLITICAL PRISONER IN HONG KONG

Biden had a decent start by prioritizing democratic alliances and pressuring Beijing for its human rights abuses. I expect strong continuity on an assertive China policy, including the crucial implementation of the Hong Kong Autonomy Act. But the Biden team can do more to connect civil society worldwide and treat the global democratic recession with a clear vision, plans, and actions.

B

KELEBOGILE ZVOBGO, WILLIAM & MARY

The Biden administration has taken key steps promoting human rights at home and abroad, including executive orders to advance racial equity, rejoining the United Nations Human Rights Council, and taking a tougher stance vis-à-vis rights-violating countries. But Trump-era sanctions remain against the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor for her lawful investigations implicating Americans in alleged war crimes in Afghanistan.



A-

China: Accelerate the Pace

BY ELIZABETH ECONOMY, SENIOR FELLOW AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY'S HOOVER INSTITUTION AND THE COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Overall, Biden's China policy is off to a good start. He has moved quickly to fill key positions with top China experts. Quantity and quality are both high.

All the elements of a strong policy are in place as Biden systematically follows through on the pledges of his campaign. Washington is rejoining international organizations and agreements, reconnecting with Europe to reach a common line on China, and reassuring Asian allies. Biden has reaffirmed U.S. support for Taiwan and launched a review of U.S. military needs for the 21st century, including in the Indo-Pacific. Just as importantly, he is keeping climate advisor John Kerry and his team in check until the terms of engaging with China are clear.

But Biden's to-do list on China is long. Progress is needed on technology policy, the Trump tariffs, Xinjiang, and U.S. participation in the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. There is North Korea, Hong Kong, the conflict over the South China Sea, and the decision on whether to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partner-

ship, among other pressing matters.

The administration has demonstrated refreshing unity in words and action, easily showing up both the early years of the Obama administration and all four years of the Trump administration. Biden quickly and effectively quashed pesky rumors that the Pentagon was pursuing its own strategy on China. He scores extra points for not trashing—either rhetorically or literally—the previous administration's policies.

But even if Biden was quick off the starting block and has made all the right first moves, he will need to accelerate the pace to make it through his to-do list. Because this is the A-team, expectations are high. Coordinating vaccine diplomacy in Asia among the Quad was impressive, but the testy meeting between top U.S. and Chinese diplomats in Alaska in March revealed that Biden has to move quickly to craft a long-term China strategy that puts Washington in the driver's seat, something both previous administrations largely failed to do.

B+

TOSHIRO NAKAYAMA,
KEIO UNIVERSITY

The Biden administration has added smartness to Trumpian toughness on China—a huge welcome to Washington's allies and partners in Asia. The more sophisticated the policy gets, the more complicated the execution becomes. The end goal is still not clear.

A-

C. RAJA MOHAN,
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
OF SINGAPORE

Essential continuity with the Trump administration's China policy is reassuring for Asian partners facing threats from Beijing, even as Biden better balances engagement and contestation. By integrating China strategy with domestic economic and technological renewal, Biden lays the basis for a durable consensus at home. The appointment of a competent team lends credibility to his strategy. While many China challenges await, a job well begun is nearly half done.



C+	Middle East: No Damage, No Achievements
	BY MINA AL-ORAIBI , EDITOR IN CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL AND COLUMNIST AT <i>FOREIGN POLICY</i>

Biden says “America is back.” But in the Middle East, it’s not yet clear what being back will mean.

As a candidate, Biden promised to make reentering the Iran nuclear deal a priority in the Middle East. As president, he has gotten little traction putting the deal back on track—or containing Iran. Tehran has escalated and hardened its position, including restarting uranium enrichment. Furthermore, the regime’s proxies have escalated their activities across the region, from the Houthis’ rocket fire on Saudi Arabia to Iran-backed militias targeting U.S. personnel in Iraq.

Little has come from Washington but words. One notable exception was the Feb. 25 strike on a Syrian base housing Iran-backed fighters in retaliation for attacks in Iraq. But a reactive, ad hoc approach is not yet a policy.

Importantly, Biden and Secretary of State Blinken chose Iraq as the first Arab country to call. The gesture was noted in Baghdad and the region, indicating diplomatic and perhaps even

military support for Iraq.

Biden has created momentum in the region by appointing a special envoy for Yemen and making it a priority. With the Saudi proposal to end the war, Washington must now press Iran and the Houthis to commit to peace. To Riyadh, Biden has conveyed that he has concerns but that the alliance will endure.

He has an opportunity to build on the Arab-Israeli peace accords and should seek to leverage the role the United Arab Emirates can play as Washington reestablishes ties with the Palestinians. A two-state solution remains best but needs a concerted U.S. effort to happen.

Biden gets credit for the Middle East team he has put together—including experienced hands such as Barbara Leaf at the National Security Council, Brett McGurk as White House coordinator, and Tim Lenderking as special envoy for Yemen. This is a knowledgeable team that can bring about change if it chooses to do so.

B+	STEVEN A. COOK , COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
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It’s early days, but Biden has kept his commitments. His team is exploring ways to reenter the Iran nuclear deal, seeks to reform but maintain ties with Saudi Arabia, and hopes to end the war in Yemen. Biden is moving cautiously on Israel and the Palestinians. The stage for Biden’s agenda is set—but beware that the best-laid Middle East plans often go astray.

A-	DENNIS ROSS , WASHINGTON INSTITUTE FOR NEAR EAST POLICY
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On Iran, Biden is sticking to his principle of compliance for compliance and no unilateral concessions. On Saudi Arabia, Washington will not check its values at the door but has clear interests in the relationship. On Israeli-Palestinian peace, the team understands this is not the time for a big peace initiative, but policies should still be geared toward preserving two states as the outcome and actively supporting the normalization process.

A-**Russia: Engage, Deter, Speak Up**

BY MICHAEL MCFAY, DIRECTOR OF STANFORD UNIVERSITY'S FREEMAN SPOGLI INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

In his first call with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Biden laid out clear contours for his administration's policy toward Russia: offering progress on arms control, reaffirming support for Ukraine, and raising concerns on cyber-espionage, Russian bounties on U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan, interference in the 2020 U.S. presidential election, and the poisoning of Alexey Navalny. In other words, engage with the Kremlin where interests overlap, deter Putin's belligerent foreign policies, and speak up on human rights abuses in Russia. Perfect. Biden's team then matched ambition with action, extending the New START arms control treaty for five years, sanctioning some of those responsible for Navalny's poisoning and arrest as well as

the pro-Russian Ukrainian oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky, and affirming the U.S. commitment to deeper ties with NATO. Fantastic start. Yet, ignoring Navalny's pleas, Biden and his team decided not to sanction any of the Russian oligarchs underwriting Putin's autocracy. They have not yet articulated a comprehensive strategy for supporting democrats in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, and Armenia. One way to help meet regional demand for U.S. engagement would be to reappoint a special envoy to Ukraine—but expand the post's writ to include the whole region. But the administration is still in its early days and operating with a skeletal senior staff. Before we give Biden the next grade, let him get his full team on the field.

C**CONSTANZE STELZENMÜLLER,**
BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

So far, we have Biden calling Putin a "killer" and his secretary of state threatening Europeans with sanctions over a pipeline. What's needed is a coherent trans-Atlantic strategy addressing all the risks and threats posed by Russia in Eurasia and beyond.

A-**ANGELA STENT,**
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Biden will work with Russia on issues of vital national interest, including arms control and climate change, but push back against malign activities. The rhetoric has been consistent and tough. At best, this will remain a compartmentalized relationship where cooperation and competition coexist.

A**Immigration: But Can He Fight?**

BY JORGE CASTAÑEDA, PROFESSOR AT NEW YORK UNIVERSITY AND FORMER MEXICAN FOREIGN MINISTER

Biden's first significant move was to undo his predecessor's disastrous and xenophobic policies: stopping construction of the border wall, eliminating the travel ban targeting Muslims, restoring asylum hearings on U.S. soil, reinstating protections for undocumented minors, and suspending at least some deportations of nonviolent offenders. All these are laudable decisions. A second landmark step was to send major immigration reform legislation to the U.S. Congress. Legalizing the status of more than 11 million undocumented people and giving them a path to citizenship is, as Biden would put it, a big deal. Working with

C+**VIVEK WADHWA,**
HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

Biden gets an A+ for his humanity and compassion for the undocumented and his determination to fix a primary cause of hemorrhaging U.S. competitiveness—the exodus of skilled talent. But his immigration plan is a kitchen sink of demands that has almost no chance of passing in the U.S. Senate. By demanding all or nothing, Biden will get nothing.

Mexico to invest in the Northern Triangle countries—El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras—makes sense as long as the amounts are meaningful. Granting Venezuelans in the United States temporary protection status also deserves applause. Still, I have two doubts. The first is that the bill in Congress does not address future migration flows that will inevitably continue, mainly due to Mexico's tanking economy. A major temporary worker program, or a significant increase in H-2A and H-2B employment visas, especially for Mexicans, is an indispensable complement to the regularization of unauthorized individuals currently in the United States. Progress on worker visas is also politically indispensable in order to secure some Republican votes. Which leads to my second doubt: Is Biden really willing to fight—busting the filibuster if necessary—in order to get immigration reform done?



B

Climate: Practical, Not Grandiose

BY TED NORDHAUS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CO-FOUNDER OF THE BREAKTHROUGH INSTITUTE

Climate change will take many decades to effectively address, so it's difficult to grade Biden just 100 days into his term. Judged against his own rhetoric—that we are in an unfolding climate emergency, have only a decade to address it, and must completely decarbonize the electrical grid by 2035—Biden would get an F, the grade that the Sunrise Movement memorably gave his climate proposal in the heat of the Democratic primary season.

But a failing grade would not so much reflect policy as the reality that no U.S. president is actually going to advance a climate agenda consistent with the grandiose ambitions to which the activist community demands fealty. Despite headline-grabbing executive orders and Biden's decision to rejoin the Paris Agreement, nothing on offer from this administration will remotely deliver on those demands.

Judged in relation to what is actually possible, however, Biden's start looks a good deal more promising. He has put in place a strong and experienced team in the White House and at the State and

Energy departments. Thus far, his plans have ignored the call for emissions caps, carbon taxes, and massive new regulation for a quieter but ultimately more effective climate policy: efforts to develop and deploy technology and infrastructure, sector by sector, with an eye toward the enormous engineering and system-level challenges associated with deeply decarbonizing a large, modern economy.

Should Biden succeed in passing a major infrastructure package with real money to build long-distance power transmission lines; expand railroads, public transit, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure; commercialize next-generation nuclear, carbon capture, geothermal, and energy storage technologies; and improve the environmental performance of U.S. agriculture, I'll raise his grade to an A. And if he is then willing to take on the third rail for U.S. greens—the various environmental statutes at the federal, state, and local level that make it extremely difficult to build any of this infrastructure in a timely fashion—I'll be happy to make it an A+.

B

CONNIE HEDEGAARD,
FORMER EU CLIMATE
ACTION COMMISSIONER

Rejoining the Paris Agreement, very strong staff appointments, and John Kerry's first trip to Brussels have raised expectations that Washington will not only say the right things—but also start to do them. Getting an A would require concrete policies to achieve further emissions cuts and U.S. carbon neutrality by 2050.

A-

JULIAN BRAVE
NOISECAT, DATA
FOR PROGRESS

Biden quickly made the climate crisis a top priority for his administration. While this has been celebrated, bigger tests lie ahead as a more complicated political dance unfolds between global collaboration, diplomatic competition, and domestic compromise. This year, the president's climate legacy rides on the outcome of the U.S.-hosted climate summit in April and congressional negotiations on clean energy infrastructure.



THE MOST
VITAL 100 DAYS
SINCE FDR

*Just like Roosevelt,
Biden must show that
government still works.*

BY MICHAEL HIRSH



Did any U.S. president ever have a more ominous first hundred days? Fearing assassination, he slunk into Washington under the cover of night, in disguise, and registered without public notice at a hotel near the White House. No sooner had he taken the oath of office than he began to violate it, suspending habeas corpus and arresting dissidents without trial. Meanwhile, no matter what he tried, the nation literally fell apart around him.

Yet that president, Abraham Lincoln, is today considered one of America's greatest—the greatest in the eyes of many historians. That in turn suggests that the first hundred days metric is hardly an accurate measure of presidential success. First used by Franklin D. Roosevelt three score and eight years after Lincoln's death—when FDR rushed through emergency legislation in record time to defeat the Great Depression—many historians today disdain it as largely a media contrivance designed to conjure headlines.

But neither can we dismiss the hundred days standard entirely, especially now, with Joe Biden replacing Donald Trump at a time of multiple crises: a pandemic that has cost more than half a million American lives, a rolling cataclysm of natural disasters exacerbated by climate change, an economy still bleeding millions of jobs, and a foreign policy that remains inchoate and aimless as America's global leadership is in doubt.

A number of prominent historians and political scientists who study the presidency suggest that this period *is* different: that Biden's first hundred days have mattered a great deal, perhaps as much as Roosevelt's did in fighting the Depression. (FDR coined the term in July 1933, when he gave a radio address reflecting on "the crowding events of the hundred days which had been devoted to the starting of the wheels of the New Deal.") What the two share in common is the urgent need to show the American people and the world that, amid turmoil accompanied by widespread disillusionment with Washington, government can still work at the most fundamental level.

"YOU'D BE HARD-PRESSED TO FIND A PRESIDENT since Roosevelt who's had a more important first hundred days," said Sidney Milkis, a presidential historian at the University of Virginia. Milkis had in mind Biden's many executive orders reversing Trump's policies and his \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief bill, but he added that these actions also take place in a nation arguably

"more divided now culturally, regionally, and on matters of American identity—who we are—than we have been since Lincoln and the Civil War." In a way, Milkis said, Biden faces a more treacherous situation than Roosevelt: "There was no insurrection at the Capitol during Roosevelt's tenure, and few people questioned whether he was the legitimate president."

Sean Wilentz of Princeton University also pointed to Trump's trampling of the U.S. Constitution and postwar global system. "The whole status of the executive branch is in shambles, and you need to rebuild that quickly," he said. "Most salient is the mistrust in the Justice Department, given the events of Jan. 6 at the Capitol. No modern president has inherited this kind of situation institutionally."

Against these high stakes, the consensus among nearly a dozen presidential experts interviewed for this article is that Biden's first hundred days have been mostly successful, even as he has failed to bridge the partisan gap left over from the bitterly divisive Trump years. Starting on his first day in office, Biden signed at least 50 executive orders, about half of them reversing Trump policies, including his withdrawal from the Paris climate pact, immigration policies, border wall construction, and the travel ban targeting Muslims. "I'm not making new law. I'm eliminating bad policy," the new president said bluntly. (In fact, in his first two weeks in office, Biden signed nearly as many executive orders as Roosevelt—who still holds the record—signed in his entire first month.)

Then, on March 11, Biden signed into law the giant COVID-19 relief package, passed on party-line votes in the House and Senate. It was perhaps the biggest job creation and anti-poverty program since the New Deal. His administration has also dramatically expedited the distribution of vaccines. On infrastructure and clean energy, the 46th president has also pledged to spend an additional \$2 trillion, more than any predecessor has promised. As Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said in late February, "Now is the time to be aggressive." At his first news conference, on March 25, Biden himself invoked the hundred days standard, vowing "200 million [vaccine] shots in 100 days."

This frenzy of activity echoes FDR's as he sought to reverse the laissez-faire approach of his own predecessor, Herbert Hoover, to the Great Depression. Richard Immerman, a presidential scholar at Temple University and former senior intelligence official under President George W. Bush, pointed out that both men also installed a "brain trust" of experts—for Biden, "a team that may be unparalleled in terms of their experience." Despite a slow start in getting cabinet nominees confirmed—thanks in part to the impeachment trial of Trump in January and the former president's refusal to concede and take part in a transition—Biden managed to install a series of longtime respected professionals to top posts. They include Lloyd Austin for defense secretary, Antony Blinken as secretary of state, and Janet Yellen as treasury secretary. Biden pledged that

his attorney general, Merrick Garland, would be the nation's lawyer, not the president's, as Trump appeared to believe.

Most of all, experts agreed that the sense of urgency to fix the system is what most likens Biden to FDR. "There are so many crises: the pandemic, an economy that in many ways will have fundamentally changed during it—and of course global warming, an existential crisis ... which the previous administration did nothing about," said Joseph Ellis, another well-known presidential historian. "Biden is doing the right thing by identifying those crises."

Despite Biden's parallels to one of America's greatest presidents, it takes far longer than a hundred days for any consensus on presidential success to form. Biden's foreign policy, for example, has barely gotten off the ground, despite urgent issues such as Iran's nuclear program and ending the "forever wars," as he has pledged to do. Trying to reverse Trump's immigration restrictions, he also faces a new crisis involving a surge of migrants at the southern U.S. border.

But Biden faces structural, social, and political challenges that many presidents before him did not. Two decades ago, the great presidential historian Richard Neustadt famously denigrated the hundred days standard as bad history, arguing that FDR's tenure was the exception because of the gravity of the crisis he faced, the incompetence of his predecessor to address it, and—crucially—his total control of Congress. FDR enjoyed large majorities in both legislative bodies and called Congress into emergency session until June 1933. Consequently, in the three months following his inauguration on March 4, 1933, Roosevelt was able to ram 15 major bills through a compliant Congress, including the Emergency Banking Act, the National Industrial Recovery Act, and legislation creating the Tennessee Valley Authority, Federal Emergency Relief Administration, and Civilian Conservation Corps. The humorist Will Rogers joked at the time: "They are passing bills so fast [in Washington] they don't even vote on them; they just wave at them as they go by." By contrast, Biden's Democratic Party has a thin margin in the House and a 50-50 split in the Senate.

Other well-regarded presidents had slow starts, including John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan. "At some level, the hundred days is an important notation in the sense that you're seeing the president's initial leadership style," said Lara Brown, a political scientist at the George Washington University. "But in terms of actual performance—is this person going to be successful or not—I think it's tremendously shortsighted. I would argue that for most presidents in the modern era, the first hundred days is the beginning, not the end, of their stories."

That's true even of Roosevelt. His 15-bill onslaught in the first hundred days did much to bring the republic back from the brink of ruin, but his most important achievements didn't come until later. The key surviving elements of the New Deal emerged only in the middle of his first term. The

Social Security Act of 1935, for example, was part of FDR's extraordinary "second hundred days." What was actually a total of 177 days in 1935 also included legislation strengthening the Federal Reserve Board; the creation of the Rural Electrification Administration; and the Wagner Act establishing the National Labor Relations Board. Those fundamental reforms changed U.S. capitalism forever.

Like Biden, FDR faced continuing challenges from populist forces well after his first hundred days. Populism, of any strain, is often a response to the perceived failures of the establishment, and Roosevelt faced skepticism about his sweeping policies. Even after his titanic success with the New Deal, FDR met with recalcitrance from the Supreme Court. This led to his disastrous court-packing plan, a forerunner of what progressives are urging Biden to do in response to Trump's three conservative appointments. Roosevelt also faced a populist challenge from a bloc led by fascist voices including the anti-Semitic Rev. Charles Coughlin and, most threateningly, Sen. Huey Long, the demagogic "Kingfish of Louisiana."

FDR evaded the fascist threat when Long was assassinated in 1935 at the height of his power and influence. But Long's "Share Our Wealth" program (which restricted annual income to \$1.8 million and guaranteed no less than \$2,000 per adult) was enormously popular, and, had he lived, historians believe he might have mounted a serious challenge to Roosevelt in the 1936 election.

Biden could well face his own populist resistance ahead of the midterms in 2022. And, at 78, it's not clear he'll serve long enough to enact lasting change. Thus the gravest danger is that at a time of what seems permanent polarization, "the first hundred days has become merely a period of demonstrating that you're repudiating the previous administration," said Julia Azari, a presidential historian at Marquette University.

This has become especially true in foreign policy following the breakdown of the postwar and Cold War consensus on America's role in the world. In the three most recent presidencies, Bush repudiated what Bill Clinton did, inveighing against "nation building" (at least until he invaded Iraq); Barack Obama in turn sought to reverse what Bush did (calling Iraq a "dumb" war); and Trump tried to destroy Obama's legacy, in particular the Paris climate pact, his nuclear agreement with Iran, and his trade agenda.

This may be the most unsettling dimension to the hundred days framework: Because so many modern presidents hew to it, it sends a message of dysfunction to the rest of the world.

“Especially in a time of polarization, if you try to hit the ground running with a fast start, you’re going to do more to help your opponents to unify than not,” Brown said. That appeared to be the case with Biden’s relief plan. Despite the president’s numerous attempts to reach out to Republicans—whom he courted for 36 years as a senator—not one voted for his plan.

And this may be the most unsettling dimension to the hundred days framework: Because so many modern presidents hew to it, it sends a message of dysfunction and unsteadiness to the rest of the world, with the very idea of U.S. leadership kicked back and forth, term after term, like a wayward football.

THINGS WEREN'T ALWAYS THIS WAY. For most of U.S. history, no one made much of the beginning months of presidential terms; in the 19th century, very few presidents even exercised their veto power. “Presidents were measured in the 18th and 19th centuries the same way: The Constitution presumed the initiative would be taken by Congress, and Congress was usually gone for six months at a time,” said H.W. Brands, a historian at the University of Texas at Austin. “Over time, presidents would slowly come to recommend things to Congress.”

President Zachary Taylor, for example, spent the first months of his brief term in 1849 traveling around the newly expanding country. He and his successors until Lincoln mostly equivocated on big issues and deferred to Congress while it fought over the spread of slavery—ultimately leading to the Civil War.

Hence, few 19th-century presidents are remembered for their achievements—neither in their first hundred days nor even during their entire terms. The nation’s third president, Thomas Jefferson, was an exception in large part because his Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the new country.

So, too, was James Monroe, who established hemispheric U.S. dominance as a principle, and Andrew Jackson, who aggressively asserted presidential power by opposing a national bank and forcing the migration of Native Americans but ended up wrecking the economy with the Panic of 1837. Perhaps the only other highly regarded president from that period was James Polk, who successfully expanded U.S. territory to the Far West.

That limited concept of presidential power changed for good in the 20th century with Theodore Roosevelt, who took office in 1901 after the assassination of William McKinley. Roosevelt was the first, Brands said, “to hit the ground running. He didn’t wait for Congress. He took executive action by launching antitrust actions and sent the message that his would be an activist administration.” Presidents, he added, “have been held to that standard ever since.”

Some presidents have sought to warn the public against rushing to judgment; most famously, perhaps, Kennedy in his inaugural address told Americans that his New Frontier would “not be finished in the first 100 days. Nor will it be finished in the first 1,000 days, nor in the life of this administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin.”

For some presidents, playing up their first hundred days is good publicity. In his 1993 inaugural address, Clinton—an admirer of FDR—sought to invoke the Rooseveltian standard even if it didn’t particularly apply to his times. “Let us resolve to make our government a place for what Franklin Roosevelt called ‘bold, persistent experimentation,’” he said, though all Clinton faced was a mild recession. Even Trump at first tried to put out what his campaign called a “game-changing plan for his first 100 days in office.” But nearing the end of his self-imposed benchmark, he repudiated it on Twitter.

Yet now America’s very system of governance has been called into question in a way that hasn’t been seen since the Great Depression. And first impressions—those first hundred days—matter once again. For Biden to win popular support, the key is to make clear to the American public that his administration is mounting crisis responses, not new ideological standards or existential threats to the very system—and to sell them that way. Obama, for example, failed to explain that he was acting mainly to save the economy from collapse, by most accounts, loading up his 2009 stimulus plan with progressive ideas such as new green technologies and pushing for health care reform even as the Great Recession raged on. Most of all, Obama failed to sell his plan as a major crisis response, setting him up for a big backlash in his first midterms in 2010.

So far, the more experienced Biden has avoided this path, saying flatly that he’s going all out to publicize his economic rescue package. “I kept saying [to Obama], ‘Tell people what we did,’” Biden recalled at an event in March, referring to his advice when he was vice president in 2009. “He said, ‘We don’t have time. I’m not going to take a victory lap.’ And we paid a price for it, ironically, for that humility.”

What matters about Biden in the end may not be what he accomplishes by his hundred-day mark but what his stature will be going into the 2022 midterms. According to Brown, that and Biden’s third-year agenda will likely provide the best assessment of his presidency—and whether he can win reelection in 2024. Perhaps no one knows this better than Biden, with his long legislative experience in the Senate. For example, he gave in easily when his \$15 minimum wage demand was separated from the COVID-19 relief bill, saying he would work with Republicans on future legislation.

“At the end of the day, the third year is the year presidents must figure out what their election is going to be about. That is their year to position or pivot,” Brown said. “The first hundred days are meaningful in that it is when typically the public gives the president the benefit of the doubt. But overall you’re better off kind of going slow, trying to co-opt your opposition.”

But Biden, the oldest U.S. president ever to take office amid some of the nation’s worst crises, may not feel he has that luxury. ■

MICHAEL HIRSH is a senior correspondent at FOREIGN POLICY.



THIS IS NOT A DRILL

A lifelong diplomat laces up his boots.

BY MARK PERRY

F

arly in his term as president, Donald Trump famously called America's military leadership "my generals." It was a description that might have rubbed the military the wrong way were it not for his decision to increase defense spending by some \$100 billion over three years. The spending spree, which included pay raises for those in uniform, solidified Trump's standing at the Defense Department and in the field. Many in the military, even in its most senior and skeptical ranks, supported Trump and celebrated his off-the-cuff derision of progressives.

The love affair didn't last. Trump's reproachful and mocking manner—"You're all losers," he said during his first full meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff in July 2017. "You don't know how to win anymore."—so undermined his standing as commander in chief that, by the end of his term, the military was sick of him, with 2020 election polls showing a preference for Joe Biden among all ranks, an astonishing slippage in Trump's support among a group that voted overwhelmingly for him four years prior. "I was really shocked by how many of my former colleagues voted for the former president and openly supported him," said retired U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Paul Eaton, who pointedly refused to mention Trump by name. "But when he [Trump] turned on the military, well, the military turned on him."

And so it is that, even inside the military, President Joe Biden is defined not so much by who he is but by who he isn't—namely, Donald Trump. The difference between Biden and Trump isn't that Biden is loath to confront the military—quite the opposite. For decades, his dealings with officers have been marked by an insistence on showing he's not intimidated by them. But the new president is steeped in the ways of Washington rather than reality television. Before Biden has had any chance of applying his deal-making powers abroad, he has already been using his full range of diplomatic skills at the Pentagon.

BIDEN REMAINS LARGELY A MYSTERY TO THE MILITARY, and there's a good reason why. While Biden served for 36 years in the U.S. Senate, his experience with the military's upper echelons has been incidental. "We have to remember that Biden headed up the Senate judiciary and foreign relations committees," said Gordon Adams, a former White House official for diplomacy, foreign assistance, defense, and intelligence budgeting. "That's not to say that Biden didn't know or talk

with military leaders, because he certainly did, but his primary contacts were with diplomats, not generals."

One thing the military knows about Biden is that he "knows the State Department and knows it well," said Adams, now a fellow at the Washington-based Stimson Center. "And that has shaped his views. He doesn't view military policy as foreign policy." In his years leading the Senate Foreign Relations Committee from 2001 to 2003 and again from 2007 to 2009, Biden saw up close the ways that diplomatic priorities could easily be distorted by agendas set by the military.

As President George W. Bush began pushing for military action against Iraq in 2002, Biden drafted a bipartisan resolution that emphasized diplomacy over military force. But Biden's resolution was unceremoniously buried, the victim of then-Secretary of State (and former Joint Chiefs Chairman) Colin Powell's pledge that America's march to war wouldn't be a sprint, by Bush's promise that he would prioritize diplomacy over force, and by military leaders' reassurances that a war in Iraq was the last thing they wanted. Powell, Bush, and the military all said they agreed with Biden in favoring what Antony Blinken, Biden's top foreign-policy aide at the time, called "tough diplomacy." Biden believed them and so voted in favor of giving Bush broad war powers—a stance he has been trying to explain ever since.

Biden attempted to recover his position in 2007, when the Iraq War was already a quagmire. He opposed the Bush administration's troop surge to rescue the U.S. military's position; proposed that Iraq be partitioned into Kurdish, Sunni, and Shiite states; and supported Nouri al-Maliki as Iraqi prime minister. But his opposition to the surge proved a mistake when additional troops helped stabilize Iraq; his proposal for a partition of Iraq was caricatured by military officers as naive and uninformed; and his support for Maliki seemed ill-advised when the Iraqi leader's anti-Sunni policies seeded the rise of the Islamic State. This sobering record led former U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates to issue a harsh, and very public, critique of Biden's record. "I think he has been wrong on nearly every major foreign policy and national security issue over the past four decades," Gates wrote in his 2014 memoir, recounting his time in government.

Given Biden's record, it's hard to disagree. Yet, in nearly every instance, Biden not only favored diplomacy over military intervention, but he tirelessly argued for increased State Department funding—an always popular mantra that has actually done very little to curtail America's penchant for choosing the military as its tool of choice in responding to foreign-policy challenges. From President Lyndon Johnson's decision to send U.S. troops pounding into South Vietnam in 1965 to the present day, the State Department has played second fiddle to the Pentagon in dollars (\$50 billion in spending compared with \$740 billion in 2020) and in prestige—where the chairs of the congressional armed services committees

wield outsized influence and the once powerful head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee toils in near anonymity.

Biden's involvement with electoral politics has freed him from dependence on either the military's largesse or its prestige. "We have to remember," Adams said, "Delaware isn't one of those states that is dependent on Pentagon spending. It's not as if Biden was pounding on the military to provide Delaware with defense dollars." Indeed, Delaware has consistently ranked near the bottom of states in receiving defense personnel and contract spending—a paltry \$651 per resident as of 2019.

It's hardly a surprise then that, after 36 years in the Senate and two stinging missteps on Iraq, Biden began his tenure as Barack Obama's vice president with a deeply ingrained skepticism about what the military said it could do—and what it could actually get done. That may help explain his strident disagreement with the military intervention in Libya in March 2011, his high-profile disagreement with the raid that killed Osama bin Laden in May of that year, and his staunch support for removing all U.S. troops from Iraq at the end of 2011. It also helps explain why, even as Biden polled well with the military during the presidential election, senior military officers retain a wait-and-see attitude on what he will do as president.

BIDEN'S SEVERAL WELL-DOCUMENTED PERSONAL CONFLICTS with military officers as vice president shed light on his diplomatic approach to dealing with the Pentagon. The common thread in those confrontations has been the way Biden has insisted on holding his ground while also refusing to resort to scorched-earth tactics.

The most well-reported conflict came in the summer and fall of 2009, when Biden crossed swords with the military during the Obama administration's review of U.S. policy on Afghanistan—where the conflict with the Taliban had reached a tipping point. On one side of the debate was the senior military leadership (including Army Gen. Stanley McChrystal, the newly minted commander of coalition forces in Afghanistan), who favored a substantial surge of upwards of 80,000 troops (a "fully resourced, comprehensive counterinsurgency campaign," as Army Gen. David Petraeus described it) that would tip the war in America's favor. On the other side was Biden, who argued that the United States should focus on its original mission of defeating al Qaeda, what the then-vice president called "counterterrorism plus." Through nine intensive meetings that began in September 2009, Biden cast doubts on the counterinsurgency strategy, offered alternatives to it, attempted to recruit like-minded military officers to his viewpoint—and lost. While the military did not get all of what it wanted (Obama settled on 30,000 troops), the president endorsed the counterinsurgency plan, a repudiation of Biden's views.

Biden's outspoken opposition to the military's proposal should have soured his relationship with America's senior

officers, but that turned out not to be true—at least in part. When Petraeus was named the commander of coalition forces in Afghanistan in June 2010, Biden suggested they have dinner together. The invitation took Petraeus by surprise, particularly considering their earlier tussle over Afghanistan policy. But the disagreement was hardly mentioned by Biden when the two met in Tampa, Florida, where U.S. Central Command is headquartered. According to published reports, Petraeus served Biden and Blinken (who is now Biden's secretary of state) sea bass, cucumber soup, Florida salad, and banana flambé—and ended the evening with a tour of his library. The message to Petraeus was obvious and welcome: Biden wasn't the kind of person to hold a grudge.

That certainly wasn't true for McChrystal, Biden's most contentious opponent during the Afghanistan debate. In June 2010, the journalist Michael Hastings documented how McChrystal, who was still rubbed raw by Biden's opposition to his Afghanistan troop plan, greenlit his staff's reckless and insubordinate comments on Biden and other Obama administration figures in a controversial profile for *Rolling Stone*. At the heart of Hastings's account was an alcohol-fueled screed about Biden, including their nickname for him. Joe Biden wasn't Vice President Biden, Hastings reported. He was "Joe Bite Me." While McChrystal scrambled to save his job in the wake of the article's publication, Biden telephoned half a dozen senior officers to assess whether they believed he should be fired. They did—and Biden endorsed Obama's decision to replace him. But, as in the case of Petraeus, Biden not only didn't hold a grudge ("I didn't take it personally at all. I really, honestly to God, didn't," he said in July 2010); he invited McChrystal to serve as a military advisor on his transition team.

More than 10 years after Hastings's revelations, McChrystal supported Biden's suggestion that retired Army Gen. Lloyd Austin be his administration's first defense secretary. The fact that Biden's son Beau was a good friend of Austin (and regularly attended Catholic Mass with him) and that Biden himself got to know the general during several trips to the Middle East also helped. Biden was impressed by Austin's low-key but well-informed approach to the region's conflicts and his succinct but precise military briefings. Biden was also impressed by Austin's command of arcane military subjects when the two talked after the election.

Crucial, though, was Biden's growing conviction that Austin wouldn't be another James Mattis. Mattis surrounded

Biden retains the fears that he expressed during the Obama years—that, in the end, a president can be rolled by those in uniform.

himself at the Pentagon with many of the same senior military figures who had served with him when he was the head of Centcom, which made the Pentagon's E-ring (where all the important decisions are made) seem more like the bridge of a Marine Corps amphibious ship than a civilian-run department. "I think it's pretty clear, in retrospect, that James Mattis wasn't a very successful defense secretary, even though he was viewed as the original adult in the room," a senior Pentagon civilian and Joint Chiefs advisor said. "The truth is that while Jim Mattis showed up every day at the Pentagon in a suit, he wasn't really fooling anyone. He was still in uniform; he was still in command, and he was still General Mattis. That isn't true for Austin, who has a highly refined sense of the relationship between civilians and the military. He knows where the line is."

Finally, it was Austin's support for Biden's focus on diplomacy over military intervention that most impressed the president-elect, according to a Pentagon official who was privy to Biden's decision-making process. "Despite Biden's vote in favor of the Iraq War, he's not an interventionist, he's just not, and neither is Lloyd Austin," the official said.

While Biden's progressive critics say there's actually scant evidence of this—they point to Biden's saber rattling on China and the intervention in Syria—the new president's first offerings on the proposed U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan reflect his focus on diplomacy. "It ought to be clear by now that reupping troop numbers on Afghanistan is not in the cards," the Pentagon official said. "The first thing out of the box was a Biden proposal on recasting the Afghan government. This is all diplomacy. It's right in his wheelhouse." In this sense, some former senior officials and military officers believe that Biden's first year in office will look a lot like Bill Clinton's. "Clinton came into White House and appointed Congressman Les Aspin to take over the Pentagon. And the message to Aspin was absolutely clear: Keep these guys under control and out of the headlines while I take care of domestic policy," Adams said. "It's the economy, stupid' wasn't just a campaign slogan. It was Clinton's policy. My bet is that Biden gave a similar message to Austin. That's his role."

DESPITE POLLING WELL WITH MILITARY PERSONNEL in the last election, Biden knew that among his first acts as president he needed to shore up his support in the Pentagon. It was one of the reasons he reversed Trump's ban on transgender personnel and then nominated two women (Air Force Gen. Jacqueline Van Ovost and Army Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson) to elite, four-star commands—a popular move inside of an establishment in which about 1 in 5 of those in uniform are female. Just as important, the White House quietly told reporters that, despite pressure from progressives in his own party, the new president would maintain a level defense budget in line with Pentagon spending for 2021—easing fears that, in his first year in office, Biden would slash military spending.

Yet Biden inherits a military that is not only scarred by 20 years of war but, according to a recent poll, losing the confidence of the American people—a stark contrast with previous polls that showed the military was one of the most trusted institutions in the country. While a majority of Americans (56 percent) retain their confidence and trust in the military, that figure has nosedived from the 70 percent registered in 2018—an unprecedented double-digit dip in just three years. The Jan. 6 insurrection, during which the military seemed slow to stop the violence at the U.S. Capitol, is one of the reasons for this loss of confidence. But it isn't the only one. The military has been hit by a number of high-profile scandals, including one involving a Navy Seal accused of war crimes—whom Trump pardoned—and the spectacle of its most senior commander, Joint Chiefs Chairman Mark Milley, escorting Trump to St. John's Episcopal Church during last summer's Black Lives Matter protests. Both current and retired senior military officers are quietly reflecting on the events of the Trump-Mattis era, when senior military commanders engineered workarounds of Trump policies, including a U.S. troop withdrawal from Syria and Trump's proposed May 1 withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan.

"I don't think there's any doubt that we're in the midst of a civilian-military crisis," said retired U.S. Army Col. Andrew Bacevich, a West Point graduate and president of the Washington-based Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft (where I also work). "It undermines, it erodes the single most important pillar of democracy that we have as a nation. That crisis has to be the first thing on the new president's agenda."

Eaton, the retired Army major general, remains confident that Biden's fundamental decency, his experience as a contentious skeptic during the Obama years, his appointment of Austin as defense secretary, his focus on diplomacy over intervention, and his intellect will help resolve the problem. "Smart soldiers will always follow smart commanders," Eaton said. "And the view in the military is that, no matter what they might think about his policies, Biden is smart."

Then, too, Biden retains the fears that he expressed during the Obama years—that an inexperienced president might be unduly influenced by the military's ever confident, can-do mentality. That, in the end, a president can be rolled by those in uniform. Biden's constant doubts, relentless questioning, and privately expressed niggling at the military's claims during that era left an indelible impression. "The military doesn't [screw] around with me," he reportedly told aides as vice president. "I've been around too long." Put simply, the military and its officers were able to defy Trump because he was in awe of them.

Biden isn't. ■

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**TWILIGHT
OF THE
TECHNOCRATS**

BY ADAM TOOZE



**JANET YELLEN AND MARIO DRAGHI SHAPED THIS ECONOMY,
BUT CAN THEY CONTROL WHAT COMES NEXT?**

In recent years, the world has been regaled with stories about the crisis of expertise. The era of the liberal technocrat was over, we were told, killed off by the financial crisis and populism. But if democracies find it hard to live with expertise, it seems they can't live without it either.

At the start of 2021, two of the most contentious capitalist democracies in the world, Italy and the United States, turned to familiar experts to chart a way out of novel political situations. If there is such a thing as a technocrat, Janet Yellen, the new U.S. treasury secretary, and Mario Draghi, Italy's new prime minister, are it.

For the last 30 years, both Yellen and Draghi have held positions of high authority, culminating in the period between 2014 and 2018 when they overlapped as the heads of the U.S. Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank (ECB), respectively, the two most powerful central banks in the world. They were chosen to wield power based on their expertise and judgment but also because they aligned with the prevailing brand of centrist politics—Yellen more on the left, Draghi more on the center-right. They have now been called back to the ramparts, at an age that would normally suggest retirement, to take on roles that are more political than ever.

Yellen, the first woman to lead the U.S. Treasury Department, is set to preside over the most audacious round of stimulus of any democracy in peacetime. Draghi, as prime minister, faces the challenge of returning Italy to growth with the help of an unprecedented allocation of 209 billion euros (\$254 billion) from the European Union's new Next Generation EU fund that was bargained at the outset of the pandemic.

Those are extreme tasks, demanded by the extreme situation the United States and Europe find themselves in.

On both sides of the Atlantic, disappointed expectations and fears about the future are helping to stoke disruptive nationalist and right-wing politics. If broad-based growth cannot be restarted, the implications are alarming.

Of course, it would be absurd to blame either Draghi or Yellen personally for the sequence of shifts and shocks that has destabilized capitalist democracies since the 1990s or the crisis of confidence these have triggered among centrist liberals. But as people of huge influence and as representatives of a class of experts who have ruled the roost for the last 30 years, they can hardly plead innocence either. It was on their watch that growth slowed, inequality between social classes and regions became ever deeper, and the risk of inflation tipped into that of deflation. It was on their watch that the financial system was allowed to become a flywheel of mass destruction. It was on their watch that the risks of climate change and pandemic threats went unaddressed.

Whereas the market revolutionaries of the 1970s and '80s were radicals, squashing the last bastions of the old left and bulldozing organized labor out of the way, Draghi and Yellen came to the fore in the 1990s as managers of what is now known as the Great Moderation. That is not to say they idolized the status quo. As Yellen once remarked: "Will capitalist economies operate at full employment in the absence of routine intervention? Certainly not. Do policymakers have the knowledge and ability to improve macroeconomic outcomes rather than make matters worse? Yes." But their idea of policy intervention took the existing institutional horizon as given. Not for nothing they came into their own as independent central bankers—the political position perhaps least accountable to democratic politics and the quintessential policy lever of the neoliberal era.

Inheritors of the market revolution, committed to managing and improving the status quo, Draghi's and Yellen's march through the institutions has been glorious, but their careers have also been defined by constant adjustment to political and economic shocks that they did not foresee and could not control. These shocks have driven Yellen and Draghi to explore the political and economic boundaries of technocratic power.

Draghi faced that challenge first. It was the power vested in him as boss of the ECB that enabled him to change the course of history with a single sentence. Draghi's defiant exclamation in the summer of 2012 that he would do "whatever it takes" to save the eurozone was what philosophers of language call a performative utterance. Through his declaration, Draghi established the anchoring monetary authority that the eurozone had hitherto lacked.

For much of the period since the 1990s, American experts of Yellen's ilk regarded the project of European monetary union with deep skepticism. Condescendingly, they benchmarked it against the U.S. experience and announced that Europe was still awaiting its Hamiltonian moment. But since 2008, at the

latest, the tables have turned. Yellen and her colleagues in the United States have come face to face with structural problems of their own—in the U.S. financial system, the country’s profound social inequalities, its inadequate welfare state, and its deeply polarized politics. The tensions facing the Biden administration by the time it took office were so extreme that “whatever it takes” might as well be its motto, too.

Yellen and Draghi are no doubt qualified, but the question facing both in 2021 is blunt. Can they get a grip on the basic political and economic forces shaping their countries? The fact that they are in the positions that they are in, under the circumstances we currently face, is not a reward for lifetime achievement. It is a wager that they can deliver an escape from the terrifying mess that 2020 found us in. Can they, in perhaps their last act, vindicate the last half-century of centrist expertise of which they are such prominent exponents? And will that require leaving most, if not all, of its basic organizing assumptions behind?

YELLEN AND DRAGHI ARE BOTH PROTOTYPICAL SUCCESS STORIES of the postwar period. They were born just over a year apart: Yellen in Brooklyn, New York, in August 1946, Draghi in Rome in September 1947. In the 1970s, they both earned Ph.D.s from powerhouse economics departments on the East Coast of the United States: Yellen from Yale University in 1971, Draghi from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1976.

Yellen and Draghi were both trained as Keynesians. Their careers and those of their collaborators are a standing refutation of the cliché that the last 50 years of economic policy—the period normally referred to as the neoliberal era—were defined by conservative Chicago-school monetarism or dogmatic rational-expectations economics. At MIT and Yale in the 1970s, they imbibed what was known as the neoclassical synthesis. The central idea was that though the microeconomics of markets were important, markets would function properly only so long as the macroeconomic environment was set correctly. Keynesianism and market economics were not opposites but complements.

In the 1980s, Yellen played an important part in shaping the further development of the neoclassical synthesis known as New Keynesian economics. Working alongside the likes of Joseph Stiglitz and George Akerlof, she mapped how labor market imperfections could give rise to

Their positions are not a reward for lifetime achievement but a wager that they can deliver an escape from the terrifying mess of 2020.

macroeconomic problems. Those rigidities in wages and prices, in turn, also enabled macroeconomic policy to work. It was because markets were slow to adjust that unexpected movements in interest rates, taxes, and government spending could have real effects. Big, 1930s-style crises were not on the agenda. They were something that happened in the developing world. In the United States, secured by a solid and well-understood framework of macroeconomic policy, the challenging problems were of fine-tuning.

Draghi’s work at MIT was less intellectually generative than Yellen’s. But his dissertation is nevertheless revealing. It includes a chapter in which he describes how planners trying to manage an economy subject to short-run fluctuation are more successful if they focus on long-run goals. Long-range strategy, regardless of short-term cost, will do better than a hectic effort to optimize at every moment.

Though they owe little to the Chicago school, it does not follow that Draghi and Yellen were not exponents of neoliberalism. On the contrary: They were strong advocates of markets. Competition and properly designed incentives were the recipe for productivity and growth. In the world economy, they favored the free capital movement and flexible exchange rates that defined the so-called Washington Consensus of the 1990s. It was Rudiger Dornbusch, the pope of international macroeconomics at MIT and one of Draghi’s chief mentors, who described the project of his generation as being the taming of “democratic money.” In the wake of the collapse of the Bretton Woods financial order and the U.S. dollar’s gold peg, the chief enemies of good economic governance were shortsighted trade unions pushing for higher wages and vote-chasing politicians. Once trade unions were curbed and politicians confined to their proper tasks, monetarists hoped that prices could be stabilized by mechanical monetary rules.

But by the early 1980s, that had proved naive. For the MIT crowd, what keeping money safe from democracy amounted to was placing it under the control of competent experts credibly committed to providing markets with the stable framework they needed. The independent central bank was their institutional bastion.

BY THE EARLY 1990S, YELLEN WAS AN INFLUENTIAL FIGURE in New Keynesian circles. It was no surprise when she was headhunted by Laura D’Andrea Tyson, the chair of President Bill Clinton’s Council of Economic Advisers, herself a MIT Ph.D. and Yellen’s colleague at the University of California, Berkeley. In 1994, Yellen was appointed along with Alan Blinder to the Federal Reserve Board. Their role was to counterbalance the Wall Street-centered approach of the Fed chair and Ayn Rand disciple, Alan Greenspan. It was a bruising experience.

In 1994, Greenspan was determined to crush any possible revival of inflation. He hiked interest rates, unleashing a violent bond market sell-off. The ensuing “bond market

The timeline features a central horizontal line with colored dots (blue and green) and diagonal slashes. Above the line are events for Janet Yellen, and below are events for Luigi E. Draghi. Logos for Yale and MIT are placed near their respective timelines. Two photographs are included: one of Janet Yellen speaking at a podium and another of Luigi E. Draghi at a conference table.

1946
Yellen is born in Brooklyn, New York.

1971
Yellen receives her Ph.D. in economics from Yale.

1947
Draghi is born in Rome.

1976
Draghi receives his Ph.D. in economics from MIT.

1984
Draghi becomes Italy's executive director at the World Bank in Washington.

1991
Draghi becomes director-general of the Italian Treasury.

1994
Yellen is appointed as a member of the Federal Reserve Board.

1997
Yellen becomes chair of Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers.

2002
Draghi joins Goldman Sachs as a vice chairman and managing director.

2004
Yellen becomes president of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco.

massacre” scarred the first term of the Clinton administration. This was the moment when Clinton’s political advisor James Carville declared that he wanted to be reincarnated as the bond market because you could intimidate anybody. In fact, the drama was not in the economy, where inflation was ebbing, or inside the Clinton administration, which was falling over itself to prove its fiscal conservatism. It was inside the Fed. It was Greenspan who was acting the maestro.

Unable to exercise any influence, Blinder left abruptly in 1996. Yellen departed in 1997 to take over as chair of Clinton’s Council of Economic Advisers. With the gloss on Ronald Reagan’s morning in America looking worn, Robert Rubin and Larry Summers sought to offer a new economic model—one that combined fiscal discipline with growth and full employment. Yellen was a true believer in this “new economy,” insisting that private investment would drive a surge in productivity growth. To encourage competition, Clinton’s economic team pushed the North American Free Trade Agreement. They also smoothed the path for financial modernization, which meant repealing New Deal-era regulations like the Glass-Steagall Act and letting Wall Street off the leash. Environmental policy was also part of the mix. In 1998, Yellen played an inglorious part in the effort to get the Kyoto Protocol past a furious Congress. It was her calculations that showed that the United States could keep its costs down by buying in carbon credits from the bankrupt countries of the former Soviet bloc.

The reform program of the 1990s was a long-run project. The key question was whether Clinton’s new version of the

Democratic Party could consolidate a majority. The party was increasingly dominated by the educated class, and socio-demographic trends in U.S. society seemed to be on its side. Clinton won in 1992 and again in 1996. But Congress was another matter. The 1994 midterms were a disaster that handed power to the insurgent right wing of the Republican Party led by Newt Gingrich. For all their sense of having history on their side, what the modernizing technocrats of the Democratic Party faced, in fact, was a resurgence in conservatism. It turned out that America’s rapid social, cultural, and economic transformation was splitting the country in half.

GINGRICH LIKED TO TALK OF REVOLUTIONS. It was always a pose. What he was waging was more like trench warfare. The Italian political scene of the 1990s, in which Draghi rose to prominence, was closer to an actual revolution.

Italy, too, was divided over the legacies of the 1960s and ’70s, but there the end of the Cold War and the Tangentopoli corruption scandal of 1992 swept away the existing three-party system, in which Christian Democrats competed with communists and socialists. The collapse of the Christian Democrats spawned the rise of a new right wing, headed by Silvio Berlusconi and the Northern League. Meanwhile, for those Italians who since the 1970s had gravitated toward a historic compromise between Eurocommunism and the left wing of Christian democracy, the EU was the answer. Italy would be modernized by the discipline of *vincolo esterno*, or external constraint. Enlightened rules set in Brussels and a



2007

Yellen says she does "not consider it very likely that developments relating to subprime mortgages will have a big effect on overall U.S. economic performance."



2014

Yellen becomes chair of the Federal Reserve.

2015

Yellen announces the decision to raise interest rates.



2021

Yellen becomes U.S. treasury secretary.

2006

Draghi becomes governor of the Banca d'Italia, Italy's central bank.

2007

Draghi gives a speech that acknowledges the crisis in the securitized mortgage business but insists that it's up to the private sector to sort it out.

2011

Draghi becomes president of the European Central Bank.



2012

Draghi famously says he would do "whatever it takes" to save the eurozone.

2015

Draghi launches a quantitative easing program, marking what might be called the "Americanization" of the ECB.



2021

Draghi becomes Italy's prime minister.

unified European single market, ultimately completed by a currency union, would set a high bar for competition and root out corruption and inefficiency.

Reform-minded Italians discuss in heated terms their attachment to such external props. It goes back to British and French sponsorship of Italian unification in the 1850s. But the search for constraints wasn't merely an Italian curiosity. The global financial order developed by economic elites—from the 19th-century gold standard to the gold-pegged dollar of the Bretton Woods system to the worldwide preoccupation with independent central banks after Bretton Woods dissolved—has always involved imposing constraints on policymakers. In the 1980s, devices such as exchange rate pegs were all the rage in Asia as well as Europe for signaling self-discipline to financial markets.

The advice from economists, however, was equivocal. Tying yourself to a conservative anti-inflation anchor like Germany's Bundesbank had obvious attractions, but as much as mainstream macroeconomics campaigned for price stability, both the Chicago and MIT schools favored floating exchange rates. All that was really needed for price stability was responsible national monetary policy.

From the vantage point of the United States, that made sense, but it took the existing order of nation-states for granted, which was precisely what European integration put in play. Support for monetary union implied a gamble on eventual convergence and the creation of a more elaborate structure of common fiscal policy. Ultimately, it assumed the emergence of a European polity and society that would facilitate

joint decision-making and labor mobility. It was a project not of stabilizing the status quo but of historic transformation.

As far as Italy was concerned, after the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, it looked like a very long shot. The country's politics were in turmoil. In an unprecedented attack, the Mafia assassinated the distinguished magistrate Giovanni Falcone. Public finances were in chaos. In September 1992, Italy and the United Kingdom both crashed out of the European Exchange Rate Mechanism, the halfway house to monetary union. Draghi was in the middle of the fight.

Back home in the late 1970s, watching his family inheritance being eaten up by rampant inflation, Draghi had bounced around Italy's highly politicized university system until 1984, when he became an executive director at the World Bank in Washington. He was not lured back to Rome until 1991, when he was asked to take the job as director-general of the Italian Treasury. He was appointed by then-Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, the spider in the web of Christian Democratic politics, but Draghi's loyalties were with the *vincolo esterno* camp. Faced with the 1992 crisis, the choice was clear. Unlike the U.K., Italy would do whatever necessary to rejoin the convoy toward monetary union. To redress the national budget deficit, Draghi curbed expenditures. To bring down the debt, he drove large-scale privatization of Italy's huge state-owned enterprises. Always a man of the markets, Draghi also pushed the Italian Treasury to adopt techniques of financial engineering to juggle its debt mountain.

It came at a considerable cost. Growth slowed to a crawl.

Many of Draghi's former teachers at MIT, led by Franco Modigliani, his Ph.D. supervisor, went public with their doubts about the stringent Maastricht criteria for euro membership. But the Europeans persisted, and as far as Italy was concerned, in the early 2000s, the plan seemed to be working. Though fiscal austerity slowed Italy's growth and hindered productivity gains, the straitjacket held. Though Berlusconi took office for the second time as prime minister in 2001, his room for maneuver was constrained. Meanwhile, Italians were not merely subject to European constraint; they achieved considerable prominence in Brussels. Romano Prodi, as European Commission president between 1999 and 2004, oversaw the introduction of the euro. Mario Monti shaped EU taxation and competition policy. At the ECB, Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa was widely seen as the intellectual father of the euro. Vincolo esterno was not merely a surrender; it was a way for Italy to secure leverage on the larger European stage.

Draghi, meanwhile, after a few years at Goldman Sachs, was called back by Berlusconi in January 2006 to head the Banca d'Italia, Italy's central bank. Though the bank was in turmoil thanks to allegations of impropriety against his predecessor, Draghi inherited a complacent scene. Markets were calm. For Italy, as for Greece, borrowing costs were at historic lows. The symbiotic relationship between public finances, markets, and investment banks that Draghi had helped forge seemed to be working well.

By contrast, what made itself painfully evident in the United States in the early 2000s was precisely the lack of any external restraint on policymaking. Driven by the radicalization of the nationalist right wing, U.S. politics became not just polarized internally but divorced from the norms prevailing in Europe. It is rightly said that Berlusconi was the godfather of the modern oligarchic populist style. But though it toyed with climate skepticism, Italy never broke from the European mainstream. It wasn't in Italy that fundamentalist religion was welcomed in the halls of power. In the United States, by contrast, even elementary democratic norms no longer seemed safe.

In 2000, though Al Gore had won the largest number of popular votes, Supreme Court judges nominated by George W. Bush's father handed him the election victory. Unconstrained by any domestic check, the budget was blown out by ruthless, inegalitarian tax cutting and Bush's wars of choice. Figures like Paul Krugman, a contemporary of Draghi's at MIT, were driven into radical opposition.

Yellen was more restrained. Rather than taking to the streets, she took charge as president of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco in June 2004. She was chosen in part because she had forged a reputation, in the words of Berkeley's chancellor at the time, as an "outspoken advocate for fiscal responsibility." In 2004, that was a liberal stick to beat the Republicans with.

While Yellen immersed herself in the day-to-day of policymaking, other true-believing disciples of the

Clinton-era "new economy" looked around for their vincolo esterno. They remembered only too well the pressure they had been under by bond markets in 1994. Surely, the Bush administration's recklessness with deficits would soon face its comeuppance. The most likely scenario seemed to be that it would come in the form of a wallop from China, the largest holder of U.S. debt. Beijing would sell. The dollar would crash. Interest rates would surge. That would teach Republicans that no one was above the economic rules. But the external check, America's vincolo esterno, never arrived. The dollar remained king. The shock came from within.

IN 2008, A FINANCIAL CRISIS DID SWEEP REPUBLICANS OUT of office. But it was not the crisis that Democratic technocrats had anticipated. It wasn't the government bond market that blew up. It was mortgage-backed securities and banks.

The embarrassment was that whereas on fiscal policy and the trade deficit one could point the finger at irresponsible Republicans, on the financial sector there was really no room between the parties in the United States—or for that matter between the Americans and the Europeans. In the Clinton administration, the charge on financial sector deregulation was led by Summers at the Treasury Department, but as chair of the Council of Economic Advisers, Yellen had raised no objections. Nor had there been any resistance from the other side of the Atlantic.

At least Yellen had not made Draghi's faux pas of working for Goldman Sachs or signing up for a hedge fund like Summers or running Citigroup like Rubin. From her vantage point at the San Francisco Fed, she did take note early of the signs of a housing crisis; in California, you could hardly miss them. But as late as July 2007, Yellen opined: "From the standpoint of monetary policy, I do not consider it very likely that developments relating to subprime mortgages will have a big effect on overall U.S. economic performance, although they do add to downside risk." A few months later, Draghi, as head of Italy's central bank and chair of the international Financial Stability Board, would give a speech on the transformation of the European financial industry in Frankfurt that acknowledged the crisis going on in securitized mortgage business but insisted that it was up to the private sector to sort it out. He failed to highlight the systemic risks in the investment banking operations of Europe's megabanks or the

For all their inside status and expertise, neither Yellen nor Draghi gave any public sign of anticipating the crisis that was to come.

doom loop connecting European banks and sovereign debt.

For all their inside status and expertise, neither Yellen nor Draghi gave any public sign of anticipating the crisis that was to come. The same was true for the vast majority of their cohort, whether MIT or Chicago. The scale of the systemic risk posed by the financial system of the advanced economies simply did not register until it was too late.

Once the crisis arrived, the appropriate economic policy was obvious, at least in outline. The United States needed fiscal stimulus—the only question was how big. The shadows of the 1990s lingered over President Barack Obama's economic policy team, which was recruited, in the main, from the circle around Rubin. Concerns about debt sustainability never lifted. As critics like Krugman soon began to warn, the Obama stimulus of 2009 was nowhere near large enough—about half the size that would have been necessary to fill the output gap. Christina Romer, Yellen's close colleague at Berkeley and another MIT Ph.D. who was serving as Obama's chair of the Council of Economic Advisers, correctly gauged the challenge, but she was overridden. The public protests in the media from conservative economists didn't help. But it was Summers, once the golden boy of MIT and Yellen's one-time student, who clinched the argument from the inside, in his position as director of the National Economic Council. A stimulus in excess of \$1 trillion was, in his words, "non-planetary." Meanwhile, the Republican opposition in Congress, the heirs to Gingrich, hemmed the Obama administration in until, during the 2010 midterms, they were able to retake power. As Democrats assembled their multiracial, expert-led coalition for a new America, the temperature on the right—from Gingrich to Sarah Palin to the Tea Party—kept rising.

For lack of fiscal stimulus, the Fed was left to pick up the pieces. Ben Bernanke, a Republican appointee from the same MIT cohort as Draghi, worked well with the Obama administration. To reinforce his dovish tendencies, in April 2010 Obama nominated Yellen to the Fed board, this time in the hot seat as vice chair. Faced once again with Republican control of Congress and fiscal paralysis, Yellen became one of the loudest voices pushing for more monetary policy stimulus to sustain the recovery.

Fortunately for Italy, it was not on the front line in 2008. Its long-run growth path since adopting the euro may not have been promising, but its banks were not entangled in the mortgage boom. What the Italian Treasury could ill-afford, however, was a general panic in eurozone sovereign debt markets—and that's precisely what started in 2010 in Greece, Ireland, and Portugal. By 2011, Draghi found himself in the heart of the desperate effort to stave off disaster in the eurozone. This required dealing with the Berlusconi problem by more direct means than *vincolo esterno*. What was needed was inside pressure. In August 2011, Draghi and ECB President Jean-Claude Trichet teamed up to write a secret missive to the

prime minister demanding he make drastic cuts, sanctioned if necessary by the application of emergency laws. When Berlusconi demurred and lost his grip on Parliament, an alternative candidate was ready and waiting. Draghi himself had been discussed on several occasions as a possible prime minister, but he was now on his way to the ECB to succeed Trichet. The fix for the Italian premiership was Mario Monti, the economist and former EU commissioner who in the 1970s had studied at Yale with James Tobin, Yellen's Ph.D. supervisor.

It was not the only technocratic substitution with an American flavor performed in Europe in the fall of 2011. At the same time, in November, Greece and its latest austerity program were put in the hands of Lucas Papademos, who held a bachelor's degree in physics, a master's degree in electrical engineering, and a doctorate in economics, all from MIT.

Working closely with Spain, Monti anchored a push for fundamental moves on banking union that over the summer of 2012 opened the door to Draghi's famous "whatever it takes" line. The financial markets were calmed. But the price was paid in the destabilization of European democracy.

Initially, the public reaction to Berlusconi's replacement by Monti was overwhelmingly favorable. The crisis, the Italian public conceded, required a democratic exception. But the honeymoon did not last. Feeding off the indignation provoked by Monti's hard line on fiscal policy and apparent indifference to the social crisis afflicting Italy, in the February 2013 parliamentary election, the Five Star Movement, avowedly skeptical of the EU, surged to 25 percent of the vote. And the populist backlash was now spreading across Europe. The Alternative for Germany party emerged on the scene in 2013 as a challenge to Draghi's rule at the ECB. The National Front in France gained enormously in popularity. Podemos in Spain and Syriza in Greece both openly espoused leftist populism. Draghi became an object of hate, but the real target was *vincolo esterno*, the abstract mechanism of constraint that now stifled all initiative.

FOR ALL OF DRAGHI'S FINE WORDS, the ECB did not actually act in 2012. The eurozone slid deeper into recession. It was the Fed that did act. In September 2012, the Fed announced QE3, an open-ended bond-buying program to keep interest rates at rock bottom. With fiscal policy paralyzed by the standoff between the Republican-led Congress and the Obama administration, Bernanke, with Yellen's support, committed to keeping his foot on the gas until unemployment fell below 6 percent.

By this point, the left wing of the Democratic Party was getting restless. When the question came of Bernanke's replacement, the idea that Summers was the anointed heir stirred indignation. Despite her own Clintonian past and despite the fact that she was a card-carrying member of the Fix the Debt campaign, Yellen emerged in February

2014 as the compromise candidate backed by the likes of Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Sherrod Brown.

She had reached the pinnacle of economic policymaking on the basis of her track record both as an academic and a policymaker but also because of her astute political positioning. In an increasingly polarized political environment, there was no such thing as neutral expertise. And, at least at first, Yellen showed every sign of repaying the trust of the left by maintaining quantitative easing (QE) until October 2014, when unemployment was around 5 percent.

Though the recovery in the United States was painfully slow, the situation in Europe was far worse. Draghi's "whatever it takes" approach had stopped the acute bond market crisis, but by 2014 the eurozone was teetering on edge of deflation and renewed recession. Draghi, who had previously been a staunch advocate of fiscal consolidation, was now pleading for an active fiscal policy. "Whatever it takes" from the central bank could only go so far. What was required was a proper balance of monetary and fiscal policy. But in Berlin there were no MIT Ph.D.s. With then-German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble doggedly pursuing budgetary surplus, rather than fiscal stimulus, *vincolo esterno* was now garroting the eurozone.

The consistent failure to deliver adequate fiscal policy responses to the crisis after 2008 went against all the preconceptions of 1970s MIT-style macroeconomics. Where were the spendthrift politicians when you needed them? The fiscal undershoot by the Obama administration could perhaps be explained by miscalculation and Republican partisanship. But the fact that a centrist majority in the heart of Europe, faced with dangerous populist challenges from the left and right, would choose to die on the hill of budget balance was not part of the plan.

It was up to the ECB to act. In 2015, to the horror of German conservatives, Draghi finally launched a QE program. This was a technical economic measure. But it had spectacular political effects. It enabled the European Council to play hardball with the radical left-wing government in Greece without causing the bond markets to panic. It insulated Europe from the shock to confidence during the refugee crisis and to some degree against the sudden downturn in China. One might say it marked the Americanization of the ECB. But precisely at that moment, a fateful division was emerging between Europe and the United States. Draghi was pumping liquidity into the European financial system just as Yellen began to contemplate the possibility of actually raising rates.

Seven years on from the collapse of Lehman Brothers, a majority on the Fed board was swinging toward tightening. The point was not so much that the U.S. economy needed restraining as that they were deeply uncomfortable with interest rates remaining at zero. It stoked speculation in financial markets and gave the Fed nowhere to go if it needed to counter a downturn. Negative interest rates along the lines adopted



Yellen prepares to take questions from the media following a meeting of the Federal Open Market Committee in Washington on March 15, 2017. She announced that the Fed was raising its benchmark interest rate for the third time since the 2008 financial crisis.

by Japan were not something that the Fed wanted to contemplate. There was just one problem: the sudden deterioration of the world economy. In 2015, commodity prices were plunging. China was looking shaky. Financial markets were wobbling.

Nevertheless, on Dec. 16, 2015, Yellen announced the decision to raise rates. "I feel confident about the fundamentals driving the U.S. economy, the health of U.S. households, and domestic spending," she declared. "There are pressures on some sectors of the economy, particularly manufacturing and the energy sector ... but the underlying health of the U.S. economy I consider to be quite sound." At that point, on the basis of the broad measure of unemployment known as U-6, 16 million Americans, or 9.9 percent of the workforce, were still unemployed or underemployed. After years of undershooting, core inflation was at 2 percent, but excluding housing, which was recovering from the real estate crisis, it was closer to 1 percent.

With the ECB pushing in the opposite direction, the torque applied to the U.S. economy was painful. Over the first three years of Yellen's term at the Fed, the dollar appreciated by more than 26 percent in trade-weighted terms. Manufacturing was hit hard. Large parts of the United States entered the 2016 election year in a mini-recession. In many blue-collar constituencies, plants were closing, and the outlook was dire. Sen. Bernie Sanders did not hesitate to attack Yellen in December 2015 for what he regarded as a grossly premature



Draghi speaks to the media after attending a session of the Bundestag Europe Commission in Berlin on Sept. 28, 2016. He was there seeking support from Germany for the European Central Bank's strident interventions in the European financial crisis.

tightening. In 2016, Donald Trump was poisonous, accusing the Fed of being in cahoots with Democrats. Days before the election, he rounded out his campaign with what was perhaps the most outrageously anti-Semitic attack in recent U.S. electoral history, pillorying Yellen alongside George Soros and Lloyd Blankfein of Goldman Sachs.

Yellen was chosen as Fed chair as a candidate of the liberal left. The triumph of Trump and America's radical right sealed her fate.

At first, it seemed that Europe might have dodged the populist bullet. In 2017, Macron defeated Marine Le Pen and her National Front. But in Italy, the pressure was mounting. And in 2018, the *vincolo esterno* strategy finally blew up. In the March 2018 election, the Euroskeptic Lega and the Five Star Movement split almost 70 percent of the vote between them. An intervention by Italy's grizzled president, Sergio Mattarella, was necessary to ensure that an openly anti-euro professor did not take charge of Italy's finance ministry. Europe was not an external constrainer, he emphasized, but the guarantee of Italy's future. The bond market reacted with alarm. There was talk, as in 2011, of an Italian debt death spiral.

So long as the ECB stood ready to prop up the market, Italy could limp on, but what QE did not do was revive rapid economic growth in the European economy. In 2019, Europe was once again at risk of sliding into deflation. Far from catching up, Italy was further behind than ever. Its per capita GDP in

2019 was about 3 percentage points lower than in 2000—two lost decades of growth. As Draghi pleaded for fiscal action, Berlin dug in its heels. In September 2019, in desperation, Draghi resorted to another round of QE. Once again, he earned a storm of opprobrium from Germany. It was all that Berlin could do to give him a dignified send-off from Frankfurt.

THE BASIC FRAMEWORK OF 1970S MACROECONOMICS that framed Draghi and Yellen's training and outlook, like that of the rest of their cohort, was that properly structured markets would take care of growth. Well-regulated financial systems were stable. The chief priority for economists was to educate and restrain politicians to ensure that inflation remained in check and public debts were sustainable.

In the United States, this was institutionalized in the form of an elite bargain with Republicans—or at least so the economists imagined—to jointly manage the budget, the key regulatory agencies, and the Fed. In Europe, that structure was in the process of creation. A review of Yellen's and Draghi's careers, for all their personal accomplishments, is the story of the shipwreck of those expectations.

Financial instability is a mortal risk. For now, it is being held at bay. But the world saw as recently as March 2020 how rapidly even the largest financial market—the market for U.S. Treasuries—can be destabilized. To tame that risk, the Fed and the ECB, under Yellen's and Draghi's non-economist successors—Jerome Powell and Christine Lagarde, respectively—have adopted an astonishingly undogmatic and expansive approach to stabilization.

Inflation, once considered the most serious threat, is not a realistic prospect and is one that, if it were to reemerge, can clearly be handled by the central banks. The priority instead is to restart growth and thus secure the foundation for stable democratic rule both in the United States and the weaker parts of the eurozone, of which Italy is by far the most important.

As far as Italy is concerned, the 2020 crisis has miraculously delivered the most expansive vision of accommodating political circumstances that any advocate of *vincolo esterno* could have imagined: a lifting of fiscal rules, a bond market stabilized by the ECB, an injection of capital investment and funding from the EU equivalent to 10 percent of Italy's GDP, a political mood in Germany broadly congenial to action, and a president in France who is desperate to save himself. The question now is whether Italy can recharge its growth engine. Or is it too late? Is the damage done by two decades of stagnation too deep? Are the global conditions for an export-orientated economy like Italy's simply too tough?

On the one hand, it is fitting that the task of implementing the EU's new common fund, Next Generation EU, should fall to one of the original architects of the *vincolo esterno* strategy of 1992. On the other hand, the fact that it does is also testament to the failure of that project. Draghi's personal qualities

aside, the Italian political class is abdicating in favor of a retired, unelected official in his 70s. The fact that Draghi is in power is owed to the machinations of Matteo Renzi, once seen as a young champion of the center-left, now reduced to the role of a disruptive spoiler. Matteo Salvini of the League is biding his time. The one option that Rome was not willing to consider when Conte's government fell in January was an election. The current Parliament is too afraid of the far-right Brothers of Italy party, which makes Berlusconi and Salvini seem tame.

Cleverly, Draghi has refused to make the mistake that dogged Monti's premiership. He has appointed a cabinet not of nonpolitical technicians but of representatives of the parties. They will not be allowed to excuse themselves of responsibility or snipe from the sidelines. But Draghi remains at the center. He is no caretaker like Conte, who startled Italy by developing into an effective leader. The expectations of Draghi are of a different order; he is "Super Mario." There is no escaping the fact that faced with a decisive historical challenge—restarting growth after decades of stagnation—Italy's political class has chosen to delegate executive power to someone who has never been elected to office. It is the ultimate victory of technocracy but also a do-or-die challenge. Given the self-abasement of the political class, if the combination of Draghi and Next Generation EU fails to deliver growth, what future prospects are there at all?

No one could accuse the Biden administration of being nonpolitical. The central organizing idea for both the White House and congressional Democrats is not to get caught in the logic of the Clinton and Obama administrations. The irresponsible thing to do at this juncture would be to be "responsible" on fiscal policy. Despite her track record, precisely on the issue of fiscal responsibility, Yellen was once again the candidate for treasury secretary acceptable to the left wing of the party. It helps that in 2016, even as the Fed continued to raise rates, Yellen began to advocate for a "high-pressure economy" that would deliver full employment and uplift even those at the bottom end of the U.S. labor market. The idea was a blast from the past. It was coined by Arthur Okun, a leading Yale economist in Yellen's time there in the early 1970s who, like Tobin, Yellen's doctoral supervisor, had done a stint on the Council of Economic Advisers in the '60s.

What is at stake in the giant stimulus program launched by the Biden administration is not just the social crisis left by the wreck of the U.S. labor market. In light of developments in the Republican Party, securing a liberal vision of U.S. democracy demands of the Biden administration that it not lose control of Congress. Whereas Draghi is facing the final battle for the technocratic *vincolo esterno* strategy, Yellen has cast her lot with the cause of politics.

The economics team in the Treasury and the White House continues to offer technical justifications. They insist that their calculations show that fear of overheating is overdone.

The economics team in the Treasury and the White House continues to offer technical justifications. But the stimulus push is above all the result of political calculation.

But the stimulus push is above all the result of political calculation. The ultra-fine balance in Congress means that the left as well as the center of the Democratic Party have real sway. They demand that a Democratic administration should actually deliver for the people who elected it. Any attempt at finding common ground with Republicans has been abandoned. The result is what has been called the most audacious break in U.S. policy consensus since the 1980s. It means accepting, as Krugman put it in his most recent collection of essays, that in 21st-century America, everything is political. Republicans have taken that stance since the 1990s. Now finally Democrats are catching up.

Biden's stimulus package, the American Rescue Plan, was pushed over protests from none other than Summers. The left cheered. But Summers made at least one crucial point. The plan may be a crisis response. It will no doubt give the U.S. economy a high. The question is, will it last? Certainly what no one could claim for the plan is that it offers a long-run vision. And if the truly strategic challenge facing progressive politics in the United States as in Europe is to find a new model of inclusive and environmentally sustainable economic growth, then the Biden administration has yet to deliver. Everything, in fact, hinges on a promised infrastructure program to come. That will be the real counterpart to the Next Generation EU program.

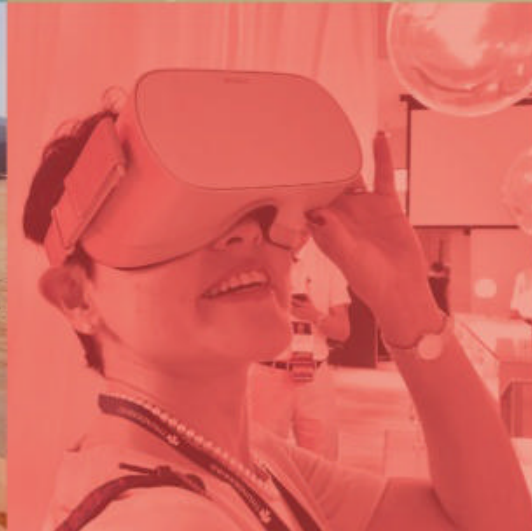
In the 1990s, you didn't need to be a naive exponent of the post-Cold War end-of-history argument to think that the direction of travel for global politics was clear. The future belonged to globalization and more-or-less regulated markets. The pace was set by the United States. That enabled technocratic governments to be organized around a division between immediate action and long-term payoff. That was the trade-off that Draghi evaluated in his MIT Ph.D. in the 1970s. The drama of Draghi and Yellen's final act is that for both of them, and not just for personal reasons, the trade-off is no longer so clear-cut. If the short-term politics fail, the long-term game may not be winnable at all. "Whatever it takes" has never meant more than it does today. ■

ADAM TOOZE is a professor of history and director of the European Institute at Columbia University, as well as a columnist at FOREIGN POLICY.

FP GUIDE



In-Demand Careers in International Affairs



GRADUATE
EDUCATION
SPRING 2021

**Virtual Job
Searches**

**In-Demand
Degrees**

**Sought-After
Skills**

Although COVID-19 closed classrooms around the world, graduate programs have rallied to offer tailored degrees, networking, and internships that prepare students for fulfilling jobs. Meanwhile, the demand for international affairs careers remains robust.

Schools moved job fairs online and worked with students over video calls. They also leveraged alumni who have global jobs to help students form professional networks.

For recruiting and hiring, employers hosted Facebook Live sessions and conducted events via YouTube live broadcast sessions.

Students have been entrepreneurial, taking advantage of virtual networking. Also, an unforeseen benefit of the pandemic is that students can accept positions around the world without moving.

This *FP Guide* demonstrates the continued relevance of international affairs graduate degrees, and it also details in-demand degrees and skills, including:

- **Technology-related degrees:** cybersecurity and internet policy
- **Other specializations:** human security (people affected by climate change, human trafficking, and conflict), global entrepreneurship, data science, and sustainable tourism
- **Sought-after skills:** the ability to write about complex issues in a concise and yet engaging manner and the ability to visualize and interpret data

Dig in and hear from leading international schools ready to prepare you for today's jobs.

Students Leverage Virtual Events, Create Professional Networks for the Future



that no in-person meetings would lead to fewer networking opportunities with prestigious alumni and other professionals who could help with their job search. To meet that need, Johns Hopkins SAIS began hosting remote networking opportunities such as virtual happy hours and online chats, to allow students and recent graduates to connect with more established alumni.

For example, the school's annual "Perfect Pitch" workshop, normally held on the school's main campus in Washington, DC, connects students with accomplished alumni working in fields including international finance, international development, national security, climate, and energy. In 2021, the workshop shifted to an online format, allowing for a record number of alumni to participate and give students valuable feedback and career advice.

During the pandemic, these connections don't depend on in-person meetings. Therefore, there are more opportunities for students to create a far-reaching professional network for the future.



"I remind them that they're the COVID-19 generation, and that itself will be a selling point as they're job searching."

—Andrew Mertha, Director of SAIS China and the George and Sadie Hyman Professor of China Studies, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University

Although the COVID-19 pandemic closed borders and classrooms around the world, upending the traditional graduate school environment, it also opened up more ways to thrive—both on campus and in the job market.

"I have been very impressed to see the way our students have shifted their approach to landing a job after graduation," says Andrew Mertha, director of SAIS China and the George and Sadie Hyman Professor of China Studies at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. "Students are entrepreneurial in their career search and are taking full advantage of virtual networking opportunities to expand their reach with employers and alumni. Fortunately, the job market continues to be robust for our graduates, which was one of the few positive surprises of this period."

Recent graduates of Johns Hopkins SAIS are seeing employment trends that are only slightly below pre-2020 levels, demonstrating the continued relevance of a graduate degree in international affairs.

"Around the world, this pandemic has shifted the way we work, but the nature of the work remains the same," Mertha says. "As we begin to imagine a post-COVID-19 vision for our future, our new normal will allow us to explore new ways to connect and conduct business."

Nearly every aspect of the student learning experience was recalibrated when courses and programming moved online last spring. One of the students' biggest concerns was

MOST IN-DEMAND JOB FUNCTIONS FOR RECENT GRADUATES*

26.6% Research

15.3% Consulting

11.2% Data analytics

**Class of 2020 recipients of MA in International Relations degree who are employed*

"I remind them that they're the COVID-19 generation, and that itself will be a selling point as they're job searching," Mertha says. "Being able to pivot from a rigorous in-person program to fully remote learning—amidst a global pandemic—illustrates that our graduates will succeed in the most challenging circumstances."

Johns Hopkins SAIS Global Careers
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Robust Alumni Network Gives Graduates a Head Start



“Our graduates have weathered this pandemic exceptionally well. Most of their skill set adapts easily to remote work, and they have been finding employment in all sectors.”

–Rae Ann Bories-Easley, Director of the Office of Career and Professional Development, Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver

The University of Denver’s Josef Korbel School of International Studies leverages its flourishing alumni network to help its students navigate job searching during COVID-19, by hosting virtual networking events and connecting students with alumni mentors.

“The silver lining of the pandemic is that we have a very active alumni group who are in jobs all over the world,” says Rae Ann Bories-Easley, director of the Office of Career and Professional Development at the Korbel School. “We have been working very closely with alumni since the pandemic started, to mentor and to help students find employment.”

In December 2020, a record number of Korbel School students participated in a virtual tour of Washington, DC, meeting 130 alumni in one week of “visits” with potential employers. The online format enabled more students and alumni to take part, and allowed students to spend more time networking.

Another unforeseen benefit of the pandemic is that students can graduate and accept competitive positions without leaving Colorado, which has freed them to expand their professional goals and connect with more potential employers.

“From research and managed projects to policy work and analysis, our students have access to unprecedented opportunities to support organizations across all sectors,” says Bories-Easley. “Even during the pandemic, all of our students are completing internships, either virtually or in person.”



Korbel School graduates accept jobs evenly across sectors, with 36 percent working for nonprofit organizations, 33 percent for private companies, 29 percent for federal or state agencies, and 2 percent for multilateral organizations (according to data averages from 2017 through 2019). Ninety-five percent of recent Korbel School graduates are employed.

A particularly bright light at the school is its MA in Global Economic Affairs, which generates competitive candidates for positions in development, security, and data analytics. The program’s robust training in data and economic analysis has helped graduates land positions at Booz Allen Hamilton, Deloitte, Robinhood, the US Agency for International Development, and research centers across the globe.

“Our graduates work on a variety of issues,” says Bories-Easley. “We’ve had students and alumni working in the private sector, performing risk analysis for companies such as Western Union, which is headquartered here in Colorado, where they might analyze the flow of money related to terrorism. We have created a pipeline of organizations like this that love our students.”

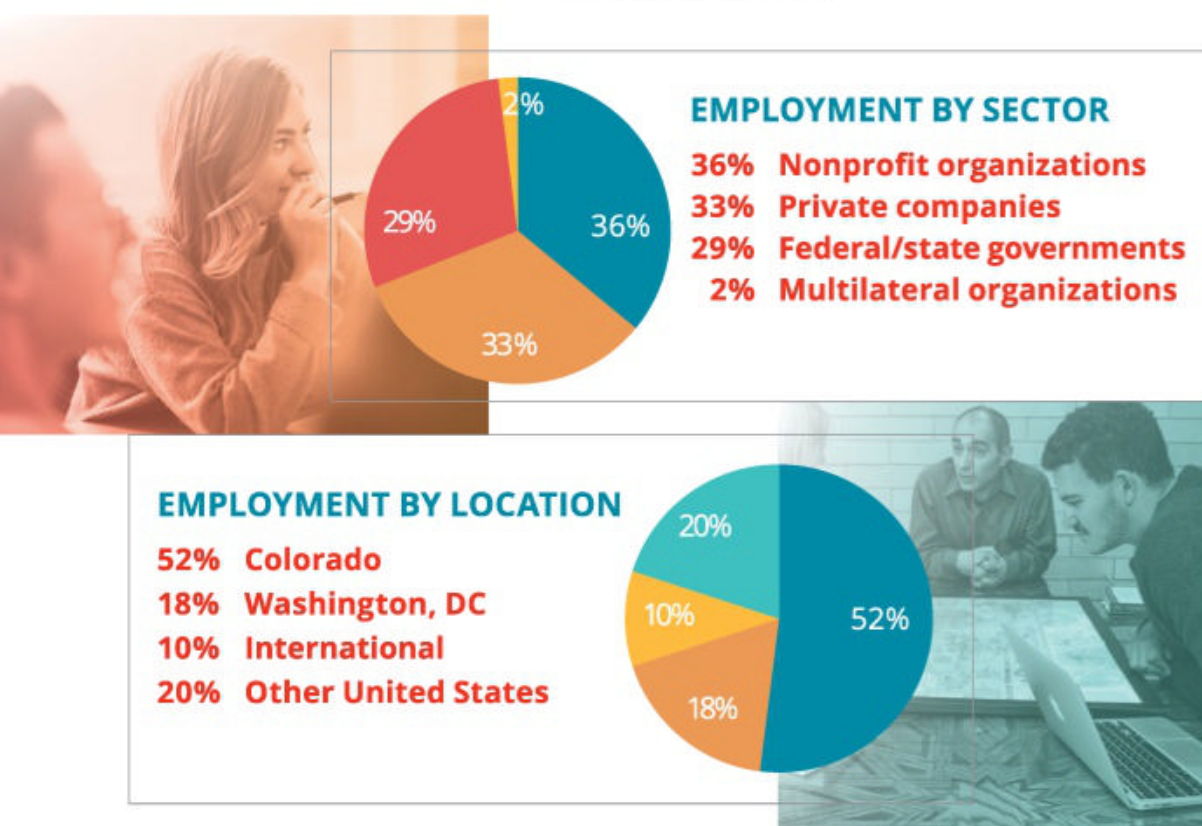
Under President Biden’s administration, Bories-Easley expects an increase in demand for jobs in the security and policy studies arenas, as much of the world turns during the pandemic to secure digital platforms for e-commerce, cloud file management, and digital internal communications.

Career Services

<https://korbel.du.edu/careers-alumni/career-services>

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Feeding a Growing Market in Technology, Cybersecurity, and Internet Policy

“Fletcher alums are comfortable walking into rooms where they have a unique set of skills and a unique expertise and then trying to find common ground and explain important concepts.”

–Josephine Wolff, Assistant Professor of Cybersecurity Policy, The Fletcher School, Tufts University



Driven by a job market hungry for expertise, the school is actively developing degree options in technology, cybersecurity, internet policy, and related fields. For example, it added an emphasis in technology and international affairs to its popular Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy program. The school also created a Master of Science in Cybersecurity and Public Policy, in collaboration with the Department of Computer

Science in the Tufts School of Engineering. The goal is to solidly ground students in technology, to create more capable policy experts.

The need for expertise in technology-related policy, from data security to internet regulation, has exploded in the last five years, as governments and multinational companies worldwide struggle to create rules for a global network that does not respect national boundaries.

To help graduates enter those markets, Fletcher is combining degree programs with an extensive alumni network (the school has more than 70 alumni clubs worldwide) and the opportunity to gain real-world experience through internships. Fletcher students normally participate in roughly 165 different internship programs in more than 50 countries. During the pandemic, the school has funded student research positions that provide new opportunities for students and faculty to collaborate. For example, Wolff had three student researchers last summer, all eager to gain experience.

“Most policy makers you interact with are not going to understand the technology,” she says. “To be effective in this space, you have to be willing to come into those rooms and explain. Fletcher alums are comfortable walking into rooms where they have a unique set of skills and a unique expertise and then trying to find common ground and explain important concepts.”

There’s a statistic cited often about The Fletcher School at Tufts University: 95 percent of Fletcher students accept a position within six months of graduating.

While COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the job market for recent graduates, Fletcher graduates are finding employment at private-sector giants, such as Facebook and Twitter. They work in influential public-sector agencies, including the US Department of State and the US Agency for International Development. Fletcher grads also go to the nonprofit world, landing coveted jobs at organizations such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

As The Fletcher School itself is quick to note, it has a global affairs degree option for almost any interest or ambition.

“It is profoundly flexible. The students have a lot of freedom to design what they want to focus on and put together a slate of courses that interests them,” says Josephine Wolff, assistant professor of cybersecurity policy.

WHERE FLETCHER GRADUATES WORK*



*2019 data

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A Journey for Students to Discover Their Ideal Job



“It’s a journey about them learning what they want to do in the world,” Ross says. “It’s very important that they do this reflection and don’t jump into a career that their undergraduate self thinks would be right.”

Because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, BSIS is seeing some shifts in employment trends for its graduates. The immediate impact is positive: Graduates don’t have to move to the location of their new employer to start a job. “That opens up considerably more opportunities,” Ross says.

However, it is uncertain whether this type of virtual arrangement will continue after the pandemic, since starting a new job involves some socialization that can be lost when it occurs virtually, Ross says.

To help its graduates find jobs during the pandemic, BSIS continues to provide internships—but virtually—with international organizations based or represented in Brussels, ranging from the Red Cross and embassies, to the European Parliament and NATO. Students also can help with the school’s European Union Rights Clinic, which offers legal advice to refugees in EU member countries.

BSIS provides its students with two types of career training. Students take specific courses to prepare for certain careers, such as in human rights or EU diplomacy. In addition, the school provides general career training in skills such as the art of networking and preparation for an interview.

For instance, BSIS traditionally hosts an annual networking event with European Parliament staff for students to learn how to get an internship and hear what the jobs are like. BSIS has continued this event in a virtual format, but hopes to return to the typical happy hour format, which is more beneficial for students, Ross says.

“These networking opportunities really are at the heart of their voyage of discovery,” he says.

Contact
www.kent.ac.uk/brussels
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“It’s very important that they do this reflection and don’t jump into a career that their undergraduate self thinks would be right.”

–Alastair Ross,
Head of Operations,
Europe, Brussels
School of
International Studies,
University of Kent

In addition to their academic coursework, students at the University of Kent’s Brussels School of International Studies (BSIS) are engaged in a more personal learning experience, to discover what they want to do professionally.

From their earliest days on campus, students are encouraged to think about their ideal job, says Alastair Ross, head of operations for Europe for the University of Kent. This process can only be done effectively when the students are actively studying the issues involved and beginning to understand the nuances of the possible options.

An analogy, Ross says, is a person standing on the bank of a river, looking at logs go by. If the person does not jump in and hop from log to log, they will miss opportunities.

JOBS BY SECTOR FOR RECENT GRADUATES*



*2015–2020

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“They can tailor their program to their passion and to where the [job] market is. What they get from Thunderbird is a digital global mindset and a really strong understanding of these new technologies.”

–Sanjeev Khagram, CEO, Director General, and Dean, Thunderbird School of Global Management, Arizona State University

Even pre-pandemic, the world’s digital transformation made traditional MBA programs too generic to train the types of employees that companies needed, so the Thunderbird School of Global Management at Arizona State University pivoted.

A new Master of Global Management offers core classes such as accounting (but with insight into blockchain) and also allows students to pick one or two specialties to build deep expertise. The choices: global entrepreneurship, data science, sustainable tourism, and more. Some of the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)–oriented concentrations also qualify international students to work in the United States for an extra two years.

“They can tailor their program to their passion and to where the [job] market is,” says Sanjeev Khagram, CEO, director general, and dean of Thunderbird. “What they get from Thunderbird is a digital global mindset and a really strong understanding of these new technologies.”

Thunderbird graduates do well in the marketplace because of their training, a requirement that each student speak two languages, and a 94 percent rate of serving in internships, which often lead to permanent jobs. Students also participate in a Global Challenge Lab—a six-credit group consulting project with a faculty supervisor at clients such as Smucker’s and the Los Angeles city government. Instead of traveling to clients around the world, the program was virtual last summer because of the pandemic.

Thunderbird was set up for remote classes even before the pandemic, which eased the transition, Khagram says. Those classes and the virtual lab mean “employers know [students] can live, work, and be resilient in a digital, remote world professionally.” As consulting has boomed because companies are struggling during the pandemic, the lab also has been a training ground for consulting careers.

EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR,* 2019–2020 GRADUATES



*Accounts for two-thirds of graduates

CROSS SECTION OF EMPLOYERS, 2019–2020 GRADUATES

- Amazon.com
- Deloitte
- Honeywell International
- Stellantis
- UNICEF
- US Department of State

Thunderbird’s digital focus is appealing both to employers in traditional companies, which have learned from the pandemic about the need for digital-savvy workers, and to tech companies themselves, where there are many jobs. “Companies are looking for future-ready skill sets. We now call it present-ready,” Khagram says.

The school also has stepped up its connections between students and alumni, with an app/platform to connect them. “Every student gets an alumni mentor in their field,” notes Khagram. Students also can post résumés and videos in a digital book that is available to alumni.

Some popular domestic locations for graduates are New York, Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and fast-growing Phoenix. Top foreign landing spots include China, Mexico, India, and Nigeria.

“Our students have a range of opportunities in terms of sector, industries, and region of the world,” Khagram says.

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“ This program is unique in equipping modern diplomats with **21st-century skill sets** and policy tools that balance strategic thinking with agility. ”

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Tunisia



“ The **professors are super helpful** and worry about your learning process. They are open and request constructive feedback on how they can improve the student experience. ”

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Career Opportunities in International Security Stay Strong During Pandemic



“The International Security program at the Schar School prepares students to handle enduring and emerging challenges—a skill set that has never been more in demand.”



–Ellen Laipson, Director, Master’s in International Security program, Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University

More than a year into the pandemic, the career trajectory for students in George Mason University’s Schar School of Policy and Government remains solid. While many industries have been hard-hit, the skills that students are acquiring in the Schar School are still in high demand.

“Our students graduate with a wide range of cross-disciplinary knowledge as well as training in leadership skills. They know how to assess an issue and adapt to new challenges. If anything, the pandemic has only highlighted the need for employees with this kind of background,” says Ellen Laipson, director of the school’s Master’s in International Security program and the Center for Security Policy Studies.

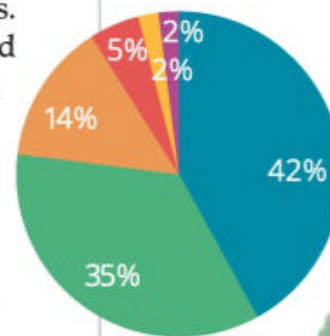
Though many traditional recruiting and hiring practices have been disrupted, employers now host Facebook Live sessions and conduct recruiting events via YouTube live broadcast sessions, according to Duane Bradshaw, director of the school’s career development office. While in-person events are not an option, the Schar School has hosted virtual job fairs and worked with students one-on-one over video calls to prepare them for the challenges of today’s job search.

“With the change in administration, there may be a replenishment of the State Department or other federal agencies. Trends in employment will be affected, and we are making sure our students are positioned for success,” says Laipson, who previously served as vice chair of the National Intelligence Council.

Many graduates who earned an MA in International Security work for the US federal government, including the departments of Homeland Security, Treasury, and Energy; and agencies such as the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI). Others work as staff members for representatives in Congress. International Security graduates also are employed in the private sector, sometimes for federal government consultants such as Booz Allen Hamilton, SAIC, and Lockheed Martin.

While the Master’s in International Security program works well for someone just starting their career, more than half of the students in the program already hold jobs in the national security field. Many students take Schar School classes part-time—working around their full-time jobs—to help advance their career. The program also serves as a powerful career network within security fields that otherwise may be difficult to break into.

JOBS FOR MASTER’S IN INTERNATIONAL SECURITY PROGRAM GRADUATES*



- 42% Private sector, government contractors**
- 35% Federal government**
- 14% Private sector, general****
- 5% Nonprofit/Nongovernmental organizations**
- 2% State governments**
- 2% Multilateral/International organizations**

*Graduates 2016–2019
**Not government contractors



Students often select the Schar School because they want to learn from faculty who are internationally recognized for their work in Washington, DC, including former directors of the CIA, FBI, and NSA and senior White House advisers, as well as other renowned experts in security-related fields.

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New Washington, DC, Teaching Site Supports Mission of Public Service



Even before the building renovations were finished, the new site hosted Poland's ambassador to the United States.

"We want to be a place where we have those discussions, in the right forum," Silveria says. "We're not about an agenda."

The Washington, DC, teaching site began with a dozen students, all mid-career professionals studying to earn a Master of International Policy degree, which can take just one year if students attend full-time, although most take classes on a part-time basis. Mid-career professionals are a key market for the school, which is appealing to professionals because of its emphasis on public service and its affordable tuition.

Many Bush School students look to a graduate degree as a gateway to their next position or as a way to switch industries. Silveria says the academic offerings for the Washington, DC, location will expand to include degrees in national security and intelligence, two areas with a great need for well-educated professionals.

"The job market continues to grow and to build," Silveria says. "But people are looking for quality. People who stretch themselves with a degree will make themselves much more qualified."



"If someone wants to make a difference and have an impact, the Bush School in DC puts you on that path."

—Jay Silveria, Executive Director, Washington, DC, Teaching Site, Bush School of Government & Public Service, Texas A&M University

A job in the federal government is the choice of more than 40 percent of graduates of the Bush School of Government & Public Service who earn a Master of International Affairs degree.

So, it made sense when the school opened a Washington, DC, teaching site in January, renovating 50,000 square feet of a building two blocks from the White House.

"We are literally and figuratively trying to be in the middle of government and public service," says Jay Silveria, executive director of the Bush School's new teaching site. "If someone wants to make a difference, wants to have an impact, this is a path to make a difference."

The Bush School was founded on Texas A&M University's College Station, Texas, campus by the late President George H.W. Bush in 1997, shortly after he left office. Texas A&M also hosts the George Bush Presidential Library and the George Bush Foundation.

In its almost 25 years of operation, the Bush School's connection to the former president and his legacy has been a major attraction for students, Silveria says. For example, Jeb Bush, the president's son and a former governor of Florida, taught a 10-day course on the role of governors.

Silveria, a retired Air Force lieutenant general and former superintendent of the Air Force Academy, says the Washington, DC, teaching site intends to invite many voices from government and industry to speak about international policy.

SELECTED EMPLOYERS, 2021 INTERNATIONAL POLICY STUDENTS

Nonprofit organizations

Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, The German Marshall Fund

Public sector

Defense Intelligence Agency, Department of Homeland Security, District of Columbia Air National Guard

Private sector consulting firms

Booz Allen Hamilton, Leidos

Contact

<https://bush.tamu.edu>
BushSchoolDC@tamu.edu
202-773-0022



Texas A&M Plants Flag in Washington, DC

Texas A&M University has opened a new teaching site in Washington, DC featuring The Bush School of Government and Public Service, a graduate program founded by the nation's 41st president. The Bush School welcomed the first cohort for the Master of International Policy in January 2021.

The DC Teaching site is a state-of-the-art facility located in downtown DC within several blocks of the White House and other key government buildings.

ACADEMIC FOCUS

The Master of International Policy (MIP) degree aims to strengthen students' ability to understand complex issues through rigorous coursework. Well-published scholars and seasoned practitioners from federal agencies lead in-depth classroom discussions, collaborate on research, and mentor students in and out of the classroom. The program seeks to expand students' worldview and prepare them to advance their careers in international affairs.

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- Designed to meet the practical interests of those seeking employment and advancement in the fields of international affairs, international security, and intelligence track
- National Security and Diplomacy



"The Master of International Policy degree allows me to continue my education while furthering my career prospects."

—**Erika**, Department of Homeland Security



"I chose the Texas A&M Bush School in DC for my master's degree because I wanted a high-quality education while advancing my career in the nation's capital."

—**Ryan**, Booz Allen Hamilton



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Students Find Their Niche Exploring Diverse Pathways to Public Service

“Students have the flexibility to gain learning and practice experiences that prepare them for career opportunities, from local governments and community-based organizations to federal agencies and global NGOs.”



–Carissa Schively Slotterback, Dean, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Pittsburgh



In the changing world of public service—where local governments are addressing problems such as climate change, and the United Nations and other multilateral organizations are tackling issues related to urbanization—students at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA) learn that there are many ways to serve the public good.

While the US Department of State and CIA employ many of GSPIA’s graduates, others find equally meaningful work in a range of sectors, for example, working to improve the lives of recently resettled refugee and immigrant families at a Pittsburgh-based nonprofit, or spearheading clean energy programs for the Asian Development Bank in the Philippines.

“We focus on revealing the diverse pathways to public service,” says Carissa Schively Slotterback, dean of GSPIA.

Each fall semester, GSPIA students have access to the school’s Global Security and Development Program at its Pitt Washington Center in

Washington, DC. For the spring semester, the Pitt Washington Center focuses on lobbying, advocacy, and public diplomacy. While taking courses, most students also work at an internship and connect with alumni based in the capital region. During spring break, GSPIA hosts a career fair at the center that includes site visits to potential employers, panel discussions, and networking opportunities—normally in person, but virtual during the pandemic.

GSPIA’s alumni base of more than 6,500 in more than 130 countries is an asset in generating internship opportunities and facilitating professional networking. “Zoom has made it easier to connect our students with alumni and other change makers. We will carry this kind of engagement forward as we transition out of the COVID-19 pandemic,” Slotterback says. “We’re really intentional about engaging alumni. It’s inspiring to hear them reflect on their time at GSPIA and how it has shaped where they are now.”

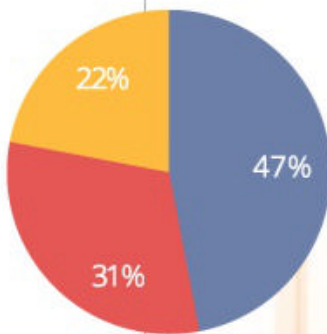
GSPIA students have held internships at the US Department of Treasury, FBI, and World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh. Of its 2019 graduating class, 96 percent were employed or pursuing further study within one year after graduation.



As one of a few graduate schools worldwide offering a concentration in Human Security, GSPIA draws students who want to work on issues involving the security of civilian and vulnerable populations affected by disasters, climate change, human trafficking, and conflict. Program graduates have been hired by the United Nations Development Programme, the US Government Accountability Office, and Global Links Pittsburgh.

Meanwhile, graduates of GSPIA’s popular Security and Intelligence Studies concentration have landed jobs with the National Cyber-Forensics and Training Alliance, BNY Mellon, and the US Department of Commerce.

SAMPLE EMPLOYERS BY SECTOR, 2019 GRADUATES



- 47% Nonprofit/Nongovernmental organizations**
The Forbes Funds, Pew Research Center, The Task Force for Global Health
- 31% Public sector***
US Department of State, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- 22% Private sector**
Deloitte, ACA Compliance Group, JPMorgan Chase

*Includes multinational organizations



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Graduates Skilled in Data Analysis, Communication Poised for International Careers



“The highest-priority skill graduates need is the ability to write on complex issues in a short, concise, and yet engaging manner.”



—Paul Winters, Keough-Hesburgh Professor of Global Affairs, Keough School of Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame

Working at the United Nations gives one a critical perspective on the international system. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic overran the globe, Paul Winters witnessed how health could be affected by a range of factors—from climate change to wealth inequality and from agriculture to nutrition. This complexity and interconnectivity of today’s global system creates challenges to achieving global objectives, he says, but it also offers new opportunities for graduates of international affairs.

“Nearly every aspect of the global development field now integrates technology and data in some way,” Winters says. Now, with an increased availability of data and a focus on gathering and using that information, students who can interpret, visualize, and communicate complex data will be more competitive in the field of international affairs. “The demand for these skills is greater than the number of professionals who have them,” he says.

Winters recently left his position at the UN’s International Fund for Agricultural Development to join the University of Notre Dame’s Keough School of Global Affairs, where he is the Keough-Hesburgh Professor of Global Affairs and director of the school’s sustainable development concentration in the Master of Global Affairs program.

Educators must respond to several current trends in international development, Winters says. “The highest-priority skill graduates need is the ability to write on complex issues in a short,

concise, and yet engaging manner,” he says. “Even with the overwhelming issues facing the world, everyone wants their content to be distilled down to brief or a tweet—something that can be posted on social media or published in policy documents that are no more than five pages.”

The second-greatest need is the ability to visualize and interpret data. “Because so much of the work in international development and in humanitarian interventions is project-based, there is a need to be able to monitor and assess the impact of a project,” Winters says.

To help students be competitive in international affairs, the Keough School provides “a global curriculum for the 21st century.” This includes courses on quantitative analysis, visualizing data, Information Communications Technology for Development (ICT4D), and policy writing. The school also hosts skills-based policy labs where students get intensive, hands-on experience in topics such as big data, machine learning, and artificial intelligence.

To apply these skills in real time, the school’s Integration Lab partners students with global organizations to solve real-world problems. In doing so, students develop sought-after “soft skills,” such as leadership, design thinking, and problem solving.

SELECTED EMPLOYERS, 2019–2020 MASTER OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS GRADUATES

Chemonics International
Migration Policy Institute
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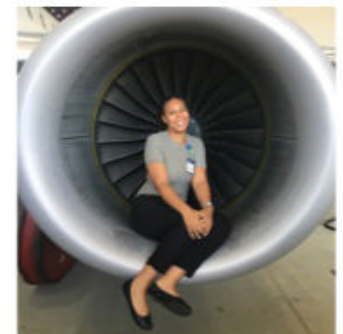
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See these schools and more at <https://fpguide.foreignpolicy.com/2021-career>



University of Pittsburgh, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs

Cover photos:

Top row left: George Mason University, Schar School of Policy and Government

Top row right: University of Notre Dame, Keough School of Global Affairs

Middle row left: Tufts University, The Fletcher School

Middle row right: University of Notre Dame, Keough School of Global Affairs

Lower row left to right: University of Pittsburgh, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs; Arizona State University, Thunderbird School of Global Management

Lower row right: Texas A&M University, The Bush School of Government & Public Service; University of Denver, Josef Korbel School of International Studies

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REVIEW

The Anthropocene Is Overrated

The way we talk about climate change and our effect on the planet is all wrong—and increasingly dangerous.

By David Sepkoski



A large, bold, black letter 'W' is positioned at the top left of the page. The letter is composed of thick, solid black strokes. The top horizontal bars are connected to the vertical stems, and the bottom point is sharp. The overall style is minimalist and graphic.

elcome to the age of humans—the Anthropocene. Scientists, academics, public intellectuals, and policymakers have been using this term to describe a new geological epoch marking an unprecedented era of human impact on the natural environment. Beginning with the Industrial Revolution in the late 18th century, carrying through the development and testing of nuclear weapons, and peaking in recent decades with rapid global warming and the catastrophic depletion of the Earth’s biodiversity, the Anthropocene is often framed as an existential threat to the survival of the human species. Like some of the great environmental catastrophes of the past—such as the mass extinction that wiped out the dinosaurs 65 million years ago—the footprint of human activity will be present in the geological record for millions of years to come. Or so the reasoning goes.

There is every reason to be alarmed about anthropogenic climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss, all of which have been accelerating in recent decades and do pose existential threats. Warming trends could cause the collapse of Arctic and Antarctic ice sheets that would dramatically increase sea levels by dozens of feet by the end of this century. If that happens, say goodbye to New York City, San Francisco, Seattle, Mumbai, London, Istanbul, Dubai, St. Petersburg, Mumbai, and Beijing, to name just some of the most populous cities that would be drowned. Left unchecked, climate change would also involve ocean acidification (as the oceans absorb atmospheric carbon), terrible droughts and heat waves (with equatorial regions reaching unlivable temperatures for much of the year), air pollution at unbreathable levels in many major cities, and mass extinctions of plants and animals at levels not seen since some of the greatest geological catastrophes in the

Earth’s history—perhaps as severe as the “great dying” at the end of the Permian period some 250 million years ago, when as many as 96 percent of all living species may have died out. The resulting Earth from this catastrophe may become devoid not only of humans but perhaps of most complex life on land and in the seas.

Scientists have been aware of these threats for decades, but it is only recently that we’ve begun to talk about human damage to the Earth as a potential geological transformation. In the early 2000s, the Nobel Prize-winning atmospheric chemist Paul Crutzen proposed formally amending the established geological timescale to acknowledge the irreversible changes that humans had wrought. These changes, Crutzen and others have argued, will be permanently recorded in the layers of the Earth: a spike in radioactivity from atomic testing, human-made microfossils of plastic and other industrial compounds that will take millions of years to decompose, and of course drastic changes to the composition of life.

The Anthropocene is a somewhat controversial notion in geology. Crutzen’s proposal has been taken up by various professional bodies responsible for ratifying changes to the geological timescale, including the International Commission on Stratigraphy and the International Union of Geological Sciences, although no formal action has yet been taken.

As a matter of dating and stratigraphic nomenclature, this question can and will be decided on empirical grounds. But over the past decade, the Anthropocene has taken on a much broader cultural significance: Championed by observers in fields including climate science, history, and the arts, it now signifies not just a proposal about how we date the Earth’s history but an existential crisis for late modern human society and a diagnosis of its failures. As Crutzen and collaborators argued in an influential 2007 article, the Anthropocene embodies the recognition of a “profound shift in the relationship between humans and the rest of nature,” in which “[h]umankind will remain a major geological force for many millennia, maybe millions of years, to come.” In this perspective, the Anthropocene is not merely a proposal for renaming a geological epoch but a new state of awareness about the permanence of human intervention in the natural world. It crystallizes a host of new and preexisting anxieties and ambitions relating to climate change, biodiversity preservation, geoengineering, biotechnology, human population expansion, environmental and economic justice, and the future of humankind on, or even beyond, the planet Earth.

The Anthropocene’s relevance as a cultural touchstone is indisputable. Its usefulness as a guide for how to act and feel at a time of crisis is another matter. The Anthropocene concept is part of a long history in the West of projecting current anxieties onto imagined catastrophic futures. For nearly 2,000 years, the apocalyptic theology of the Book of

Revelation has influenced Western Christian theology and culture. More recently—since the later 19th century—European and American societies have experienced waves of catastrophic thinking connected to, successively, the collapse of imperial economic systems, anxieties about globalization, the specter of nuclear war, environmental degradation, and, most recently, global warming and a biodiversity crisis poised to produce a sixth mass extinction.

Thinking catastrophically can have real value if it encourages people and policymakers to address problems of momentous import. Heightened levels of anxiety about nuclear proliferation—captured by Carl Sagan’s famous “nuclear winter” hypothesis—contributed directly to major reductions in the world’s nuclear arsenals in the 1980s and 1990s. The rallying cry presented in Rachel Carson’s 1962 bestseller, *Silent Spring*, helped curb the use of industrial pesticides and raised awareness about environmental threats posed by pollution. More recent calls to action about global warming (such as Davis Guggenheim and Al Gore’s 2006 documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*) and biodiversity conservation (E.O. Wilson’s 1992 book, *The Diversity of Life*, or Elizabeth Kolbert’s *The Sixth Extinction*) have undoubtedly raised consciousness of these issues and have had positive effects on the policies of many governments around the world.

But what do we do when the scope of the crisis is presented as so permanent, all-encompassing, and perhaps unavoidable that it will be written into the very strata of the Earth? It’s not an idle concern to wonder whether the rhetoric around the Anthropocene is so extreme, so dispiriting, and so fatalistic that it could simply paralyze us. That has certainly been the case with some recent and notable responses: In 2015, the literary scholar Roy Scranton published a book with the cheery title *Learning to Die in the Anthropocene: Reflections on the End of a Civilization*, while David Wallace-Wells’s 2019 book, *The Uninhabitable Earth*, documents a litany of catastrophes terrifying, and paralyzing, to contemplate. And these are just two of the more prominent and popular accounts of the consequences of the Anthropocene.

I’m not for a moment questioning either the reality of the crisis these authors describe or the sincerity of their responses. But it’s fair to wonder whether the way the Anthropocene has come to dominate Westerners’ imagination of the future is even accurate or helpful.

Isn’t it a little grandiose to project ourselves onto geological history in the way that the Anthropocene supposes?

AT A VERY BASIC LEVEL, THE IDEA OF NAMING A GEOLOGIC EPOCH after our own species deserves more scrutiny than it has received. Geologists normally recognize geological changes after the fact, rather than in advance. The science of stratigraphy (as the study of the Earth’s layers is known) essentially breaks the geological record up into a series of roughly equal units of time that are demarcated by observable changes in the composition of rock layers, called signals, and the distinctive types of plant and animal fossils that characterize particular layers.

It turns out that a number of these stratigraphic breaks that distinguish one period from another—we can look to the famous boundary at the Cretaceous and Paleogene periods, when the dinosaurs died out—do correspond to major environmental upheavals or mass extinctions. In the case of the Cretaceous-Paleogene boundary, one of the most significant signals is an anomalous layer of the element iridium, which is quite rare on Earth but common elsewhere in the solar system. The discovery of this layer in the 1980s led scientists to propose (and eventually confirm) the hypothesis that a collision with a massive asteroid triggered a massive calamity that blanketed the Earth in dust and ash for more than a year, wiping out not only the dinosaurs but a host of other species on land and in the seas. More recent research has detected the signal of the wildfires and volcanic eruptions that contributed to this extinction, and it’s not unreasonable to expect that future geologists (perhaps sentient cockroaches or extraterrestrial visitors?) might detect a similar signature from our own era. But whether or not that’s the case, it will be the job of other, far-future observers to document this.

In a more basic sense, isn’t it a little grandiose to project ourselves onto geological history in the way that the Anthropocene supposes? The human species has been around for a little over 100,000 years (or a few million years if you count our direct hominid ancestors) and only dominant on a global scale during the last few thousand. That’s a vanishingly small percentage of the 4.5 billion years that the Earth has been around or even the roughly 3.5 billion years during which life has existed. The typical species longevity in the fossil record is about a million years, so we’re still well short of—and quite possibly will not achieve—even an average duration. In contrast, the dinosaurs (of course a group, not a single species) dominated for some 165 million years, and the humble cockroaches have been around for a staggering 280 million years.

Beyond that, both the formal geological proposal and some of the more superheated cultural discussions of the Anthropocene seem more than a little anthropocentric. Even if the worst does come to pass and we wipe ourselves out through our actions (combined with inaction), I’m not convinced that the Earth will remember us much at all. One thing that paleontologists who have studied earlier eras of environmental crisis have discovered is that the Earth and its inhabitants

tend to rebound fairly quickly: Even the great extinction event at the end of Permian period saw a fairly rapid return of life's diversity, and of course the Cretaceous-Paleogene event that ushered out the dinosaurs simultaneously ushered in our distant mammalian ancestors. Mass extinctions, it turns out, can actually be a source of new evolutionary pathways and greater levels of species diversity.

In many cultural discussions of the Anthropocene, it's often argued, as justification for the label, that no species has ever had such a profound impact on the Earth as a whole. That's simply not true. Photosynthesizing cyanobacteria some 2.4 billion years ago produced perhaps the greatest environmental revolution in the Earth's history, when in a relatively short period they drastically reduced atmospheric and marine carbon dioxide and dramatically increased levels of oxygen in what is known as the Great Oxygenation Event. This set the stage for the evolution of all complex life. Nothing we could possibly do as a species will ever rival that, but the humble blue-green algae still don't have an epoch named after them.

There's also a certain conflation of victimhood and hubris in some of the Anthropocene rhetoric. Anthropogenic climate change and mass extinctions are often compared to the impersonal geological triggers, like asteroids or volcanoes, of past crises. At the same time, we like to compare our fate to those of long-dead prehistoric groups. Which is it—are we the asteroid or the dinosaur? As it turns out, the dinosaurs did nothing to deserve their fate; they simply had the misfortune to have a giant rock fall on their heads, rendering their environment inhospitable to millions of years of natural selection and adaptation. Humans, on the other hand, have been making a concerted effort to transform their own environment, and on some level, proponents of the Anthropocene seem to want to give them credit for that.

One could reasonably argue that despite their relatively short presence, humans have had an outsized impact, and that's certainly true. But the Anthropocene concept also reflects the tendency for humans to put their names on everything they touch: from prehistoric megaliths to sports stadiums to office towers. It may be appropriate to memorialize our impact with a geological epoch, or it may not be, but it's hard to see what the rush is to do so. As the evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould put it in a 1990 essay, from a geologist's perspective “our planet will take good care of itself and let time clear the impact of any human malfeasance.”

THE TERM ANTHROPOCENE IS DERIVED FROM THE GREEK WORD for human, *anthropos*. The cultural concept, accordingly, addresses humanity as a whole, both in assigning blame for the coming catastrophe and in imagining solutions (or the lack thereof). The implication is that people, as a whole, are a problem.

Proponents of this view argue with some justification that whatever their source, the technological innovations that have produced major changes to the Earth's climate and environment—carbon dioxide emissions, industrial pollution, artificial radioactivity, deforestation, etc.—have been global in their impact. That is certainly true. But it's also worth asking whether the responsibility for these consequences—and, perhaps more importantly, the agency in responding to them—is distributed fairly in Anthropocene commentaries.

China and India, for example, are among the leaders in global carbon dioxide production (No. 1 and 3 respectively, sandwiching the United States at No. 2). But Europe and the United States have been releasing carbon into the atmosphere for much longer and have reaped industrialization's social, political, and economic benefits for two centuries. Is it fair for Western observers to demand the same level of accountability from developing economies in the global south?

Moreover, as a number of recent critics have noted, the Anthropocene is tied very closely to a specific form of economic and industrial development—to capitalism, in other words. For that reason, some authors have suggested replacing “Anthropocene” with “Capitalocene,” or even “Plantationocene,” to acknowledge the roles that Western economic development and, in particular, the system of industrialized agriculture that has dominated since the late 18th century have had on climate and environmental change.

There are very good arguments in favor of naming and shaming the real perpetrators responsible for initiating these trends, but these alternative proposals have problems as well. In the first place, if what we're really describing is a recent historical trend in economic policy and industrial technology, this starts to sound less and less like a genuine geological epoch. One of the signature features of the Anthropocene is its insistence on merging the scales of human and natural history and forcing humans to think about their role as agents in shaping their natural environment (something biologists call “niche construction” when discussing nonhuman species). Taken at face value, the Anthropocene involves humans, but it also involves a wide array of nonhuman actors and agents as well: the crops that make up today's agricultural monocultures, the cows and pigs that produce atmospheric methane

The Anthropocene concept reflects the tendency for humans to want to put their names on everything they touch: from prehistoric megaliths to sports stadiums to office towers.



A mountain of tires in the Spanish countryside near Madrid on Sept. 24, 2014. A signature of the Anthropocene is its insistence on forcing humans to think about their role in shaping the natural environment.

and other pollutants, the toxic cyanobacteria that thrive in acidifying oceans. These agents know nothing of capitalism or plantations or even of humans themselves in some cases.

On the human front, one can have real concerns about whether proposed solutions to climate and environmental crisis take into account issues of global social justice, self-determination, and agency. I am adamantly not arguing that unchecked economic development should take precedence to combating climate change, but we should be worried about who stands to benefit—and lose—in various solutions that have been proposed.

Among those authors who have been most fatalistic about the Anthropocene, pessimistic scenarios seem to apply equally to everyone, everywhere. But as any resident of Mumbai or São Paulo will tell you, conditions are already catastrophic, with dangerous levels of air pollution and extreme heat. Among the areas projected to suffer most from rise in sea level by 2050, the vast majority are in the global south. Sure, New York and London and Amsterdam are also threatened, but they are part of societies with vastly greater economic and political resources. For residents of the global north, the effects of climate change have been—and will likely continue to be—more incremental. As the Anthropocene critic Jedediah Purdy puts it, “For all the talk of crisis that swirls around the Anthropocene, it is unlikely that a changing Earth will feel catastrophic or apocalyptic. ... Indeed, the Anthropocene will be like today, only more so.” The sense of urgency, then, for immediate solutions to these problems is hardly distributed equally among those likely to be affected.

This concern applies to potential solutions as well. A variety of proposals have been floated, ranging from fairly uncontroversial steps like carbon neutrality and green architecture to the more fantastical, including broad geoengineering initiatives like carbon sequestration and giant orbital mirrors to block sunlight—and even colonies on Mars or elsewhere to escape this planet. These proposals raise the obvious concern about unintended consequences: We simply have no

idea what cascading environmental effects such interventions may have, nor have most of these technologies even been invented. They also carry the hubristic sentiments present in the initial Anthropocene proposal (Crutzen and other central proponents have advocated these steps from the start) to a potentially frightening level. Blithely arguing that what technology has broken can be fixed by more technology seems dangerously oblivious to what got us into this mess in the first place.

And such steps simply underscore the inequalities that are already growing exponentially today. The vast sums of money and resources required to carry out these fanciful initiatives are clearly possible only for the richest and most developed economies—those societies that have already benefited from decades and centuries of unchecked industrialization, by the way. What guarantee do we have that those societies that pay for these solutions wouldn’t expect to benefit most from them or be particularly concerned about collateral damage to the economies and environments of societies that can’t? Again, Purdy sounds a necessary warning here, predicting that the “disasters of the Anthropocene in our near future will seem to confirm the rich countries’ resilience, flexibility, entrepreneurial capacity, and that everlasting mark of being touched by the gods, good luck, [while] amplifying existing inequality.”

To be clear, global society does face potentially catastrophic risks from anthropogenic climate change and other threats. We must act to address these problems, and we must act now. We must focus on the parts of the globe where human suffering is already extreme. But however you look at it—as a geological proposal, as a cultural touchstone, or as a set of policy solutions—the Anthropocene is overrated. It may even be dangerous. ■

DAVID SEPKOSKI is a professor of history at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This article is adapted from his most recent book, *Catastrophic Thinking: Extinction and the Value of Diversity From Darwin to the Anthropocene*.

WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER

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European business schools enter an era of reinvention

The continent’s top management educators usher in new models of education for leadership that will meet the needs of all stakeholders in the post-COVID world

The seismic impact of COVID-19 has catalyzed many of us to take action to change our futures. As an illustration, Europe’s business schools saw a 24% increase in applications last year, according to the Graduate Management Admission Council, with experts predicting 2021 will see even stronger competition to secure places at the most admired institutions.

At the same time, those top schools and universities are re-shaping the future of management education to meet the substantially different needs that global students, businesses and society will have in the post-COVID era.

“In an increasingly complex and globalized environment, the rapid disruption caused by the pandemic prepared the ground for a new mandate for management schools,” explains Eric Cornuel, president at EFMD Global, the leading accreditation body for business schools and their programs. As well as operating EQUIS, the gold standard in management education certification, EFMD acts as a network for many of the trailblazing institutions that have reimaged their offerings.

Highlighting some of the transformations being made to educational models, Cornuel stresses that the virtual systems so widely adopted during 2020 will continue to play a key role going forward. “The rising popularity and legitimacy of online learning will be increasingly recognized by employ-



Eric Cornuel
President, EFMD Global

ers. There is also a proliferating trend toward blended online and in-person learning.”

The World Economic Forum calculates that, as technology revolutionizes the know-how businesses require, a staggering 50% of the world’s workforce needs reskilling by 2025. Coupled with extending human lifespans, that’s moving education toward a life-long-learning paradigm, he says. “The relentless speed of digital innovation means people will constantly have to reskill and upskill to keep pace. One consequence will be the rising importance of executive education, short courses and micro-degrees.”

Another result of this shift is that leading business schools are adopting greater personalization of learning experiences, with faculty adding the role of coach to that of teacher. “It’s essential that



Employers are recognizing the rising legitimacy of online and blended learning

students are not only given opportunities to learn throughout their lives but that they are also accompanied and mentored throughout their careers,” he asserts.

Perhaps the most radical disruption in management education, however, is what is being taught. “For far too long, the corporate world has focused on shareholder returns,” Cornuel claims. “Monetizing a business is essential, but the current generation of students is looking to

sustainable mindset in students, and I’m pleased to say that EFMD and its network of schools and universities are strong advocates of the social and environmental imperatives that should accompany business practices. This is also critical for the reorientation of research in management: we need research that is relevant for all society’s stakeholders,” he says.

Today, there are thousands of business education providers around the world offering courses

“The rapid disruption caused by the pandemic prepared the ground for a new mandate for management schools.”

Eric Cornuel, President, EFMD Global

work in companies or set up businesses that combine profit with purpose.” Responsible educators have run with this trend, pivoting from a shareholder-value to a stakeholder-value attitude to management.

“I’m convinced that if we continue to follow the shareholder approach, many societies might implode. Educators must instill a

that Cornuel politely describes as “very variable in quality.” On the following pages, we spotlight a selection of the highest-ranked European schools and universities that are spearheading management education’s reinvention to help students, executives, corporations and other stakeholders find the institution that will take their future in the right direction.

Prisma Reports wishes to thank its esteemed partners for their contribution to this project:



Innovative educators inspire novel ways of thinking

Business schools and universities are adopting new practices and technologies to further cement their position as generators and incubators of creative and entrepreneurial ideas

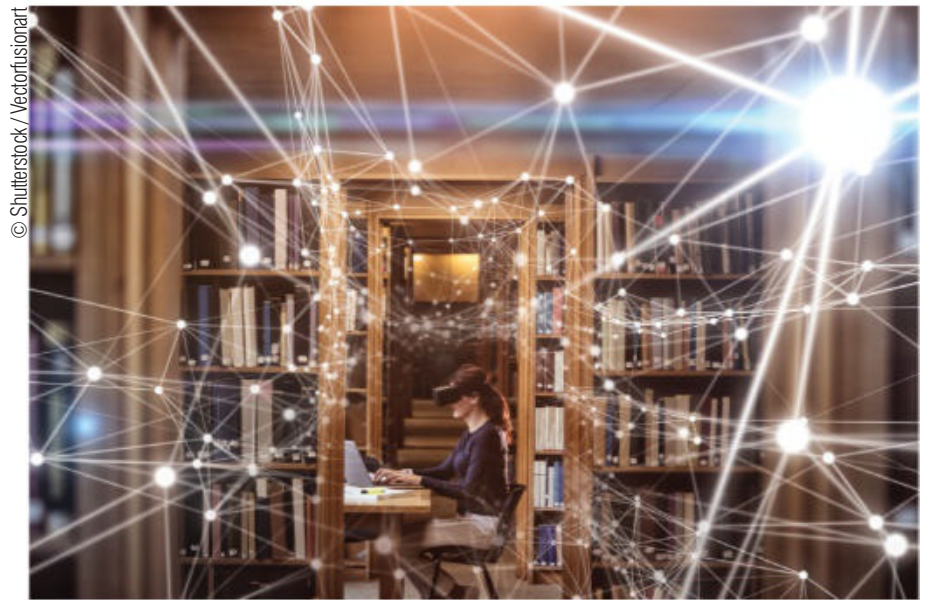
Europe's top management schools are at the cutting-edge of not only incubating the next generation of entrepreneurial innovators, but also of innovation in educational practices. Take, for example, Italy's Bologna Business School (BBS), part of the University of Bologna, which is developing a virtual-reality-based program to support interaction during COVID-related lockdowns with Ferrari, one of many industry champions the school specializes in partnering.

"Students are the epicenter of our strategy and action. Our mission is to provide opportunities for them to better learn," explains Dean and CEO Massimo Bergami.

BBS's approach to encouraging innovation is interdisciplinary. "We are very good at bringing together different people and experiences, not just in classrooms, but in companies as well," he says, noting that, "Serendipity can be used as a driver and method for innovation."

One illustration of BBS's rich entrepreneurial ecosystem is its powerful IDEA platform, states Bergami, "Through that, we created a number of programs and initiatives that include incubators, business plan competitions and collaborative projects with international institutions."

Rector Grzegorz Mazurek of



Business schools are at the forefront of developing new technologies for education

Kozminski University also believes that to inspire innovation, you have to be innovative: "Innovation means change, change means attitude and attitude comes from example." The young institution Mazurek oversees epitomizes this, he says, having swiftly become the premier business educator in Central and Eastern Europe "through ambition, vision, drive and energy, which stems from the entrepreneurial spirit of the Polish people."

That energy is characteristic of not just Poland but the entire region, which shares a common history and resurgence after the communist era."

Kozminski plays a big part in Poland's thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem, partnering and supporting many of the dynamic companies that have become international names, while also forming strategic international alliances with other leading management educators,

A continuous tradition of excellence, innovation and impact through research

HEC Lausanne takes an analytical approach to the future of management and economics

Widely recognized as one of the world's leading management and economics schools due to the excellent quality and impact of its education and research, Switzerland's HEC Lausanne at the University of Lausanne has been at the forefront of training for executives and future business leaders for over 100 years.

"One thing that makes HEC Lausanne unique is that quantitative methods are a large part of the school's DNA: the first economist at the university was Léon Walras, the father of mathematical economics," says Dean Jean-Philippe Bonardi: "Thanks to this long tradition, our pro-

fessors and students have a very strong position in quantitative analysis. Our school has also become very strong in business model innovation and other technologies. This has a significant impact on how we grasp the future and the evolution of the digital economy."

The growing use of data in modern economies is reflected in HEC Lausanne's courses that are regularly realigned with cur-



Jean-Philippe Bonardi
Dean, HEC Lausanne

rent and future market needs. In our Master of Finance, for example, students can study skills such as financial entrepreneurship, business analytics, fintech and big data, as well as issues related to sustainability. Over 50% of those students and 80% of their highly qualified professors come from outside Switzerland.

In addition, 350 researchers are based at HEC Lausanne's modern campus on the stunning shores of Lake Geneva: a strong indication of the importance the school puts on innovation. That focus produces results: for instance, HEC Lausanne was the birthplace of the Business Model Canvas concept that currently drives global thinking on business model innovation.

Last year, in association with the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) and École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), the school launched Enterprise for Society (E4S), a major new center for interdisciplinary education and research that strives for innovation for future economic paradigms.

"New technologies establish the possibility of creating a new economic model and the challenge is to make sure this model delivers as much as it can regarding social and environmental issues. What HEC Lausanne is trying to do is train future leaders who will be able to think that way," explains Bonardi.

One thing that makes HEC Lausanne unique is that quantitative methods are a large part of the school's DNA."

Jean-Philippe Bonardi, Dean, HEC Lausanne



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Europe’s best schools have built strong communities that encourage innovation

such as ESCP Business School. By leveraging its entrepreneurial flair and networks, “We aren’t just providing education, we are providing development and changing mindsets,” Mazurek stresses.

Another institution defined by its entrepreneurial character is Germany’s WHU – Otto Beisheim School of Management. “We have a strong community spirit and a vibrant ecosystem that values inclusion, equality and di-

versity. But WHU’s unique value proposition is that some of our graduates have gone on to found flourishing companies,” says Dean Markus Rudolf modestly. In fact, there are only a handful of other schools around the globe whose alumni have created as many companies worth over \$1 billion.

At the heart of the school’s support for students and businesses aiming to establish their own unicorn, as well as those that want to

innovate in a corporate setting, is the WHU Entrepreneurship Center. “Faculty hired at this center receive significant amounts of investment, allowing us to teach and do research in these fields — we have perhaps the most publications in the field of entrepreneurship,” Rudolf states.

that will inspire innovations and invite everyone to collaborate, co-create, and challenge each other. It will be an incubator for new ideas, for students, faculty, alumni and corporations that will create genuine inter-generational exchange and be a real learning hotspot.”

Students are the epicenter of our strategy and action. Our mission is to provide opportunities for them to better learn.”

Massimo Bergami, Dean and CEO, Bologna Business School

The center also hosts numerous activities, including IdeaLab!, which may be the continent’s largest event for startups and gives some of them the opportunity to pitch to top-level investors, and the WHU Incubator that supports aspiring entrepreneurs from first idea to first external financing.

An incubator of a different sort is in the final phase of construction in Switzerland: the University of St. Gallen Learning Centre, a state-of-the-art building for learning in the digital era. According to President Bernhard Ehrenzeller: “We are looking forward to a space

Every discipline requires the cultivation of a different understanding of innovation, Ehrenzeller holds, “Irrespective of field, however, our research and teaching is directed toward cultivating an innovative mindset.” The University of St. Gallen’s success in this is proved by a thriving startup scene that is supported by its Global Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. Now, by combining its new learning center with the skills of its dedicated Teaching Innovation Lab, the forward-focused educator is developing its own prototype: University 4.0.

Digital learning, sustainability and the integration of technology

Bernhard Ehrenzeller, President of the University of St. Gallen, introduces one of Europe’s top business schools

In the Swiss Alps near Zurich, the University of St. Gallen has been a center for academic success since 1898. Steeped in tradition, St. Gallen’s entrepreneurial spirit has set it on a path for integrating traditional learning and the digital world, while connecting people on campus. Its new learning center will prepare students for a world where industry-specific knowledge interfaces with digital learning. It will experiment with the notion of learning itself, developing innovative formats and challenging how information is presented.

St. Gallen was the first Swiss university to acquire a NVIDIA

DGX-2 supercomputer, and its new computer science school offers courses in disciplines like artificial intelligence, machine learning and cybersecurity. Other new programs include a medical master’s in cooperation with the University of Zurich that will provide business, management and leadership courses to medical students.

Sustainability is also part of University of St. Gallen’s DNA. According to the Financial Times (FT) it is a top-three European business school in sustainability, while its Institute for the Economy and the Environment ensures St. Gallen sets an example in its



The new St. Gallen Learning Center is expected to open in 2022

teaching and the implementation of environmentally conscious changes.

University of St. Gallen’s annual Impact Awards recognize scholarship with a profound societal effect. Subjects awarded include a St. Gallen study on the effects of oil spills on neo-natal deaths that caused a media frenzy forcing the Nigerian government to change behavior, business models for the circular economy and a blockchain-based insurance structure.

In the FT’s European Business

School Ranking 2020, St. Gallen ranked seventh and its Strategy in International Management program has been recognized as the best global program ten years in a row, while the expanding Executive School is first in German-speaking Europe. With the St. Gallen Learning Center, the blueprints for its move toward digital learning, sustainability and the integration of technology will continue to be developed as it advances toward new methods of learning.

St. Gallen’s entrepreneurial spirit has set it on a path for integrating traditional learning and the digital world.”

Bernhard Ehrenzeller, President, University of St. Gallen

The European approach to management

A pan-European school that stands for academic excellence and singularity, creativity and pluralism

With six campuses in Madrid, Turin, Warsaw, Berlin, London and Paris, multi-accredited ESCP is the continent's oldest business school and the only one that is truly pan-European. "We are a leader in the sector because we know how to mix cultural pluralism and interdisciplinarity to help students develop a better understanding of global issues," says Frank Bournois, the school's dean and executive president.

"Our mission is to educate students with a European approach, in which business, society and politics are intertwined, which essentially is what foreign policy is about, and we teach unique programs in intercultural management." Providing a full portfolio of programs — including bachelors, master's, MBAs, PhDs and executive education — to participants from 120 countries, ESCP utilizes a specific 'PHYGITAL' model for its teaching, so that all students engage in both face-to-face and online education.



Frank Bournois
Dean and Executive President
ESCP Business School

alliances, ESCP has an impressive international footprint and continues to meet its vision of educating the world's future leaders with skills they will need.

According to Bournois: "A very important topic at the moment is environmental societal governance. Students want more than just lessons and talks about sustainability. This is why we have

We know how to mix cultural pluralism and interdisciplinarity to help students develop a better understanding of global issues."

Frank Bournois, Dean and Executive President, ESCP Business School

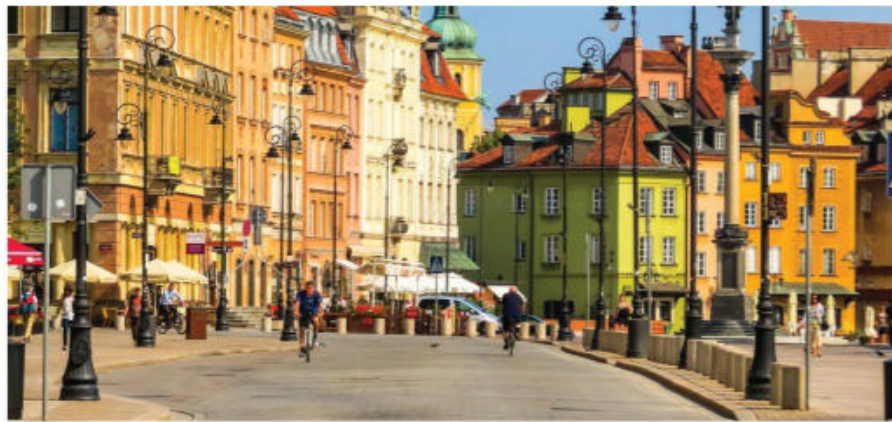
"We have encouraged and fostered digital transformation, and invested a lot in our 'PHYGITAL' factory, which supports our faculty to create digital modules for companies and digital education. However, we don't believe in an entirely digital offer for education in management. Our goal is a minimum of 20% digital classes and a minimum of 40% physical classes. They go together and physical education remains one of the key values of learning on our campuses," Bournois states.

Sustainability is fundamental

Through its network of 65,000 alumni in over 150 countries plus worldwide academic and research

an associate dean for sustainability and the circular economy. Sustainability is not just a course or an elective, it covers anything we teach. It's fundamental that we train future leaders for these challenges. We train them alongside companies, for example, we have a special chair in the circular economy working with Deloitte and other advisory firms."

In this, as in all its activities, the school shows the values behind its name, he states: "ESCP stands for academic excellence and singularity: meaning students must learn physically and digitally; creativity: as the school has always created; and pluralism: meaning the variety of the European community."



The city of Warsaw is at the heart of Poland's thriving and dynamic economy

Putting entrepreneurial Poland on the business school map

Established just 28 years ago in the Polish capital Warsaw, Kozminski University has become the leading business school in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), as well as a regional hub for entrepreneurship and innovation

"Kozminski University is a gateway to understanding the robust energy of Poland's people and entrepreneurial economy," explains Rector Grzegorz Mazurek. "We are a new school for a new world — new, because we develop to constantly change as reality changes."

For students, Kozminski becomes a partner for lifelong development. Its study programs cover a wide range of degree, post-graduate and executive education offerings, with highly ranked examples that include masters' in finance and management, plus bachelor and/or master's degrees in management and artificial intelligence (AI), digital marketing and management in virtual environments.

Meanwhile, Kozminski's research specializations cover topics like AI in management, finance, digital transformation and smart cities. "Our research focuses on truly impactful and socially important issues. It receives high recognition in top-ranked outlets and is widely promoted in mass media," Mazurek asserts.

Strategically partnered with some of the other best schools in Europe and worldwide, internationalization is core to Kozminski's identity. As are environmental issues and social responsibility: it is the first Polish school to implement United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, for instance.



Grzegorz Mazurek
Rector, Kozminski University

According to Mazurek, "COVID proved solidarity works, with the Kozminski community helping companies, hospitals and elderly people, and supporting students through rapid digital change."

He sees the school as a hub creating value through intensive collaborations. For example, a program in management and AI has partners like Microsoft and Oracle, while a master's in big data science is built with Accenture, Goldman Sachs, Discovery, AWS and others. Overall, he notes: "Kozminski answers what it means to be entrepreneurial: to create something real out of dreams and a well-prepared strategy. It also gives you answers as to what is unique about CEE and why so many see great prospects in the region."

Europe nurtures responsible leaders for a new economy

Higher education has a critical role to play in laying the foundations for ethical and responsible leadership

“It’s our responsibility to ensure students are prepared to face challenges related to social development and sustainability. They are tomorrow’s decision makers,” says Dean Christophe Germain of top-tier Audencia, reflecting the opinion of Europe’s best management educators. Originated in the French city of Nantes, Audencia’s overarching objective is to create a better school for a better world. “As part of this, we’ve launched Gaïa, Europe’s first School of Ecological and Social Transition, where all students and executive education participants will follow courses and work on projects for partner companies,” he states.

EADA Business School Barce-

lead and help others develop their skills. Last year, for example, we created the BBS React initiative for students and alumni aiming to help companies in trouble because of the pandemic.”

For Italy’s Luiss Business School, “Ethics, responsibility and sustainability are entrepreneurial and managerial skills,” says Dean Paolo Boccardelli. “Our Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability Hub, now CeSID, develops those aspects. Additionally, we have a research center for sustainability and the circular economy that works extensively with companies in energy, manufacturing and services.”

Students at pan-European ESCP Business School have also

Business schools have to be the facilitators of a world that needs to be reinvented.”

Jordi Díaz, Dean, EADA Business School Barcelona

lona’s Dean Jordi Díaz agrees that “Business schools have to be the facilitators of a world that needs to be reinvented. We were pioneers in this with the first master’s degree in sustainable business and innovation. We see need from young people wanting to change the world and senior leaders switching to a new mindset.” EADA has important alliances in sustainability and social responsibility, he reveals. “We collaborate with BCorp, the movement for certifications that consider sustainable impact, and Ashoka, the organization for social entrepreneurship. Schools need to be open to cooperate beyond traditional boundaries.”

Diversified collaboration is also the approach of Bologna Business School (BBS), which is building a center for management education on sustainability and climate change with its partners. Dean and CEO Massimo Bergami comments: “BBS’s ‘Live, Learn, Lead’ motto sums it up. Our professors and students share the mission to

been working closely with companies on environmental societal governance issues since it established a chair for circular economy and sustainable business models with Deloitte in 2018. “This is a subject of vital importance,” according to Dean and Executive President Frank Bournois.

Dean Jean-Philippe Bonardi of Switzerland’s HEC Lausanne is another who believes introducing courses is great, but not enough. “We need to go further, imagine what the economy might become, and how it might be more sustainable and inclusive,” he says. To do this, HEC Lausanne, the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) and École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) have established the Enterprise for Society (E4S) center. This offers joint education programs, is a competence center and a collaborative network. “E4S’s purpose is to think together about the future of the economy in an interdisciplinary way,” he notes.



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Tomorrow’s decision makers will face increasingly complex challenges

As economic models advance with respect to issues like climate change, natural resources, digitalization, inequality, ethics and promoting global stakeholder value, the knowledge and skills a responsible leader needs are also constantly evolving. Ranked in the Financial Times top-10 European institutions for research publications related to responsibility and sustainability, and tasked with the specific mission of training responsible managers and entrepreneurs, triple-crowned ESSCA School of Management is one educator at the forefront of defining the capabilities tomorrow’s leaders will require and equipping them for the challenges they will face.

including those of steward, citizen, servant, visionary, architect, agent of change, coach and storyteller.

To foster multicultural dimensions in leadership, “All our master’s students spend at least one year abroad during their education,” states Dean and CEO Jean Charroin. ESSCA’s global footprint overall is substantial and it currently operates eight medium-sized campuses in France, Hungary and China. “This enables us to be close to entrepreneurial ecosystems and local communities. It’s also important to be close to top-level academic environments. We are very open to working with other institutions; schools of design, politics and engineering,

I want to see the extent to which we can make a contribution to a more balanced world.”

Jean Charroin, Dean and CEO, ESSCA School of Management

Founded in 1909 in Angers in western France to put the values of humanism at the center of economic activity, the theme of responsible leadership links all of ESSCA’s academic and professional management programs as well as its research. It believes that to create truly responsible leaders, business education must go beyond the literal tying together of leadership and corporate social responsibility theories.

Instead, it must take a holistic approach to the relationship between leaders and all stakeholders in their activities, as well as the various roles of responsible leaders,

for example. A large part of the solutions for a more sustainable world will come from interdisciplinary approaches,” he says.

He gives the following illustration: “We are changing the curriculum of our Masters in Management to include more math, coding and data sciences. We want alumni who can address the complexity of the world and the growing importance of new technologies.” In ten years’ time, he hopes those alumni look back with pride at the education they received at ESSCA, “I want to see the extent to which we can make a contribution to a more balanced world.”

An atmosphere that attracts entrepreneurs

Germany's leading business and management school has a remarkable track record in nurturing startups to success

Over the last 35 years, four unicorns and over 500 startups have been created by students and alumni of Germany's foremost business and management education provider: WHU – Otto Beisheim School of Management.

"We've created an atmosphere that attracts these kinds of people. We look for excellence in everything we do, while our core values lean toward an entrepreneurial spirit, community focus and 'cosmopolitanism,' which represents inclusion, gender equality and international diversity," explains Dean Markus Rudolf.

With campuses in Vallendar in the Rhine Valley and the vibrant city of Dusseldorf, WHU addresses its entrepreneurial mindset to all its academic programs, executive education and research. Its study programs run from bachelor degrees to MBAs and executive MBAs, with the latest addition being a pioneering Global Online MBA for executives.

Unlike some other schools, WHU has seen significantly more student applications since the



Markus Rudolf
Dean, WHU – Otto Beisheim
School of Management

value, is not the right way. We have systematically incorporated sustainability and ethics into all our programs and implemented three new chairs in those areas," he states.

Internationalization is a further huge advantage. Outside current COVID restrictions, its MBA involves multi-continent travel and is ranked third in the world for international focus by the Financial Times, for example. "We have a

We want to continue being perceived as a hub for entrepreneurs: it's the strength of WHU."

Markus Rudolf, Dean, WHU – Otto Beisheim School of Management

emergence of COVID. Much of this is due to selectivity toward high-quality hybrid and digital learning experiences, Rudolf believes: "Being more agile than others was a true asset. We implemented digital teaching immediately." Since then, WHU has invested well over €1 million to equip classrooms for hybrid teaching, and set up a TV and video studio with high-definition cameras, a center of digitalization and 12 digitalized lecture rooms.

Its approach to sustainability and social responsibility is another draw. "Teaching the way we used to, the neoclassical approach oriented toward shareholder

very high percentage of international students across our programs. We attract students from all over the world and believe we can achieve a higher level of performance through diversity," asserts Rudolf.

The WHU Entrepreneurship Center acts as a central platform to support budding entrepreneurs, linking activities such as well funded and highly published research, the WHU Incubator and events like IdeaLab!, probably Europe's biggest founders' conference. "We want to continue being perceived as a hub for entrepreneurs: it's the strength of WHU," says Rudolf.

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Virtual delivery allows global participation in education programs

Frameworks for executive development on a global scale

While the size of their physical geographical footprint might vary, Europe's premier executive educators all have substantial and influential international networks

One way the best business and executive education institutions can differ from each other is in their attitude to internationalization. Hult Ashridge Executive Education, for example, defines itself as "British, global and, even with Brexit, very European," says Dean Dina Dommert. Based near London, Hult Ashridge is the result of a 2015 alliance between Ashridge Business School and Hult International Business School.

"We have campuses in Ashridge, Boston, San Francisco, London, Dubai, Shanghai and New York, and a uniquely international student, faculty and staff community. It's deliberate that we should be global, not only in terms of campus, but in how we design our degrees, open and custom programs," she explains.

Hult Ashridge does well in rankings because it offers customized executive education that is personalized and facilitative, Dommert states: "We tackle problems together with our clients and all our faculty have real-world experience." Prior to joining Hult Ashridge, Dommert worked at the renowned Saïd Business School at the University of Oxford. Her boss there, Dean Peter Tufano, agrees

that a grounding in practice is key to educating executives: "They have little tolerance for theory that is not applicable."

During the COVID crisis, Hult Ashridge's emphasis on human resources, capability, support and development has never been more relevant. "Fortunately, we have strengths in virtual delivery and provide limitless learning for global students and participants, she says. Challenges for global educators are issues relating to equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging, she cautions: "If all you do is enrol students from around the world with no regard for their different perspectives, that's a failing."

Audencia's largest campus is in Nantes, France, but it's another school with a physical international presence, with three campuses in China and one soon to open in São Paulo. "We collaborate with local institutions abroad because we consider that a more effective way to understand the local ecosystem. We are proceeding the same way in Africa, where we have launched Executive MBAs in Senegal and Morocco," reveals Dean Christophe Germain, adding that innovative executive education is a crucial part of Audencia's portfolio.



© Shutterstock / Halpoint

Physical campuses enable tight bonds with local ecosystems to be formed

Internationalization in education is far from being a modern construct, according to Dean and CEO Massimo Bergami of Bologna Business School (BBS), part of the world’s oldest university: the Alma Mater Studiorum or University of Bologna. “It was created in 1088 by students from all over Europe and the history of the university is very connected to the concept of a boundaryless international community of scholars. This is our heritage as BBS: interdisciplinarity, autonomy, an international mindset, strong integration with the world of practice.”

Bergami believes that a unique strength of the school is its community that includes numerous industrial partners and a large network of international alumni, many of whom have taken advan-

Rome, Milan and Belluno, as well as Amsterdam in the Netherlands. We want to drive our investments in such a way that we are close to those local communities with two pivotal words: global perspective and creative leadership.”

ESCP Business School maintains that, as a world without geographical or cultural borders will almost certainly never exist, leaders need to be trained to be able to bridge the borders they might face. As a result, the institution ranked seventh worldwide for executive education by the Financial Times has fostered a multicultural, interdisciplinary and open approach that embraces pluralism at its campuses in Spain, Italy, Poland, Germany, England and France.

“We also work with many remarkable people around Europe

“If all you do is enrol students from around the world with no regard for their different perspectives, that’s a failing.”

Dina Dommett, Dean, Hult Ashridge Executive Education

tage of BBS’s executive programs. He highlights a Global MBA, which focuses on “Italian leading industries rather than functions, in order to be as close as possible to the world of practice.”

Another Italian institution, Luiss Business School, also combines an international viewpoint with strong local links. “We call our approach ‘glocalization’,” says Dean Paolo Boccardelli, adding that it’s a concept related to the fact that globalization is changing and regionalism is growing. “We think that leadership must take into account a global perspective and be able to balance, understand and adapt to the real local needs of communities. We have operations in

and on other continents. In Asia, we work with important institutions, including the China European and International Business School. In North America, we are very connected with Cornell University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Texas at Austin. We want to work with people that share common values with us and where students can experience fulfilling exchanges,” Dean and Executive President Frank Bournois clarifies.

Summing up ESCP’s internationalization model, Bournois says: “In Europe, we are at home and we run our own campuses. On other continents, we have the best partnerships.”

Adaptive, boundless and lifelong learning strategy

Close corporate partnerships help to create better leaders for a better world

Founded in Rome in 1966 with the task of educating leaders for Italy and for serving a larger community, Luiss Business School (businessschool.luiss.it/en/) takes an authentic and personal approach to creating “better leaders for a better world” that is grounded on an adaptive, boundless and lifelong learning strategy.

Today, the school’s offering goes far beyond business: it generates processes of transformation, encouraging an attitude of change so that its students become leaders who help the development of the business community in a sustainable way.

“We have always worked closely with our stakeholders, as a member of a community: not just in the academic environment but also the corporate sector, steering in an effective way to educate leaders for their needs and society,” says Dean Paolo Boccardelli.

Luiss Business School’s mission is to be very close to its external partners, mainly corporations, in order to help them to grow, transform and catch up with the challenges of our time, such as exponential changes in technology.

“We are looking at the digital transformation as a key feature of change in our business and society as a whole. We are already, in terms of artificial intelligence,



Paolo Boccardelli
Dean, Luiss Business School

the business schools have the great responsibility to educate the ruling class of a challenging future. Our students should be able to bring to the community not only their technical skills and disciplinary competences, but also their sheer will to become an active player in innovating within society,” Boccardelli states.

Driven by data

“One of the new characteristics of the school’s business model is the adoption of a data-driven approach that matches the profile of each student with the opportunity and expectation that they may have in their future development,” he reveals.

“We need to create a pattern where students can bring their strengths and talents against the opportunities that the job

“We are looking at the digital transformation as a key feature of change in our business and society as a whole.”

Paolo Boccardelli, Dean, Luiss Business School

within a transforming business model. Luiss Business School’s modus operandi has constantly progressed over the years to meet the emergence of new goals in our market.

“In this extremely complicated and fast-changing scenario,

market would provide. It’s not easy but, with the assistance of customization of learning journey, a micro-learning approach and innovative technologies, it’s achievable. Students will need to understand their potential development in that direction.”



The Trailblazers

How three women broke into the uber-macho world of war reporting. *By Janine di Giovanni*

In 2003, the director Barbara Kopple set out to make a documentary about the work of five female reporters in Iraq. In *Bearing Witness*, Kopple—best known for her Oscar-winning portrayal of a grueling coal miners’ strike in Appalachia—turned her camera on the work of women reporting war. She showed the sexism and grittiness but also women struggling with personal travails and demons—alcoholism, loneliness, and, in my case as one of the women, combining motherhood with war.

Kopple wanted to portray women deeply committed to their job—truth-telling under the most hostile circumstances—while trying to be taken seriously in an uber-macho world.

Reading Elizabeth Becker’s new book, *You Don’t Belong Here: How Three Women Rewrote the Story of War*, I realize how little changed in terms of infiltrating an old boys’ club between Vietnam in the 1960s and ’70s, when Becker’s book is set, and Iraq three decades later. Even today—despite massive changes in technology and the way the press covers war—all of the hallmarks of clubby sexism and bias remain.

In Becker's compelling book, three extraordinary women—Catherine Leroy, Frances “Frankie” FitzGerald, and Kate Webb—arrive in Vietnam at the height of the war to try to depict the conflict in unique ways. Each is determined to make her mark and to make the war her own. Each becomes captivated by the country, drawn in deeply, and committed to the people and culture. They are equally appalled by the horror of the atrocities and intent on bringing to light the murky U.S. foreign policy in the region.

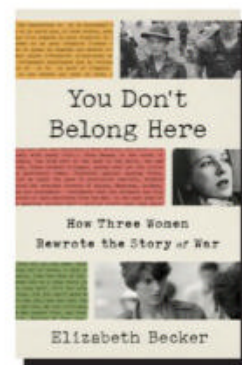
Leroy—angry, fierce, driven—takes enormous personal risk to shoot intense, close photographs that highlight the raw emotion of war: the fear, the mud, the boredom, and the chaos. What she suffers—the isolation, the sneers at her physical appearance after spending grueling days working in the field, and the hard battle she fought just to be accredited as a press photographer by the U.S. military—is infuriating. Her sheer courage and plucky determination to keep going despite getting little support and camaraderie make her the most compelling, if self-destructive, figure in the book.

Webb also exemplifies courage. She insisted on going down roads and into the field even when it was far too dangerous and ended up getting captured by the North Vietnamese. Her death was widely reported. Her family mourned her and began preparation for memorial services. Yet several weeks later, Webb marched out of a field, stricken with malaria, half-dead, but alive enough to recount the story of her capture.

FitzGerald, a beautiful debutante from a wealthy family, cast a unique light by portraying the war from all three sides—U.S., South Vietnamese, and North Vietnamese—and winning respect from her colleagues. Her groundbreaking history of Vietnam, *Fire in the Lake*, is still regarded as one of the most profound and comprehensive studies of the war. (In 1980, she also became one of the first women to join the editorial board of *FOREIGN POLICY*.)

But all of them were derided at the time. Becker told me that she took the title of her book from a remark made to Leroy by a male French photographer, who later apologized to her for the statement. Sir Don McCullin, the much-lauded English photographer, echoed what these women had to endure in an essentially hostile male-dominated environment while working under conditions of great duress: “[Leroy] did not want to be a woman amongst men but a man amongst men. Why would a woman want to be amongst the blood and carnage?” For McCullin to say this shows how tough the three women's jobs were and how determined they were to stick it out for so long.

The three women Becker chose to tell the story of the war couldn't have been more different. Leroy was tiny and French, feisty and gutsy, a master parachutist, and a loner. She loved fashion. “[S]he had become Saigon's Twiggy,” Becker writes. Leroy was as free with her sexuality as most of the men were—but she was a woman and got labeled with the sobriquet “slut,”



*You Don't Belong Here:
How Three Women Rewrote
the Story of War*

ELIZABETH BECKER, PUBLICAFFAIRS,
320 PP., \$28, FEBRUARY 2021

Facing page, from left: Frances FitzGerald on May 1, 1973; Kate Webb in 1968; and Catherine Leroy about to jump with the 173rd Airborne during Operation Junction City in South Vietnam on Feb. 22, 1967.

Becker told me. But Leroy was also headstrong, devoted to getting the photograph, and willing to push past any man to get the shot she needed—hence, annoying the hell out of them. Decades later, my comrades in the field—female photographers and camerawomen—suffered the same fate.

Leroy also unabashedly spoke her mind, an attribute that did not hold her dear to the mostly male press corps. In one particularly cringeworthy scene, Becker describes a furious Leroy, beautifully dressed, strutting on stage to accept a coveted award in New York City. But when she reaches the stage, she begins lambasting her bosses and her colleagues to the horror of the audience. In another time, one would applaud her: You go, girl! But in the era that she lived and worked in, she was shunned and avoided. After Vietnam, she paused her career for a while before going on to do some of her best work in the civil war in Lebanon.

Webb came from Australia with a dark, traumatic past and a determination to succeed. Quiet, shy, but steadfast, she endured untold humiliation as a reporter in a man's world—and had to closet her femininity in order to be taken seriously. She became a hard-drinking, chain-smoking, skilled reporter and trusted colleague. She rose to run the UPI bureau in Phnom Penh, Cambodia—unheard of for a woman.

“Webb hated being called a girl reporter,” Becker writes. “[S]he felt it was a way to dismiss her accomplishments.” Yet she was a woman, with a woman's needs and wants often pushed to the side to accommodate a toughness she was forced to uphold.

FitzGerald was perhaps the luckiest of the lot. Her patriotic ancestry included a father who was a CIA supremo and a

mother who was a socialite lover of Adlai Stevenson and who later became the U.S. representative to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (mainly because of her connections to the Kennedy clan). FitzGerald's father gave her a check for \$100,000, close to \$1 million in today's money, when she graduated from Radcliffe College, which allowed her to live well in Saigon on a freelance income. She never had to sleep in cheap hotels as Webb or Leroy did or fight to get paid properly.

FitzGerald had a golden address book, and on landing in Saigon, she immediately entered a relationship with Ward Just, one of the most respected male reporters in the press corps. The association protected her from gossip and gave her an instant social life. She later had a romance with Kevin Buckley, a Yale University graduate and *Newsweek* correspondent who helped her establish her credibility as a reporter.

FitzGerald's Saigon was not a tough ascent like Webb's or Leroy's. When she fell ill, her overbearing mother flew in and whisked her off to private hospitals and linen sheets in Singapore. When she wanted a break from war, she flew to a distant cousin's lush castle in Ireland. When she wanted to publish her essays, the *New Yorker* and the *Atlantic* opened their doors to her.

Still, despite her lofty credentials, education, and hard work and research, FitzGerald was still not taken seriously until she published *Fire in the Lake*. She still had to struggle to be recognized as one of the few journalists to report the war from all three sides. Her commitment to the country was established. As Becker told me: "She was the only debutante reporting from Vietnam! She didn't have to be there."

What Becker really wanted to achieve with *You Don't Belong Here* was a book about Vietnam told through the eyes of three women who loved the country. "I wanted to write a book about Vietnam that was readable," she told me. "Narrative journalism—literary journalism that you could read [in order to] understand the Vietnam War through the eyes of these women."

Becker finishes the book with her own story of how she came to work in Cambodia as a journalist and fell under the spell of Indochina, writing extraordinary dispatches from the Khmer Rouge era. When Becker meets Webb for the first time in the Hong Kong airport—Becker is arriving in Asia and Webb is departing—Webb asks her why she left her safe home in Seattle to cover a war. Becker pauses and replies that Cambodia is integral to her studies—but in reality, she is more intrigued by the escalation of the U.S. bombing campaign and the legacy of the women, such as FitzGerald and Webb, who worked in Vietnam before her.

Becker's book does an excellent job of bringing back what my colleague in Bosnia, the *New York Times* reporter John F. Burns, once nostalgically called "that time, that place, of war." She writes beautifully of the heartache the women suffer,



Photos by Leroy of a U.S. soldier and a Vietnamese civilian (top) during the Vietnam War circa 1967 and a U.S. soldier in South Vietnam circa 1968.

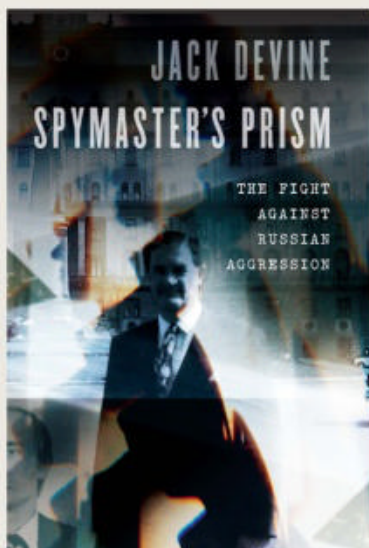
their struggles to be taken seriously, the guffaws, the catcalls, the daily small humiliations that amounted to the French photographer's fierce indictment: You don't belong here.

But they did belong. And the proof is their legacy. *Fire in the Lake* stands next to the greatest historical records of the Vietnam War. Leroy's startling images of wounded Marines being carried by their comrades are some of the best photographs of the war; her "Corpsman in Anguish" is iconic. And Webb, much to the annoyance of her male colleagues, will always be remembered as the first wire reporter to reach the U.S. Embassy in Saigon during the 1968 Tet Offensive, hiding behind a wall, taking notes, and beating them to the scoop. Interestingly enough, none of the three women had children, and only FitzGerald married—and not until the age of 50. Leroy and Webb died too soon and tragically. But all of them are legends.

When I first went to cover the war in Bosnia in 1992, the last of the Vietnam press corps were still alive and still working. The stories they told over late-night whiskey and cigarettes with shelling and sniper fire in the background were often of these remarkable women whose work superseded the heavy obstacles they faced. ■

JANINE DI GIOVANNI is a senior fellow at Yale University's Jackson Institute for Global Affairs and a columnist at FOREIGN POLICY.

World of Books

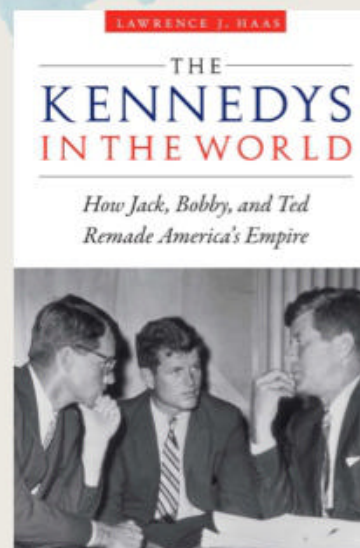


Spymaster's Prism: The Fight Against Russian Aggression

Jack Devine, Potomac Books

"A splendid intelligence perspective on thug Putin's determination to get even with us for the Russian loss of the Cold War. . . . Only the naïve and inept will fail to heed this message."

— Tom Twetten, former CIA deputy director of operations

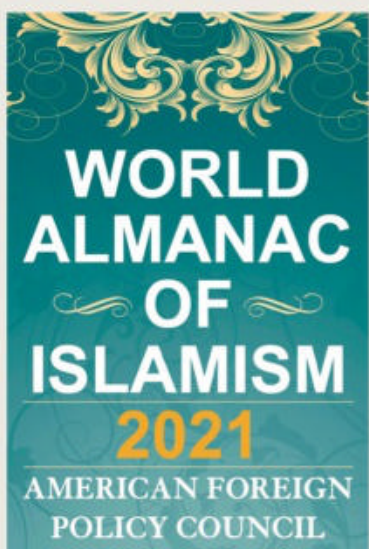


The Kennedys in the World: How Jack, Bobby, and Ted Remade America's Empire

Lawrence J. Haas, Potomac Books

"In this vivid, fast-paced study, Haas ... compels us to see these major personalities in a global context, showing not just how the Kennedys influenced the world but how the world influenced the Kennedys."

— Richard Aldous



World Almanac of Islamism 2021 edition

American Foreign Policy Council, Rowman & Littlefield

The American Foreign Policy Council's World Almanac of Islamism is the definitive resource on political Islam and Islamic extremism, featuring sixty-two country studies and chapters on ten separate transnational movements.

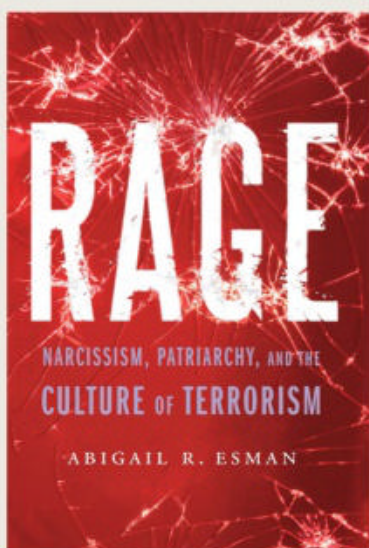


Power & Complacency: American Survival in an Age of International Competition

Phillip T. Lohaus, Potomac Books

"By illuminating the different ways great powers define war and actions short of war, Lohaus shows how strategic culture is a useful concept for analyzing the different tools that powers bring to bear in great-power competition."

— Christopher Marsh, director of research for Joint Special Operations University



Rage: Narcissism, Patriarchy, and the Culture of Terrorism

Abigail R. Esmán, Potomac Books

"There has never been a book about terrorism quite like this.... The connections Esmán makes are scholarly sound, deeply personal, and have an emotional resonance that many readers will find unforgettable."

— Chris Dickey, Daily Beast, MSNBC



The Star and the Scepter: A Diplomatic History of Israel

Emmanuel Navon, Jewish Publication Society

"Should be required reading for every veteran and cadet in Israel's Foreign Ministry, and will be of significant interest to informed and educated general readers concerned with the Jewish people's and the Jewish state's places in the world."

—Jerusalem Post

Welcome back to the Caribbean's best destination

Having established an extensive safe bubble for visitors, Jamaican tourism is already bouncing back

While travel to many other countries remains restricted, Jamaica continues to offer a much-needed vibrant burst of sunshine to the world's tourists. Since reopening its borders in June, the island that consistently ranks as the top Caribbean destination at the World Travel Awards has safely welcomed back 264,152 guests between June 15 and December 31 2020, who have rushed to embrace its famous and uniquely diverse culture, seek adventure in its lush tropical lands, mist-covered mountains and turquoise sea, or just relax on its peerless sandy beaches.

"In June 2020, we became only the third country to receive the World Travel and Tourism Council's Seal of Safe Travel Approval," notes Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett. "By establishing resilience corridors to create a safe bubble for tourists we have been able to limit the spread of the virus. These corridors contain about 85 percent of all our tourism assets for visitors to fully enjoy."

The incredible variety of those assets makes Jamaica the ideal vacation destination for anybody. If you are yearning for an upbeat



Edmund Bartlett
Minister of Tourism

resort experience and the chance to dance your cares away on the beach, for example, Montego Bay and Ocho Rios are obvious highlights. On the other hand, Negril, Port Antonio and the island's little-visited south coast offer more relaxed and secluded seaside pleasures. But there is so much more to Jamaica than just sun, sea and sand.

One of the things that make it such a special and memorable place is its warm and engaging people, who seem to have an innate ability to bring smiles to the faces of everyone. Then there is the rhythm of reggae and its



The boutique Rockhouse hotel and spa overlooks Negril's awe-inspiring cliffs

musical offshoots that provide the country with an unmistakable pulse that radiates out from the cosmopolitan capital, Kingston. Another distinction is the island's fabulously flavorful gastronomy, which utilizes freshly grown and caught delicacies to tantalize your tastebuds.

The uniqueness of Jamaica's topography also allows visitors to engage in a much wider range of activities in comparison with other Caribbean destinations, with everything from hiking, mountain biking, sea sports, cliff diving, river rafting and even bobsleighbing being available.

Easily accessible

Voted the region's leading airport at the World Travel Awards 2020, Jamaica's Sangster International Airport is currently go-

ing through a major expansion to make the country's unparalleled hospitality even more accessible, while investor optimism will see over 10,000 new hotel rooms built in the next couple of years.

Right now, however, the island stands ready to welcome all guests, says Bartlett. "We offer you an experience that is unmatched; we offer you an experience that is unforgettable; come to Jamaica, let us pamper you and keep you safe. Jamaica cares."

"We offer you an experience that is unforgettable; come to Jamaica, let us pamper you."

Edmund Bartlett
Minister of Tourism

Jamaica takes a leading role in global tourism resilience and crisis management

2020 proved the resilience in Jamaican tourism, an issue close to Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett's heart. "Tourism is a central pillar for many economies. It creates jobs, revenue and development; builds people, knowledge and capacity. Tourism is an industry that must survive the shocks of our time. We needed to build out support mechanisms to ensure that the sector's vulnerabilities don't overtake its capacity to manage, recover and thrive after crises. That's why Jamaica established the Global Tourism Resilience and Crisis Management Centre in 2018," he explains.

"It provides data that countries can access to prepare themselves to withstand contingencies like hurricanes, terrorism, economic or health crises. The center has also been measuring the resilience of countries to offer guidance for investors or travelers. Creating more resilience in communities is important as well: small- and medium-sized firms process about 80% of tourism but only get about 20% of the returns. We need to help build their capacity."



Relax on a river raft and immerse yourself in Jamaica's natural beauty

Jamaica will remain at the top of travel bucket lists

The Caribbean idyll is working hard to ensure it continues to offer tourists a larger-than-life vacation experience of their dreams

According to Donovan White, director of tourism at the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), “2019 was a record year, with 4.3 million visitors and tourism earnings of \$3.6 billion. Tourism directly contributed some 9.5% of our gross domestic product and about 34% when you add induced earnings.”

Those figures took a hit in 2020, but the JTB took the opportunity of a quieter year to reevaluate the sector. “We have worked hard to enable tourism

to be rebuilt progressively for the future,” he states. “Because of our powerful USPs, 42% of visitors are return guests but we have to continue our quest to be excellent in every possible way.”

To maintain Jamaica’s allure, the JTB is encouraging investments that develop tourism by expanding attractions and boosting the number of hotel rooms. It is also working to create more economic opportunities for the local product and service provid-



Donovan White
Director of Tourism, Jamaica Tourist Board

ers that gravitate around tourism and employ about 40% of the country’s workforce, says White.

“We are supporting the development of human capital as well, so we can we service this expansion and make the product better in terms of service delivery. The Ministry of Tourism has financed the training of over 30,000 tour-

ism workers, for example.” The JTB is also building new and deeper relationships with international partners like airlines, tour operators and travel agents. “We operate various offices around the world and spend a lot of time making sure we are connected, and that we understand and find solutions to our partners’ needs,” he notes.

Just 2-4 hours away, the U.S. generates about 65% of Jamaica’s visitors, but the JTB aims to increase the island’s accessibility for leisure and business tourists from places like Latin and South America, Japan and India, where there is growing demand. However, he points out, “Jamaica should be on the bucket list of anyone considering travel in 2021. You will be amazed at the larger-than-life experience you will have here, and will truly understand why we say Jamaica is the heartbeat of the world.”



Jamaica welcomed nearly 500,000 cruise passengers in 2020

Top 5 things to do in the tropical paradise

- 1 Visit Bob Marley’s home and recording studio
- 2 Eat freshly barbecued jerk lobster on the beach
- 3 Shop for diverse artisan-made local crafts
- 4 Get married in the world’s top wedding destination
- 5 Swim with dolphins off the coast of Ocho Rios

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JAPAN: PRESENT/FUTURE

JAPAN, AMERICA AND
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TO REVOLUTIONIZE 5G

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Japan, America and the Post-Corona Order

The world's two most economically powerful democracies have a unique opportunity for joint leadership in the post-pandemic global arena.

For both Japan and the US, the blossoming cherry trees in Washington, D.C. this year are heavy with symbolism. A long, grim winter has passed, likely the last during which either country will be as burdened by the COVID-19 pandemic. Likewise, each nation is moving forward with renewed hope under new central leadership. As President Joe Biden pledges to rebuild relationships with traditional allies, Japan is determined to leverage this moment to forge even deeper, more influential bonds with the US.

In Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's first speech marking the start of the year's parliamentary session, he said that Japan is prioritizing working with members of the international community, the US in particular, "to exert leadership in creating a post-corona international order." At a time when the world faces unprecedented global challenges, cooperation between both nations could shape the future for generations to come. "The Japan-US alliance is the cornerstone of Japan's diplomacy and security, and the foundation of freedom, peace, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region and the international community," Suga told lawmakers.

How does Japan envision this new era? As before, shared values with the US – human rights, free trade, prosperity and protecting regional security – are at its core. But now, Japan's government is highlighting the urgency of new international norms for the digital age as well as the need to fight climate change. Just like Biden, Suga has pledged to make Japan carbon neutral by 2050.

Dealing with China's growing power will no doubt be a challenge for both countries. Japan's approach is firm but cooperative. Acknowledging that stable Sino-Japanese relations are critical, Suga pragmatically says that "we will

insist on what we should insist on... and work together to resolve common issues." In his first call with Suga, President Biden expressed his "unwavering commitment" to the defense of Japan, including in the Senkaku Islands, which are subject to a territorial dispute with China and Taiwan. In the call, both leaders also pledged to work towards the complete denuclearization of North Korea.

“

The Japan-US alliance is the foundation of freedom, peace, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region and the international community

**Yoshihide Suga,
Japanese Prime Minister**

Japanese leadership, committed to multilateralism, breathed a collective sigh of relief when the US re-joined the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Paris climate accord. Recognizing strengths and weaknesses of global bodies, they hope more US involvement can aid their push for reforms, particularly in the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Since Japan donated cherry trees to Washington in 1912, the country's mark on the US has grown exponentially. In 2019, Japan became the largest foreign investor in the US. Strengthening economic ties, particularly around technology like 5G and AI, is another of Suga's priorities.



Q&A

KOJI TOMITA, JAPANESE AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES

Japan's new ambassador to the US was previously posted in South Korea and has worked closely with the Obama administration.

How do you envision Japan-US cooperation under a Biden administration?

PM Suga and President Biden have already confirmed they will cooperate bilaterally and on global issues. I think we can take the initiative in regional frameworks, as well as in the G7 and G20. Even as the international order faces major changes, the values of freedom, democracy, and human rights remain unchanged.

“China's attempts to unilaterally change the status quo in the East China Sea are contributing to a severe increase in tensions”

Why is Biden's commitment to protecting the Senkaku Islands important?

Here is the situation. China's attempts to unilaterally change the status quo in the East China Sea and other areas are intensifying and contributing to a severe increase in tensions. President Biden has expressed his unwavering commitment to the defense of Japan, including the application of Article 5 of the Japan-US Security Treaty to the Senkaku Islands. He has also reaffirmed the United States' determination to provide extended deterrence to Japan. My government considers the statement of intent to be highly significant and essential.

How can the countries partner around climate change?

Advancing a virtuous cycle of environmental protection and economic growth is the way forward. To achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 and help decarbonize society globally, Japan and the US must collaborate on research, development and deployment of advanced technologies. I am talking about hydrogen, carbon capture and utilization, clean energy infrastructure and nuclear power.

HOW JAPAN NAILED THE SCIENCE BEHIND CORONAVIRUS

With highly dense cities, an elderly population and laws that make lockdowns impossible, Japan could have been extremely vulnerable to COVID-19. But fast, lucid scientific thinking, and a government that listened, have kept deaths and contagion relatively low.

When China reported its first outbreak of COVID-19, Japan went into high alert. After having suffered the 2011 earthquake and subsequent Fukushima nuclear accident, and seeing how fast other viruses had spread in the globalized world, Japan's population and government were prepared for the unexpected.

On Jan. 16, 2020, Japan detected its first infection. Less than two weeks later, the government had set up a national anti-coronavirus task force. Filled with scientific experts to whom the government was ready to defer, it aimed at controlling spread through "implementing a series of measures flexibly and swiftly, thinking outside the box and firmly un-

derstanding the characteristics of the virus," in the words of then Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Dr. Hitoshi Oshitani, Professor of Virology at Tohoku University, was one of the most prominent government advisors and has been dubbed the architect of Japan's COVID-19 response. He had deep insight into SARS from working for the World Health Organization (WHO) in the Philippines during the early 2000s.

"There are no textbooks or manuals for a new pandemic," he said. "What we need in such a situation is the savage mind, or *Bricolage*, as French philosopher Lévi-Strauss said – the skill of using whatever is at hand." It was with this mindset



Japanese women dressed in colorful kimonos in Tokyo's Harajuku district on Coming of Age Day. ALAMY

that Japan's top scientists sprang into action to figure out how the virus spreads.

The tragic situation of the Diamond Princess cruise ship, which was quarantined in Japan in early February, not only cast the global spotlight on Japan but provided the country's scientists with valuable lessons about the virus. By Feb. 20, the ship was home to half of the total coronavirus infections detected outside of China, with more than 700 passengers and crew members infected with the disease.

"I believe that we were purely lucky with many incidental happenings. Japan is close to China, and thus, we had opportunities to observe various clusters in different geographic areas from February to March 2020," said Dr. Hiroshi Nishiura, Professor of Hygiene at Kyoto University, whose models and work as a government adviser were also pivotal for the Japanese response.

Observational data in hand, Japan's scientists were soon able to garner insights into the virus's characteristics that most of the Western world took months to figure out, if at all.

Perhaps the first breakthrough was surrounding asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic transmission. Oshitani had been comparing the novel coronavirus to other pandemics and it became clear to him that, unlike SARS or Ebola, people infected could spread the virus without presenting serious symp-

toms. In February, Nishiura estimated that more than 40% of secondary transmission of the virus takes place during the pre-symptomatic stage. His findings were published in the International Journal of Infectious Diseases on March 4, 2020 – a week before the WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic.

With that fact clarified, even though it went against global scientific consensus at the time, Japan's experts and policymakers opted for a suppression, not elimination, strategy. "Due to the stealthy nature of the virus, containment by extensive testing, isolation and contact tracing was not a feasible option to contain COVID-19 in Japan," said Oshitani.

It's true that China had been controlling the outbreak through draconian lockdowns; South Korea, through extensive contact tracing with the military; and Singapore with extensive testing. But Japanese officials knew that they did not have the legal footing to collect cellphone data or lock down their population like other countries. At the same time, Japan's testing capacity was limited.

So the scientists looked at the data they had and applied it to the Japanese context to figure out the best ways of preventing transmission. Early in February, Oshitani emailed Nishiura noting how the transmission pattern of the virus appeared to be highly varied, more like SARS than the flu. Their early analysis found that »

The Pillars of Japan's Response

Avoid the 3Cs
Closed spaces,
crowded places and
close-contact settings

Cluster-Busting
Contract tracing to
identify superspreading
events

Digital Technology
Using apps to monitor
spread, assist
population

Border Control
Travel restrictions on
specific countries,
quarantine, testing

Masks & Hygiene
Mask use is ubiquitous,
as is hand washing

» up to 80% of those infected didn't infect others, suggesting superspreading events were driving most contagion.

With that in mind, Japan adopted a “cluster-busting” approach. Most western countries use a prospective contact tracing system, where someone tests positive and health officials try to identify and isolate the people the positive person may have infected. Japan does that too, but its contact tracers, a powerful team of around 8,000 trained public health nurses, also act as detectives – trying to get to the bottom of where the original person was infected. This helps them find superspreading events, which not only allows them to identify more exposures but also produces key epidemiological data about the conditions that lead to big outbreaks. These field investigations are also supported by genome sequencing.

When looking at data from clusters, one factor became incredibly clear: most transmission occurred in closed environments with poor ventilation. Nishiura's group had published a preprint with their evidence by March 3, 2020, just two days after New York detected its first case. Oshitani, who wrote a WHO publication in 2017 about how the main mode of transmission for

influenza is short-distance aerosols, not droplets, also suspected it was the same for SARS-CoV-2.

“Several quarantine officers and nurses were infected on the Diamond Princess. I was quite sure that they were implementing so-called droplet precautions – wearing surgical masks and conducting rigorous hand-hygiene. This fact strongly suggested that droplet precaution alone was not so effective in preventing the infection,” he explained.

WHEN LOOKING AT DATA FROM CLUSTERS, ONE FACTOR BECAME INCREDIBLY CLEAR: MOST TRANSMISSION OCCURRED IN CLOSED ENVIRONMENTS WITH POOR VENTILATION

Early on, Japan's scientists, through close observation, understood several key aspects of the pandemic – the importance of ventilation, short-distance aerosol transmission and the pivotal role of superspreading events. Politicians seized on the advice and sent the population a simple message by late March – avoid the 3Cs. A simple communication device to remember that closed environments with poor ventilation, crowded places

and close contact settings were the riskiest. Officials didn't need to insist on masks, as the Japanese population was used to reaching for them during times of sickness or allergies.

“I don't think there was any problem convincing policymakers about scientific findings such as a cluster-based approach and 3Cs concept. In fact, the cluster task force was established within the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare as early as Feb. 25, 2020,” recalled Oshitani.

Meanwhile, many people in western countries were focused on surface transmission. The smell of bleach and disinfectant filled the air, covered groceries and was even suggested as a cure via injection. Officials in not only the US but also Europe, advised against wearing masks. Even in April, when Japan sent two masks to every household, the WHO insisted that healthy people didn't need to cover their faces. Many countries went into full lockdown, unaware of where risk lies.

The 3Cs became so catchy that a popular publishing house deemed it Japan's word of the year. Perhaps tellingly, Collins English Dictionary chose ‘lockdown.’

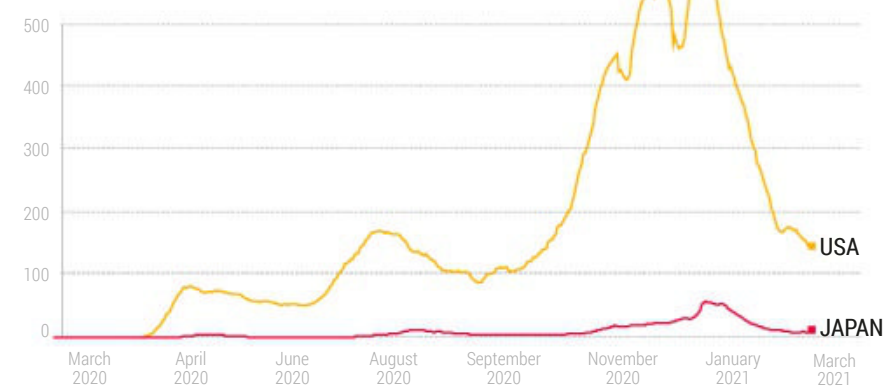
Clear science-based communication was not Japan's only tool to curb contagion. By March, the Japanese govern-



A physical education class in a Japanese high school. Schools opened in September, but masks and ventilation were key to preventing viral spread. ALAMY

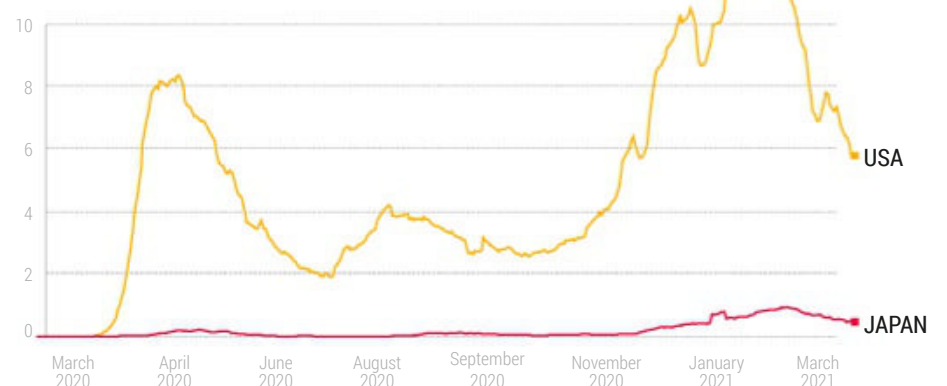
Daily New Confirmed COVID-19 Cases per Million People

Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data – Last updated 10 March



Daily New Confirmed COVID-19 Deaths per Million People

Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data – Last updated 10 March



TOTAL CASES*

Japan: 441,152
US: 29.1 million

TOTAL DEATHS*

Japan: 8,359
US: 527,699

*Updated March 10

ment passed travel restrictions for many foreign countries. Japanese residents returning from those areas were asked to quarantine for two weeks. Out of concern over new variants, Japan has recently amped up restrictions with many countries, also requiring negative coronavirus tests before and after arrival.

In spring 2020 and again in January, the Japanese government declared states of emergency. Though measures were not legally binding, the government urged people to stay home and for bars and restaurants to close early. After both states of emergency, the curves of infections reversed.

“I don’t think [the latest reduction] was just due to the state of emergency. I think it’s mainly due to people’s behavioral changes. It is possible that information about issues such as the sudden increase of cases over the New Year holidays, the death of a politician who was in his 50s, a strong appeal from health care workers about overwhelmed hospitals, might have led to sudden changes in behavior. We have very strong peer pressure in Japanese society,” said Oshitani.

Other factors, too, bolstered Japan’s response. The country has a strong

system of universal healthcare, which is well distributed even in rural areas. “We believe it is absolutely essential, especially when facing a pandemic such as this one, to guarantee equitable access to healthcare for all people regardless of their income status, which otherwise could prevent them from seeking healthcare,” said Dr. Yasuhiro Suzuki, one of the country’s top physicians who acts as a chief advisor to Japan’s Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare.

Culturally, a widespread acceptance of masks, even outside of pandemics, is just one of the ingrained traditions that acted in the country’s favor. Talking loudly on public transportation is considered rude (not traditionally due to viral transmission, but for the peace of the travelers) as is blowing one’s nose in public. The Japanese bow to greet people has also been adopted worldwide as a safer way to say hello than a hug or handshake.

By late March, the country had also launched a voluntary chat bot-based healthcare system called COOPERA on Japan’s most popular mobile messaging app. The AI-powered system

not only collected epidemiological data but also guided people through illness and told them when they should seek medical assistance. At the same time, it proved helpful in monitoring people with exposure histories so their movement wasn’t restricted to home and advising people in quarantine such as recent arrivals to the country.

While Japan’s clever, science-based approach has kept deaths and contagions down to a tiny fraction when compared to the US, it is not out of the woods yet. Japanese authorities will continue their strategy, though variants may pose new challenges. The inoculation plan could also come across roadblocks. Due to a peculiar history with vaccinations, Japan has one of the lowest rates of vaccine confidence in the world.

“We have to be cautious in implementing vaccinations for COVID-19. It will be a big challenge to convince young people,” said Oshitani. “We have some other options to reduce the impact of COVID-19, including a cluster-based approach and more effective prevention and control measures... We should not rely solely on vaccines.”

JAPAN'S LEADING VOICES ON COVID-19

With expertise ranging from big data to patient care, these are some of the key minds behind the country's pandemic response.

Read the full interviews at foreignpolicy.com/japanpresentfuture



Dr. Hiroshi Nishiura,
Professor of Hygiene,
Kyoto University

His modeling and statistical analysis has been behind some of Japan's big breakthroughs about how the virus spreads.

Are you worried about what mutations could do to Japan's fight against COVID-19?

The new variant 501Y, first found in South Africa, has completely changed the story. The mutation makes it more infectious than others, and some evidence is beginning to suggest that the infection with that variant could be more severe. We are very concerned by some of the mutations that have emerged. Once the variant is introduced and widespread, originally planned hospital caseload demand would have to be revised.

What lessons can be learned from Japan's response to the COVID-19 pandemic that could be applied to pandemic preparedness in the future?

For both focused interventions on high-risk groups and population-wide voluntary lockdown, I have shown that a scientifically sound approach is vital to controlling the COVID-19 pandemic. Epidemiologists and modeling experts should be scientifically honest to advise policymakers on infectious disease control.

Dr. Hitoshi Oshitani,
Professor of Virology,
Tohoku University



Drawing on his experience from SARS and other respiratory viruses, his insight into viral spread proved fundamental to Japan's response.

Could the US shift to a cluster-busting approach?

The cluster-based approach is more effective when transmission is below a certain level. Now that cases are decreasing, it may be useful to implement some of its

components. I believe that the 3Cs concept is a general rule for COVID-19 and maybe also for many other infectious diseases. People need to understand which environments are risky, and risk should be reduced through measures like improving ventilation.

You've said the world needs to adopt a new lifestyle. How do you envision that?

Unfortunately, our world is becoming more vulnerable. This is true not only for infectious diseases but also for economic crises, frequent mega-disasters, the division between poor and rich, food crises and so on. I believe that we are at a turning point in history. We have to decide whether we will continue moving in the same direction or create a truly sustainable world.



Dr. Yasuhiro Suzuki,
Chief Medical & Global
Health Officer,
Vice-Minister for Health,
Japanese Ministry of
Health, Labor and Welfare

One of Japan's most esteemed physicians, Dr. Suzuki has worked with Japan's Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare for 30 years.

How can societies prepare for future pandemics?

We had the avian flu in 1997, SARS in 2003, H1N1 in 2009, MERS in 2012 and now COVID-19. Pandemics have been hitting the world every four to five years. We need to prepare our healthcare and even socio-economic ecosystems for such frequent waves of threats. But the world cannot be on high alert all the time. We must identify our core capacity and preparedness before the actual pandemics and how quickly we could surge our capacity in response.

Should Japan and the US boost collaboration around global health?

We share many values, and I believe we can achieve an incredible amount of global health initiatives by collaborating. One of the many potentials is to establish an 'Asian Centers for Disease Control' together. The US already helped establish an African CDC after the Ebola outbreak, an initiative that has been considered successful.

Dr. Hiroaki Miyata,
Professor of Health Policy
and Management,
Keio University

Professor Hiroaki Miyata's research revolves around how tools like big data and AI can be used to improve health and wellbeing.

What has COVID-19 taught us about the importance of data in public health?

COVID-19 has taught us how important it is not to hoard data, but to utilize it for the benefit of the people. The early sharing of genome sequences with the world has facilitated the development of vaccines at an astonishing speed. Sharing data on mutations can also help our fight against the changing virus.

The most important point about data, unlike oil, is that it can be



shared. If you share the data of one person with 10,000 people, you can get a better prognosis. If you share it with 1 million, then the true power can be unleashed. I believe that we can think about how to share the data in a way that ensures transparency and traceability and that measures the protection of rights in a way that is not just based on individual consent.



The Fugaku supercomputer has been used to simulate how factors like masks, humidity and distance influence viral spread. RIKEN

World's Fastest Supercomputer Cracking the COVID Code

Conducting around 442 quadrillion calculations per second, Fugaku was the world's first supercomputer to be top-ranked in speed, data processing, deep learning with AI and practical simulation calculations.

In the global competition to develop the world's fastest supercomputer, Japan's Fugaku displaced the IBM Summit for top spot last June. Yet the driving factor behind its development was never to win. Instead, it was created with an application-first philosophy aimed at tackling the world's biggest challenges.

As COVID-19 raged, the supercomputer, developed jointly by RIKEN and Fujitsu, was deployed earlier than planned so it could be added to the global arsenal against the pandemic. Researchers knew it would be an ideal tool to run real-world simulations about viral transmission.

"We have put out a press release every month or two. It would take a year or more to do the same with the world's fastest supercomputer of the previous generation," said Makoto Tsubokura, team leader at the RIKEN Center for Computational Science.

The research has helped turn the invisible visible. By communicating results, people around the world have been able to see how factors like masks, visors, ventilation, airflow, humidity and distance influence the likelihood of contagion.

Researchers found that risk is determined by four main factors – distance,

FUGAKU WAS DEVELOPED OVER A DECADE AT A COST OF \$1.2 BILLION

duration of contact, vocalization (like singing, talking, silent, or exercising) and ventilation. "It is advisable to develop a habit of thinking about the risk of infection in various situations by always assessing the relative contribution of these four factors," said Tsubokura.

The computer's simulations have underscored the importance of wearing well-fitted masks, even though they do not eliminate exposure risks completely. They also found that face shields are much less effective, but can be helpful in situations such as eating or drinking.

For other harm reduction strategies, Fugaku's results say that when dining with a group, there should be empty seats in front of and beside each person at the table. Likewise, for partitions to be effective, they should be above head height. Now, the supercomputer is focused on analyzing different ventilation strategies in music venues.

Moving forward, Fugaku will also be leveraged to work on critical areas like medicine, pharmacology, disaster prediction and prevention, environmental sustainability and energy.



Inside the world's first digital art museum, located in Tokyo's Odaiba district. ALAMY

Government as a Service

The Japanese government is embarking on a digital transformation aimed at streamlining administrative procedures and providing round-the-clock services to citizens.

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the shortcomings of governments around the world. In Japan's case, management of the health crisis was hampered by an outdated and cumbersome administrative system. While the country may be famed for its futuristic technology, some aspects of government appeared to still be operating in the last millennium.

As social media was being used to conduct widespread surveys and provide support for people with the disease, many healthcare providers were faxing information about infections to public healthcare centers, where data was aggregated manually. When the government tried to send out nearly \$1,000 to each resident, the process was significantly delayed by paper-based administrative procedures. People were told to submit applications online, but an unprepared system forced some local governments to accept mail-in requests only.

Looking to distance himself from his predecessor and address this glaring problem, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga made the digitalization of Japan one of his top priorities. Within hours of taking office last September, he created the post of digital transformation minister and tasked the latter with creating an agency within a year to lead the national effort.

The project is moving forward at record speed and the Digital Transformation Agency is expected to be operational by September 1 of this year. It will be staffed by around 500 experts, including at least 100 IT engineers hired from the private sector through a fast-track process more readily associated with a business start-up than a public organization.

"I believe that the pandemic is why Japan has been moving forward with digital

transformation at an incredible speed. It's provided a strong lesson to the entire nation," says Takuya Hirai, Japan's first Digital Transformation Minister.

Hirai's agency will act as a command center, reporting directly to Prime Min-

»»

This is an agile, expedited process, similar to starting a company from scratch

**Takuya Hirai,
Minister for Digital Transformation**

ister Suga. Within five years, it hopes to integrate, standardize and digitalize government processes, ahead of a nationwide transition to the cloud. Simultaneously, the agency will create architecture for new public sector systems while promoting initiatives to

encourage digital transformation in the private sector.

"The establishment of the Digital Transformation Agency is an agile, expedited process, similar to starting a company from scratch. Eventually, once the Digital Transformation Agency is in operation, we will have 'Government as a Service,'" explains Hirai. "This means government services will be accessible and available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The convenience of digitalization in various fields such as medical care, education, and disaster prevention is that it will be available whenever and wherever you want."

The agency will also be different from other government departments in its rejection of traditional, top-down bureaucratic thinking. Instead, it will put user experience at the center of its strategy as it strives to make administrative services simple and intuitive »»





From Japan's National Diet, the Suga administration is spearheading the process of digital transformation. SHUTTERSTOCK

» for everyone, including the elderly and people with disabilities.

One of the agency's key goals is the promotion of Japan's personal identification cards, called My Number Cards, which will serve as passports to the digital society. These cards are already equipped with IC chips that act as electronic certificates, verifying identity for some online government services. They are also hooked up to an online portal where residents can check what information governments have about them, as well as perform a few administrative tasks. But the government's strategy is to make the cards much more versatile.

By this spring, the ID cards are expected to also begin operating as health insurance cards. By early 2023, the government aims to hold their functions in cellphones. The year after that, they are expected to act as valid driver's licenses, all while the government continues to improve their authentication functions.

"At that point, it will become possible to digitally identify the person and check the necessary information on the spot, providing finely tuned services. This should lead to greater convenience in people's daily lives, with citizens able to file tax returns or complete childcare-related procedures on-

line from anywhere using a computer or mobile phone," said Hirai.

Aspects of the new system are already being piloted. Moving in Japan can be a notoriously long and complicated process. The change of address has to be reported to various government agencies and private businesses. The processes vary from place to place and person to person, leading to frequent mistakes and omissions. To reduce the burden, the government is going to launch an online one-stop moving service allowing residents to report their new contact information to local governments and private enterprises all in one place.

“We need to think about how digital infrastructure, despite being invisible, brings about huge value for society, just like physical infrastructure does. This is the key to revitalizing Japan’s economy on a global scale,” says Mickey Mikitani, Chairman and CEO of Rakuten, a leading Japanese digital company. “Digital transformation is endless. There is no finish line.”

The government understands that for digital transformation to be successful, it will have to protect users’ privacy and security. Authorities are working on a system in which an independent regulatory authority will monitor and supervise how personal information is being handled by both the public and private sectors. And new legislation is expected to be pre-



We need to think about how digital infrastructure, despite being invisible, brings about huge value for society, just like physical infrastructure does. This is the key to revitalizing Japan’s economy on a global scale

**Mickey Mikitani,
Chairman and CEO of Rakuten**

sented to the government this year, renewing basic regulations around personal data with the aim to strike “an appropriate balance between the protection and utilization of data,” in the words of Minister Hirai.

Beyond its borders, Japan has spearheaded the Data Free Flow with Trust initiative. First discussed under Japan’s G20 leadership in 2019, the initiative seeks to develop international rules for the digital age that protect sensitive information while allowing productive data to flow across borders. This, and other ideas related to digitalization, will be highlighted when Tokyo hosts the World Economic Forum’s first Global Technology Government Summit in early April.

**IN CONVERSATION WITH
TAKUYA HIRAI,
JAPANESE MINISTER FOR
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION**

**“We need to use
this momentum.
We cannot take
a step back”**



Considered one of Japan’s most tech-savvy lawmakers, Minister Hirai is leveraging the knowledge garnered in his post as minister of information and communications technology to create Japan’s Digital Transformation Agency from scratch within a year.

What did the pandemic teach you about the importance of digital transformation?
I believe that dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic has served as an opportunity to underscore Japan’s lag in digitalization. In my opinion, the main cause for this is that we have been half-hearted in our efforts, and we were not thoroughly keeping the users’ perspective in mind. On the other hand, I believe that working from home, online medical care, and online education have somewhat taken root in society by now as an effect of COVID-19. We need to use this momentum. We cannot take a step back. It should become the engine of the digitalization of society and it presents opportunities for digital transformation.

How would you describe Japan’s vision for a digital society?

The purpose of digital transformation is to promote a human-friendly digital transformation to create a society where no one will be left behind, where citizens can choose the services that meet their needs and find fulfillment through the use of digital technologies. Digitalization is just a method, not a purpose. The government will create a society where, even when everything becomes digital, people will still help each other and that traditional spirit is

further leveraged through the use of digital technologies. We also want to establish a more enriched lifestyle where people can lead quality lives with a variety of choices, regardless of location or age. Efficiency would increase free time, which could be used for further investment and socioeconomic activities, contributing to economic growth, as well as for a variety of community activities and leisure.

What role does the Digital Transformation Agency have in bringing this to fruition?

The Digital Transformation Agency will oversee and supervise the central and local governments’ information systems. Besides that, we will also put in place essential systems. In this way, we will be able to offer the services that people rightfully hope to receive, designed thoroughly from the ordinary citizen’s perspective. We believe that implementing digital administrative procedures in a way that applies to all citizens will have a significant ripple effect beyond the public sector. The government must set the example in terms of promoting society’s digitalization as a whole. Its role is to create a society where people can get the services they expect and experience the convenience of digitalization. To realize these goals, I strongly feel that I must take the lead in vigorously promoting digital transformation and the Digital Transformation Agency. As the command post for the formation of a digital society, the agency must be given a robust overall managing function, including the right to issue orders.

Society 5.0: Japan's Roadmap for the Future

When it comes to technology, Japan's government is no passive bystander. Its vision for Society 5.0 encourages innovation for a more sustainable, inclusive and human-centered future.



A young girl making friends with a robot in the Kuromon Market in Osaka. UNSPLASH

Japan's government believes that technological innovation has been the driving force of societal change. First the agricultural revolution, then the industrial one. Now, the rise of the internet has led us to the information age.

But with the unprecedented speed of technological advances, Japan's government believes civilization is again at the dawn of a new era. Soon, almost everything will be able to be digitally connected. At the same time, through tools like AI, we will have the power to analyze the massive amount of data

coming from connected devices and derive insights in real-time. Cyberspace and physical space will further converge, creating a super-smart society.

With this revolution still in its infancy, societies still have a choice for where it can go. One is for policy-makers to watch indifferently as technological innovations disrupt society for private profit. Another is for governments to harness the technology to reinforce power and control populations on a scale never before seen.

Japan presents an alternative. Its Society 5.0 concept

draws on these technological breakthroughs to achieve a more human society. Instead of looking at improving big, complex social issues as a fiscal trade-off, it aims to leverage technology in a way that boosts economic development while simultaneously tackling societal problems and improving individual well-being. Humans are not to be the components of the system, they will instead be at its center.

“In the past, we as a society strove for the greatest happiness for the greatest number. But already, by using AI and

Transforming Society:

Healthcare

Personalized care, early detection, empowering individuals with health information

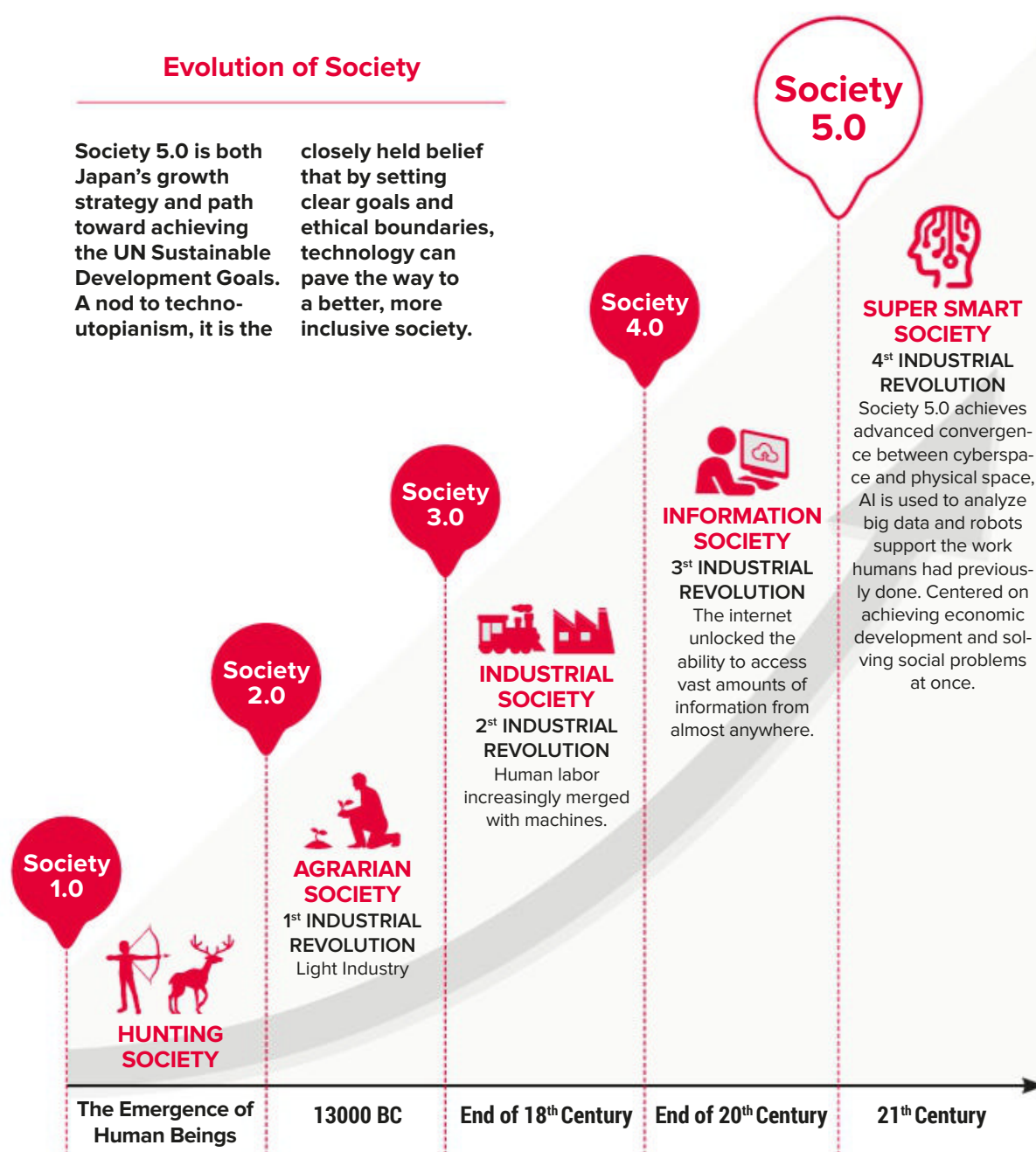
Mobility

Autonomous driving, shared services, live data on driving conditions, reduced emissions

Manufacturing

Use of AI and robots for efficiency, cooperative shipping, linking up supply chains

Evolution of Society



SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN

Q&A

JUN MURAI,
PROFESSOR, KEIO UNIVERSITY



Known as the Father of the Internet in Japan, Professor Jun Murai was a pioneer in bringing the internet to the Asia-Pacific region. He remains a key figure for his work on the future of connectivity.

What is the main challenge for the internet today?

Abuse versus proper and ethical use. To solve abuses, we need to achieve technical sophistication in terms of security and trust frameworks. To promote ethical use, the technology should work toward solving the main challenges of human society such as health and natural disasters. It should be a force for good in the world. I think that proper and ethical use of digital data for our society should be the goal of Society 5.0. The internet certainly is the basis of it, so we should keep enhancing it – making it a better platform for society.

“I believe this is a historic moment to re-challenge the status quo for better internet governance together”

What are some interesting technologies coming out of Japan now?

To name a few, stratosphere communications for the internet such as Loon and Hapsmobile, which are somewhere between wifi/mobile technology and satellite technology. I think they are very promising for post-disaster internet infrastructure recovery. Plastic optical fiber for high-speed, short-distance connection is also becoming practical with its energy effectiveness. Quantum internet technology for post-public key encryption internet security is another interesting and competitive field.

data, it is now possible to significantly reduce the cost of covering individual needs while ensuring that no one is left

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In the past, we strove for the greatest happiness for the greatest number. We can now aim for a society with the greatest happiness for the greatest diversity of people

Hiroaki Miyata, Professor of Health Policy and Management, Keio University

behind. We can now aim for a society with the greatest happiness for the greatest diversity of people,” said Hi-

roaki Miyata, Professor of Health Policy and Management at Keio University.

Enthusiasm for this vision has rippled across Japan’s sectors. Keidanren, Japan’s main business association, has adopted working toward Society 5.0 as a main focus. Meanwhile, the government has prioritized funding for science and technology. This January, the government announced it will be setting up a fund worth as much as \$100 billion for innovative research in universities.

“We strongly promote Society 5.0 by working to help solve social issues in Japan and internationally,” said Takayuki Morita, President and CEO of Japanese technology company NEC.

Why Japan's Open Technology Stands to Revolutionize 5G

Increasing concerns over 5G supply chain risk have given new impetus to Japan's open approach to next-generation mobile networks.



Research suggests that the 5G consumer market will be worth an estimated \$31 trillion by 2030. SHUTTERSTOCK

The US-led clampdown on Huawei's 5G technology gave fresh momentum to Japan's next-generation telecoms equipment. That's not only thanks to Japan's commitment to human rights but also because of the country's open approach to 5G, which promises to shake up the future of mobile networks.

For now, the 5G space is something of an oligopoly. In 2020, just three companies – Ericsson, Huawei and Nokia – controlled 77% of the entire global 5G

base-station market share, according to research group TrendForce.

Traditionally, network suppliers have provided mobile carriers with all-in-one bundles. As networks grew increasingly complex, just a few large companies became dominant, building entire networks or large components with proprietary technology.

But Japan's government and technology companies are hoping to help turn the tide. Companies like Rakuten, NTT DOCOMO, Fujitsu and NEC are build-

ing key 5G technologies around open specifications that allow networks to work with a multitude of components from a range of companies. This could help destroy entry barriers for new companies in the 5G space, not only in Japan but worldwide.

“Our new generation of mobile phone tech infrastructure is unusual in that it draws on technology vendors from Japan, the US, Finland, Taiwan, Korea and elsewhere, but not from vendors that have been spotlighted due to secu-

rity concerns. Not surprisingly, US and European authorities have been watching our progress,” said Mickey Mikitani, Chairman and CEO of Rakuten, which launched the world’s first large-scale open-architecture network last year. “The new network’s advantages are clear: 30-40% percent savings compared to traditional networks for present 4G technology and up to 50% savings for next-generation 5G networks.”

Japan’s emphasis on open networks aims to diminish real threats that could come with reliance on single suppliers. A European Commission report found that this approach increases the exposure not only to cyberattacks but also to technical weaknesses and vulnerabilities. Increased competition could also help get rid of supplier lock-in and lead to significant price drops for mobile carriers and consumers.

THE PUSH FOR OPEN TECHNOLOGY COULD HELP DESTROY ENTRY BARRIERS FOR NEW COMPANIES IN THE 5G SPACE, NOT ONLY IN JAPAN BUT WORLDWIDE

The UK, after virtually barring Huawei technology in its 5G network due to unresolved security concerns, found that it would be relying entirely on Nokia and Ericsson for its critical 5G infrastructure. Even though they are European companies, Digital Secretary Oliver Dowden said it still represented “an intolerable resilience risk.” The country looked to Japan for alternatives. Now, the British government is partnering with Japan’s NEC to launch a 5G Open Radio Access Network (RAN) this year.

While Japan looks to launch more of its 5G technology at home and abroad, the country has already set its sights on 6G. Continuing with the public-private partnership approach that has helped grow its 5G technology, the Japanese government is set to earmark \$475 million this year to promote the advancement of 6G mobile networks. Development of core technologies could be well underway by 2025, with 6G commercial launch pegged for 2030.

IN CONVERSATION WITH RYOTA TAKEDA, JAPANESE MINISTER FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS

“The indispensability of ICT as basic social infrastructure has been reaffirmed”



Ryota Takeda has been Japan’s Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications since Sept. 2020. One of his main tasks is accelerating the deployment of quality Japanese information and communications technology (ICT) like 5G on the global market. He also hopes to stimulate more multilateral cooperation around international norms and standards that promote ethical use of mobile technology.

How has the pandemic impacted your approach to ICT in Japan?

The COVID-19 pandemic has largely expanded the demand for remote activities such as working from home and distance learning. As a result, the indispensability of ICT that supports these activities as basic social infrastructure has been reaffirmed. Besides, the use of big data, such as applying information from mobile phone base stations, is spreading internationally as key to creating the best countermeasures against viral contagion.

What’s your evaluation of the growing global trend that emphasizes the security of 5G networks?

ICT, including 5G, is expected to be harnessed for use in every aspect of society, and it is important as a foundation for future social development and economic growth. Therefore, ensuring the safety and security of the ICT network is an urgent and critical task. Meanwhile, there is also growing concern that ICTs, which are making rapid progress, might bring about dark scenarios involving surveillance societies. We believe it is important to foster ICT solutions that respect privacy, human rights

and the norms regarding ICT usage. Since it is difficult to solve these issues through the respective efforts of individual countries, international cooperation is crucial. Since Japan’s secure and quality ICT is gaining increased international attention, we must live up to these expectations and contribute to the security of global ICT networks.

Why has Japan emphasized open 5G architecture?

We are well aware of security concerns such as the supply chain risk caused by the issue of “vendor lock-in,” where network operators have little flexibility to adopt vendors other than those that were initially adopted. To cope with this problem, we are internationally promoting an open and interoperable 5G network architecture. Domestically, some operators have already introduced openness into their network and the government has been implementing various promotion measures such as tax incentives and support for R&D. While the global trend to ensure openness and interoperability of 5G networks aims at enhanced network quality and security, this also creates a more competitive market, opening new opportunities for various businesses, including Japanese ones. Indeed, the strength of the Japanese 5G model lies in its openness, secureness, high quality (e.g. low power consumption), and flexibility to meet various needs. Since Japan was one of the first countries to institutionalize private 5G, Japanese businesses can propose 5G systems with solutions using their own rich experience in private 5G.

VOICES FROM THE CUTTING EDGE

Japanese companies have long been leaders in innovation and technology. Inspired by the government's vision for a more connected, sustainable and inclusive world, they are creating the tools and infrastructure to support that future. With world-class technology in areas like robotics, artificial intelligence and 5G, they are poised to make global waves in the years to come.

Read the full interviews at foreignpolicy.com/japanpresentfuture

NEC



“We are working to protect data privacy and security across our business operations”

**TAKAYUKI MORITA,
PRESIDENT AND CEO,
NEC**

NEC Corp is one of Japan's leading ICT and electronics companies. In its 120-year history, it has pioneered a range of global technologies, most recently cutting-edge biometric authentication, 5G, facial recognition and AI.

As the new CEO, what is your vision for the company?

The world is becoming increasingly connected and network technologies will play a transformative role in not only changing how we communicate but how business is conducted across verticals. We expect industries to undergo important

transformation in the next five to 10 years, and NEC has significant assets and capabilities to help drive this transformation.

What is your strategy for the US market?

NEC is continually working to further align our US business with our goal of being a social value innovator, and we plan to continue helping US customers securely meet their identity management, communications, and other technological needs. We are proud to have longstanding biometric identity management partnerships with US public

and private entities. As an example of our commitment to leveraging our technologies to help tackle ever-evolving societal challenges, this past year we were excited to provide the Hawaii Department of Transportation with a multimodal biometric solution that can detect elevated body temperatures and help keep travelers and employees safe in Hawaii airports. We are also helping to build strong, secure, accessible communication networks as a trusted vendor across the United States through 5G initiatives supporting Open RAN (Radio Access Network).

RAKUTEN



**MICKEY MIKITANI,
CHAIRMAN AND CEO,
RAKUTEN**

Rakuten is often compared to Amazon, not only for its e-commerce platform but also its vast ecosystem of innovative activities. Present in 30 countries, including the US, its services include fintech, ICT, e-books, health and more.

What's been your approach to creating the Rakuten Mobile network?

Last spring, we built and launched the world's first large-scale commercial open-architecture network. It is horizontal, bottom-up, and open software-driven, constructed from off-the-shelf parts and powered by cloud computing. When creating the Rakuten Mobile network, we sought to do

“We are working hard to personalize the online shopping experience. Thanks to AI, we hope to replicate online Japan's famed *omotenashi* spirit of selfless hospitality”

something that's never been done before. Our goal was to democratize the telecom industry by lowering the cost barrier not only in Japan but around the world. And now, with 5G, as the world stands on the cusp of a telecommunications revolution – one that resembles how personal computers replaced mainframes – we are bringing Japan back into the telecom field globally.

How can Rakuten play a role in the digital transformation of society?

We can be a leader. Empowering society through innovation and technology has always been our most important goal. It's why we're investing heavily in pioneering mobile technology. It's why we are developing our capabilities in AI, cloud computing, autonomous drone delivery, smart logistics and more. We are working hard to personalize the online shopping experience. Our image recognition of products utilizes deep learning, classifying items automatically based on images. We aim to have computers recognize products without human intervention – helping both our merchants and their customers.

NTT DOCOMO



**MOTOYUKI II,
PRESIDENT AND CEO,
NTT DOCOMO INC.**

With 79 million customers, NTT DOCOMO Inc is one of the world's largest mobile phone operators. Internationally famed for creating the emoji, it now aims to lead the way in digital transformation.

How do you envision NTT DOCOMO'S future in the US?

NTT DOCOMO is currently providing solutions mainly focused on the Internet of Things (IoT) to corporate users in the US through our US subsidiary. We will continue expanding our global business in terms of 5G and IoT networks and solutions by utilizing the NTT group's assets in North America and other locations abroad. If we have the opportunity, we would also

“We are collaborating closely with US companies to create new value for 5G services”

like to deliver the capacities that we've acquired in the BtoC Smart Life business, such as the payment platform business, to the global market – US included.

For the next generation 6G and IOWN networks, we are partnering with leading companies in the US such as AT&T, Verizon Wireless, Qualcomm, NVIDIA, Intel, VMware and Dell Technologies, to promote the activities of the O-RAN Alliance, which was formed by telecommunication operators and manufacturers to drive embedded intelligence and new levels of openness in the radio access network of 5G, and next-generation wireless systems.

We will continue to utilize our world-leading technical advantages and support the growth of our customers doing business in the US market.

FUJITSU



**SHINGO MIZUNO,
CORPORATE EXECUTIVE OFFICER/
VICE HEAD OF SYSTEM PLATFORM
BUSINESS, FUJITSU**

On the cutting edge of the technologies set to define the 21st century, Fujitsu is behind breakthroughs like the world's fastest supercomputer, advanced artificial intelligence and leading 5G technology.

How do you think 5G will change business?

5G offers the potential to accelerate the digitization of field operations, solve various social problems, and transform customer operations. By connecting everything in real time, 5G optimizes data processing models that leverage the cloud and edge computing. I'm confident that the use of such data across industries will eliminate boundaries among different industries and create entirely new business models. Ultimately, the transition from 4G to 5G will be a continuous process. We believe 5G technology will emerge seamlessly and steadily with the evolution of digital transformation.

“Carrying out digital transformation has become an urgent challenge not only for governments but for all industries”

How can Fujitsu contribute to American 5G networks?

We believe that 5G represents the vital network infrastructure underlying efforts to make digital transformation a reality. To create this open 5G ecosystem, we look forward to working with a variety of partners to deliver different products and solutions and system integration services to help contribute to the realization of North America's 5G networks. We believe that policies to exclude products of sensitive origin and the promotion of Open RAN offer significant market opportunities not only for Fujitsu and Japanese vendors, but also for many new vendors. We are a trusted partner of governments across the world, and we take pride in our high security standard.



Japan for Every Season

01

We still can't travel but we can always dream. And the moment it becomes safe to explore the world again, let Japan blow your mind.



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08

1. Autumnal branches shape Mount Fuji as it reflects off Lake Kawaguchi.
2. Snowboarders pass by the famous 'snow monsters' of Mount Zao.
3. The Sumida Fireworks Festival lights up Tokyo skies each July.
4. A springtime boat ride on the moat of Himeji Castle.
5. A woman in a kimono strolls through Kyoto's Arashiyama Bamboo Grove.
6. Scenes from the Awa Dance Festival, held in August on Shikoku island.
7. Kyoto's Kinkaku-ji (Golden Pavilion) temple, first built in 1397.
8. Japanese macaques warm up in the Jigokudani hot springs.

PHOTOS: SHUTTERSTOCK

Course Correction



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The Art of the Jumla

Why India's Narendra Modi keeps getting away with failure.
By Nikhil Kumar

During his first campaign for national office in 2014, Narendra Modi made a memorable pledge. If elected as India's prime minister, he would launch a crusade to repatriate untaxed wealth stashed abroad by unscrupulous businesspeople. The recovered bounty, Modi promised, would be worth as much as \$25,000 for every Indian, a colossal sum.

About a year after Modi won, with no sign of the windfall, a local broadcaster asked the Indian leader's election mastermind and closest political ally, Amit Shah, what had happened. "Look, this is a *jumla*," said Shah, now India's interior minister. The obscure word—found in Hindi, Urdu, and Gujarati, the official language of Gujarat state, Modi and Shah's home turf—literally means sentence or clause. But as Modi's star has grown brighter, a different connotation has gained prominence: a false promise or gross exaggeration.

“This was just a way of campaigning,” Shah said, insisting that the public understood that no individual would ever receive such a massive cash injection. He might as well have added, “What, you didn’t get it?”

As Modi begins his eighth year in power, Shah’s poker-faced defense seems all the more telling. The jumla phenomenon offers a guide to understanding not just how India’s reigning populist campaigns but also how he governs—and why he keeps winning despite a series of major policy failures. The truth or falsity of his claims hardly seems to matter. What wins the day, and continues to win Modi elections, is his apparent intent, transmitted to a young, desperate population via carefully crafted jumlas.

The best example came in late 2016, when Modi unveiled one of his most dramatic moves: demonetization, which scrapped high-denomination currency notes and rendered the vast majority of money in circulation illegal with immediate effect. India’s economy runs mostly on cash transactions, and stunned Indians struggled to get their hands on the newly issued currency, creating chaos at banks. The government said it intended to target tax evaders and counterfeiters. The idea was that those holding untaxed wealth, known in India as black money, wouldn’t want to be identified when they went in to exchange their stockpiles of old currency for new notes.

Modi said demonetization would “break the grip of corruption and black money” while ordinary citizens would only have to put up with “temporary hardships.” That didn’t turn out to be true. Official data shows that the policy didn’t achieve its goal of exposing criminals, as almost all the old currency was returned. Local reports later revealed that India’s central bankers had told Modi that the measure wouldn’t work. Much of the fallout landed on India’s poorest citizens. People lost their jobs as businesses went under or were forced to scale back their operations. For Modi’s opponents, demonetization looked like a classic jumla: a bold promise that proved economically ruinous for many Indians.

Yet Modi’s popularity only increased. Not long after he upended the cash economy, his Bharatiya Janata Party won by a landslide in elections in Uttar Pradesh, India’s most populous and most electorally significant state. Today, even as concerns grow about the systematic oppression of India’s minorities and the smothering of dissent, Modi’s success at the polls has continued, cementing his position as the godhead of Indian politics. When he ran for reelection in 2019, he defied predictions and increased his parliamentary majority.

Modi has also relied on jumlas under crisis. At the outset of the coronavirus pandemic last March, he plunged India into a sudden and all-encompassing nationwide lockdown. The decision pushed millions of daily-wage laborers into the streets and migrant workers onto packed buses, robbed of their already shaky livelihoods. It also helped spread the virus nationwide as the urban poor returned to the

countryside. Modi said India would effectively shut down for 21 days, during which it would defeat the virus. As was clear to many experts at the time, these were more empty words.

Why do these lofty promises continue to work for Modi? The prime minister has used jumlas to portray himself as on the side of the so-called honest Indian left behind as the economy opened up and the country grew its own small army of billionaires. Demonetization may have failed to achieve its policy objectives, but it worked to show young, poor Indians that the prime minister intended to go after corrupt elites. Hundreds of millions of others have found themselves locked out of a system where basic resources, from health care to education, remain in short supply.

In Modi’s telling, these inequities are the fault of those who governed before him. In an interview with a local newspaper during his reelection campaign, he talked about the “Khan Market gang”—a reference to one of Delhi’s toniest markets, long a haunt of the richest and best connected. “Modi’s image has not been created by the Khan Market gang, or Lutyens Delhi, but 45 years of his toil ... good or bad,” the prime minister said, referring to the upscale, British-built central Delhi enclave where the market is located.

Never mind that a policy fails, that what Modi says is clearly false—at least he’s trying. The messaging is clear: Modi is a doer, working to fix a system that served his predecessors rather than the public. In his public appearances and on social media, where he is far and away the most influential politician in India, Modi presents himself as India’s *pradhan sevak*, or prime servant in Hindi—a play on *pradhan mantri*, which means prime minister. The focus isn’t on whether or not he delivers but on who he is, an idea that he hammers home with consummate skill. In early 2017, when someone jokingly tweeted that Modi “works for me,” the Indian leader replied by saying, “Absolutely. Happy to be the Pradhan Sevak for each and every Indian.”

A splintered and ineffective opposition at the national level has only helped Modi’s cause, enabling him to hone his image even as his policies fail. Meanwhile, pressure on the media to toe the government line has allowed Modi and his proxies to continue making big claims that go unchallenged.

India is still grappling with the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. While its caseload hasn’t spiraled to the levels feared by some experts, recent spikes in certain regions have raised concerns about a new wave. The unplanned nature of last year’s lockdown exacted a heavy economic toll. But politically, it seems to have worked for Modi, who again came across as a doer, taking decisive action in the face of an unprecedented threat. The prime minister’s approval ratings have dipped only marginally over the last year, confirming his skill at the art of the jumla. ■

NIKHIL KUMAR is a writer and journalist based in New Delhi.