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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Volume 100, Number 5

WHO WON THE WAR ON TERROR?

COVER: PAOLO PELLEGRIN / MAGNUM PHOTOS

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After working as a China correspondent for *The Wall Street Journal*, **MATT POTTINGER** joined the U.S. Marine Corps and served three tours of duty in Afghanistan and Iraq. In 2017, he accepted a position in the Trump administration, first as senior director for Asia on the National Security Council staff and then as deputy national security adviser. He resigned his position on January 6, 2021, the day pro-Trump rioters attacked the U.S. Capitol. Now a senior adviser at the Marathon Initiative, Pottinger argues in "Beijing's American Hustle" (page 102) that U.S. officials are still failing to appreciate how China is taking advantage of the United States.

Born in Seoul and raised in Hawaii and Virginia, **SUE MI TERRY** joined the CIA after receiving her Ph.D. in international relations from Tufts University. An analyst focused on Northeast Asia, she served on the National Security Council staff under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. She is now a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. In "North Korea's Nuclear Family" (page 115), Terry argues that after decades of missed opportunities, Washington is rapidly running out of options to contain the North Korean nuclear threat.

Both a doctor and an economist by training, **RAJIV SHAH** served as the administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development from 2010 to 2015. During his tenure, the agency responded to an earthquake in Haiti, an Ebola outbreak in West Africa, and a famine in South Sudan. Today, Shah is president of the Rockefeller Foundation. In "The COVID Charter" (page 179), he calls for a new approach to economic development focused on narrowing the gap between rich and poor.

WHO WON THE WAR ON TERROR?

"This battle will take time and resolve," President George W. Bush declared on September 12, 2001. "But make no mistake about it: we will win." For much of the next two decades, pursuing victory in the "war on terror" would serve as the central fixation of American foreign policy. Yet even as the United States invaded two countries and launched drone strikes in others, as governments around the world erected vast security structures and attackers plotted with mixed success to evade them, as jihadi groups rose and fell and rose again, a basic question was never answered: What would it mean to "win"?

Drawing on thousands of al Qaeda documents seized in the 2011 raid that killed Osama bin Laden, Nelly Lahoud reveals that the other side struggled with the same question. The 9/11 attacks were meant, in bin Laden's words, to "destroy the myth of American invincibility." Ultimately, Lahoud writes, "bin Laden did change the world—just not in the ways that he wanted."

One factor he failed to anticipate was the overwhelming U.S. response. "By any measure," writes Ben Rhodes, "the 'war on terror' was the biggest project of the period of American hegemony that began when the Cold War ended—a period that has now reached its dusk." The vast scale and consequences of that project, Rhodes argues, continue to shape U.S. foreign policy, as Washington imposes the same us-versus-them construct on new threats.

American counterterrorism, meanwhile, has settled into what Daniel Byman calls a "good enough doctrine," meant to "manage, rather than eliminate, the terrorist threat"—with a degree of effectiveness that few imagined possible in the aftermath of 9/11. Other outcomes would have seemed equally surprising. Thomas Hegghammer traces how the fight against jihadi terrorism fueled "the steadily growing coercive power of the technocratic state." Cynthia Miller-Idriss traces how it fueled a different strain of extremist violence: 2020 saw a record number of domestic terrorist plots and attacks in the United States, and "two-thirds of those were attributable to white supremacists and other far-right extremists."

"If the goal of the global war on terror was to prevent significant acts of terrorism, particularly in the United States, then the war has succeeded," Elliot Ackerman concludes from his survey of the expansive use of U.S. military power in that war. "But at what cost?" In the last few years, terrorism may have vanished from the top tier of American national security concerns almost as quickly as it appeared. Yet the costs continue to accrue—leaving the question of what winning means as unsettled now as it was on September 12, 2001.

—Daniel Kurtz-Phelan, Editor

For two decades, pursuing victory in the "war on terror" has served as the central fixation of American foreign policy.

PAOLO PELLEGRIN / MAGNUM PHOTOS

Bin Laden's Catastrophic Success

Al Qaeda Changed the World—but Not in the Way It Expected

Nelly Lahoud

On September 11, 2001, al Qaeda carried out the deadliest foreign terrorist attack the United States had ever experienced. To Osama bin Laden and the other men who planned it, however, the assault was no mere act of terrorism. To them, it represented something far grander: the opening salvo of a campaign of revolutionary violence that would usher in a new historical era. Although bin Laden was inspired by religion, his aims were geopolitical. Al Qaeda's mission was to undermine the contemporary world order of nation-states and re-create the historical umma, the worldwide community of Muslims that was once held together by a common political authority. Bin Laden believed that he could achieve that goal by delivering what he described as a "decisive blow" that would force the United States to withdraw its military forces from Muslim-majority states, thus allowing jihadis to fight autocratic regimes in those places on a level playing field.

NELLY LAHOUD is a Senior Fellow in the International Security Program at New America and the author of the forthcoming book *The Bin Laden Papers*.

Bin Laden's worldview and the thinking behind the 9/11 attack are laid bare in a trove of internal communications that were recovered in May 2011, when U.S. special operations forces killed bin Laden during a raid on the compound in the Pakistani city of Abbottabad where he had spent his final years hiding. In the years that followed, the U.S. government declassified some of the documents, but the bulk of them remained under the exclusive purview of the intelligence community. In November 2017, the CIA declassified an additional 470,000 digital files, including audio, images, videos, and text. With the help of two research assistants, I pored over 96,000 of those files, including nearly 6,000 pages of Arabic text that form a record of al Qaeda's internal communications between 2000 and 2011, which I have spent the past three years analyzing. These documents consist of bin Laden's notes, his correspondence with associates, letters written by members of his family, and a particularly revealing 220-page handwritten notebook containing transcripts of discussions between members of bin Laden's immediate family that took place in the compound during the last two months of his life. The documents provide an unparalleled glimpse into bin Laden's mind and offer a portrait of the U.S. "war on terror" as it was seen through the eyes of its chief target.

By the time of 9/11, bin Laden had been contemplating an attack inside the United States for decades. Many years later, in conversations with family members, he recalled that it was in 1986 that he first suggested that jihadis "ought to strike inside America" to

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address the plight of the Palestinians, since, in bin Laden's mind, it was U.S. support that allowed for the creation of the state of Israel on Palestinian land. Bin Laden's concern for the Palestinians was genuine; their suffering, he often reminded his associates, was "the reason we started our jihad." But the Palestinians mostly served as a convenient stand-in for Muslims all over the world, whom bin Laden portrayed as the collective victims of foreign occupation and oppression. In his "Declaration of Jihad," a 1996 public communiqué that came to be known among jihadis as the "Ladenese Epistle," bin Laden grieved for Muslims whose "blood has been spilled" in places as far-flung as Chechnya, Iraq, Kashmir, and Somalia. "My Muslim brothers of the world," he declared, "your brothers in the land of the two holiest sites and Palestine are calling on you for help and asking you to take part in fighting against the enemy, your enemy: the Israelis and the Americans." This collective battle, bin Laden hoped, would be the first step in reviving the umma.

It soon became clear that bin Laden was ready to back his words with deeds. In 1998, al Qaeda carried out simultaneous bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing 224 people and wounding more than 4,000. Emboldened by the international attention those strikes received, bin Laden became more ambitious. On October 12, 2000, al Qaeda rammed a small boat filled with explosives into the USS *Cole* as it was refueling in the port of Aden, Yemen, killing 17 U.S. Navy personnel. Soon after that, bin Laden told a large gathering of supporters that the attacks represented "a critical turning point in the history of the umma's ascent toward greater eminence."

The Abbottabad papers include handwritten notes that bin Laden composed in 2002, disclosing "the birth of the idea of 11 September." They reveal that it was in late October 2000, within weeks of the USS *Cole* attack, that bin Laden decided to attack the American homeland. They also reveal his reasoning at the time: bin Laden believed that "the entire Muslim world is subjected to the reign of blasphemous regimes and to American hegemony." The 9/11 attack was intended to "break the fear of this false god and destroy the myth of American invincibility."

About two weeks after the attack, bin Laden released a short statement in the form of an ultimatum addressed to the United States. "I have only a few words for America and its people," he declared. "I swear by God almighty, who raised the heavens without effort, that neither America nor anyone who lives there will enjoy safety until safety becomes a reality for us living in Palestine and before all the infidel armies leave the land of Muhammad." The attack had an electrifying effect, and in the years that immediately followed, thousands of young Muslims around the world committed themselves in various ways to bin Laden's cause. But a close reading of bin Laden's correspondence reveals that the world's most notorious terrorist was ignorant of the limits of his own métier.

Bin Laden was born in 1957 in Saudi Arabia. His father was a wealthy construction magnate whose company was renowned not just for the opulent palaces it built for the Saudi royal family but also for its restoration of the Islamic

holy sites in Mecca and Medina. Bin Laden was raised in comfort, wanting for nothing. He grew into a poised young man who yearned to take part in political causes around the Muslim world. In his early jihadi exploits, which involved fighting in Afghanistan in the 1980s and helping finance and coordinate the mujahideen battling the Soviet occupation of that country, he demonstrated that he had learned something about entrepreneurship and management from the family business. And yet, although bin Laden's correspondence indicates that he was well versed in Islamic history, particularly the seventh-century military campaigns of the Prophet Muhammad, he had only a perfunctory understanding of modern international relations.

That was reflected in the 9/11 attack itself, which represented a severe miscalculation: bin Laden never anticipated that the United States would go to war in response to the assault. Indeed, he predicted that in the wake of the attack, the American people would take to the streets, replicating the protests against the Vietnam War and calling on their government to withdraw from Muslim-majority countries. Instead, Americans rallied behind U.S. President George W. Bush and his "war on terror." In October 2001, when a U.S.-led coalition invaded Afghanistan to hunt down al Qaeda and dislodge the Taliban regime, which had hosted the terrorist group since 1996, bin Laden had no plan to secure his organization's survival.

The 9/11 attack turned out to be a Pyrrhic victory for al Qaeda. The group shattered in the immediate aftermath of the Taliban regime's collapse, and most of its top leaders were either killed or captured. The rest sought refuge in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, an autonomous area bordering Afghanistan. Hiding became a way of life for them. Their communications reveal that for the rest of bin Laden's life, the al Qaeda organization never recovered the ability to launch attacks abroad. (The group did carry out attacks in November 2002 in Kenya but was able to do so only because the operatives tasked with planning them had been dispatched to East Africa in late 2000 and early 2001, before everything fell apart for al Qaeda in Afghanistan.) By 2014, bin Laden's successor, Ayman al-Zawahiri, found himself more preoccupied with delegitimizing the Islamic State (or ISIS), the jihadi group that eventually overtook al Qaeda, than with rallying Muslims against American hegemony. Still, it is impossible to look back at the past two decades and not be struck by the degree to which a small band of extremists led by a charismatic outlaw managed to influence global politics. Bin Laden did change the world—just not in the ways that he wanted.

LETTERS TO A MIDDLE-AGED TERRORIST

After fleeing to Pakistan following the Taliban's defeat, many al Qaeda fighters and operatives were arrested by authorities there. Fearing the same fate, the remaining al Qaeda leaders and many members of bin Laden's family covertly crossed the border into Iran in early 2002. Once there, they were assisted by Sunni militants who helped them rent houses using forged documents. But by the end of 2002, the Iranian authorities had tracked down most of them and had placed them in a secret prison under-

ground. They were later moved into a heavily guarded compound, along with their female relatives and children.

In 2008, bin Laden's son Saad escaped from Iran and wrote a letter to his father detailing how Iranian authorities had repeatedly ignored the al Qaeda detainees' medical conditions and how "the calamities piled up and the psychological problems increased." When Saad's pregnant wife needed to be induced, she was not taken to a hospital until after "the fetus stopped moving"; she was forced "to deliver him after he died." Saad was convinced that the Iranians "were masters at making us lose our nerve and took pleasure in torturing us psychologically." So desperate were their conditions that when a Libyan jihadi leader, Abu Uns al-Subayi, was eventually released in 2010, he wrote to bin Laden that Iran is where the "greatest Satan reigns." Detention there felt like being "exiled from religion," he wrote, admitting that he had even begged his Iranian captors to deport him to "any other country, even to Israel."

Bin Laden was completely unaware of these travails while they were happening. The Abbottabad papers show that in the wake of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, bin Laden disappeared from the scene and was not in command of al Qaeda for three years, even though he continued to release public statements cheering jihadi attacks in Indonesia, Kuwait, Pakistan, Russia, Tunisia, and Yemen. It was not until 2004 that bin Laden was finally able to resume contact with second-tier leaders of al Qaeda. He was eager to launch a new campaign of international terrorism. In one of the first letters he sent after reestablishing contact, he methodically outlined plans to carry out "martyrdom operations akin to the 9/11 New York attack." If these proved too difficult, he had alternative plans to target rail lines.

His associates quickly set him straight: al Qaeda had been crippled, and such operations were out of the question. In September 2004, a second-tier leader known as Tawfiq wrote a letter to bin Laden describing just how difficult things had been in the immediate aftermath of the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan. "Our afflictions and troubles were heart-rending, and the weakness, failure, and aimlessness that befell us were harrowing," he wrote. He lamented that bin Laden's "absence and inability to experience [their] painful reality" had itself fed the turmoil. "We Muslims were defiled, desecrated, and our state was ripped asunder," he reported. "Our lands were occupied; our resources were plundered. . . . This is what happened to jihadis in general, and to us in al Qaeda in particular."

Another second-tier leader, Khalid al-Habib, explained in a letter to bin Laden that during his three-year absence, their "battlefield achievements were negligible." He counted a total of three "very modest operations, mostly with [rockets], and from a distance." Another correspondent told bin Laden that al Qaeda's "external work"—that is, attacks abroad—had been "halted" because of the unrelenting pressure that Pakistan was exerting on the jihadis. As if this weren't bad enough, bin Laden learned that al Qaeda had been sold out by most of their erstwhile Afghan sympathizers and the Taliban—"90 percent of whom," Habib complained, "had been lured by the shiny dollars."

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A LIFELINE FOR AL QAEDA

But around the time that bin Laden was able to reestablish contact, things started looking up for al Qaeda. After the U.S.-led coalition had ousted the Taliban from power in Afghanistan, the next phase of Bush's war on terrorism was the 2003 invasion of Iraq, a country ruled by a secular tyrant, Saddam Hussein, who viewed jihadis with hostility. The U.S.-led invasion put a swift end to Saddam's brutal reign but also led to the disbanding of the Iraqi army and the hollowing out of other secular government institutions. Initially, Arab Sunnis, the minority group that had dominated Iraq under Saddam, bore the lion's share of the sectarian violence that followed the invasion. This proved to be a lifeline for al Qaeda and other jihadi groups, which were able to position themselves as the defenders of the Sunnis. As Habib put it in his 2004 letter to bin Laden: "When God knew of our afflictions and helplessness, he opened the door of jihad for us and for the entire umma in Iraq."

Habib was referring, specifically, to the rise of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian jihadi who had come to prominence in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion. By 2004, Zarqawi, and not bin Laden, was the leader of the world's most powerful jihadi group. Aside from their shared commitment to violent jihad, the two men had little in common. Bin Laden had enjoyed a privileged upbringing; Zarqawi had grown up poor, had done time in prison, and had emerged not just as a religious extremist but also as a hardened ex-convict and a brutal thug. Despite the vast gulf between the two men, Zarqawi was eager for his group, Jamaat al-Tawhid wal-Jihad, to merge with al Qaeda. In a series of missives to bin Laden, Zarqawi made clear that his followers were "the sons of the Father"—that is, bin Laden—and that his group was a mere "branch of the original." Zarqawi also assured al Qaeda's leaders that he was collaborating with and seeking to unite all the jihadi factions in Iraq.

Zarqawi's enthusiasm pleased bin Laden. "The merger of the group [Jamaat] al-Tawhid wal-Jihad [would be] tremendous," bin Laden wrote to his deputy Zawahiri and Tawfiq, urging them "to give this matter considerable attention, for it is a major step toward uniting the efforts of the jihadis." In December 2004, bin Laden formalized the merger by publicly appointing Zarqawi as the leader of a new group, al Qaeda in Mesopotamia (often referred to in Western media as al Qaeda in Iraq).

Zarqawi's initiative eventually spurred jihadi groups in Somalia, Yemen, and North Africa to formally align themselves with al Qaeda. These groups did not directly grow out of the original organization, but their leaders saw many benefits in acquiring the internationally feared al Qaeda brand, especially the chance to improve their standing in the eyes of their followers and to gain international media attention, which they hoped would help them raise money and recruit new adherents. It worked.

Fixated on al Qaeda, counterterrorist authorities all over the world often subsumed all jihadis under a single umbrella, unwittingly giving individuals who wanted to associate themselves with bin Laden a larger selection of groups to potentially join. Thus, al-

though the al Qaeda organization was broken, its brand lived on through the deeds of groups that acted in its name. All of this flowed from Zarqawi's alliance with bin Laden. In early 2007, a Saudi jihadi cleric, Bishr al-Bishr, described the merger in a letter to a senior al Qaeda leader as an instance of God having "shown mercy on al Qaeda," which would have come to an end had it not been for "the amazing jihadi victories in Iraq, which raised the value of al Qaeda's stocks." It was a divine intervention, he assessed: "God's way of repaying the people of jihad for their sacrifices in his path."

THINGS FALL APART

Bin Laden had assumed that those who pledged their allegiance to him would pursue the kind of attacks against the United States that al Qaeda had pioneered. Their success, he hoped, would "raise the morale of Muslims, who would, in turn, become more engaged and supportive of jihadis," as he put it in a letter to Zawahiri and Tawfiq in December 2004.

Once again, bin Laden had miscalculated. The decision to bestow the al Qaeda imprimatur on groups that he did not control soon backfired. Zarqawi failed to unite Iraq's jihadi groups under his banner, and the country's most established jihadi group, Ansar al-Sunna (also known as Ansar al-Islam) refused to merge with him. Before long, bin Laden and his followers found themselves at the receiving end of letters that chronicled the squabbles among their new associates. "Ansar al-Sunna have been spreading lies about me," Zarqawi complained in one. "They say that I have become like [Antar] al-Zawabiri," the leader of a notoriously extremist Algerian group who had been killed in 2002 and whom many jihadis had considered to be overzealous even by their standards. "Can you imagine?!" he fumed.

More disturbing for al Qaeda than Zarqawi's vain whining, however, were his group's indiscriminate attacks, which resulted in massive Iraqi casualties, particularly among Shiites. Bin Laden wanted al Qaeda to make headlines by killing and injuring Americans, not Iraqi civilians—even if they were Shiites, whom Sunni jihadis saw as heretics.

From their hideouts in Pakistan and the tribal areas, al Qaeda's leaders struggled to unify the militant groups in Iraq that were now at the center of global jihadism. But the divisions among them became even more entrenched. Zawahiri tried to mediate between Zarqawi and Ansar al-Sunna, but his efforts failed. Ansar al-Sunna made it clear to al Qaeda that unity with Zarqawi was conditional on "correcting the ways of al Qaeda in Mesopotamia." Atiyah Abd al-Rahman (generally referred to as Atiyah), who oversaw al Qaeda's external contacts and relations at the time, grew ever more dismayed with Zarqawi's leadership and wrote to bin Laden that "we cannot leave the brother to act on the basis of his judgment alone." In a December 2005 letter intercepted by U.S. intelligence, Atiyah urged Zarqawi "to lessen the number of attacks, even to cut the current daily attacks in half, even less," pointing out that "the most important thing is for jihad to continue, and a protracted war is to our advantage."

Things went from bad to worse for al Qaeda after Zarqawi was killed by a U.S. airstrike in 2006. His successors

declared themselves the Islamic State of Iraq without consulting bin Laden, Zawahiri, or any other senior al Qaeda figures. In 2007, ISI leaders stopped responding to al Qaeda's letters altogether, a silence that reflected, in part, the fact that the Iraqi jihadis had begun losing ground to what became known as the Sunni Awakening, which saw U.S. forces forge ties with Sunni tribal sheikhs in order to confront the terrorists.

ON THE SIDELINES

Al Qaeda's management struggles were hardly limited to Iraq. In 2009, a group of jihadis in Yemen dubbed themselves al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula without alerting the parent group or even publicly pledging allegiance to bin Laden. They were to prove a persistent source of headaches. In or around 2009, an AQAP leader named Qasim al-Raymi admitted in a letter to al Qaeda's leadership that he and the group's other top members suffered from inexperience and "deficiencies concerning leadership and administration." He conceded that he himself was not equipped "to judge when, how, and where to strike." But inexperience did not deter AQAP's top leader, Nasir al-Wuhayshi, from announcing in 2010 that he wanted to proclaim an Islamic state in Yemen. It took a great deal of finesse on the part of senior al Qaeda leaders to dissuade him.

For his part, bin Laden was dismayed that AQAP even considered itself a jihadi group at all, much less an affiliate of al Qaeda. "Did you actually plan and prepare for jihad?" he tartly asked in a draft letter to Wuhayshi. "Or is your presence a result of a few government attacks to which the brothers responded, and in the midst of this reactive battle, it occurred to you that you should persist?" Wuhayshi's letters to bin Laden show that he was vexed by the guidelines that the leadership had given him. Despite backing down from declaring an Islamic state, Wuhayshi defied senior al Qaeda leaders' instructions to refrain from sectarian attacks targeting Houthis in Yemen and to curb military confrontations with the Yemeni government.

For bin Laden, the least problematic of the new al Qaeda spinoffs was the North African group al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. Unlike the other affiliates, it did not want to proclaim a state and instead focused on taking Westerners hostage for ransom or for the freeing of jihadi prisoners held by Western governments. Bin Laden saw this tactic's potential for influencing Western publics and seemed to appreciate the pragmatic approach of AQIM's leader, Abu Musab Abdul Wadud. Still, because bin Laden could not communicate with AQIM in a timely fashion (since his communications depended on the schedule of a courier), his interventions often arrived too late and sometimes even proved counterproductive. On at least one occasion, negotiations over the release of Western hostages that could have benefited AQIM fell apart because of bin Laden's meddling.

By 2009, most of al Qaeda's senior leaders were fed up with their unruly affiliates. That year, bin Laden hardly rejoiced when Mukhtar Abu al-Zubayr, the leader of the Somali jihadi group al Shabab, sought a public merger with al Qaeda. Zubayr, too, wanted to proclaim an Islamic state. In a letter to Zubayr, Atiyah delicately explained that it

would be best to "keep your allegiance to Sheikh Osama secret." For his part, bin Laden declined the public merger and suggested that Zubayr downsize from a state to an emirate, and do so quietly. "Our inclination," he wrote, "is that your emirate should be a reality to which the people grow attached without having to proclaim it." Zubayr complied with their wishes, but his response shows that he was troubled, rightly pointing out that he and his group were "already considered by both our enemies and our friends to be part of al Qaeda." A few years later, Zawahiri, who succeeded bin Laden after his death, finally admitted al Shabab into al Qaeda.

During the last year of his life, bin Laden lamented that his "brothers" had become a "liability" for global jihad. Some of their attacks, he bemoaned, resulted in "unnecessary civilian casualties." Worse yet, "the Muslim public was repulsed" by such attacks. The new generation of jihadis, he concluded, had lost their way.

In the winter of 2010–11, the revolts that became known as the Arab Spring initially gave bin Laden some hope. He reveled in the success of what he called the "revolutionaries" (*thuwar*) who brought down autocratic regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. But soon, he grew troubled. In conversations with his family, he worried that "the revolutions were born prematurely" and lamented that al Qaeda and other jihadi groups were mostly on the sidelines. He was resigned that "we cannot do anything except intensify our prayers."

Yet bin Laden was determined to "protect these revolutions" and intent on advising the protesters through his public statements. His one and only response to the Arab Spring went through at least 16 drafts before he made an initial recording of it. And his daughters Sumayya and Maryam, who had effectively co-authored most of the public messages that bin Laden delivered over the years, did much of the heavy lifting in composing the text. In late April 2011, they were planning to give it one more round of edits before the final recording, but they ran out of time: U.S. Navy SEALs raided the Abbottabad compound before they had a chance to polish it. It was the U.S. government that ended up releasing the statement, probably to help establish that the raid had actually occurred and undermine the claims of conspiracy theorists to the contrary.

The raid was masterfully planned and executed. "Justice has been done," U.S. President Barack Obama declared in announcing bin Laden's death. With the man behind the 9/11 attack eliminated and with mostly peaceful and secular protesters on the march against Middle Eastern tyrants, it seemed for a moment that the jihadi movement had run its course. But that moment proved fleeting.

A SHORT-LIVED CALIPHATE

Back in Washington, the Obama administration had dropped Bush's "war on terror" moniker. But Obama maintained his predecessor's excessive focus on al Qaeda, and his team failed to discern divisions within jihadism that proved consequential. In choosing to go to war in Iraq, the Bush administration had exaggerated al Qaeda's connections to the country and overestimated the counterterrorism benefits of toppling Saddam's regime. The Obama administration, for its part, overestimated the positive effects

that bin Laden's death and the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq would have on the fight against jihadism. "The drawdown in Iraq allowed us to refocus our fight against al Qaeda and achieve major victories against its leadership, including Osama bin Laden," Obama claimed in October 2011. At that very moment, however, the ISI, al Qaeda's erstwhile ally in Iraq, was being energized by a new generation of leaders. The Obama administration and other Western governments failed to see the growing danger.

In 2010, the ISI had come under the leadership of a formerly obscure Iraqi who called himself Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The Iraqi government's sectarianism and corruption offered fertile ground for the ISI to rebuild and grow. In 2010–11, Baghdadi unleashed a wave of terrorist assaults on Iraqi Christians and Shiites. This campaign enraged al Qaeda's leaders. "I do not understand," Zawahiri chafed in a letter he wrote to bin Laden a few months before the Abbottabad raid. "Are the brothers not content with the number of their current enemies? Are they eager to add new ones to their list?" He urged bin Laden to write to the ISI's leaders and instruct them to stop "targeting the Shiites indiscriminately" and to "end their attacks against Christians." But bin Laden no longer had any influence over the ISI. The Iraqi group had moved on.

Between 2011 and 2013, the ISI expanded into Syria, inserting itself into the bloody civil war that had begun there after the regime of Bashar al-Assad crushed an Arab Spring uprising. In June 2014, after the ISI had conquered vast swaths of territory in both Iraq and Syria, the group's spokesperson, Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, proclaimed Baghdadi to be the leader of a new caliphate, and the group renamed itself the Islamic State, dropping all geographic references from its name. Its territorial expansion led jihadi groups in more than ten countries to pledge allegiance to the new caliph. In turn, the Islamic State (also known as ISIS) designated these groups as either "provinces" or "soldiers of the caliphate."

After bin Laden's death, al Qaeda continued to operate under Zawahiri's command, but it had now been fully eclipsed by ISIS. Still, just as bin Laden had been ignorant of terrorism's limits, Baghdadi proved to be clueless when it came to running a state, let alone a "caliphate" that aimed to conquer other countries without possessing so much as a single fighter jet. In September 2014, the Obama administration formed a coalition of 83 countries "to degrade and ultimately defeat ISIS." By 2016, ISIS had begun to collapse. The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump kept up the fight, and the coalition eventually wrested control of all of ISIS's territory. Baghdadi had spurned bin Laden's strategy of fighting from the shadows in favor of empire building and had managed to replace bin Laden as the face of global jihadism. But the two men had similar fates. In October 2019, U.S. forces raided Baghdadi's compound in Idlib Province, in northwestern Syria. U.S. military dogs chased Baghdadi into a dead-end tunnel. Cornered, the caliph detonated a suicide vest. "The world is now a safer place," Trump declared.

THE FUTILITY OF TERROR

In the two years since Baghdadi's demise, Trump's pronouncement has

held up. The jihadi landscape is still divided. Jihadi organizations continue to proliferate, but no group dominates in the way that al Qaeda and ISIS once did. Their capabilities range from merely howling threats, to throwing Molotov cocktails, to carrying out suicide operations or blowing up cars, to seizing control of territory—at least for a time.

When it comes to the next phase of the struggle, all eyes are on Afghanistan. Al Qaeda, ISIS, and a number of other groups maintain operations in the country, but they are overshadowed by the larger conflict playing out between the Afghan government and the Taliban, which are both struggling for control of the country in the wake of the United States' withdrawal. In 2020, the United States and the Taliban reached a peace agreement in which the Taliban promised "to prevent any group or individual, including al-Qa'ida, from using the soil of Afghanistan to threaten the security of the United States and its allies."

Will the Taliban make good on their promise? Judging by the Abbottabad papers, not all Taliban members were equal in the eyes of al Qaeda, which had long suspected that some Taliban factions had been seeking rapprochement with the United States. As early as 2007, Atiyah wrote to bin Laden that "forces within the Taliban are distancing themselves from al Qaeda to elude the terrorism accusation." And in 2010, Zawahiri expressed alarm in a letter to bin Laden that the Taliban seemed "psychologically prepared" to accept a deal that would render al Qaeda impotent. Owing to the Taliban's factionalism since 9/11, it may be difficult for the group's leaders to enforce compliance with the terms of their agreement with the United States.

The Taliban's factionalism may prove to be an intractable problem for the United States. But al Qaeda's experiences after 9/11 suggest that the same factionalism will also complicate matters for terrorists seeking refuge in Afghanistan. Even a sympathetic host regime is no guarantee of safe haven. Bin Laden learned that lesson the hard way, and Baghdadi later found out that controlling territory was even harder. But Washington and its allies have come to realize (or at least they should have) that an open-ended war on terrorism is futile and that a successful counterterrorism policy must address the legitimate political grievances that al Qaeda claims to champion—for example, U.S. support for dictatorships in the Middle East.

Washington cannot quite claim victory against al Qaeda and its ilk, which retain the ability to inspire deadly, if small-scale, attacks. The past two decades, however, have made clear just how little jihadi groups can hope to accomplish. They stand a far better chance of achieving eternal life in paradise than of bringing the United States to its knees.

Them and Us

How America Lets Its Enemies Hijack Its Foreign Policy

Ben Rhodes

No twenty-first-century event has shaped the United States and its role in the world as much as 9/11. The attacks pierced the complacency of the post–Cold War decade and shattered the illusion that history was ending with the triumph of American-led globalization. The scale of the U.S. response remade American government, foreign policy, politics, and society in ways that continue to generate aftershocks. Only by interrogating the excesses of that response can Americans understand what their country has become and where it needs to go.

It is difficult to overstate—and in fact easy to understate—the impact of 9/11. By any measure, the "war on terror" was the biggest project of the period of American hegemony that began when the Cold War ended—a period that has now reached its dusk. For 20 years, counterterrorism has been the overarching priority of U.S. national security policy. The machinery of government has been redesigned to fight an endless war at home and abroad. Basic functions—from the management of immigration to the construction of government facilities to community policing—have become heavily securitized, as have aspects of everyday life: travel, banking, identification cards. The United States has used military force in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, the Philippines, Somalia, Yemen, and a number of other countries. Terrorism has become a prominent issue in nearly all of Washington's bilateral and multilateral relationships.

The war on terror also reshaped American national identity. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States was a country bereft of the unifying sense of purpose that the Cold War had fostered. Gone was the clarity of the ideological struggle between capitalist democracy and communist autocracy, the free world and closed societies. After 9/11, President George W. Bush marshaled the aspiration for a unifying American identity and directed it toward a new generational struggle. The war on terror, he declared, would be on par with the epochal struggles against fascism and communism.

Bush's framing of counterterrorism as a defining, multigenerational, and global war represented an effective form of leadership after an unprecedented national tragedy, but it led inexorably to overreach and unintended consequences. The U.S. government soon abused its powers of surveillance, detention, and interrogation. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq became about far more than taking out al Qaeda. American democracy was linked to militarized regime change in ways that undermined its health at home and legitimacy abroad. The victories Bush

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and his administration promised—and that conservative media relentlessly predicted—never materialized, sapping Americans' confidence in government and provoking a search for internal scapegoats. The jingoistic nationalism of the immediate post-9/11 era morphed into a cocktail of fear and xenophobia that eventually produced a president, Donald Trump, who paid lip service to ending wars abroad and repurposed the rhetoric of the war on terror to attack a shifting cast of enemies at home.

The United States now has a president more genuinely committed to ending the country's "forever wars." President Joe Biden's determination to do so is demonstrated by his decision to remove U.S. troops from Afghanistan, and even more clearly by his administration's global agenda. In Biden's first address to the U.S. Congress, in April, and in a speech he made at the G-7 summit in June, terrorism was supplanted by the challenges of stamping out a pandemic, fighting climate change, revitalizing democracy, and preparing the United States and its allies for an enduring competition with an assertive China. After 20 years, Biden is taking steps to move the country into a new period of history: the post-post-9/11 era.

Yet the vast infrastructure of the war on terror remains in place, and its prerogatives continue to influence the organization of the U.S. government, the deployment of the U.S. military, the operations of the U.S. intelligence community, and Washington's support for autocratic regimes in the Middle East. As was the case in the Obama administration, those realities constrain the United States' ability to move decisively past the post-9/11 era, lead a global revitalization of democracy, and buttress a rules-based international order. A true pivot will require more dramatic steps: reconfiguring or dismantling aspects of the U.S. post-9/11 enterprise and changing a securitized mindset that has encouraged authoritarianism at home and abroad. The U.S. government cannot end forever wars if it is designed to fight them; it cannot revitalize democracy if democracy consistently winds up on the losing end of national security tradeoffs.

Meanwhile, what the United States represents and what it means to be an American are far more contested today than when the nation reflexively rallied after 9/11. The debate about American identity has become so acute that the country has been rendered more vulnerable to the kinds of violent extremism that its post-9/11 posture was built to prevent. There was a time when a deadly assault on the U.S. Capitol would have been a sobering wake-up call to action; today, it has been interpreted largely through the prism of tribal politics characterized by right-wing denialism and deflection. The same Republican Party that led the establishment of a multitrillion-dollar security state after September 11 doesn't even want to investigate what happened on January 6.

In this context, one way to redefine the United States' purpose in the world—and reshape American identity at home—would be to focus on competition with the Chinese Communist Party. That contest is the one major concern in U.S. politics that evokes broad bipartisan agreement. And there are good reasons to be concerned about the CCP. Unlike al Qaeda, it has both an alternative view of governance and society and

the power to remake much of the world to suit its own purposes. Ironically, China's ascent in global influence accelerated rapidly after 9/11, as the United States was too often consumed by its focus on terrorism and the Middle East. In terms of geopolitical influence, the CCP has been the biggest beneficiary of the war on terror. There are also good reasons, however, to be wary of how a U.S.-Chinese confrontation might play out. Defining the United States' purpose in the world and American identity through a new "us versus them" construct risks repeating some of the worst mistakes of the war on terror.

THE OCEAN LINER

President Barack Obama used to call the U.S. government "an ocean liner": a massive, lumbering structure that is hard to turn around once pointed in a certain direction. After 9/11, the Bush administration pointed the ship in a new direction and generated an enormous amount of momentum. The national security apparatus was refocused on fighting terrorism: vast new bureaucracies were established, organizational charts redrawn, new authorities granted, budgets rewritten, priorities upended. After U.S. forces routed the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2001, a delirious triumphalism took hold in Washington. U.S. global influence never seemed stronger, and the politics of being tough on terrorism was resoundingly validated at the ballot box in the 2002 midterm elections, when the GOP swept control of Congress. Ever since, the United States has been cleaning up the wreckage left behind in the ocean liner's wake.

Today, the countries that experienced the most intense fighting of the

war on terror are mired in various degrees of conflict. Afghanistan is returning to the state of civil war and Taliban ascendancy that preceded 9/11. Iraq has weathered a lengthy insurgency that generated al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), which later morphed into the Islamic State (also known as ISIS); the country remains riven by intercommunal rivalry and Iranian influence. Libya, Somalia, and Yemen all lack governing authorities and host brutal proxy wars. There was certainly a basis for U.S. military action after 9/11, and certain threats necessitate a military response. Yet the conditions in these countries demonstrate the limits of military intervention and raise uncomfortable questions about whether, on balance, the people of these countries would have been better off without it.

The costs of the post-9/11 wars have been staggering. Over 7,000 U.S. service members have died in Afghanistan and Iraq, more than 50,000 were wounded in action, and more than 30,000 U.S. veterans of post-9/11 conflicts have taken their own lives. Hundreds of thousands of Afghans and Iraqis lost their lives, and 37 million people, as estimated by Brown University's Costs of War Project, have been displaced by the post-9/11 conflicts that have involved U.S. forces. Meanwhile, the price tag of those wars—and for caring for those who fought them—is approaching $7 trillion.

Counterterrorism has also consumed an incalculable amount of the limited bandwidth of the U.S. government—everything from the time and attention of the president and senior officials to staffing and prioritization within agencies. Consider what else the United States could have done with those resources and that bandwidth over the last two decades, as the country struggled to keep pace with climate change, epidemics, widening inequality, technological disruption, and diminished U.S. influence—especially in places enticed by the CCP's growing economic clout and promises of infrastructure improvements.

Of course, the party that instigated the war on terror was al Qaeda. After 9/11, the United States and other countries faced the risk of further catastrophic terrorist attacks and had to respond. To their credit, the U.S. military and the U.S. intelligence community decimated al Qaeda and took out its leader, Osama bin Laden. ISIS has been similarly rolled back through a campaign that involved a limited U.S. presence on the ground. My personal experience with the Americans who carry out U.S. counterterrorism policies has led me to overwhelmingly admire them. They have served their country bravely through administrations with shifting priorities, helping prevent attacks and save lives. Aspects of the country's counterterrorism apparatus have certainly been necessary.

That reality, however, does not erase the enormous excesses and warped risk calculations that defined Washington's response to 9/11. The kinds of attacks that the country spent trillions of dollars to prevent would have caused only a fraction of the deaths that could have been prevented by a more competent response to COVID-19, by the minimal gun safety measures that have been blocked by Congress, or by better preparation for deadly weather events intensified by climate change—all of which were neglected or stymied in part because of Washington's fixation on

terrorism. The scale of the costs—and opportunity costs—of the post-9/11 wars suggests that the country needs a structural correction, not simply a change of course.

EASY TO START, HARD TO END

From the president on down, nearly all of the Biden administration's top officials played a role in the Obama administration's efforts to extricate the United States from its post-9/11 wars, a complex and politically fraught task that ultimately reduced the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan and Iraq from nearly 180,000 in 2009 to roughly 15,000 by 2017. And during Obama's second term, Washington's global agenda looked something like the one that Biden described in his address to the G-7: organizing the world to combat climate change, strengthening global health systems, and pivoting to Asia while trying to contain a revanchist Russia.

With the benefit of hindsight, however, it is clear that the Obama administration—whose critics usually fault it for excessive restraint—actually erred in the opposite direction by sustaining aspects of the post-9/11 project. A 2009 troop surge in Afghanistan prolonged the war despite diminishing returns. The expanded use of lethal drones achieved tactical successes but institutionalized a capability to kill people in many countries. Acquiescence to authoritarian allies, including a Saudi regime that launched a catastrophic war in Yemen, undermined U.S. rhetoric about democracy. After Trump took office, his administration deployed tens of thousands of U.S. troops to the Middle East to confront Iran, relaxed restrictions meant to limit civilian casualties, cast aside concerns about human rights, fully embraced autocratic allies and partners, and deprioritized climate change and global health.

The clear lesson is that it won't be enough to merely redirect the ocean liner; Biden and Congress should redesign it. Take climate change. Under Obama, the effort to achieve the Paris agreement to limit global warming drew on scarce climate expertise scattered across agencies and a fraction of the resources allotted by Congress for counterterrorism. The Obama White House went to great lengths to connect that climate expertise with the machinery of U.S. foreign policy: the bilateral and multilateral relationship management required to achieve anything substantial in international politics. Once the Trump administration took office, this nascent prioritization of the climate was halted. The same thing happened to a White House office dedicated to pandemic preparedness that Obama had established after the Ebola outbreak in 2014. Trump shuttered that office, folding its portfolio into a directorate focused on weapons of destruction: pandemic preparedness was quite literally absorbed into the infrastructure of the war on terror.

Today, the Biden team has the advantage of two decades' worth of evidence that the focus on terrorism has warped national priorities, with rising public concerns about pandemics, a warming climate, and challenges from China and Russia. To truly prioritize those issues, Biden and his Democratic allies in Congress should work to dismantle parts of the post-9/11 enterprise. The 2001 congressional Authorization for Use of Military Force, which

has been used to give legal standing to a wide range of military interventions since 9/11, should be repealed and replaced by something far more narrowly tailored, with a built-in sunset before the end of Biden's term. Drone strikes should cease to be routine and should be used only in circumstances in which the U.S. government is prepared to publicly reveal and justify its actions. The U.S. military's global force posture should reflect the diminishing prioritization of the Middle East; the Pentagon should reduce the oversized presence of U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf region, which escalated in the Trump years.

To make permanent the focus on issues such as climate change and global health, the Biden administration should increase federal investments in clean energy, pandemic preparedness, and global health security and should accompany that spending with major reforms. For instance, agencies such as the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development should ramp up their climate expertise, and the intelligence community and the military should devote more resources to understanding and responding to truly existential dangers that threaten the American people.

The Biden team will encounter resistance to those steps, just as the Obama administration often found itself swimming against the tide of American politics. The effort to close the costly and morally indefensible U.S. prison in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, was stymied by members of Congress from both parties. The cynical extremity of the Republican response to the 2012 attack on U.S. facilities in Benghazi, Libya, blended a growing penchant for far-right conspiracy theories with Republican attempts to delegitimize any foreign policy initiative supported by the Democratic Party. The Iran nuclear deal—designed to prevent both an Iranian nuclear weapon and yet another war—proved to be more contentious (and drew less congressional support) than did the authorization of an open-ended war in Iraq.

Yet Biden is in a post-Trump, post-pandemic moment. The GOP's embrace of Trumpism clearly endangered the lives of Americans and destroyed the party's claim to a foreign policy that promotes American values. Biden and his team are uniquely suited to make the case to the public that they are more trustworthy, competent, and capable of securing the country and strengthening its democracy.

To do so, the United States must abandon the mindset that undermines democratic values. Consider the experience of Mohamed Soltan, an Egyptian American who took part in the 2011 protests in Tahrir Square. He celebrated the downfall of the Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak and the democratic opening that followed. But after a 2013 military coup ousted Egypt's elected president, Mohamed Morsi, Soltan joined protesters in Cairo's Rabaa Square. Security forces opened fire, killing at least 800 people. Soltan was shot. He was then imprisoned, tortured, and encouraged by interrogators to commit suicide. He went on a hunger strike that lasted almost 500 days and resisted the appeals of ISIS recruiters who were allowed to enter his cell. He was released only after a personal appeal from Obama to Egypt's dictator, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

This dystopian scenario reveals the dysfunction of a post-9/11 U.S. foreign policy that provides billions of dollars in military and economic aid to a brutal regime that allows ISIS recruiters to roam its overpopulated prisons, fostering the very radicalization that justifies both the regime's brutality and U.S. assistance. The war on terror was always at war with itself. The United States subsidizes Egyptian repression while paying lip service to democratic values, just as Washington continues to sell weapons to a Saudi government that silences dissent and has waged a brutal war in Yemen. It is no coincidence that the governments of key U.S. partners in the war on terror—not just Egypt and Saudi Arabia but also Israel and Turkey, among others—have grown more repressive since 9/11, contributing to the rising tide of authoritarianism around the world that the United States wants to roll back.

Revitalizing global democracy is not compatible with a permanent global war on terror. The balance of tradeoffs has to shift. U.S. military assistance should be conditioned on respect for human rights. Washington should cast off the hypocrisy that has weighed down American foreign policy for too long.

THE WAR AT HOME

The war on terror not only accelerated authoritarian trends elsewhere; it did so at home, too. The jingoism of the post-9/11 era fused national security and identity politics, distorting ideas about what it means to be an American and blurring the distinction between critics and enemies.

After 9/11, an us-versus-them, right-wing political and media apparatus stirred up anger against Americans who were not sufficiently committed to the war on terror and hyped the threat of an encroaching Islamic "other." But as the 9/11 attacks receded into memory and it became clear that no grand victories would take place in Afghanistan or Iraq, the nature of that "other" shifted. Fear-mongering about terrorism and conspiracy theories about "creeping sharia" morphed into fear-mongering about immigrants at the southern border, anger at athletes who took a knee during the national anthem to protest police violence, and conspiracy theories about everything from Benghazi to voter fraud. More often than not, this dynamic targeted minority populations.

Ironically, this redirection of the xenophobic currents of the country's post-9/11 politics ended up fueling terrorism rather than fighting it, with white nationalists running over a counterdemonstrator in Charlottesville and killing 11 people at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh. It also contributed to once unthinkable authoritarian scenarios. When fellow citizens are relentlessly cast as enemies of the state, even a violent American insurrection can become real.

When a superpower embraces a belligerent strain of nationalism, it also ripples out around the world. The excesses of post-9/11 U.S. policies were repurposed by authoritarians elsewhere to target political opponents, shut down civil society, control the media, and expand the power of the state under the guise of counterterrorism. Of course, this is not Washington's doing. Yet just as Americans should recoil when Russian President Vladimir Putin indulges in whataboutism to excuse his abuses, they should not blithely ignore their own

country's overreach and belligerent nationalism, which undermines Washington's effort to push back against Putin, defend democratic values, and reinforce a rules-based order.

Like Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping has embraced the American war on terror as a template for repression and a justification for abuses. In 2014, Uyghur terrorists took dozens of lives in the autonomous territory of Xinjiang, in western China. State media referred to the attacks as "China's 9/11." Xi urged CCP officials to follow the American post-9/11 script, setting in motion a crackdown that would eventually lead to a million Uyghurs being thrown into concentration camps. At a meeting in 2019, Trump reportedly told Xi that detaining the Uyghurs in camps was "exactly the right thing to do."

Although nothing in the United States' response to 9/11 approaches the scale of the CCP's repression, Trump's comment was far from the only validation that the CCP would find in the post-9/11 era. In the years following 9/11, several Uyghurs were held in the U.S. prison at Guantánamo Bay. None were found guilty of terrorism or deemed to pose a serious danger to the United States. When Obama tried to close the prison at the outset of his presidency, there was a plan to release a few Uyghur detainees in the United States to show that the American government was willing to do its part, since it was asking other countries to repatriate some of their citizens who had been detained at Guantánamo but cleared for release, and the Uyghurs could not be safely repatriated to China. Obama's proposal was met with hyperbolic opposition that resulted in restrictions that prevented the prison's closure. Republican Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and Senator Joe Lieberman, an independent from Connecticut, led the charge, releasing a joint declaration that claimed that the Uyghurs "have radical religious views which make it difficult for them to assimilate into our population"—a statement that sounded precisely like CCP propaganda regarding its actions in Xinjiang.

Americans rightfully take pride in their country's tradition of global leadership and its aspiration to be "a city upon a hill" that sets an example for the world. But why would they think that others will follow their example only when it reflects positive values and qualities? When Americans invade another country for no good reason, support autocracy out of convenience, and stigmatize minorities in their own country, they should not be surprised when other countries emulate those misdeeds or use them to justify their own authoritarian excesses.

Americans must confront this uncomfortable reality not because Washington should retreat from the world but because it cannot cede the field to leaders like Putin and Xi. The United States must live up to the better story it tells itself as the leader of the free world. Ultimately, this is the most important lesson that Americans must learn from the post-9/11 period. Restoring American leadership requires rebuilding the example of American democracy as the foundation of the United States' foreign and national security policy.

MORE US, LESS THEM

All these lessons must be applied to an intensifying competition with China. Biden is justifying huge outlays on

infrastructure by pointing to the need to prove that democracies can outcompete the CCP's state-controlled capitalism. Congress is investing substantial resources in science and technology to keep pace with Chinese innovation. The Biden White House is proposing industrial policies that would favor certain U.S. industries and refining export-control regimes to disentangle critical supply chains that link the United States and China. U.S. defense spending is increasingly shaped by future contingencies involving the People's Liberation Army. The State Department has prioritized the fortification of U.S. alliances in Asia and enhanced contacts with Taiwan. Washington has become increasingly critical of Chinese human rights violations in places such as Hong Kong and Xinjiang. On trade, technology, and human rights, the United States is working with partners and through multilateral organizations, such as the G-7 and NATO, to forge the firmest possible united front against China. These efforts will create their own political incentives and pressures; they will also create momentum for the expansion of resources and bandwidth within the U.S. government. Already, one can sense the ocean liner adjusting course.

Yet although each of these initiatives has its own justification, it would be a mistake to simply focus on the new "them"—an impulse that could facilitate another wave of nationalist authoritarianism of the kind that has poisoned American politics for the past 20 years. Better to focus more on "us"—a democracy resilient enough to withstand a long-term competition with a rival political model, forge consensus among the world's democracies, and set a better example to the world.

In addition to delivering on big-ticket items, such as infrastructure, American democracy must be fortified and revitalized. Protecting the right to vote and strengthening democratic institutions at home must be the cornerstone of the United States' democratic example. Addressing inequality and racial injustice in the United States would demonstrate that democracies can deliver for everyone. Rooting out corruption that flows through the U.S. financial system would help clean up American politics and choke off resources that flow to autocrats in other countries. Stemming the flood of disinformation and hate speech on U.S. social media platforms would curb radicalization and undermine authoritarianism all over the world. For 30 years, the U.S. government has prioritized economic interests over human rights in dealings with the CCP, and so have many American companies, cultural institutions, and individuals. This must change—not because of Washington's geopolitical opposition to Beijing but because of the United States' support for democratic values at home and around the globe.

The world is a difficult and sometimes dangerous place. The United States must assert itself to defend its interests. But the post-post-9/11 era should be defined not by a confrontation with the next enemy in line but rather by the revitalization of democracy as a successful means of human organization. To replace the war on terror with a better generational project, Americans have to be driven by what they are for, not what they are against.

The Good Enough Doctrine

Learning to Live With Terrorism

Daniel Byman

In the 20 years since the 9/11 attack, U.S. counterterrorism policy has achieved some striking successes and suffered some horrific failures. On the positive side, jihadi organizations such as al Qaeda and the Islamic State (also known as ISIS) are now shadows of their former selves, and the United States has avoided another catastrophic, 9/11-scale attack. The worst fears, or even the more modest ones, of U.S. counterterrorism officials have not been realized. With terrorism less of an immediate concern, U.S. President Joe Biden has turned Washington's focus toward China, climate change, and other issues—even withdrawing U.S. troops from Afghanistan as part of an effort to end the so-called forever wars.

At the same time, however, many of the United States' more ambitious foreign policy efforts done in the name of counterterrorism since 9/11, such as effecting regime change in the Middle East and winning the goodwill of Muslims around the world, have failed and even backfired. Although al Qaeda and ISIS are far weaker than they were at their peak, they have persisted in the face of tremendous pressure, and their reach, albeit at times more ambitious than their grasp, has only grown since 2001. Today, other countries face potent terrorist threats, and al Qaeda, ISIS, and their various affiliates and allies remain active in civil wars around the world.

Instead of a decisive victory, the United States appears to have settled for something less ambitious: good enough. It recognizes that although jihadi terrorism may be impossible to fully and permanently eradicate—or the costs of trying to do so are simply too high—the threat can be reduced to the point where it kills relatively few Americans and no longer shapes daily life in the United States. As Washington has grown more skeptical of large-scale counterinsurgency operations designed to reshape whole societies, the most recent three administrations—Barack Obama's, Donald Trump's, and now Biden's—have focused on keeping jihadi organizations weak and off balance. Through a mix of intelligence gathering, military operations, and homeland security efforts, they have mostly succeeded in keeping the fight "over there." To a remarkable degree, the United States itself has been insulated from the threat. Jihadism remains alive and well abroad and is not going away anytime soon, but the current U.S. doctrine is a politically feasible and comparatively effective way of managing the issue. Good enough, it turns out, is good enough.

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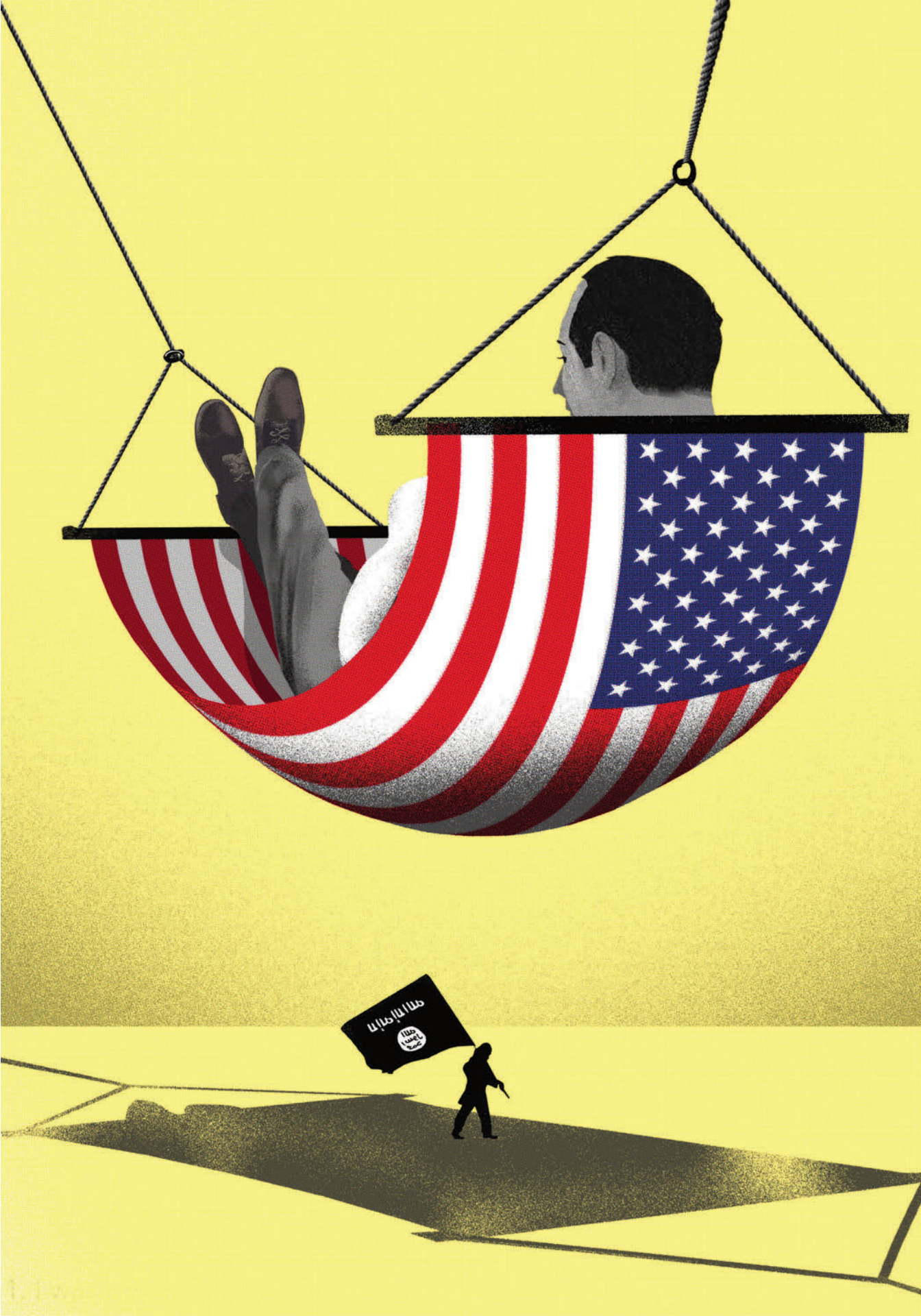
ON THE RUN

The severity of the threat posed by jihadi groups such as al Qaeda and ISIS



depends on where you are. Data from the think tank New America indicate that 107 Americans have died in jihadi terrorist attacks on U.S. soil since 9/11, almost half of whom were killed at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida, in 2016 by Omar Mateen, who declared allegiance to ISIS during his rampage. Europe, by contrast, has suffered far more such violence. In one gruesome 2015 evening in Paris alone, ISIS suicide bombers and shooters killed 130 people in a coordinated series of attacks. Europe has also seen far more stabbings and other low-casualty attacks, in part because it has stricter gun laws. As ISIS's strength has waned, however, attacks on both sides of the Atlantic have subsided. As of mid-July 2021, the United States had not endured a jihadi attack since December 2019, when a Saudi student linked to al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula killed three sailors at a U.S. Navy base in Florida. Europe has suffered fewer casualties than during the peak years of 2015 and 2016.

These numbers pale in comparison to those of Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, where jihadi groups are far more active than they were before 9/11. Al Qaeda has a presence in, among other countries, Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Iran, Libya, Mali, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, and Yemen. ISIS is present in most of those countries, plus Cameroon, Chad, Iraq, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Russia. Many of these countries suffer from civil wars in which jihadi groups are among the active participants. Hundreds of thousands have died in these conflicts.

One crucial factor keeping the United States safe is the American Muslim community. After 9/11, U.S. officials feared that the country was home to an angry Muslim population riddled with al Qaeda sympathizers and sleeper agents. In 2003, Robert Mueller, the director of the FBI, warned that the country's "greatest threat is from al Qaeda cells in the United States that we have not yet been able to identify." This fear turned out to have no basis in fact. Compared with European Muslims, American Muslims are well integrated into society. Indeed, their average educational and income levels are equivalent to or higher than those of non-Muslims. Although some have attempted to travel abroad to join ISIS, they have done so at far lower rates than European Muslims. Most important, American Muslims have cooperated closely with law enforcement and the FBI, making it hard for cells and radicalized individuals to organize and plan operations.

The jihadi movement also suffers from numerous weaknesses that hamper its ability to carry out attacks. Even at the height of al Qaeda's power, for instance, the movement the group sought to lead had conflicting priorities: Should it fight foreign invaders, topple supposedly apostate regimes in the Middle East, or take the war to the United States? These divisions are more pronounced today. Different factions disagree on whether and when to declare an Islamic state, how to handle nonbelievers and the insufficiently pious, which enemy to target first, and, of course, who should be the overall leader of the movement. In Iraq, these disputes led some fellow jihadis to condemn al Qaeda, and in Syria, they led to a rift that gave rise to ISIS and a jihadi civil war.

NOT-SO-SAFE HAVENS

The movement also lacks a sanctuary akin to what it enjoyed on the eve of 9/11. More than 10,000 volunteers traveled to Afghanistan when it was under the Taliban's rule to train in camps run by al Qaeda and other militant organizations. This safe haven was a powerful unifying force that made al Qaeda more lethal. It allowed its leaders to bring jihadi groups and individuals together from across the globe, train them to fight, indoctrinate them into a common agenda, and give those with special language skills or particular promise additional training.

Today, the movement tries to make do with multiple smaller safe havens, but none has proved as effective a launching pad as pre-9/11 Afghanistan did. Al Qaeda, ISIS, their affiliates, and other jihadi groups are present in war zones around the Muslim world. In those wars, members of these organizations learn to use weapons and forge intense bonds with one another. But they engage primarily in civil war, not international terrorism. As a result, they do not receive the same training as previous generations of jihadis did—and local leaders often assign the most promising local recruits and foreign volunteers to important roles in local conflicts rather than give them international terrorist assignments. The vast majority of the over 40,000 foreign fighters who joined ISIS during the Syrian civil war, for instance, fought to defend the caliphate in Iraq and Syria, not to project terror abroad.

The United States and its allies, moreover, exert constant pressure on most local affiliates—often to the point where they reject their mother organizations. Consider al-Nusra Front, once al Qaeda's affiliate in Syria, the most important war zone for the jihadi movement in the last decade. In 2016, it publicly distanced itself from al Qaeda. Al-Nusra's leader, Abu Mohammad al-Julani, declared that he and his organization rejected attacks on the United States and Europe. For al Qaeda, this was a major military setback and an even larger reputational blow, threatening its status as the would-be leader of the broader jihadi movement.

Iran is another second-rate safe haven for al Qaeda. As the U.S. State Department noted in its 2020 annual report on terrorism, since 9/11, Tehran had "continued to permit an [al Qaeda] facilitation network to operate in Iran, sending money and fighters to conflict zones in Afghanistan and Syria, and it still allowed [al Qaeda] members to reside in the country." Because Iran has an effective air defense system and Washington wants to avoid a broader conflict with Tehran, the United States does not carry out drone strikes or other direct attacks against al Qaeda figures there, giving them a degree of protection. But the group still must worry about other counterterrorism operations in the country. In 2020, Israeli assets—operating at the behest of the United States, according to interviews of intelligence officials conducted by *The New York Times*—killed Abu Muhammad al-Masri, a top al Qaeda official living in Iran.

The Iranian government itself also places numerous restrictions on al Qaeda figures in the country. Al Qaeda documents captured by U.S. forces revealed that some members of the group moved to Iran after 9/11 only out of desperation, and the organization's

relationship with the Iranian government has been marked by hostility and suspicion. For much of the post-9/11 period, al Qaeda members in Iran have often been considered captives or at least potential bargaining chips, not welcome guests. In addition, ties to Iran—a Shiite power that many religious Sunnis loathe—are unpopular among jihadis and discredit al Qaeda when publicized. ISIS, which is not based in Iran and supports attacks on the Islamic Republic, has criticized al Qaeda for its links to the country.

The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan could restore some of al Qaeda's freedom of action in the country. As it did before 9/11, the Taliban might once again support or tolerate a large al Qaeda leadership presence and give the group free rein to train, plot, and recruit there. Alternatively, the Taliban may simply work with al Qaeda fighters against their mutual enemies in Afghanistan but discourage broader international terrorist operations. For now, it remains unclear which Afghan Taliban leaders support direct attacks against the United States. Even before 9/11, several staunch Taliban supporters did not appear to approve of such operations, even if they did little to stop them.

Moreover, the United States' withdrawal from Afghanistan will not end its ability to affect the situation on the ground. Washington will retain diplomatic options, such as sanctions and multilateral pressure, to influence the Taliban's behavior. The United States is also working on an array of basing and access arrangements that would allow the U.S. military to strike targets in Afghanistan and Pakistan after the withdrawal of all U.S. troops. Such arrangements will not fully replace a direct U.S. presence in Afghanistan, but they could make it difficult for al Qaeda to plot freely or run large-scale training camps in the country. In short, although the United States' departure is unquestionably a victory for al Qaeda, it is not yet clear how big a win it will prove.

Beyond geographic safe havens, jihadis often use virtual sanctuaries. Even these, however, are less secure than they once were. Al Qaeda exploited the Internet for many years after 9/11, using email, chatrooms, and websites to communicate with followers, publicize the movement, and direct operations. ISIS put that approach on steroids, using platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to recruit widely and spread propaganda. When ISIS reemerged during the Syrian civil war, electrifying jihadi extremists worldwide with its beheading videos, Twitter hashtag hijackings, and other social media successes, it seemed that technology was on the terrorists' side. Not so today: although jihadi groups remain active on mainstream platforms, the companies that control them now remove jihadi content and ban users who promote it. Many governments, for their part, now aggressively monitor terrorist-linked accounts to identify followers and disrupt potential plots. For the would-be terrorist, social media has become a risky place to reside.

WHAT'S WORKED?

After years of grand designs with ambitious goals, the United States has settled on a set of policies designed to weaken foreign jihadis while protecting the U.S. homeland. Perhaps the most important but least appreciated of these policies is

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the U.S.-led global intelligence campaign against terrorist groups. After 9/11, the United States developed or expanded security partnerships with more than 100 countries. Local intelligence agencies have the manpower, legal authority, language skills, and other vital resources to monitor, disrupt, and arrest suspected terrorists. Jihadis now find themselves hunted when they try to establish cells, recruit new members, raise money, or otherwise prepare for attacks. The discovery of a terrorist cell in one country, moreover, often leads to arrests in another if the jihadis try to communicate, share funds, or otherwise work together across borders. U.S. intelligence agencies, for their part, share relevant information, push partners to act on it, and, when these partners do, gain new information that continues the cycle.

Some governments, however, are too weak for such intelligence cooperation to function effectively. In such cases, the United States uses drone strikes and airstrikes, along with raids by special operations forces, to attack al Qaeda, ISIS, and associated groups. Washington usually conducts these operations with the approval of local governments, as it does in Pakistan, or by taking advantage of the lack of a functioning government, as it does in Somalia and Yemen. In addition to the al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, the United States and its allies have killed the al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula leader Nasir al-Wuhayshi, the leading English-language jihadi propagandists Anwar al-Awlaki and Adam Gadahn, and the South Asian al Qaeda leader Ilyas Kashmiri, as well as important operational figures, such as Rashid Rauf and Saleh al-Somali, both of whom orchestrated attacks in the West. Washington and its allies have also assassinated al Qaeda's new leader in Yemen, Qasim al-Raymi; the leader of the group's North African branch, Abdelmalek Droukdel; and the leader of its unofficial affiliate in Syria, who was known as Abu al-Qassam. The United States launched a similar campaign against ISIS, killing its self-proclaimed caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, in 2019, among many other leaders.

Such efforts, of course, do not end terrorism, and they often kill innocent people caught in the crossfire. They are, however, effective at keeping jihadi groups weak. Decapitation strikes create constant churn within organizations, and many terrorist groups do not have a deep bench of would-be leaders, making it difficult for them to replace experienced commanders.

The constant fear of drone strikes and raids also undermines terrorist groups' effectiveness—perhaps more than the death of individual leaders. Members cannot gather in significant numbers for fear of detection, making it hard to sustain large training camps. If groups communicate, they risk being tracked. Isolated and dispersed, terrorist groups then risk splintering into disparate cells that are difficult to coordinate. Cells may go against the wishes of senior leadership and even compete with one another. Without the ability to communicate, leaders also lose their relevance. When the Arab Spring protests, the most important event in the Arab world in a generation, began in late 2010, al Qaeda waited weeks before commenting. In contrast, rival voices across the Arab world offered their views constantly, particularly on social media. At the height of the Syrian civil war, Ayman al-Zawa-

hiri, bin Laden's successor as the leader of al Qaeda, went incommunicado for long stretches of time—prompting the al-Nusra Front leader Julani and other affiliated members to distance themselves from the core organization. For its part, ISIS has managed to remain more active, both on the battlefield and in its propaganda efforts. But it, too, is diminished. U.S. pressure has forced the group's leaders into hiding, making it difficult for them to coordinate and direct global operations.

A separate set of U.S. efforts to track terrorists' travel activities, share databases of suspects, and tighten borders has also made it harder for terrorists to penetrate the United States. After 9/11, the FBI undertook a far-reaching campaign to identify, disrupt, and arrest potential terrorists on U.S. soil—a campaign that continues unabated to this day. Many terrorist plots would have come to nothing regardless, but some might have reached fruition if not for government intervention. Alert citizens and law enforcement officers have caught other potential terrorists. The police foiled a plot to bomb military installations at Fort Dix in 2007, for example, when the jihadis went to a Circuit City store to transfer from a VHS tape to a DVD videos of themselves shooting weapons and shouting "Allahu akbar." The employee making the transfer contacted law enforcement. Travel is also far harder for would-be jihadis than it was in decades past. Unlike in the 1990s, potential terrorists cannot travel to a sanctuary such as Afghanistan for training without a high risk of detection and arrest. As a result, many Western jihadis are untrained, making them far less dangerous.

REIMAGINING 9/11

To understand the cumulative effect of these counterterrorism measures, it is helpful to consider the problems al Qaeda or another jihadi group would face if it sought to carry out a spectacular terrorist attack similar to 9/11. Al Qaeda began planning that strike in late 1998 or early 1999 from bases in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where the group had deep networks and the support of local governments. After receiving approval from bin Laden, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, an experienced senior jihadi and the overall architect of the attack, started recruiting members in 1999. Mohammed initially tried to draw heavily on veteran fighters, but their inexperience in the West made them poor candidates to lead the operation. Al Qaeda leaders instead identified Mohammed Atta, who had lived in Germany for several years, as an ideal cell leader. Commanders noticed Atta's English fluency, religious fervor, and comfort operating in the West when he traveled to Afghanistan in 1999.

The hijackers prepared for the operation in Afghanistan, where some learned to hijack planes and disarm air marshals. A group of the planners held a meeting in Malaysia in January 2000, where U.S. intelligence picked up fragments of their trail, but not enough to detect the plot. The hijackers themselves began entering the United States that same year, although some first traveled to Germany. In California, two members with weaker English-language skills probably received some support from the local Muslim community via area mosques. Others prepared by taking flight lessons and going on practice runs—traveling first class

cross-country on the type of aircraft they would later hijack. In the summer of 2001, Atta traveled to Spain to meet with Ramzi bin al-Shibh, one of the attack's coordinators. There, Atta received further instructions and finalized plans for the attack. Money for expenses flowed through accounts in the United Arab Emirates. Throughout this planning process, al Qaeda enjoyed a crucial advantage in Europe and the United States: official neglect. Intelligence and law enforcement services in both places were focused on other priorities, allowing the jihadis considerable freedom of movement.

On September 11, 2001, the operation proceeded like clockwork—aided by an airport security system unaware that such an attack was possible. The hijackers boarded four planes without arousing suspicion. Although authorities selected some of the hijackers for extra scrutiny, that simply meant that their bags received a slightly more thorough screening. They likely carried utility knives or pocketknives permissible under the guidelines of the time, and several reports indicate that the hijackers also had Mace and box cutters, which the screeners may not have detected. After takeoff, the attackers forced their way into the planes' cockpits and successfully turned three of the four airliners into massive suicide bombs, killing almost 3,000 people.

Every step of the way, a plot on the scale of 9/11 would be far harder to carry out today. With no sanctuary on a par with pre-2001 Afghanistan, volunteers have few training opportunities—and even fewer chances to plot direct attacks against the United States. Indeed, would-be terrorists risk arrest in their home countries and in transit. If they eventually made it to a war zone or other haven, they would also find it far harder to gather safely or communicate without being detected by local or foreign intelligence agencies. Authorities in the United States or elsewhere could capture senior figures who might give up important operational details. And leaders such as Khalid Sheikh Mohammed might be killed by a drone strike. Governments might detect meetings in other countries or funding flows through foreign banks—revealing not just the plot but also the identities of many other group members. If terrorists tried to recruit, raise money, or conduct operations via social media, the platforms' moderators might ban them from the sites or report them to the FBI. Their social media followers might, in turn, come under suspicion. The visa applications of would-be flight students from the Middle East now receive far more scrutiny. If plotters managed to make it to the United States, a wary public and a cooperative Muslim community would be more likely to report suspicious activity. Al Qaeda could not tell its operatives to seek support from locals without the risk of detection. Even if terrorists managed to overcome all these obstacles, carrying out an actual attack would still be far harder: civil aviation and other sensitive targets are much better guarded than they were before 9/11.

No single measure by itself can make a repeat of a 9/11-scale plot impossible. But the cumulative effect of these policies and changes has made a sophisticated and high-impact scheme much less likely to succeed. It is not an accident that most attacks in the United States and even Europe in the last

decade have been so-called lone-wolf incidents—inspired, rather than directed, by groups such as al Qaeda and ISIS. These kinds of attacks are usually less deadly, but they are harder to stop.

WHAT'S FAILED?

With the risk of 9/11-scale violence significantly reduced, it is tempting to declare victory and return to the pre-2001 level of vigilance. This would be a mistake. The United States has failed in many of its more ambitious attempts to fight jihadi groups, suggesting that terrorism will remain a threat for years to come. Although the danger these groups pose will remain manageable, preventing attacks will still require ongoing counterterrorism efforts.

The need for continued vigilance stems in part from Washington's failure to win over the Muslim world. After 9/11, U.S. leaders sought to cultivate goodwill among Muslims through advertising campaigns; new broadcasting entities, such as the Arabic-language station Radio Sawa and the television channel Al Hurra; and, eventually, social media initiatives. But polling data suggest that these efforts have had little impact. Public opinion of the United States in the Arab world is still largely negative, although it has varied somewhat over the years. In 2015, over 80 percent of poll respondents in Jordan—a close U.S. ally—had an unfavorable opinion of the United States. This is damning, but it should not come as a surprise. Unpopular U.S. policies, such as the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which many throughout the Muslim world opposed, and U.S. support for Israel, have overshadowed fine-tuned messages about how wonderful life in the United States is for Muslims. As a result, anti-American groups continue to find it easy to recruit followers, and the incentive for targeting the United States remains high.

Jihadi-linked insurgencies are also far more prevalent now than they were before 9/11. This is partly because of the collapse of governments throughout Africa and the Middle East and partly because of the weakness of many surviving regimes. It takes only a small band of fighters to establish an insurgency in a weak state such as Mozambique and even fewer in a failed state such as Yemen. The jihadi cause, moreover, offers local fighters a compelling brand, enabling them to sell their movements to the community as providers of law and order and defenders of the faith. With jihadi bona fides, they can also tap into transnational networks, gain support from like-minded fighters in neighboring states, and, at times, acquire resources such as money, weapons, and access to propaganda.

In the past, the United States turned to counterinsurgency to combat these groups—deploying tens of thousands of its own forces to fight the Taliban in Afghanistan and various Sunni jihadi groups in Iraq. With public support for such efforts declining, however, and jihadi groups spreading to more countries, the U.S. military and intelligence agencies now often resort to training and equipping local forces that can act as the tip of the counterterrorism spear. Such U.S. proxies have battled al Shabab in Somalia, an ISIS offshoot in Libya, and al Qaeda–linked Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines, among other groups.

In a few places, the United States has managed to make headway against

jihadis by partnering with local government forces. In many others, however, the defeat of one jihadi group has simply made room for the emergence of another. After 9/11, U.S. forces helped the government of the Philippines rout Abu Sayyaf; today, the Philippines is fighting an ISIS-linked organization. Elsewhere, even that limited level of success is elusive. The enormous amount of money, time, and equipment the United States poured into helping anti-ISIS fighters in Syria and the governments of Afghanistan and Iraq appears to have achieved, at best, only modest results. Training successes are limited to some small elite units such as Iraq's Counterterrorism Service. Efforts to stand up large armies have largely failed.

U.S. attempts to improve the quality of governance in states with jihadi terrorist problems have an equally mixed legacy. Some countries, such as Yemen, have slipped into civil war, while corruption, poor economic growth, and undemocratic political systems plague many others, such as Egypt and Pakistan. Where progress toward democratization has occurred, such as in Indonesia and Tunisia, it was the work of indigenous movements and leaders, not U.S.-led efforts.

Counterterrorism policies within the United States suffer from a different set of problems. Politicians should level with the American people about the real risk of terrorism—which is low compared with many other dangers—as a way of inoculating the public against the psychological effect of small attacks. Despite 20 years of limited terrorist violence in the United States, however, polls show that the number of Americans "very" or "somewhat" concerned about terrorism remains high and has even grown in recent years. Political leaders continue to use this fear as a cudgel, criticizing one another when attacks occur and using these rare incidents to advance particular agendas on issues such as immigration. When Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, an operative for al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, almost blew up a plane over Detroit in 2009, Republicans blasted Obama for this near failure. As a candidate and in office, Trump used the asylum status of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombers to bolster his calls for a border wall, among other anti-immigrant measures.

As a result, the U.S. legal system and public discourse often single out American Muslims as a potential threat. Many Americans now associate Islam with violence, even though very few American Muslims have been involved in terrorist activities, and even though the larger American Muslim community has proved willing to work with U.S. law enforcement. In 2020, Muslims reported the highest level of discrimination of any religious group in the United States. Many American Muslims worry that the police do not treat them equally. This state of affairs is both unjust and counterproductive. If community members fear law enforcement, they may not seek out the authorities if a problem arises.

LEARNING TO LIVE WITH SUCCESS

Twenty years after 9/11, U.S. policy is stuck—but not necessarily in a bad way. The mix of intelligence cooperation, military pressure on groups in their havens, and better homeland security has largely insulated the United States

from terrorist violence. Still, Washington has failed to permanently solve the problem. Today, the United States is still bombing and raiding the ideological descendants of the original 9/11 planners. There is no end in sight, and groups such as al Qaeda remain committed to attacking the United States. Even so, constant pressure keeps these organizations weak, and as a result, they will conduct fewer and less lethal attacks. Jihadi terrorism will not go away, but its biggest impact is felt mainly in parts of the world where U.S. interests are limited. Washington must therefore think hard about where to deploy its counterterrorism resources. Although violence in Chad or Yemen is catastrophic for those countries, its impact on U.S. security is small. Efforts to promote democracy or improve governance may be valuable for other reasons, but they are unnecessary for heading off potential terrorist threats. In some cases, such efforts may actually make the situation worse.

The United States also needs to do more to manage the domestic politics of counterterrorism. Public fear keeps support for robust defense programs strong, but it also makes it easier for terrorists to gain attention and sow panic. Politicians must therefore tread cautiously in the aftermath of terrorist attacks and condemn extreme reactions of all kinds. When (not if) the next attack occurs, it will be vital for the president and other leaders to react responsibly. They must not only stress the need to help the victims and punish the killers but also explain that such events are rare and that the American Muslim community is part of the solution, not the problem. Local leaders, including police officials, should reach out to their Muslim communities to show support and guard against any retaliatory violence. Unfortunately, the last 20 years have shown that politicians will reliably exploit fear, even when the actual threat is limited. Such behavior only helps terrorist groups as they strive to stay relevant.

Israeli officials have a useful phrase to describe their own good-enough counterterrorism strategy: "mowing the grass." The idea is that by conducting regular raids against terrorists and continually gathering intelligence, the government can keep terrorist groups such as Hamas weak, even if those groups' attacks will always continue. The goal is to manage, rather than eliminate, the terrorist threat, and this frees the government to focus on other concerns. Having found a similarly imperfect but largely effective solution to the problem of jihadi violence, Washington should do just that, prioritizing China, Russia, climate change, and other pressing issues. With its post-9/11 counterterrorism toolkit, the United States can keep terrorist groups in remote countries weaker and off balance while accepting that at least some threat will always remain.

Resistance Is Futile

The War on Terror Supercharged State Power

Thomas Hegghammer

"What," I sometimes ask students in a class I teach on the history of terrorism, "was the name of the Islamic State's branch in Europe?" It is a trick question: the Islamic State (also known as ISIS) never set up a full-fledged European branch. The group's self-proclaimed caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, knew better than to try. By 2014, when ISIS formalized its split from al Qaeda and established itself as the dominant player in the global Salafi-jihadi movement, Western security services had figured out how to make it effectively impossible for the group to establish a base of operations in Europe or North America. Like al Qaeda before it, ISIS was only ever present in the West in the form of disparate cells and sympathizers. A traditional terrorist organization—with a functioning bureaucracy, regular meeting places, and in-house propaganda production—would, Baghdadi and his henchmen understood, have had as little chance of surviving in a contemporary Western country as the proverbial snowball in hell.

In fact, it has been decades since it was possible to run a major terrorist organization, capable of mounting a sustained campaign of large-scale attacks, in Europe or North America. Even the most notorious of the separatist movements and far-right militias that have originated in Western countries, and whose rhetoric can seem menacing, are comparatively small-scale operations; they survive because they kill relatively few people and never manage to attract the authorities' full attention. The last high-impact terrorist organizations based in the West—the Basque separatists of ETA in France and Spain and the loyalist and republican paramilitaries in Northern Ireland—effectively collapsed in the 1990s under the weight of state countermeasures.

In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, it seemed that was all going to change. And of course, the past two decades have witnessed some horrific attacks on Western soft targets: the bombing of a train station in Madrid in 2004, the attack on a concert venue in Paris in 2015, the assault on a nightclub in Orlando, Florida, in 2016, among others. But such crimes were not the work of locally based organizations, and none of the perpetrators was able to strike more than once. Although for a time such swarms of weakly connected attackers periodically outmaneuvered Western security and intelligence services, the latter have adapted and, quite definitively, prevailed.

Spectacular though the 9/11 attacks were, they did not, as many feared, indicate that large and powerful terrorist organizations had laid down roots in the West and threatened the foundations of its social order. Meanwhile, the persistent fear of that outcome—which was never likely—has blinded many to an opposing trend: the steadily growing coercive power of the technocratic state.

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With artificial intelligence already entrenching this advantage, the threat of a major armed rebellion, in developed countries at least, is becoming virtually nonexistent.

THREAT LEVEL: SEVERE

At the dawn of this century, the outlook was quite different. The 9/11 attacks were widely believed to portend the rise of ultra-lethal nonstate actors who, many were convinced, had well-equipped sleeper cells in scores of Western cities, with militants who blended into communities unnoticed while awaiting orders to strike. During the weeks and months immediately after 9/11, the evidence that these cells existed seemed to be everywhere: in late September and early October 2001, a series of anthrax-laced letters were mailed to U.S. Senate offices and news outlets, and on December 22, 2001, a British convert to Islam on a flight to Miami was subdued by fellow passengers after trying to ignite his shoes, which were packed with plastic explosives. A steady stream of media reports suggested that jihadis had access to weapons of mass destruction. In late 2002, policymakers were jolted by intelligence reports warning that al Qaeda planned to use a two-chambered device called "the mubtakkar" (from the Arabic word for "invention") to release cyanide gas on New York City subways. Nobody was safe anymore, news anchors insinuated, pointing to the official U.S. threat barometer, which periodically blinked red for "severe."

The prevailing anxiety was reflected, in a somewhat muted form, in academic and strategic thinking. Following the deadly sarin gas attacks on the Tokyo subway carried out by the extremist cult Aum Shinrikyo in 1995, scholars such as Walter Laqueur had begun speaking of "the new terrorism," a form of political violence characterized by religious zeal, decentralized organization, and a willingness to maximize casualties. The 9/11 attacks helped popularize such ideas, as well as the notion that Western societies were particularly vulnerable to the new threat.

Militant Islamism did indeed grow in the 1990s, and al Qaeda raised the bar considerably in terms of demonstrating how much damage nonstate actors could inflict on a powerful country. At the time, national security services in most Western countries were smaller than they are today, and because those services understood less about the actors they were up against, worst-case scenarios were less easily debunked. Still, it is clear in retrospect that the horrors of 9/11 frightened many into excessive pessimism.

The bigger analytic mistake, however, was not to overestimate the enemy but to underestimate the ability of rich, developed states to adapt and muster resources against the new threats. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, commentators often portrayed the governments of such states as lethargic bureaucracies outwitted by light-footed rebels. As the years went on, however, what emerged instead were dynamic technocracies blessed with deep pockets and highly trained investigators and operatives. For every $1 in ISIS's coffers, there are at least $10,000 in the U.S. central bank. For every al Qaeda bomb-maker, there are a thousand MIT-trained engineers.

Western governments have also proved to be less scrupulous about preserving

civil rights than many expected in the early years of the war on terrorism. When faced with security threats on their own soil, most Western states bent or broke their own rules and neglected to live up to their self-professed liberal ideals.

One of the most widespread cognitive biases in strategic analysis is to view one's opponent's behavior as governed by exogenous factors, such as a cunning strategy or material resources. But terrorism is a strategic game between states and nonstate actors, and what rebels are able to do depends heavily on a state's countermeasures. In short, it did not matter that the new terrorists were good, because the people chasing them were even better.

To understand why, one must consider the fundamentals of the contest. Terrorist groups in Western states—or in any peaceful, relatively stable country, for that matter—are usually tiny factions that control no territory. Dwarfed by the combined forces of the state, they enjoy one key advantage: anonymity. They can operate as long as law enforcement does not know who they are or where they are based. Counterterrorism is therefore fundamentally about information: security services work to identify and locate suspects, while the latter try to stay hidden. A campaign of terrorism is a race against time, in which the terrorists are betting that they can draw new recruits or defeat the state faster than the police can hunt them down.

Through investigation, intelligence analysis, and research, the state's knowledge about the terrorists gradually increases. Unless they can attract new recruits fast enough to render such knowledge constantly out of date, the terrorists will lose the race. Most terrorist campaigns therefore follow an activity curve that starts high and then gradually decreases, sometimes with a bump at the end as the militants make a desperate last attempt to turn the tide.

Terrorist campaigns are also shaped by communications technologies. New encryption techniques, for example, can help terrorists evade detection, and new social media platforms can help them distribute propaganda and recruit new members. But terrorist groups usually have only a brief window to enjoy the fruits of each new technology before states develop countermeasures such as decryption or surveillance. For example, in 2003, al Qaeda operatives in Saudi Arabia used mobile phones to great effect, but within a year, government surveillance had made the same devices a liability.

THE FIRST WAR ON TERROR

Broadly speaking, Western states have conducted two so-called wars on terror: one against al Qaeda in the first decade of this century and another against ISIS in the 2010s. In each case, a new organization grew, largely unnoticed, in a conflict zone, before surprising the international community with a transnational offensive, only to be beaten back through a messy counterterrorism effort. In each case, the militants initially benefited from having operatives and sympathizers unknown to Western governments but lost that advantage as the latter mapped their networks. Similarly, technological innovations benefited the terrorists to begin with but became a vulnerability as time wore on.

Al Qaeda began as a small group of Arab veterans of the 1980s Afghan jihad who, in the mid-1990s, decided to wage

asymmetric war against the United States to end what they saw as Western imperialism in the Muslim world. The group grew strong in the late 1990s owing in part to access to territory in Afghanistan, where it trained fighters and planned attacks in relative peace. Hundreds of volunteers from the Muslim world, Europe, and North America attended these camps between 1996 and 2001. Western governments paid little attention to them because they were not deemed a major threat to the U.S. or European homelands. On 9/11, the group benefited from the element of surprise and from the relative anonymity of its operatives.

Al Qaeda's momentum lasted for another half decade as Western states scrambled to map the group's networks. The Guantánamo Bay facility, which was set up in early 2002 to hold significant al Qaeda figures but ended up holding mostly low-level ones (and some people who had no connection to the group at all), stands as a monument to that early information problem. In 2002, U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld referred to detainees at Guantánamo as "the worst of the worst." In reality, the United States had little idea what role, if any, these detainees had played in al Qaeda, since authorities in Washington knew relatively little about the group's operations or personnel.

Meanwhile, al Qaeda itself was growing and transforming from an organization into an ideological movement. It drew thousands of new sympathizers worldwide, partly from the publicity generated by the 9/11 attacks, partly from the growth in online jihadi propaganda, and partly from the outrage among Muslims generated by the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. Between 2001 and 2006, cells trained or inspired by al Qaeda carried out multiple attacks in Europe, most famously the Madrid attacks of 2004 and the London transit bombings in 2005. There were also dozens of foiled plots, such as a 2006 plot in which a cell based in the United Kingdom planned to blow up several commercial airplanes by bringing bomb ingredients onboard in small containers and assembling the bombs after takeoff. (This plot is the reason passengers are not allowed to bring water bottles through airport security even today.)

But the capabilities of Western intelligence services were also growing. Across western Europe and North America, the number of analysts working on jihadism skyrocketed in the aftermath of 9/11. These state security services designed new systems for collecting signals intelligence and exchanged more information with one another. Many countries passed laws that effectively lowered the bar for investigating and prosecuting suspects, often by expanding the definition of terrorist activity to include providing logistical support to terrorist groups. Hard drives began filling up with data, printers churned out network graphs, and investigators studied the finer points of Islamist ideology.

The tide finally turned around 2007. By then, the networks that al Qaeda had developed in Europe prior to 9/11 had all been rounded up, and the authorities had found ways to detain a number of extremist clerics based in Western countries. The number of jihadi plots in Europe decreased, as did the amount of al Qaeda propaganda online. On jihadi online discussion forums, where users

had previously felt safe enough to share phone numbers, the fear of infiltration and surveillance became palpable. Al Qaeda branches in the Middle East were also losing steam, notably in Iraq and Saudi Arabia. The United States experienced a brief upsurge in attacks in 2009 and 2010—linked in part to the influence of the Yemeni American Salafi-jihadi preacher Anwar al-Awlaki—but it was not enough to change the overall picture. By 2011, the mood in Western counterterrorism circles had become cautiously optimistic. The wave of popular uprisings in the Arab world that began in late 2010, and came to be known as the Arab Spring, promised to end the authoritarianism many considered to be the root cause of jihadism. When U.S. Navy SEALs killed Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, Pakistan, on May 2, 2011, it was possible to entertain the notion that the war on terrorism was coming to an end.

In a sense, that was both true and false. In retrospect, 2011 did mark the end of al Qaeda's war on the West. The group lives on as a set of regional militias with local agendas in places such as Somalia, but it has not successfully conducted a serious attack on the West for almost a decade. Meanwhile, another organization has taken up the mantle with arguably greater success.

JIHAD AND SOCIAL MEDIA

ISIS was a child of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. In the broad Sunni insurgency that followed, a highly active al Qaeda affiliate emerged, one that would take the name the Islamic State of Iraq in 2006. In the ensuing years, U.S. and Iraqi counterinsurgency efforts weakened the group, and it likely would have remained a midsize regional al Qaeda branch were it not for two unexpected developments.

The first was the eruption of civil war in Syria 2011, which provided the Islamic State of Iraq with a safe haven in which to expand. The group initially operated in Syria under a different name, but things went so well there that in 2013 it began breaking away from al Qaeda and presenting itself as an independent, Iraqi-Syrian group named the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, or ISIS. In mid-2014, it burst onto the world stage by capturing the western third of Iraq and casting itself as a caliphate to which all the world's Muslims must pledge allegiance. Meanwhile, in the preceding years, the horrors of the Syrian war had captured the attention of Sunni Muslims worldwide and led thousands of the more religious and adventurous among them to go to Syria as volunteers for the rebel side. Syria emerged as the global epicenter of militant Islamism, and ISIS, being the most visible of the Syria-based groups, attracted the lion's share of the foreign fighters.

The second development was the social media revolution. Around 2010, platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube went mainstream and changed the online media landscape in ways that greatly empowered radical ideological actors. For one, propaganda now spread further. Until this time, jihadis had been confined to shadowy websites that people visited only if they were already at least partly radicalized. The new platforms, by contrast, had millions of users, and their algorithms could push a jihadi video onto the timeline of someone who was not searching for it.

Paradoxically, jihadis were also safer on the new platforms than on the old

websites, because the National Security Agency could not hack Facebook the way it could easily penetrate an obscure jihadi website housed in, say, Malaysia. Moreover, social media offered better integration with smartphones, allowing militants to view and upload propaganda from any location. Radicals seized the opportunity. The first half of the 2010s saw a colossal increase in jihadi propaganda, as ISIS produced material on a scale and with a level of sophistication previously unseen in the history of nonstate armed groups.

Finally, the new online ecosystem offered rich opportunities for secret communication. Encrypted messaging apps proliferated, and jihadi communications spread over a wide range of platforms. It was a signals intelligence nightmare. Militants began using messaging apps extensively for bilateral and small-group communication, seemingly uninhibited by the surveillance fears of the past. An important factor behind the rapid increase in foreign fighters in Syria in 2013–14 was the ability of early recruits to message their friends back home and persuade them to follow suit.

Western states did little to stem these developments for a simple reason: ISIS had not yet launched attacks outside the Middle East. It was only in the autumn of 2014, after an international military coalition formed to combat ISIS, that the group set its operational sights on Western cities. In September of that year, it called on followers worldwide to kill Westerners by any means and began training attack teams for high-profile operations in Europe. ISIS was now at the peak of its power, and like al Qaeda in 2001, it enjoyed a key advantage: member and sympathizer networks poorly known to Western intelligence services. The group had cast itself as a more youthful and dynamic alternative to al Qaeda and had attracted a new generation of European radicals. Its propaganda spread so fast that state security services could not keep track of all its new sympathizers.

This translated into one of the most serious waves of terrorist violence in Europe's modern history. In three years, from 2015 to 2017, jihadis in Europe killed nearly 350 people, more than the number killed in jihadi attacks in Europe during the preceding 20 years and more than the total number of people killed by right-wing extremists in Europe between 1990 and 2020. ISIS's offensive also featured the first European terrorist cell able to strike hard twice: the group that carried out the attacks in Paris in November 2015 and Brussels the following April. Its success suggested the extent to which the intelligence community was back on its heels.

But the violence triggered a state counteroffensive that was equally unprecedented. "We are at war," French President François Hollande declared after the 2015 Paris attack, before announcing an official state of emergency. The pattern from the immediate post-9/11 era repeated itself: expanded intelligence budgets, more aggressive surveillance, and new laws lowering the bar for police intervention in cases related to jihadism. Europe found itself taking measures so strict they would have been politically impossible just a few years earlier: closing mosques, deporting preachers, stripping people of their citizenship. Some European countries sent special forces to Iraq to

hunt down citizens who had joined ISIS. Beginning in 2016, governments and social media giants also began an unprecedented effort to remove the group's propaganda from the Internet. Censorship, previously considered politically unpalatable or technically impossible, was now being implemented with the full force of Silicon Valley's artifical intelligence machinery.

Once again, the state won. By 2018, the number of jihadi plots and attacks in Europe had been cut in half compared to 2016, and the flow of foreign fighters had dried up entirely. What is more remarkable, every jihadi assault in Europe since 2017 has been carried out by a lone individual, suggesting that it has become very difficult to plan group attacks. Similarly, no terrorist strike since 2017 has involved explosives: instead, the attackers have used simpler weapons, such as guns, knives, and vehicles. There have been some complex and ambitious plots, but they all have been foiled by the police. This is not to dismiss the current threat, which remains serious. But ISIS's offensive of the mid-2010s was firmly rolled back.

THE DIGITAL PANOPTICON

It may not be obvious to the ordinary citizen just how powerful modern intelligence services have become. Imagine that you wanted, for whatever reason, to start a violent rebellion in a Western country. You want to launch an organization, and not just carry out a one-off attack. How would you go about it? All your Internet searches, emails, and cell phone calls are in principle accessible to the state. You can start taking precautions now, but your digital history and those of your collaborators are still available for profiling. In an economy dominated by credit card transactions, your ability to get things done without leaving a trace will be limited. Venture into a city, and you will be caught on surveillance cameras, perhaps ones armed with facial recognition software. And how will you know whom to trust, when any of your new recruits might be a police infiltrator? What will you do when some of your best people—including ones who know your organization's secrets—are arrested?

The reason information technology empowers the state over time is that rebellion is a battle for information, and states can exploit new technology on a scale that small groups cannot. The computer allowed states to accumulate more information about their citizens, and the Internet enabled faster sharing of that information across institutions and countries. Gadgets such as the credit card terminal and the smartphone allowed authorities to peer deeper and deeper into people's lives. I sometimes serve as an expert witness in terrorism trials and get to see what the police have collected on suspects. What I have learned is that once the surveillance state targets someone, that person no longer retains even a sliver of genuine privacy.

SURVEILLANCE NORMALIZED

Given the overwhelming advantages that wealthy developed countries enjoy, it is remarkable that jihadi terrorism has managed to persist in such places even at low levels. One reason is that states' capabilities diminish past their borders, and jihadism is an unusually transnational movement. For decades, jihadis in the West have been able to travel to conflict zones in the Muslim world for training, thereby enjoying a kind of

strategic depth that other radicals in the West, such as those of the far right, do not have. Another reason is that jihadi ideology fosters a culture of self-sacrifice. Anyone contemplating terrorism in the West knows that he will not be present to enjoy the hypothetical political fruits of his efforts, because he will either die or get captured in the process. Still, with the promise of rewards in the hereafter, the jihadi movement has been able to produce hundreds of volunteers for such one-off attacks, allowing it to swarm the enemy with disposable operatives. The rate of production of such volunteers is so much higher among jihadis than in other rebel movements that ideology must be part of the explanation. Finally, the high number of armed conflicts in the Muslim world has fed grievances and offered operational space for jihadi groups to grow. The role of the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the Syrian civil war, in particular, cannot be overestimated.

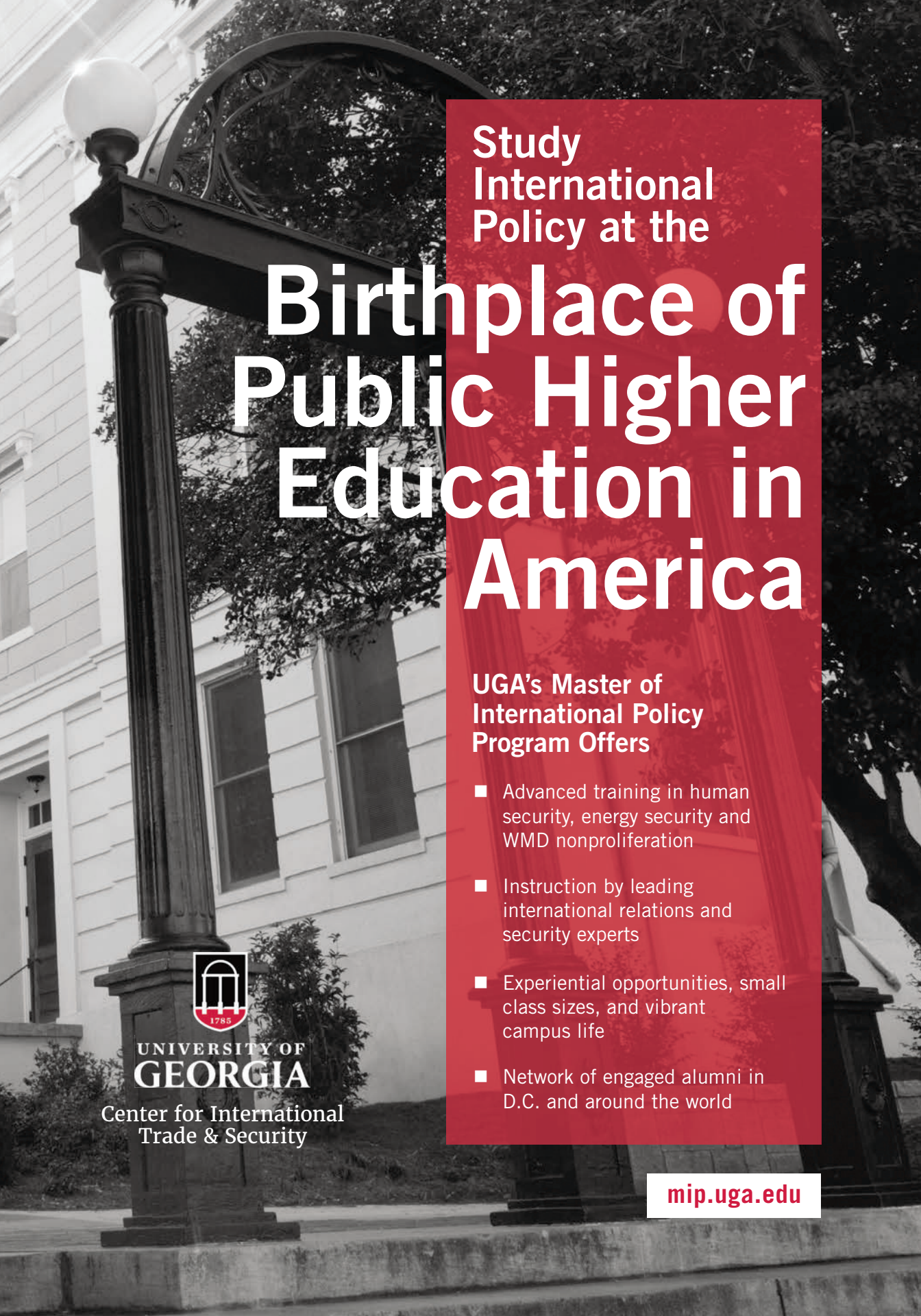
For all these reasons, a third wave of Islamist terrorism in the West is conceivable, but it is nonetheless unlikely. Would-be terrorists face a far tougher operating environment than did al Qaeda and ISIS at their height. And the opportunity for state security services to hone their skills on jihadis will also make it harder for other radical movements—ones with less access to conflict zones and less of a culture of self-sacrifice—to mount major campaigns in the future.

Developed countries will also become ever more digital, and it will become harder and harder to conceal one's identity and go off the grid. The rebels of the future will have lived their entire lives on the Internet, leaving digital traces along the way, and that information will be accessible to states. New technologies may provide digital stealth for nonstate actors, but the effect will likely be temporary. Meanwhile, the rise of artificial intelligence may speed up states' march toward technological dominance. Until now, states have not been able to exploit all the data that are available to them. Machine learning may change that.

These technological developments will probably also make political violence more unevenly distributed around the world. Well-resourced states will be able to buy their way to order, whereas weaker states will not. Things are already very uneven, with the Muslim world having suffered vastly more than the West during the war on terrorism. The future stability divide may cut through the global South, as well-resourced autocracies leverage the power of surveillance technology.

The rise of states immune to rebellion is not a good thing. It is naive to think that states' new powers will be used only against people plotting bomb attacks. Such powers can—and do—creep into the policing of less lethal forms of political activism. In autocracies, the same tools are being deployed in an unfettered way to silence peaceful regime opponents. They allow countries such as China and Saudi Arabia to identify activists and nip mobilizations in the bud in a way that was not possible a couple of decades ago.

The rich nations of Europe and North America are liberal democracies, but their governments are also ferociously efficient repression machines. The surveillance tools at their disposal have never been more powerful. So those countries should choose their leaders wisely.



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From 9/11 to 1/6

The War on Terror Supercharged the Far Right

Cynthia Miller-Idriss

Radical ideas that are today considered right-wing—white supremacism, violent antigovernment libertarianism, Christian extremism—have played starring roles in the American story since the very beginning. For most of the postwar era, however, the far right has mostly stayed underground, relegated to the fringes of American society. It never disappeared, of course, and in the early 1990s, it seemed poised for a resurgence after a series of confrontations that pitted the authorities against antigovernment militias and religious extremists—a phase that peaked with the 1995 terrorist bombing of a federal building in Oklahoma City by a white supremacist, antigovernment extremist, which killed 168 people.

By the dawn of the new millennium, however, those events seemed to be in the rearview. In the years following the Oklahoma City attack, a feared wave of right-wing violence did not materialize. If anything, the bloodshed seemed to further marginalize the far right.

Fast-forward two decades, and the picture looks very different. The past few years have witnessed an explosion of far-right violence and the normalization of the extremist ideas that drive it. In the United States in 2019, 48 people were killed in attacks carried out by domestic violent extremists, 39 of which were carried out white supremacists, making it the most lethal year for such terrorism in the country since 1995. In 2020, the number of domestic terrorist plots and attacks in the United States reached its highest level since 1994; two-thirds of those were attributable to white supremacists and other far-right extremists. In March of this year, the FBI had more than 2,000 open investigations into domestic violent extremism, roughly double the number it had open in the summer of 2017. Also in 2020, authorities nationwide arrested nearly three times as many white supremacists as they did in 2017. And last year, reports to the Anti-Defamation League of white supremacist propaganda—in the form of fliers, posters, banners, and stickers posted in locations such as parks or college campuses—hit an all-time high of more than 5,000, nearly twice the number reported in the previous year. This trend is not limited to the United States. Although jihadis still pose the biggest terrorism threat in Europe, the growth of far-right violence is increasing. The top British counterterrorism official, Neil Basu, recently described right-wing extremism as the United Kingdom's "fastest growing threat," and in Germany, violent crimes motivated by right-wing extremism rose by ten percent from 2019 to 2020.

Amid this increase in violence, extreme right-wing ideas were becoming mainstream and were normalized, with far-right political parties gaining representation in more than three dozen national parliaments and in the European Parliament. In the United States,

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hate

Donald Trump's electoral success was both a cause and an effect of this trend. His 2016 presidential campaign and his tenure in the White House were steeped in populist, nationalist, nativist rhetoric, which the far right perceived as a legitimation of their views. By the time the "Stop the Steal" campaign sought to overturn the legitimate results of the 2020 U.S. presidential election (with Trump's explicit encouragement), extremist ideas had taken center stage in American politics. The increase in far-right violence and the normalization of right-wing extremism together culminated in the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol: a brutal assault fueled by far-right ideas that had gone mainstream.

The growth of the extreme right has been driven by many factors, including a reactionary backlash to demographic changes and a rising belief in conspiracy theories. It has been further accelerated by the megaphone of social media, as new online channels for amplifying and circulating ideas have significantly broadened the influence of far-right propaganda and disinformation, forged global connections across groups and movements, and created new ways for extremism to seep into the mainstream.

Ironically, however, it was another form of extremism—and Washington's reaction to it—that in many ways set in motion the resurgence of the far right. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the rise of violent jihadism reshaped American politics in ways that created fertile ground for right-wing extremism. The attacks were a gift to peddlers of xenophobia, white supremacism, and Christian nationalism: as dark-skinned Muslim foreigners bent on murdering Americans, al Qaeda terrorists and their ilk seemed to have stepped out of a far-right fever dream. Almost overnight, the United States and European countries abounded with precisely the fears that the far right had been trying to stoke for decades.

But it wasn't just the terrorists who gave right-wing extremists a boost: so, too, did the U.S.-led war on terrorism, which involved the near-complete pivoting of intelligence, security, and law enforcement attention to the Islamist threat, leaving far-right extremism to grow unfettered.

In recent years, right-wing radicals in the United States and Europe have made clear that they are willing and able to embrace the tactics of terrorism; they have become, in some ways, a mirror image of the jihadis whom they despise.

Western governments must act decisively to combat this threat. Launching a new "war on terror," however, is not the way to do so. The fight against jihadi violence went awry in many ways and produced negative unintended consequences—including by aiding the rise of the far right, which now poses the gravest terrorism risk. In the fight against this new threat, policymakers need to avoid repeating the very mistakes that contributed to the dangerous new reality.

EURABIAN KNIGHTS

The modern far right exists on a broad spectrum and includes neo-Nazis, white supremacists, militias opposed to federal governments, self-described "Western chauvinist" groups such as the Proud Boys, "alt-right" provocateurs, conspiracy theorists, and misogynists who call themselves "incels" (short for "involuntary celibates"). What links these disparate elements is a conspirato-

rial worldview and a shared adherence to antidemocratic and illiberal ideas. A subset of them also support—at least in theory—the use of mass violence against civilian and government targets.

Although their ideas and iconography draw inspiration from the Confederacy, the Ku Klux Klan, the Nazis, and other dead or moribund movements, today's American and European far-right groups are more firmly rooted in much more recent developments. In the early 1980s, episodes of far-right terrorism struck France, Italy, and Germany as part of a rising neofascist and neo-Nazi movement in western Europe. Those attacks were followed by a wave of neo-Nazi activity that swept through Germany and eastern Europe during the period of rapid social, political, and economic change that took place in the 1990s, after the fall of the Iron Curtain and German reunification. This form of radicalism manifested in a violent, racist skinhead youth culture, which celebrated street fighting and attacks on asylum seekers and immigrants.

At around the same time, racist skinhead groups began to emerge in North America, too, some of them linked to the hardcore music scene. In the United States, another source of far-right and antigovernment extremism was a small but dedicated contingent of Vietnam War veterans who set up boot camps to train paramilitary forces, with the goal of establishing a white separatist homeland. As the availability of assault weapons and tactical equipment expanded in the United States in the 1980s and 1990s, militias built staggering arsenals and grew bolder in confronting authorities. A series of high-profile standoffs between radical groups and law enforcement agencies—including at Ruby Ridge, in Idaho, in 1992 and in Waco, Texas, the following year—drew attention to the threat, which had been simmering for years. The Oklahoma City bombing turned the far right into the most pressing issue in national politics, at least for a time.

But instead of being emboldened by the bombing, the far right went further underground in its aftermath. Membership in unlawful militias declined. Militia leaders distanced themselves from the bombers, who had brought unwanted attention to their cause from law enforcement. As the threat seemingly diminished, the far right faded from the public consciousness. Amid the booming economy, technological advancements, and relative peace and prosperity of the late 1990s, terrorism became a low priority for the American public.

That all changed on September 11, 2001. As the country reeled from the attacks, far-right groups saw an opportunity and grabbed it, quickly and easily adapting their messages to the new landscape. A well-resourced Islamophobia industry sprang into action, using a variety of scare tactics to generate hysteria about the looming threat. In Europe, the far right's imagination was gripped by a conspiracy theory introduced by the British author Bat Ye'or in her 2005 book *Eurabia*, which argued that the profound demographic changes taking place in European countries were not coincidental. On the contrary, *Eurabia* suggested, Muslims were orchestrating a revival of the caliphate by replacing white Europeans through immigration and high birthrates. Europe, Ye'or warned, was shifting from a

Christian civilization to an Islamic one, and Europeans would soon be subjected to Islamic law, or sharia, forced either to convert or to accept subservient roles.

In this milieu, anti-immigrant sentiment became more mainstream. Far-right political parties and organizations embraced the idea of an Islamic threat, using metaphors and iconography from the Christian Crusades and fifteenth-century pogroms in Europe that targeted Muslims and Jews. In France, the leader of the right-wing National Front, Marine Le Pen, compared groups of Muslims praying on sidewalks outside mosques to Nazi occupiers. The Dutch far-right leader Geert Wilders described refugees as an "Islamic invasion." The British arm of the far-right group Generation Identity linked the fight against multiculturalism to the fifteenth-century efforts of European forces to retake the Iberian Peninsula from the Muslim rulers who controlled most of it at the time.

By 2015, tens of thousands of people were marching in cities across Europe under the banner of a group called PEGIDA, a German acronym for "Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West"—gatherings that sometimes led to violence between demonstrators and antifascist counterprotesters. During the 2019 elections for the European Parliament, the German far-right party Alternative for Germany (AfD) put up billboards featuring a detail from Jean-Léon Gérôme's 1866 painting *The Slave Market*, which depicts a naked white woman having her teeth and mouth probed by a dark-skinned, turban-clad man. The posters urged voters to learn from history "so that Europe does not become Eurabia."

In the United States, rising anti-Muslim sentiment found expression in a successful movement to prevent the building of a mosque near the site of the 9/11 attacks in New York City and in legislation passed in dozens of U.S. states to thwart nonexistent efforts to subject residents to sharia. After the election of the first Black president in U.S. history, in 2008, record-breaking numbers of hate groups emerged. The antigovernment fringe that had gone quiet after the Oklahoma City bombing resurfaced, with calls for insurrection and revolution coming from militias such as the Oath Keepers and movements such as the Three Percenters (whose name was inspired by the false claim that it took only three percent of the American colonists to successfully rise up against the British). Starting in 2014, North America also witnessed a spurt of violent attacks carried out by incels inspired by male supremacist ideology, leading to the deaths of dozens of women, including in mass shootings at a college sorority and a yoga studio and in a vehicle-ramming attack on the streets of Toronto. In 2016, the Proud Boys arrived on the scene, engaging in street brawls and claiming to stand in defense of Western civilization.

THE DANGER GROWS

In the midst of this explosion of far-right activity, national governments and international organizations remained laser-focused on jihadi terrorism, building new agencies and spending billions of dollars. Far-right extremism was all but ignored, and it was viewed by international organizations as a domestic problem facing individual countries, not as a common global threat.

Of course, jihadi terrorism posed a genuine threat—and still does, especially in conflict-ridden countries in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, where Islamist terror takes the lives of thousands each year. But the global response to the shock of 9/11 was so overblown that it blinded policymakers, security officials, and the broader public to the faster growth of what became, in the United States especially, a much larger threat from far-right extremism. As a result, right-wing terrorist attacks were treated as fringe incidents, rather than as a persistent and growing danger to national security—one that now outstrips jihadi terrorism in terms of the toll on Western societies.

Even the most spectacular and gruesome far-right attacks have failed to galvanize counterterrorism agencies in the West. In Norway in 2011, for example, a far-right extremist named Anders Behring Breivik murdered 77 people, mostly teenagers attending a Labor Party summer camp outside Oslo. Breivik had composed a 1,500-page manifesto in which he railed against Islam, warned about the coming of Eurabia, and cited U.S. anti-Muslim activists nearly 200 times. His assault received a high degree of media attention but was often presented as an anomaly, and Breivik himself was sometimes portrayed as a mentally unhinged mass murderer rather than as a terrorist, even though his violence was explicitly political.

By every relevant, available measure—the numbers of arrests and convictions, the number and severity of plots, the amount of propaganda circulating, and the number of attacks—right-wing extremism has increased significantly. Globally, deaths from

terrorism declined in 2019 for the fifth consecutive year. But in North America, western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand, they increased by 709 percent during those five years—a consequence of the roughly 250 percent increase in far-right attacks there. In 2010, there was only one recorded far-right terrorist attack in those places; in 2019, there were 49, which represented nearly half of all terrorist attacks in those places and resulted in 82 percent of all terrorism-related deaths there.

Some may argue that the decline in jihadi extremism merely reflects the efficacy of authorities' efforts to combat it. But the tremendous imbalance in the resources and efforts directed toward thwarting terrorist plots, with the vast majority going to fight jihadi terrorism, had direct consequences for the success of the far right. In recent congressional testimony, FBI officials noted that despite the massive shift in the nature of the threat, 80 percent of their counterterrorism field agents still focus on international terrorism cases. That misallocation of resources has had an impact: between 9/11 and the end of 2017, two-thirds of violent Islamist plots in the United States were interrupted in the planning phase, compared with less than one-third of violent far-right plots.

THE METAPOLITICS OF HATE

The post-9/11 resurgence of far-right violence reflected reactions to changing social conditions, the rise of jihadism, the opportunism of political provocateurs, and the myopia of the war on terrorism. It was also rooted, however, in an intellectual project launched in the late 1960s by a group of French thinkers called the Nouvelle Droite (New Right). Some referred to this group, which included Alain de Benoist and Guillaume Faye among its founders, as "the Gramscians of the right" because of their adoption of the Marxist Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci's call to spur revolution not by physical force but by gaining control over how people think, through education and cultural change. They adapted that approach into a concept called "metapolitics," a term the New Right used to describe their effort to foster ethnonationalist and anti-immigrant ideas and then introduce them into mainstream thought in ways that would eventually lead to political and social change.

Metapolitics was an exercise in patience, requiring a view of politics as "downstream from culture," in the words of the late right-wing American activist Andrew Breitbart. In practice, the strategy involved using academic and mainstream media outlets to critique globalization and liberal democratic concepts such as egalitarianism and multiculturalism and argue in favor of ethnic separatism and homogeneity. Such ideas were controversial but influential: in 1978, de Benoist won France's most coveted intellectual prize, the French Academy's prestigious Prix de l'Essai.

After nearly 50 years, this long game finally bore fruit. Ideas that had once been relegated to the fringes seeped into the public discourse, helping justify hard-line anti-immigrant policies. In the early years of this century, stridently far-right political parties made substantial gains in national parliamentary elections across Europe, often by giving even the most vapid extremist ideas the veneer of respectability by draping them in the trappings of intellectualism—an approach per-

fected by the AfD (which was nicknamed "the professor's party") and by "alt-right" figures in the United States such as Richard Spencer. Right-wing metapolitics formed a feedback loop, with political ideas eventually flowing back upstream into the culture when, for example, far-right agitators slapped white supremacist slogans and icons onto hip clothing designs, which many young people then wore to seem rebellious and outré on social media.

During the past decade, far-right groups had succeeded enough to move past metapolitics and could embrace more traditional forms of politics, not only by launching political parties but also by putting forward something akin to a grand narrative to unify the disparate parts of the movement: a conspiracy theory about a coming "great replacement" of European and white civilization. Coined by a French scholar in a 2011 book by the same name, the term describes an alleged plot by global and national elites to replace white, Christian, European populations with nonwhite, non-Christian ones. The idea is a kind of greatest hits of right-wing extremism, combining the anti-Muslim ideas of *Eurabia*, American-style white nationalism, and age-old anti-Semitic tropes about Jewish domination.

The conspiracy theory is powerful because it is remarkably flexible. A right-wing extremist can adopt the framework against virtually any perceived threat, be it Jews, Muslims, immigrants, or even white progressives. In 2019, a terrorist in Christchurch, New Zealand, live-streamed his murder of 51 Muslim worshipers in two mosques after writing a manifesto he titled "The Great Replacement." Less than five months later, a terrorist killed 23 people in a Walmart in El Paso after posting a hate-filled manifesto that warned of a "Hispanic invasion of Texas" and that claimed white people were being replaced through immigration.

BLOWBACK

The anti-Muslim propaganda and conspiracy theories that eventually merged into the great-replacement narrative were in many cases inadvertently aided by counterterrorism policies that muddied the distinction between Islamist terrorism and Islam. In the wake of 9/11, counterextremist approaches—such as the so-called Prevent policy in the United Kingdom, or the New York City Police Department's Muslim surveillance program—targeted ordinary Muslim communities. A full decade after 9/11, the FBI was using Islamophobic training materials that described ordinary Muslims as terrorist sympathizers whose charitable donations were a "funding mechanism for combat." For far-right activists, such practices seemed to confirm that Islam itself posed an existential and civilizational threat. Such approaches also paved the way for more overtly discriminatory ideas, such as Trump's musings during the 2016 presidential campaign about building a national database of Muslims and his promise to ban all Muslims from entering the United States.

Meanwhile, the global war on terrorism led to military actions across the Middle East that triggered an unprecedented migration crisis in Europe—which in turn energized the far right. After the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, millions of people

fled those countries for Europe, creating an influx of Muslims that produced an intense backlash, featuring anti-Muslim marches and hundreds of attacks on refugees and asylum seekers.

U.S. military actions in the Middle East also drove anti-Muslim sentiment among active-duty troops and in veterans' communities. Merchandise for sale on websites catering to military veterans helped carry Islamophobic sentiment fostered on the frontlines into civilian life back home. Bumper stickers and T-shirts, for example, allowed American soldiers to proudly identify as "infidels" and displayed Arabic text with the phrase "Stay back 100 meters or you will be shot."

Against this backdrop, the United States saw the growth of unlawful militias in the antigovernment extremist movement—including some that recruited from active-duty troops and veterans' communities. Like the returning Vietnam War veterans who had helped launch the white power movement in the 1970s, some veterans of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq returned home with a sense of anger and betrayal. Others grappled with posttraumatic stress, which research suggests can increase one's vulnerability to extremist recruitment. The dehumanization that soldiers are trained to embrace as a battlefield tactic, for example, may not automatically turn off on one's reentry into civilian society. And the rhetoric used by far-right extremist groups to recruit members—with appeals to brotherhood, heroism, the defense of one's people, and a chance to be part of a meaningful cause—echoed the language that had attracted many to enlist in the armed forces in the first place.

ANOTHER WAR ON TERROR?

The good news is that the upsurge in far-right violence has finally commanded the attention of counterterrorism officials. A scramble to realign resources and assemble expertise is now underway. From the UN Security Council to national parliaments to militaries and security agencies, there are currently dozens of commissions, special task forces, briefings, listening sessions, and investigations taking place across the globe to explore ways to counter the new threat. Some countries have already announced new legislation: Germany, for example, plans to spend one billion euros on 89 specific measures to counter racism and right-wing extremism, and New Zealand's wide-ranging response to the Christchurch attack includes proposed changes to hate-crime legislation and counterterrorism laws, the establishment of a new ministry for ethnic communities, funding to enhance security for communities particularly threatened by terrorism, and the creation of a new national center for social cohesion and the prevention of extremism.

Changes are afoot in the United States, as well. In October 2020, the Department of Homeland Security's annual threat assessment finally declared domestic violent extremism to be the most pressing and lethal threat facing the country. A few months later, the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol brought that reality into sharp relief. In June of this year, the Biden administration released the country's first-ever National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism, which emphasizes preventing radicalization by strengthening media literacy skills and building

resilience to online disinformation and the need to address the underlying conditions that help fuel domestic extremism, including racism and insufficient gun control.

This represents a welcome change. But the implementation of new policies around the globe will encounter significant challenges as the West pivots from the prior era of terrorism. The problem is partly structural: the strategies designed to combat jihadi terrorism—surveilling and monitoring hierarchical groups of leaders and cells—are a poor fit for the post-organizational nature of far-right extremism. Formal groups play a diminishing role in far-right recruitment and radicalization, which more typically take place in a vast and ever-expanding online ecosystem of propaganda and disinformation. Only 13 percent of the far-right terrorist attacks in North America, western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand between 2002 and 2019 that resulted in at least one death were attributable to a specific group. Today's far-right extremism involves fewer backwoods initiation rituals and attacks by cells and more self-directed training and solo operations, live-streamed for a global audience.

The motivations and ideologies of far-right groups are more muddled than those of the jihadi groups to which most terrorism experts are accustomed. The far-right universe includes preppers, vegan neo-Nazis, anti-vaccine activists, QAnon followers, and thousands of unclassifiable radicals who have assembled bits of far-right propaganda into choose-your-own-adventure belief systems that don't always make much sense to outsiders. Some far-right groups promote LGBTQ rights and women's rights, for example, in order to draw supporters from the progressive left by arguing that they are defending what they claim are Western values against Islamic aggression. Or consider "ecofascists" who back border closures as a way of protecting and preserving territories threatened by climate change—not for the good of humanity but for the benefit of white people, who they believe have a "blood and soil" entitlement to those lands.

Combating these threats will revolve less around the surveillance and monitoring that were signature tactics in the global war on terrorism and more around building societies' resilience to propaganda and disinformation. The politics of fear practiced by many officials and leaders in Western countries in the post-9/11 era clearly contributed to right-wing radicalization. By encouraging people to feel that they lacked control over their own lives, to see themselves as vulnerable, and to fear outsiders, this style of politics opened a door for extremists, who marched right through it. So fighting the far right will also mean more fully abandoning the civilizational logic that undergirded the war on terrorism—sometimes consciously, sometimes inadvertently. Counterterrorism authorities must do away with policies and messages predicated on the idea that Islam poses a threat to Western civilization, which helped created a kind of ideological scaffolding on which the far right has built a movement.

TOMORROW NEVER KNOWS

In the weeks after January 6, Washington, D.C., became a militarized zone. Wide swaths of downtown were fenced off,

with military checkpoints on the bridges and more than 25,000 National Guard forces deployed to secure the city before President Joe Biden's inauguration.

Perhaps Americans will simply become used to these security measures, just as global travelers came to accept the beltless, shoeless shuffle through airport security. To avoid that outcome, U.S. counterterrorism officials will have to get better at prevention. There is little evidence about what works to prevent radicalization or help people disengage from extremist movements, and even less knowledge about what kinds of interventions can be effectively scaled up. Other countries take holistic approaches, involving agencies that deal with health and human services, culture, education, and social welfare. U.S. expertise, however, remains concentrated in security and law enforcement agencies—although Biden's new national strategy signals a shift, envisioning a coordinated, multiagency effort to reduce polarization, limit access to firearms, and combat racism.

Perhaps the single most important lesson to draw from the far right's mobilization over the past 20 years is that liberal democratic ideas and institutions must be nurtured through education and not just defended by force. The best way to fight an omnipresent extremist fringe is not through suppression alone but by making mainstream society more resilient and less vulnerable to far-right appeals. This is the "defensive democracy" approach that Germany pursued after World War II, which involved sustained federal investments in scalable, evidence-based media literacy programs to strengthen citizen support for multicultural democracy and its core tenets. It requires giving all citizens the tools to recognize and reject extremist propaganda and disinformation. Federal agencies cannot do this job on their own; such efforts work best when integrated with initiatives at the local level, where leaders enjoy more trust and are better equipped to understand their communities' needs.

Security and law enforcement agencies still have a role to play, but authorities should broaden the pool of experts who advise them on terrorism: agencies full of experts trained overwhelmingly in Islamist sources of terrorism have struggled to recognize and respond to the far-right threat. Governments should forge teams of cross-agency experts in social work, psychology, and education, and on topics such as cults, gangs, gender-based violence, racism, and trauma. They should also establish deeper relationships with academics and research centers, where younger scholars often have their fingers on the pulse of new and evolving threats.

There is no crystal ball that can predict what the future of terrorism will bring. But if there is one certainty, it is this: tomorrow's extremism will not look exactly like today's. The United States will likely see more violence from radical environmentalists; from coalitions of anti-vaccine, antigovernment, and conspiracy theory groups; and from groups that seek the collapse of social, political, and economic systems in furtherance of a variety of hard-to-define ideological goals. As the danger evolves, the worst thing the country could do is to once again focus obsessively and exclusively on the threat it faces today.

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Winning Ugly

What the War on Terror Cost America

Elliot Ackerman

My first mission as a paramilitary officer with the CIA was against a top-ten al Qaeda target. It was the autumn of 2009, and I had been deployed in my new job for a total of two days. But I was no stranger to Afghanistan, having already fought there (as well as in Iraq) as a Marine Corps officer over the previous six years. On this mission, I was joined by the Afghan counterterrorism unit I advised and a handful of members from SEAL Team Six. Our plan was to conduct a raid to capture or kill our target, who was coming across the border from Pakistan for a meeting in the Korengal Valley.

The night was moonless as we slipped into the valley. The 70-odd members of our raid force hiked under night-vision goggles for a couple of hours, taking on hundreds of feet of elevation in silence until we arrived at a village on a rocky outcropping where the meeting was being held. As surveillance and strike aircraft orbited the starry sky, a subset of our force sprinted toward the house where an informant had told us the target was staying. There was a brief and sharp gunfight; none of our men were hurt, and several of our adversaries were killed. But the target was taken alive. Then we slipped out of the valley as expeditiously as we had arrived. By early morning, we had made it safely to the U.S. Army outpost, where our prisoner would soon be transferred to Bagram Air Base.

The sun was breaking over the jagged ridgeline as we filled out the paperwork transferring custody. The mood among our raid force, which had been tense all night, suddenly eased. We lounged in a small dirt parking lot, helmets off, laughing and recounting the details of our mission. A convoy would soon arrive to usher us back to our base, where we would get some much-needed rest and a decent meal. We would then await our next target, continuing what was proving to be a successful U.S. campaign to decapitate al Qaeda's leadership. We were feeling, in short, victorious.

While we waited, a column of scraggly American soldiers, little older than teenagers, filed past. They lived at the outpost, and their plight was well known to us. For the past several years, they had been waging a quixotic and largely unsuccessful counterinsurgency in the valley. Many of their friends had been killed there, and their expressions were haggard, a mix of defeat and defiance. Our triumphant banter must have sounded to them like a foreign language. They gave us hard, resentful looks, treating us as interlopers. It occurred to me that although our counterterrorism unit was standing on the same battlefield as these soldiers, we were in fact fighting in two very different wars.

At a joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001, U.S. President George W. Bush announced a new type

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of war, a "war on terror." He laid out its terms: "We will direct every resource at our command—every means of diplomacy, every tool of intelligence, every instrument of law enforcement, every financial influence, and every necessary weapon of war—to the disruption and to the defeat of the global terror network." Then he described what that defeat might look like: "We will starve terrorists of funding, turn them one against another, drive them from place to place until there is no refuge or no rest."

If Bush's words outlined the essential objectives of the global war on terror, 20 years later, the United States has largely achieved them. Osama bin Laden is dead. The surviving core members of al Qaeda are dispersed and weak. Bin Laden's successor, Ayman al-Zawahiri, communicates only through rare propaganda releases, and al Qaeda's most powerful offshoot, the Islamic State (or ISIS), has seen its territorial holdings dwindle to insignificance in Iraq and Syria.

Most important, however, is the United States' success in securing its homeland. If someone had told Americans in the weeks after 9/11—as they navigated anthrax attacks on the Capitol, a plunging stock market, and predictions of the demise of mass travel—that the U.S. military and U.S. intelligence agencies would successfully shield the country from another major terrorist attack for the next 20 years, they would have had trouble believing it. Since 9/11, the United States has suffered, on average, six deaths per year due to jihadi terrorism. (To put this in perspective, in 2019, an average of 39 Americans died every day from overdoses involving prescription opioids.) If the goal of the global war on terror was to prevent significant acts of terrorism, particularly in the United States, then the war has succeeded.

But at what cost? Like that night in the Korengal, could success and failure coexist on the same battlefield? Can the United States claim to have won the war on terror while simultaneously having lost the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq? The answers require untangling the many battles the United States has fought since 9/11 and understanding the impact they have had on the American psyche.

US AND THEM

Every war the United States has fought, beginning with the American Revolution, has required an economic model to sustain it with sufficient bodies and cash. The Civil War, for instance, was sustained with the first-ever draft and the first-ever income tax. World War II saw a national mobilization, including another draft, further taxation, and the selling of war bonds. One of the chief characteristics of the Vietnam War was an extremely unpopular draft that spawned an antiwar movement and sped that conflict to its eventual end. Like its predecessors, the war on terror came with its own model: the war was fought by an all-volunteer military and paid for largely through deficit spending. It should be no surprise that this model, which by design anesthetized a majority of Americans to the costs of conflict, delivered them their longest war; in his September 20, 2001, speech, when describing how Americans might support the war effort, Bush said, "I ask you to live your lives and hug your children."

This model has also had a profound effect on American democracy, one that

is only being fully understood 20 years later. Today, with a ballooning national deficit and warnings of inflation, it is worth noting that the war on terror became one of the earliest and most expensive charges Americans placed on their national credit card after the balanced budgets of the 1990s; 2001 marked the last year that the federal budget passed by Congress resulted in a surplus. Funding the war through deficit spending allowed it to fester through successive administrations with hardly a single politician ever mentioning the idea of a war tax. Meanwhile, other forms of spending—from financial bailouts to health care and, most recently, a pandemic recovery stimulus package—generate breathless debate.

If deficit spending has anesthetized the American people to the fiscal cost of the war on terror, technological and social changes have numbed them to its human cost. The use of drone aircraft and other platforms has facilitated the growing automation of combat, which allows the U.S. military to kill remotely. This development has further distanced Americans from the grim costs of war, whether they be the deaths of U.S. troops or those of foreign civilians. Meanwhile, the absence of a draft has allowed the U.S. government to outsource its wars to a military caste, an increasingly self-segregated portion of society, opening up a yawning civil-military divide as profound as any that American society has ever known.

Last year, in response to nationwide civil unrest, Americans finally had the chance to meet their military firsthand as both active-duty and National Guard troops were deployed in large numbers throughout the country. Americans also got to hear from the military's retired leadership as a bevy of flag officers—both on the right and the left—weighed in on domestic political matters in unprecedented ways. They spoke on television, wrote editorials that denounced one party or the other, and signed their names to letters on everything from the provenance of a suspicious laptop connected to the Democratic nominee's son to the integrity of the presidential election itself.

For now, the military remains one of the most trusted institutions in the United States and one of the few that the public sees as having no overt political bias. How long will this trust last under existing political conditions? As partisanship taints every facet of American life, it would seem to be only a matter of time before that infection spreads to the U.S. military. What then? From Caesar's Rome to Napoleon's France, history shows that when a republic couples a large standing military with dysfunctional domestic politics, democracy doesn't last long. The United States today meets both conditions. Historically, this has invited the type of political crisis that leads to military involvement (or even intervention) in domestic politics. The wide divide between the military and the citizens it serves is yet another inheritance from the war on terror.

DEFINING VICTORY

Although it may seem odd to separate the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq from the war on terror, it is worth remembering that immediately after 9/11, the wholesale invasion and occupation of either country was hardly a fait accompli. It is not difficult to imagine a more

limited counterterrorism campaign in Afghanistan that might have brought bin Laden to justice or a strategy to contain Saddam Hussein's Iraq that would not have involved a full-scale U.S. invasion. The long, costly counterinsurgency campaigns that followed in each country were wars of choice. Both proved to be major missteps when it came to achieving the twin goals of bringing the perpetrators of 9/11 to justice and securing the homeland. In fact, at several moments over the past two decades, the wars set back those objectives. This was never more the case than in the months after bin Laden's death in May 2011.

Few years proved to be more significant in the war on terror than 2011. Aside from being the year bin Laden was killed, it also was the year the Arab Spring took off and the year U.S. troops fully withdrew from Iraq. If the great strategic blunder of the Bush administration was to put troops into Iraq, then the great strategic blunder of the Obama administration was to pull all of them out. Both missteps created power vacuums. The first saw the flourishing of al Qaeda in Iraq; the second gave birth to that group's successor, ISIS.

If insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different outcome, in Afghanistan, the Biden administration has adopted an insane policy, setting itself up for a repeat of President Barack Obama's experience in Iraq with the ongoing withdrawal. The recommitment of U.S. troops to Iraq in the wake of ISIS's 2014 blitzkrieg to within 16 miles of Baghdad was a response to the fear not only that the government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki might collapse but also that a failed state in Iraq would create the type of sanctuary that enabled 9/11. The United States' vast counterinsurgency campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq were predicated on a doctrine of preemption; as Bush put it in 2007, "We will fight them over there so we do not have to face them in the United States of America."

But what makes the war on terror different from other wars is that victory has never been based on achieving a positive outcome; the goal has been to prevent a negative one. In this war, victory doesn't come when you destroy your adversary's army or seize its capital. It occurs when something does not happen. How, then, do you declare victory? How do you prove a negative? After 9/11, it was almost as though American strategists, unable to conceptualize a war that could be won only by not allowing a certain set of events to replicate themselves, felt forced to create a war that conformed to more conventional conceptions of conflict. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq represented a familiar type of war, with an invasion to topple a government and liberate a people, followed by a long occupation and counterinsurgency campaigns.

In addition to blood and treasure, there is another metric by which the war on terror can be judged: opportunity cost. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the depths of American political dysfunction and has hinted at the dangers of a civil-military divide. Perhaps even more important from a national security perspective, it has also brought the United States' complex relationship with China into stark relief. For the past two decades, while Washington was repurposing the U.S. military to engage in massive counter-

insurgency campaigns and precision counterterrorism operations, Beijing was busy building a military to fight and defeat a peer-level competitor.

Today, the Chinese navy is the largest in the world. It boasts 350 commissioned warships to the U.S. Navy's roughly 290. Although U.S. ships generally outclass their Chinese counterparts, it now seems inevitable that the two countries' militaries will one day reach parity. China has spent 20 years building a chain of artificial islands throughout the South China Sea that can effectively serve as a defensive line of unsinkable aircraft carriers. Culturally, China has become more militaristic, producing hypernationalist content such as the *Wolf Warrior* action movies. In the first, a former U.S. Navy SEAL plays the archvillain. The sequel, released in 2017, became the highest-grossing film in Chinese box-office history. Clearly, Beijing has no qualms about framing Washington as an antagonist.

China isn't the only country that has taken advantage of a preoccupied United States. In the past two decades, Russia has expanded its territory into Crimea and backed separatists in Ukraine; Iran has backed proxies in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria; and North Korea has acquired nuclear weapons. After the century opened with 9/11, conventional wisdom had it that nonstate actors would prove to be the greatest threat to U.S. national security. This prediction came true, but not in the way most people anticipated. Nonstate actors have compromised national security not by attacking the United States but by diverting its attention away from state actors. It is these classic antagonists—China, Iran, North

Korea, and Russia—that have expanded their capabilities and antipathies in the face of a distracted United States.

How imminent is the threat from these states? When it comes to legacy military platforms—aircraft carriers, tanks, fighter planes—the United States continues to enjoy a healthy technological dominance over its near-peer competitors. But its preferred platforms might not be the right ones. Long-range land-based cruise missiles could render large aircraft carriers obsolete. Advances in cyberoffense could make tech-reliant fighter aircraft too vulnerable to fly. The greatest minds in the U.S. military have now, finally, turned their attention to these concerns, with the U.S. Marine Corps, for example, shifting its entire strategic focus to a potential conflict with China. But it may be too late.

WORN OUT

After two decades, the United States also suffers from war fatigue. Even though an all-volunteer military and the lack of a war tax have exempted most Americans from shouldering the burdens of war, that fatigue has still manifested. Under four presidents, the American people at first celebrated and then endured the endless wars playing in the background of their lives. Gradually, the national mood soured, and adversaries have taken notice. Americans' fatigue—and rival countries' recognition of it—has limited the United States' strategic options. As a result, presidents have adopted policies of inaction, and American credibility has eroded.

This dynamic played out most starkly in Syria, in the aftermath of the August 2013 sarin gas attack in Ghouta. When Syrian President Bashar al-Assad crossed Obama's stated redline by using chemical weapons, Obama found that not only was the international community no longer as responsive to an American president's entreaties for the use of force but also that this reluctance appeared in Congress, as well. When Obama went to legislators to gain support for a military strike against the Assad regime, he encountered bipartisan war fatigue that mirrored the fatigue of voters, and he called off the attack. The United States' redline had been crossed, without incident or reprisal.

Fatigue may seem like a "soft" cost of the war on terror, but it is a glaring strategic liability. A nation exhausted by war has a difficult time presenting a credible deterrent threat to adversaries. This proved to be true during the Cold War when, at the height of the Vietnam War, in 1968, the Soviets invaded Czechoslovakia, and when, in the war's aftermath, in 1979, the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. Because it was embroiled in a war in the first case and reeling from it in the second, the United States could not credibly deter Soviet military aggression. The United States is in a similar spot today, particularly with regard to China. When Americans were asked in a recent poll whether the United States should defend Taiwan if it were confronted with an invasion by China, 55 percent of respondents said that it should not.

Obviously, if the Chinese undertook such an action, particularly if Americans or the citizens of allied countries were killed in the process, public opinion might change swiftly; nevertheless, the poll suggested that the threshold for the use of force has risen among Americans. U.S. adversaries understand

this. It is no coincidence that China, for instance, has felt empowered to infringe on Hong Kong's autonomy and commit brazen human rights abuses against its minority Uyghur population. When American power recedes, other states fill the vacuum.

U.S. adversaries have also learned to obfuscate their aggression. The cyberwar currently being waged from Russia is one example, with the Russian government claiming no knowledge of the spate of ransomware attacks emanating from within its borders. With Taiwan, likewise, Chinese aggression probably wouldn't manifest in conventional military ways. Beijing is more likely to take over the island through gradual annexation, akin to what it has done with Hong Kong, than stage an outright invasion. That makes a U.S. military response even more difficult—especially as two decades of war have undermined U.S. military deterrence.

A FOREIGN COUNTRY

The war on terror has changed both how the United States sees itself and how it is perceived by the rest of the world. From time to time, people have asked in what ways the war changed me. I have never known how to answer this question because ultimately the war didn't change me; the war made me. It is so deeply engrained in my psyche that I have a difficult time separating the parts of me that exist because of it from the parts of me that exist despite it. Answering that question is like explaining how a parent or a sibling changed you. When you live with a person—or a war—for so long, you come to know it on intimate terms, and it comes to change you in similarly intimate ways.

Today, I have a hard time remembering what the United States used to be like. I forget what it was like to be able to arrive at the airport just 20 minutes before a flight. What it was like to walk through a train station without armed police meandering around the platforms. Or what it was like to believe—particularly in those heady years right after the Cold War—that the United States' version of democracy would remain ascendant for all time and that the world had reached "the end of history."

In much the same way that members of "the greatest generation" can recall where they were when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor or baby boomers can remember where they were when JFK was shot, my generation's touchstone is where you were on 9/11. Like most of us, I remember the day clearly. But when thinking of that time, the event I return to most often happened the night before.

I was a college student and had requisitioned the television in my apartment because HBO was showing a new series, *Band of Brothers*. As an ROTC midshipman, I believed my entire future would be spent as part of a band of brothers. As I settled onto the sofa, that iconic title sequence started: sepia-toned paratroopers falling across the sky en route to liberating Europe, the swelling strings of the nostalgic soundtrack. There wasn't a hint of irony or cynicism anywhere in the series. I can't imagine someone making it today.

As the United States' sensibilities about war—and warriors—have changed over two decades, I have often thought of *Band of Brothers*. It's a good barometer of where the country was before 9/11 and the emotional distance it has traveled

since. Today, the United States is different; it is skeptical of its role in the world, more clear-eyed about the costs of war despite having experienced those costs only in predominantly tangential ways. Americans' appetite to export their ideals abroad is also diminished, particularly as they struggle to uphold those ideals at home, whether in violence around the 2020 presidential election, the summer of 2020's civil unrest, or even the way the war on terror compromised the country through scandals from Abu Ghraib prison to Edward Snowden's leaks. A United States in which *Band of Brothers* has near-universal appeal is a distant memory.

It is also a reminder that national narratives matter. The day before the United States departed on a 20-year odyssey in the Middle East, the stories people wanted to hear—or at least the stories Hollywood executives believed they wanted to hear—were the ones in which the Americans were the good guys, liberating the world from tyranny and oppression.

WINNING AND LOSING

Not long after President Joe Biden announced the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, I was speaking with a former colleague at the CIA. He had also fought in Afghanistan and Iraq as a marine, and he, too, was on that mission in the Korengal Valley. But when I left the CIA, he remained and has spent his career prosecuting the war on terror around the world. Today, he runs paramilitary operations at the agency.

We talked about the differences between the withdrawal from Iraq and the withdrawal from Afghanistan. We agreed that the latter felt harder. Why? Unlike Iraq, the war in Afghanistan was predicated on an attack against the United States. This had happened only once before in American history and had led to a decisive U.S. triumph. But unlike the greatest generation, our generation of veterans would enjoy no such victory. Instead, we would be remembered as the ones who lost the United States' longest war.

When I told him that even though we might have lost the war in Afghanistan, our generation could still claim to have won the war on terror, he was skeptical. We debated the issue but soon let it drop. The next day, I received an email from him. A southerner and a lover of literature, he had sent me the following, from *The Sound and the Fury*:

> No battle is ever won. . . . They are not even fought. The field only reveals to man his own folly and despair, and victory is an illusion of philosophers and fools.

Graduate School Forum Showcase:

The Opportunities Ahead

After years of disruption, the international community has an opportunity to rebuild and reinvigorate its path forward.

The pandemic underscores the need for international cooperation. A spotlight on systems of oppression opens the chance to include those historically kept from decision-making. A worldwide economic slowdown, ever-more-apparent inequality, and an escalating climate crisis challenge us to adopt new ways of producing, working, and living.

To prepare for such opportune moments, future leaders need to understand the elements of international affairs and policy.

Training in these disciplines develop the ability to recognize the cultural, economic, social, environmental, and political forces at work in the world. It challenges students to build communication, leadership, and teamwork skills. Its interdisciplinary curriculum and a diverse community of people integrate differing perspectives. Programs distinguish themselves by their flexibility and adaptability.

As you search for a master's program, ask how the program is trying to anticipate changes in the way people will work, live, and govern in the future. Consider how they are adapting and innovating during the pandemic. Look at how they bring different voices into the conversation. Discover in what ways students challenge traditional ideas and formulate new ones. Examine how they work to cultivate leadership qualities in students, as well as engage current policymakers.

Students of international affairs and policy can lay out a new blueprint for success. They can find the silver lining in recent challenges, shake off the inertia of the past, and promote positive change.

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

Contents

Carolyn Gallaher, PhD

Senior Associate Dean
School of International Service
American University

Learning to Thrive in the New Normal

What lessons learned, adjustments made, and/or innovations has your program implemented in the last 15 months?

Our faculty learned that they could teach online and do it well. That doesn't mean there weren't bumps along the way—there were many—but in a crunch, we made it work. Faculty now have a new skill set—online teaching—and improved computer program competencies in Zoom, Canvas, and Teams. I expect we'll take these skills with us back into the classroom. Ironically, holding office hours online may facilitate more one-on-one meetings between faculty and students as barriers to face-to-face meeting, including jobs, internships, and long commutes, are eliminated.

How are the mechanisms of policymaking changing to adapt to a post-pandemic world?

The global pandemic brought weaknesses in our local, state, and federal policymaking process into sharp relief. The need for cooperation became clear early on, when mayors, governors, and the executive branch initiated contradictory policies on masks, school closings, and travel. The importance of clear lines of decision-making was also made depressingly obvious when governors demanded the president purchase and distribute COVID-19 tests, only to be told it wasn't the federal government's job to do this. We weren't ready for the pandemic. Our policymaking apparatus needs to be rebuilt from the ground up.

How does your school promote new voices and new perspectives in its diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) initiatives?

Like most higher education institutions, the School of International Service still has much work to do on DEIJ initiatives. At the faculty level, we're focusing on hiring. We need to bring Black, Latinx, and Indigenous voices onto our faculty and into our classrooms to catch up with our increasingly diverse student population.

As a faculty, we're building DEIJ skills for the classroom. We've decolonized core courses by adding units on nontraditional topics and incorporating authors from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East in our syllabi. We're learning how to lead difficult conversations in the classroom and strategizing how to keep these conversations focused on readings rather than polemics. We realize that providing students with DEIJ knowledge and skill-building is crucial to their future professional success.

How do leadership roles for traditionally underrepresented groups enhance your programs?

Representation matters, especially at a school for international affairs and especially at the leadership level, because it provides a more accurate picture of the world. Having leaders from underrepresented populations broadens the perspective of everything we do, from helping students with problems they encounter to making policy and from designing curricula to forging new international partnerships.

As the new U.S. administration refocuses on international diplomacy and cooperation, how do your programs prepare students for a more open dialogue on the global stage?

We've always prepared our students to engage in diplomacy and dialogue with allies and adversaries alike. What's different now is that we're also teaching them how to repair damaged relationships and to build up what was lost during the last administration and the global pandemic.

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Kenneth Scheve

Dean Acheson Professor of Political Science and Global Affairs
Yale Jackson Institute for Global Affairs

Jackson Prepares to Launch as Professional School in Fall 2022

What are the major changes Jackson will make when it becomes a professional school?

We will be investing in people who want to make a difference by solving the most challenging problems in global affairs. This means significantly expanding our faculty whose research informs critical public policy challenges in international security, development, trade, climate, global health, human rights, and other areas. Central to this investment is changing our two-year professional degree to a master in public policy (M.P.P.) and reimagining our curriculum to better prepare future global affairs professionals for impactful leadership. Jackson has always been a community in which students, faculty, and distinguished practitioners come together to work on important global problems. As a professional school, the Jackson community will have the resources, scale, and focus to make an even greater difference in the world.

What was the rationale behind changing the degree name from an M.A. to an M.P.P.?

Students enrolled in our two-year graduate program have diverse goals but share a commitment to careers as public service professionals. Changing our degree name to an M.P.P. communicates to prospective students and employers our focus on developing the professional skills needed for policymaking leadership. We deliver students an interdisciplinary education that provides them with the ideas, concepts, and skills to be creative problem solvers in a lifelong career in global affairs. Our core curriculum integrates fundamental insights from academic disciplines such as economics, political science, and history with the development of analytical and communication skills. Jackson's program is intellectually dynamic and challenging but focused on ideas and skill-building directly relevant to a career as global affairs professionals. It is this mission that makes the M.P.P. degree name a great fit.

What will most distinguish the Yale Jackson School of Global Affairs from its peer policy schools?

Jackson's M.P.P. occupies a unique place among international affairs graduate programs because of its flexibility and size. The four-course interdisciplinary core curriculum provides students with a shared intellectual foundation focused on acquisition of the ideas, ways of thinking, and skills needed for leadership in global affairs. The small core both prepares students to identify and investigate solutions to the global issues they are most passionate about and gives students the unusual flexibility to design an individualized course of study around those issues by taking advantage of the extraordinary breadth of courses and resources at Jackson and across Yale. With about thirty-five students in each entering class, Jackson's program is small by design. Our size allows us to deliver distinctive programs such as a writing program integrated into the core curriculum that provides students with extensive training and feedback in writing for different objectives in the policymaking process. It also encourages graduate students to form an intimate and close-knit learning community among themselves as well as with faculty and practitioners.

Yale JACKSON INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Daniel Starr Tenorio
Master of Advanced International Studies Program 2020–22
Diplomatische Akademie Wien – Vienna School
of International Studies

Thomas Kögler
Master of Advanced International Studies Program 2017–19
Diplomatische Akademie Wien – Vienna School of
International Studies, a recent graduate
currently working for Austrian National Bank

The Opportunities Ahead

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

As the new U.S. administration refocuses on international diplomacy and cooperation, how do your programs prepare students for a more open dialogue on the global stage?

Thomas: While the Biden administration is a breath of fresh air after the presidency of Donald Trump, the skills needed to succeed in this environment are not new. It takes a holistic, interdisciplinary approach with a broad knowledge of history, politics, and economics as well as transcultural sensibility to find meaningful compromises and advance not only the interests of a specific nation but of humankind. The pandemic and the global climate crisis have shown us that we need to find new answers and intensify the dialogue between decision-makers and experts of various fields. The graduate programs offered by the DA combine the best of two worlds: diplomatic skills and interdisciplinary knowledge necessary on the international stage as well as expertise on topics that will shape our future. In addition, the DA's challenging curriculum leaves room for pursuing individual academic interests.

How are policymaking mechanisms changing to adapt to a post-pandemic world?

Daniel: Policymaking bodies have had to act more efficiently in implementing restrictions and authorizing expenditure at short notice, leaving no room for filibustering and forcing cross-aisle cooperation. In the post-pandemic world, policymakers must maintain the same standards of collaboration to guarantee swift reaction in the next emergency.

Democracies without strong institutions ex ante have suffered as leaders consolidate power without regard for democratic norms. It will be a challenge for people in these countries to reinstall democratic norms; it is vital that international policymakers aid their efforts.

What innovations has your program implemented in the last 15 months?

Daniel: One of our programs' selling points is networking opportunities, which were negatively affected by movement restrictions. In response, the DA hosted online events that allowed students to meet people across industries, and they led to internships, employment, or contacts to further students' careers after graduation. The DA offered a course on COVID-19 and its impact on the international state system, which analyzed international public health history and the different societal and state responses. Comparing the current pandemic with past crises enables us to recognize the mistakes that we made over the past 15 months and provide insight to exit the pandemic with as little loss as possible.

How does your school promote new voices and new perspectives in its diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) initiatives?

Daniel: Despite being a small school, the DA has a variety of student-led groups, which promote different identities, such as the Hispanic, queer, and sustainability societies. Students can pursue their interests and advocate for issues that they find most important. For instance, at the Hispanic society, people can practice their Spanish, meet ambassadors and ministers from Spanish-speaking missions in Vienna, and learn about Latin American and Spanish cultures.

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

Professor Henry Schwalbenberg

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

International Cooperation as Key to Facing Global Crises

What sets Fordham IPED apart from other international affairs programs?

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

How does Fordham IPED prepare its students to participate in promoting international cooperation and diplomacy in combating global crises?

Our core curriculum provides our students with an advanced interdisciplinary knowledge of global economic relations, giving them the expertise critically needed in restarting a world economy. As examples, in the nonprofit sector, we have alumni who are part of emergency response teams to health outbreaks, including managing global and domestic vaccination campaigns. In the public sector, we have alumni who work with international trade agencies that safeguard and enhance the competitive strength of local industries against unfair trade practices. In the private sector, we have alumni who are engaged in impact investing, using the dynamics of portfolio management to fund development projects. Drawing from the strength of their training from the Fordham IPED program, these alumni are able to promote effective development strategies, accountable governance, and fair and equitable trade and commerce for a revitalized global economy.

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

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

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

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

Lastly, we have a strong alumni network and close association with various international organizations. Our placement record is strong, with about 40% of alumni in the private sector, 24% in the nonprofit sector, 27% in government, and the remaining 9% in academia. Our graduates also have a strong record of winning various prestigious awards, such as Fulbright Fellowships, U.S. Presidential Management Fellowships, and international development fellowships.

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

Cordel Faulk
Director of Global Admissions
Schwarzman Scholars

Lead the Future: Schwarzman Scholars in the 21st Century

Why should aspiring global leaders apply to a master's degree in global affairs in China?

Our Founding Trustee Steve Schwarzman has long said that, in the twenty-first century, China is no longer an elective course; it is core curriculum. Looking at the state of the world in 2021, it is hard to disagree. China is one of the largest economies in the world and its role, culturally and politically, has become more important in the short term than we ever could have predicted.

Through leadership training, a rigorous curriculum, deep dives, internships, mentoring, and language instruction, Schwarzman Scholars have unparalleled opportunities to connect with Chinese culture while learning about global affairs. They develop skills to maximize their leadership potential through firsthand experiences in China. To be a leader in any discipline, you need to understand China—and Schwarzman Scholars is the best place to do so.

The pandemic spawned new obstacles to multilateralism around the world. What were the main lessons learned?

As the world lived through COVID-19, we saw that no country or community can tackle these complex challenges alone. This includes Schwarzman Scholars: in addition to acquiring critical leadership skills in an uncertain world, Scholars need to cultivate relationships across borders.

More than ever before, the past year has highlighted the strength and resilience of the Schwarzman Scholars community. Scholars have gone above and beyond in giving back to their communities across more than forty initiatives they founded during the pandemic - from facilitating access to credit and PPE, to founding a virtual tutoring program, and creating a microgrant venture to support high school entrepreneurs. We know Schwarzman Scholars will continue to prove how multilateralism can create a lasting positive impact.

How did Schwarzman Scholars respond as a program to COVID-19?

Since we are based in Beijing, Schwarzman Scholars was one of the first programs to go fully virtual in January 2020. We quickly pivoted to support our Scholars from around the world, increasing our course offerings by over 20% while our faculty led classes for Scholars across 18 time zones. We hosted guests such as Madeleine Albright, Richard Haass, Condoleezza Rice, Indra Nooyi, and more. Our careers team also hosted more than 120 collective coaching and resume review sessions while our student life team conducted over 25 virtual Deep Dives, a hallmark of our program's unique curriculum.

Travel restrictions during the pandemic did not deter today's young leaders from wanting to learn more about China. We hosted over 13,000 students in online information sessions in 2020 – twice as many as in 2019. We received more than 3,600 applications to select 151 students from 39 countries to join our incoming sixth cohort who will start the program this August.

SCHWARZMAN SCHOLARS
清华大学苏世民书院

Dr. Michael Kenney

Posvar Chair in International Security Studies
Director, Matthew B. Ridgway Center for International Security Studies
Graduate School of Public and International Affairs
University of Pittsburgh

Shaping Leaders to Face Today's Complex Challenges

What makes the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA) unique, and how does the Ridgway Center enhance that experience to prepare students for a more open dialogue on the global stage?

The GSPIA prides itself on shaping the next generation of forward-thinking leaders in international affairs and public service by offering a rigorous academic experience and extensive experiential learning opportunities that inspire our graduates to address diverse challenges. Our location at one of the country's most distinguished research institutions, combined with its new Washington, DC Center, allows students to network with both local Pittsburgh leaders and those on the national stage.

Securities and intelligence studies majors receive training in leadership, research, and technical skills development. They also have the opportunity to participate in a variety of projects, events, and workshops.

At the Ridgway Center, students work with world-renowned researchers and practitioners on projects tackling real-world security problems, including nuclear proliferation, WMDs, extremism and political violence, transnational organized crime, and cybersecurity. Outside the classroom, students participate in working groups that provide cutting-edge research to client agencies working in security, development, and diplomacy. In addition to these public-private partnerships, the Ridgway Center offers internships, independent studies, and scholarships to a select number of students. Events are hosted throughout the year.

How is the Ridgeway Center actively working to promote new perspectives in its diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice initiatives and to provide leadership opportunities for traditionally underrepresented groups?

The Ridgway Center has undertaken a concerted effort to increase the diversity, equity, and inclusion of our programming. Recently, we created a new speaker series, Black Scholars in International Relations, which host prominent African American scholars who are making important contributions to our understanding of international affairs. This series is part of a larger multi-year initiative, Diversity Series in World Politics. We were also thrilled to host Lt. General Richard Clark, the first African American superintendent of the U.S. Air Force Academy. The vast majority of Ridgway Center events last year featured women and/or members of underrepresented communities. We will continue to promote new voices and perspectives in the years ahead.

The Ridgway Center is co-sponsor of the University of Pittsburgh's chapter of Women in International Security, which is dedicated to advancing the leadership and professional development of women in the field of international peace and security. The chapter maintains a student executive board that provides valuable leadership roles and experience to our students.

What skills will students need to meet the challenges policymakers face in today's changing world?

Policymakers confront complex challenges—an ongoing global health pandemic, the struggle for social justice and equity, persistent threats to peace and security—that often transcend national boundaries. Even as the policy challenges change, the skills students need to confront them remain largely the same. These include, but are not limited to, informed subject matter expertise, critical and ethical thinking, quantitative and qualitative research methods, and clear, coherent communication. We train our students in all these areas. In doing so, we shape leaders who are adaptable, compassionate, and visionary—leaders who are ready to face the complex challenges in the world today.

University of Pittsburgh | Graduate School of Public and International Affairs

Fredline M'Cormack-Hale, PhD

Associate Professor and Director of
Online Programs
School of Diplomacy and International Relations
Seton Hall University

Working Toward a More Just and Equitable World

You have been recognized for your excellence in online teaching. How do you keep students connected and engaged?

In some ways, we are more connected than ever! Students from around the world have been able to join us virtually, expanding accessibility and adding richness to the graduate school experience. Students engage with each other's ideas; they challenge, support, and learn from one another. They hold study sessions, work collaboratively, make presentations, and receive feedback. We host virtual events, guest speakers, online advising, group discussions, office hours, and one-to-one chats.

Your research focuses on the role of women in democratization. What impact do women have on policy and access to leadership?

Women's leadership needs to be the new normal. We need to address patriarchal structures that marginalize women using legal reform and continued engagement. The pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women, yet policies are largely gender blind. We celebrate women leaders for performing better in containing COVID-19, but women in leadership are outliers; despite years of advocating for greater representation of women at all levels, this still lags in practice. For example, in Sierra Leone, the focus of much of my research, women represent less than 10 percent of the leadership in key institutions charged with fighting the outbreak, despite leading on the frontlines as health care workers. COVID-19 reminds us that the battle for gender equity and equality is far from over.

How does the School of Diplomacy and International Relations prepare students to work in today's diverse world?

Our community is a microcosm of the world. Our students are the changemakers leading the way. Our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Coalition is listening to students and alumni, assessing curriculum, developing new courses on race and racism, and building the pipeline of diverse international affairs professionals. Our students challenge us to be more responsive and to represent a range of voices. As faculty, we are learning from them and working together to be intentionally anti-racist and address inequality.

How do students benefit from the school's multidisciplinary, multilateral approach to international affairs?

Our proximity to New York City and Washington, DC, and unique alliances with the UN community expands students' knowledge base and perspective on global challenges. Students learn from scholars and practitioners engaged in research and policymaking. We represent the complexities of decision-making and analysis of world events from multiple perspectives. Students work with professors as research assistants and co-author articles and opinion pieces, gaining advantage in the job market.

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

Never lose your passion for transformative change. Be open to learning from those who do not look like you, as well as from those you want to "help." Admit that what you do not know is much more than what you do. A key message for students is that development has to change—they have to play their part in decolonizing aid and development institutions and promoting equity in development. International cooperation and multilateral solutions to global problems have never been more essential. The world needs our graduates. This is a critical time to become an international affairs professional.

SCHOOL OF DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

Dr. Chonira Aturupane

Associate Director for Academic and Student Affairs
Ford Dorsey Master's in International Policy
Stanford University

Preparing the Next Generation of Policy Leaders

How are the mechanisms of policymaking changing to adapt to a post-pandemic world?

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed challenges that too often stand in the way of effective policymaking. Three such challenges have become particularly salient over the course of this pandemic.

The first is the prevalence of unreliable information. The increasingly rapid adoption of new technologies has facilitated the rampant spread of misinformation, clouding our ability to analyze societal problems that could benefit from policy solutions. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of sourcing credible data for effective policymaking. The second is the degree to which uncertainty and unpredictable factors can derail the best-laid plans. Planning ahead for various what-if scenarios, even unlikely ones, is now a necessary step for policymakers. Similarly, it has become essential to look at global trends to assess how various circumstances might impact current and future events. This is particularly important in the solution design and implementation stages of policymaking. The third challenge relates to the importance of comprehensive and feasible implementation plans. For instance, COVID vaccine rollouts in many places have illustrated how policy shortfalls or vague implementation plans can have dire consequences.

The Ford Dorsey Master's in International Policy (MIP) program trains students to address such challenges head-on. Our capstone program utilizes a framework that focuses on the entirety of the policymaking process, from problem identification and solution development to policy implementation. The program's cyber policy and security specialization addresses issues of misinformation, disinformation, and the impact of technology on policymaking. Additionally, the MIP curriculum includes courses taught by former and current practitioners with direct experience dealing with a myriad of challenging policy issues. For instance, my course on trade and development analyzes trends and discusses how advancements in new technologies have affected the future of work, life, and policymaking, with a view to designing impactful and prescient policies.

These components of the MIP program provide invaluable opportunities for discussing challenges at the forefront of global discourse during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our students graduate from the program well prepared to be effective policymakers in a post-pandemic world.

How does your school promote new voices and new perspectives in its diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice (DEIJ) initiatives?

Students at MIP were instrumental in advocating for change and a commitment to DEI within MIP and our home institute, the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies (FSI). In June 2020, FSI convened a task force on Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI) following MIP student demands for a concerted response to racial injustice. Among REDI's stated goals are the pursuit of an anti-racist mandate, increasing the diversity of the FSI community, and programming and curricular proposals to achieve pedagogical reform. Two MIP students and I serve on the REDI task force.

In parallel, MIP took concrete steps toward the recruitment and admission of the most racially diverse class to date and committed to making DEI trainings a formal part of programming for incoming students and to hold events on DEIJ themes. We look forward to continuing to build on these important efforts, now and in the future.

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

Gladys McCormick

Associate Professor of History; Jay and Debe Moskowitz Endowed Chair in Mexico-U.S. Relations; and Associate Dean of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University

Senior Associate of the Americas Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C.

A Diverse, Interdisciplinary Ethos

In many circles, Gladys McCormick represents a distinctive point of view when it comes to discussing U.S. foreign policy with Latin America. As an historian, a woman, and a naturalized U.S. citizen from Costa Rica—often the only one in the room—she adds vital context to inform solutions to pressing issues.

At the Maxwell School, McCormick has found a home among scholars and practitioners guided by a longstanding interdisciplinary principle: Diverse viewpoints fuel innovation and deliver better outcomes.

As an international scholar and as director of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) for the number-one–ranked school of public affairs in the United States, what do you see as the most pressing issue of the past 15 months?

COVID has revealed and widened the deep chasm of inequalities, domestically and internationally. The public health systems in many countries, especially in Asia and Latin America, have been completely overwhelmed. Many have lacked basic healthcare, let alone access to vaccines. The pandemic has also had a sweeping economic impact; while the wealthiest made more money in 2020, the middle class and lower middle class have been devastated. All of this is certain to fuel instability.

How can looking at an issue through the lens of history and other disciplines provide insight to map a path forward?

Let's look at the drug war in Mexico as an example. Undeniably, it has been a failure; we've seen exponential growth in violence. Many look to 2006 as the war's focal point because of the marked explosion in cartels, but they were around for decades—born from weak government institutions. The failure of the drug war is a failure to reckon with history. It shows the falsehood of the cookie-cutter mentality in policy—that because a solution worked in one context, it must work in another. I impart on students that they must be attuned to the social, political, and holistic considerations of a region. Looking at the future, crafting policy, requires a study of the past.

At Maxwell, my contextual understanding is strengthened by colleagues within the Moynihan Institute for Global Affairs. In this environment, I am immersed, for example, in the work of economists focused on financial crime in Asia and political scientists studying the Middle East's refugee crisis. This leads to research collaboration, such as a recent paper I co-wrote with sociologist Edwin Ackerman analyzing COVID quarantine efforts in Mexico.

How is Maxwell working to instill in its students this inclusive ethos?

Our students have long benefited from the range of perspectives that come from our interdisciplinary approach: Looking at an issue from diverse lenses fuels their understanding that successful ideas and policies must reflect our diverse world.

The recent social justice reckoning added momentum to our work to build a culture of inclusivity and remove barriers for the underrepresented. We created a robust DEI strategic plan that established affinity groups and launched cross-cultural dialogue opportunities. We also just concluded a graduate colloquium in which students developed action plans for implementing these practices in their professional lives.

This work is ongoing on both our Syracuse and Washington, D.C., campuses.

Syracuse University
Maxwell School of
Citizenship & Public Affairs

Mary Beth Altier

Clinical Associate Professor
Director, Transnational Security Concentration
NYU School of Professional Studies
Center for Global Affairs

Building a Better Future

How does the Center for Global Affairs at the NYU School of Professional Studies prepare individuals to confront the significant global challenges we've witnessed over the past 15 months?

The pandemic and other recent events, such as the attack on the U.S. Capitol, have highlighted fundamental flaws in the international system and within individual nation-states. However, these events have also demonstrated the incredible resilience of democratic and international institutions when confronted with substantial challenges and offered important opportunities for reflection and much needed reform. At the Center for Global Affairs, we teach future leaders how to anticipate, prepare for, and respond creatively and effectively to global threats and opportunities such as these. We do this through interdisciplinary and interactive coursework and applied learning and networking activities.

During the pandemic, we significantly expanded our consulting practicum offerings. In these courses, students work for a high profile partner on a project of critical importance. Over the years, students have collaborated with the UN Counterterrorism Executive Directorate on terrorists' use of social media, returning terrorist fighters, the role of technology in counterterrorism, and the rise of right-wing terrorism. They've worked with the Global Network on Women Peacebuilders to examine the impact of COVID-19 on women peacebuilders in Colombia, the Philippines, South Sudan, and Ukraine. They've partnered with the U.S. State Department's Global Engagement Center to investigate and propose strategic communications solutions to radicalization and recruitment into terrorism in Nigeria and Somalia, polarization and state sponsored disinformation in the Western Balkans, and racially and ethnically motivated violence in the United States. Other practicum partners now include Mastercard, the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, New York City Cyber Command, the Institute for the Healing of Memories, and the International Center for Transitional Justice.

Can you tell us how you are innovating to build a better future?

Changes in social and economic activity during the pandemic generated an important pause in climate emissions and the improvement of air and water quality in certain locations. Our newly formed Energy, Climate Justice, and Sustainability Lab is at the forefront of informing the debate around a rapidly changing energy sector and climate impacts. Faculty, students, and alumni also examine and publish on a range of timely security issues—the reintegration of violent extremists, including those associated with ISIS, drug cartels' use of social media, nuclear proliferation, climate change in the Sahel, the CIA's use of torture—as part of our Initiative on Emerging Threats. Our Peace Research and Education Program is involved in on-the-ground post-conflict peacebuilding efforts in Colombia, Libya, and Iraq. We've developed an Executive Education program in Cyber Leadership to help organizations prevent, mitigate, and respond to cyberattacks. Finally, our student body is international and diverse, and we do not shy away from the hard and potentially contentious questions in global affairs. We address them head-on with mutual respect for one another in an effort to identify solutions that will move us forward.

NYU | SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

CENTER FOR GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Professor Haruyuki Shimada

Dean
The Graduate School of International Relations
Ritsumeikan University

Preparing Tomorrow's Leaders From the Ancient Capital Kyoto

The Graduate School of International Relations at Ritsumeikan University (GSIR) is located in Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan. Kyoto not only has a considerable number of world-class historical sites but is also home to more than thirty higher educational institutions. Students have the advantage to pursue their own study and research in a unique environment where tradition and innovation co-exist in harmony.

How are you preparing students to adapt to a rapidly changing world?

In 2020, only a handful of our students from abroad could enter Japan due to the pandemic. To cope with the ever-changing situation, GSIR delivered classes combining online conference, on-demand, and in-person classes. The pandemic has cast questions over the existing framework of university and research institutions, urging us to reconsider the significance and our role. This led us to launch a new curriculum that we had been working on for several years, which has a strong focus on classes conducted in English.

Within the English-based program, GSIR offers four newly established clusters: 'Global Governance', 'Sustainable Development', 'Culture, Society and Media' and 'Global Japanese Studies'. These clusters cover broad academic disciplines, such as politics, economics, sociology, and cultural studies. Our highly qualified academic team with extensive experience in their fields of expertise conduct the various cutting-edge courses. As our graduate school has been admitting more students not only from Asia but also from Africa, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and North America year by year, students can immerse themselves in a culturally and ethnically diverse environment, where they learn from each other on a daily basis.

What does GSIR offer to students who are seeking advantages for their careers?

In addition to providing ways for upgrading academic knowledge and skills through the programs, GSIR invites experienced external lecturers, such as diplomats, economists, journalists, managers of nongovernmental organizations, and entrepreneurs from private sectors. This gives students opportunities to promote their understanding of what is really happening in Japan and in the world as well as encourages them to find clues to address global issues. Moreover, we are preparing various off-campus academic and practical training opportunities in Japan, which will also help students realize how the Japanese political and economic system are operating in both public and private sectors.

Furthermore, GSIR has been in the process of strengthening the dual master's degree program, which offers qualified students an opportunity to study at overseas partner universities and research institutes in countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, and in various Asian and European nations. Through this program, students are able to earn two master's degrees in as short as two years.

Our alumni are engaged in professions in the fields of international organizations, public and private sectors, civil society groups, and research and educational institutions. GSIR is ready to offer committed students every opportunity to acquire high level of knowledge and skills for their future careers.

RITSUMEIKAN UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of
International Relations

Aileen Teague
Assistant Professor, PhD
The Bush School of Government and Public Service
Texas A&M University

A New Concentration Focused on Latin America: Preparing Students to Address the Region's Most Pressing Challenges

The state of Texas is no stranger to border and immigration issues that have been in the forefront of national headlines for years. The Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University recently expanded its regional focus to include Latin America, providing a rigorous and interactive option for those interested in studying the border, Mexico, and Latin America. Dr. Aileen Teague brings a global perspective to the coursework, both as a PhD in diplomatic history specializing in U.S.-Mexico relations and having travelled the world in a military family before serving in the Marine Corps.

What makes the Bush School's Latin America concentration unique?

With the Brownsville-Matamoros border crossing located only 6.5 hours south of our College Station campus, the interdisciplinary Latin America concentration—drawing from history, politics, development, and border studies—provides students with a dynamic curriculum and practical tools to gain expertise in the region.

Our faculty help students gain a multi-perspectival understanding of regional issues both within nation-states and across country borders, where the social, political, and economic interconnectivity between the United States and its Latin American partners have reverberations on a global scale.

Students' training in U.S.-Latin America relations integrates cutting-edge academic research with high impact learning experiences. For instance, as an historian of the drug trade in Mexico, I instill in my courses an appreciation for the ways in which historical legacies contextualize and complicate current policymaking.

American domestic politics and interactions also play a role when we bring in practitioners and policymakers to engage in dialogue with our students. A former assistant secretary in the Department of Homeland Security joined us in seminar recently to discuss the possibilities for comprehensive immigration reform and improved border security, given the highly partisan political environment.

Additionally, a capstone project features students interfacing with real-world governmental and non-governmental agencies operating in Latin America and internships that help students develop their professional networks. With the backing of one of the largest public universities in the country and alumni dedicated to giving back and supporting service, our students make their mark all over the world.

How does the Bush School promote new voices and new perspectives in U.S. relations with Mexico and Latin America?

While research is a bedrock of our Latin America concentration, we also highlight a range of perspectives from U.S. and foreign practitioners. In 2020, we launched "The Other Side of the Border: Ties that Bind and Issues that Divide," a speaker series featuring human-centered and practitioner perspectives on issues related to the border, Mexico, and Central America.

We live in uncertain times when it comes to achieving reforms in immigration and border security in the post-Trump era. This project aims to facilitate dialogue between policy practitioners and our graduate students and is intended to unearth "off-the-book," grassroots perspectives, which are often where the road begins to achieving reform. This year, for example, the series will feature a discussion with a Mexican journalist on the dangers of reporting on the drug war, as well as a conversation with an Amazonian activist on the challenges of utilizing international aid in the aftermath of the 2020 fires.

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

Leela Fernandes

Director
Stanley D. Golub Endowed Chair
The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies
University of Washington

Changing Global Connections

How do your programs prepare students for a more open dialogue on the global stage?

Crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change have revealed the urgency and complexities of addressing global challenges. Effective responses require a combination of good policies, strong institutions, and public communication and engagement. The Jackson School prepares students to meet practical challenges through a mission of public engagement that combines these varied aspects. This allows for a more open dialogue on the global stage. Public engagement includes a variety of actors, ranging from governmental officials and policymakers to nongovernmental organizations and social movements to the media. Our faculty have expertise that spans themes as wide-ranging as disability rights, space policy, and environmental justice. We combine thematic areas with deep knowledge and professional ties to particular regions. This allows us to train students to learn about and to collaborate with communities and partners across the world.

What role do matters of identity play in international relations and policymaking?

Global dialogue requires an understanding of identity in international relations. One of our unique strengths is a robust program in comparative religion. Our school provides students with a deep understanding of the critical role of religious literacy for policymaking and conflict resolution. We also foreground the study of race, indigeneity, and gender and train students to think about the ways in which diasporic politics and global migration deepen the centrality of identity in global affairs.

What innovations have your program implemented in the last 15 months?

We have implemented a number of initiatives that are designed to further these objectives. We have recently set up a series of courses that seek to train students in public writing and engagement with the support of the Calderwood program. Our inaugural graduate Calderwood seminar, Religion, Freedom, and the Public Sphere, will be taught this coming winter. We have been expanding our cybersecurity program and some master's degree students in a graduate course from this past year will have the opportunity to produce a NATO publication related to this course. We have also created an inaugural professor of practice position on U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, which we will be filling in the coming year. Finally, we launched a speaker series titled, Protest, Race and Citizenship Across African Worlds, that emphasized the significance of global and regional understandings for an understanding of the complexities of racial inequality and justice in the United States.

How can we engage new voices and new perspectives in the fields of international relations?

One of the few positive dimensions that came out of the COVID-19 pandemic was a broadening of the use of technology for collaborative work across the world. This has shown the significance of digital-based international studies. Over the coming years, we will be expanding such pedagogical platforms to bring in new perspectives and finding ways to address voices that are marginalized by a lack of access to such technology.

HENRY M. JACKSON SCHOOL
OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

Alexandra Kahan

Chief of Staff to the Coordinator for Global
COVID-19 Response and Health Security
U.S. Department of State
Master in Public Policy, 2017

Preparing Leaders in International and Domestic Public Affairs

The Princeton School of Public and International Affairs' one-year, full-time residential master in public policy (MPP) degree is ideal for midcareer professionals who are rising leaders in international and domestic public affairs. While MPP students are required to select a field of concentration when applying to the school, the structure of the degree is flexible and allows students to tailor their studies to their specific career goals.

As members of tight-knit cohorts, students foster lifelong relationships with their classmates and learn from one another's diverse experiences, interests, and backgrounds.

We recently sat down with graduate Alexandra Kahan (MPP '17) to trace her steps from Princeton to the U.S. Department of State and understand how the midcareer program equipped her with new skills and perspectives to tackle the most pressing policy challenges.

How did Princeton prepare you to adapt in the face of changing, complex global challenges?

Earning my MPP from the School of Public and International Affairs was a pivotal experience for me. With a truly unique academic setting made possible by the financial generosity afforded to all students, each course and discussion was made richer by students with incredible experiences and diverse points of view from all over the country and the world. I was able to take a step back from my career and reflect on critical, complex global challenges that I had an opportunity to see up close in practice based on my prior work. My time at Princeton gave me an opportunity to grapple with these issues anew, through the multiple lenses of my peers, the faculty, and academic focus.

How has Princeton's unique midcareer MPP program helped you advance within your career?

When I met my MPP class in the summer, I was blown away, not only by their experiences and accomplishments, but by their humility, humor, and kindness. With peers from varied professions and governments, we spent the MPP year in rich conversation, reflecting on lessons in policy, leadership, and the aspiration for, and practicalities of, governing. Over the course of the year, we made lifelong bonds and a community that I will continue to lean on throughout my career and life.

How has your job transformed over the last year throughout the pandemic?

In the day-to-day, I had to navigate new ways of communicating and managing a team during a mostly virtual work setting. The pandemic has transformed not only the way that I work but the focus of my efforts as well. COVID response, globally, has become the singular focus of my career at present. In my current position at the U.S. Department of State, our team is working to drive and shape the U.S. leadership role in the response and recovery effort. We are working across the U.S. government and with international partners to drive action that will help mitigate impact, shorten the lifespan of the pandemic, and build a sustainable global health security architecture to prevent, detect, and respond to future health and biosecurity threats.

Princeton School of Public and International Affairs

Yasushi Katsuma
Professor
Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies
Waseda University

Response to COVID-19 in the Asia-Pacific: A Multidisciplinary Perspective from Tokyo

To imagine a post-pandemic world, Waseda University's Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies (GSAPS) offers an intellectually stimulating research environment in Tokyo. Students will approach the COVID-19 response in the Asia-Pacific from a multidisciplinary perspective.

Infectious Disease Outbreaks on International Ships: Reimagining Global Health Governance?

A COVID-19 outbreak on the Diamond Princess cruise ship drew global attention in February 2020. The cruise program was run by a U.S. company, Princess Cruises, which owns the ship. When a passenger who disembarked at a port in Hong Kong tested positive for COVID-19, authorities reported the case to the World Health Organization and Japan, based on the 2005 International Health Regulations. After Vietnam, Taiwan, and Okinawa, the Diamond Princess was on its way to Yokohama. According to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, jurisdiction over the ship belongs to the flag state—the United Kingdom—while on the high seas and to the coastal state—Japan—while on Japan's internal waters. Japan allowed the ship to call at Yokohama and extended support to passengers and crew.

As the burden on coastal states is heavy, a new mechanism of international cooperation and burden sharing among stakeholders needs to be established for future infectious disease outbreaks on international ships. How would you reimagine global health governance?

The Politics of Wearing Face Masks: Public Health or Individual Freedom?

Many Asian countries have been successful in nonpharmaceutical interventions to the pandemic. In Japan, people wear face masks to mitigate spring allergies and to prevent spreading seasonal influenza in winter. After the first case of COVID-19 was identified in Japan, many people started wearing face masks voluntarily when commuting. However, due to the surge in demand and the disruption of supply chains from China, disposable non-woven masks vanished from stores. People blamed the government for not doing enough. In response, then-Prime Minister Shinzo Abe launched his plan to distribute two small gauze masks to each household. Many people were dissatisfied with his plan and its implementation, calling them "Abe no Masuku" (Abe's masks).

In addition to advocating for face-mask wearing and hand washing, a campaign called Avoid the 3 Cs was launched, encouraging people to stay away from crowded places, close-contact settings, and confined and enclosed spaces. Do you think the relative success of such nonpharmaceutical interventions may have delayed the vaccination rollout in Japan?

A State of Emergency During the Olympics: Public Health or Economic Development?

The Japanese Constitution does not allow the government to enforce a hard lockdown, as it would be considered an infringement on personal freedoms. Instead, the Japanese government asks for cooperation in reducing human movements and restricting commercial activities. Determined to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games, the government declared another state of emergency, agreeing not to have spectators at venues in the greater Tokyo area. As an unprecedented international mass gathering occurring during a pandemic, there will be many lessons to be learned.

What has happened in Japan may help students identify knowledge gaps in an academic community and encourage them to formulate their own research question. Waseda University's GSAPS is an ideal location for students to conduct multidisciplinary research.

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

Sanjeev Khagram, PhD
Director-General and Dean
Thunderbird School of Global Management

Thunderbird: Where Global Meets High Tech

What makes Thunderbird the world's most global and digital school?

As Thunderbird School of Global Management observes its seventy-fifth anniversary, we celebrate not only our origins in pioneering global business, management, and leadership education in the wake of World War II but also our evolution into the world's first truly global and multinational academic institution. Thunderbird has a global community of alumni serving in leadership roles and satellite Centers of Excellence in twelve countries, soon expanding to twenty-five hubs worldwide. Our newly constructed, state-of-the-art global headquarters opens this year, equipped with the latest digital technologies, including cutting-edge tools for telepresence connectivity and data visualization on a planetary scale.

By pioneering learning technology and expanding our global presence, Thunderbird is showing once again what it means to be at the vanguard of international business, management, and leadership education.

What makes Thunderbird's global alumni network unique?

With more than 45,000 distinguished alumni in 145 countries, Thunderbird's tight-knit community of bilingual and multilingual graduates resembles a giant, compassionate family that spans the globe. Known as T-birds, they're uniquely equipped with a global mindset and high technical aptitude to make a difference in this era of rapid change and disruption. T-birds everywhere offer their talents to empower our students and realize our collective vision of inclusive, sustainable prosperity worldwide. By reciprocally engaging and supporting our alumni, we advance solutions to global challenges, connect current students to transnational and state enterprises, and form mutually beneficial partnerships across sectors. Thunderbird future-proofs alumni skills through lifelong learning opportunities and connects alumni in a worldwide network of experts who are all trained to work across boundaries of every kind.

Why is Thunderbird investing in a global network of Centers of Excellence?

Our regional Centers of Excellence deliver innovative and fit-for-purpose graduate degree programs and professional certificate programs where they can make massive impacts. These satellite hubs link students and alumni from Los Angeles to Tokyo and Moscow to Nairobi, providing a truly global presence that sets Thunderbird apart with academic offerings in major commercial centers, physically connecting and engaging our alumni, and supporting international recruiting.

How will Thunderbird Global Headquarters connect students to the latest technology and the world?

The nexus of our Centers of Excellence is our state-of-the-art facility in Phoenix, Arizona, within the capital city's business district. This high-tech home connects students to the world using cutting-edge collaboration and education tools built into the architecture.

Thunderbird HQ leverages the latest mixed reality (AR/VR) and data visualization technology to immerse students in executive and managerial leadership in real-time. Our global decision theater empowers students to manipulate data using AI and VR. Our VR language lab helps students learn a required second language. The global forum hosts world-class speakers with hybrid presentation capability for events such as graduation ceremonies, broadcasting live to and from our satellite hubs using a 360-degree video ring that circles the forum space.

THUNDERBIRD
SCHOOL OF GLOBAL MANAGEMENT

A unit of the Arizona State University Enterprise

Jeremy Carrette
Dean for Europe
Brussels School of International Studies
University of Kent

Advanced International Studies in the Capital of Europe with World-Leading Academics and Experienced Practitioners

What could a post-pandemic world look like at the Brussels School of International Studies (BSIS)?

In challenging times, we need a vision for the future that will transform the world and provide solutions for rapidly changing social and political environments. Such a vision requires an education that anticipates the next steps. At BSIS, we provide an educational opportunity that support future leaders and thinkers with the skills and ideas that offer effective solutions to new international problems and with an understanding of how to build strong communities.

The pandemic has led us to find new, safe, and flexible ways to live. Our dynamic and friendly community has remained connected and thrived in these times, proving that connectivity and communication are vital for our future educational flourishing. We have worked hard to maintain the close-knit BSIS community, and we are delighted with how our students have approached this new world—with the enthusiasm to study and the resilience in adjusting and engaging in hard work to build new careers.

What changes will we see at BSIS?

The pandemic has allowed us time to reflect on the subjects we deliver and the way in which we teach them. One theme that has emerged from the pandemic has been the focus on global health matters and its link to international policy—this is a subject we intend to bring to BSIS over the next year. We also plan to develop a focus on new environmental concerns, which will inform some of our additional research events during the academic year. We are unique in addressing these new global issues through our international and interdisciplinary approach, bringing students and researchers from different backgrounds to think together. Via our specializations, we allow students to create rich interconnections for a stronger career profile.

How has innovation developed at BSIS during the pandemic?

Innovation came quickly in the form of hybrid teaching. Our commitment to students is to offer safe in-person teaching; while this remains as we look beyond 2021, the elements of online and digital delivery will supplement lectures and seminars, where appropriate, to offer students the best of both approaches.

Looking beyond the pandemic as the world starts to re-open, our students will have the opportunity to attend conferences, seminars, and internships in Brussels while having the advantage of looking beyond Brussels via new online deliveries, bringing a real international flavor to studies.

Our students have an appetite for critical thinking, and, undoubtedly, the topic over the next years will be an analysis of how the pandemic was handled at a local, national, and international level. At our school, we believe we are ideally located for students to be part of this—as European Union and international players meet in Brussels to discuss and debate the topic. Being at the crossroads of international affairs, BSIS will play a pivotal role in challenging debates and shaping leaders of the future. Join our world for tomorrow's world.

University of Kent | Brussels School of International Studies

Nobuko Maybin

Class of 2017

Master of Arts in International Development Studies

The Elliott School Welcomed Me

Why did you choose the Elliott School?

I chose the Elliott School because of the school's location in Washington, DC, the flexibility of the International Development Studies (IDS) program, and its emphasis on putting theory to practice. I researched many international development and international education programs and found that they were too narrowly focused, so that studying one field would mean forfeiting focus on the other. The IDS program allowed me to actually be balanced in my studies of both. I was able to have a substantial amount of courses in international education while also maintaining the core knowledge and background needed in the international development field. Under the umbrella of the George Washington University (GW), I was also eligible to apply for the GW UNESCO Fellows Program in International Education for Development, the GW UNESCO Chair is one of only three designated chairs in a U.S. school.

The Elliott School is also walking distance to many international and development organizations, such as the World Bank, the World Health Organization, the Asian Development Bank, the Organization of American States, and the U.S. Department of State. This meant I engaged with these institutions' networks because they regularly visited the school or were guest faculty for my classes. I also volunteered and attended many development summits and conferences hosted throughout the year by these organizations.

Were there elements of the IDS program that were attractive to a student seeking flexibility, like yourself?

Above all, I was interested in the IDS program's emphasis on putting theory to practice, which was largely conveyed in its final capstone project. Coming straight into a graduate program from undergraduate studies, I didn't have a lot of work experience in the international development field. So I was interested in getting as much hands-on experience as possible to bolster both my confidence and knowledge in the field. The capstone project gave students funding to partner with an international development organization to conduct research on a particular area of development work in the respective country of implementation. No other program I researched provided this level of insight, experience, and networking opportunities in the field of international development. The Elliott School was an easy decision to make after I realized this.

As a mixed African-American woman coming from a historically Black college and university—or HBCU—it was not only important that the coursework bring value to my professional career but that the institution also recognizes and celebrates the added value that I bring to it. I attended during a tumultuous time, especially following the 2016 presidential election in the United States, where incidents of hate crimes were popping up everywhere around the city. I remember feeling anxious but reassured after the school administration quickly spoke out and underscored its appreciation of the student body's diversity. I also remember classmates and professors initiating tough discussions on discrimination, racism, and neocolonialism and its effect on development projects.

Against the backdrop of the Washington Monument, I sat at graduation, feeling I didn't just purchase the name of the university on my degree but also an experience that amplified my voice and merit alongside my classmates and professors.

Elliott School of International Affairs

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Dr. Victor Cha

Vice Dean for Faculty and Graduate Affairs
Walsh School of Foreign Service
Georgetown University

Building on Lessons from the Pandemic

How has the Walsh School of Foreign Service (SFS) integrated diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) into the graduate student experience?

We believe that diversity is critical to building a better, more challenging, and more successful learning environment in order to train the new generation of international leaders. In the summer of 2020, SFS established a dedicated DEI office to ensure that our curriculum, pedagogy, and culture fully engage with issues of social justice and equity. We have created new graduate student scholarships, such as the MSFS Futures Scholarship and the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy McHenry Fellows program in our functional and regional studies master's programs, expanded our efforts to update curricula and student initiatives, and broadened our admission and recruitment efforts to reach students whose holistic experiences contribute to the diversity of the school and its mission.

What kind of benefits resulted from the virtual learning during the pandemic, and how will this be integrated into the graduate program going forward?

As challenging as the pandemic was to life and learning on campus, we found new ways to improve our pedagogy in the virtual learning environment. Being online allowed us to become truly global in the sense that authors and leaders joined our virtual classrooms and gatherings from cities all over the world, including World Bank President David Malpass, HRH Princess Ghida Talal of Jordan, and the CFOs of Gap, Inc. and UPS. Students were not deterred from doing study abroad programs and internships virtually in the far corners of the earth. In addition, we continued to build our curricular offerings coming out of the pandemic to include new specializations in science, technology and international affairs, refugees, humanitarian disasters, and migration. While we will all be happy to return to campus in the fall, we will capitalize on the best elements of online learning going forward.

How did SFS build community networks during the pandemic?

Whether it was active SFS alumni going the extra mile to find jobs and internships, faculty holding additional one-on-one Zoom office hours, or the dean bringing together political and corporate leaders from around the world for virtual coffee chats with students during the pandemic, SFS emerges with an even stronger community going forward. Our ability, for example, to bring the most diverse group of recruiters to campus virtually greatly enhanced job and internship placements for our students. We will build on those newly strengthened networks to give students greater access to novel learning, research, and internship opportunities that can be augmented by the virtual possibilities opened up by the pandemic. Not unlike the moment of SFS's founding in 1919, SFS faculty and students are inspired today to rebuild an inclusive, open, and transparent post-pandemic world, each in their own unique and impactful way.

SFS | GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
Walsh School of Foreign Service

Gordon McCord

Associate Teaching Professor and Associate Dean
UC San Diego
School of Global Policy and Strategy

Sustainability in Action

Tell us about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Policy Initiative's mission and work.

The SDG Policy Initiative uses the United Nations' SDGs as a framework for bringing together policymakers and researchers to inform evidence-based solutions for a sustainable future. The initiative is based at UC San Diego's School of Global Policy and Strategy (GPS), which is at the forefront of interdisciplinary research critical to the 2030 Agenda.

With interrelated challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and biodiversity loss, achieving sustainable and inclusive growth will require developing analytical tools that cut across disciplines and developing new policymaking processes that go beyond the traditional silos of governance.

The initiative is engaged in a number of programs that put the SDGs into action to guide and measure progress at all levels of government. From contributing to a decarbonization policy plan for the United States to supporting the government of Paraguay in implementing the SDGs as a framework for sustainable growth to designing sustainable land-use planning tools for Mexico, the initiative is supporting achievement of the ambitious SDGs with evidence-based solutions.

What will be the initiative's part in making sure the Biden administration's sustainability agenda is put into action?

In a series of executive orders, strategies, and policy announcements, President Biden has clearly signaled his intention to be a transformative leader with a deep commitment to the sustainability agenda. The SDG Policy Initiative is an active partner in projects that support the agenda of inclusive and sustainable growth in the United States. The most important of these is the Zero Carbon Action Plan, which laid out policy recommendations for the power, transportation, buildings, land use, and other sectors in order to move the country onto a pathway of decarbonization by midcentury.

Tell us about your work with local governments.

We are very excited to partner with San Diego County on a decarbonization framework. Drawing on expertise, including America's Zero Carbon Action Plan, the SDG Policy Initiative will work with partners to model technically feasible pathways to achieve net-zero carbon emissions in San Diego County. The project will evaluate key sectors, including energy, transportation, buildings, and land use, and evaluate employment impacts. Approaching decarbonization from the regional perspective, the framework will help policymakers identify opportunities for collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries. As San Diego works to become a global leader in decarbonization, a new comprehensive regional decarbonization framework can set the region on a path to zero carbon and be an example for others to follow.

What opportunities exist for students to help enact real-world policy goals?

All the initiative's projects offer opportunities for current and former GPS students. Some of these positions are paid graduate researcher positions, while in other cases, students take advantage of the initiative's relationships with governments to do projects in their classes that are immediately useful to policymakers. Many examples of student involvement in projects and research are showcased in our student blog.

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SCHOOL OF GLOBAL POLICY AND STRATEGY

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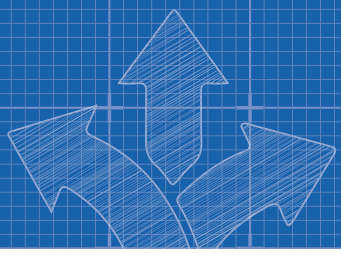

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About APSIA

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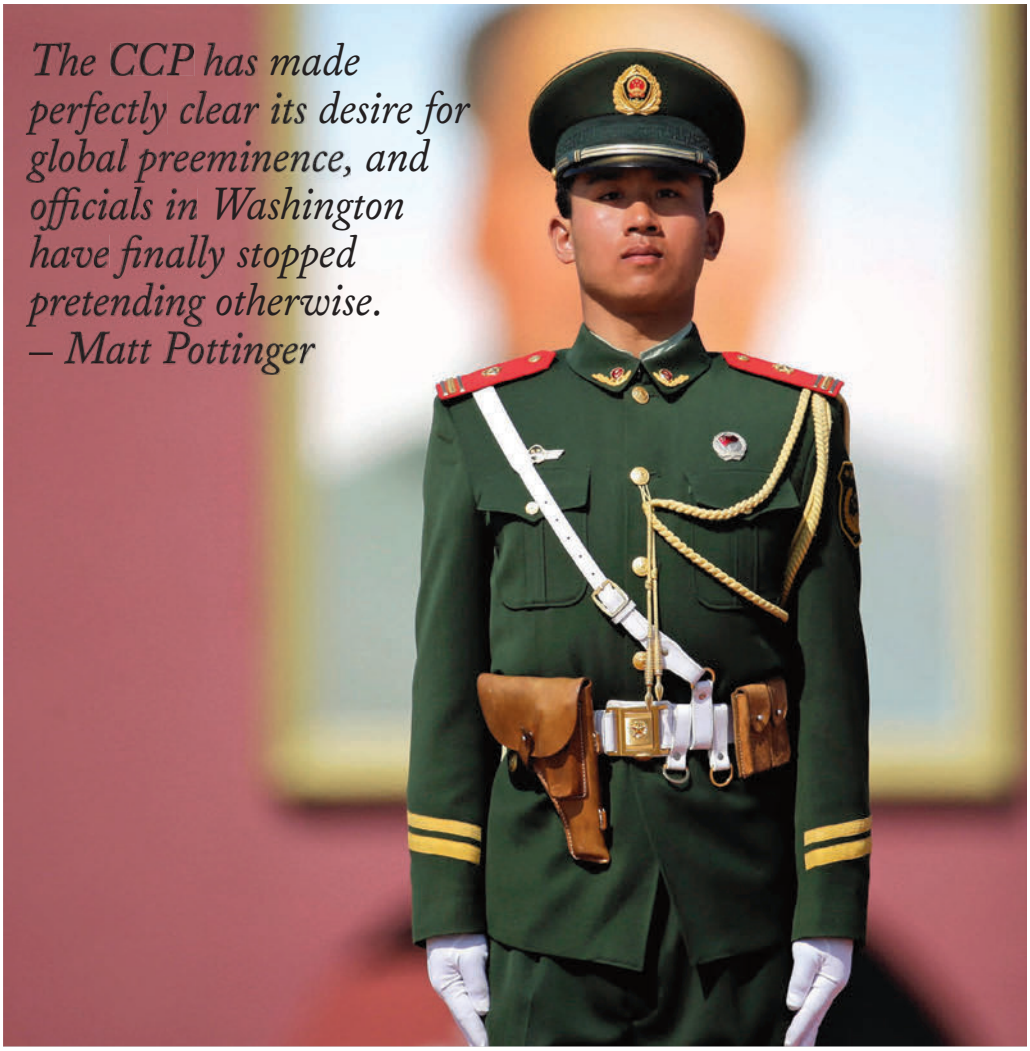

LI GANG / XINHUA

Beijing's American Hustle

How Chinese Grand Strategy Exploits U.S. Power

Matt Pottinger

Although many Americans were slow to realize it, Beijing's enmity for Washington began long before U.S. President Donald Trump's election in 2016 and even prior to Chinese President Xi Jinping's rise to power in 2012. Ever since taking power in 1949, the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has cast the United States as an antagonist. But three decades ago, at the end of the Cold War, Chinese leaders elevated the United States from just one among many antagonists to their country's primary external adversary—and began quietly revising Chinese grand strategy, embarking on a quest for regional and then global dominance.

The United States and other free societies have belatedly woken up to this contest, and a rare spirit of bipartisanship has emerged on Capitol Hill. But even this new consensus has failed to adequately appreciate one of the most threatening elements of Chinese strategy: the way it exploits vital aspects of American and other free societies and weaponizes them in the service of Chinese ambitions. Important U.S. institutions, especially in finance and technology, cling to self-destructive habits acquired through decades of "engagement," an approach to China that led Washington to prioritize economic cooperation and trade above all else.

If U.S. policymakers and legislators find the will, however, there is a way to pull Wall Street and Silicon Valley back onside, convert the United States' vulnerabilities into strengths, and mitigate the harmful effects of Beijing's political warfare. That must begin with bolder steps to stem the flow of U.S. capital into China's so-called military-civil fusion enterprises and to frustrate Beijing's aspiration for leader-

MATT POTTINGER is a Senior Adviser at the Marathon Initiative and was U.S. Deputy National Security Adviser from 2019 to 2021.

ship in, and even monopoly control of, high-tech industries—starting with semiconductor manufacturing. The United States must also do more to expose and confront Beijing's information warfare, which spews disinformation and sows division by exploiting U.S. social media platforms—platforms that are themselves banned inside China's own borders. And Washington should return the favor by making it easier for the Chinese people to access authentic news from outside China's so-called Great Firewall.

Some have argued that because the CCP's ideology holds little appeal abroad, it poses an insignificant threat to U.S. interests. Yet that ideology hardly appeals to the Chinese people, either, and that hasn't prevented the party from dominating a nation of 1.4 billion people. The problem is not the allure of Leninist totalitarianism but the fact that Leninist totalitarianism—as practiced by the well-resourced and determined rulers of Beijing—has tremendous coercive power. Accordingly, U.S. leaders should not ignore the ideological dimension of this contest; they should emphasize it. American values—liberty, independence, faith, tolerance, human dignity, and democracy—are not just what the United States fights for: they are also among the most potent weapons in the country's arsenal, because they contrast so starkly with the CCP's hollow vision of one-party rule at home and Chinese domination abroad. Washington should embrace those strengths and forcefully remind American institutions that although placating China might help their balance sheets in the short term, their long-term survival depends on the free markets and legal rights that only U.S. leadership can secure.

In past decades, the United States' failure to reckon with the ways that American society and businesses were being weaponized to serve the CCP's long-term agenda might have been chalked up to naiveté or Pollyannaish optimism. Such excuses are no longer plausible. Yet Beijing continues to run this play, turning American money and institutions to its own ends—and making the need for real action from Washington all the greater.

THE ART OF POLITICAL WARFARE

The West's sluggishness in realizing that it has been on the receiving end of China's elaborate, multidecade hostile strategy has a lot to do with the hubris that followed the United States' triumph in the Cold War. U.S. policymakers assumed that the CCP would find it nearly

impossible to resist the tide of liberalization set off by the collapse of the Berlin Wall. According to this line of thought, by helping enrich China, the United States would loosen the party's grip on its economy, people, and politics, setting the conditions for a gradual convergence with the pluralistic West.

If U.S. policymakers and legislators find the will, there is a way to pull Wall Street and Silicon Valley back onside.

That was, to put it mildly, a miscalculation, and it stemmed in part from the methods the CCP employs to prosecute its grand strategy. With enviable discipline, Beijing has long camouflaged its intention to challenge and overturn the U.S.-led liberal order. Beijing co-opted Western technologies that Americans assumed would help democratize China and instead used them to surveil and control its people and to target a growing swath of the world's population outside China's borders. The party now systematically cultivates Western corporations and investors that, in turn, pay deference to Chinese policies and even lobby their home capitals in ways that align with the CCP's objectives.

Beijing's methods are all manifestations of "political warfare," the term that the U.S. diplomat George Kennan, the chief architect of the Cold War strategy of containment, used in a 1948 memo to describe "the employment of all the means at a nation's command, short of war, to achieve its national objectives." Kennan credited the Soviet Union with "the most refined and effective" conduct of political warfare. Were he alive today, Kennan would marvel at the ways Beijing has improved on the Kremlin's playbook.

Kennan's memo was meant to disabuse U.S. national security officials of "a popular attachment to the concept of a basic difference between peace and war." He was hopeful that Americans could shed this handicap and learn to fight in the political realm to forestall a potentially catastrophic military conflict with the Soviets. To a great extent, Washington did exactly that, marshaling partners on every continent to contain Soviet influence.

Today, free and open societies are once again coming to terms with the reality of political warfare. This time, however, the campaign is directed by a different kind of communist country—one that possesses not just military power but also economic power derived from its

quasi-marketized version of capitalism and systematic theft of technology. Although there are holdouts—financiers, entertainers, and former officials who benefited from engagement, for example—polls show that the general public in the United States, European countries, and several Asian countries is finally attuned to the malevolent nature of the Chinese regime and its global ambitions. This should come as no surprise, given the way the CCP has conducted itself in recent years: covering up the initial outbreak of COVID-19, attacking Indian troops on the Chinese-Indian border, choking off trade with Australia, crushing the rule of law in Hong Kong, and intensifying a campaign of genocide against Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in China.

HIDE AND BIDE NO MORE

Those aggressive moves represent merely a new phase of a decades-old strategy. In writing his recent book *The Long Game*, the U.S. scholar Rush Doshi pored over Chinese leaders' speeches, policy documents, and memoirs to document how Beijing came to set its sights on dismantling American influence around the globe. According to Doshi, who now serves on the National Security Council staff as a China director, three events badly rattled CCP leaders: the 1989 pro-democracy protests in Tiananmen Square; the lopsided, U.S.-led victory over the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's forces in early 1991; and the collapse of the Soviet Union that same year. "The Tiananmen Square protests reminded Beijing of the American ideological threat; the swift Gulf War victory reminded it of the American military threat; and loss of the shared Soviet adversary reminded it of the American geopolitical threat," writes Doshi. "In short order, the United States quickly replaced the Soviet Union as China's primary security concern, that in turn led to a new grand strategy, and a thirty-year struggle to displace American power was born."

China's new grand strategy aimed first to dilute U.S. influence in Asia, then to displace American power more overtly from the region, and ultimately to dominate a global order more suited to Beijing's governance model. That model isn't merely authoritarian; it's "neo-totalitarian," according to Cai Xia, who served for 15 years as a professor in the highest temple of Chinese communist ideology: the Central Party School in Beijing. Cai, who now lives in exile in the United States, recently detailed her falling out with the CCP in these pages and has written elsewhere that the CCP's "fundamental interests and

its basic mentality of using the [United States] while remaining hostile to it have not changed over the past seventy years."

Xi didn't sire the party's strategy, argues Cai. He merely shifted it to a more overt and aggressive phase. Had observers more carefully pondered the former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping's precept for China to "hide your capabilities, bide your time," they would have realized that Deng's approach was always intended as a transitional stage, a placeholder until China was strong enough to openly challenge the United States.

That moment has now arrived, and Beijing is no longer bothering to camouflage its global ambitions. Today, party slogans call for China to "take center stage" in the world and build "a community of common destiny for mankind." This point was displayed vividly in Alaska in March, during the first face-to-face meeting between senior Biden administration officials and their Chinese counterparts. In their opening statements, the Chinese took advantage of the international TV coverage of the meeting to lecture the Americans. "I don't think the overwhelming majority of countries in the world would recognize that the universal values advocated by the United States or that the opinion of the United States could represent international public opinion," the senior Chinese diplomat Yang Jiechi said as part of a carefully scripted diatribe. Yang juxtaposed "United States–style democracy" with what he called "Chinese-style democracy." The latter, he contended, enjoys the "wide support of the Chinese people," while "many people within the United States actually have little confidence in the democracy of the United States."

Yang's soliloquy was so arresting that the most consequential implication was easily lost in the majority of the press coverage: Beijing was using its time in front of the cameras to openly declare its bid for world leadership. Yang was following instructions issued by Xi at the 19th Party Congress, in October 2017, when the Chinese leader called on party cadres to increase their ideological "leadership power" and "discourse power" in defense of Beijing's totalitarian brand of socialism, according to the China scholar Matthew Johnson. This process of fighting and winning ideological battles on the global stage was also given a name: the "great struggle."

THE BEST DEFENSE

Kennan considered economic statecraft a vital component of political warfare, and the CCP's assimilation of economic weaponry into its grand

strategy would not have surprised him. Beijing's economic objectives are couched in a policy called "dual circulation," which prioritizes domestic consumption (internal circulation) over dependence on foreign markets (external circulation). A close look, however, shows that this Chinese strategy can really be thought of as "offensive leverage"—an approach designed to decrease China's dependence on high-tech imports (while making the world's technology supply chains increasingly dependent on China), ensure that China can easily substitute imports from one country with the same imports from another, and use China's economic leverage to advance the CCP's political objectives around the globe.

The CCP has tried to spin these moves as defensive. "We must sustain and enhance our superiority across the entire production chain . . . and we must tighten international production chains' dependence on China, forming a powerful countermeasure and deterrent capability against foreigners who would artificially cut off supply [to China]," explained Xi in a seminal speech last year. In practice, however, China is playing offense. In recent years, Beijing has restricted trade and tourism with Canada, Japan, Mongolia, Norway, the Philippines, South Korea, and other countries in an effort to force changes in their laws and internal political and judicial processes.

The most aggressive of these campaigns is the one the CCP launched against Australia. More than a year ago, Australia proposed that the World Health Organization investigate the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic. The idea was supported by nearly all the members of the World Health Assembly, but Beijing decided to punish Canberra for its temerity. China soon began restricting imports of Australian beef, barley, wine, coal, and lobster. Then, the CCP released a list of 14 so-called "disputes" that are, in effect, political demands made of the Australian government—including that Canberra repeal laws designed to counter the CCP's covert influence operations in Australia, muzzle the Australian press by suppressing criticism of Beijing, and make concessions to China's territorial claims in the South China Sea. China targeted Australia with precisely the offensive economic strategy that Xi's speeches and party documents describe. When it comes to grand strategy, at least, Xi is a man of his word.

UNDER THE INFLUENCE

The CCP's campaign of offensive leverage represents the overt manifestation of Beijing's grand strategy. But the strategy also relies on

covert and invisible activities: information warfare and influence operations designed to subvert the social and political institutions of Chinas' rivals. The most important element of those efforts is "United Front" work, an immense range of activities that China's leaders call a "magic weapon" and that has no analog in the world's advanced democracies. The party's 95 million members are required to participate in the system, which has many branches, and the United Front Work Department alone has three times as many cadres as the U.S. State Department has Foreign Service officers. Instead of practicing diplomacy, however, the United Front gathers intelligence about and works to influence private citizens and government officials overseas, with a focus on foreign elites and the organizations they run. Assembling dossiers has always been a feature of Leninist regimes, but Beijing's penetration of digital networks worldwide has taken it to a new level. The party compiles dossiers on millions of foreign citizens around the world, using the material it gathers to influence and intimidate, reward and blackmail, flatter and humiliate, divide and conquer. The political scientist Anne-Marie Brady calls United Front work a tool to corrode and corrupt foreign political systems, "to weaken and divide us against each other, to erode the critical voice of our media, and turn our elites into clients of the Chinese Communist Party, their mouths stuffed with cash."

Newer to the party's arsenal is the exploitation of U.S. social media companies. Over the past several years, Beijing has flooded their platforms with overt and covert propaganda, amplified by proxies and bots, that is increasingly focused not only on promoting whitewashed narratives of Beijing's policies but also on exacerbating social tensions within the United States and other target nations. The Chinese government and its online proxies, for example, have for months promoted content that questions the effectiveness and safety of Western-made COVID-19 vaccines. Research by the Soufan Center has also found indications that China-based influence operations are amplifying online conspiracy theories, including QAnon-related falsehoods. The Soviet Union could never have dreamed of reaching a mass audience in the United States for its agitprop such as the one Beijing reaches daily through the tools provided by Silicon Valley technology giants. "Currently there is no effective path for the [People's Republic of China] to wage effective global information operations and increase its international discourse power that does not run

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through American social media platforms like Twitter, YouTube and Facebook," writes Bill Bishop, the author of the blog *Sinocism* and a close observer of Beijing's information warfare.

AN AMERICAN COUNTERSTRATEGY

After decades of naiveté and denialism, Washington's approach to Beijing finally began to adapt to reality and toughen up during the Trump administration, and the Biden administration has largely maintained its predecessor's policy. The tariffs Trump imposed to punish China's theft of intellectual property are still in place, and President Joe Biden is fleshing out a Trump-initiated Commerce Department panel meant to keep dangerous Chinese software and equipment out of U.S. domestic telecommunications networks. The current administration is also deepening diplomatic initatives related to China, such as the Quad—a group of democracies composed of Australia, India, Japan, and the United States.

Despite those corrective steps, there are still several areas in which Washington needs to further strengthen its approach, especially by making sure that powerful private interests in the United States stop undercutting the country's ability to confront China. The realm of finance is the place to start. The retirement savings of millions of Americans currently finance Beijing's military modernization and support Chinese companies that are complicit in genocide and other crimes against humanity. Even as Beijing was systematically expelling foreign journalists from China and making the country's investment climate increasingly opaque, stock index providers such as FTSE Russell and MSCI continued to add Chinese companies to their indexes, sometimes under pressure from Beijing. Because many American funds benchmark their investments to those same indexes, billions of U.S. dollars automatically flow to Chinese companies, including those that Washington has sanctioned or subjected to export controls. For Beijing, there simply is no substitute for U.S. capital markets, whose depth and liquidity outpace those of the rest of the world's capital markets. Few successful Chinese technology companies exist that were not launched with money and expertise from Silicon Valley venture capital firms. Both Alibaba and Baidu were seeded with U.S. capital.

Although executive orders issued by the Trump and Biden administrations already prohibit U.S. investment in 59 named Chinese companies involved in the Chinese military's modernization or hu-

man rights atrocities, the Treasury Department needs to expand that list by at least an order of magnitude to better encompass the galaxy of Chinese companies developing so-called dual-use technologies—those with both civilian and military or surveillance applications. The Biden administration should also enforce a ban on the purchase of debt instruments from blacklisted companies and clarify that their subsidiaries are off-limits to U.S. investors, as well. The European Union should adopt a similar investment blacklist and permanently abandon the trade agreement it recently negotiated with Beijing. The deal is already on ice after Beijing sanctioned European parliamentarians and think tanks for highlighting Chinese human rights abuses. The EU should now withdraw once and for all.

Today, free and open societies are once again coming to terms with the reality of political warfare.

The United States and European countries should also challenge the naked hypocrisy of some firms that tout investment products they claim will further "environmental, social, and governance" goals. Some money managers who offer such options eschew investing in Western companies that don't meet a particular set of criteria (called "ESG criteria") but happily invest in Chinese companies that feature atrocious records in all three categories. There are U.S. university endowments, for instance, that could deliberately decide to invest in only ESG-compliant companies in the United States but simultaneously invest in a raft of Chinese firms that flout all accepted standards of corporate governance and environmental stewardship. Chinese firms contribute more to greenhouse gas emissions, ocean plastic pollution, and illegal fishing than do the companies of any other country on earth. As for social responsibility, a wide variety of Chinese companies—from leading technology firms to manufacturers that export globally—work with Beijing's security apparatus to track, incarcerate, and extract forced labor from ethnic Uyghur and Kazakh Muslims. With respect to corporate governance, CCP cells, operating mostly in secret, wield significant and often decisive control over Chinese companies—making a mockery of Western standards of corporate transparency and independence.

The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission needs to fulfill its legal obligations under the Holding Foreign Companies Accountable

Act of 2020, which prescribes an overly generous three-year grace period before Chinese companies are to be delisted from U.S. exchanges if they fail to meet U.S. accounting standards. The SEC has yet even to start the clock on the three-year countdown for noncompliant firms. Having judged the U.S. law hollow, Chinese companies continue to launch initial public offerings in the United States.

Washington also needs to do more to stymie Beijing's plans to dominate semiconductor manufacturing. Chinese leaders are well aware that most twenty-first-century technologies—including 5G telecommunications, synthetic biology, and machine learning—are built around advanced semiconductors. Accordingly, those leaders have poured more than $100 billion in subsidies into building Chinese chip foundries, with mixed results.

Most of the world's cutting-edge chips are produced by the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company. The CCP has many ideological and strategic reasons to consider invading Taiwan; its quest for control of the market for chips represents an economic incentive to do so. Of course, a war could seriously damage Taiwan's foundries, which, in any case, would struggle to maintain production without Western chip designs and equipment. And such a shock to chip supplies would affect millions of downstream jobs in China, not just those in other large economies. Even so, Beijing might believe that China could recover from a crisis more quickly than the United States. That is precisely the lesson Beijing drew from the COVID-19 pandemic, which has taken a far greater toll on China's adversaries than on China itself. To be sure, Beijing would not take the fateful step of attacking Taiwan and risking war with the United States based on semiconductor inventories alone. The point is that Chinese leaders may not view the disruption of semiconductor supply chains as an inhibitor to launching a war.

Regardless of Beijing's calculus, Washington should seek to eliminate any potential Chinese advantage in semiconductors by subsidizing new chip foundries in the United States—something the 2020 CHIPS Act and the 2021 U.S. Innovation and Competition Act seek to do. The U.S. Commerce Department must also slow Beijing's efforts to scale up its foundries by applying sharper restrictions on the export of U.S.-made equipment used to manufacture semiconductors—not just for cutting-edge chips but also for those that are a couple of generations older.

Finally, Washington needs to do more to address Beijing's information warfare. One of the weirder ironies of our time is the fact that U.S. citizens are sometimes censored and even deplatformed for political speech by the same American social media giants that channel CCP disinformation and agitprop to millions of people worldwide. U.S. companies, Congress, and the courts should act to address both of these phenomena—supporting the free speech of U.S. citizens while exposing the ways in which Beijing boosts its messaging. This can and should be done while still upholding the letter and spirit of the First Amendment. The idea is not to censor Beijing's statements but to expose government-orchestrated efforts to camouflage propaganda as organic discourse among private citizens through fake accounts and covert schemes. Washington's best partners in this effort should be the Silicon Valley social media giants themselves. Because they have the means to detect Beijing's proxies, these firms can take a leading role in tamping down the sheer amplitude of Chinese government influence operations online.

At the same time, free and open societies—and the companies that flourish in them—must make it easier for Chinese citizens to access information from outside China's Great Firewall, and to communicate with one another away from the watchful eye of Beijing's digital panopticon. The Great Firewall is formidable but less technologically advanced than many observers often assume. In contrast to the CCP's information warfare, U.S. efforts need not involve manufacturing disinformation or even generating much content at all. Washington needs only to provide the Chinese people with safer means to exchange news, opinions, history, films, and satire with their fellow citizens and others around the world.

One good place to start would be with the Chinese diaspora. There are very few Chinese-language news outlets left that resist toeing the CCP's line. Under a new national security law imposed by Beijing, authorities in Hong Kong recently arrested the owner and editors of one of the few that remained: the now-defunct *Apple Daily*. The U.S. government can help by offering grants to promising private outlets and reenergizing federally funded media such as Radio Free Asia. U.S. universities should also hand a second smartphone to every Chinese national who comes to study in the United States—one free from Chinese apps such as WeChat, which monitor users' activity and censor their news feeds.

DEMOCRACY VS. TYRANNY

During a visit to Beijing in 1995, the U.S. democracy activist Dimon Liu met with a former Chinese official sympathetic to democratic reform. He provided Liu with an insight into U.S.-Chinese relations that she never forgot: "If the contest is based on interests, tyranny wins. If the contest is based on values, democracy wins."

The failure of Beijing's recent attempt to coerce Australia into compliance with Chinese policy illustrates this point nicely. CCP leaders gambled that Australian businesses, suffering from a targeted trade embargo, would lobby their government to make political concessions to Beijing. But the Australian people—business leaders and exporters included—understood that accepting China's ultimatum would mean submitting to a dangerous new order. Australian businesses absorbed the losses, weathered the embargo, and found new markets. Australians decided that their sovereignty was more important than lobster sales—no doubt confounding those in Beijing who had assumed that Canberra would put Australia's economic interests ahead of its foundational values. The CCP, having played this card, will not be able to do so again with much effect in Australia or elsewhere, so long as democracies remain alert to what is at stake.

The CCP has made perfectly clear its desire for global preeminence, and officials in Washington have finally stopped pretending otherwise. Americans, Europeans, and people the world over are now increasingly clear-eyed about Beijing's intentions and the sources of its hostile behavior. Elected leaders must now take the next step: applying their tough new line not just to Beijing but also to elite institutions in their own societies that need to join the fight against the CCP. Because companies are economic actors, not political ones, it is the government's responsibility to establish guidelines for engaging with adversaries. With strict new parameters, Washington can level the playing field for all U.S. firms—refreshing their commitment to the United States' 245-year-old experiment with democracy instead of bowing to the Chinese government's experiment with neo-totalitarianism. Without such guidelines, however, U.S. firms, money, and institutions will continue to be coerced into serving Beijing's ends instead of democratic principles.

North Korea's Nuclear Family

How the Kims Got the Bomb and Why They Won't Give It Up

Sue Mi Terry

When the Biden administration, following a months-long review, announced its North Korea policy this past April—"diplomacy, as well as stern deterrence"—the news barely registered. The question of how to deal with the nuclear-armed pariah state, a matter never resolved but never fully escalating into an existential threat, has dogged a long succession of U.S. administrations. The prevailing sense today, amid a pandemic and heightened great-power tension, seems to be that Washington has bigger fish to fry and more urgent crises to focus on.

That impression is dangerously misguided. Years of inconsistent, and at times counterproductive, U.S. efforts to contain the North Korean nuclear threat have only let it fester, such that U.S. President Joe Biden now faces a far more capable adversary in Pyongyang than his predecessors ever did. In the 15 years since North Korea's first-ever nuclear test, the country has amassed up to 60 nuclear warheads and enough fissile material to build at least six additional bombs every year. More alarming still, these weapons can now most likely reach the continental United States. North Korea already fields long-range missiles capable of hitting the East Coast. It is impossible to know for certain whether it has figured out how to place a nuclear warhead on top of those missiles, but the available evidence suggests that it has. North Korea is likely moving on to the next step: placing multiple warheads

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on a single missile, which would allow it to frustrate U.S. missile defenses. What was once a pure hypothetical—a North Korean nuclear strike on the American mainland—is fast becoming a real possibility.

North Korea is still unlikely to launch a nuclear attack against the United States, knowing it would suffer devastating retaliation. But an emboldened North Korean regime with growing nuclear capabilities could resort to increasingly reckless behavior, such as conventional strikes, terrorist plots, or cyberattacks. Japan and South Korea, in turn, could lose confidence in the U.S. nuclear umbrella and feel compelled to field their own nuclear weapons, setting off a destabilizing nuclear arms race across the region. Moreover, if North Korea's leader, Kim Jong Un, believes that his nuclear and missile programs provide some degree of protection for his misbehavior, his cash-strapped regime could be tempted to sell nuclear weapons, materials, or expertise to other states and nonstate actors. (In the past, North Korea helped build a nuclear reactor in Syria and sold missiles to Iran, Myanmar, and other countries.) In short, a nuclear-armed North Korea is a security nightmare for Washington even if the regime never uses its arsenal, and the years ahead could prove a turning point for the region.

North Korea's nuclear program has been a thorn in the side of five American presidents, sometimes approaching crisis levels, sometimes receding to secondary importance. But over the past few years, as Pyongyang's warheads have come into striking distance of the American heartland, the threat has become a qualitatively different one. If the United States ever had an opportunity to turn back the clock on North Korea's nuclear program—and it is far from clear that it ever did—that moment has passed. That this change was so long in the making has inured analysts and policymakers to its gravity. But before long, a crisis is all but certain to drive home how much more difficult and dangerous the North Korean nuclear challenge has become. This realization requires a new approach: one that considers the lessons of Pyongyang's successful quest, in defiance of broad international opposition and consistent U.S. efforts, to become a nuclear power—and one that recognizes how much more constrained U.S. options in North Korea have become.

HOW THE NORTH WON OUT

Although poor and isolated, North Korea has pursued nuclear weapons relentlessly in the face of growing international condemnation. The state's nuclear aspirations date back to the 1950s, when North Korean

His way: Kim Jong Un on Mount Paektu, North Korea, October 2019

KOREAN CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY

scientists first gained basic nuclear expertise with Soviet assistance. Over the course of the following decades, the regime continued accumulating sensitive nuclear technologies, and in the 1980s, it built its first nuclear reactor in Yongbyon. In 1985, North Korea signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, but it did so under Soviet pressure, not out of genuine conviction. Soon thereafter, it began covertly reprocessing spent nuclear fuel to extract plutonium for use in nuclear weapons. Years of further research and enrichment culminated in the country's first nuclear test in October 2006. Five more tests have followed.

Only a handful of states have ever ended their nuclear programs or given up their nuclear weapons voluntarily, and it often took some form of regime change for them to do so. North Korea is no different: Pyongyang's nuclear weapons are a military asset, an insurance policy, and a vast source of prestige all in one. The Kim family, which has ruled the country without interruption since 1948, does not want to go the way of Saddam Hussein of Iraq or Muammar al-Qaddafi of Libya—tyrants who gave up their weapons of mass destruction programs only to be overthrown and killed. Leaders in Pyongyang are convinced that nobody, not even a superpower such as the United States, would dare to attack or even seriously undermine a state armed with the ultimate

weapon. At home, the nuclear weapons confer a degree of legitimacy on the regime: a point of national pride, they justify the deprivations that ordinary citizens suffer to support the state and its military. Abroad, they raise the country's diplomatic profile, making up for its deficits in political, economic, and soft power. The bomb also raises the potential cost to the United States of defending its ally South Korea in a war and thus serves Pyongyang's goal of driving a wedge between Seoul and Washington. The regime is, and has always been, unlikely to give up that trump card, no matter what political or economic concessions it is offered in return. To truly steer Pyongyang off its current course would have required stepping in before it ever produced its first warhead—and even then, success would have come at too high of a cost.

Washington appears to have exhausted its peaceful options to no avail.

Consider the events of 1994, perhaps the best opportunity the United States ever had to permanently undo the North's nuclear progress. At the time, Pyongyang's enrichment efforts were well underway, and the regime was preparing to remove several nuclear fuel rods from its research reactor in Yongbyon. Inside the rods, experts suspected, was enough weapons-grade plutonium to build half a dozen nuclear bombs. Despite intense pressure, Pyongyang refused to grant international inspectors access to the site.

Washington saw the danger—a hostile state might be on the verge of crossing "the nuclear finish line," as Ashton Carter, then U.S. assistant secretary of defense, put it—and seriously contemplated military action. In one plan that reached U.S. President Bill Clinton's desk, American cruise missiles and F-117 stealth fighters would carry out a precision strike on Yongbyon, burying the fuel rods in a mountain of rubble and thus preventing North Korea from weaponizing its fissile material. But as Clinton was weighing his options, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter traveled to Pyongyang and, on his own initiative, negotiated a deal: North Korea would freeze its nuclear weapons program in exchange for oil and assistance for its civilian nuclear sector. Clinton assented, and later that year, he signed an agreement with the North Korean leader Kim Jong Il. Under the deal, known as the Agreed Framework, the North pledged to halt its plutonium-producing reactors in Yongbyon. In return, an American-led consortium

would deliver about ten years' worth of heavy oil to North Korea and build two civilian light-water nuclear reactors in the country, among other concessions. A potential war had been averted.

Knowing how history unfolded (spoiler alert: North Korea did not stop its nuclear program), one wonders if Clinton was right not to strike when he had the chance. But the picture is muddled and full of questionable counterfactuals. A single airstrike, or even a series of strikes, would have only slowed down Pyongyang's nuclear progress, not reversed it. A full-scale war, on the other hand, would almost certainly have meant North Korea's defeat at the hands of the United States and South Korea, likely followed by regime change and a guaranteed end to the North's nuclear program. But the cost would have been prohibitive. Pyongyang's artillery, although inferior to U.S. and South Korean firepower, was still formidable. North Korean shelling could have led to 250,000 casualties in Seoul alone, and some estimates put the total number of possible deaths at one million—a Pyrrhic victory if there ever was one.

Clinton's and Carter's diplomacy, however, could not rein in the North Koreans. Although Pyongyang froze its plutonium capabilities after the 1994 deal, it secretly continued working with A. Q. Khan, the father of Pakistan's nuclear program, to enrich uranium instead. When a U.S. envoy confronted North Korean officials about their cheating in October 2002, they were unrepentant. Within a few months, North Korea expelled international inspectors and withdrew from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, triggering renewed tensions.

For defenders of the Agreed Framework, the blame for its breakdown lay partly with U.S. President George W. Bush. Earlier in 2002, Bush had lumped North Korea together with Iran and Iraq as part of what he called "an axis of evil"—bellicose rhetoric that, coming on the heels of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, was said to have spooked Pyongyang and contributed to its decision to withdraw from the agreement. Meanwhile, the construction of the promised light-water reactors was behind schedule, and the United States had never fully normalized relations with North Korea, as laid out in the Agreed Framework. But what was the Bush administration supposed to do once it had evidence of North Korean cheating? Offering more concessions to coax the regime back into compliance, as some critics later suggested, would have simply rewarded Pyongyang for its transgressions and incentivized more cheating down the line. In truth, the failure of the agreement was of North Korea's own making.

To imagine what paltry results more engagement in 2002 would have brought, consider South Korea's separate efforts to sway its neighbor. Under the so-called Sunshine Policy, the South Korean government sent the North approximately $8 billion in economic assistance from 1998 to 2008 in the hope of improving bilateral relations. South Korean President Kim Dae-jung even won a Nobel Peace Prize for a historic meeting with Kim Jong Il—a summit, it was later divulged, made possible through the payment of $500 million in cash to the reclusive dictator. Yet all these inducements did little to shift the North's course. On the contrary, after North Korea withdrew from the Agreed Framework in 2002, it accelerated its nuclear program.

The United States, for its part, seemed stuck in an exasperating cycle of sanctions and pressure campaigns followed by overtures and agreements that invariably fell apart. Among other steps, the Bush administration worked to cut off North Korea's access to hard currency—obtained mostly through drug smuggling, counterfeiting, and money laundering—and thus target the money flows that funded the extravagant lifestyles of North Korean elites. As the centerpiece of this new initiative, Washington imposed sanctions in 2005 on the Macao-based Banco Delta Asia, where North Korea kept $25 million in various accounts, triggering heightened scrutiny by other banks around the world. The squeeze worked as intended: North Korean officials called the sanctions "intolerable." According to *The Wall Street Journal*, one official, after one too many drinks, told his American counterparts that they had "finally found a way to hurt us."

Despite the encouraging feedback, the sanctions remained short lived. When Pyongyang tested its first nuclear weapon the following year, Bush decided to unfreeze the accounts at Banco Delta Asia in an effort to jump-start talks. Protracted negotiations eventually produced a joint statement in which North Korea pledged to disable all its nuclear facilities and stop the export of nuclear material and technology; in return, Washington promised to remove North Korea from its list of state sponsors of terrorism and resume oil shipments and food aid. But Pyongyang refused to agree to robust verification measures, dooming the accord just as Bush left office. Despite this failure, Washington did not reimpose sanctions on Banco Delta Asia or put North Korea back on the terrorism list until almost a decade later, thus in effect rewarding Pyongyang for its saber rattling.

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FALLING IN LOVE WITH ROCKET MAN

The same hopeless dynamic characterized the Obama years, which North Korea rang in with a second nuclear test in May 2009. After several years of impasse, U.S. President Barack Obama briefly reached an agreement with North Korea's new leader, Kim Jong Un, in 2012. (Kim had taken power after his father's death a year earlier.) This time, the United States would provide food aid in exchange for a moratorium on ballistic missile tests and any nuclear activities. Shortly after the agreement was rolled out, however, North Korea launched a satellite into orbit using the same technology that would be used to fire a long-range missile. Another deal thus fell apart. To top things off, Pyongyang declared that its nuclear weapons were not a bargaining chip and would not be relinquished even for "billions of dollars."

The episode put an end to the Obama administration's hopes for a deal. Washington reverted to a policy of "strategic patience," which was designed, as Jeffrey Bader, a National Security Council staffer, put it, to "break the cycle of provocation, extortion, and reward." This meant maintaining sanctions without launching any major diplomatic initiatives. In kicking the can down the road, Obama managed to peeve both liberal and conservative Korea watchers: liberal "engagers" saw the policy as forgoing diplomacy in the face of a worsening nuclear threat, whereas hard-liners complained that Washington was failing to ratchet up the pressure.

The waiting game came to a sudden stop when U.S. President Donald Trump took office in 2017. Casting aside "strategic patience" in favor of "maximum pressure," Trump doubled down on sanctions and authorized the U.S. Treasury Department to blacklist any foreign business or individual that facilitated trade with North Korea. His administration also convinced the UN Security Council to adopt a new set of tough sanctions aimed at cutting off nearly all of Pyongyang's sources of hard currency. Meanwhile, a series of leaks suggested that the administration was considering launching a preemptive, "bloody nose" military strike on North Korean nuclear sites. All of this was accompanied by Trump's threats to rain "fire and fury" down on "Rocket Man"—his belittling nickname for the North Korean leader.

Kim responded with bluster of his own, but he also extended an unexpected olive branch. In his 2018 New Year's Day address, he declared that his country's nuclear program was "complete" and offered to hold conditional talks with South Korea. Through South Korean

envoys, he also proposed a summit with the U.S. president. Trump, sensing an opportunity to play dealmaker, accepted the offer the moment he heard of it. In an instant, maximum pressure was transformed into maximum engagement.

Trump reveled in the three meetings he had with Kim over the course of 2018 and 2019, at one point declaring that he and Kim had "fallen in love." But the lovefest failed to produce any tangible results. At their first summit, Trump brought Kim a bizarre, make-believe movie trailer showcasing the prosperity that North Korea could enjoy if it gave up its nuclear weapons. It eluded Trump entirely that Kim himself already had all the luxury goods he could ever hope for and that he was not going to give up the security that nuclear weapons afforded his regime. Trump walked away with a vague commitment for both sides to "work toward complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula." Subsequent attempts to put meat on this bare-bones agreement went nowhere.

That Trump managed to leave office without inviting some sort of catastrophe on the North Korean front may count as a success in and of itself. But it is worth noting just how well his initial strategy of pressuring and isolating the rogue regime seemed to be working. By late 2017, about 90 percent of North Korean exports were illegal under international law. On top of far-reaching U.S. sanctions, nine major Security Council resolutions had banned the country's most lucrative exports—coal, iron ore, seafood, and textiles, among others—which had been netting the regime $3 billion a year. UN resolutions are effective only if enforced, and China, to everyone's surprise, was finally doing its part after years of dragging its feet. Meanwhile, over 20 countries had restricted North Korea's foreign diplomatic presence, which Pyongyang was known to use to evade sanctions.

It is unlikely that maximum pressure would have forced North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons had it been sustained for longer. Still, it stood a better chance than Trump's summitry of securing meaningful limits on Pyongyang's nuclear activities. Recall that Iran agreed to roll back—but not eliminate—its nuclear program in 2015 only after three years of maximum pressure from Washington. North Korea, too, would have had a greater incentive to negotiate in good faith and move away from maximalist demands if it had suffered longer-lasting economic pressure. Unfortunately, following Trump's premature pivot to dealmaking, the air started to leak out of the sanctions campaign. China and Russia both eased up on their sanctions enforce-

ment. Today, even South Korea is unlikely to support a return to the no-holds-barred approach of 2017; South Korean President Moon Jae-in, currently in his last six months in office, is eager to jump-start dialogue with the North and move ahead with inter-Korean projects that have stalled in recent years.

FALSE HOPES

What emerges, in retrospect, is a dispiriting picture. Washington appears to have exhausted its peaceful options to no avail. The one policy that could have achieved denuclearization—invading North Korea and toppling its regime—was fraught with uncertainty and would have exacted an unacceptable human toll. What little leeway Washington did have to slow the North Koreans' progress and thus buy more time for a permanent solution it squandered through its endless zigzagging—from diplomacy to "strategic patience" to "fire and fury" and back to diplomacy, without ever giving any one approach a fair chance to succeed.

Some might argue that it was U.S. hostility that compelled North Korea to seek the bomb in the first place—that things would have turned out differently had the United States normalized relations, lifted sanctions, concluded a peace treaty, and pulled its troops out of South Korea. This confuses cause and effect. American soldiers were sent to South Korea following the North Korean invasion of 1950, and they stayed because the North Korean threat never went away. (As recently as 2010, North Korea torpedoed and sank a South Korean naval vessel, killing 46 seamen.) And it's not as if a U.S. withdrawal would dispel North Korea's pervasive sense of insecurity. The Kim dynasty, a Stalinist dictatorship built on deception and oppression, is ultimately threatened by its own lack of legitimacy. It can never feel safe as long as a freer, more prosperous rival Korean state exists next door. The nukes are as much about the regime's own desperation as they are about deterring U.S. military action.

It is true, however, that U.S. policymakers have often failed to understand the North Korean regime. Those in the engagement camp—including Trump, once he was meeting with Kim—have falsely convinced themselves that North Korean leaders share their hopes for peace and could be enticed away from nuclear weapons with offers of increased aid and economic incentives. Some hard-liners, for their part, have been led astray in thinking that there was a military option,

either in 1994 or more recently, that could have surgically neutralized the North Korean nuclear program without triggering a catastrophic war. Unfortunately, there has never been an easy way out.

If there is a government that could have made a real difference, it is not Washington but Beijing. China is North Korea's largest trading partner by far and a major source of energy supplies. It can bring North Korea to its knees simply by stopping the flow of oil—as it did for a few months in 2013 and again in 2014, when it was infuriated by yet another nuclear test and by the execution of Jang Song Thaek, Kim's uncle and Beijing's main interlocutor in Pyongyang. But the pressure was not sustained. China, albeit no fan of the North Korean nuclear program, is far more afraid that too much pressure might cause the regime in Pyongyang to collapse, sending refugees flooding into China and possibly bringing U.S. troops and their South Korean allies right up to its doorstep. And with U.S.-Chinese relations at a low point, Beijing has little reason to give Washington a helping hand.

A NEW THREAT

In dealing with Pyongyang, Biden is the latest American leader to confront a set of unappealing options, but the potential consequences of failure, already severe to begin with, have worsened dramatically. Unlike past presidents, Biden now faces a determined adversary with a robust nuclear deterrent that includes the ability to hit the continental United States with nuclear missiles. He has not had to acknowledge as much, as Kim—likely distracted by the fallout of the pandemic—has so far forgone the missile and nuclear tests that have usually greeted new U.S. presidents. But the odds are that Kim will eventually resume his tried-and-true strategy of provocations followed by insincere peace overtures. Before long, things will inevitably come to a head.

How will Biden respond to the next crisis? Come what may, a preemptive military strike should remain off-limits. If that option was deemed too risky and costly to pursue in 1994, it is all the more so today. Many of the North's nuclear warheads and missiles are believed to be hidden in covert facilities and buried in impenetrable bunkers; some can be moved around with ease. Airstrikes are unlikely to eliminate these capabilities in one fell swoop, meaning that Kim could retaliate with a nuclear strike.

Diplomacy is a better option, but it is no more likely to bring about denuclearization. At most, Pyongyang might agree to an interim nu-

clear freeze deal that limits its nuclear weapons capabilities for a given period. But history suggests that negotiations will ultimately fail over the issue of verification. Instead of making concessions and getting nothing in return, Biden must come to terms with two fundamental facts. First, North Korea will not give up its nuclear weapons as long as its totalitarian regime remains in charge. Second, U.S.-led regime change, at least in the short term, is not an option. Biden's best bet is to contain the threat and then work to gradually weaken the regime's hold on power from the bottom up.

Start with sanctions. It will be hard, perhaps impossible, to return to the maximum-pressure policy of 2017 as long as China does not prioritize sanctions enforcement. But renewed North Korean provocations, such as a nuclear or a long-range missile test, could bring Beijing back onboard. In the meantime, Washington can still revive its efforts to target the North's illicit revenue streams and foreign bank accounts. It could also impose secondary sanctions on Chinese companies doing business with North Korea, provided that this doesn't disrupt its wider China strategy.

At the same time, the United States should continue its efforts to deter North Korea from acts of aggression against its neighbors. Doing so will require increasing cooperation with its allies Japan and South Korea, which in turn need to be encouraged to work more closely with each other. Together, the three allies could integrate their missile defenses, streamline their intelligence sharing, and enhance their antisubmarine warfare, among other steps.

Counterproliferation measures will be essential, too. North Korea has been known to share ballistic missile technology with Iran and Syria, in addition to other countries. The more nuclear weapons and missiles the regime produces, the greater the risk that it will share its knowledge with more states, or even nonstate actors, in return for what it needs the most—hard currency. Washington will need to build a coalition of states to conduct extensive surveillance on the ground, at sea, and in the air to detect any such proliferation activities, and Biden must make clear that any infractions will carry severe consequences.

With these containment measures in place, Washington should focus on small steps to loosen the regime's grip on the North Korean people. News from the outside world already seeps into the North across its porous border with China. Black and gray markets inside the country have made it easier to distribute banned technologies and

media. As a result, more North Koreans than ever can see the gap between the state's myths and the cruel reality. To a regime built on lies, that burgeoning awareness poses a threat—one that Washington can work to amplify with its own clandestine information operations.

The Biden administration should also maintain a global focus on the North's appalling record of abusing its own population. The regime has devoted its scarce resources to building nuclear weapons rather than feeding its own people or providing them with basic services. Washington should highlight this link and push for renewed UN human rights investigations and resolutions on the matter.

Years of inconsistent, and at times counterproductive, U.S. efforts to contain the North Korean nuclear threat have only let it fester.

This strategy—combining information operations and a human rights campaign—would echo the Western policies that once contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Kim is entering his second decade in power, but with swirling rumors about his health and a persistently dire economic outlook, no one knows how stable his rule really is. Whatever the regime's immediate future, its long-term prospects are bleak unless it carries out genuine economic reforms, but reforms might engender political instability of their own. Against that background, an information and human rights campaign would not yield any quick results on the nuclear front, but it might plant the seeds of a more enduring shift. Only when North Korea becomes more accountable and responsive to its own people will there be any chance for meaningful progress toward denuclearization. A transformed regime under a future leader might perceive less of a need to develop nuclear deterrent capabilities and pose less of a threat to its own people or its neighbors.

Absent such a regime change or transformation—highly unlikely but not impossible—the only other durable solution to the nuclear crisis is the country's reunification under the democratically elected, pro-Western government in Seoul. Even if a unified, democratic Korea decided to keep a nuclear arsenal, it would still not pose the kind of threat that the world currently faces from the tyrannical regime in Pyongyang. Ultimately, the North Korean nuclear crisis is a reflection of North Korea's government. Until that regime either dramatically reforms itself or collapses, the nuclear threat will remain.

Strategies of Restraint

Remaking America's Broken Foreign Policy

Emma Ashford

For nearly three decades after the end of the Cold War, U.S. foreign policy was characterized by a bipartisan consensus: that as the world's "indispensable nation" and with no competitor, the United States had little choice but to pursue a transformational agenda on the world stage. Over the last few years, however, that consensus has collapsed. A growing chorus of voices are advocating a strategy of restraint—a less activist approach that focuses on diplomatic and economic engagement over military intervention. And they have found a receptive audience.

In that, they have undoubtedly been helped by circumstance: the United States' failed "war on terror," the rise of China, and growing partisan polarization at home have all made it clear that U.S. foreign policy cannot simply remain on autopilot. Even those who continue to argue for an interventionist approach to the world typically acknowledge that their strategy must be shorn of its worst excesses. Where restraint was once excluded from the halls of power and confined largely to academic journals, now some of its positions have become official policy.

Although President Donald Trump's record was defined by dysfunction more than any coherent strategy, he did wind down the war in Afghanistan, raise doubts about the value of U.S. alliances in Europe and Asia, and question the wisdom of military intervention and democracy promotion. President Joe Biden, for his part, has begun withdrawing U.S. troops from Afghanistan, has initiated a review of the United States' global military posture, and has taken steps to stabilize the U.S.-Russian relationship. In 2019, Jake Sullivan, now Biden's national security adviser, wrote, "The U.S. must get better at seeing both the possibilities and the limits of American power." That this sentiment is now openly embraced at the highest

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levels of government is nothing short of a win for those who have long called for a more restrained U.S. foreign policy.

Yet victory also raises a question: Where do restrainers go from here? With Washington having dialed down the war on terrorism, the most politically popular of their demands has been achieved. Now, they are liable to face an uphill battle over the rest of U.S. foreign policy, such as how to treat allies or what to do about China—issues that have little public salience or on which the restrainers are divided. Although often bundled together by Washington's foreign policy elites and derided as isolationists, the members of the restraint community include a diversity of voices, running the gamut from left-wing antiwar activists to hard-nosed conservative realists. It should not be surprising that they disagree on much.

If the restraint camp focuses on what divides them rather than what unites them, then it will find itself consumed with internecine battles and excluded from decision-making at the very moment its influence could be at its height. But there is a viable consensus, a path forward for restraint that can achieve the most important goals, alienate the fewest members of the coalition, and win new converts. This more pragmatic strategy, which would entail the gradual lessening of U.S. military commitments, would not achieve the most ambitious of the restrainers' goals. But it has the best chance of moving U.S. foreign policy in a more secure and more popular direction.

A DEBATE REBORN

The idea that the United States is uniquely qualified to reshape the world has manifested itself in different ways in the 30 years since the collapse of the Soviet Union marked the end of a bipolar world. Humanitarian intervention, democracy promotion, and counterterrorism—all were attempts to mold the world according to American preferences. Yet the unipolar moment has largely failed to live up to expectations. Today, democracy is in decline, there are more state-level conflicts than at any time since 1990, the war on terrorism has largely failed, and China's rise has given the lie to the notion that the United States can prevent the emergence of peer competitors. Washington's foreign policy community now appears to accept the need for a course correction, although it remains divided on the specifics.

Today, opinion is increasingly coalescing around three distinct views. The first of these is a modified form of liberal international-

ism, the school of thought that believes that U.S. leadership is a stabilizing force in the world, emphasizes militarized deterrence, and has faith in a liberal, rules-based international order. Proponents of this approach often frame threats from China and Russia as threats to this order rather than as threats to concrete U.S. security interests. Yet the strain of this view dominant today is also, at least in theory, a softer, reformed version of the post–Cold War consensus, one that takes into account critiques of recent U.S. foreign policy and rejects parts of the war on terrorism.

Because they are more aware of the limits of American power than their predecessors, advocates of this view are best described as liberal internationalists, rather than liberal interventionists. The scholars Mira Rapp-Hooper and Rebecca Lissner—both of whom now serve on the National Security Council—belong to this camp. As they wrote in these pages in 2019, "Rather than wasting its still considerable power on quixotic bids to restore the liberal order or remake the world in its own image, the United States should focus on what it can realistically achieve."

Another alternative has percolated out of the synthesis of the Republican foreign policy establishment and the Trump administration: a form of belligerent unilateralism that prioritizes maintaining U.S. military primacy. This "America first" approach to the world is also a clear successor to the old consensus, but one that privileges power over diplomacy and U.S. interests over a liberal order. Like their liberal internationalist counterparts, the America firsters—both Trump administration alumni and more mainstream Republican foreign policy hands—have absorbed the notion that U.S. foreign policy has become unpopular, particularly among the GOP base. They have therefore shifted from democracy promotion and nation building toward a militarized global presence more akin to classic imperial policing.

They also reject some of the core liberal components of the old consensus, spurning diplomacy and arms control, fetishizing sovereignty, and preferring American solutions to global problems over multilateral solutions. For them, the liberal order is a mirage. As Nadia Schadlow, a veteran of the Trump White House, wrote in these pages in 2020, "Washington must let go of old illusions, move past the myths of liberal internationalism, and reconsider its views about the nature of the world order."

Both approaches to the world are still problematic. A rebooted liberal internationalism may succeed at rehabilitating the United States'

Fight the power: at an antiwar rally in Washington, D.C., January 2021

LIU JIU / XINHUA

image, but it is unlikely to advance democracy or build a unified liberal order through nonmilitary means when military ones have failed. And as the global balance of power shifts, liberal internationalism simultaneously overestimates the contributions that U.S. allies can make to collective defense and underestimates the differences they have with Washington. The "America first" approach, for its part, may yield short-term dividends: Trump, after all, was able to force U.S. allies to abide by sanctions on Iran and renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement, but it has diminishing returns. The more the United States uses coercive tools against other countries, the more they will look for ways to blunt those tools. And both approaches lean heavily on a forward U.S. military presence in ways that could all too easily trigger an unplanned conflict, particularly in Asia.

The remaining alternative, restraint, comes from outside the Washington policymaking world and is largely focused on these flaws. It is far more ideologically diverse than the other two, but most restrainers agree on several core principles. They share a conviction that the United States is a remarkably secure nation, that unlike many great powers in

history, it faces no real threat of invasion, thanks to geography and nuclear weapons. They argue that U.S. foreign policy has been characterized in recent years by overreach and hubris, with predictably abysmal results. And they think U.S. foreign policy is overmilitarized, with policymakers spending too much on defense and too quickly resorting to force. Most important, advocates of restraint strike directly at the notion of the United States as the indispensable nation, considering it instead as but one among many global powers.

RESTRAINT'S MOMENT

The most common slap at restrainers is that they focus too much on criticism without offering plausible policy alternatives. That is not an entirely accurate evaluation; individual proponents of restraint have offered detailed prescriptions for everything from the war in Afghanistan to U.S.-Russian relations. But it is true that restrainers have often focused on what draws them together—namely, their shared criticisms of the status quo—rather than what would pull them apart: the question of which specific policies to implement instead. As restraint enters the mainstream conversation, the distinctions within this group are coming to the surface.

Restraint contains several different overlapping ideas. The first (and best defined) of these is an academic theory of grand strategy formulated by the political scientist Barry Posen in his 2014 book, *Restraint*. His version of restraint envisages a much smaller military based primarily within the United States. Other restrainers—such as the international relations theorists John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt—advocate a grand strategy of offshore balancing, a distinct but related approach that also calls for downsizing the United States' global military role. (The distinction between the two is one of degree: Posen backs an entirely offshore military presence, whereas Mearsheimer and Walt admit that the United States may occasionally need to intervene to keep a hostile state from dominating a key region.) As grand strategies, both leave many granular policy details unstated, but they present internally coherent and fully formulated approaches to the world.

There is also a looser definition of "restraint." Increasingly, the term is Washington shorthand for any proposal for a less militarized and activist foreign policy. That includes those put forth not just by academic realists but also by progressive Democrats and conservative Re-

publicans in Congress, as well as various antiwar groups (such as Code Pink and the Friends Committee on National Legislation) and newer entrants into the antiwar space (such as the veterans' group Common Defense). Thus, the term "restraint" is now used as often to signify this broader political movement as it is to describe a grand strategy.

Any movement that includes Mearsheimer and Code Pink is by necessity a big tent, and indeed, there are many motivations for restraint. For some, it might be a moral consideration: many libertarians believe that war grows the state, and anti-imperialists want to rein in what they see as an overbearing military-industrial complex. For others, the motivation is financial: although conservative deficit hawks are far less vocal on defense than on other issues, they exist, and many progressives and even some mainstream Democrats view cuts to military spending as an easy way to free up resources for infrastructure or social programs. For others in the restraint community, it is personal: some of the recent activism around ending the war on terrorism has been driven by veterans who are concerned about what the conflict has done to their fellow soldiers and to American society writ large. Then there are the strategists, for whom the pursuit of restraint is largely about avoiding the failures and risks of the current approach. There are even those who might be called "restraint-curious," people who are open to a more restrained foreign policy on specific issues but reject the broader notion.

The result is a coalition that—much like its opposition—is broad and bipartisan, a partnership of the left and the right in which the two sides don't agree with each other on much else. Consider the congressional activism around ending U.S. support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen, a movement that was spearheaded by two liberals, Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Senator Chris Murphy, a Democrat from Connecticut, and two Republicans, Senators Rand Paul of Kentucky and Mike Lee of Utah. Or consider the strange bedfellows made by the war in Afghanistan. In the House of Representatives, advocates of withdrawal included Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, the standard-bearer of the Democratic Party's left wing, and Matt Gaetz of Florida, a Republican devotee of Trump. The transpartisan nature of the coalition pushing for restraint is one of its core strengths.

It is also a sign of restraint's increasing influence on an important and growing segment of American society. After all, there have always been people calling for a less activist U.S. foreign policy: presi-

dential candidates who opposed the Spanish-American War, senators who refused to support joining the League of Nations, students who protested the Vietnam War. After the Cold War, these voices were pushed aside in policy debates, chided as unrealistic or isolationist. This ire fell both on activists protesting the U.S. invasion of Iraq, who were derided as "Saddam's idiots," and on once mainstream realists such as George Kennan and Brent Scowcroft, whose opposition to NATO expansion was met with derision from politicians such as Biden, then a senator, who described them as "isolationist." It was easy for elites, in the heat of the unipolar moment, to brush past the concerns and critiques of those who pointed out that nation building in the Middle East would be difficult or that seemingly benign policies in Europe might have unexpected consequences.

Today, it is not so easy. Not only has the war on terrorism publicly failed; the balance of power is also shifting globally, with the United States in relative decline and China rising. Political polarization and gridlock are weakening the United States domestically and tarnishing its image internationally. Polls show that a majority of voters now favor diplomacy over military intervention— hence the rise of restraint.

A HOUSE DIVIDED

Although they remain mostly outside government, restrainers have achieved some notable successes in recent years. Thanks to a peace process initiated by the Trump administration, the United States is finally withdrawing from Afghanistan after 20 years. Congress has succeeded in curtailing U.S. military support for the war in Yemen. Meanwhile, the Biden administration's plans to conduct reviews of the U.S. global force posture and U.S. sanctions suggest a growing awareness within government of the criticisms lobbed by restrainers. Then there are the suspension of sales of precision-guided munitions to Saudi Arabia, the opening of strategic stability talks with Russia, and the drawdown of U.S. missile and air forces from the Middle East. None goes as far as most restrainers would like, but all are steps in the right direction.

More important, establishment figures now routinely make points that used to get advocates of restraint excluded from polite conversation. Consider the way in which Mara Karlin and Tamara Cofman Wittes (both of whom have been appointed to senior posts in the Biden administration) described the Middle East in these pages in 2019: "It is time for Washington to put an end to wishful thinking

about its ability to establish order on its own terms or to transform self-interested and shortsighted regional partners into reliable allies." Or as Martin Indyk, a veteran of the Clinton and Obama administrations, put it more bluntly in *The Wall Street Journal*: "The Middle East isn't worth it anymore." It is too early to take a victory lap, but proponents of restraint have certainly notched some major victories in the debate over U.S. foreign policy.

U.S. foreign policy has been characterized in recent years by overreach and hubris.

Yet it is notable that those victories have come in debates over Afghanistan and the Middle East, where the stark realities of the United States' strategic bankruptcy have been most obvious, where the solutions have been politically palatable, and on which public opinion has been strongly supportive of restraint. More important, these issues drew support from across the pro-restraint community; realists, doves, fiscal hawks, and even Trumpian nationalists largely agreed that democracy promotion and nation building in Afghanistan and Iraq was problematic. With that debate won, restrainers will have to turn to issues that are a harder sell and on which they themselves are not of one mind. Although many of them have laid out viable policies on issues from U.S. support for Taiwan to burden sharing in NATO, these visions are not always compatible. For example, European states will likely decline to shoulder a greater burden within NATO—and instead strengthen the EU's own capabilities—if they believe that the United States' ultimate goal regarding the alliance is abandonment rather than reform.

In other words, restrainers have not offered a single, coherent alternative to today's foreign policy because they do not themselves always agree. In their days of irrelevance, that would have been quite literally an academic point. But now that they are actively beginning to influence policy, their internal disagreements could shape the future of U.S. foreign policy. Today, these debates are as important as those between restrainers and liberal internationalists.

Some of these divergences are the inevitable result of restraint's bipartisan appeal. Just as there is no consensus between Democratic and Republican liberal internationalists on questions of trade, there is no consensus on them among restrainers. Many realists tend to be classically liberal on trade, with the academics promulgating grand strategies

of restraint seeing the maintenance of free trade as a core U.S. interest. Progressive politicians who back restraint, by contrast, hold more traditional, pro-labor attitudes. During the 2020 Democratic presidential primary, for example, Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts promised: "I want to . . . use our leverage to force other countries to raise the bar on everything from labor and environmental standards to anti-corruption rules"—a decidedly different position from that of many realists. Similar tensions can be found on the topic of immigration, where progressives' embrace of greater immigration runs into opposition from more conservative restrainers. These differences of opinion mean that there may be some inherent tensions in a more restrained foreign policy. Trade wars, for example, could complicate the ability of the United States to shift the burden of military defense to European or Asian countries and could make friction with China more challenging to manage.

On other topics, the divergence among restrainers is mostly one of degree. In academia, most restrainers agree that the United States should largely move its forces offshore, but they disagree about how far offshore. Some think that the United States could remain safe while downsizing the military and closing most foreign bases, whereas others prefer a Goldilocks approach: maintaining some U.S. presence in crucial regions. As a result, estimates of how much retrenchment would save the U.S. government differ. The Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments has projected that a fully implemented strategy of restraint—one that conformed to Posen's grand strategic vision—could save $1 trillion over ten years. Writing in these pages in 2020, Kathleen Hicks (now U.S. deputy secretary of defense) proposed a more limited retrenchment, a strategy she estimated would save $20–$30 billion a year.

The two central questions dividing the restraint camp are the same ones dominating the rest of the U.S. foreign policy debate: What is the future of U.S. alliances, and what should be done about China? On the former, most restrainers highlight the downsides of alliances—namely, that they encourage free-riding and raise the risk of getting entangled in conflict. Yet alliances remain widely popular; few Americans want to gut NATO. Sanders has called for European allies to spend more on defense, but he has also argued that alliances remain valuable, a position shared by a majority of the public. And in Asia, partnerships will undoubtedly be necessary to deal with China even under a grand strategy of offshore balancing. The result is an uneasy truce within the restraint

coalition: all agree that some level of reform is necessary, but while some seek to mitigate the risks and costs of alliances by downsizing the U.S. military or forcing other countries to bear more of the burden, others argue that only a complete withdrawal from the United States' permanent alliances will do the trick.

On China, few voices within the restraint community would argue that the country's rise is insignificant; the debate is over how to respond to it. For some realists, China's rise is the foundational issue driving their advocacy for restraint outside East Asia. In 2016, for example, Mearsheimer and Walt argued in these pages that China "is likely to seek hegemony in Asia" and called on the United States to "undertake a major effort to prevent it from succeeding." Such realists are mostly not arguing for retrenchment in East Asia; instead, they advocate a restructuring of the U.S. force posture to focus on the threat from China, coupled with a reconsideration of the putative U.S. security commitments—especially to Taiwan—that pose the biggest risk of misperception and war.

There are, however, two other main camps on China within the restraint community. The first argues that retrenchment, homeland defense, and nuclear weapons are sufficient to preserve U.S. interests and security in the face of a more powerful China. In this view, China may be a threat to the United States' military primacy but not to its security. The second group argues, conversely, that the China problem is best viewed not in terms of security but in terms of shared challenges such as climate change. In July, more than 40 progressive groups signed a letter to Biden urging him to "eschew the dominant antagonistic approach to U.S.-China relations and instead prioritize multilateralism, diplomacy, and cooperation with China to address the existential threat that is the climate crisis." It is not clear that these differences can be reconciled even over the long term, raising the disquieting notion that the restraint movement may succeed when it comes to the Middle East but founder on the question of China.

COME TOGETHER

The restraint community is in some ways an accident of history, the unintended consequence of the United States' remarkable overextension after the Cold War. Only such an unbalanced foreign policy could generate such a diverse coalition against it. Today, restrainers find

themselves advocating the right idea at the right time; they have made significant inroads with their most persuasive arguments. So what now?

The most viable path through which restraint could become the dominant strand of strategic thinking among U.S. policymakers is the promotion of a foreign policy that is realist yet not doctrinaire, internationalist yet prudent. Such an approach is better suited for a world where the United States can no longer dictate policies from on high, where it is merely first among equals. On issues of common concern, such as climate change, this realist internationalist approach would argue for the United States to use its outsize power to act not as an antagonist but as a convener, building coalitions to address global problems to the extent possible. When it comes to the U.S. military's size and posture, it would advocate sufficiency, rather than primacy, focusing mostly on the forces needed to defend the United States and its core security interests. There would be some level of global retrenchment, including a reduction in the United States' network of overseas bases. Washington would push allies to bear a greater share of the burden for their own defense. In Europe, that would take the form of ending the U.S. military presence over a period of years, while working with European states to bolster homegrown capabilities to deter Russia. In Asia, it would mean resisting further U.S. military buildup and increasing the capabilities of Australia, Japan, South Korea, and Southeast Asian allies. Most important, since this strategy's central goal is to avoid a great-power war, the United States would have to hedge its bets on China and Russia, maintaining the necessary defense capabilities while avoiding destabilizing arms races and security dilemmas.

Establishment figures now routinely make points that used to get advocates of restraint excluded from polite conversation.

If this sounds like an argument for moderation by restrainers, it is. It would not be prudent—and could be destabilizing—to immediately or completely withdraw from Europe or Asia. Likewise, ending alliances should be a last resort, not a first resort. In an ideal world, perhaps the United States would not have enlarged NATO or extended a security guarantee to South Korea, but policymakers must grapple with the world as it is. Equally important, this vision of restraint is far more politically viable than other variants. A campaign to leave NATO would, if success-

ful, undoubtedly reduce U.S. military overstretch, the risks of entanglement, and tensions with Russia. But it would be widely unpopular and be opposed by a wide coalition, including the American public, Washington foreign policy elites, and European allies. An alternative approach of promoting burden sharing and drawing down U.S. troop levels over a decade would achieve many of the same benefits without provoking a domestic backlash. It might even garner support from European allies.

The restraint movement may succeed when it comes to the Middle East but founder on the question of China.

To put it another way: one of the most important things that restrainers bring to the table is the notion of moderation and pragmatism. Restrainers are some of the loudest voices arguing that the United States should resist grand crusades and transformational goals in foreign policy, whether it be the war on terrorism or the struggle of democracy versus autocracy. A consensus approach for restrainers would apply this moderation not only to the broader questions of U.S. foreign policy but also to their own ambitions. It will be tempting for restrainers on either side of the internal divides to shun calls for consensus and work instead with their external opponents in the foreign policy debate on the more limited areas where they align. Offshore balancers might choose to work with America firsters on reining in democracy promotion and nation building. Progressives might make common cause with liberal internationalists on fighting kleptocracy or bolstering the role of multilateralism and diplomacy. Although this might indeed be a viable path forward, nudging both Democrats' and Republicans' increasingly divergent foreign policies closer to restraint, it also carries significant risks.

Chief among these is the risk that this approach will solve smaller, surface-level problems with current U.S. foreign policy while leaving the biggest problems untouched. Cutting the defense budget without rolling back the military's massive forward-deployed presence might be worse than no cuts at all, leaving a hollow and weak force that is nonetheless forward deployed in ways that could spark an unintended conflict. That could increase the likelihood of a war, while decreasing the military's ability to win it. Likewise, getting European and Asian allies to pay up without shedding U.S. commitments to defend non-

treaty allies would be more prudent financially than the current policy, but no more strategically sound. Restrainers should be wary of partnerships that require them to compromise on core principles. Progressives who push for Ukraine's membership in NATO as a pro-democracy step are liable to find their antiwar goals undermined in the long run by Russian military action, as they did in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014. Offshore balancers who partner with hawkish unilateralists to contain China may find themselves pulled into a far riskier approach than they intended. Partisan polarization is liable to heighten these distinctions; it would be a serious mistake for restrainers to get sucked more deeply into partisan fights over foreign policy.

Ultimately, restrainers will find it better to stick together and cooperate as a transpartisan bloc. This will require compromise, in which the coalition hammers out differences internally to advance a shared vision of a less militaristic and more restrained U.S. foreign policy. Proponents of a grand strategy of restraint may have to accept an approach that is less radical in its military retrenchment. Offshore balancers may have to accept that it will be challenging, perhaps impossible, to achieve the most ambitious reforms of U.S. alliances. Progressives may have to accept the core insights of realism and admit that some problems, such as oppression abroad, cannot be solved through international compromise, diplomacy, or sanctions. In other words, restrainers should downplay their own internal differences and prioritize their continuing differences with the splintering consensus.

The United States of Sanctions

The Use and Abuse of Economic Coercion

Daniel W. Drezner

In theory, superpowers should possess a range of foreign policy tools: military might, cultural cachet, diplomatic persuasion, technological prowess, economic aid, and so on. But to anyone paying attention to U.S. foreign policy for the past decade, it has become obvious that the United States relies on one tool above all: economic sanctions.

Sanctions—measures taken by one country to disrupt economic exchange with another—have become the go-to solution for nearly every foreign policy problem. During President Barack Obama's first term, the United States designated an average of 500 entities for sanctions per year for reasons ranging from human rights abuses to nuclear proliferation to violations of territorial sovereignty. That figure nearly doubled over the course of Donald Trump's presidency. President Joe Biden, in his first few months in office, imposed new sanctions against Myanmar (for its coup), Nicaragua (for its crackdown), and Russia (for its hacking). He has not fundamentally altered any of the Trump administration's sanctions programs beyond lifting those against the International Criminal Court. To punish Saudi Arabia for the murder of the dissident Jamal Khashoggi, the Biden administration sanctioned certain Saudi officials, and yet human rights activists wanted more. Activists have also clamored for sanctions on China for its persecution of the Uyghurs, on Hungary for its democratic backsliding, and on Israel for its treatment of the Palestinians.

This reliance on economic sanctions would be natural if they were especially effective at getting other countries to do what Washington

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wants, but they're not. The most generous academic estimate of sanctions' efficacy—a 2014 study relying on a data set maintained by the University of North Carolina—found that, at best, sanctions lead to concessions between one-third and one-half of the time. A 2019 Government Accountability Office study concluded that not even the federal government was necessarily aware when sanctions were working. Officials at the Treasury, State, and Commerce Departments, the report noted, "stated they do not conduct agency assessments of the effectiveness of sanctions in achieving broader U.S. policy goals."

The truth is that Washington's fixation with sanctions has little to do with their efficacy and everything to do with something else: American decline. No longer an unchallenged superpower, the United States can't throw its weight around the way it used to. In relative terms, its military power and diplomatic influence have declined. Two decades of war, recession, polarization, and now a pandemic have dented American power. Frustrated U.S. presidents are left with fewer arrows in their quiver, and they are quick to reach for the easy, available tool of sanctions.

The problem, however, is that sanctions are hardly cost free. They strain relations with allies, antagonize adversaries, and impose economic hardship on innocent civilians. Thus, sanctions not only reveal American decline but accelerate it, too. To make matters worse, the tool is growing duller by the year. Future sanctions are likely to be even less effective as China and Russia happily swoop in to rescue targeted actors and as U.S. allies and partners tire of the repeated application of economic pressure. Together, these developments will render the U.S. dollar less central to global finance, reducing the effect of sanctions that rely on that dominance.

Washington should use sanctions surgically and sparingly. Under a more disciplined approach to economic statecraft, officials would clarify the goal of a particular measure and the criteria for repealing it. But most important, they would remember that there are other tools at their disposal. Sanctions are a specialized instrument best deployed in controlled circumstances, not an all-purpose tool for everyday use. Policymakers should treat them like a scalpel, not a Swiss Army knife.

A HISTORY OF ECONOMIC VIOLENCE

Economic statecraft has been a vital component of U.S. diplomacy since the early days of the republic. As president, Thomas Jefferson urged passage of the Embargo Act of 1807 to punish the United

Kingdom and Napoleonic France for harassing U.S. ships. That effort at sanctions was a disaster. Back in the day, the United States needed European markets far more than the United Kingdom and France needed a fledgling country in the New World; the Embargo Act cost the United States far more than it did the European great powers. Even so, the United States continued to use trade as its main foreign policy tool, focusing on prying open foreign markets for export and promoting foreign investment at home. This was only natural given the paltry size of the U.S. military for most of the nineteenth century. The preeminence of the British pound in global finance also meant that the U.S. dollar was not an important currency. Trade was the primary way the United States conducted diplomacy.

At the end of World War I, the United States renewed its enthusiasm for trade sanctions as a means of regulating world politics. President Woodrow Wilson urged Americans to support the League of Nations by arguing that its power to sanction would act as a substitute for war. "A nation boycotted is a nation that is in sight of surrender," he said in 1919. "Apply this economic, peaceful, silent, deadly remedy and there will be no need for force. It is a terrible remedy." Americans were unconvinced, and the United States never joined the League of Nations. In the end, sanctions imposed by the league failed to deter Italy from invading Ethiopia in 1935 or stop any other act of belligerence that led to World War II. To the contrary, the U.S. embargo on fuel and other war materials going to Japan helped precipitate the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The advent of the Cold War expanded the array of tools of economic statecraft available to the United States. For the first time, the country supplied a significant amount of multilateral and bilateral foreign aid; stopping that aid was an easy way of applying economic pressure. The United States' most successful use of economic sanctions in this period came during the 1956 Suez crisis. Outraged by the British-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt, Washington prevented the United Kingdom from drawing down its International Monetary Fund reserves to defend its currency. The subsequent run on the pound forced London to withdraw its troops.

Most of the time, however, U.S. sanctions failed. In the early years of the Cold War, the United States embargoed Soviet allies to deny them access to vital resources and technologies. That embargo succeeded as an act of containment. But sanctions designed to compel changes in behavior had little bite, since the Soviet Union simply stepped in to of-

Chokepoint: at a shipping terminal in Busan, South Korea, July 2021

KIM HONG-JI / REUTERS

fer economic support to the targeted economies. In the early 1960s, for example, as the United States tightened its embargo on exports to Cuba, the Soviets threw Fidel Castro's regime an economic lifeline by channeling massive amounts of aid to Havana. Later in the Cold War, the United States used economic sanctions to pressure allies and adversaries alike to improve their human rights records. Beyond the rare success of sanctioning a close ally, economic pressure worked only when it came from a broad multilateral coalition, such as the UN sanctions against apartheid-era South Africa.

The end of the Cold War brought an initial burst of hope about sanctions. With the Soviets no longer automatically vetoing UN Security Council resolutions, it seemed possible that multilateral trade sanctions could replace war, just as Wilson had dreamed. Reality quickly proved otherwise. In 1990, after Iraq invaded Kuwait, the Security Council imposed a comprehensive trade embargo on Iraq. These crushing sanctions cut the country's GDP in half. They were nonetheless unable to compel Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait; it took the Gulf War to accomplish that. Sanctions against Iraq continued after the war, but the humanitarian costs were staggering: infant mortality rates were widely viewed to have skyrocketed, and per capita income remained stagnant for 15 years. Iraq manipulated figures to exaggerate the humanitarian costs of the sanctions, but the

deception worked. Policymakers came to believe that trade sanctions were a blunt instrument that harmed ordinary civilians rather than the elites whose behavior they were intended to alter. So they searched for smarter sanctions that could hit a regime's ruling coalition.

The centrality of the U.S. dollar seemed to offer a way of doing just that. Beginning in the late 1990s and accelerating after 9/11, the United States made it harder for any financial institution to engage in dollar transactions with sanctioned governments, companies, or people. U.S. and foreign banks need access to U.S. dollars in order to function; even the implicit threat of being denied such access has made most banks in the world reluctant to work with sanctioned entities, effectively expelling them from the global financial system.

U.S. presidents are quick to reach for the easy, available tool of sanctions.

These sanctions have proved more potent. Whereas restrictions on trade incentivize private-sector actors to resort to black-market operations, the opposite dynamic is at play with measures concerning dollar transactions. Because financial institutions care about their global reputation and wish to stay in the good graces of U.S. regulators, they tend to comply eagerly with sanctions and even preemptively dump clients seen as too risky. In 2005, when the United States designated the Macao-based bank Banco Delta Asia as a money-laundering concern working on behalf of North Korea, even Chinese banks responded with alacrity to limit their exposure.

As U.S. sanctions grew more powerful, they scored some notable wins. The George W. Bush administration cracked down on terrorist financing and money laundering, as governments bent over backward to retain their access to the U.S. financial system. The Obama administration amped up sanctions against Iran, which drove the country to negotiate a deal restricting its nuclear program in return for the lifting of some sanctions. The Trump administration threatened to raise tariffs and shut down the U.S.-Mexican border to compel Mexico to interdict Central American migrants; in response, the Mexican government deployed its new National Guard to restrict the flow.

Yet for every success, there were more failures. The United States has imposed decades-long sanctions on Belarus, Cuba, Russia, Syria, and Zimbabwe with little to show in the way of tangible results. The Trump administration ratcheted up U.S. economic pressure against

Iran, North Korea, and Venezuela as part of its "maximum pressure" campaigns to block even minor evasions of economic restrictions. The efforts also relied on what are known as "secondary sanctions," whereby third-party countries and companies are threatened with economic coercion if they do not agree to participate in sanctioning the initial target. In every case, the target suffered severe economic costs yet made no concessions. Not even Venezuela, a bankrupt socialist state experiencing hyperinflation in the United States' backyard, acquiesced.

SANCTIONS SETBACK

There are multiple problems with the way the United States currently employs economic sanctions. The biggest is the most banal: with maximum pressure has come maximum demands. The United States wants North Korea to denuclearize, Iran to denuclearize and then some, and Venezuela to accept the end of Bolivarian rule. To the rulers of these countries, these demands are tantamount to regime change. It should come as no surprise that they have opted to endure economic pain in lieu of making such massive concessions.

The Iran episode highlights an additional problem: the increasingly unilateral nature of U.S. economic pressure. Until recently, the United States had usually been able to impose financial sanctions with the explicit or implicit cooperation of allies. When the Trump administration decided to reimpose financial sanctions on Iran, however, it did so over the objections of European allies. The administration succeeded in ratcheting up the economic pressure on Iran by threatening secondary sanctions on other countries. The countries complied, and the gambit increased the costs to Iran, but success came at the price of straining long-standing ties.

At the same time, Washington has grown more comfortable sanctioning other great powers. What works with Mexico, however, does not work with China or Russia. Bigger targets have more resources to use to resist. The sanctions placed on Russia after its invasion of Ukraine might have deterred Moscow from more aggressive actions on its periphery, but that is a low bar for success. By any reasonable standard, the sanctions have failed to achieve their objective, since Russia has continued to violate international norms. Similarly, the myriad tariffs and other restrictive measures that the Trump administration imposed on China in 2018 failed to generate any concessions of substance. A trade war launched to transform China's economy from state capitalism to a more

market-friendly model wound up yielding something much less exciting: a quantitative purchasing agreement for U.S. agricultural goods that China has failed to honor. If anything, the sanctions backfired, harming the United States' agricultural and high-tech sectors. According to Moody's Investors Service, just eight percent of the added costs of the tariffs were borne by China; 93 percent were paid for by U.S. importers and ultimately passed on to consumers in the form of higher prices.

Sanctions have alienated allies, impoverished populations, and encouraged diversification away from the dollar.

A related problem is the ratchet effect. Presidents are always eager to impose sanctions but wary of removing them, because it exposes leaders to the charge of being weak on foreign policy. This makes it difficult for the United States to credibly commit to ending sanctions. When Biden considered lifting a few sanctions on Iran, for example, Republican lawmakers criticized him as a naive appeaser. Furthermore, many U.S. sanctions—such as those against Cuba and Russia—are mandated by law, which means that only Congress can permanently revoke them. And given the polarization and obstructionism now defining Capitol Hill, it is unlikely that sufficient numbers of lawmakers would support any presidential initiative to warm ties with a long-standing adversary. Even when political problems can be overcome, the legal thicket of sanctions can be difficult to navigate. Some countries are subject to so many overlapping sanctions that they find themselves trapped in a Kafkaesque situation, unsure if there is anything they can do to comply.

The difficulty of removing sanctions from some countries complicates the United States' efforts to bargain with all countries. If targets do not believe that Washington can lift its coercive measures, they have no incentive to bother with negotiations. What's the point of complying with U.S. demands if there will be no reward? That was one reason Saddam refused to negotiate with the United States in the 1990s and one reason Iran refused to negotiate with the Trump administration.

Sanctions also exact a humanitarian toll. Targeted financial sanctions were supposed to reduce the suffering associated with comprehensive trade embargoes, on the theory that going after banking systems and assets held by bad actors would spare the general population. In practice, most financial measures have been larded on top

of trade sanctions, damaging the overall economies of targeted countries even more. International relations scholars do not agree on a lot, but the literature on sanctions is unanimous on the harm these measures inflict on populations in targeted countries. Even financial sanctions are likely to trigger repression, corruption, and backsliding on human development indicators.

Finally, targets have learned to adapt to life under sanctions. In the case of great powers such as China and Russia, this means finding alternative trading partners; Beijing lowered tariffs to European countries at the same time as it retaliated against the United States in their trade war. Russia countersanctioned European food imports to stimulate domestic production. Targets also respond with retaliatory sanctions, leading to a tit-for-tat escalation that imposes costs on U.S. producers and consumers. This tendency will only increase as other major economies view U.S. sanctions ostensibly imposed for national security reasons as a stalking-horse for trade protectionism. When the chief financial officer of the Chinese company Huawei was arrested in Canada and charged by the U.S. Department of Justice with trying to evade U.S. sanctions against Iran, China saw the move as part of the larger trade war; Trump did not help matters when he casually suggested that the executive could be released in return for trade concessions.

The greater long-term concern is that financial sanctions could undercut the U.S. dollar's standing as the world's primary reserve currency. It is the preeminent role of the dollar, along with the centrality of U.S. capital markets, that enabled the boom in financial sanctions in the first place. After a generation of these sanctions, however, targets are searching for alternatives to the dollar to protect themselves from coercion. Digital currencies offer one way out. The People's Bank of China has rolled out a digital yuan that will enable those who use it to bypass the U.S. dollar entirely. Even U.S. allies in Europe developed the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX), a means through which they could circumvent the dollar and trade with Iran. Little wonder, then, that the U.S. dollar's share of global foreign exchange reserves fell to a 25-year low at the end of 2020. For now, the dollar remains the primary global reserve currency. But if its use declines further, so will the power of American financial statecraft.

U.S. sanctions have notched a few significant accomplishments. But they have also alienated allies, impoverished populations, and encouraged diversification away from the dollar, all while failing to generate

much in the way of tangible concessions. Policymakers seem to have confused the potency of sanctions with effectiveness. Much as generals erroneously relied on body counts as their metric of success in prosecuting the Vietnam War, policymakers are now using the pain inflicted by sanctions as a metric of success. In November 2020, for example, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called the maximum-pressure campaign against Iran "extraordinarily effective." As evidence, he pointed out that "Iran's economy faces a currency crisis, mounting public debt, and rising inflation." Left unsaid by Pompeo was that despite all the economic pain, Iran was in fact accelerating its enrichment of uranium.

THE POLICY OF FIRST RESORT

If economic sanctions are so enervated, why are foreign policy elites so enthused about them? It is not because they are irrational. Rather, shifts in world politics and in American society have made sanctions look more attractive, particularly in comparison with other options. Simply put, it is easier to impose sanctions than it is to do anything else.

To paraphrase Sun-tzu, the best kind of sanction is the one that never has to be imposed. For much of the post–Cold War era, the United States was so powerful that few countries dared challenge it even if they wanted to. Others were cajoled by American soft power into wanting what the United States wanted. Those that did challenge Washington usually faced swift pushback, amplified by multilateral structures such as the UN Security Council. Only in a small subset of international relations—regarding nuclear proliferation and war crimes—did the United States find it necessary to impose economic sanctions.

But now, as U.S. hegemony has declined, there are simply more countries with an interest in challenging the status quo. The democratic recession and the fraying of the liberal international order have created more revisionist states that disagree ideologically with Washington. At the same time, visible U.S. policy failures—in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria—have made the threat of U.S. coercion seem less scary. As the number of actors willing to challenge U.S. interests has gone up, so has the demand for sanctions against them.

Meanwhile, the political appeal of other foreign policy tools has declined considerably. It is not a coincidence that even as Biden has preserved most of the Trump administration's sanctions, he has also honored the pledge to withdraw U.S. forces from Afghanistan later this year. The generation-long war on terrorism has caused policymak-

ers and the public to lose their taste for large-scale military interventions. A 2020 Gallup poll found that 65 percent of Americans think the United States should not strike another country first—the highest percentage since the question was first asked, in 2002. Even small-scale uses of military force, such as drone strikes and targeted bombings, have become less politically appetizing among policy elites. The wars in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq have convinced many Americans that what may start out as a limited military intervention can easily grow into a long and costly war.

If sticks have lost out to changing tastes, carrots have become downright unpalatable. For more than 80 years, the United States was willing to proffer both foreign aid and preferential trade arrangements to countries as a means of encouraging more amenable foreign policies. Over the last decade, however, the politics of economic openness has curdled. Foreign aid has never been well liked, but in this populist age, it has become even less so. As for trade, both Trump's "America first" platform and Biden's "foreign policy for the middle class" mantra exclude new free-trade deals. And even if a president wanted such an agreement, political polarization would make congressional passage a heavy lift.

While other instruments have become more costly to use, sanctions have never been easier to implement. The array of U.S. laws authorizing sanctions has expanded considerably. For Congress, economic coercion hits the political sweet spot: it is viewed as less costly and less risky than a declaration of war but tougher than a symbolic resolution. Politicians can tell their constituents that they are doing something about a problem even if that something isn't working.

Another factor that has made sanctions more enticing is the additional leverage that globalization has afforded the United States. Globalized economic networks increase the power of central hubs, and the United States stands at the center of most. Because a strikingly high proportion of global transactions involve U.S. banks, the United States has been able to weaponize economic interdependence more than many once thought possible. It has even exploited economic ties with its own allies. Before globalization really took off, countries were reluctant to sanction treaty allies, because as the allies sought new economic partners, the initiating country would suffer as a result. The strength of U.S. financial networks, however, reduces the ability of U.S. allies to find alternatives to the dollar (even though that strength has encouraged these countries to seek long-term alternatives to the dollar).

KICKING THE HABIT

The United States faces a conundrum. It confronts a growing number of foreign policy challenges and yet has a shrinking set of tools to fix them. Meanwhile, its favorite tool, sanctions, is wearing out through frequent use. The Biden administration at least seems to be aware of the problem. In her confirmation hearing, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen promised a review of U.S. sanctions policy to ensure that the measures are used "strategically and appropriately." But what would it mean in practice to change such an entrenched policy?

The most obvious advice will also be the hardest to follow: the United States needs to sanction less often. Even if an individual act of sanctioning makes sense, policymakers should consider the aggregate effect of too many sanctions. This does not mean never sanction; the United States does need to push back against egregious norm violations, as when Belarus forced down a civilian airliner in May to take a reporter into custody. But the fewer sanctions imposed, the more effective will be those that are warranted.

Economic coercion works best when the state imposing the sanctions is unambiguous about the conditions under which they will be threatened, enacted, and lifted. To preserve its future ability to use economic statecraft, the United States must reassure other countries that it will apply sanctions smartly. It should, in word and deed, make it clear that it turns to sanctions under narrow and precisely defined circumstances. It should create standard operating procedures to secure multilateral support for sanctioning those well-defined categories of behavior. And it should swiftly lift sanctions and allow cross-border exchange to resume when actors comply with the stated demands.

The executive branch can take a few concrete steps to clarify the U.S. approach. The most explicit would be for the Treasury Department or the White House to publish an economic statecraft strategy every five years. The use of force is guided by a series of official strategy documents, including the National Security Strategy and the National Defense Strategy. A similar logic should apply to economic pressure. The Treasury Department, in particular, would be well served by clear articulations of its approach to economic sanctions; it is damning that the four-year "strategic plan" the department released in 2018 mentioned the word "sanctions" just twice in 51 pages.

To be useful, an economic statecraft strategy would need to include explicit guidelines for when sanctions are being imposed for the pur-

pose of containment (that is, to limit the power of another state's economy) or compellence (that is, to induce a well-defined change in another state's behavior). Sanctions designed to contain are akin to the strategic embargo on the Soviet Union and its allies during the Cold War. In a world of great-power competition, such embargoes should indeed be part of U.S. statecraft. By declaring some economic measures as containment, the U.S. government could eliminate any expectations of concessions; rather, sapping a rival's power would be the explicit goal. Sanctions designed for compellence, on the other hand, would need to be attached to specific, concrete demands that could be met by the target—signaling to the target that relief was a real possibility and thus increasing the odds of compliance.

The most obvious advice will also be the hardest to follow: the United States needs to sanction less often.

One way to alleviate the pressure on sanctions as a policy instrument is to promote viable alternatives, so an economic statecraft strategy should also highlight the various economic inducements the U.S. government can dangle. Policymakers need to get back in the business of using the lure of access to the American market as a means of promoting more constructive behavior in world politics. This includes holding discussions with U.S. firms that have to implement sanctions and putting in place safeguards to ensure that sanctions indeed end when they are supposed to. More explicit procedures for lifting sanctions would enhance the Treasury Department's ability to reassure private-sector actors that once the sanctions are lifted, they should feel safe doing business with the erstwhile targets. Such reassurance would reduce the phenomenon of banks "de-risking" their balance sheets by permanently freezing out previously targeted actors that have mended their ways, causing sanctions to bite for longer than intended.

All policies benefit from regular review. Sanctions have escaped such scrutiny, as the Government Accountability Office report acknowledged. Mandating such reviews annually—along with assessments of the sanctions' humanitarian effects—would help policymakers decide when it's time to give up on a particular campaign of economic pressure. Congress could even automatically require the Government Accountability Office to conduct such reviews for every new measure it passes.

Congress should institute another standard operating procedure: the insertion of a sunset clause into any new sanctions legislation.

Congressionally mandated sanctions could be set to automatically expire after, say, five years unless Congress voted to extend them. Some sanctions may well need to remain in place longer, but requiring a new vote would at least offer decision points where the ratchet effect of continued sanctions could be reversed. It could also offer some elected officials a graceful way out of a policy dead end.

Finally, if embargoes are going to be built to last, the United States needs to revive multilateral structures for maintaining them. During the Cold War, CoCom—short for the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls—was the organization that preserved the strategic embargo of the Warsaw Pact states. A modern-day equivalent could originate in the G-7 and then expand to other trusted allies. Developing an informal international group with standing committees would have the added benefit of making it difficult for successive U.S. administrations to reverse the policies of their predecessor without consulting allies because of partisan whims.

A BETTER WAY

Sanctions cannot and will not go away anytime soon. Other great powers, such as China and Russia, are becoming increasingly active sanctioners. China has used an array of informal measures to punish Japan, Norway, South Korea, and even the National Basketball Association over the past decade; Russia sanctioned former Soviet republics to deter them from joining an EU initiative in eastern Europe. Aspiring great powers, such as Saudi Arabia, have also tried their hand at economic coercion. There will be more sanctions in the future, not fewer.

But that doesn't mean the United States has to be part of the problem. Even the countries now discovering sanctions still rely on them for only a fraction of their foreign policy goals; they also sign trade deals, engage in cultural diplomacy, and dole out foreign aid to win friends and influence countries. So did the United States once. Washington needs to exercise the policy muscles it has let atrophy, lest a statecraft gap emerge between it and other governments. U.S. policymakers have become so sanctions-happy that they have blinded themselves to the long-term costs of this tool. To compete with the other great powers, the United States needs to remind the world that it is more than a one-trick pony.

Iran's War Within

Ebrahim Raisi and the Triumph of the Hard-Liners

Mohammad Ayatollahi Tabaar

The Islamic Republic of Iran is a state divided against itself. Since its inception in 1979, it has been defined by tension between the president, who heads its elected government, and the supreme leader, who leads the parallel state institutions that embody modern Iran's revolutionary Islamist ideals. The current supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, served as president from 1981 to 1989. During his tenure as president, he clashed over matters of policy, personnel, and ideology with the supreme leader at the time, Ruhollah Khomeini, the charismatic cleric who had spearheaded the Iranian Revolution. After Khomeini died, in 1989, Khamenei was appointed supreme leader and went on to do battle with a long line of presidents more moderate than himself.

Iran's recent presidents have not been radicals by the standards of the country's political establishment. But despite their differing worldviews and social bases, all of them pursued domestic and foreign policies that the parallel state labeled as secular, liberal, antirevolutionary, and subversive. In each case, Khamenei and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which answers directly to the supreme leader, moved aggressively and at times brutally to contain and control the elected government. The battles left the government bureaucracy depleted and paralyzed.

With the election of Iran's new president, this struggle may have finally been decided in favor of the parallel state. Ebrahim Raisi, who captured the presidency in a meticulously engineered election in June, is a loyal functionary of Iran's theocratic system. For decades, he served as a low-profile prosecutor and judge, including two

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years as the head of Iran's judiciary. Over the course of his career, Raisi became notorious for his alleged role in the summary execution of thousands of political prisoners and members of leftist armed groups in the late 1980s. His eagerness to stamp out any perceived threat to the parallel state clearly endeared him to Khamenei, and there is little doubt that as president, one of his priorities will be to tighten the supreme leader's control over the administrative agencies of the elected government.

The context in which Raisi assumed the presidency will also require a break from the past. Iran has been impoverished by the stranglehold of U.S. sanctions and the toll of the COVID-19 pandemic. The democratic aspirations of the devastated middle class are waning, and a collective sense of isolation and victimhood is rising in their place. The surrounding region remains threatening, strengthening those who pose as guardians of national security. Amid all this turmoil, Iran will soon need a new supreme leader—a transition in which the new president is set to play a critical role, and which could potentially result in his own rise to head of the Islamic Republic.

These changes promise to usher in a new era in the Islamic Republic's history. The turmoil created by a divided system could give way to an Iran that is more cohesive and more assertive in trying to shape the region in its own image. As many of the leaders and movements that defined Iranian politics for the past three decades fade away, a faction of right-wing leaders has the opportunity to reshape Iran's politics and society in ways that will expand the IRGC's control over the country's economy, further diminish political freedoms, and yet display limited tolerance on religious and social issues. It will champion Iranian nationalism to widen its popular base domestically, while relying on Shiite and anti-American ideologies to project power regionally.

These changes could also reshape Iran's relationship with the world, and particularly with the United States. With the backing of a self-assured IRGC and no fear of domestic sabotage, the new government will not shy away from confronting perceived existential threats from the United States. Although it may compromise on the nuclear issue to mitigate mounting economic and environmental crises at home, the incoming foreign policy team will shelve previous presidents' aspirations of a rapprochement with the West and instead pursue strategic alliances with China and Russia. Its primary focus will be the Middle East, where it will seek bilateral security and trade agreements with its neighbors and dou-

ble down on strengthening its "axis of resistance," a sprawling network of proxies in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and the rest of the region.

U.S.-Iranian relations will be transactional and revolve around immediate security concerns. The alluring promise of a broader rapprochement will no longer find fertile ground in Tehran. The window of opportunity for a "grand bargain" between the two countries has likely closed.

BORN IN STRUGGLE

The political order that Khomeini ushered into being in 1979 emerged in struggle. Removing the shah, the dictator who had ruled Iran since 1941, was a relatively peaceful affair, but the contest between Islamists and their rivals was bloody and protracted. Khomeini's acolytes battled traditional clergy, nationalists, and Marxists for power. The 1979 takeover of the U.S. embassy by students loyal to Khomeini consolidated the Islamists' grip on power, as did the war that Iran fought against its neighbor Iraq from 1980 to 1988, which helped expand their paramilitary force, the IRGC, as a counterweight to the U.S.-trained Iranian army.

The victorious Islamist forces established parallel institutions that collectively they call *nezam*, or "the system," which is designed to neuter any threats from the secular state. Iran soon found itself riven by fault lines, however: between the supreme leader and the president, between the commanders of the IRGC and the army, and between the religious jurists of the Guardian Council (the body that holds a veto power over legislation) and members of parliament. The fissures deepened after Khomeini died, when the Islamists' conservative wing took over and removed its leftist brethren from power. The ruling faction soon split between the parallel state and the government, headed by the new supreme leader and the president, respectively.

The supreme leader is constitutionally the ultimate decision-maker in Iran, but the president and the government bureaucracy can occasionally exploit popular sentiment to outmaneuver him. Elections have highlighted polarizing issues such as civil rights, mandatory dress codes, corruption, and relations with the United States, spurring social movements and protests that the parallel state cannot ignore. The 1997 presidential election gave birth to a formidable reform movement whose "religious democratic" aspirations altered even the supreme leader's lexicon.

But for Iran's recent presidents, efforts to exploit popular sentiment to push for reform usually ended in frustration and failure. As

candidates, all the men who have served as Iran's president during the past three decades—Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Mohammad Khatami, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and Hassan Rouhani—promised to chart an independent course and open the country up to the world. Once in office, however, they inevitably fell short, constrained by the supreme leader's active opposition. All these men also began their careers as fervent loyalists of the parallel state, and indeed they helped build the foundations of the Islamic Republic.

Rafsanjani made the first attempt to weaken the parallel state. He was himself one of the founders of the theocratic establishment, as well as an instrumental backer of Khamenei's appointment as supreme leader. But as Iran's president from 1989 to 1997, Rafsanjani tried to shepherd the country out of its revolutionary phase and rebuild its fractured economy by strengthening ties with the United States and Europe. Before long, he was locked in a power struggle with Khamenei, as he sought to subsume the IRGC into the army or at least reduce it to a small, elite division. His objective was to centralize decision-making within the government and prevent the parallel state's interests from determining national security.

Khamenei foiled that plan and nixed a proposed constitutional amendment that would have allowed Rafsanjani to run for a third consecutive term. But when Rafsanjani left office in 1997, he did not exit the political scene. Instead, the competition between him and Khamenei introduced an element of volatility into Iranian electoral politics that lasted for a quarter century.

Khatami owed his stunning landslide electoral victory in 1997 in part to Rafsanjani, who used his control over the political machine to back the unlikely reformist candidate. Khatami's progressive platform appealed to disgruntled youth, women, and a middle class that had swelled because of Rafsanjani's economic reforms. As president, Khatami presided over a brief moment of liberalization: hundreds of new media outlets emerged, and intellectuals put forward ideas about religious pluralism that threatened the supreme leader's monopoly on divine truth. Khamenei and the IRGC moved aggressively to thwart Khatami's reformist agenda and head off any rapprochement with the United States, arresting hundreds of journalists, intellectuals, and students.

Following this crackdown, the parallel state seemed to be on the verge of winning its power struggle with the government. Ahmadinejad ran a populist campaign in the 2005 election and defeated Rafsanjani, whom

he portrayed as the symbol of a corrupt system. Throughout Ahmadinejad's presidency, the IRGC penetrated state institutions, accelerated the country's nuclear program, and exploited Iran's international isolation under sanctions to bolster its own economic activities. When millions of Iranians protested Ahmadinejad's contested reelection in 2009, the IRGC violently crushed the demonstrations. The parallel state imprisoned many reformist leaders and placed others under house arrest. Among the dead and detained were children and relatives of senior conservative officials. For a moment, even the parallel state cracked: IRGC commanders had to travel around the country to brief rank-and-file members and other conservative figures to justify their excessive use of violence against the protesters.

But even Ahmadinejad eventually clashed with Khamenei and the IRGC. In his second term, he dropped his anti-American stance in favor of overtures toward Washington and replaced his earlier Islamist rhetoric with appeals to Persian nationalism. He accused the IRGC and the intelligence agencies of smuggling luxury commodities such as cigarettes and women's makeup products (and other goods) disguised as sensitive items into and out of Iran. In an effort to bypass the very religious establishment that had brought him to power, he intimated that he enjoyed a connection of some sort to the "Hidden Imam," a messianic figure revered by the Shiites.

After eight years with a loose cannon as president, Iranians began to support reformists who promised a return to normalcy. Rafsanjani was disqualified from running in the 2013 election by the Guardian Council, which is charged with assessing whether candidates hold loyalty to the supreme leader, and so he rallied support for his protégé, Rouhani, a former national security adviser to and nuclear negotiator for Rafsanjani and Khatami. Rouhani campaigned on an ambitious platform, pledging to defend citizens against the militarism of the IRGC and the religious extremism that restricted citizens' daily lives, secure the release of reformist leaders from house arrest, and improve the economy by resolving the nuclear impasse. He linked economic growth to the nuclear negotiations by declaring, "It's good to have centrifuges running, but people's lives also have to run; our factories have to run."

With Rafsanjani and the reformists behind him, Rouhani was elected president in 2013 and reelected in 2017. Technocrats returned to senior positions and resumed the nuclear negotiations they had started a decade earlier under Khatami, but this time, they spoke not only with European

powers but also directly with the United States. Preliminary nuclear talks between Iran and the United States had started secretly in Oman, with Khamenei's blessing, a few months before Rouhani's election. But the new team used its popular mandate to pressure the supreme leader to show more flexibility in the negotiations than he would have liked. After two years, Rouhani's negotiators concluded an agreement with six world powers, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which offered Iran some relief from sanctions in return for agreeing to allow inspections of its nuclear facilities and to limit its uranium enrichment, at least for a time.

LEAKED SECRETS

The parallel state struck back hard to dampen the euphoria that greeted the 2015 nuclear deal. In doing so, it provided graphic evidence of the internal struggles within the Iranian state. In April of this year, a three-hour audio file that was part of a classified oral history commissioned by an arm of the president's office was anonymously leaked to the media. In it, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif can be heard bluntly stating that Iran's foreign policy has consistently been at the service of the IRGC.

This leak confirms that the Rouhani administration viewed Iran's nuclear program as an IRGC project not entirely in the interests of the state. In the taped conversation, Zarif says that he told Khatami and Rouhani that "a group [presumably the IRGC] has thrown the country down into a well, and that well is a nuclear well."

Zarif even accuses the IRGC of collaborating with Russia to sabotage his diplomatic efforts on the nuclear issue. The Russians feared that a nonproliferation agreement could bring Iran closer to the United States. According to Zarif, immediately after the JCPOA was announced, Russian President Vladimir Putin met with Qasem Soleimani, the commander of the IRGC's Quds Force, to discuss the Syrian conflict. Russian missiles and planes then began intentionally flying a longer route through Iranian skies to attack forces battling the regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria. Zarif implies that Putin intended to lock Iran into a collaboration with Russia in a regional battle as a way to keep Tehran in conflict with Washington.

In the leaked audio, Zarif howls that the parallel state spent the six months before the nuclear agreement went into effect trying to sabotage it. The IRGC's "firing a missile with 'Israel must be wiped out' inscribed on it, those affairs with Russia and the following regional events, raiding

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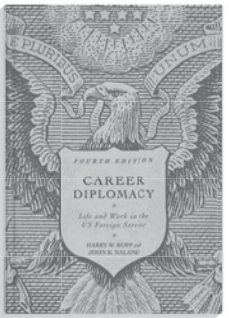

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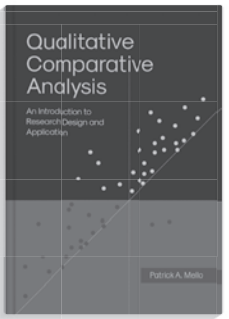

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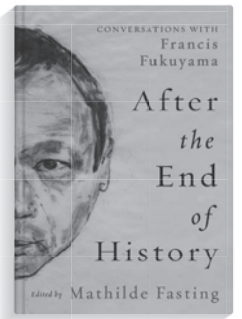

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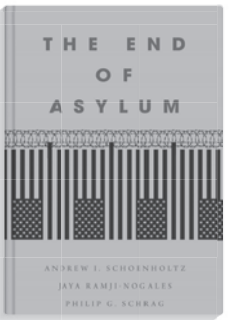

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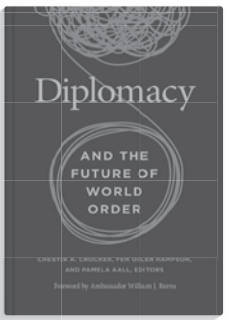

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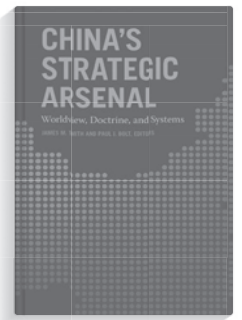

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the Saudi embassy [in Tehran], seizing U.S. ships—they were all done to prevent the JCPOA from implementation," he says on the tape.

In the years after the JCPOA was adopted, Zarif found himself constantly scrambling to repair the IRGC's damage to his careful diplomacy. Soleimani told Zarif little about his plans. For instance, in January 2016, U.S. sanctions on Iran's flagship airline, Iran Air, were relaxed as part of the nuclear deal. But five months later, Zarif learned from U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry that Iran Air not only had resumed the use of putatively civilian flights to funnel weapons to Hezbollah in Syria, the action that had gotten it sanctioned in the first place, but also had increased those flights sixfold on Soleimani's direct orders.

The flights put Iran Air's aging fleet at risk and courted new sanctions. Zarif furiously summarizes the IRGC's view of the matter—that if using Iran Air for this purpose conferred a two percent advantage over the alternatives, "even if it cost the country's diplomacy 200 percent, it was worth using it!" (Soleimani's risk acceptance and willingness to provoke the United States may have contributed to his own demise; in early 2020, he was targeted and killed by an armed U.S. drone in Baghdad.)

Zarif bemoans the fact that his popularity among Iranians dropped from 88 percent to 60 percent in the years after the JCPOA was finalized. Meanwhile, Soleimani's approval jumped to 90 percent thanks to his heroic portrayal in the IRGC-backed media.

Throughout his time in office, Rouhani found himself at war with the parallel state, just like predecessors. Back in the 1980s, Rouhani had helped expand the IRGC from a small volunteer organization into a full-fledged army, with ground, naval, and air forces. Three decades later, he publicly accused the IRGC of sprawling interference. In a 2014 anticorruption conference with the heads of the judiciary and the parliament, he demonstrated his frustration with the IRGC's nonmilitary activities. Without explicitly naming the IRGC, he stated, "If guns, money, newspapers, and propaganda all gather in one place, one can be confident of corruption there."

DEUS EX MACHINA

This familiar struggle between Iran's elected government, under Rouhani, and its parallel state institutions, under Khamenei, could have ended as inconclusively as previous clashes. But an impetus from outside—namely, Donald Trump's election as president of the United States in 2016—tipped the balance decisively toward the parallel state. The

Rouhani government had assured Iranians that it would be impossible for the United States to unilaterally abrogate the nuclear deal, because it was an international agreement negotiated among six world powers and further endorsed by the UN Security Council. But the IRGC made a different wager, as it trusted neither U.S. promises nor international agreements. No sooner had Trump won the U.S. presidency than the IRGC's front companies lined up at Iran's central bank, its Ministry of Petroleum, and other state agencies to bid for contracts to circumvent likely U.S. financial and energy sanctions.

The window of opportunity for a "grand bargain" between Iran and the United States has likely closed.

When Trump formally withdrew from the agreement in May 2018, these "sanctions profiteers" stood poised to take over Iran's financial sector. Due to the reimposition of U.S. sanctions, Iran now had to rely on the IRGC's network to circumvent international banking networks to sell its oil and bring revenues back into the country. According to the former head of Iran's central bank, Abdolnaser Hemmati, the IRGC's takeover of these financial transactions resulted in the equivalent of a 20 percent commission on every transfer the government makes. U.S. policies had effectively empowered the IRGC to deepen its economic influence.

The Trump administration denied the existence of meaningful political divisions within the Islamic Republic. It adopted a "maximum pressure" policy designed to reduce Iran's oil exports to zero and strangle its economy. Inside the White House, there was no agreement on the endgame. While Trump's goal was to force Iran to negotiate a new agreement, his then secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, and his national security adviser at the time, John Bolton, pushed for regime change. Regardless of its ultimate objective, the new approach did not spare even those Iranian officials who opposed the IRGC from within: the Trump administration sanctioned Zarif in July 2019.

The Trump administration's insistence that Iran's elite was monolithic became something like a self-fulfilling prophecy: Trump's actions pushed Iranian politics in a more extreme direction. Under the existential threat of a draconian U.S. sanctions policy, internal divisions abated. The White House's policies helped forge a broad agreement among Iran's elites that the only way to protect the country's national interests was to secure the regime,

which allowed the IRGC to present itself, for the first time in its existence, as the champion of Iranian nationalism.

The IRGC had long claimed that its advanced ballistic missiles and network of proxies across the Middle East protected Iran's territorial integrity. In 2019, after it became clear that Iran's policy of "strategic patience" in upholding the JCPOA was not paying off, the IRGC sprang into action to establish deterrence against further pressure from the United States. It began carrying out brazen attacks, launching a startling, precise drone strike on an oil-processing facility in Saudi Arabia and shooting down a U.S. drone over the Persian Gulf. In January 2020, the IRGC launched ballistic missiles against American forces in Iraq in response to Soleimani's assassination. These operations also served to silence the IRGC's opponents within the state and society.

For decades, the parallel state had feared that Iranian society would unite with the elected government to overpower it. The parallel state had acted, nimbly and often violently, to forestall that possibility. Now it could envision a new future, one in which both Iranian society and the government united behind the parallel state, making the supreme leader and the IRGC the vehicles for their aspirations.

CO-OPTING THE FIELD

By this year's election, Iran's political and social landscape had been transformed. Rafsanjani, for decades a powerful force in elite politics, had died suddenly from a heart attack in 2017. Khatami remains under virtual house arrest, and the government forbids Iranian media from mentioning him or publishing his photograph. Ahmadinejad is still an outspoken critic: former advisers have described in Iranian media how he envisions himself as an Iranian Boris Yeltsin, destined to ride mass protests to power to save the nation. But Ahmadinejad's faction has been purged from every important institution.

The reformist bloc was the biggest loser of the 2021 campaign, during which its aging leadership failed to present a united front or a coherent plan of action. The movement had once mobilized enough public support to propel Khatami to the presidency and later formed a crucial part of the coalition behind Rouhani. Now, however, it seems out of touch. The inflation rate in Iran soared to 40 percent after Trump withdrew from the JCPOA, and the country is plunging into poverty. According to Iran's Social Security Organization, the absolute poverty rate doubled within only two years, from 15 percent in 2017 to 30 per-

cent in 2019. The efforts by student groups and women's organizations to organize protests against political repression and human rights violations have tailed off, replaced by impromptu violent riots over economic grievances, water shortages, and power outages. The rioters' angry slogan—"Reformists, conservatives, your time is up"—suggests that they view the reformists as accomplices in their misery.

In the past, reformists succeeded in elections by polarizing the political landscape. Khatami ran on a platform of promoting civil society and democracy, and Rouhani promised the resolution of the nuclear issue and improved ties with the United States. These qualify as wedge issues in Iran, and invoking them transformed those candidates' campaigns into social movements, thus increasing voter turnout, particularly among women and young people. That strategy doomed Raisi's first bid for the presidency, in 2017, when he lost badly to Rouhani.

In this year's election, however, Khamenei and the IRGC found little resistance on their way to choreographing Raisi's win. The Guardian Council disqualified all the candidates who could have potentially energized the electorate, barring not only all the reformists and Ahmadinejad but also Ali Larijani, a relatively moderate former Speaker of the parliament and chief nuclear negotiator. The only moderate candidate left in the game was Rouhani's head of the central bank, Hemmati.

In the end, the reformists' supporters fractured into three camps: those who boycotted the election, those who cast blank ballots, and those who voted for Hemmati. Turnout came in at 49 percent, the lowest for a presidential election in the Islamic Republic's history. In the reformist stronghold of Tehran, only 26 percent of eligible voters participated. According to official figures, Raisi won 62 percent of the vote, and Hemmati only eight percent.

The hard-line campaign succeeded not solely due to repression but also by stealing a page from its opponents' playbook. Raisi's background is almost entirely in the theocratic judiciary, but as a presidential candidate, he emphasized security and prosperity rather than religion and ideology. He ran on a platform devoted to building a "strong Iran," promising to tackle government corruption and neutralize the effect of sanctions by replicating the IRGC's self-reliance in the defense industry in nonmilitary arenas, too. When he campaigned at bazaars, factories, and Tehran's stock market, IRGC-affiliated media showed him talking to workers and technocrats about reopening bankrupt businesses and reviving the economy.

Raisi not only posed as a centrist technocrat but appropriated the reformists' secular discourse, as well. He promised to fight domestic violence and pledged to discourage the much-despised morality police from harassing ordinary people and to encourage them to instead go after economic and bureaucratic corruption. Images released by his campaign suggested that his supporters included women who did not follow the strict official dress code.

Other hard-liners have struck a similar tone. In a debate between reformists and hard-liners held on the chat app Clubhouse during the campaign, Masoud Dehnamaki, a notorious vigilante and militia leader who since the 1990s has physically attacked intellectuals, students, and ordinary people for "un-Islamic" behavior, ridiculed the reformists for focusing on social restrictions. In a telling moment, he said that compulsory veiling was no longer a serious concern for the regime.

Raisi has also repeatedly said that he advocates engagement with the world. This represents a significant shift from the confrontational approach that hard-liners have traditionally taken. He also has made clear that he does not object to the nuclear deal as such, only to the specific aspects of the agreement that allowed the United States to violate it with impunity. The most dramatic shift has come among Raisi's hard-line supporters, who were adamantly opposed to the JCPOA until a few weeks before his campaign began but have since made a U-turn, pledging compliance with the agreement. Mojtaba Zonnour, a senior member of parliament, once led a group of conservatives to the podium and set a copy of the JCPOA on fire after Trump withdrew from the agreement. After criticizing the JCPOA for years, he is now backing Raisi's adherence to it, as long as the United States honors its obligations.

THE PARALLEL STATE AS UNITARY STATE

This time, those who anticipate a repetition of the familiar conflict between the president and the supreme leader may be disappointed. The impending transition to the next supreme leader will loom over Raisi's presidency. There is limited information on the 82-year-old leader's health, except for a much-publicized prostate surgery in 2014. But it is widely expected that the decision to replace Khamenei will have to be made during the new president's tenure.

The forces that engineered Raisi's victory are purging the highest echelons of the Islamic Republic to smooth this succession process. If

he is not himself named Khamenei's successor, Raisi will play a key role in determining who is. He is thus unlikely to spend his presidency challenging the current occupant of the nation's highest office.

Raisi is simply part of a larger political project that Khamenei is pursuing in his final years. The new president may tactically moderate his positions, but any real policy shift will occur in close coordination with the supreme leader. The parallel state is widening its social base beyond Islamists to nonreligious nationalists, in an attempt to co-opt the growing influence of those who despise the official and selective imposition of Islamic law. Many veiled women have joined the anti-veiling campaign, since they see the dress code as divisive, generating resentment toward them in the street. Raisi's selective and reversible appropriation of the reformists' social and foreign policy agendas is designed to further undermine their ability to return to the political scene at this critical moment in Iranian history.

Despite its smooth start, this high-stakes gambit could quickly fall apart. Raisi and his team of young, right-wing technocrats will need to use state patronage to co-opt resentful elites, particularly the faction of marginalized conservatives. They also must address the needs of the impoverished population, a portion of which backed Raisi because of his economic promises.

On foreign policy, Raisi will attempt to turn the failed globalist aspirations of his predecessors on their head. Previous presidents came to believe that the best way to forge a safe and secure Iran was to make the country a prosperous part of the global economy. Raisi believes that, on the contrary, only a strong Iran with undisputed regional leverage can deter external forces and achieve economic prosperity. Therefore, he is expected to enhance the IRGC's military capabilities in order to counter U.S. pressure. That means bolstering the corps's network of proxies in Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, and beyond, all in the service of protecting the original parallel state in Iran.

The new administration will also deepen Iran's security and economic ties with both China and Russia. Putin issued one of the first and strongest congratulations to the new president, expressing his confidence that Raisi's election will lead to "further development of constructive bilateral cooperation between our countries." Tehran also recently signed a 25-year trade and military partnership with Beijing, which was initially delayed in 2016 because Iran hoped to improve ties with the United States and Europe.

Paradoxically, the elimination of any potential rapprochement with the United States has brought coherence to Iran's foreign policy. There is now a general consensus across Iran's political spectrum that their country's hostile relationship with the United States will persist indefinitely. Consequently, Iran's competing factions are no longer obsessed with the domestic ramifications of improved ties with Washington. This means that neither the JCPOA's success nor its failure can dramatically upset the internal balance of power. This new dynamic has reduced the likelihood of domestic sabotage in the event a diplomatic breakthrough is achieved—but it has also hardened Iran's bargaining position in the ongoing negotiations.

Raisi needs a diplomatic success on the nuclear front to deal with a sea of internal problems. But unlike Rouhani, he is not betting his political fortune on it. His hawkish foreign policy team perceives the United States as ideologically committed to destroying the Islamic Republic. Its assumption is that Washington will attempt to renege on any agreement either bluntly, as Trump did, or subtly, as the Obama administration did, by not properly removing financial sanctions on Iran. The political forces that propelled Raisi to the presidency are therefore preparing step-by-step retaliatory measures in case a revived JCPOA falters. They are also committed to preserving Iran's nuclear infrastructure, to maintain the option to weaponize the program rapidly if the agreement falls apart. At the same time, the signing of a new nuclear deal could inadvertently create a more combustible region: Tehran fears that it would give the United States a free hand to go after its regional influence, and Tehran's enemies are concerned that it would provide Iran with more resources to bolster its proxies and missile program.

The resulting security dilemma appears poised to escalate tensions between Iran and the United States. The two countries are already embroiled in a low-level but continuous conflict in Iraq, where U.S. forces and pro-Iranian militias clash sporadically. Although Raisi has held out the prospect of talks with regional powers to lower tensions, the emerging unified leadership in Iran sees itself in a win-win position. It is confident in its military and has long known how to thrive on conflicts and expand its nonstate allies. Thanks to the new domestic political transformation, it can also make tactical compromises with its adversaries without the risk of exacerbating internal divisions. As a new era of the Islamic Republic begins, Iran and the United States are on a collision course.

ADAPTING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

As the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic continues to bear down on economies and disrupt the lives of billions of people around the world, Japan's universities and schools have remained vigilant about safeguarding the health of their students, faculty and staff. While most classes are still conducted remotely, all schools are preparing to reopen classrooms once the pandemic is contained.

The country's most renowned universities have exhibited much resilience during this prolonged health crisis. With their reputations intact, Japanese schools have stayed top-of-mind, judging from the number of international applicants to the country's most prestigious universities.

"We currently provide online courses to foreign students who, according to our survey, were very happy that we provided them with that opportunity. They would have been happier if they got to study in the campus, but the situation didn't allow us to do so. We thought we wouldn't get the same number of students this year, but our graduate school enrollment actually increased," said **Tohoku University President Hideo Ohno**.

Unfortunately, some universities were not prepared to handle the disruption caused by the global pandemic. Due to sudden international travel restrictions, they saw a slowdown in their student exchanges.

For Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, the situation might have been daunting. But it boldly faced difficulties and looks to the future with confidence and optimism.

"It was especially challenging for an international university like us because we recruit around 50 percent of our students from outside the country and want to have all domestic students spend their time abroad during their time at APU. So you can imagine that during this pandemic, when travelling is severely restricted, it was a huge challenge for us. But one of our strengths, as a university, is resilience," said **Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University Vice President Marian Beise-Zee**.

Despite the challenges, Japanese universities have proven their resilience by quickly adapting and creating opportunities to strengthen their current systems.

"Although the Japanese government restricted receiving foreigners and sending students to foreign countries because of COVID-19, we succeeded to operate through an online system. We are using this online system to have some sort of student exchange program. This is only a substitute, but we must utilize the system because most of the students won't get the chance to go abroad. That's how we have made the most out of the situation," said **Kanagawa University Vice President Akihiro Matoba.**

On the practical level, many universities faced the challenge to create effective connections with its students thousands of miles away and building a community of students located in different places and even different countries.

"Last March, I sent a message to students of TIU around the world, stating that although some of our students were not able to enter Japan, we were all connected and linked to the university and that we would do our best to still provide opportunities and education, albeit remotely. I felt it was a very important message to send: that we were not abandoning our international students or leaving them

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

behind just because they could not enter Japan," **Tokyo International University Chancellor Nobuyasu Kurata** said.

"Another challenge for our international students in particular was how they could support their cost of living because they were away from their families. We were one of the first universities to respond by providing financial assistance to those students in need," Kurata added.

Others, like **Hitotsubashi University**, used the disruption to build stronger and wider connections with international partners during a time when travel is restricted and student exchange programs are suspended.

"Hitotsubashi University, Singapore Management University and Renmin University in China are members of SIGMA (Societal Impact and Global Management Alliance), together with top European business universities, like Copenhagen Business School and WU Wien (Austria). It is very important for us to develop this kind of alliances with SIGMA and other universities," **Hitotsubashi President Satoshi Nakano** stressed.

In the last 40 years, Japan has stayed committed to internationalize its higher education system. The wider use of the English language has allowed Japanese students to adapt more easily when they go abroad and has attracted more international applicants wishing to study in the country. With regards to economic development and demographic terms, it is a win-win policy.

The internationalization of the Japanese higher education system has also nurtured a new breed of Japanese, one with a more globalized outlook and a wider perspective of the world. Working closely with the government, the Japan Association of National Universities (JANU) has taken the lead in promoting student exchange programs.

"JANU, has several important agreements with similar groups in the UK, France, Australia, the US, like the American Council of Education. Those agreements allow us to encourage national universities to send students abroad and recruit international students to Japan. At the same time, the government is also preparing to make competitive study grants available," said **JANU President Dr. Kyosuke Nagata**.

Fully supportive of the efforts of the Hyogo prefectural government and its colleagues, **University of Hyogo** hopes to increase enrollment of students from around the world.

"We want to take in students from around the world, particularly from developing countries in Southeast Asia, South Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa and Latin America, rather than those only in Europe and the United States. That's because we want, from the first year, to develop intellectuals who understand Japanese culture and consequently, develop human resources who will be bridges between Japan or Hyogo and their home countries in the future. This will lead not only to the achievement of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but also, by extension, contribute to world peace," **University of Hyogo President Isao Ohta** said.

Among its peers, **International University of Japan** stands out for its initiative to internationalize. Not only has IUJ taken in more international students, a significant part from developing countries, (Only 10 percent of its student body is Japanese), it also conducts all its classes in English.

"We have been welcoming students from many developing countries. We are also developing new programs, like the International Public Policy program, which will bring together students, diplomats, and government officials from Japan and western Pacific countries here in our campus. They

will be able to build a network for the future and hopefully, help build better diplomatic relations in the Western Pacific," **International University of Japan President Hiroyuki Itami** said.

Meanwhile, **International Christian University (ICU)** plans to send its students abroad again in the near future, and is working with key partners to resurrect the various Study Abroad programs that have been largely on hold for the past eighteen months.

At the same time, for those who are not able to travel abroad, ICU is also committed to offering virtual study abroad opportunities to all students who remain on campus.

"With our commitment to provide a global experience to each and every student here, we are seeking to build on our current percentage of approximately 60% of students participating in one of our Study Abroad opportunities during their four years here at ICU. To this end, we are committed to developing new partnerships and to expanding the extent of our collaborations with existing partners. We are also looking to increase the scope of the activities initiated by our service learning center and using this to develop new ventures in regions such as Africa and Southeast Asia", said **ICU President Shoichiro Iwakiri**.

Reflective of the close ties between Japan and the United States, many Japanese universities have formed partnerships with several prestigious American universities.

Since 1993, the cooperation between **Asahi University** and University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) continues to benefit both sides in terms of research, knowledge sharing and cultural understanding.

"When I was little, my parents took me to an English school. It was the first time I met a teacher from another country. I was nervous because I couldn't speak the language. But through time, I learned that the language itself wasn't the only thing needed in order to communicate with non-Japanese. I learned there were differences in body language, expressions, and culture that came along with it. It was then that I realized that partnerships and face-to-face interactions played an important role in becoming an individual who is globally aware. That is something I have been doing ever since," **Asahi University President Katsuyuki Ohtomo** said.

"Asahi University provides unique experiences to both international and local students through its face-to-face interactions. From the start, internationalization was at the core of the university and we remain committed to fostering partnerships. We train our students to contribute to the future of society through their knowledge and ability. We look to develop their intelligence and creative spirit in line with that," Ohtomo also said.

With the growing awareness and increasing importance of sustainable development around the world, several Japanese universities have wholeheartedly integrated SDGs into their programs.

"Okayama Region is one of the best places in the world to see how education for sustainable development (ESD) is integrated in advancing the SDGs in a multi-stakeholder partnership manner. As the first UNESCO Chair in ESD across Asia and the only national university that received a special prize at the Japan SDGs Award from the Government of Japan, we led a profound cultural shift for higher education institutions and they implemented SDG-based management systems," **Okayama University President Hirofumi Makino** said. ■

Acting locally, thinking globally

A mere mention of Japan conjures up images of its sprawling, densely populated, ultramodern urban centers, like Tokyo and Osaka. Apart from those well-known hubs, the country boasts other regions and cities that play an important part in the country's development and its engagement with the wider world.

University of Nagasaki has contributed to efforts to strengthen Japan's links with the rest of the world. It was among the first universities in the country to set up an information security department, which has since attracted the attention of Japanese multinationals like Fujitsu.

"Because of positive reviews and a growing demand for its graduates from several other companies, the Department of Information Security has doubled its enrollment for its courses in the field this year. Other initiatives of the university include partnerships with local and international organizations, like lectures arranged by the Department of International Management, which aims to provide students with a more globalized outlook. One lecture, delivered by the U.S. chief consul, was so popular we had to also broadcast it online because the venue could not accommodate all the participants," said **University of Nagasaki President Tsutomu Kimura**.

The lecture series, Kimura added, has also encouraged a significant number of students to seek further studies in the United States and thus prompted him to eagerly widen its U.S. partnerships.

In Yamanashi prefecture, **Tsuru University** has built strong partnerships with the local government and the community. The prefecture is the largest local producer of grapes, plums, peaches, and wines in Japan, as well as a major source of bottled mineral water. The university, located at the foot of Mt. Fuji, maintains a particularly distinguished record in teacher education.

"Our university was founded and continues to be supported by the city of Tsuru. As a public institution, we value regionality, internationality, and a distinctive learning environment extremely highly. The university's Regional Exchange Center provides many educational, cultural and sports programs for the people of the community, also promoting and managing regular field work initiatives," said **Tsuru University President Hidenori Fujita**.

"Exchange programs are also critical. They help us improve our students' cultural knowledge and sensitivity, and allow them to open up their future. We want to use our resources to develop both our university and our city. These efforts will consequently benefit the university, local communities, society and the world," Fujita added.

Located in the subtropical region of Japan, Okinawa boasts of a rich history and distinct qualities that no other part of the country holds. Sharing similar characteristics to Pacific islands like, Hawaii, the Ryuku islands play an important position in international collaboration and knowledge exchange regarding

the preservation of local ecosystems.

"In the country, our university is ranked 6th in the promotion of the preservation of underwater life, aside from being classified No. 1 in the promotion of quality education This is quite significant as it certainly shows our strength in being able to give back and develop the local community," said **University of the Ryukyus President Mutsumi Nishida**.

With its reputation as an excellent research institute, the university not only commits its efforts towards academics, but also caters to the revival of local heritage sites such as the Shurijo Castle.

"The castle was burned down in 2019 and was a cultural icon and symbol of the independence of Okinawa. We wanted to take the initiative to use our expertise and academic network to reconstruct and revive an important part of our history," Nishida added. ■

Keepers of Japanese culture

The Japanese aesthetic possesses a singular status in the world. Because of its long period of isolation, art forms in the country developed virtually absent of Western influence and planted very deep roots among the Japanese.

With the end of Japan's isolation, Japanese art reached the West and reignited the creativity of several artists there. More than a century after, the influence of Japanese art and design is very visible in the buildings we inhabit, the products we use, the pictures we hang on our walls, and the clothes we wear.

Through their international partnerships, Japan's art universities have served as bridges with the global community, guardians of the country's culture and promoters of its art and design. One such school is **Musashino Art University (MAU)** in Tokyo.

Founded in 1929 as Teikoku Art School, the university has grown to become one of Japan's most prestigious art schools. In addition to encompassing all the existing areas of an art university, MAU established the College of Creative Thinking for Social Innovation in 2019 to develop new disciplines in the field.

With two undergraduate and two postgraduate schools, MAU is now one of the largest art universities in Japan. Its groundbreaking educational innovations for the next generation have attracted a great deal of attention both in Japan and overseas as unprecedented forms of instruction.

"With agreements with 37 major art universities around the world, and MAU's tradition of global educational development, it was recognized by MEXT as the first Japanese art university to develop global human resources. Global programs are offered in both classes and as projects on a daily basis. Its achievements and scale have long led Japanese art universities", **Musashino Art University President Tadanori Nagasawa** said.

For more than 120 years, **Joshibi University of Art and Design** has trained female artists, many of whom have achieved success not only in Japan, but also in New York, Paris, London and Milan. It was the first women-only fine arts institution and the oldest private art school in the country.

"We are proud of our graduates. It's interesting to see that applicants come to us because they look up to our graduates. We have this strength in training these students and passing them along to the wider world," said **Joshibi University of Art and Design President Fumiko Ogura**.

"We are also proud to have bred many artists that have received the Order of Culture as well as artists that have been selected as Persons of Cultural Merit in the field of Japanese paintings, and Western paintings and crafts. We have the most number of these awards among other art schools and universities," she added. ■

Partners in social development

Among Japan's most serious and longest running demographic challenges is its rapidly ageing population. Despite incentives from the government to reverse the trend, population growth remains negative, while the number of marriages has decreased since the early 1970s.

To address this protracted problem, successive governments have relaxed immigration laws and have encouraged non-Japanese to study, work and live in the country. To further ease assimilation, Japanese universities have instituted English-only degree programs.

At the same time, Japan has needed to strengthen government programs to support its elderly population and look after their health. Playing a key role in this mission are the country's many medical and dental universities and schools.

"Even though we are small now, we are focused on spreading awareness of the importance of dental health, which is not only about our teeth but about oral health as a whole. That is one of Fukuoka Dental College's main goals. We want to change people's perception of dentistry, given that Japan already targets a large global market for general medicine," said **Fukuoka Dental College Chairperson Dr. Sachiyo Suita**.

Osaka Dental University shares the same goal, which is to educate more people about the huge role of dental health in one's general wellbeing and improve the quality of dental education in the country by gathering information from around the world and incorporating the latest knowledge and breakthroughs into its programs.

"We believe deeply the founding spirit of our university – Philanthropy and Public Interest – will save countless lives, not only through dentistry but also through medicine as a profession. Looking towards the future, we aim for sustainable expansion and development as a comprehensive medical university by nurturing medical professionals that will look after patients closely and live out our founding spirit," said **Osaka Dental University President and Chairman Takayoshi Kawazoe**.

A deeply patriarchal society, Japan has not fared as well in terms of gender equality as other highly advanced economies. Reflective of its very conservative values, the country has many all-female universities and educational institutions which, while they differ in terms of style of instruction and focus, have not compromised on quality of education.

"We are a private school. Compared to some others, we are relatively small. But, we look at our students as individuals, not as a group. We have a more human-centered or individual-centered approach. The most important thing for us is that each faculty consults with each student to know if they have any problems and know what we need to improve. Those are very important things we focus on," **Kobe Women's University President Nobutaka Kurihara**. ■

Society 5.0: Building smarter, living better

Consistently a trailblazer, Japan has led the world in imagining the future, starting with the high-speed bullet train, pocket calculators, the Sony Walkman and android robots. The country has always found solutions to do things faster with less cumbersome equipment and ideally, with fewer people involved.

Dubbed Society 5.0, former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe first mentioned this ambitious initiative in 2017. This vision for a "super smart" society aims to bring together technologies, like big data, Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), and robots, and incorporate them into every industry and across all social segments, resulting in solutions to difficult problems and in more comfortable lives.

While this vision for the future directly involves infrastructure, finance technology, healthcare, logistics and AI, it will have significant implications on the education sector, as well. After all, Japan's schools and universities are the training grounds of the country's future workforce, business leaders, engineers and entrepreneurs.

Already, several universities have expressed their full support for Society 5.0 and have begun to institute changes to support the initiative.

"Our goal is to equip our students with new ideas and resources that will benefit society in the long-term future. We hope they convey this message to the wider world and demonstrate, in their future endeavors, how the things they learned here, along with the techniques and technologies they mastered, can support all people and their communities," said **Tohoku Institute of Technology President Hironori Watanabe**.

Meanwhile, Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology continues to step up efforts to advance Society 5.0 and revise the country's education model to adopt technological innovation and utilize them to build a more intelligent environment. Should they succeed, the government hopes it will provide the world with a model on how to teach and fully capitalize on advanced technology.

"We want to collaborate more with world-leading industries and organizations, in addition to acquiring national grants, creating new businesses and improving our education system. As diversity and inclusion are very important for our university, we will accept more international professors and students. It should be important as a university to stimulate our Japanese and international students to become more active and globalized," said **Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology (Tokyo NoKo University) President Kazuhiro Chiba**.

As digital technology and artificial intelligence become more developed and more present in our daily lives, the Japanese government believes Society 5.0 allows the country's schools and universities to adopt a flexible approach in their task to strengthen communication, leadership, as well as reading and comprehension skills.

Many universities strongly agree and strive to comply with

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

the vision the government has presented for the country's education system. Meanwhile, **Kyoto University of Advanced Science** has worked actively to establish its own vision for the future and nurture the kind of graduates that society needs today and will need in the centuries to come.

"KUAS is a new university. We've been around for only three years. However, we built a university from the ground up, producing the kind of top tier talent and professionals that business leaders and business owners want for their companies and organizations," said **Kyoto University of Advanced Science President Masafumi Maeda**.

Other universities have focused on practical training for their students ahead of their entry into the workplace.

"In Hakodate, we talk directly to local people to find out the challenges they face. That gives us an idea of where technology should be heading. That's how we can contribute to Society 5.0. We have a lot of technology-minded faculty members and many excellent students who can use their skills and know-how into designing this new model," said **Future University Hakodate President Yasuhiro Katagiri**.

Under this new education regime, schools will require a mastery of basic skills from students starting from the 5th year until the 7th year at the elementary level. Underperforming students will not be promoted to the next year until they gain a satisfactory mastery of those basic skills. Also, to prepare students for a "super smart" society, schools will focus less on subjects and more on skills proficiency.

Because of the ever-changing needs of society, there has been a significant increase in the number of smaller, more specialized schools in Japan over recent years. In line with government guidelines and societal trends, **Kobe Institute of Computing Graduate School of Information Technology (KIC)** has focused on developing and preparing individuals for roles in the IT industry regardless of their previous background.

"Our main mission is to improve society through the application of technology. As a professional graduate school, our purpose is to not only give lectures but to also monitor and encourage our graduates to make an impact, said **KIC President Toshiki Sumitani**.

As Japan leads Society 5.0, there is an opportunity for schools not only to make a local impact but also to serve as an example globally, specifically to developing countries.

"Our distinct feature is that we have more international students than Japanese students. That said, we highly encourage and invite individuals from all over the world, including those in the smaller regions of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East," Sumitani added. ■

Aiming to be a global frontrunner in oral medicine

Fukuoka Dental College IMAGINES THE FUTURE

Celebrating its 50th anniversary next year, Fukuoka Dental College was founded in 1972 with the approval from the Ministry of Education, now the Ministry of Education Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. It received its first batch of students the following year.

Nearly half a century later, the college has not waned in its commitment to form competent dentists and develop pioneers in oral medicine. So far, more than 4,700 graduates have made successful careers in the medical field, the academe and in their own local communities.

From dentistry to oral medicine

Dental medicine does not cover only lesions of the teeth and surrounding tissues. The field covers a wide range of diseases affecting the oral cavity, including the lips, palate, tongue, salivary glands, jawbone, and temporomandibular joint.

This widened coverage came as a response to expanded knowledge about the structure of diseases, the demographic changes due to the declining birthrate and ageing population in Japan, the increasing prevalence of general medical diseases among dental patients and the improvement of dental technology.

In addition, oral care contributes greatly to the prevention of aspiration pneumonia and improves the quality of life of the elderly among in Japan's ageing population. Thus, the relationship between dentistry and general medical care has grown even closer.

In order to promote "patient-centered medicine," Fukuoka Dental College believes it is essential for their students to acquire a comprehensive knowledge of systemic medicine. It incorporates elements of general medicine and welfare into conventional dentistry, with the aim of training dentists who will "protect the health of the whole body through oral health".

"To reflect the college's new approach to the outside world, in 2013, we changed the name of our faculty from 'Faculty of Dentistry' and 'Division of Dentistry' to 'Faculty of Oral Dentistry' and 'Division of Oral Dentistry,' said Chairperson Dr. Sachiyo Suita.

Practiced-oriented research

In 2020, Fukuoka Dental College ranked 11th among 802 Japanese universities in terms of the ratio of students and researchers under 40 years old selected for the grants-in-aid for scientific research administered by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science.

"As a place that cultivates excellent personnel, we will continue to make further progress in education, research, and in our contribution to society, with all students, faculty, and staff working together to provide happiness to people," Suita said. ■

Sachiyo Suita, M.D., Ph.D., MACS (Hon), FAAP (Hon), Chairperson of Board of Trustees of the educational institution Fukuoka Gakuen

Faculty and students of Fukuoka Dental College and their international partners benefit mutually from their exchange programs.

The educational institution Fukuoka Gakuen is made up of Fukuoka Dental College, Fukuoka Nursing College and Fukuoka College of Health Sciences, all of which collaborate closely to provide excellent education and pioneering research.

Fukuoka Nursing College

Fukuoka Dental College Medical and Dental Hospital

www.fdcnet.ac.jp/english/col_e/index.html

Tohoku University:
Wireless, Borderless, Limitless

Located in the cosmopolitan city of Sendai in Japan's Northeast region, Tohoku University is renowned for its innovative research and dynamic global network.

It was among the first to be conferred the status of a Designated National University by the government in 2017, and is currently ranked number one on Times Higher Education's list of top Japanese Universities for a second year in a row.

Progressive Education

A trailblazer since its founding in 1907, Tohoku University was the first university in Japan to admit female students, and also one of the first to welcome foreigners. These days, 10 percent of its 18,000 students are international, spread across 10 faculties, 15 graduate schools and six research institutes.

The diversity on campus is best reflected in University House, the largest student housing complex to be built at a Japanese national university. There, international and Japanese students share apartments, in a multicultural living environment that is both supportive and inclusive.

In 2020, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Tohoku University took immediate action, moving all classes online to protect its students and staff. By leverageing its strengths in information technology and by utilizing the benefits of digital connections and resources, it was able to complete the academic year without significant disruption.

A year and a half into the pandemic, Tohoku University is adjusting its activities to incorporate a combination of real and virtual interactions. International exchange programmes have also had to adapt. To accommodate travel restrictions, the university established the Be Global Project, which offers joint academic courses and co-curricular cultural programmes online.

Innovative Research

Among the early inventions that were born at Tohoku University are the split-anode magnetron used in microwave ovens, the steel-wire recorder and the Yagi-Uda antenna, the university's first foray into a wireless world that put it well ahead of its time.

With a vision to "collaborate, innovate and activate," the university takes an interdisciplinary approach to research. Its large campus includes a science park that is conducive to in-development tests and experiments, as well as industry co-creation of production-grade new materials and technology.

Tohoku University is also focused on developing new academic fields. For example, in the aftermath of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, it pioneered research in disaster science, giving local and global communities the tools and knowledge to be better prepared for natural disasters. At the same time, the Tohoku Medical Megabank Organization began the world's first large scale three-generation cohort survey, to develop more effective medical treatment and personalized healthcare for the future.

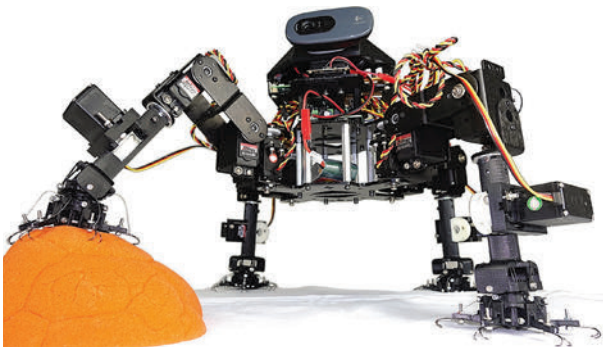
More recently, Tohoku University has been all-in in the fight against COVID-19. Its Clinical Skills Lab has been providing ECMO simulation training to medical personnel from around the region to help them treat COVID-19 patients, as well as research projects that cover a range of topics, from medicine, testing and public health to the various technologies that support the search for treatments and a cure. International research collaborations have also been stepped up.

Present Future

But COVID-19 is not the only challenge the world is currently facing. With climate change and widening social disparities also a perennial threat, Tohoku University recognizes the importance of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Under the umbrella of a Green Goals Initiative, it is committed to developing green technology, and putting in place actions that focus on recovery and resilience, as well as social innovation and inclusion.

And the university's vision forward extends beyond the familiarities of Earth. Through partnerships with JAXA and other space agencies, the Space Robotics Lab at the Department of Aerospace Engineering has already contributed to critical domestic and international space projects, such as the Hayabusa2 asteroid sample-return mission, and the Google Lunar XPRIZE race to the moon. It is now planning to launch university-based microsatellite missions from Earth into lunar orbits; and developing a multi-limbed climbing robot capable of reaching challenging locations, such as lunar caves and asteroid surfaces.

At Tohoku University, the story of innovation never ends, and the next step in its journey of discovery is already wireless, borderless… and limitless. ■



The COVID Charter

A New Development Model for a World in Crisis

Rajiv J. Shah

In August 1941, U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill met aboard the USS *Augusta* in the waters off Newfoundland to discuss the war then raging in Europe and Asia. As they considered the future, the two leaders remembered the past. The deprivations and divisions fueled by World War I and the Great Depression, they knew, had eventually led to the devastation of World War II.

The president and the prime minister were determined not only to win the war but also to establish the foundation for a more durable peace. The Atlantic Charter, which Roosevelt and Churchill released during this meeting, famously set out the two leaders' grand vision for the postwar world. But one of its key areas of focus often goes overlooked: the charter promoted a global economic recovery designed to unleash a slow, steady convergence between wealthy and poor nations. The goal was to rebuild and industrialize countries, paving the way for a planet free from "fear and want."

This past June, U.S. President Joe Biden and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson met on the United Kingdom's Cornish coast to sign the "New Atlantic Charter." It was one of many communiqués and commitments delivered by national leaders since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world's gravest crisis since World War II. But in order to prevent a future crisis, the global community needs to go well beyond what these statements, including those the G-7 leaders recently released, have suggested is possible.

As it did in the throes of the 1940s, the world today needs an entirely new paradigm for global development. The failures of the cur-

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rent system have been thrown into stark relief by COVID-19, which has left the globe divided between countries with the ability to endure the pandemic and those that remain at its mercy. Unless the United States and other countries take courageous new steps to promote human security for all, this divergence will leave much of the planet mired in fear and want. Insecurity will eventually spread to every nation, leaving the globe increasingly vulnerable to climate change, future pandemics, and democratic backsliding.

The world can avoid such a fate. Today's leaders have an opportunity to agree to a COVID charter that commits countries to take the steps necessary to vaccinate the entire world and prevent the consequences of climate change. Leaders in wealthier countries are already taking such steps at home, but to prevent the next crisis, their governments and those in lower-income countries will need to do the same in the developing world. To meet this moment, the United States and the rest of the world must commit to and implement a new global charter to ensure that humanity is equipped to tackle the daunting challenges ahead.

A WARTIME COMMITMENT

In the months that followed Roosevelt and Churchill's meeting aboard the USS *Augusta*, American and British economic policymakers began planning for a postwar order that could ensure their militaries would never need to fight World War III. In July 1944, as fighting still raged in Normandy following the D-Day landings, U.S. and British officials welcomed representatives from 42 other countries to Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, to create a multilateral system meant to restart growth, reopen trade, and react to crises.

One result was the Bretton Woods institutions, which were designed to industrialize and interconnect economies to avoid the divergence that had proved so costly before the war. The World Bank would lend resources to sovereign nations to rebuild and then establish the foundations for broader growth, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) would put out economic fires before they grew and spread.

The United States played a leading role in helping propel global growth. Through the Marshall Plan, American officials invested more than $13 billion, equivalent to more than $150 billion today, to rebuild devastated industries and infrastructure in 16 countries across Europe. And then, in 1961, President John F. Kennedy established the U.S. Agency for International Development. Although some of its

The power brokers: Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill in 1941

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early optimism dimmed amid Cold War failures in Vietnam, USAID had real successes. For example, the agency's partnership with South Korea helped build the agricultural and industrial juggernaut that powered that country's economic miracle, which was even more astounding given the desolation just over the border in North Korea.

Unsurprisingly, these initiatives reflected the era's state-centric mindset. Western leaders' fear was that fascists, communists, or other radicals could ride economic discontent to power and subsequently create security threats for their neighbors and the wider world. To prevent another global war and promote stability, officials sought to modernize economies so each state could better provide for its citizenry.

To a significant degree, this strategy worked. The result was not just a recovery from World War II's devastation in Europe and Asia but also a golden age of economic growth. From 1961 to 1970, developed economies grew at a robust rate of 5.0 percent each year. Middle classes blossomed, a baby boom ensued, and social safety nets were strung up. The growth was fueled in part by gains in less advanced economies, which were growing at an average of 5.5 percent annually thanks to technology transfers, private investment, and aid.

At the end of the twentieth century, convergence really gained speed. From 1995 to 2015, a period the economist Steven Radelet has called "the great surge," developing countries' real GDPs grew at an average rate of 4.7 percent per year—considerably faster than those of their advanced counterparts. Much of this boom was driven by China and other East Asian states, but it also included tremendous gains in Africa and South America. Over the same time period, more than one billion people were lifted out of poverty.

TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY HEADWINDS

Yet despite this progress, the global development agenda has struggled to adapt to the needs of a changing world. Transnational crises such as pandemics, global economic recessions, and climate change have wreaked havoc on the lives of the world's most vulnerable. The world has grown more interconnected, which has boosted growth—but it has also left many people exposed to these crises. Some countries' GDPs have continued to soar, even as many of their citizens still lack health care, education, food, and other essentials.

Due in part to global development, the world today has to worry far less about rogue fascist or communist states bent on igniting World War III. Instead, some of the most significant and urgent global risks stem from vulnerabilities in an interconnected world. Poor governance in failing states can destabilize regions and create havens for terrorists, as the world saw in Afghanistan. Global economic shocks, as during the financial crisis of 2008, can quickly create massive food security challenges in many lower-income countries. And insufficient state health-care investments can allow contagious pathogens to destabilize regions and even the world, as HIV/AIDS, Ebola, and the Zika virus did in recent decades.

Development professionals have responded to these challenges by focusing on "human security," which shifted the focus of development away from state-level growth and toward individual citizens. The United Nations defines human security as people having "freedom from fear and freedom from want, with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential." Nowhere is this clearer than in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, which laid out 17 specific goals to finally end poverty and improve health, education, gender equity, and environmental sustainability by 2030. These SDGs, which were approved by global leaders in 2015, reflected not just development's success but also its growing ambition and focus.

But the global development model was too limited, static, state-centric, and underresourced to achieve this historic initiative. The Bretton Woods institutions, which have long served as a pillar of growth and stability, are ultimately funded by states to serve the interests of other states. If a low- or middle-income government is unable, or unwilling, to respond to the challenges facing vulnerable people and communities, their needs too often go unmet. Or if an advanced economy objects to one state's or one region's development plans, those initiatives are often delayed or left unfunded altogether. As a result, in an era defined by faster-moving transnational challenges, these institutions have remained dedicated to legacy missions and have often lacked the necessary resources and flexibility to do more.

Some transnational problems also proved impossible for markets, governments, or multinational institutions alone to address. Although public-private partnerships have demonstrated some success in responding to those failures, particularly in public health, these accomplishments have yet to be replicated at scale. The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, brought together pharmaceutical companies, public health experts, and national officials to help the world turn the tide against an incredibly disruptive virus. In addition, GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, rallied industry, governments, and scientists to immunize 822 million children in 77 countries over the last 20 years. Unfortunately, these partnerships—and their successes—have been too few and far between. For example, despite new technological advances, neither markets nor governments have been able to provide reliable access to electricity around the world. Eight hundred million people still lived in the dark in 2018.

The world needs an entirely new paradigm for global development.

The system has also been challenged by one of its successes. China's rise was made possible by a global economic system that promoted convergence—but that country's own model of global development has not always been shaped by the lessons learned over the last 80 years. Through the Belt and Road Initiative, Chinese institutions have funded massive and much-needed projects in Africa, Central Asia, and eastern Europe. In many instances, these projects have helped states build indispensable infrastructure. But in others,

the initiatives, which have ignored best practices on debt sustainability, anticorruption, and environmental stewardship, proved less beneficial to human security than was possible.

The inability of the global development model to address the realities of the twenty-first century has become more evident with every passing year. When the world sought to prevent pandemics after the 2014 Ebola crisis in West Africa or made agreements in Paris in 2015 to combat climate change, it did not commit the resources or reforms necessary to meet those goals. And as inequality grew in the United States and other advanced countries, populists such as Donald Trump, Brexit's promoters, and others gained the power to undermine foreign aid and multilateralism. The stage was set for disaster and divergence.

A DIVIDED WORLD

The world was already seriously vulnerable when COVID-19 hit. But the failure to launch a robust development response to the pandemic has only made it more so. Global growth shrank by 4.4 percent in 2020 and has been gutted by another $11 trillion this year. Progress on the SDGs has also been set back. It is projected that the pandemic pushed around 100 million people into extreme poverty last year—the first rise in two decades. Such a significant increase in poverty is driving humanity to the brink: the UN World Food Program has estimated that more than 270 million people are at risk of starvation, double the pre-pandemic figure.

Although economic strength may not have determined how well a country mitigated the health and economic effects of the pandemic in its first year, as the economist Angus Deaton has argued, it appears certain to dictate long-term performance. Advanced countries, including the United States, have been able to provide their economies with fiscal and monetary stimulus packages equal to about 24 percent of their GDPs, according to the IMF. Lower-income countries could not take such steps: emerging economies have enacted fiscal and monetary stimulus measures equal to only six percent of their GDPs, on average, and low-income countries have mustered less than two percent.

Foreign assistance has been insufficient to close this resource gap. Although advanced countries committed more than $161.2 billion in foreign aid in 2020, that figure represented just a 3.5 percent increase over the previous year and only one percent of what those countries spent on stimulus at home. Meanwhile, although the IMF has increased

its lending to low-income countries, loans delivered by the World Bank and other multilateral institutions was far less robust in 2020, especially when compared with the significant response to the 2008 financial crisis.

These economic divides promise to widen in the months and years ahead, as advanced countries have also been able to afford to purchase hundreds of millions of vaccine doses, while poorer countries have been forced to wait or go without. COVAX, the global initiative to supplement national vaccine programs in the developing world, has been seeking to achieve only a 27 percent vaccination rate in low- and middle-income countries this year. That is a long way away from the 70 percent global immunization rate that experts consider necessary to provide sufficient immunity to defeat the virus. As of mid-July, only 37 percent of the population in South America, 26 percent in Asia, and three percent in Africa had received at least one vaccine dose.

As a result, human insecurity is on the rise as poverty, hunger, and sickness wreak havoc on the lives of millions of people across the globe. The question is not whether the developing world is going to fall further behind more advanced economies but how far—and whether it will be able to recover. Before the crisis, the IMF expected 110 emerging and developing economies to converge with the advanced economies between 2020 and 2022; now, it estimates that 58 of those countries will lose ground. Many experts—including Kristalina Georgieva, the managing director of the IMF, and Janet Yellen, the U.S. treasury secretary—are now warning of "a great divergence." This is the result of a "business as usual" approach in the development world, and it cannot be allowed to continue.

THE RISKS OF A GREAT DIVERGENCE

Citizens of wealthy countries should not labor under the illusion that this is simply a sad story happening to people in faraway countries. The great divergence poses a tremendous risk to every nation.

People around the world are growing not just poorer but also less secure. One statistic is particularly harrowing: more than 500 million additional people are projected to have fallen below the expanded poverty line since 2020, meaning that they live on less than $5.50 per day. In many parts of the world, these people represent the wage labor in the workforce, which serves as the foundation of the economic pyramid that many below aspire to join and on which many above

depend for labor and consumer spending. With so many falling below that threshold, the wage-labor community is no longer able to serve as a driver of inclusive growth.

Without significant development interventions, increased poverty and suffering will be a decades-long problem. Due to shrinking access to health care, people are at a greater risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19 or another disease. The virus has also transformed the global economy, leaving behind those whose jobs could not be done remotely or who lacked the electricity or Internet connectivity required to go online. Unsurprisingly, the job market will not quickly recover in the developing world: the International Labor Organization has projected that the pandemic will keep 200 million people, disproportionately women, unemployed next year.

This level of human insecurity will eventually increase global instability. When governments struggle to meet the needs of their citizens, more people are likely to express discontent at home or migrate to neighboring states. And history includes many examples of struggling states fighting wars to capture limited resources, to stop spillover effects from other states, or simply to distract from troubles at home.

The great divergence will also undermine the global response to climate change. Even before the pandemic, the world was failing to take the actions necessary to limit global warming as agreed to in Paris. The planet has seen the acceleration of climate impacts, which have proved worse for the most vulnerable. Unfortunately, limiting climate change will require action from all states—and the world is too divided for easy consensus. And for lower-income countries to do their part, combating climate change must be tied to advances for their most vulnerable citizens.

As transnational crises become more frequent, the world's have-nots will be drawn into a vicious cycle. Take the story of Rafael Córdova, a 50-year-old man who lives near Lima, Peru, and worked in the human resources department of a municipal government before the pandemic. According to *The New York Times*, this father of three was able to provide for his family; he and his wife were expecting twins when the pandemic struck. But in May 2020, Córdova became one of the more than two million people in Peru to fall ill from COVID-19. He lost his job, and after his wife tested positive for the virus and gave birth prematurely, they lost one of the twins.

In short order, Córdova's and his family's prospects bottomed out. With no job and a national economy in free fall, he could not pay the

rent, purchase the cell phone plan that was his older children's only link to their closed school, or even find the funds for a proper burial for his daughter. Eventually, Córdova moved to a squatter's camp on a hill near Lima overlooking the Pacific coast, where he drew a square in the dirt to define "his" land.

Córdova will not be alone. These personal tragedies will grow in number the longer the great divergence persists. The twin threats of COVID-19 and climate change will hurt the most vulnerable first and worst. According to the Institute for Economics and Peace, the climate crisis could displace 1.2 billion people by 2050. The world is already being battered by more contagious variants of COVID-19, and low rates of vaccination in many developing countries will ensure that these mutations continue to grow even more dangerous. The Delta variant is already hammering unvaccinated countries and threatening the recovery in advanced countries; it or another mutation could kill millions and squander all the investment and effort that have been dedicated to ending the pandemic.

THE RIGHT TIME FOR A COVID CHARTER

When Roosevelt and Churchill wrote the Atlantic Charter, they knew they had to look beyond the immediate crisis to lay the groundwork for a more peaceful future. Today's leaders should show as much ambition and foresight. They must aim not just to end the pandemic but also to make the post-pandemic world durable enough to prevent another transnational crisis from appearing in its wake.

The world's nations should launch a COVID charter, which should make clear that the transnational crises affecting the most vulnerable pose the greatest near-term risk to international stability. The charter must place human security at the top of the twenty-first-century development agenda. That is the only way to effectively respond to COVID-19 and climate change, which can target vulnerable people whether in Lima, Lusaka, or Lincoln, Nebraska.

As the pandemic still rages, it may appear impossible to forge such ambitious cooperation among countries. Populism and nationalism were growing in strength even before the world ever heard of COVID-19, and their adherents will surely resist new global commitments today. Competition among states—especially between China and the United States—risks distracting international attention and making the world miss this crucial moment for concerted action.

But this is no time to give in to despair. Political developments across the globe have opened a window of opportunity to take the sort of bold actions required to end this great divergence. In Washington, Biden has shown that he is seriously committed to and capable of global leadership—his administration's boost to vaccine donations abroad and support for multilateral action have been essential to recent progress on the pandemic response. China is also making an ambitious play for global leadership, and its ability to help shape the response to the pandemic could be a key indicator of whether it is ready for that role. In Europe, officials are eager to make progress on climate change to ward off catastrophe.

Most important, the pandemic has evolved. Advanced countries may have vaccinated a good portion of their citizens against the virus, but they can't ignore the threat of variants abroad. Stock markets drop at every report of a new mutation, and every day that passes increases the risk that yet another more transmissible, deadlier strain of the virus will appear. Analysis by the Rockefeller Foundation, where I am president, has suggested that until a sufficient percentage of the populations in emerging and developing countries have been vaccinated, which may take another 18 months or longer, variants will be four to six times as likely to develop in largely unvaccinated countries as in highly vaccinated ones. Until the pandemic is over in the developing world, any recovery in advanced countries will be fragile. The leaders of those countries can thus promote development assistance as an investment in protecting their own citizens and their own domestic economies from a resurgence of the pandemic.

To protect everyone from the dual threats of the pandemic and climate change, the world must commit to a COVID charter for bold, measurable actions that boost human security. This plan begins with restarting convergence: the world must urgently close a resource gap of trillions of dollars in developing and emerging economies.

A COVID charter must include at least five commitments. First, the advanced economies must agree to devote at least one percent of their GDPs to foreign aid, which would increase development assistance by around $100 billion. These pledges would reverse the damaging political trend—most recently seen in the United Kingdom—of countries abrogating previous aid commitments. This new initiative should champion environmental sustainability, fight corruption, and promote real employment opportunities within local economies.

Second, this foreign aid commitment from developed countries could be made as part of a framework agreement with developing economies, whereby those economies pledge to strengthen their own capacities. Leaders in low- and middle-income countries must commit to taking responsibility for vaccinating their populations and rebuilding their economies in an inclusive way. They should also commit to achieving a much greater level of domestic resource mobilization. Right now, low-income countries raise government revenue equivalent, on average, to less than 14 percent of GDP, whereas middle-income countries are nearing 20 percent. The target in the charter could be at least 25 percent, which, when combined with continued economic growth, would produce trillions of dollars over several years in financing to protect vulnerable populations.

The United States can lead the world in its recovery from the present crisis.

Third, shareholders and institutional leaders must commit to reimagining the Bretton Woods architecture to respond to the twin crises. During recent efforts to expand emergency aid in Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan, and West Africa, the Bretton Woods institutions struggled to innovate at the necessary scale and with the necessary urgency. The same has been true over the last year. But with aggressive leadership and creative reforms, these institutions can prove central to ending the great divergence. The IMF under the leadership of Georgieva has been the most adaptive during the pandemic. It is currently moving forward with a plan to issue $650 billion in Special Drawing Rights, which can augment member countries' official reserves. If shareholders agree to what is known as "recycling," these SDRs could provide $100 billion to support vaccinations and promote a green recovery—and as long as the great divergence persists, the IMF could use this same method again to inject greater liquidity into developing economies.

The resources of the World Bank and other multilateral development banks should also be more aggressively deployed. At a time of historically low interest rates, these banks could all raise and lend an additional $1 trillion by modernizing their capital adequacy requirements to enable greater leverage. Furthermore, by embracing innovative financing solutions—for example, raising new resources from public and private donors in the form of grant capital and guaran-

tees—these institutions could offer far more attractive terms to borrowers than they do with their typical commercial products. These and other initiatives would enable the banks to more effectively mobilize private resources toward their mission.

Fourth, private-sector and philanthropic leaders should commit to working with governments to help vaccinate the globe and jump-start a green recovery. In recent decades, public-private partnerships have demonstrated a special ability to solve global problems and correct market failures. To meet these crises and prevent others, the world needs to expand these partnerships to fully unlock the latest in science, technology, and innovation for the world's most vulnerable, who have historically been the last to benefit from new advances.

Gavi has already been tremendously successful in immunizing the world's children, and its remit should be expanded to produce and distribute the vaccines required to end the pandemic. The World Health Organization and private and philanthropic players, meanwhile, should seek to prevent future pandemics by integrating epidemiological, medical, and other data and establishing an early warning and response system. Similar well-resourced public-private collaborations will be needed to transform global food systems and enable climate-friendly electrification across the world.

One of the great advances in global development over the last few decades has been the increased rigor in measuring and reporting results. And so fifth, all the signatories of the COVID charter should commit to having their inputs and outcomes measured in ways that are consistent with the principles agreed on at the 2011 High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held in Busan, South Korea, and to having their work regularly monitored by the G-7, the G-20, and the UN Security Council.

By realizing a COVID charter, the world could leverage what would amount to hundreds of billions of dollars—a relatively small commitment given the scope of the challenge—into trillions of dollars of impact for the world's most vulnerable communities. Such an investment would represent a transformational recommitment to human security and the SDGs, giving people and countries all over the world the opportunity to survive and thrive in the years ahead.

FROM CRISIS TO OPPORTUNITY

The world was still in the midst of a crisis when Roosevelt and Churchill sailed home from Newfoundland, but they departed with a

shared commitment to trying to make it better. Eighty years later, the world's leaders can once again promote convergence and cooperate to reduce fear and want in the world. With the next G-20 summit set to take place this fall in Rome, there is not a moment to lose in beginning the work of launching this diplomatic initiative.

Today is a time of incredible risk, and taking the path of least resistance could have existential consequences. But it is also—for the first time in a long time—a moment of real opportunity. With the steps that the Biden administration has already taken, it is now possible to imagine an end to the pandemic and the great divergence. By taking bold actions now, the United States can lead the world in its recovery from the present crisis and also set the stage for a more durable, prosperous, and inclusive future.

Think about Córdova, living in a country battered by COVID-19 and severely threatened by climate change. If these initiatives are enacted, he could get a vaccine in time for the next variant that sweeps across South America. He could afford a new cell phone plan, which would allow him to get back to work and his children to get back to school. And with projects to slow climate change, he may avoid future displacement and economic shocks.

Even if the life of one person may seem small in the sweep of history, Córdova is a reminder of the benefits of improving human security across the globe. A COVID charter would represent—like the Atlantic Charter did—hope for him and billions of others amid one of the worst crises in nearly 80 years. If realized, the charter's commitments would not just empower these people to survive COVID-19. It would also usher in a new era of global cooperation in which the world again promotes convergence and ensures each individual's basic rights—to be free from fear and want.

The Center Cannot Hold

Will a Divided World Survive Common Threats?

Thomas Wright

Before the COVID-19 pandemic began, Washington was coalescing around a new bipartisan consensus: great-power competition, especially with China, ought to be the main organizing principle of U.S. foreign policy. For some, the pandemic called that notion into question by suggesting that transnational threats pose an even greater danger to the American public than ascendant rival powers. Skeptics of great-power competition, such as Senator Bernie Sanders, an independent from Vermont, argued that the United States should seek to de-escalate tensions with China so that the two countries can work together to manage borderless risks such as pandemics and climate change.

But the debate over whether great-power competition or transnational threats pose the greater danger to the United States is a false one. Look back at strategic assessments from ten years ago on China and Russia, on the one hand, and those on pandemics and climate change, on the other, and it is clear that Washington is experiencing near-worst-case scenarios on both. Great-power rivalry has not yet sparked a hot war but appears to be on the brink of sparking a cold one. Meanwhile, the worst pandemic in a century is not yet over, and the climate crisis is only accelerating.

What COVID-19 has made powerfully clear is that this is an age of transnational threats and great-power competition—one in which the two phenomena exacerbate each other. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Chinese government has been obsessed with maintaining its grip on power and has refused to cooperate with the international community to fight the virus. For its part, the administration of

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U.S. President Donald Trump framed the international dimensions of its pandemic response almost exclusively in terms of competition with China, extinguishing any hope of a multilateral cooperation, even with other democracies. At the height of the pandemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) became an arena for U.S.-Chinese rivalry, leaving the rest of the world to fend for itself.

Great-power rivalry and transnational threats will both shape U.S. foreign and national security policies in the years to come. Washington cannot downplay one in order to better deal with the other. Attempting to ease tensions with China to make cooperation on global public health possible won't work, partly because Beijing cannot credibly commit to being more transparent and cooperative in the future. By the same token, ramping up competition with China without a plan to rally the world to deal with transnational threats (which can themselves fuel rivalry between great powers) would only guarantee future disasters.

The United States needs a strategy to address transnational threats under the conditions of great-power competition. It must aim to cooperate with rivals, especially China, to prepare for future pandemics and to tackle climate change. But in case cooperation fails, it must have a backup plan to rally allies and partners to provide a much greater share of global public goods, even if that means shouldering more of the costs. None of this will be easy, but all of it is necessary.

SECRECY AND SURVIVAL

Competition between the United States and China has made the pandemic worse, and the pandemic, in turn, has deepened U.S.-Chinese rivalry and inhibited international cooperation more generally. But the negative synergy between great-power rivalry and transnational threats was evident even before COVID-19. In the decade after the SARS epidemic of 2002–4, the United States and China had developed a working relationship on global public health. On the eve of the current pandemic, the United States had dozens of public health professionals stationed at the U.S. embassy in Beijing from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Health and Human Services, the National Institutes of Health, and the Food and Drug Administration. Among them was a team of approximately 12 CDC officials working on infectious diseases and pandemic preparedness. (The Trump administration had redeployed a number of CDC officials working on AIDS funded through the President's Emergency

Plan for AIDS Relief to countries such as Uganda, but the embassy team working on pandemic preparedness remained in place.)

But as a number of U.S. embassy officials told the foreign policy analyst Colin Kahl and me for our book *Aftershocks*, this team's cooperation with the Chinese government became more challenging as U.S.-Chinese rivalry intensified, largely because of China's actions. In 2018 and 2019, for instance, Chinese officials refused to fully share samples of a strain of bird flu known as H7N9 with the WHO's "collaborating centers" for influenza, frustrating their U.S. counterparts. At the time, public health experts believed that this form of influenza, or some variant of it, could potentially be the source of the next global pandemic.

The United States needs a strategy to address transnational threats under the conditions of great-power competition.

Chinese public health officials also grew more reluctant to engage with their U.S. counterparts. In 2019, the U.S. embassy in Beijing hosted an event to mark 40 years of U.S.-Chinese relations. U.S. officials had planned to highlight public health cooperation—widely regarded as a success story in a sometimes tumultuous bilateral relationship—and several Chinese public health officials were slated to speak. But 24 hours before the event, amid rising trade tensions, all the Chinese officials canceled. It was a harbinger of things to come.

When COVID-19 hit, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) maintained near-absolute secrecy. All channels of communication between Beijing and Washington went silent, as they did between Beijing and other governments. Chinese leaders sought to conceal vital information about the emerging epidemic in China from the rest of the world, even attempting to prevent Chinese scientists from sharing the genetic sequence of the virus with scientists in other countries. (A Chinese scientist deliberately disobeyed the order and collaborated with an Australian counterpart.) Beijing also pushed the WHO not to declare the outbreak a "public health emergency of international concern," an official designation that would have required a coordinated international response, and not to support or even remain neutral on placing travel restrictions on China.

The Chinese government's actions put the WHO in a difficult position and constrained its choices. During the SARS epidemic, Gro

At attention: military medics in Wuhan, China, February 2020

Brundtland, the director general of the WHO, called out the Chinese government for covering up the outbreak and refusing to cooperate fully with the international community. The strategy helped persuade Beijing to shift course and eventually to engage with the WHO. The United States had hoped the WHO would use the same playbook with COVID-19 and publicly criticize—or at least refuse to praise—Beijing for withholding cooperation.

But senior WHO officials believed that Chinese President Xi Jinping was more dictatorial and less susceptible to outside pressure than his predecessors. If they tried to call him out, he was likely to shut them out completely. WHO officials also believed that working with China offered the only hope of stopping the virus. If that required publicly flattering Beijing, then so be it—a calculation that put the WHO on a collision course with the United States.

It is impossible to say for certain why the Chinese government behaved the way it did, but secrecy and control make sense in light of what the vast majority of China experts believe to be Xi's top priority: regime survival. Xi did not want to facilitate an international response to COVID-19 that could have attributed blame to China or isolated it through travel restrictions, either of which might have damaged the regime's domestic legitimacy. Instead, Xi leveraged the pandemic to his advantage: China's suppression of the

LI YUN / XINHUA

virus became a matter of national pride, held up by Beijing in sharp contrast to the experience of the United States.

Once it had controlled the virus at home, China became more assertive in its foreign policy. It linked pandemic assistance and, later, access to its vaccine to public praise for China and to favorable policy choices, such as participation in the health component of its Belt and Road Initiative. It also retaliated against Australia for seeking an international investigation into the origins of COVID-19. As the world reeled from the pandemic, China imposed a draconian national security law on Hong Kong, provoked a deadly border spat with India, and engaged in combative "Wolf Warrior" diplomacy around the world—aggressively responding to criticism, including by peddling falsehoods and disinformation. For China's leaders, the pandemic revealed the inexorable decline of the West, confirmed Beijing's power and capabilities, and created more latitude for the CCP to do as it wished.

TURNING POINT

Geopolitics also shaped the U.S. response to COVID-19. Contrary to popular belief, some senior Trump administration officials grasped the national security threat posed by the virus faster than their European counterparts did. Top officials in the National Security Council began focusing on the pandemic in early January, just days after news of the outbreak in Wuhan, China, became public. They were primed to pay attention in large part because of their suspicions of the Chinese regime: Matthew Pottinger, the deputy national security adviser, had covered the SARS epidemic as a journalist for *The Wall Street Journal*, and he viewed the news trickling in from Wuhan in early 2020 through the lens of Beijing's previous coverup. But even though Pottinger and other NSC officials were wise to the danger, they ultimately failed to persuade Trump to make the necessary preparations to deal with the pandemic when it inevitably reached the United States.

Throughout 2020, the Trump administration saw the international dimensions of COVID-19 almost entirely in terms of the U.S. rivalry with China. As the administration began to formulate its response, those who favored a more comprehensive public health approach both at home and abroad were excluded or marginalized at crucial moments. The result was that the Trump administration focused more on holding China responsible for the outbreak and reducing U.S. reli-

ance on Beijing than on the minutiae of global public health policy or the hard work of rallying the world to tackle the pandemic.

COVID-19 also galvanized the Trump administration to intensify the contest with China. When it signed the Phase One trade agreement with China in January 2020, the Trump administration was split into two camps: one that wanted to contain China and one that wanted to focus narrowly on economic differences with China and not pursue a broader strategic competition. Trump spoke in the hawkish terms preferred by the containment faction, but he sided with the camp focused on economic issues in concluding the trade agreement. By mid-March, however, Trump had joined the containment faction, convinced that the crisis—and the lockdowns it necessitated—now threatened his personal political prospects.

Two Trump administration officials who favored continued engagement with China told me that before COVID-19, Trump was something of a check on the containment faction. Once he saw the virus as a threat to his reelection chances, however, he became willing to endorse the containment faction's preferred policies to counter China's assertiveness. According to another senior official associated with the containment faction, the pandemic and China's response to it helped unify the administration behind a more comprehensive strategy to push back against Beijing. Between March 2020 and the end of the year, the senior official said, the United States put in place more containment measures than it had in the previous three years, including restrictions on Chinese technology firms, sanctions on Chinese officials, looser regulations on diplomatic contacts with Taiwan, and recognition of the repression in Xinjiang as a genocide. In this sense, the pandemic was a pivotal moment in the U.S.-Chinese rivalry.

Competition between the two countries overwhelmed everything else, including U.S. cooperation with allies on the pandemic, leaving a global leadership vacuum that no one could fill. The foreign ministers of the G-7 countries were unable to agree on even a communiqué in March 2020, and the G-7 leaders' summit in June was canceled and never rescheduled during Trump's presidency. The EU tried to step up by increasing funding for the WHO and for COVAX, the global initiative to share vaccines, but it never came close to organizing a global response. China's assertive foreign policy, and its attempts to use pandemic assistance to advance its interests, aggravated European leaders and convinced them to harden their positions toward China throughout the course of 2020.

During this period, there was hardly any international cooperation on vaccine development or distribution, no coordination on travel restrictions or the distribution of medical supplies, and limited cooperation on achieving a cessation of hostilities in conflict zones. The economic disruption caused by COVID-19 devastated low-income countries, which received little in the way of international assistance. Especially hard hit were countries, such as Bangladesh, that had made significant development gains in the last two decades and were propelling themselves into the lower tier of middle-income economies. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation found that in just 25 weeks, the pandemic reversed 25 years of progress on vaccination coverage, a key public health indicator. And according to the UN, the pandemic could force a total of 490 million people into poverty—defined as the loss of access to clean water, adequate food, or shelter—pushing the global poverty rate to around seven percent by 2030, compared with the pre-pandemic target of three percent.

CLIMATE WEDGE

Pandemics are not the only transnational threat that promises to intensify great-power rivalry and diminish the prospects for much-needed cooperation. Climate change could do the same. The global economic downturn caused by the pandemic occasioned a brief and modest reduction of emissions of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases, but those emissions have already begun to increase again. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the international body of experts that represents the scientific consensus on the climate, the world is on track to warm by around three degrees Celsius by the end of the century—a rate and magnitude of change that scientists warn could be cataclysmic. Absent drastic, cooperative action, the world will see more frequent droughts and wildfires; more intense hurricanes, storms, and flooding; more transmission of diseases from animals to humans; the inundation of many coastal areas and low-lying nations due to sea-level rise, leading to the displacement of hundreds of millions of people; and the devastation of ocean and terrestrial ecosystems.

Rather than unite the world around a common purpose, climate change is likely to deepen competition between major powers, especially as the transition away from fossil fuels creates economic winners and losers. Countries that aggressively decarbonize could place

sanctions and other trade restrictions on countries that do not, leading to counterresponses and new trade wars. In a recent report for the European Council on Foreign Relations, Janka Oertel, Jennifer Tollmann, and Byford Tsang argue that the impediments to cooperation between Europe and China on climate change "are becoming higher" and warn that "decision-makers must not underestimate the highly competitive aspects of how China is changing its energy production and consumption."

The United States and Europe will both compete with China for access to raw materials and in developing the technology needed to make their economies carbon neutral: magnets, batteries, high-performance ceramics, and light-emitting diodes, among other things. In some of these areas, the United States and Europe are at risk of dependence on China, so they will want to make themselves more self-reliant as they develop clean technology.

Climate change could even drive a wedge through the transatlantic alliance if the United States elects another president who seeks to undermine efforts to reduce carbon emissions, as Trump did. And even if the U.S. government remains broadly aligned with Europe on climate policy, the Europeans could still become disaffected if Congress blocks meaningful climate action, such as commitments to cut carbon emissions or invest in clean technology. This, in turn, could diminish Europe's willingness to help uphold the U.S.-led international order.

THE LIMITS OF COOPERATION

Some analysts, mainly on the right, care about the foreign aspects of transnational threats only to the extent that they can blame China for them, effectively wielding China's malign influence on the WHO or its centrality to the problem of climate change as a cudgel in the geopolitical rivalry. They do not even try to provide an affirmative agenda for international cooperation on these threats—all but guaranteeing that they will exact a heavy human toll and heighten geopolitical tensions. The disease that causes the next pandemic could be just as contagious as COVID-19 but much more lethal and impervious to vaccines. Climate change is only getting worse.

Other analysts, mainly on the left, argue that the United States should set aside its contest with China or at least attempt to ease tensions in order to cooperate on shared challenges. It is unclear what exactly they intend. If, on the one hand, they mean softening U.S. rhetoric without

conceding much of substance to China, they would do well to look to Europe, where governments were much more inclined than the Trump administration to cooperate with China, but China did not take them up on the offer. To the contrary, China became much more assertive and confrontational in its approach to Europe. If, on the other hand, they mean unilaterally making major geopolitical concessions to China—on its territorial acquisitions in the South China Sea, for instance, or the status of Taiwan—the United States would not only pay an extremely high price but also likely embolden Beijing further without actually securing cooperation on pandemics or climate change beyond what Beijing has already offered. Deliberately undercutting U.S. interests on matters unrelated to transnational threats is not a sound strategy.

The need for cooperation on transnational threats must change how the United States competes with China.

There is no getting around strategic competition with Beijing: it is deeply embedded in the international order, mainly because China seeks to expand its sphere of influence in Asia at the expense of the United States and its allies, which are in turn committed to thwarting Beijing's plans. The United States and China are also engaged in what Jake Sullivan, Biden's national security adviser, recently called "a competition of models." China is seeking to make the world safe for the CCP and to demonstrate the effectiveness of its system. This entails pushing back against what it sees as pressure from liberal democratic countries that could thwart its objectives. For its part, the United States worries about the negative externalities of Chinese authoritarianism, such as censorship of international criticism of Beijing or the export of its tools of repression to other countries. The United States also worries about what would happen to the military balance of power if China secured an enduring advantage in key technologies. Even in diplomacy, friction will be endemic to the U.S.-Chinese relationship and will affect the broader international order for the foreseeable future. Outright confrontation can be avoided—but competition cannot.

This competition places real limits on cooperation. Take the arena of global public health: many studies on how to improve pandemic preparedness call on world leaders to dramatically strengthen the WHO, including by giving it the same power to enforce international health regulations as the International Atomic Energy Agency enjoys

with nuclear nonproliferation rules. This recommendation is not new. Several reviews of the WHO's performance during previous health emergencies, including the West African Ebola epidemic of 2014–16, have recommended sanctions in the event of noncompliance with international health regulations by member states, but the member states have not granted that power to the WHO.

The problem is getting every government to agree to a universally applicable mechanism for sanctions or some other enforcement mechanism. China will not agree to any reform that would involve intrusive inspections of its scientific research facilities. And even if Beijing were to agree to vague language that could be interpreted as allowing these actions, the lesson of the COVID-19 pandemic is that it will not live up to its word when a crisis occurs.

WHEN COOPERATION FAILS

The need for cooperation on transnational threats must change how the United States competes with China—not whether it competes. U.S. officials should not give up on China entirely; instead, they should make a good-faith effort to work with Beijing, both bilaterally and in multilateral settings. Recognizing that there are strict limits on U.S.-Chinese cooperation is not the same as saying that no cooperation is possible. China has an interest in tackling pandemics and climate change, and diplomacy may help incrementally. But the real challenge is determining what to do when cooperation with China and other rivals falls short of what is required. The United States needs a backup plan to tackle shared challenges through coalitions of the willing.

When it comes to pandemic preparedness, this means fully supporting the WHO (including by pressing for needed reforms) but also forging a coalition of like-minded states: a global alliance for pandemic preparedness that would regularly convene at the head-of-state level and work alongside nongovernmental organizations and the private sector. Any country that accepts the conditions of membership should be able to join. But those conditions should be strict and include a commitment to transparency beyond what is currently required by the international health regulations—for instance, granting WHO inspectors the kind of authority enjoyed by their counterparts at the International Atomic Energy Agency. Crucially, whenever the WHO declared an international public health emergency, alliance members would coordinate on travel and trade restrictions, as well as

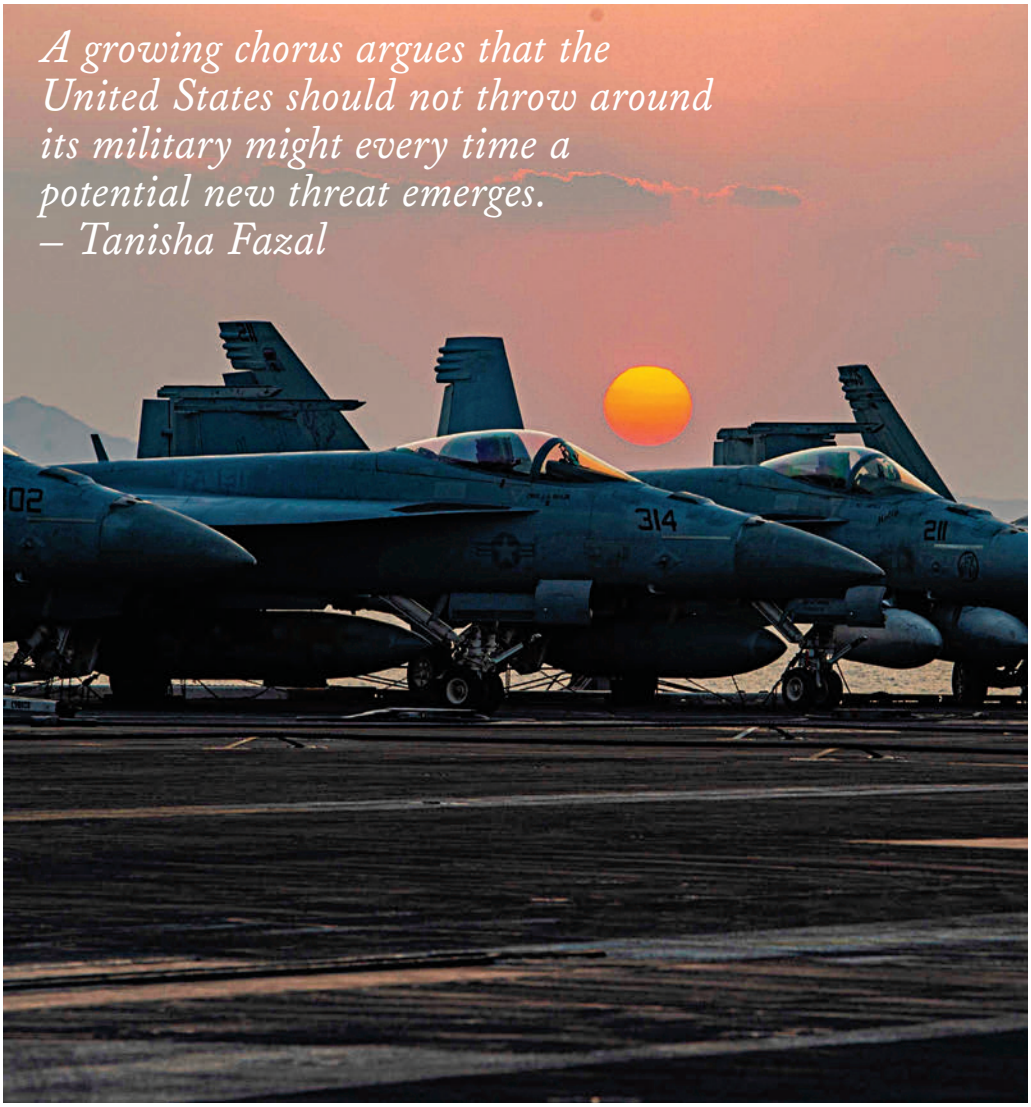
on public messaging and financial penalties and sanctions. Those penalties and sanctions would be aimed at those states that failed to provide sufficient access to or fully cooperate with the WHO. The alliance would support, not supplant, the WHO.

For any such coalition to succeed, the United States and its allies and partners would have to take on a far greater share of the burden of providing global public goods. The G-7, for example, could have committed to vaccinating the world against COVID-19 at its June summit, instead of just promising to purchase and distribute 870 million vaccine doses, approximately ten percent of the global need. A coalition could also step up in a big way to help developing nations build the capacity to prepare for future pandemics and invest in therapeutics, diagnostics, and vaccines.

The situation is more complicated with respect to climate change. The United States is a less reliable partner in this arena, and China's survivalist instincts could in theory make it more willing to mitigate climate threats than to strengthen the WHO. Sustained, managed competition with China could potentially help the United States build bipartisan support for investments in clean technology that would prevent Beijing from gaining an enduring advantage in this area. But the United States and the European Union will also need to build coalitions of the willing to deal with the international security consequences of accelerated climate change, such as extreme weather events that threaten large numbers of people, and to address the foreign policy dimensions of climate action, including managing the risk that a shift away from fossil fuels could destabilize countries and regions that are dependent on oil exports.

Two separate constellations of powers are steadily emerging, one largely democratic and led by the United States and the other authoritarian and led by China. These constellations are interdependent but riven by distrust and rivalry. Cooperation across this divide should always be the first choice in times of shared crisis, but as the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated, the U.S.-led constellation must always have a backup plan. It did not have one in 2020. It needs one for the next crisis.

REVIEWS & RESPONSES



JOSEPH T. MILLER / U.S. NAVY / REUTERS

The Case for Complacency

Does Washington Worry Too Much About Threats?

Tanisha M. Fazal

The Stupidity of War: American Foreign Policy and the Quest for Complacency
BY JOHN MUELLER. Cambridge University Press, 2021, 342 pp.

As U.S. President Joe Biden seeks to resurrect American leadership on the world stage, the perennial question of how the United States should respond to international crises looms large. In his latest book, the political scientist John Mueller offers a refreshingly straightforward answer: Washington should aim not for transformation but for "complacency," which Mueller characterizes as "minimally effortful national strategy in the security realm."

Mueller's case rests on two claims. The first is that war is in decline; not only do wars occur less frequently, but the idea of major wars has effectively gone out of style. The second is that the U.S. foreign policy establishment is prone to panic and often blows potential threats out of proportion, thereby justifying military interventions that frequently prove counterproductive. Because Americans face fewer threats than they think they do, the United States should shrink its military.

Mueller is a provocative and original thinker. He was one of the first scholars to argue that war was in decline, and he has made the case that the threats posed by terrorism, cyberattacks, and even nuclear war are overblown. His latest book synthesizes decades of work and marshals reams of historical evidence to chronicle a litany of mistakes abroad—from the Vietnam War to the invasion of Iraq—that add up to an unflinching indictment of U.S. foreign policy since 1945.

The Stupidity of War reflects strands of thought popularized in recent years by self-proclaimed "restrainers," analysts who object to the United States' muscular post–Cold War foreign policy. A growing chorus of restrainers argue that U.S. hegemony should not be preserved for its own sake and that the United States should not throw around its military might every time a potential new threat emerges. Mueller reaches similar conclusions via a slightly different route, claiming that since 1945, U.S. foreign policy has been characterized by unnecessary interventions that "have mostly failed to achieve policy ends at an acceptable cost."

Mueller frames his book as a critique of conventional wisdom and establishment thinking. But its specific targets are not immediately clear. Who, exactly, thinks war is smart? As the United States winds down its war in Afghanistan and refrains from placing many boots on the ground in other theaters, such as Syria and Yemen, few scholars or analysts are arguing for aggressive U.S. military deployments. At the moment,

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debates about U.S. grand strategy are dominated by figures who harbor deep anxiety about the durability of the liberal international order and others who have argued for limited humanitarian interventions in the face of atrocities abroad.

Neither of those positions is necessarily at odds with Mueller's argument. For proponents of a rules-based order, a strong U.S. military is less important than diplomacy, economic statecraft, and multilateral institutions such as the United Nations. Mueller's preferred foreign policy would be consistent with those priorities, as long as they don't involve the use of military force—although he equivocates on the question of humanitarian intervention, arguing that U.S. forces could be deployed under the auspices of the UN to "police destructive civil wars or to depose regimes" but that such interventions are becoming increasingly unlikely owing to lukewarm domestic support.

So if proponents of a U.S.-led, rules-based order and liberal interventionists are not Mueller's intended targets, then who is? One possibility is the Beltway thinkers who argue that U.S. military strength explains the "long peace" of the last 75 years. (Mueller references the historian and foreign policy commentator Robert Kagan and the current national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, in particular.) But if his aim were to persuade these opponents, insulting them with his title and mocking them with a "sardonic litany" of their own arguments in the book's appendix would be an unworthy approach.

Mueller's true audience seems to be his fellow restrainers, and his contribution to the debate is a particular logic of restraint. The United States' fundamental mistake, he argues, is not so much overextension as it is the overhyping of threats—and especially the threat of war. So, for example, the United States should retrench not because China's rise is inevitable but because the decline of great-power war will not reverse. The world has become a largely safe and secure place, at least for Americans and U.S. interests. Maintaining a large military is simply unnecessary. Mueller's advice boils down to this: Washington should just calm down.

WAR'S WANING DAYS?

Mueller stakes much of his argument on the claim that war is in decline—that is, that the total number of wars and battlefield deaths has decreased since 1945. But although he is correct that this thinking has gained traction in policy circles, his conclusions are distorted by a narrow definition of war. He focuses on wars between rich, northern countries (plus Japan). But war, or something close to it, continues apace between India and Pakistan, Russia and Ukraine, and Iran and Saudi Arabia. Even more misleading is Mueller's exclusive attention to international conflicts. He neglects civil wars in his analysis, even though civil wars have become the dominant type of war since 1945. The argument about war's decline came into vogue around 2011, following the publication of books such as *The Better Angels of Our Nature*, by the psychologist and scholar Steven Pinker. Ironically, according to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, the number of ongoing conflicts began to increase right around the same time. Despite that reversal, the "decline of war" thesis remains influential.

Another problem with that thesis is that the data that Mueller and others rely on are slightly distorted. For instance, the data sets they reference typically use battle death thresholds: for a conflict to count as a war, a minimum number of military personnel must have died. But over the same time period that war has supposedly declined, there have been dramatic improvements in military medicine that have shifted many casualties from the "fatal" to the "nonfatal" column. This shift has made it harder for any event to qualify as a war today, regardless of the nonfatal toll it exerts. It also undermines Mueller's claim that the United States has a long-standing aversion to casualties, as the general public is relatively indifferent to the human and financial costs of nonfatal war casualties.

Mueller connects his argument that war is in decline to the notion that the idea of war has become obsolete in the minds of Americans. The public opinion polls he cites do not explicitly demonstrate such a change in public thinking, but he gives "the growth of aversion to international war and of an appreciation of its stupidity" as yet another reason why Washington should adopt a foreign policy of restraint. But if the American public really does generally believe that war has gone out of style, and public opinion matters greatly for U.S. foreign policy, then why has the postwar period been characterized by U.S. interventions and adventurism? One possible answer is that Mueller is simply wrong: the American public does not believe that war is obsolete. Another is that the defense industry is served by the maintenance of a large U.S. military with frequent foreign deployments. Members of Congress are concerned about base closures in their districts, defense contractors want to secure sales to the Pentagon, and the military worries that its skills will erode if they are not put to use. As the international relations scholar Elizabeth Saunders and others have argued, elites shape public opinion on foreign policy, rather than the other way around. Mueller rejects this assertion, which is puzzling given that it would help explain why a supposed widespread public belief in the obsolescence of war has not actually fostered a policy of restraint.

Perhaps the biggest unanswered question in *The Stupidity of War* is what is at stake for Mueller and his position. Theorists do not develop grand strategies just for the sake of it. Strategies are meant to serve ends, and Mueller's ends are obscure. Does Mueller aim to save American lives? To prevent global atrocities, as his apparent amenability to humanitarian intervention might suggest? Or to secure U.S. interests? If so, what are those interests? Mueller is frustratingly silent on these important questions.

DEMOCRATIC SOUL-SEARCHING

Mueller does not quite say so, but almost everyone—including restrainers—would agree that the preservation of American democracy should be a lodestar of any U.S. foreign policy. Put in those terms, Mueller's conclusion is correct: for the time being, at least, the United States should shrink its military and resist the temptation to put a finger in every foreign policy pie. Washington should do so not because war is on the decline or because alleged external

threats are overblown, although Mueller often makes a convincing case for the latter. Instead, temporary restraint makes sense because the current state of U.S. domestic politics demands that the country turn its attention inward if it is to do itself or anyone else any good.

Among the supposedly overblown threats Mueller identifies are the boogeymen of China, Iran, and Russia. These states' regimes, Mueller assures readers, will eventually collapse, just as the Soviet Union did. The United States, by contrast, remains stalwart. Even its incompetent response to the COVID-19 pandemic could not dent American power, Mueller argues: "The country is so strong, it can't even be destroyed by itself."

In the aftermath of the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, that claim seems less convincing than it might have been just a year ago. Ongoing attempts to restrict voting, deep structural inequalities, extreme polarization, and the lack of a collective understanding of facts have created a dangerous cocktail. As the political scientist Rachel Myrick recently argued in *Foreign Affairs*, domestic polarization also reduces U.S. credibility abroad. When domestic political institutions are struggling, it is hard to identify what foreign policy priorities should guide grand strategy.

U.S. foreign policy has helped enable some of these worrying domestic trends. The military has become the default tool of U.S. foreign policy, asked to accomplish goals it was never designed to meet. The fetishization of the military should give all citizens pause, especially when it seeps into domestic affairs. Consider, for example, the scenes of police

officers donning riot gear and deploying tear gas—sometimes purchased as surplus from the Pentagon—to confront protesters on the streets of dozens of American cities in the wake of George Floyd's murder at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer in May 2020.

The United States' resources are finite, and redirecting time and money toward the preservation of U.S. democracy is the smart move. The United States spends many times as much on defense as it does on education or the environment. But for reasons including constitutional principles and the possibility of extremism in the ranks, it should be clear that the military cannot protect American democracy from threats emanating from within the country.

This does not necessarily mean that the United States should "substantially disarm," as Mueller suggests. If the United States can right its domestic ship, the military may have critical roles to play in bolstering international institutions, responding to atrocities, and confronting climate change. A strong U.S. military can further these goals by supplying troops and other support to peacekeeping efforts and by responding to the security threats that will inevitably emerge from climate crises. And although its track record on counterinsurgency leaves something to be desired, the U.S. military has had success in disaster relief and humanitarian aid, missions that can inspire confidence in the United States among foreign publics.

As Mueller notes, military restraint comes with risk; after all, not all international threats are overblown. For example, owing to climate change, the prospect of conflict in the Arctic region—and perhaps in other places significantly affected by global warming—seems much more likely today than it did 20 years ago. But a strong military is hardly sufficient to tackle such challenges, and the value of military strength becomes questionable if it comes at the expense of civilian institutions. Allies around the world will look askance at a United States whose commitment to democracy at home appears uncertain. Focusing on the restoration and protection of American democracy will be much more helpful for U.S. standing in the world than would building an ever-stronger military alone. What—and whom—is grand strategy serving otherwise?

How Democratic Is the World's Largest Democracy?

Narendra Modi's New India

Sadanand Dhume

Modi's India: Hindu Nationalism and the Rise of Ethnic Democracy
BY CHRISTOPHE JAFFRELOT.
Princeton University Press, 2021, 656 pp.

The brutal second wave of COVID-19 that battered India over the spring pushed into the background another global concern about the country: Just how democratic is the world's largest democracy?

Since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rise to power in 2014, India's rankings on global indexes that measure democratic health have plummeted. Over the past six years, India fell 26 places—from 27 to 53—on the Democracy Index, published by the Economist Intelligence Unit. In March, Freedom House downgraded India from "free" to "partly free," a status it shares with countries such as Ecuador, Mozambique, and Serbia. The same month, Sweden's V-Dem (Varieties of Democracy) Institute went even further, announcing that India had ceased to be an electoral democracy altogether.

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V-Dem now classifies India as an "electoral autocracy," a notch above "closed autocracies," such as China and Saudi Arabia, and two notches below "liberal democracies," such as Japan and the United States. India ranks seventh on a V-Dem list of ten countries that have lost the most democratic ground over the past decade. By this measure, it has regressed less than Hungary and Turkey but more than Bolivia and Thailand.

In India, where more than 600 million people—about two-thirds of those eligible—voted in the 2019 general election, many people view allegations of democratic decline as a Western attempt to diminish the country. "You use the dichotomy of democracy and autocracy," said Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar at a media conclave in March. "You want the truthful answer? It's hypocrisy."

Such pugilistic responses play well in a land awash with nationalist sentiment. Independent India has a hoary history of blaming the "foreign hand" for anything that goes wrong, a tradition that the Modi government has expertly revived. But the foreign minister's deflection does not answer the central question: Why has India, long regarded as an outlier in the postcolonial world for preserving democracy amid poverty, suddenly lost its sheen?

ETHNIC DEMOCRACY

The French scholar Christophe Jaffrelot's new book on Modi and the rise of Hindu nationalism is a good place to seek an answer. Jaffrelot argues that under Modi, India has morphed into an "ethnic democracy" that equates the majority Hindu community (roughly four-fifths of the population) with the nation and

relegates Christians and Muslims to second-class citizenship, excluding them from the national imagination and exposing them to the wrath of vigilante groups with ties to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

This ethnicization project has a number of aspects. First, at both the federal and the state level, BJP governments have passed laws to protect Hinduism and its symbols. For instance, several BJP-ruled states have enhanced punishments for killing cows, considered sacred by pious Hindus, and curbed religious freedom to stem conversions from the majority faith to Christianity or Islam. They have passed these laws without altering India's formally secular constitution.

At the same time, the Modi government has assaulted bastions of leftist and secularist thought by appointing Hindu nationalist sympathizers to administer prestigious universities, such as New Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University, and by cracking down on troublesome foreign nongovernmental organizations. Last year, Amnesty International shuttered its office in India, citing "a concerted and vicious smear campaign of spurious allegations, raids by various investigative agencies, malicious media leaks, and intimidation."

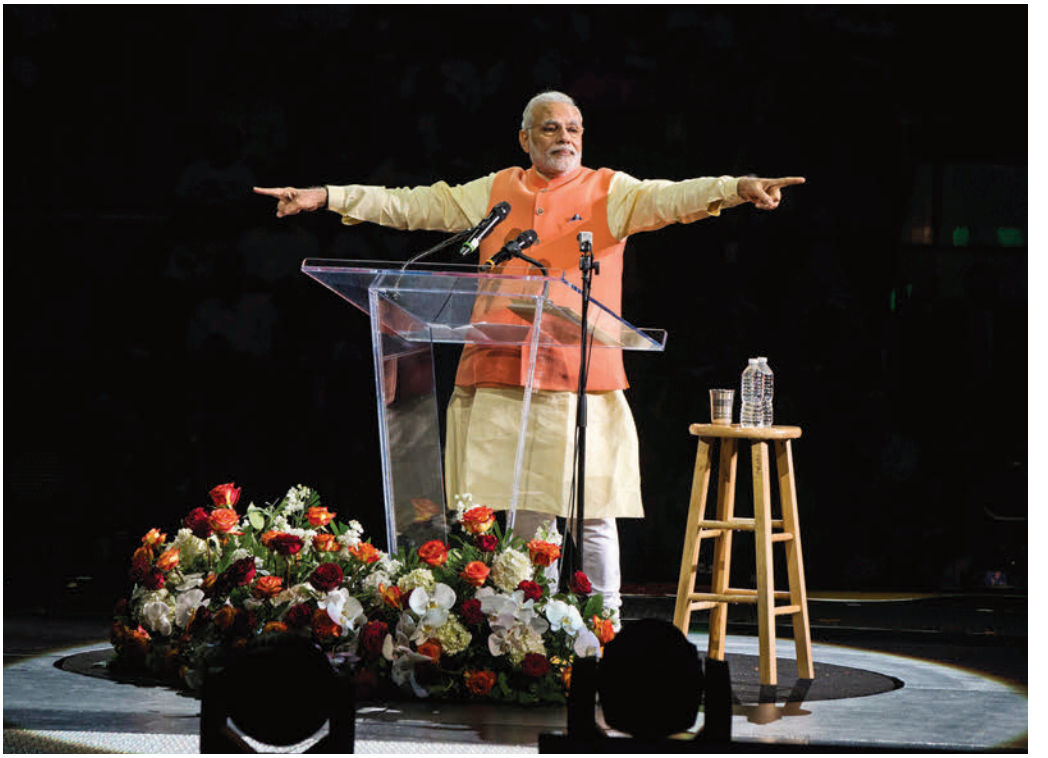
The Modi government has also legitimized the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the nearly century-old Hindu nationalist volunteer group with paramilitary features that provides the BJP with its top leadership, its distinctive worldview, and its most committed cadres. Since 2014, the state broadcaster Doordarshan has telecast to the entire country the annual address of the RSS chief. Aided by BJP victories in state elections, RSS operatives have entered the government at multiple levels, eroding the ability of the permanent civil service to perform its functions impartially.

That creeping ideological movement has worked its way into the educational system, including in the teaching of history, as state authorities have encouraged the rewriting of textbooks. Hindu nationalists view India's past through the prism of conflict with medieval Islamic rulers, rather than as a complex mosaic that included elements of both conflict and cooperation.

Finally, Jaffrelot argues that the joint venture between Hindu nationalist groups and the government has "restructured the public sphere to some extent." In simple terms, this means that government and law enforcement agencies shield Hindu nationalist vigilante groups from prosecution, granting them license to attack those they deem "antinational." On university campuses, right-wing youth groups, including the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, the student wing of the RSS, attack students who chant slogans praising Kashmiri separatists or refuse to sing the nationalist hymn "Vande Mataram."

DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING

The RSS may not directly control the most violent vigilante groups, which sport names such as the Bhartiya Gau Raksha Dal (Indian Cow Protection Group) and the Hindu Yuva Vahini (Hindu Youth Force), but they operate with impunity in states such as Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, where the BJP holds power. Since Modi's election, mobs have lynched at least 37 Muslims accused—often without evidence—of killing cows or transporting cattle for slaughter. The vast



Backslider: Narendra Modi in New York City, September 2014

LUCAS JACKSON / REUTERS

majority of such incidents took place in BJP-ruled states. Anyone who has dipped a toe in Indian Twitter has likely witnessed the online version of this vigilantism: attacks on anyone deemed critical of Modi or even skeptical of any aspect of the BJP's ascendant cultural project. The head of the BJP's Information Technology Cell boasted in an interview of commanding an army of over 1.2 million volunteers dedicated to continually spreading the party's message.

Like Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Hungary's Viktor Orban, Modi has hollowed out institutions that might have checked his power. Jaffrelot shows how the government uses federal law enforcement bodies such as the National Investigation Agency and the Central Bureau of Investigation to harass political opponents. (The legal troubles of opposition politicians have a way of miraculously disappearing if they choose to join the BJP.) The government has reduced the once proudly independent Supreme Court to either rubber-stamping or sidestepping controversial issues—such as the government's sudden cancellation in 2019 of the autonomy of the Muslim-majority state of Jammu and Kashmir. At times, the Supreme Court has refused to enforce habeas corpus, a cornerstone of the Anglo-Saxon law that India supposedly follows.

The government also keeps much of the media, once among the liveliest in Asia, on a tight leash. It intimidates the press through tax raids, temporary bans on TV channels, and pressure on media magnates to sack recalcitrant journalists or risk harm to their business interests. And it lures the media with its massive

advertising budget, which it uses to influence political coverage. A new breed of pro-government propaganda channels work around the clock to smear opposition leaders and hail Modi's virtues. Since 2016, India has fallen nine spots on Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index, where it now ranks 142 out of 180 countries.

No matter the travails of Indian civil society, institutions, and media, elections have long been the brightest spot in any assessment of Indian democracy. These gargantuan exercises of democratic choice have boasted high voter turnout and been guided by a historically impartial election commission. But Jaffrelot argues that India has now succumbed to "electoral authoritarianism." It still conducts multiparty elections, but they lack "democratic substance." The BJP has tilted the playing field against the opposition by appointing alleged partisans to the Election Commission and punishing dissenters within it. The ruling party also enjoys a massive funding advantage over its rivals, thanks in part to the introduction of a new form of campaign finance: electoral bonds, which donors deposit into the registered bank accounts of political parties. Unlike other forms of campaign finance, such as cash donations, these bonds can be traced by state-owned banks overseen by the government. This makes those who contribute large amounts to the opposition vulnerable to government retribution. According to one estimate, India's 2019 election cost $8.6 billion, more than the estimated $6.6 billion spent on last year's U.S. presidential election. And the Association for Democratic Reforms, an Indian watchdog group, reported that in 2017–18, the BJP accounted for nearly three-fourths of all income declared by national political parties, over five times as much as its closest rival, the Indian National Congress did.

HINDU NATIONALISM VS. INDIAN NATIONALISM

The democratic backsliding may be recent, but the ideological contest Modi has sharpened stretches back nearly a century. The standard-bearer of traditional Indian nationalism, Mohandas Gandhi, known to his followers as Mahatma, led India's struggle for independence. Gandhi was a publicly pious Hindu, but he attempted to rally Indians of all faiths against British colonial rule. "If the Hindus believe that India should be peopled only by Hindus, they are living in a dreamland," he wrote in *Hind Swaraj* (*Indian Home Rule*) in 1909. Gandhi's foremost disciple and India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, fostered a polity that broadly met the essential criteria of secularism: everyone was free to practice his or her religion, and the state regarded all religions as equal in the public sphere. However, unlike France, for instance, India made no attempt to separate faith and state or to secularize society. Indian secularism rests not on shunning religion but on striving to treat all religions equally.

Jaffrelot contrasts Gandhi's approach to religious pluralism with *Hindutva* (Hindu nationalism), a form of ethnic nationalism similar to other "xenophobic 'sons of the soil' movements throughout the world." He sees Hindu nationalism as rooted in a lack of self-esteem induced by the nineteenth-century colonial stereotype of Hindus as "puny." And demographic changes in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century

raised fears among early Hindu nationalists that Hindus were a "dying race."

The most important Hindu nationalist ideologue, Vinayak Savarkar, was an atheist who rose to prominence in the first half of the twentieth century. He listed four criteria for national belonging: race, territory, language, and culture. For Savarkarites, only those who view India as both their fatherland and their holy land are true patriots, a belief that automatically casts suspicion on Indian Christians and Muslims, whose sacred sites lie outside the subcontinent. Gandhi famously made nonviolence a centerpiece of his political philosophy. By contrast, Hindu nationalists such as Savarkar condemned this stance as a form of weakness.

For more than four decades, Hindu nationalism remained on the margins of national life. But starting in the late 1980s, the BJP emerged as a major force in politics. The party championed a movement to build a temple to the Hindu deity Ram in the northern Indian town of Ayodhya, on the site of a sixteenth-century mosque that Hindu nationalists claim Muslim invaders erected at the precise spot where Ram was allegedly born. In 1992, a Hindu nationalist mob razed the mosque, sparking Hindu-Muslim riots in many parts of the country but also boosting the BJP's electoral prospects, particularly in the populous Hindi-speaking heartland. Still, many pundits regarded the party as too far outside the national mainstream to claim power.

In 1998, the BJP formed a coalition government led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who ruled for six years in part by mothballing the party's signature cultural issues—building the Ram temple; ending the autonomy enjoyed by the country's only Muslim-majority state, Jammu and Kashmir; and formulating a uniform civil code to put an end to the application of sharia in matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance when the participants are Muslim. Jaffrelot calls the period between 1998 and 2014—from the election of Vajpayee to the advent of Modi—one of "forced moderation," compelled by the party's need to forge alliances with nearly two dozen regional and caste-based parties, many of which depended on Muslim voters.

MODI MANIA

In 2014, Modi trounced the left-of-center National Congress and led the BJP to India's first single-party majority in 30 years. His rise has turned conventional political wisdom on its head. Modi has shown that the BJP can consolidate enough votes among the Hindu majority—cutting across caste differences—to offset the party's weakness among Christians and Muslims and end its dependence at the federal level on alliances with other parties. Jaffrelot contends that Modi has also disproved the "moderation thesis" proposed by some political scientists, which holds that the compulsions of electoral politics and governance tend to transform "radical parties" into "more moderate political actors." Modi first rose to national prominence after bloody Hindu-Muslim riots occurred on his watch as chief minister of Gujarat in 2002—riots that killed more than 1,000 people, a large majority of them Muslims.

What is the secret of Modi's political success? For starters, he has benefited from a decades-long effort by the RSS and the BJP to expand the party's support

beyond its traditional upper-caste base. Modi belongs to one of the Other Backward Classes, a broad category of numerically dominant but historically disadvantaged castes in the Indian state's complex taxonomy of social groups. His plebian background—he famously sold tea at a railway platform in his native Gujarat—contrasts favorably with the patrician Nehru-Gandhi family, which once dominated Indian politics. As Jaffrelot, quoting the populism scholar Pierre Ostiguy, puts it, a swath of underprivileged Indians, many of them young men, view Modi as "both *like me . . . and* an ego *ideal*," that is, the person they aspire to be. Like them, Modi lacks a fancy family pedigree, prestigious degrees, and fluency in English. Yet he rubs shoulders with world leaders and wields power over those who regard themselves as his social superiors.

Modi communicates directly with his followers through a radio program called *Mann Ki Baat*, or "Heartfelt Thoughts," an attempt to create what Jaffrelot calls an "intimate, trust-based relationship between the leader and his people." He has also launched a slew of populist government initiatives to signal his concern for the poor. These include the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission), the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (Prime Minister's People's Wealth Scheme), and the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (Prime Minister's Brightness Scheme). They share common features: an eye-popping scale and a focus on dignity. The Swacch Bharat Abhiyan has built 66 million household toilets. The Jan Dhan Yojana has opened 425.5 million bank accounts for the poor. The Ujjwala Yojana has supplied subsidized cooking gas cylinders—a replacement for dung, firewood, and charcoal—to 83 million households.

At the same time, Modi cultivates what Jaffrelot calls an air of "worldly asceticism." By presenting himself as something akin to a mystic, Jaffrelot points out, "Modi tries to match a very prestigious repertoire of Indian politics," one whose foremost practitioner was Gandhi. Modi's biography and brand of populism have turbocharged Hindu nationalism's electoral appeal.

For many in India's 200-million-strong Muslim minority, the consequences of the country morphing from a secular democracy to an ethnic democracy have been profound. Several BJP-ruled states have passed laws to curb "love jihad," an imaginary phenomenon of Muslim men wooing Hindu women as a form of social warfare. India's largest state, Uttar Pradesh, is run by Yogi Adityanath, a Hindu monk who founded an anti-Muslim militia and whose bloodcurdling rhetoric against Muslims once placed him beyond the pale of high office. Adityanath has called Muslims "two-legged animals that [have] to be stopped." In spite of—or perhaps because of—these divisive appeals, Adityanath has won a devoted following in Uttar Pradesh, where now "the functions of head of government, spiritual leader, and militia chief are all wrapped up in one person," as Jaffrelot puts it.

In his second term, Modi summarily scrapped the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir and passed a citizenship law that pointedly excludes Muslims from three neighboring countries from the benefits of fast-track naturalization. Muslims have long been underrepresented in the ranks of the army, the police, and the civil service, and the BJP's

rise has witnessed the extension of this marginalization to politics. Between 1980 and 2019, Muslim representation in the directly elected lower house of Parliament fell by nearly half, to 26 members, or 4.6 percent of the body, while the Muslim share of India's population rose by nearly three percentage points, to 14.4 percent. The BJP does not have a single Christian or Muslim among its 303 directly elected members of Parliament. Jaffrelot argues that "Muslims today may well be India's new Untouchables."

THE SEEDS OF AUTHORITARIANISM

Jaffrelot's book is a powerful indictment of the Modi government and the direction the BJP has taken on Modi's watch. But like Indian democracy, it has its share of flaws, including misspelled names of several prominent people. At times, Jaffrelot veers into conspiratorial territory. One can legitimately argue that the Supreme Court has become largely toothless during Modi's rule, but it's a different matter to claim without evidence, as Jaffrelot does, that this may be because the government is blackmailing judges.

Jaffrelot's contention that the BJP's rise reflects "an Indian-style conservative revolution" by old elites is not as straightforward as he suggests. The BJP may have checked the power of caste-based parties in the Hindi-speaking heartland, but it did this by diversifying the caste background of its own leadership. The old political adage that the BJP is merely the party of Brahmins (priests) and Banias (traders) no longer holds. Moreover, the BJP has largely supplanted India's old English-speaking elite. In that sense, it is a party of parvenus rather than privilege.

Jaffrelot seems to take the Hindi-speaking heartland as a proxy for all of India. In reality, Hindu nationalism's footprint is more limited than he suggests. A Christian or a Muslim in Uttar Pradesh may live in fear of Hindu nationalist vigilantes. But it's hard to argue that this captures the experience of religious minorities in the large swaths of eastern and southern India ruled by non-BJP governments. In May, the BJP suffered stinging defeats in state elections in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal, suggesting a geographic limit to Modi's brand of Hindu nationalism.

Jaffrelot is not optimistic about India's future, to put it mildly. He believes the country is already transitioning from a "de facto Hindu Rashtra" (Hindu nation) to an "authoritarian Hindu Raj" (Hindu nation-state). Modi has grasped that in India, "charisma is above accountability." His brand of nationalist populism has not only made India an ethnic democracy but also prepared the ground for authoritarianism.

One way to think of Jaffrelot's prognosis is as a plausible worst-case scenario. There is no doubt that over the past seven years, India has traveled down a markedly illiberal path. But Modi still faces massive challenges that make the declaration of a hard-line Hindu nationalist victory premature, including a sputtering economy, the ravages of the pandemic, uncooperative state governments, border tensions with China, and a U.S. administration likely to be more attentive to human rights than its predecessor was. Liberal democracy in India may be on the ropes. But it's still too soon to say if it's down for the count.

Strait of Emergency?

Debating Beijing's Threat to Taiwan

Don't Fall for the Invasion Panic

Rachel Esplin Odell and Eric Heginbotham

Oriana Skylar Mastro's article "The Taiwan Temptation" (July/August 2021) is one of many recent articles that warns of the growing risk of Chinese aggression in the Taiwan Strait. Such articles have become so common that they have created something of an invasion panic in Washington—one that is damaging to both the United States' and Taiwan's interests. Anxiety about impending Chinese aggression was part of what drove Washington in recent years to weaken its long-standing "one China" policy by lifting some restrictions on official interactions between it and Taiwan. It also undergirds recent calls for Washington to abandon its policy of "strategic ambiguity" about whether it would defend Taiwan against a Chinese attack.

Although Mastro does not explicitly endorse these policy changes, she does suggest that the United States has no good options for preventing a Chinese assault on Taiwan, implying a false equivalence among the various approaches available to Washington. In reality, the risks are less imminent and more manageable than she suggests. The United States can maintain stability in the Taiwan Strait by bolstering Taiwan's self-defense capabilities and adopting a lighter and more distributed—and thus less vulnerable—force posture in the Asia-Pacific. At the same time, Washington should strengthen its "one China" policy, reinforce strategic ambiguity, and refrain from making unconditional commitments to Taiwan.

Mastro rightly observes that if China were to take military action against Taiwan, it would have several options, ranging from an invasion to a blockade to the occupation of small offshore islands or strikes on selected economic or political targets. Although some of these options are more realistic than others, all would carry immense risk. Contrary to what Mastro suggests, Beijing is unlikely to attempt any of them unless it feels backed into a corner.

China's most decisive option would be a cross-strait invasion. But its chances of succeeding today—and for the next decade at least—are poor. Moreover, failure would produce a wrecked fleet and an army of prisoners of war in Taiwan, an outcome that even Beijing would be unable to spin as a victory. If, as most China analysts believe, regime security is the top priority for Chinese leaders, an invasion would risk everything on dim prospects for glory.

To be sure, recent Chinese military modernization efforts have yielded potent new capabilities, and the People's Liberation Army could visit havoc on Taiwan and U.S. forces deployed in the region at the outset of a conflict. But the PLA still lacks the naval and air

assets necessary to pull off a successful cross-strait attack. Just as important, it suffers from weaknesses in training, in the willingness or ability of junior officers to take initiative, and in the ability to coordinate ground, sea, and air forces in large, complex operations.

To put China's naval capabilities in perspective, consider that the United States captured Okinawa in 1945 from a Japanese garrison that was roughly the size of Taiwan's current active army with a fleet weighing 2.4 million tons and supported by 22 carriers, 18 battleships, and 29 cruisers. China's amphibious fleet totals just 0.4 million tons today and would be supported by a much smaller fleet of combat ships that, unlike the battleships and cruisers of World War II, are not equipped with large guns capable of supporting troops ashore. China could supplement its naval transport vessels with civilian ships, but such ships unload slowly, as the British rediscovered in the Falklands in 1982, and these would share with the military fleet a limited number of landing craft for getting supplies from ship to shore. Chinese paratroopers or heliborne forces could also attempt to cross the strait, but they face even greater limitations and would be highly vulnerable to Taiwan's surface-to-air missiles.

Even if China could triple the size of its amphibious transport fleet, its ships would remain vulnerable to counterattacks by the United States and Taiwan. To seize control of the island, China would need to keep its fleet off Taiwan's coast for weeks, creating easy targets for antiship cruise missiles launched from Taiwan or from U.S. bombers, fighter aircraft, and submarines. And even if the PLA managed to capture ports or airports, U.S. bombers or submarines could put those facilities out of commission, assuming Taiwan's forces did not sabotage them first. To be sure, China could strike U.S. bases in Japan and threaten the U.S. fleet operating east of Taiwan. But unless Taiwan were to collapse without a fight—a scenario on which leaders in Beijing are unlikely to gamble their own survival—China could not sustain a fleet off Taiwan's beaches long enough to prevail.

Instead of an all-out invasion, China could opt for an air or sea blockade, seeking to starve Taiwan of trade until it capitulated to Beijing's demands. But the potential upside would be smaller and less certain, and the potential downside almost as calamitous. A blockade would require China to operate aircraft and ships for extended periods of time to the east of Taiwan, once again creating targets for U.S. bombers, aircraft, and submarines. As Mastro notes, China could respond by striking U.S. bases in Japan, but doing so would ignite a broader war, with all the attendant risks China would have sought to avoid by stopping short of an invasion.

Mastro acknowledges that "China is unlikely to attack Taiwan unless it is confident that it can achieve a quick victory." But blockades, by their nature, take months and sometimes years to yield results. Even a few months would give the United States sufficient time to mobilize its immense military might to break the blockade. And a blockade could be met not just with an attack on Chinese forces but also with a counterblockade of China. As a result, this option is also unlikely to deliver Taiwan into Chinese hands and, like an invasion, would succeed

only if Taiwan essentially collapsed without a fight.

Less risky than an invasion or a full blockade would be more limited coercive actions. China could seize a small Taiwan-controlled island immediately off its mainland coast, for instance, or strike economic or political targets in Taiwan. Taiwan's Kinmen Island is just five miles off the coast of the mainland, well within artillery range. Occupying the island is within China's current military capability and would signal resolve but would not embroil Beijing in a larger conflict. If China seized Kinmen quickly and then ceased military operations, the onus would be on Taiwan—and the world—to respond or accept the fait accompli.

But Beijing is unlikely to undertake even limited military action merely because it can, as Mastro suggests it might. China has had the ability to take Taiwan's closest offshore islands for decades, but it has refrained from doing so. Should it decide to seize one of these islands in the future, the assault would be not "part of a phased invasion," as Mastro argues, but a statement of frustration with a perceived shift in the U.S. or Taiwanese status quo. Beijing would likewise have to think long and hard before striking targets in Taiwan. Historically, coercive bombing campaigns have achieved limited success, and such attacks would expose China to considerable economic and political risk. Beijing cares about its international reputation, and although it may never forswear the use of force to achieve unification, it is not eager to attack Taiwan without a clear pretext and an endgame that serves its political purposes.

Instead of overreacting to Beijing's growing power, Washington and Taipei should foster peace and stability through a more balanced set of military and political measures. On the military front, they should continue to deter Chinese aggression by implementing their own respective denial strategies, neither of which would require a major military buildup or the integration of U.S. and Taiwanese forces. To that end, the United States should adopt a lighter military footprint in the western Pacific, one that is better able to withstand a Chinese attack and wear down Chinese naval and air forces should they attack Taiwan. It should invest in a distributed air and naval presence rather than in ground forces, more long-range antiship missiles and fewer weapons designed to strike deep into China, and light aircraft carriers to supplement a reduced force of large-deck carriers. Such adjustments would highlight the enormous risks to China of offensive military action and provide the United States with a more usable set of tools, ones that would not risk escalation in the event of a crisis.

Taiwan should also improve its own defenses. Under President Tsai Ing-wen, Taipei has adopted a more rational defense strategy that emphasizes resilience and sustainability. Washington should incentivize further movement in this direction by selling Taipei defensive weapons capable of surviving a Chinese assault, including antiship cruise missiles, smart mines, drones, and air defense systems, rather than the vulnerable aircraft and warships Taipei has preferred in the past. It should also condition such sales on Taiwan's willingness to enhance the readiness and training of its troops, especially its reserve forces.

Washington needs the right political strategy to accompany these military efforts. As the pioneering game theorist Thomas Schelling observed, reassurance is an essential corollary to deterrence, because it presents potential adversaries with a real alternative to aggression. Washington should therefore refrain from further blurring the line between cultural and economic engagement with Taiwan and official political recognition, a distinction that lies at the heart of the agreements that accompanied the normalization of U.S.-Chinese diplomatic relations. It should also make clear that it remains committed to the "one China" policy by explicitly reaffirming that it does not favor a unilateral assertion of Taiwanese independence and that it supports the peaceful resolution of cross-strait differences.

At the same time, the United States should pursue bilateral cooperation with China on issues such as climate change and pandemic management. It should also open an official nuclear dialogue with China and invest in improving military and civilian crisis communication channels, including negotiating procedures for coast guard vessel encounters. In private, U.S. President Joe Biden should emphasize to Chinese President Xi Jinping that the main obstacle to unification is not the U.S. military or the relationship between the United States and Taiwan but China's own failure to develop a viable peaceful unification strategy that appeals to the people of Taiwan.

Because Beijing refuses to engage the moderate Tsai administration, these measures are unlikely to improve cross-strait relations anytime soon. But by playing a long game of balanced deterrence and reassurance, the United States can discourage Chinese adventurism even as it leaves the door open to positive change.

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Force Is Still a Last Resort

Bonny Lin and David Sacks

Oriana Skylar Mastro argues that under President Xi Jinping, China has discarded its decades-old strategy of pursuing "peaceful reunification" with Taiwan and is now moving toward a military takeover of the island. But no such seismic policy shift has occurred in Beijing. Preparation for a conflict over Taiwan has always driven China's military modernization efforts. Using force to achieve unification, however, remains an option of last resort. Instead, China is focused on chipping away at the will of the Taiwanese people. Eventually, Beijing thinks, they will conclude that their only viable future is to join the mainland.

For decades, China's approach to Taiwan has involved a combination of carrots designed to demonstrate the appeal of unification and sticks aimed at dissuading the island from moving toward independence. Beijing offers preferential treatment to citizens of Taiwan who do business on the mainland, for instance, while also conducting

military exercises in the vicinity of the island to remind Taiwan's citizens not to flirt with independence.

Chinese leaders have embraced this approach because they do not see Taiwan as destined for independence and do not believe that the window for unification has closed. Successive Chinese leaders have advanced their policy agendas and burnished their legacies without delivering unification. Xi will be able to do the same, which perhaps explains why he has yet to set an explicit timeline for unification with the island. Xi is also aware that even though Taiwanese identity continues to harden, most on the island still support the status quo; only a small percentage of Taiwanese people advocate immediate independence.

Chinese leaders believe that the people of Taiwan will eventually conclude that their future prosperity is inextricably tied to closer relations with the mainland. Despite the island's recent efforts to reduce its economic dependence on China, 45 percent of Taiwan's exports went to the mainland and Hong Kong in 2020, a record high. Beijing is betting that Taipei will not risk Taiwan's economic livelihood for the sake of independence.

Under Xi, China has adopted a more assertive foreign policy, including vis-à-vis Taiwan. It has flown increasingly large formations of aircraft through Taiwan's airspace, expanded maritime patrols in and around the Taiwan Strait, and stepped up military exercises aimed at the island. It has peeled away Taipei's diplomatic allies and used its influence in international organizations to exclude Taiwan. And it has sought to marginalize the island economically, pressing other countries not to sign free-trade agreements with Taipei. With these and other coercive measures, China has sought to underscore the costs of resisting unification.

China's growing power and its success in isolating Taiwan have convinced Chinese leaders that the trend lines are moving in the right direction. Mastro cites as evidence that Beijing is growing impatient an April interview in which Le Yucheng, China's vice foreign minister, refused to rule out the possibility of military action against Taiwan. But in the same interview, Le took a longer view, stressing that Beijing sees unification as a "historical process and the tide of history."

Beijing still sees an invasion of Taiwan as a last resort, one that would be incredibly difficult, risky, and costly for the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Although Mastro concedes that a Chinese amphibious assault on Taiwan "is far from guaranteed to succeed," she argues that Chinese perceptions of China's capabilities matter more than its actual capabilities and that Chinese leaders are increasingly confident in China's ability to win a fight over Taiwan. It is true that China possesses a more advanced military than it did five or ten years ago, but China also intentionally exaggerates its capabilities and confidence as part of its campaign of psychological warfare against Taiwan and the United States. Analysts should not accept at face value China's claim that it could easily win a fight against Taiwan.

As evidence of China's ability to take the island, Mastro points to U.S. war games in which China prevailed over the United States. But such war games are generally designed to challenge U.S. warfighting capabilities, not to predict the outcome of conflicts. They also

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purposely tilt the fight in favor of China—for instance, by assuming that the PLA, which has not experienced serious combat in over four decades, has nonetheless mastered the incredibly difficult tactical, logistical, and command aspects of what would be one of the largest and most complicated military operations since World War II. By imagining a much more capable China, these war games help identify steps that the United States and Taiwan could take to ensure that even a large-scale and determined Chinese invasion of Taiwan would fail. Their goal is not to model a realistic scenario.

In other words, it is far from clear that China could defeat Taiwan's military, subdue its population, and occupy and control its territory. Nor is it clear that the PLA could hold off any U.S. forces that came to Taiwan's aid, or that Beijing would be willing to undertake a campaign that could spark a larger and far more costly war with the United States. A Chinese invasion would invite significant international political, economic, and diplomatic backlash that could undermine China's political, social, and economic development goals. It would also spur the formation of powerful anti-China coalitions, bringing to fruition Beijing's long-standing fear of "strategic encirclement" by powers aligned against it.

Mastro implies that China would be able to devote all its military and security resources to an attack on Taiwan. In reality, however, Chinese leaders are likely to worry that the PLA does not have the capacity to seize and hold Taiwan while still maintaining tight control over Hong Kong, Tibet, Xinjiang, and the rest of mainland China, not to mention defending its claims in the many territorial disputes it has with neighbors. Invading Taiwan would be perhaps the riskiest decision Beijing has made since 1950, when it intervened in the Korean War on behalf of North Korea. In making that choice, Chinese leaders would certainly weigh factors beyond cross-strait dynamics and the PLA's capabilities; they would also have to consider whether China could politically and economically sustain a protracted conflict and whether attacking Taiwan would undermine Beijing's broader global ambitions.

Mastro argues that once China possesses the military capabilities necessary to invade Taiwan, "Xi could find it politically untenable not to do so" because of the heightened nationalism in China. But Xi has consolidated political and military power to an extent not seen since Mao Zedong, and he has revised China's constitution to allow himself to stay in power indefinitely. Xi's control over the PLA and his emphasis on personal loyalty mean that his hand will not be forced on such a consequential decision. Moreover, he has a range of coercive options at his disposal. Rather than invading Taiwan, for instance, he could respond to rising nationalist pressure by escalating the PLA's harassment of the island while censoring additional nationalist criticism.

Instead of launching a risky assault on Taiwan, China could try to achieve its objectives in a piecemeal way that would make it difficult for Taiwan or the United States to respond. For instance, China may attempt to seize or blockade an island under Taiwanese control, such as Itu Aba (also known as

Taiping), Kinmen, Matsu, or Pratas. Alternatively, China could launch a cyberattack against Taiwan's critical infrastructure, shutting down the island's Internet or power supply. And these are just a few of the political, economic, and military options short of an invasion that Chinese leaders could use against Taiwan.

Although Mastro overstates China's eagerness to invade Taiwan, she is right that the United States needs to redouble its efforts to ensure that Xi is not tempted to do so. Washington, Taipei, and like-minded allies are capable of fielding the military capabilities needed to prevent China from forcibly seizing control of Taiwan. But the United States will need to invest in military capabilities that are either long range or difficult for PLA missiles to target—and signal its willingness to use them should China use force against Taiwan. Washington should also continue to press Taiwan to increase its defense spending and invest in asymmetric capabilities—in particular, sea mines and antiship missiles.

To prevent China's coercion of Taiwan from sparking a crisis or a conflict, the United States will need to work with Taiwan to improve its overall defense capabilities, so that it does not feel backed into a corner and forced to respond to Chinese provocations by escalating the dispute. Washington should use senior-level dialogues and war games to help Taiwan's leadership think through the consequences of various responses to Chinese military aggression. It should also help Taiwan secure its critical infrastructure, harden its cyberdefenses, and improve its maritime intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities.

This is a demanding agenda, but one that is necessary to preserve cross-strait stability. Although Mastro exaggerates the threat of a Chinese invasion, peace in the Indo-Pacific nonetheless hinges in no small part on Washington's ability to deter Chinese aggression against Taiwan.

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Xi Doesn't Need Taiwan

Kharis Templeman

Oriana Skylar Mastro warns that Chinese President Xi Jinping could soon order an attack on Taiwan. She asserts that Xi has staked his legitimacy on progress toward unification and that recent developments in Taiwan, especially the reelection in 2020 of President Tsai Ing-wen, whose party is skeptical of China, have "reinforced Beijing's fears that the people of Taiwan will never willingly come back to the motherland." Amid rising Chinese nationalist sentiment, she argues, Xi may soon feel compelled to forcibly impose Chinese Communist Party rule on Taiwan.

This argument exaggerates the importance of Taiwanese public opinion to Beijing's calculus, as well as the significance and urgency of the Taiwan issue for Xi. As Chinese strategists understand very well, Taiwan's security rests today, as it has for the last 70 years, on an implicit U.S. commitment to defend the island, not on the will of the Taiwanese people or their leaders.

Although the majority of Taiwanese would resist a Chinese invasion if they had U.S. backing, most are also fatalistic about their ability to hold out alone against Beijing—and would probably accede to unification without a fight if abandoned. Trends in the United States, not in Taiwan, will ultimately determine Taiwan's future.

Mastro also overstates what is known about Xi's commitment to achieving unification in the near term. Xi has tied his legitimacy to achieving China's "national rejuvenation," which requires a favorable international economic environment—one that a war over Taiwan would jeopardize. Although the military balance of power in the western Pacific has been shifting in China's favor, the United States still retains both the ability and the will to impose extremely high economic and political costs on China should it attack Taiwan. Even if Xi thinks he could succeed—which is by no means a given—attempting an invasion of the island now simply does not make sense unless the United States signals that it will not get involved.

Nor is there much evidence that Beijing views Taiwan as an urgent issue to resolve. Most Chinese analysts believe that long-term trends in the U.S.-Chinese relationship favor Beijing, as the scholars Rush Doshi and Julian Gewirtz have both argued persuasively. With President Joe Biden in office, Xi has to assume that the United States would respond forcefully to an attack on Taiwan today. But wait another 20 years, and the picture could look quite different. The American public has already elected one president who saw Taiwan and U.S. alliances in Asia Beijing's way: as optional and worth bargaining away for the right price. What is to stop Americans from electing another? Taiwan's future is thus likely to be decided by a Sino-American contest not of capabilities but of wills, and the Chinese Communist Party has reason to believe that it is slowly but surely gaining the upper hand in this long-term struggle—and thereby improving its prospects of taking Taiwan without a fight.

China's growing advantage stems not from the changing balance of power between it and the United States—most Chinese forecasts of American decline are overstated, if not flat-out wrong—but from shifting perceptions of both sides' will to fight. The Chinese Communist Party has already scored an important victory by framing the terms of the debate. For the last 70 years, Beijing has relentlessly asserted that Taiwan is the last piece of "Chinese territory" it needs to achieve "national unification" and a "core interest" that it must use force against, if necessary, to place under its control. For such a transparently self-serving claim, it has been remarkably persuasive: most American observers now accept the threat of invasion as credible and the goal of unification—if not the means—as legitimate.

By comparison, the case that Taiwan is essential to the United States is weak, as much as friends of Taiwan try to argue otherwise. As the former diplomat Robert Blackwill and the historian Philip Zelikow have noted, Taiwan is a vital U.S. interest only insofar as it enables the projection of U.S. power and the security of U.S. allies in the region. Future U.S. presidents could be

tempted to drop the implicit security guarantee for the island, either to avoid a devastating war or in exchange for other concessions from China. The critical question is thus not whether Beijing is willing to invade but how long Washington will continue to accept the risk of war with China.

Many U.S. analysts already believe that risk to be unacceptably high. Ted Galen Carpenter, Charles Glaser, and John Mearsheimer, among others, have argued that to preserve peace with China, the United States should disavow any commitment to defend Taiwan. It is ironic, then, that in attempting to sound the alarm about the urgent threat facing Taiwan, Mastro has reinforced Beijing's preferred narrative: that China will soon be able to launch a successful invasion and that defending Taiwan will only grow harder and more costly for the United States. Her assumption that Beijing will spare no expense and bear any burden to conquer Taiwan is shared both by those who call for urgently strengthening U.S. military capabilities in the western Pacific and by those who would abandon Taiwan to avoid war.

But that assumption is a dubious one. Xi has many other priorities, and moving against Taiwan would set back most of them. The United States should not uncritically accept China's narrative about its rise in the world, its need to avenge "the century of humiliation," and the centrality of Taiwan to this "sacred mission." In reality, China has survived and prospered for 70 years without exercising political control over Taiwan, and there is no reason why Beijing must seek to conquer it today. Mastro may have the best of intentions, but her argument ultimately bolsters those who would concede Taiwan to China without a fight.

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Mastro Replies

Rachel Esplin Odell and Eric Heginbotham, Bonny Lin and David Sacks, and Kharis Templeman all argue that China is unlikely to attempt armed unification with Taiwan. Although I appreciate their perspectives, they do not present any new evidence that would make me reconsider my assessment that the risk of Chinese aggression across the Taiwan Strait is real and growing. To the contrary, they repeat many of the increasingly dangerous misperceptions that I sought to dispel in my original article—namely, that China does not have the military capabilities to pull off an amphibious invasion, that the economic costs of an invasion would be sufficient to deter Chinese President Xi Jinping, and that China can afford to wait indefinitely to achieve its most important national goal of unification. My critics assume that insofar as there are risks, they can be dealt with through relatively limited adjustments in U.S. policy and military posture—a position with which I still strongly disagree.

Let's take these arguments in order. My critics say that I have exaggerated China's military capabilities and understated the difficulties of an invasion. But their assessments rely on outdated or largely irrelevant comparisons.

Odell and Heginbotham, for instance, note that the United States needed more naval tonnage to capture Okinawa from Japan in 1945 than China has today. But this example is inapposite. Japan's military was more than six million strong in 1945 and had been fighting for over a decade; Taiwan's military consists of 88,000 personnel and two million reservists, of whom only 300,000 are required to complete even a five-week refresher training course. Tonnage, moreover, is not a useful metric. Modern navies have moved to lighter, more flexible fleets. Odell and Heginbotham point out that civilian ships were of only limited use in the Falklands War, but the United Kingdom used just 62 of them in that campaign. The People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia has many thousands of ships and is closer to a naval force than a civilian one. If China were to mobilize all its naval vessels, including its new large amphibious transport ships and civilian ships, it could hypothetically carry hundreds of thousands of troops across the 80-mile-wide Taiwan Strait in a short period of time. Even if the United States had enough warning to optimally position its submarines, it does not have enough munitions to target such a large force.

For their part, Lin and Sacks argue that to believe China can take Taiwan by force is to fall for a Chinese misinformation campaign. They warn that "analysts should not accept at face value China's claim that it could easily win a fight against Taiwan." But no one, not even the cockiest of People's Liberation Army analysts, argues that a full-scale attack on Taiwan would be easy, only that the PLA could prevail at an acceptable cost. Moreover, my assessment of Chinese military capabilities is not based on Chinese discourse or the results of war games alone. Reams of unbiased and rigorous analysis—from the U.S. Department of Defense's annual report to Congress on China's military modernization to Congressional Research Service reports on Chinese naval modernization to hundreds of studies by think tanks and defense-affiliated organizations, such as the RAND Corporation—suggest that the PLA has made unparalleled advances in the past two decades and could take on the United States in certain scenarios. Indeed, Heginbotham himself argued in 2017 that "the balance of power between the United States and China may be approaching a series of tipping points, first in contingencies close to the Chinese coast (e.g., Taiwan)."

I do not mean to suggest that a Chinese invasion would be a cakewalk. Taiwan could get some shots in, but it does not have the ability to defend itself. Luckily, the United States would, I believe, come to Taiwan's aid and could still prevail in many scenarios. Taiwan is far from a lost cause. But ten years ago, the United States would have prevailed in any scenario. Because there are now some scenarios in which U.S. strategists think the United States could lose, it is not unfathomable to think that Chinese strategists have come to a similar conclusion.

My critics also argue that economic considerations will deter Beijing. Should China attempt to use force to assert control over Taiwan, the international response would be severe enough to imperil Xi's ambitious development goals. But as I argued in my original

article, Chinese analysts have good reason to think the international response would be weak enough to tolerate. China could even reap economic benefits from controlling Taiwan, whose manufacturers accounted for more than 60 percent of global revenue from semiconductors last year. The United States is heavily reliant on Taiwanese semiconductors. Should China take Taiwan, it could conceivably deprive the United States of this technology and gain an economic and military advantage.

But economic costs or benefits, while part of Beijing's calculus, are unlikely to be the determining factor. Xi's top priority is protecting China's sovereignty and territorial integrity—as Beijing defines it. China's Belt and Road Initiative, its militarization of the South China Sea, and its sanctions against countries that offend it, such as Australia or South Korea, all demonstrate that Chinese leaders are willing to subordinate economic considerations to considerations of power and prestige. In a speech marking the 100th anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party in July, Xi warned against foreign attempts to bully or oppress China, declaring that "anyone who dares try to do that will have their heads bashed bloody against the great wall of steel forged by over 1.4 billion Chinese people." Those words should be taken seriously.

Finally, my critics argue that China has no need to attempt to forcibly unify with Taiwan. Lin and Sacks think peaceful unification is working; Templeman believes China can wait indefinitely to resolve the issue. I disagree because I think unification is a top priority for the Chinese Communist

Party and Taiwan will not give up its autonomy without a fight.

A Chinese invasion is by no means imminent or inevitable, but Beijing is now seriously considering initiating a conflict to gain political control over Taiwan, whereas in the past the only scenario in which it would have used force was to prevent Taipei from declaring independence. I agree with Templeman that China is unlikely to invade in the next four years (although I think this is largely because China could benefit from more time to prepare, not because it fears U.S. President Joe Biden's resolve), but his argument that China can wait indefinitely is logically and empirically flawed. As I argued in my original article, Xi has made numerous statements that suggest he wants to achieve unification during his reign. It would be unwise to dismiss these as mere rhetoric, since he has repeatedly voiced his intention to assert control over other territorial claims before doing exactly that—in the South China Sea, by building military infrastructure and conducting naval drills, and in Hong Kong, by imposing a harsh national security law last year.

Templeman argues that if China believes the United States is in decline, then it has every reason to wait on Taiwan. But in the eyes of Chinese strategists, American decline actually hastens the need for action. Power transition theory, which holds that war becomes more likely as the gap between a rising power and an established great power diminishes, is also studied in Beijing. And although U.S. strategists fret that a rising China, dissatisfied with the U.S.-led international order, will become aggressive and start a conflagration, Chinese strategists fear a different pathway to war. They worry that the United States, unable to accept its inevitable decline, will make a dangerous last-ditch effort to hold on to its unrivaled great-power status. By this logic, a declining United States is more dangerous than a stable, ascendant one.

Lin and Sacks make a different argument for why Beijing does not need to attempt armed unification. They believe that Chinese leaders remain committed to their long-standing approach of limited coercion coupled with economic incentives showcasing the benefits of unification because that strategy is working. As evidence of Beijing's progress, Lin and Sacks point to polling that shows the majority of people in Taiwan support the status quo, not independence. But it is an enormous leap from not supporting independence to desiring or conceding to unification. As Lin and Sacks themselves acknowledge, China has employed this strategy of limited coercion and economic inducements for decades, but Taiwan is no closer to being a part of mainland China. In a September 2020 poll conducted by National Chengchi University, only six percent of Taiwanese citizens preferred eventual or immediate unification. So although Lin and Sacks are correct that Beijing will likely continue with its carrot-and-stick approach, it will still need to put boots on the ground to gain full political control of Taiwan.

My critics also raise concerns about some of the policy implications of my argument. Odell and Heginbotham warn against focusing too much on the credibility of the U.S. military threat when it comes to deterrence, rightly highlighting the equal importance of reassurance.

They warn that changes in U.S. policy toward Taiwan could convince Beijing that the United States now supports Taiwanese independence—a misperception that could lead to war. But my argument is for a change in posture, not in policy: the United States should develop the force posture and operational plans to deny China its objective in Taiwan and then credibly reveal these new capabilities. It should not make dangerous policy changes that would risk provoking a Chinese military response. Indeed, I have argued elsewhere that even if a war breaks out over Taiwan and the United States wins, Washington should not demand Taiwan's independence as one of the terms of peace.

Templeman raises a separate concern: that highlighting the potential costs of defending Taiwan could bolster the case of those advocating that Washington abandon Taipei. If this were a serious worry, I would be the first to shift my work to more private channels. But those calling for the United States to reconsider its commitment to defend Taiwan are still in the minority, and the Biden administration has been clear that it would come to Taiwan's aid in the event of an invasion.

Moreover, the reaction of the U.S. Department of Defense to the threat posed by China's growing military power has been not to back down but to ramp up efforts to counter it. From new doctrines that enhance joint capabilities between the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Navy to base-resilience initiatives to efforts to improve U.S. early warning systems in the region, the Pentagon is firing on all cylinders to ensure it can deter and, if necessary, defeat China in a wide range of conflict scenarios. U.S. Cyber Command, the U.S. Space Force, and the Department of Defense's Joint Artificial Intelligence Center were all established partly to counter Chinese advantages in those organizations' respective domains. If Lin and Sacks are correct that China exaggerates its capabilities to try to convince the United States to give up, Beijing has achieved the opposite.

In the end, all my critics highlight an important truth: the situation across the Taiwan Strait has been relatively stable for 70 years because of the United States. Washington has managed to convince Beijing that armed unification would fail and that China would pay a hefty price for trying. But China is not the same country it was 70 years ago. Its rapid military modernization, spectacular economic ascent, and growing global influence have changed Beijing's calculus on many issues. It has taken a more assertive approach to international institutions; built one of the world's largest, most capable militaries; and extended its economic influence deep and far throughout the world. It would be wishful thinking to assume that China has not also changed its thinking on Taiwan.

Indeed, although my critics argue that China is unlikely to invade, they still recommend that Taiwan improve its defenses and that the United States enhance its military posture in the region—not exactly a vote of confidence in Beijing's restraint. I had hoped to convince skeptics that China is now seriously considering armed unification, but at least our debate has yielded a consensus that more must be done in Taipei and Washington to enhance deterrence across the Taiwan Strait.

Masters and Commanders

Are Civil-Military Relations in Crisis?

The Process Is Working

Kori Schake

Risa Brooks, Jim Golby, and Heidi Urben ("Crisis of Command," May/June 2021) level serious charges against the U.S. military's leadership, contending that its influence has grown to the point where "presidents worry about military opposition to their policies and must reckon with an institution that selectively implements executive guidance." "Unelected military leaders," they argue, "limit or engineer civilians' options so that generals can run wars as they see fit." And "even if elected officials still get the final say, they may have little practical control if generals dictate all the options or slow their implementation—as they often do now." The authors' grim assessment of the problems leads them to an equally grim conclusion: "Without robust civilian oversight of the military, the United States will not remain a democracy or a global power for long."

If the military were acting the way Brooks, Golby, and Urben describe, then it would indeed be egregiously violating cherished norms of U.S. civil-military relations. Fortunately for the republic, however, their allegations are not substantiated.

For one thing, the authors airbrush out of the picture the Pentagon's civilian leadership. Although they describe President Barack Obama as being boxed in by generals during the debate over Afghanistan, the positions taken by the military were supported by the Defense Department's top civilians. Robert Gates, Obama's secretary of defense, and Michèle Flournoy, the undersecretary of defense for policy, were deeply involved in developing Washington's counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan and staunchly supported it both publicly and in interagency debates. In this, they were at odds with some of Obama's advisers, such as Tom Donilon, his national security adviser, and Joe Biden, his vice president. In other words, the disagreement was the product of a Defense Department–White House schism, not a civil-military one.

Brooks, Golby, and Urben also claim that "military leaders often preempt the advice and analysis of civilian staff by sending their proposals straight to the secretary of defense, bypassing the byzantine clearance process that non-uniformed staffers must navigate." The secretary of defense, however, already has the tools to prevent that process from affecting policy. He could, for example, simply refuse to review military input without civilian advice. Although the secretary should avoid making decisions without seeking the civilian counsel of his own staff, that failure falls on the secretary, not the military. The best way to address the civil-military imbalance is to strengthen the civilians, not weaken the military.

Separately, most of the examples the authors use to demonstrate failing civilian control—including the role of Colin Powell, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in creating the "don't ask, don't tell" policy and senior military officials' pushback against President Donald Trump's orders to withdraw troops from Afghanistan and Syria—are really the policymaking process working as designed. The interagency system rightly gives the military expansive influence. Although the civilian-military relationship is an unequal one by design, with civilians alone possessing the authority to decide policies, the military has the right and the responsibility to contribute its expertise as policies are shaped. This is particularly true as the armed services grow increasingly separate from the general public. In 1980, nearly 20 percent of Americans had served in the military. By 2018, that number had dropped to about seven percent. As specialists, military leaders have important contributions to make in areas of policy in which many civilians lack expertise, such as what makes for success in war and how to foster cohesion within units.

Military influence in the policymaking process, moreover, is predicated on a strong belief that the armed forces will salute and carry out their orders once civilian leaders make a decision. There is little evidence that the military is currently shirking this role. Although the authors make the serious charge that "Obama's generals signaled that they would accept nothing less than an aggressive counterinsurgency in Afghanistan," those generals did accept less under both Obama and Trump. And under President Biden, the military has followed the administration's orders to begin withdrawing all U.S. troops from the country.

Brooks, Golby, and Urben also downplay other sources of civilian oversight beyond the president and the executive branch. Congress, too, has that same authority. What observers sometimes term "insubordination" is often the legislative branch forcing the military to disclose information that the executive would rather avoid being held accountable for. When Obama and Trump complained that the generals were boxing them in on Afghanistan by roping in sympathetic legislators to make their case, it wasn't a story of the military refusing to implement the president's orders; it was a story of the president not wanting to pay a political price for a decision that the Pentagon's military and civilian leaders considered important.

Members of Congress will always use their powers of oversight to make the military's views public. In February 2003, for instance, congressional leaders forced Eric Shinseki, the army chief of staff, to concede that Washington would need several hundred thousand troops to stabilize post-invasion Iraq—far more than Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld had approved. "Congress too rarely demands that the military bow to civilian authority, instead weighing in selectively and for partisan reasons," Brooks, Golby, and Urben write. But it is unreasonable to expect legislators to act otherwise. Politicians will use military support for their purposes as long as it proves politically expedient.

Finally, the authors are curiously silent on one of the most significant episodes in U.S. civil-military relations: the incident that took place in Lafayette

Square during the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020. On June 1, Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, appeared alongside Trump for a photo op in military fatigues, immediately after police used tear gas and rubber bullets to clear peaceful protesters from a public space. The incident seemed to be of a piece with the Trump administration's attempt to pit the military against protesters, with helicopters harassing marchers in Washington, D.C., and National Guard soldiers occupying the centers of major American cities. Not surprisingly, in a February poll, the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute found that public support for the military fell by 14 percentage points from 2018 to 2021.

Less noticeable to the public but crucially important for civil-military relations, however, was Milley's powerful apology—which effectively delineated the boundaries between civilian and military authority. "I should not have been there," he said flatly. "My presence in that moment and in that environment created a perception of the military involved in domestic politics."

In the end, as Milley's behavior made clear, the only practical constraint on the politicization of the U.S. military is its own professionalism. Although there is some worrying degradation in this area, it is unreasonable to expect the strident politicization of American society not to affect the military that is drawn from it. It is a tribute to the strength of the U.S. military's professionalism that partisan politicization in the military remains as limited as it is.

The type of civil-military relationship that Brooks, Golby, and Urben advocate—complete subordination of the armed forces to civilian direction during policy formation and execution—would eliminate any meaningful check on the judgment of civilian officials. The latitude enjoyed by the U.S. military doesn't prevent elected leaders from determining and achieving their policy preferences. It simply requires those leaders to pay the political price of public scrutiny. That accountability should be welcomed, not shunned.

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A Stormy but Durable Marriage

Peter D. Feaver

The question of whether civilian control over the U.S. military is in crisis is an especially hoary debate in security studies. The political scientist Samuel Huntington's classic book on the topic, *The Soldier and the State*, now nearly 65 years old, spoke of a post–World War II "crisis of American civil-military relations." After the Vietnam War, leaders in Washington debated whether to blame the debacle on too much or too little civilian control. Analysts made different yet related arguments in the aftermath of the United States' swift victory in the first Gulf War, when the military's status and influence stood in stark contrast to the supposed dysfunction of the civilian branches of government. It is in this rich tradition that Risa Brooks, Jim Golby, and Heidi Urben have made

their case that the current relationship between military officials and civilian leaders is "broken."

It is tempting to ask how anything could be in a permanent state of crisis, especially when that crisis has never culminated in a military coup. Brooks, Golby, and Urben answer that the decline in civilian control of the military, which they trace back to 1986, when the Goldwater-Nichols Act created an empowered joint staff and chairman, has reached its apex in the present moment. Civilian control, they argue, is even more precarious today, and only dramatic steps can restore it to health.

U.S. civil-military relations, however, are better understood as a stormy but durable marriage, one in which the spouses endlessly bicker and vie for advantage but never destroy each other or the union that binds them together. In theory, divorce is possible, but in practice, all the parties are too committed to the common good to reach a genuine breaking point. Rather than being in a state of crisis, these relations are in constant friction—sometimes severe, sometimes less so.

Viewed this way, the United States is indeed approaching a temporary high point in civil-military friction. This cycle's apogee was January 6, 2021, when the military had to ponder something it had never before seriously considered: the possibility that violent insurrectionists taking over the U.S. Capitol would thwart the peaceful transfer of power. Although the system struggled to find its footing for a few fateful minutes as Defense Department leaders wrestled with how to respond to appeals for help from the Capitol, the relationship never even came close to collapsing.

In hindsight, there are several strong points in the U.S. system that helped keep civilian control intact during the Trump years. A team of senior military leaders, particularly the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the service chiefs, were committed to upholding civilian authority. They kept their collective eye fixed squarely on their oath to the Constitution and eschewed the Trumpian personality cult that a polarized political environment attempted to press on them. A cadre of respected senior military retirees spoke up to defend norms and help the profession police its ranks. Finally, over the last decade, the professional military educational system has renewed its commitment to teaching and reteaching the basics of civil-military relations.

In fact, across three decades of post–Cold War history, examples abound of the system working properly—even when military leaders disagreed with civilian directives. The institution that resisted President Bill Clinton's efforts to change how gay men and women served in uniform eventually implemented Barack Obama's repeal of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy. The military then adhered to Donald Trump's reversal of some of the same orders, and it is currently implementing Joe Biden's reversal of the reversal. The military also worked with civilian leaders to manage Obama's deep budget cuts, as well as the even more disruptive limits imposed by the 2013 sequestration. Military leaders welcomed the fiscal relief of the Trump years, but they are now preparing for a very different environment under Biden. None of this, however, is new. In the

decades after World War II, civilians and military officers wrestled with similar thorny issues.

That said, leaders on both sides of the civil-military relationship must continually shore up the foundations of their partnership. Here, Brooks, Golby, and Urben's recommendations can serve as an especially reliable guide. Their list—including strengthening civilian officials in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, publicly denouncing retired officers who violate professional norms, and updating regulations and best practices regarding service members' use of social media—will be vital for getting civil-military relations back on track.

This is only a start, however. Trump's tenure revealed just how much the U.S. system depends on respect for norms and taboos. The United States' form of representative democracy gives extraordinary power to elected leaders, unelected political appointees, and career civilian officials. The United States has survived as a functioning republic not because these actors lack the power to destroy its constitutional order but because they generally choose not to test the outer limits of their authority. Nevertheless, when the people elect a president whose stock in trade involves flouting norms and mocking taboos, civil-military relations come under extraordinary strain. The best thing Americans can do in the near term to restore the health of civil-military relations is to inventory those norms and renew the commitment to upholding them. Specialists and generalists alike, both in government and elsewhere, need to review how the U.S. system of civilian control works and what it needs to function more effectively.

Americans should also be clear that civilian control is not synonymous with good policy. Although Brooks, Golby, and Urben avoid this conflation, there is a temptation among some scholars to broaden the definition of healthy civil-military relations to include optimal geopolitical outcomes. This is an understandable error. The purpose of the military is the security of the state, and if a system keeps producing policies that make the state less secure, can that system really be considered healthy?

Perhaps not, but Americans should not ask more of civilian control than it can deliver. Civilian control means that the elected agents of the voting public get to make the decisions, including which decisions they wish to make themselves and which they wish to delegate to others. It does not mean that those leaders will make wise decisions or even merely lucky ones. It is a mistake to claim, as is often done, that civil-military relations are on the rocks because the United States intervened in Afghanistan, Iraq, or Libya. Each major decision in those wars involved fractious debate, but all were ultimately made by civilians. That includes the original decisions to invade Afghanistan and Iraq, the choices around the post-invasion planning, the decision to surge troops in Iraq in 2007, the judgment to couple a temporary surge in Afghanistan in 2009 with an arbitrary timetable for withdrawal, the resolution to intervene in Libya in 2011, the decision to leave Iraq altogether in 2011, and Biden's recent choice to withdraw all U.S. troops from Afghanistan.

The Trump administration's decision to delay the withdrawal from Afghanistan seems closest to a case of military

preferences prevailing over the president's. Yet even then, civilian control prevailed. If Trump had been truly determined to withdraw from Afghanistan, he could have done so, as he showed in his misguided abandonment of Washington's Kurdish allies in Syria in 2018. Only in the final days of the Trump administration—with the president promoting bogus claims of electoral fraud while secretly directing a tiny cabal of loyalists to hastily impose poison-pill defense policies—did the system of civilian control truly begin to break down. But even then, Trump's refusal to work through the formal chain of command allowed military leaders to slow roll his decisions. Although that response may have technically violated civilian control, it paradoxically shored up civilian authority in the long run.

Finally, leaders should direct more energy toward fixing the civilian side of the civil-military equation. Historically, analysts have focused primarily on the military's voluntary subordination to elected officials. Leaders should, of course, continue to watch for any signs of trouble. The open letter published in May 2021 by a group of retired military leaders calling themselves "Flag Officers 4 America," which questioned the legitimacy of the 2020 presidential election, is an appalling example of the erosion of military ethics. Retired senior officers should call out such incidents and top active-duty leaders must remind the rank and file that defending the Constitution means not spreading falsehoods about legitimate constitutional processes. Senior military officers should also take the temperature of their subordinates, particularly in the middle and junior ranks, to ascertain whether the unprofessionalism on display among retired officers has seeped into the active force.

But the weakest component, the one most in need of strengthening, is civilian. Every element of the civilian pillar could be improved. Key steps include educating political appointees at the top of the interagency process, providing professional development to career civil servants, and increasing awareness within the legislative branch of the processes by which civilians at all levels exercise oversight of military policy. Perhaps most important of all, leaders must give due attention to citizens' understanding of basic civics and the foundations necessary for healthy civil-military relations. Yes, the military should be reminded of its obligations and ultimate subordination. But in the long run, it is the civilian side of the relationship that will dictate the republic's health.

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Brooks, Golby, and Urben Reply

Both Kori Schake and Peter Feaver provide helpful context for understanding the contentious debate about U.S. civil-military relations. We agree that, for now, there is no acute crisis. We are also sympathetic to Feaver's claim that civil-military relations are often naturally fractious. Debate can be constructive, and too much agreement is not conducive to healthy military policy.

Even so, we remain convinced that there has been a quiet yet steady breakdown in civilian control of the armed forces over the past 30 years. These problems are more serious and far-reaching than Schake and Feaver describe. The erosion has been incremental and cumulative—a steady process of degradation rather than a single breaking point. It has largely flown under the radar, aided by a lack of public awareness, the military's extraordinarily high approval ratings, and partisan polarization that discourages meaningful reform.

As both Schake and Feaver note to varying degrees, civilians have played a role in damaging the military's nonpartisan ethic. The exploitation of military service and symbols by politicians, for instance, continues unabated. In the months since our article was published, there have in fact been new affronts to the military's neutrality, with some politicians seeking to draw the military into the country's culture wars. In July, Tom Cotton, a Republican senator from Arkansas, suggested that senior officers' perspectives on U.S. racial politics should be a litmus test for their promotion to flag rank, saying that he "may start probing nominees" about their views. As long as American politics remain polarized, politicians on both sides of the aisle are unlikely to stop using the military for partisan gain.

Polarization and negative partisanship, moreover, are not confined to elected representatives. These traits are also evident among the American public. Survey research by one of us (Jim Golby) and Feaver has shown a troubling trend: that voters increasingly want the military to take their side in partisan debates. Such divisions mean that even when the military behaves in a nonpartisan fashion, just about any action it takes can be interpreted as partisan. Although we agree with Feaver that civil-military relations would benefit from a renewed focus on civic education, that will probably not be enough to address the problem. For the public to stop viewing the military as a partisan actor, politicians will need to stop treating it as one.

There are other opportunities to improve civilian control that policymakers can and should pursue. Here, we could not agree more with Feaver's points. Political appointees would indeed benefit from additional education on civil-military issues, and the civilian civil service should have more opportunities for professional development. As Schake notes, one way to strengthen civilian control is "to strengthen the civilians." But this does not require weakening the military, as she suggests we advocate. Instead, we argue for institutional parity: organizations such as the Office of the Secretary of Defense should be as strong and effective as the Joint Staff and the combatant commands, which have grown in size and influence in recent decades. Although civilian staffers in the Pentagon do not have independent authority to issue orders, effective civilian control today is impossible without their oversight.

There are also some hopeful signs that Congress is playing a more active role in its oversight responsibilities, as Schake highlights. In June, lawmakers voted to repeal the 1991 and 2002 Authorizations for Use of Military Force, the long-in-place resolutions that allowed, respectively, the first and second U.S. wars against Iraq. Lawmakers have also

advanced legislation that would remove decisions about whether to prosecute sexual assault from the military chain of command. Bipartisan support for both measures is particularly encouraging, as it demonstrates that there are areas of common ground where Congress can reassert civilian control.

Reasserting civilian control also includes a role for the military—despite Schake's claims that there is nothing amiss there. Surveys reveal that a good portion of officers consistently believe that they should have a right to autonomy over operational and tactical matters. When policymakers impose timelines or troop limits that clash with officers' preferences, some officers view those directives with cynicism. These attitudes need to change. Senior officers owe civilian leaders candid advice about the military consequences of political decisions, but they cannot—and should not—dictate outcomes.

Schake also finds no problems with the Pentagon's current policymaking process, which often gives military leaders a bureaucratic advantage over their civilian counterparts. She notes that the secretary of defense has the prerogative to request advice from his civilian staff. But that the system does not automatically work that way is exactly our point. Unless it becomes common practice for civilian staff to scrutinize policy decisions, the military may too often get its way.

There has also been a well-documented deterioration in military officers' belief in the importance of nonpartisanship. Although most officers adhere to the rules and avoid partisan debate, problems remain. The letter by retired flag officers that Feaver cites is a particularly egregious example—the result of the military turning a blind eye to 30 years of partisan endorsements by retired officers. Although no active-duty leaders signed the document, such distinctions may ultimately matter little: research shows that the public doesn't often draw a distinction between active and retired members of the military.

Yes, there have been no acts of overt insubordination regarding a president's decisions. By that measure, civilian control is indeed intact. But there have been efforts to shape those decisions through questionable means, despite Schake's contention otherwise. Take the 2009 surge of U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Schake is correct that civilian defense leaders sided with the military chiefs in favoring a fully resourced counterinsurgency, as did Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. But noting that some civilian officials agreed with the military or that President Barack Obama made the final decision misses our point. Even if some civilian officials agreed with the military's recommendation, federal law demands that the military's advice include more than a recommendation. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—typically with support from the Joint Chiefs and the combatant commanders—is required to prepare "military analysis, options, and plans" consistent with the president's guidance. Public accounts of the deliberations over the 2009 troop surge indicate that military leaders slow rolled important aspects of Obama's requests for discrete policy options, including a coherent counterterrorism proposal. Officers effectively kept some alternatives off the table by ensuring they were not developed promptly or fully. That is not a decision-making process operating as designed.

The fact also remains that military leaders did their best to increase the political costs Obama would pay for rejecting their advice, even though they may not have seen it that way at the time. According to the reporter Bob Woodward, General David Petraeus, head of U.S. Central Command at the time, called a sympathetic *Washington Post* journalist the day after the paper published an opinion piece skeptical of the surge and suggested that the reporter write a rebuttal. General Stanley McChrystal, the commander of U.S. and international forces in Afghanistan, bluntly told an audience at a British think tank that he would not accept a solely counterterrorism-focused mission in Afghanistan. And a report drafted by McChrystal that called for a large troop commitment was leaked—a move that Secretary of Defense Robert Gates attributed to McChrystal's office. As Feaver himself wrote at the time in *Foreign Policy*, "The leak makes it harder for President Obama to reject a McChrystal request for additional troops because the assessment so clearly argues for them."

Here, Obama's reflection on the matter in his memoir is worth repeating:

> Looking back, I'm inclined to believe Gates when he said there was no coordinated plan by [Mike] Mullen [then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff], Petraeus, or McChrystal to force my hand. I know that all three men were motivated by a sincere conviction in the rightness of their position, and that they considered it to be part of their code as military officers to provide their honest assessment in public testimony or press statements without regard to political consequences. . . . But I also think that the episode illustrated just how accustomed the military had become to getting whatever it wanted.

Although Schake may believe that the military should serve as a "meaningful check on the judgment of civilian officials," we do not share that view. The institutional checks in the U.S. system of government should come from Congress, the courts, and the executive branch, not the uniformed military—no matter how seasoned, how professional, or how informed they might be.

In the end, the eternal question about civil-military relations—Is it a crisis, or isn't it a crisis?—distracts from real debate, forcing people into defending one of two extremes at the expense of addressing a far more complex reality. Civilian control varies in degree—not in absolutes. Focusing only on coups or overt military insubordination is unproductive. It makes it harder for the public to see that there is a problem and push for reform through its elected representatives.

Like Schake and Feaver, we were encouraged that the military weathered the political turmoil of the era of President Donald Trump and withstood the test posed by the January 6 attack on the Capitol that he instigated. But the erosion of important civil-military norms long predated Trump, nor has it suddenly disappeared since he left the White House. The United States can do better, and Americans should demand as much—from society, from their elected leaders, and from the military.

Recent Books

Political and Legal

G. John Ikenberry

After the End of History: Conversations With Francis Fukuyama
BY MATHILDE FASTING.
Georgetown University Press, 2021, 232 pp.

This extended conversation between Fasting and the famed political scientist Francis Fukuyama takes readers on an engaging intellectual journey in which Fukuyama reflects on the global crises and transformations that have unfolded in the three decades since his famous essay on "the end of history." What has surprised Fukuyama most about liberal democracy since the triumphal days after the end of the Cold War is the system's fragility. He has concluded that scholars were wrong to believe that democracy in advanced industrial societies could consolidate and resist backsliding. In fact, they can fall victim to what he calls "decay": the slow erosion of liberal institutions by populist and authoritarian leaders who wrap themselves in the legitimacy of democracy but chip away at the rule of law, minority rights, and independent media. The information revolution was initially greeted as a friend of democracy, but its more ominous implications are now apparent, as China uses it for surveillance and political control and Russia uses it as a tool to destabilize Western institutions. As more states modernize, will they begin to look more like China? Fukuyama thinks not. There is nothing inevitable about either the success or the failure of liberal democracy. But well-functioning democracies remain unique—and unsurpassed—in giving people dignity and opportunities.

Disruption: Why Things Change
BY DAVID POTTER. Oxford University Press, 2021, 336 pp.

Political life in ancient times and more recent eras has been shaped and transformed by a series of grand disruptions: the collapse of the Roman Empire, the emergence of Christianity and Islam, the upheavals of the American and French Revolutions, and the rise and fall of fascism and communism. With an eye on today's global convulsions, Potter seeks to illuminate the patterns formed by these disruptions. He notes that they all began with failures, dysfunctions, and mistakes made by defenders of the "old order" at the time. He argues that although the instability of large-scale political orders emerges from long-term economic and technological shifts, ideas and ideology matter just as much. The replacement of one world-shaping political order with another has always required strategy, leadership, and ideological struggles driven by the search for legitimacy. It is less the downtrodden and dispossessed who reshape political life than activists and charismatic leaders who latch on to potent new ideas and build new coalitions. Potter's message to the defenders of the current era's liberal order is to redouble their efforts to make the modern liberal state a professional servant of the people.

Our Own Worst Enemy: The Assault From Within on Modern Democracy
BY TOM NICHOLS. Oxford University Press, 2021, 272 pp.

If liberal democracy is failing, who is to blame? To illiberal populists, it is the elites who are the villains: globalists, bureaucrats, journalists, intellectuals, politicians. In this spirited polemic, Nichols argues the reverse: it is ordinary citizens who are failing the test of democracy. Populists fan the flames of fear and dissatisfaction, but it is the voters who put them in power. Nichols notes that in the twentieth century, liberal democracies survived multiple global conflicts, defeated fascism and totalitarianism, and weathered multiple depressions and recessions—and yet today, they seem unable to overcome less complex challenges, even within an overall context of relative peace and prosperity. Large segments of the publics in the United States and European countries have lost faith in democratic institutions, and growing numbers tell pollsters that they do not think it is "essential" to live in a democracy. Nichols argues that in an era of jaundiced self-absorption, citizens in Western societies have lost their appreciation of democratic values and the virtues of civic engagement. Still, Nichols acknowledges that any renewal of liberal democracy will rely on ordinary people, albeit ones who possess the civic knowledge and virtues needed to make the system work.

Global Political Cities: Actors and Arenas of Influence in International Affairs
BY KENT E. CALDER. Brookings Institution Press, 2021, 286 pp.

In this important study, Calder chronicles the rise and growing impact of large, globally connected cities that increasingly operate as independent political entities, shaping international policy agendas and carrying out core functions of political and economic life. Calder surveys these global cities, identifying the distinctive mix of political and functional characteristics that gives each one global reach and that forms what Calder calls a "penumbra of power." These cities also foster grassroots movements for social justice and environmentalism. Mayors who have run them, such as New York City's Michael Bloomberg and London's Boris Johnson, have treated them as laboratories for innovation in areas such as transportation and public health. Calder shows that as nation-states grow more fragmented and struggle to carry out the basic tasks of government, global cities have found ways to set the international agenda and project influence by tackling the everyday problems of modern living. Nation-states will not disappear—but cities seem to be reasserting themselves, much as they did in the premodern era.

Dark Skies: Space Expansionism, Planetary Geopolitics, and the Ends of Humanity
BY DANIEL DEUDNEY. Oxford University Press, 2020, 464 pp.

This remarkable, mesmerizing book describes and then dismantles the naive assumptions of "space expansionists," those techno-utopians who declare that humanity's destiny lies in colonizing the solar system and, in the process, leaving earthbound problems behind. Deudney challenges such hubris, arguing that far

from delivering security, abundance, and freedom, space expansionism will exacerbate violence, inequality, and oppression, as great powers compete to dominate the ultimate "high ground," commercial interests monopolize wealth, and tyranny flourishes both on earth and in the cold reaches of space. The nuclear arms race has been the biggest impetus behind human space activities. Why should the future be any different? The author quotes the philosopher Raymond Aron: "Short of a revolution in the heart of man and the nature of states, by what miracle could interplanetary space be preserved from military use?" Deudney predicts that untrammeled human expansion into space will ultimately result in "astrocide"—the destruction of earth from above—and the extinction of humanity. To avoid this fate, the world needs a multilateral agreement to strictly govern and limit expansion into space. Such an accord, like the famous "Earthrise" photograph taken by the *Apollo 8* astronaut Bill Anders, would focus attention back where it belongs. Humanity's destiny lies not in the stars, Deudney warns, but on "Oasis Earth."

STEWART M. PATRICK

Economic, Social, and Environmental

Barry Eichengreen

Rebellion, Rascals, and Revenue: Tax Follies and Wisdom Through the Ages
BY MICHAEL KEEN AND JOEL SLEMROD. Princeton University Press, 2021, 536 pp.

Pretty much everyone dismisses tax policy as dull and dry—except the attorneys, accountants, and civil servants dedicated to collecting taxes or avoiding (or evading) them. Keen and Slemrod, two leading public finance specialists, demonstrate that, in fact, taxes are anything but dull. Relying on historical vignettes, they show that taxation can have unintended consequences; they describe, in one instance, how the English window tax of 1696 led to dark, dank, and even windowless homes. Their book is also a reminder of the importance of getting history right. They explain, for example, that the Boston Tea Party was actually a revolt against lower taxes—not higher ones—which threatened the livelihood of American tea smugglers. Keen and Slemrod use these stories as a frame for thinking about the challenges of taxation today. They ask, for example, what genetic markers that reliably predicted a person's lifetime income would mean for defining tax liabilities. In step with policymakers in the Biden administration, the authors point to the need for fundamental changes in how governments tax corporate profits in a world of footloose balance sheets. It is hard to imagine a more timely—and entertaining—history of the fisc.

How Antitrust Failed Workers
BY ERIC A. POSNER. Oxford University Press, 2021, 224 pp.

Antitrust enforcement in the United States, starting with the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890, has long focused on product-market competition and its antithesis, the monopoly provision of goods and services. In contrast, courts

and regulators have largely neglected monopsony, where there exists one or a small handful of purchasers of goods and services, including labor services. Whether through noncompete clauses or simple market power, employers dominating local labor markets can depress wages and weaken worker protections. The author blames neglect of this issue on legal theorists' nearly exclusive attention to consumer welfare and economists' assumption that labor markets are generally competitive. He might have added a role for history and path dependence: antitrust efforts focus on monopoly today because they've focused on it for over a century. Posner concludes by showing that this imbalance can be righted within the existing legal framework if those responsible for antitrust policy wake up to the problem.

The Spirit of Green: The Economics of Collisions and Contagions in a Crowded World
BY WILLIAM D. NORDHAUS. Princeton University Press, 2021, 368 pp.

Nordhaus builds on a lifetime of work incorporating the concept of externalities into national income accounts and into conceptions of economic growth. He reminds the reader that although private markets are needed to ensure the ample supply of most goods and services, only governments can adequately provide collective goods such as pollution control and public health. He advocates using market mechanisms such as carbon taxes to offset externalities, applying this insight to multiple areas beyond carbon emissions and climate change. Such taxes would not be a drag on the economy; by correcting market failures, they would boost the rate of economic growth. Although Nordhaus emphasizes the indispensability of public policy intervention, coordinated at the international level, in the quest for a greener world, he also sees roles for private ethics and corporate social responsibility.

Three Days at Camp David: How a Secret Meeting in 1971 Transformed the Global Economy
BY JEFFREY E. GARTEN. Harper, 2021, 448 pp.

Garten provides a richly detailed, character-driven account of the weekend in 1971 when U.S. President Richard Nixon and his advisers suspended the convertibility of the U.S. dollar into a fixed quantity of gold and pulled the plug on the Bretton Woods international monetary system. It is not an overstatement to assert, as the author does, that this weekend at Camp David was a historic turning point for the global economy. Drawing on archival sources and participant interviews, Garten recounts the unfolding drama, which inaugurated an era of greater exchange-rate flexibility and thereby opened the door to freer international capital mobility. At the same time, the demise of the Bretton Woods system changed some aspects of the global monetary and financial order less radically than anticipated at the time. In particular, the dollar, which under the Bretton Woods system enjoyed the "exorbitant privilege" of being the sun around which other currencies orbited, remains the dominant international and reserve currency even today.

Military, Scientific, and Technological

Lawrence D. Freedman

The Blind Strategist: John Boyd and the American Art of War
BY STEPHEN ROBINSON. Exisle, 2021, 360 pp.

Colonel John Boyd was one of the most influential American strategic theorists of the last century. From his experience as a fighter pilot during the Korean War, he developed the so-called OODA loop—observe, orient, decide, act—as an approach to warfighting. In the 1970s and 1980s, he convinced senior U.S. policymakers of the need to abandon strategies based on attrition and embrace those based on sophisticated maneuvers instead. He drew heavily on accounts of how the German army had gained impressive victories during the World War II and on the work of the British military historian Basil Liddell Hart, who had urged an "indirect approach" to warfare to avoid deadly frontal assaults. But as Robinson reveals, the more that scholars learn about German operations and about Hart's determination to fit all military history into his own simplistic framework, the flimsier Boyd's thesis appears. Robinson carries out a meticulous demolition job that will be of interest to students of the Wehrmacht and to the U.S. Army and Marine Corps, demonstrating how grand theories with an emotional appeal can go a long way on the back of dubious history.

The American War in Afghanistan: A History
BY CARTER MALKASIAN. Oxford University Press, 2021, 576 pp.

The Afghanistan Papers: A Secret History of the War
BY CRAIG WHITLOCK. Simon & Schuster, 2021, 368 pp.

Malkasian provides a full and authoritative account of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan from President Jimmy Carter's decision to back the mujahideen after the Soviet Union invaded in December 1979 to President Joe Biden's decision earlier this year to pull U.S. troops out. Malkasian combines meticulous scholarship with a practitioner's eye. It helps that he knows the country well, speaks Pashto, can navigate his way through the complex tribal structures that shape local politics, and has a good grasp of the Taliban's attitudes and operations. The story he tells is a painful one. Successive U.S. administrations were unwilling to deal diplomatically with the Taliban because the militant group was either too weak or too strong, and Washington failed to put the effort and resources into building up the new Afghan government and army after 2001. The Bush administration's focus in the early days of the post-9/11 invasion was on catching terrorists, which led to operations that killed civilians, resulting in a loss of support from the local population. In the end, despite their harsh ideology and brutal misogyny, the Taliban were able to sell themselves as authentically Afghan and resisting foreign occupation, whereas the government forces lacked conviction.

Whitlock covers the same ground using materials he obtained through Freedom of Information Act requests, including interviews conducted by the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, U.S. Army oral histories, and former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's memos. The disparate sources make for a disjointed narrative, and although there are many quotes from U.S. officials, there is a marked absence of Afghan voices. Whitlock's approach has the advantage, however, of showing participants expressing themselves in revealing, colorful language, as they talk about the futility of spending billions of dollars trying to turn Afghanistan into a modern country, complain about the incompetence in the Afghan security forces and corruption in the government, and note how U.S. attempts to deal with the Afghan drug trade failed to take into account the importance of the poppies to the local economy. The most depressing aspect of the book is the gap it reveals between insiders' official optimism and their private pessimism. In public, progress was always being made and corners being turned. Behind closed doors, there were far more doubts.

Stalin's War: A New History of World War II
BY SEAN MCMEEKIN. Basic Books, 2021, 864 pp.

Instead of writing yet another history of World War II centered on Adolf Hitler, McMeekin takes a more original approach, focusing on Joseph Stalin. McMeekin pulls no punches in reminding readers that throughout the war, Stalin played a cruel, manipulative, and uncompromising game. His cynical deal with Hitler in August 1939 allowed the Soviet Union to take Poland and the Baltic states and pushed European democracies into a draining war with Germany. When it was the Soviet Union that was struggling to push the Germans back, Stalin demanded that the United Kingdom and the United States contort their own war plans to provide him with material assistance and establish a second front. McMeekin argues, less persuasively, that Stalin was acting as an orthodox Leninist with a long-term goal from the start. McMeekin also develops an unconvincing and at times preposterous counterfactual war. He argues, for example, that to thwart Stalin's plans, the United Kingdom could have sided with Finland in the "Winter War" of 1939–40 and made its own peace with Germany after the fall of France. McMeekin's research is prodigious, and his writing is vigorous, but in the end, he pushes his argument past the breaking point.

The Changing of the Guard: The British Army Since 9/11
BY SIMON AKAM. Scribe, 2021, 704 pp.

The British army's experience of the Iraq war began with dissatisfaction with a role that it did not feel was commensurate with its contribution and ended with humiliation. The army got bogged down fighting a Shiite militia in Basra with which they eventually had to cut a deal. British forces were spared further embarrassment only when they were able to help defeat the militia by participating in a 2008 battle referred

to as Operation Charge of the Knights, which was initiated by the Iraqi government and backed by the Americans. Well before that, British senior commanders had tried to retrieve the army's reputation by taking a major role in Afghanistan, but that did not go much better. Drawing on some 260 interviews (including one with me), Akam, a journalist who himself spent a year serving in the British army, recounts the story of these difficult years with candor, great detail, and occasional indignation, bemoaning the harm done to the institution by class tensions, alcohol, and unaccountable officers who made poor tactical choices in pursuit of often incoherent strategies. Akam makes no claim to be balanced, and this is a dense and at times undisciplined book. But much of what he writes rings true, and all told, it makes for a valuable and salutary read.

The United States

Jessica T. Mathews

American Republics: A Continental History of the United States, 1783–1850
BY ALAN TAYLOR. Norton, 2021, 544 pp.

This volume follows two earlier works, *American Colonies* and *American Revolutions,* to form a trilogy by one of the preeminent historians of the period. The plural terms in the second and third titles underline the books' central theme: that the early history of what became the United States was not what most Americans have been taught. The real story, Taylor writes in this deeply researched and beautifully written book, is not of a singular revolution that followed a sure path toward nationhood and then swept across the continent with confidence and moral purpose but rather a tale of fragility and intense dispute. The key actors were disparate states, deeply suspicious of one another, to which Americans owed their primary allegiance. Their coming together was so contentious and uncertain that most Americans at the time had reason to think of what they were doing as framing only a union, not a nation. Taylor grippingly describes the yawning gap that opened up between the founding documents' soaring principles and the reality of white Americans' behavior. The massive wrongs the majority perpetrated in their oppression of Native Americans and Black slaves were nearly equaled by the terrible treatment they inflicted on free Black people.

The Words That Made Us: America's Constitutional Conversation, 1760–1840
BY AKHIL REED AMAR. Basic Books, 2021, 832 pp.

With the rare ability to combine history and law, Amar takes a fresh, heterodox look at how "America became America." Amar, a distinguished professor of law and political science, sees the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights as having simply "followed from the logic" of a sophisticated "constitutional conversation" carried out over three decades in letters, newspapers, pamphlets, and courtrooms by the mass of Americans

(or at least white, male, and literate ones). That rolling dialogue, he argues, deserves more credit for the Declaration of Independence than does Thomas Jefferson (merely "a good scribe") and made a bigger contribution to the Constitution than did James Madison. Scholars have erred in attaching importance to Madison's essay "Federalist No. 10" (in *The Federalist Papers*), Amar claims; at the time of its publication, "almost no one paid any attention" to it. The only founder who really mattered, in Amar's view, was the relatively silent George Washington: the Constitution was "designed by and for" him alone to such a degree that his two elections as president amounted to re-ratifications of it. Amar seamlessly combines his two disciplines, crafting a swiftly paced, highly iconoclastic narrative and making important legal arcana accessible to all readers.

Rethinking American Grand Strategy
EDITED BY ELIZABETH BORGWARDT, CHRISTOPHER McKNIGHT NICHOLS, AND ANDREW PRESTON. Oxford University Press, 2021, 512 pp.

"Grand strategy" is a term that is as difficult to define as it is widely used by scholars and practitioners. This volume's editors and contributors believe that the concept needs to be reconceived by extending it in two dimensions. It should be broadened beyond its roots in military affairs and conventionally defined security to include a variety of additional issues, such as immigration, public health, demographics, international assistance, and climate change. It also needs to reach beyond its traditional focus on the state as the only important player to include other influential voices and actors, including, among others, nonprofit interest groups, organized religion, and the business sector. This volume doesn't address all those areas, but it is a valuable contribution to the task of broadly rethinking the goals and tactics of U.S. foreign policy. The analyses it presents are solidly rooted in history and provide thought-provoking insights into issues and actors that grand strategists rarely consider.

Ethel Rosenberg: An American Tragedy
BY ANNE SEBBA. St. Martin's Press, 2021, 320 pp.

Ethel Rosenberg was the only American woman ever executed for a crime other than murder and, with her husband, Julius, was one of only two Americans ever to face capital punishment for conspiring to commit espionage in peacetime. In her tragic story, told here by an accomplished biographer, she often appears as a human Rorschach test onto which others projected their own passions, largely ignoring her individual identity and massively confusing the question of her guilt or innocence. Her life and death by electrocution, in 1953, were shaped to no small degree by misogyny, anti-Semitism, and, above all, a nationwide, exaggerated fear of the Soviet Union. Her mother ignored her both as a child and as an adult and had eyes only for Ethel's brother David Greenglass, who, ironically, himself spied for the Soviets but was not executed. Not until many years later was it finally revealed that Greenglass had perjured himself, lying

in grand jury testimony about Ethel's involvement in espionage. The government's case against her was recognized to be extremely weak, but neither President Harry Truman nor President Dwight Eisenhower dared to appear soft on communism by admitting as much and dropping the case. Ultimately, it seems that although she was a Communist, Ethel was not a spy.

Last Best Hope: America in Crisis and Renewal
BY GEORGE PACKER. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021, 240 pp.

A more searing, accurate dissection of Donald Trump and his associates will likely never be written. Trump, Packer writes, is "an all-American flimflam man and demagogue, . . . spawned in a gold-plated sewer." He was able to articulate so effectively the resentment that is the essence of his supporters' condition because its taste "was in his mouth, too." Of Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and a senior official in Trump's White House "with expertise in nothing," Packer notes that "he interfered in the work of more competent officials, compromised security protocols, dabbled in conflicts of interest, flirted with violations of federal law and then promised nationwide [COVID-19] testing through his business connections, which never materialized." Packer's main interest, however, is not Trump and his circle but the country that elected him, since "a failure the size of Trump took the whole of America." The book focuses on the events of 2020 because "nothing Trump did was more destructive than turning the pandemic into a central front in the partisan war," thereby causing hundreds of thousands of needless deaths. Packer traces recent U.S. history through a piercingly insightful exploration of what he discerns as four overlapping national narratives. They are not those captured by statistics but those that describe Americans' "deepest needs and desires . . . [and] convey a moral identity." He calls them "Free America" (libertarian), "Smart America" (meritocratic), "Real America" (the populists' mythical provincial village), and "Just America" (more accurately, Unjust America). All have emerged from a half century of rising inequality, which has produced a country that, in Packer's view, is no longer governable.

Western Europe

Andrew Moravcsik

The Chancellor: The Remarkable Odyssey of Angela Merkel
BY KATI MARTON. Simon & Schuster, 2021, 368 pp.

In a few months, Angela Merkel will step down after a decade and a half as the chancellor of Germany. Polls show she remains the world's most respected political leader, perhaps because she cuts against the stereotype of modern politicians as egotists pandering to public opinion. She is unglamorous and reserved, instinctively moderate, slow to make decisions, and prone to communicate in cerebral, fact-based monologues. This is the best English-

language biography of her rise from a tough and traditional family, through her career as a physical chemist in communist East Germany, to her current renown—but it is far from definitive. As with most traditional journalistic accounts, Marton's book focuses a great deal on what Merkel said and did at various critical meetings, attributing her success to her intelligence and tenacity and her failures to her idealistic moral courage. The reader learns far less about the electoral, partisan, diplomatic, and technical constraints under which Merkel acted. The picture is further limited by the author's curious decision to focus almost exclusively on German relations with the United States and Russia, thereby excluding economic diplomacy, climate change, China, the European Union, and the developing world—not to mention German domestic politics, about which the book says hardly anything.

Future War and the Defense of Europe
BY JOHN R. ALLEN, FREDERICK BEN HODGES, AND JULIAN LINDLEY-FRENCH. Oxford University Press, 2021, 352 pp.

The authors begin with a 20-page hypothetical scenario in which Russia attacks and defeats Europe, despite U.S. military support. The rest of the book recommends a policy to head off such a calamity: the Western allies, led by the Europeans, need to "sharpen NATO's spear tip" by spending more—much more, clearly, although exactly how much remains a mystery—on high-tech military development and the procurement of weapons compatible with U.S. systems. As the authors note in the preface, some may view such scenarios as scaremongering by defense planners and military contractors—an assessment with which I have considerable sympathy. Others may wonder why the authors do not stop to ask how this plan would be funded—and whether the backlash against such an immense outlay would actually undermine Western security. Yet everyone concerned about transatlantic relations should read this book, because the authors are neither obscure extremists nor writers of alternative history. Instead, they are pillars of the transatlantic foreign policy establishment: two distinguished retired U.S. generals, one who now heads the centrist Brookings Institution, and a British academic prominent in NATO circles. This is how many, perhaps most, Western military planners think—particularly those in the United States.

Embattled Europe: A Progressive Alternative
BY KONRAD H. JARAUSCH. Princeton University Press, 2021, 344 pp.

This provocative book argues that Europe is the global beacon of progressive politics today. Among global powers, Europe alone espouses a model of the future that is politically legitimate, socially just, and technologically sustainable, Jarausch claims. Only European countries have established fair political systems that limit campaign spending, guarantee the proportional electoral representation of diverse views, and maintain effective government bureaucracies. Only European countries guarantee minimal subsis-

tence and medical care to all. Other countries cater to the wealthiest one percent of their people; European countries remain the best places for those of modest means. Only European governments divert resources from military spending to more cost-effective nonmilitary tools, such as aid, trade, and multilateral institutions. And European countries consistently uphold the world's strongest regulatory protections in areas such as the environment, digital privacy, finance, business competition, and consumer safety. The author, a celebrated historian of Europe, acknowledges that the Old Continent faces challenges, but this book remains a useful corrective to the pervasive and misleading Europe-bashing that often occupies the global press.

The Greek Revolution: 1821 and the Making of Modern Europe
BY MARK MAZOWER. Penguin Press, 2021, 608 pp.

This year marks the bicentennial of the beginning of the Greek Revolution of 1821, through which Greece gained its independence from the Ottoman Empire. This lively introduction persuasively argues that the rebellion was not just a local squabble but an epochal shift in modern history. The American Revolution aside, it was the first of many conflicts in which a small nation asserted its right to self-determination and self-government against an ancient empire. The dynamics of such conflicts have since become familiar. Although some Greeks sought to vindicate a vision of nationhood, most fought to defend their right to practice Christianity, avenge oppression, depose foreign landlords, or simply make money. Diaspora communities and small powers got involved, and powerful local groups grabbed land, resources, and power. Both sides committed atrocities and massacres. Many Greeks fought heroically, but in the end, they prevailed only because France, Russia, and the United Kingdom intervened to crush the imperial Egyptian and Ottoman forces. Over the next 200 years, in much the same way, many nation-states would replace principalities, kingdoms, empires, and colonies that had existed for centuries.

The Comparative Politics of Immigration: Policy Choices in Germany, Canada, Switzerland, and the United States
BY ANTJE ELLERMANN. Cambridge University Press, 2021, 444 pp.

Immigration is the most volatile foreign policy issue in the world today. Since the end of World War II, developed countries have allowed over 100 million foreign nationals to resettle within their borders. Governments had to carefully manage the tensions between economic incentives and special interest groups that favored increased immigration, on the one hand, and restrictionist public opinion, on the other. This book points out that the concrete policies countries pursued often differed considerably, depending on which political body—the executive branch, the legislature, or a local authority—made the key decisions. Bodies more vulnerable to public opinion adopted restrictive policies, whereas those less so chose more open policies. As an analysis of how developed countries have gotten where they are today, this argument seems persuasive. But it might miss the contempo-

rary forest for the historical trees. Today, as the author concedes in the conclusion, advocates of immigration find themselves beleaguered everywhere. Public opposition to immigration has grown so virulent that even highly insulated political institutions cannot protect politicians from the backlash against it. As a result, nearly every developed country has adopted more restrictive policies toward immigrants (including those seeking to unify their families), asylum seekers, and refugees.

Conquering Peace: From the Enlightenment to the European Union
BY STELLA GHERVAS. Harvard University Press, 2021, 528 pp.

Ghervas traces European efforts to create peace settlements, starting with the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 and moving through the Congress of Vienna in the nineteenth century, the League of Nations and the negotiations to temper the Cold War in the twentieth century, and discussions within today's enlarged European Union. Any historical narrative of this scale can seek to answer only big questions—in this case: What brought about peace and allowed settlements to endure? Hundreds of books, many of them classics, have addressed that puzzle. Some stress the rise and fall of totalitarian alternatives to liberal democracy; others, the changing nature of economic interdependence, the diffusion of political and social welfare rights, the spread of national self-determination, the rising destructiveness of military technology, the role of hegemonic powers, or the design of international legal institutions. In such august and crowded company, this book's interpretation remains frustratingly opaque. At times, the author seems to be a Hegelian, explaining each settlement as the result of a corresponding (if often ill-defined) "spirit" of the age. Yet sometimes, she takes a view more grounded in pragmatism, arguing that narrow functional interests and responses to immediate events dictated policy. And elsewhere, she rejects the search for historical lessons entirely.

Western Hemisphere

Richard Feinberg

The Trump Paradox: Migration, Trade, and Racial Politics in US-Mexico Integration
EDITED BY RAÚL HINOJOSA-OJEDA AND EDWARD TELLES. University of California Press, 2021, 374 pp.

This timely collaboration among Mexican and U.S. scholars is consistently critical of what they term "the Trump paradox": the fact that anti-Mexican vitriol persuaded many Americans to vote for Donald Trump in 2016 even though those voters had relatively little exposure to immigration or the consequences of trade with Mexico. By 2016, flows of migrants from Mexico had already markedly diminished, a result of sharply declining fertility rates in Mexico, the 2008–9 recession in the United States, and tougher border enforcement and deportation policies. The authors assail

Trump's divisive racial politics and argue instead for public policies that strengthen societies on both sides of the border, focusing especially on a region referred to as Lasanti (Los Angeles, San Diego, and Tijuana). They call for expanded allotments of temporary work-based visas, transnational portable health-care insurance, and programs to increase college graduation rates among Latinos in California. Other chapters debunk popular myths, such as the idea that the North American Free Trade Agreement was to blame for large-scale unemployment in both Mexican agriculture and U.S. manufacturing. Looking forward, the contributors argue persuasively that strong national industrial and infrastructure policies, rather than trade accords, will speed future regional prosperity.

Beef, Bible, and Bullets: Brazil in the Age of Bolsonaro
BY RICHARD LAPPER. Manchester University Press, 2021, 304 pp.

Lapper, a seasoned journalist, gracefully tackles a perplexing conundrum: How could a reputedly lighthearted, tolerant country such as Brazil, governed for two decades by highly intelligent progressive democrats, suddenly elect a bombastic, antiestablishment authoritarian? No single causal factor explains the rise of Jair Bolsonaro to the presidency. A former military officer and congressional backbencher, Bolsonaro tapped into several overflowing wells of societal discontent. A prolonged economic downturn had dashed the high hopes of the emerging Brazilian middle class. Identity politics advocating liberal positions on issues such as gay rights and abortion deeply offended the rapidly growing segment of Brazilians who identify as evangelical Christians. Ambitious cattle and soy farmers bristled against regulations protecting the Amazon rainforest and its indigenous peoples. Meanwhile, the mass media fueled disenchantment by highlighting government corruption scandals and frightening levels of violent crime. As president, Bolsonaro has maintained his aggressive, highly personalist style. Lapper finds that although Bolsonaro has polarized Brazilian society ahead of his reelection bid in 2022, the country's institutions—the National Congress, the courts, mainstream media, and nongovernmental organizations—have remained resilient and have blocked much of the president's reactionary social and economic agenda.

Two Lifetimes as One: Ele and Me and the Foreign Service
BY IRVING G. TRAGEN. New Academia, 2020, 976 pp.

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, Tragen served in a series of midlevel U.S. diplomatic posts around Latin America, working on labor rights, economic development, and counternarcotics. His memoir, instead of peering into senior-level policymaking, offers a richly detailed, highly personal account of the uneasy intersection of U.S. grand strategy and stubborn realities on the ground. Tragen's matter-of-fact descriptions of multiple U.S. missteps are all the more demoralizing given his cheerful personality and reluctance to question the basic precepts of U.S. policies. During

the presidency of John F. Kennedy, Washington demanded immediate results in Latin America without addressing the deeply rooted causes of underdevelopment, which called for the patient construction of capable institutions. In Central America, Tragen witnessed the gut-wrenching consequences of U.S. backing for brutal anticommunist dictatorships. The war on drugs produced another frustrating mismatch between goals and resources. The incessant turnovers of leadership and staff in Washington and in host countries repeatedly undermined earnest efforts at long-term planning. Nevertheless, Tragen and his wife, Ele, built many bridges of friendship with their Latin American counterparts.

Latecomer State Formation: Political Geography and Capacity Failure in Latin America
BY SEBASTIÁN MAZZUCA. Yale University Press, 2021, 464 pp.

In this extraordinarily ambitious tome, Mazzuca attributes the political and economic shortcomings of contemporary Latin America to the complex interactions of geography and history. He contrasts Latin American struggles with the European experience of state formation. In Europe, vulnerable midsize states had to learn how to fund armies and provide other public goods in order to survive. The new countries of nineteenth-century Latin America did not face the same level of external threats as their European counterparts. Instead of building internal state capacities, they focused on international trade, an economic model made possible by the free-trade capitalism of the era. The region's export-led growth did not, by itself, preclude successful development—and here is perhaps Mazzuca's most provocative insight. Development in Latin America slowed when dynamic commercial hubs in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico annexed backward provinces that were governed by patronage machines that chronically sapped national treasuries. Smaller countries, such as Chile and Uruguay, escaped this fatal dysfunction but were held back by the recurrent crises in their larger neighbors. In a creative counterfactual, Mazzuca imagines a more viable midsize nation centered on Buenos Aires, Uruguay, southern Brazil, and the surrounding resource-rich pampas—a prosperous South American Australia.

Handbook of Caribbean Economies
EDITED BY ROBERT E. LOONEY. Routledge, 2020, 504 pp.

In this erudite and informative volume, some of the Caribbean's leading specialists provide a panoramic view of the region's political economy. Their sophisticated analyses examine the obstacles and external influences with which Caribbean economies must contend. The contributors underscore the region's deep crisis: the rocky transition from plantation economies based on sugar to economies based mostly on tourism. The EU's decision to end preferential treatment of the Caribbean shook the region, but so have climate change, natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes, and the man-made calamities of drug trafficking and organized crime. Haiti's economy has been especially hard hit, Puerto Rico

went bankrupt, and Cuba still hasn't recovered from the breakup of the Soviet Union. Guyana, with its new offshore oil discoveries, and the Dominican Republic, with its creditable economic performance, shine brightly in an otherwise depressing regional tableau. The islands' attempt to find their niche in the world economy remains a work in progress.

JORGE HEINE

Eastern Europe and Former Soviet Republics

Maria Lipman

Comrade Kerensky
BY BORIS KOLONITSKII. Polity, 2020, 450 pp.

For a few months following the fall of the Russian monarchy in 1917, Alexander Kerensky, the minister of justice and then the military minister of the provisional government, was extolled as "the Leader of the People," "the Minister of People's Truth," "the Champion of Freedom," and "the Hero of the Revolution." His public speeches attracted huge audiences that greeted him with standing ovations. Women threw flowers at him; soldiers and officers gave him their medals and jubilantly lifted him in the air. Kolonitskii examines Kerensky's brief but cultish popularity through his speeches and contemporary accounts. Kerensky was a savvy politician and indefatigable coalition builder, but Kolonitskii credits his skill as a newsmaker to his keen sense of popular moods and his talent as a public speaker. The book's narrative ends before the Bolshevik takeover in late 1917 and Kerensky's subsequent escape from Russia. But the "cult" of Kerensky, Kolonitskii argues, provided a useful model for those who later created—and forcefully inculcated—the cults of Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky, and Joseph Stalin.

Beyond the Protest Square: Digital Media and Augmented Dissent
BY TETYANA LOKOT. Rowman & Littlefield, 2021, 160 pp.

Based on her research on the 2013–14 Euromaidan protests in Ukraine and the mass rallies against corruption that took place in 2017 in Russia, Lokot writes about the opportunities and limitations of digital technologies for protest movements and emphasizes the close entanglement of offline and online spaces. The book draws on state-of-the-art literature on the social role of digital technology and is academic in style but still a lively read, thanks to the numerous quotes from interviews that Lokot conducted with protesters. Digital communications were central in coordinating logistics at the protests in Kyiv, such as providing information on the availability of basic necessities, from toilets to WiFi to firewood. Live-streaming, tweeting, and blogging turned witnessing the protests into a form of participation. Countless videos recording the activities in the protest camp (cooking, singing, delivering lectures) created a public history of the uprising. Unlike in Ukraine, where the Internet is generally free, in Russia,

the government has developed sophisticated technological means aimed at controlling the digital public sphere. It continues to adopt and enforce draconian regulations against activism, drawing no distinction between online and offline activities.

White Russians, Red Peril: A Cold War History of Migration to Australia
BY SHEILA FITZPATRICK. Routledge, 2021, 384 pp.

Fitzpatrick, one of the most prominent historians of the Soviet Union, traces the travails of the waves of Russian and Soviet refugees who arrived in her native Australia in the late 1940s and 1950s. Her enthralling historical narrative is interspersed with dozens of individual stories of people uprooted by wars and revolutions. One wave consisted of prisoners of war and others the Nazis had deported from the territories they occupied in Poland and the Soviet Union to use as forced laborers in Germany. As the Cold War set in, Western organizations were eager to help those who sought to escape repatriation to the Soviet Union and increasingly regarded them as victims of communism rather than of Nazism. This meant looking the other way at false statements or forged identities, which often concealed histories of collaboration with the Germans. The other wave of immigrants were the White Russians who had settled in China after their defeat by the Reds in the Russian Civil War and who were forced to flee again in the late 1940s after the communist takeover of China. Australian authorities showed little kindness to Russian immigrants. They selected those who were young and healthy, separated men from women (making no exceptions for married couples), and required them to do hard manual labor for two years before starting on their own in their new country.

Political Ideologies in Contemporary Russia
BY ELENA CHEBANKOVA. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020, 376 pp.

Chebankova characterizes her work as a "theoretical study of Russia's ideological foundations," and the scope of the academic literature she cites is quite impressive. Unfortunately, the book's description of the current scene in Russia has numerous inaccuracies, such as outdated affiliations of political and other figures and the mischaracterization of their current public standing. A more serious shortcoming is that Chebankova's account of the Russian ideological and discursive environment is divorced from the social context: her analysis of the production of ideas does not differentiate dominant figures from marginal ones. Quotes from professional philosophers and political thinkers appear side by side with statements made by communications professionals, journalists, political commentators, filmmakers, and even pop culture figures. The author also disregards the political dynamics of the present day: for instance, although liberal ideas were fairly prominent in public discourse in the 1990s, in the 2010s, the Kremlin adopted a conservative discourse and radically marginalized its liberal opponents, smearing their reputations, jailing them, and forcing them out of Russia. The most striking example is the political activist Alexei Navalny, whom Chebankova identifies as belonging to a category she

dubs "pluralist liberals." The fact that Navalny (now imprisoned) was harassed for years goes unmentioned.

Flowers Through Concrete: Explorations in Soviet Hippieland
BY JULIANE FÜRST. Oxford University Press, 2021, 496 pp.

In the late 1960s, a countercultural hippie movement began to emerge in the Soviet Union. Early Soviet hippies were inspired by the aesthetics of their Western counterparts, as well as their message of peace, love, and rock-and-roll. Within a few years, a network of hippies had evolved across the country. The communist state consistently eradicated independent social organization, and the hippies were no exception: the police and operatives of the Komsomol, a communist youth organization, persecuted them. The authorities often confined hippies to psychiatric hospitals. Fürst's exhaustive history is based on 135 interviews with surviving hippies, as well as memoirs and personal archives. It is filled with colorful characters; documents their travels, gatherings, and spiritual quests; and boasts an amazing collection of photos. The book also includes tragic stories of drug abuse and dying young. Soviet hippies may have shared the antimaterialistic creed of Western hippies and rejected Soviet norms and values, but they were just as engaged as their "normal" Soviet contemporaries in procuring the coveted and expensive Western items that were missing in the Soviet economy (in their case, primarily blue jeans and music records). Fürst emphasizes that despite the hippies' stubborn otherness, they were part of an increasingly complex late socialist society in which a broad range of "others" lived side by side with people deemed "normal."

Middle East

Lisa Anderson

The Republic of False Truths
BY ALAA AL ASWANY. TRANSLATED BY S. R. FELLOWES. Knopf, 2021, 416 pp.

The Egyptian novelist Aswany, author of the famed novel *The Yacoubian Building*, has taken for his canvas this time not just a single apartment block in Cairo but the entire Egyptian uprising of 2011. Aswany weaves a surprisingly nuanced and affecting portrait of the ill-fated revolution through a collection of stock characters: the pious, cruel, and self-important general; his rebellious daughter; her poor but virtuous medical-student boyfriend; the driver of a disillusioned businessman, who is in turn the patron of a young revolutionary; the smarmy imam who has a religious justification for every vice; and a thwarted actor, a Copt who has a love affair with his Muslim maid. A pervasive if invisible burden of fear—of God, of poverty, of social disapproval, of torture—weighs heavily on the story. These fears, provoked and manipulated by those whom Aswany sees as the revolt's powerful opponents—the military establishment, corrupt business owners, and virtually all of the country's religious authorities—eventually

overwhelmed the daring and audacious, if naive, efforts of the revolutionaries to usher in a polity founded on freedom and social justice. Small wonder the book has been banned in Egypt and much of the rest of the Arab world.

Policing Iraq: Legitimacy, Democracy, and Empire in a Developing State
BY JESSE WOZNIAK. University of California Press, 2021, 254 pp.

An American sociologist interested in police and police reform, Wozniak took himself to Iraq to study the construction of a new police force in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion in 2003 and the subsequent collapse of the internal security and police forces. His picture is partial—he conducted fieldwork only in Sulaymaniyah, the capital of the autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government—but it is damning. Given the militarization of policing around the world since the end of the Cold War, the Bush administration's decision to assign responsibility for rebuilding civilian policing to the U.S. Department of Defense and its Iraqi military counterparts may not be surprising, but it was a recipe for failure. Citizens were viewed as enemies to be thwarted rather than protected. Recruits were trained not to be police officers but to merely look like them: good at marching in formation, incompetent at actual police work. Ultimately, Wozniak concludes that what initially seemed like a bug was in fact a feature of the training programs. The "rejection of both best practices and scientific knowledge" of policing suggests that "the United States never had a fully formed democratic state in mind in the reconstruction of Iraq."

Turkey: A Past Against History
BY CHRISTINE M. PHILLIOU. University of California Press, 2021, 294 pp.

Refik Halid Karay was a journalist who figured among the dissidents in virtually every era of the tumultuous history of Ottoman and republican Turkey between the turn of the twentieth century and his death in 1965. In this biography, Philliou offers a subtle and revealing history of the meaning of opposition. Karay, born to a family of midlevel Ottoman bureaucrats, seems to have been both constitutionally contrarian and faithful to his upbringing and class: the ideal candidate for what nineteenth-century Europeans had come to know as "the loyal opposition." But for much of the first half of the twentieth century, there was no room for such a figure in Ottoman or Turkish politics. In both the despotic empire and the authoritarian republic, opposition was treason. Often writing under the wonderful pen name "the Porcupine," Karay was sent into internal exile in Anatolia by the imperial authorities and banished to Beirut and Aleppo by the republican government. He always made his way back into the outer reaches of the inner circle, however, and by the time multiparty politics appeared in the 1950s, Karay, "elder statesman of the dissidents," had begun to carve out a novel, albeit precarious, space for the notion of the loyal opposition.

After Repression: How Polarization Derails Democratic Transition
BY ELIZABETH R. NUGENT.
Princeton University Press, 2020,
256 pp.

Hiding behind this monograph's generic title and sometimes masked by its scholarly rhetoric is a fascinating and provocative argument about why the Egyptian and Tunisian transitions took such different paths after the uprisings of 2010–11. Nugent argues persuasively that the different patterns of repression of the regimes in Egypt and Tunisia shaped the capacity and inclination of the various parts of the opposition movements to work together. The Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak's selectively brutal targeting of the Muslim Brotherhood, his government's relative leniency toward left-wing and other secularist political parties and movements, and the political segregation of the courts and the prison system divided the opposition and made it difficult for ideological adversaries to cooperate after Mubarak's fall. By contrast, the Tunisian dictator Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali's indiscriminate repression of opposition across the ideological spectrum provided opportunities, long before the uprising, for diverse political movements to collaborate, which produced the unusual levels of trust and teamwork exhibited by the political leadership that took over after Ben Ali's departure. Particularly poignant are the accounts of former political prisoners in Tunisia who recall with respect and affection having shared cells—and long conversations—with ideological rivals. Across the Middle East, prison is one of the most important universities; Nugent shows how critical the quality of those schools is for the political elites who are their graduates.

Informal Politics in the Middle East
EDITED BY SUZI MIRGANI. Hurst,
2021, 336 pp.

This collection of only loosely connected essays covers subjects as varied as the *diwans* of Kuwait (the reception rooms in which gossip is exchanged and power is brokered), tribal politics in Yemen, social activism in Egypt, voluntary agricultural associations in an Algerian oasis, political campaigning in Turkey, sectarianism in Qatar, women's advocacy in Iran, and the politics of urban slums (*ashwaiyyat*) in Cairo. The contributors do not agree on what constitutes informality, only that the venues in which people in the region gather to express informed opinions, promote public improvements, and devise collective solutions are enormously varied. The Middle East and North Africa constitute a region that is typically thought to be stripped of everyday politics by brutal governments and crippling violence. Taken together, however, the contributions to this volume convey an impressive resolve on the part of ordinary people to work inside, outside, against, or beside official channels to address common problems. This is less "informal" politics than a quotidian, community-based willingness—and sometimes insistence—to work together to enhance public life.

Asia and Pacific

Andrew J. Nathan

The Long Game: China's Grand Strategy to Displace American Order
BY RUSH DOSHI. Oxford University Press, 2021, 432 pp.

Stronger: Adapting America's China Strategy in an Age of Competitive Interdependence
BY RYAN HASS. Yale University Press, 2021, 240 pp.

The best U.S. policy toward China would be based on an accurate assessment of Beijing's strategic ambitions. These valuable books present the debate about that policy in clear terms and pose critical questions for Washington. It is indisputable that China views the United States as the main threat to its security, but that does not answer the question of how far Beijing intends to extend its own power. Does China merely seek more influence in existing international institutions? Does it want to dominate its region? Does it seek to displace the United States entirely as the dominant global power? Doshi, who assumed the position of China director on the U.S. National Security Council after writing this book, makes a strong argument for the worst-case scenario, in which China's long-term aims are to break up the U.S. alliance system, establish a global network of military bases, monopolize cutting-edge technologies, dominate trade with most countries, and foster authoritarian elites around the world. As evidence, he quotes extensively from the often obscure writings and speeches of Chinese leaders and thinkers, then infers their concrete meaning from China's increasingly assertive recent actions. He rejects as unrealistic both proposals for accommodation and strategies to subvert the regime. Instead, he suggests policies the United States could adopt to at once "blunt" China's influence through more active multilateral diplomacy and "rebuild" the U.S.-centered international order by strengthening its alliances and encouraging domestic revival.

Hass, who served on the National Security Council under President Barack Obama, offers an equally thoughtful and informative analysis, but one that differs in significant ways from that of Doshi. He does not think China seeks to export its governance model, create a Sinocentric political or military bloc, or eliminate U.S. influence in international institutions. Beijing's primary interests are to protect the regime from overthrow, secure control over its claimed national territories (including Taiwan), and maintain the international economic access necessary to sustain prosperity at home. In pursuit of these goals, China wants to weaken or eliminate the U.S. alliance system in Asia, stifle critical voices abroad, and gain an equal say in global institutions. China recognizes, however, that the United States still has power and that other major countries and regions, such as India, Japan, and Europe, will not accept Chinese domination. Hass therefore recommends some of the same policies as Doshi, such as strengthening U.S. alliances and engaging multilateral institutions, but also counsels the

United States to welcome a stronger Chinese role in international rule-making, accept the need of many countries to balance between China and the United States, and seek coordination in areas of common interest, such as climate change and global public health.

Immigrant Incorporation in East Asian Democracies
BY ERIN AERAN CHUNG. Cambridge University Press, 2020, 270 pp.

Shrinking birthrates and growing life expectancy have created a crisis of aging in East Asian societies, but a commitment to ethnocultural purity prevents the obvious fix: immigration. Most immigrants, if they can stay in the countries at all, must retain their foreign citizenship, sometimes for generations; only foreign brides are normally allowed to naturalize. In recent decades, however, immigrants have achieved some new rights in the three East Asian democracies studied in this book—Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. In each case, civil society actors drove the process in different ways. Progress has been slowest in Taiwan, where the pro-immigrant movement was overshadowed by stronger movements concerned with protecting jobs, increasing respect for aboriginal communities, and asserting Taiwan's separate identity from China. In Japan, local governments and volunteer groups provided services for foreigners similar to those available to citizens. The strongest support for immigrants emerged in South Korea, where the progressive labor, religious, and human rights movements that grew out of the struggle for democracy in the 1980s fought for a full range of labor protections for guest workers. But in all three places, even naturalized immigrants continue to face discrimination. Chung's informative study offers a fresh view on political movements and racial attitudes in Asian democracies.

Coup, King, Crisis: A Critical Interregnum in Thailand
EDITED BY PAVIN CHACHAVALPONGPUN. Yale Southeast Asia Studies, 2020, 379 pp.

The death in 2016 of the revered king Bhumibol Adulyadej, who had reigned for 70 years, intensified a long-running crisis of legitimacy in Thai politics. In 2014, the military, fearing that the king's son, Vajiralongkorn, would not be a popular successor, had carried out a coup—the country's 12th since its transition to a constitutional monarchy in 1932—and intensified its use of the lese majesty law to repress critics of the monarchy. The new king turned out to be even more selfish, impulsive, and violent than feared. In this informative volume, 14 leading specialists on Thailand probe the stalemate between the conservative power structure of the monarchy, the military, and Buddhist leaders, on the one hand, and opposition forces among urban youth, the lower-middle class, and rural residents of the north and the northeast, on the other. The palace and the military cling to each other ever more tightly and rule ever less competently, a political alliance in obvious decline but incapable of either retreat or reform.

The Chinese Revolution on the Tibetan Frontier
BY BENNO WEINER. Cornell University Press, 2020, 312 pp.

Conflicting Memories: Tibetan History Under Mao Retold; Essays and Primary Documents
EDITED BY ROBERT BARNETT, BENNO WEINER, AND FRANÇOISE ROBIN. Brill, 2020, 712 pp.

Forbidden Memory: Tibet During the Cultural Revolution
BY TSERING WOESER. TRANSLATED BY SUSAN T. CHEN. EDITED BY ROBERT BARNETT. Potomac Books, 2020, 448 pp.

Beijing's difficulty incorporating Tibetans into the Chinese nation goes back to the earliest days of communist rule. These three books offer precious insights into a hidden history, hinting at the range of stories that will be told if the region's archives are ever opened. During a brief period of access, Weiner was able to conduct research in the government and party archives of the Zeku Tibetan Autonomous County, in Qinghai Province, poring over documents dating from 1953 to 1960. Once the new communist government had pacified resistance, it merged two organizational systems: Tibetan tribal chieftains and religious leaders manned the government, and Han cadres from outside the region staffed the more powerful Chinese Community Party organization. Beijing was unsatisfied with the results of that system. The party sought to persuade the local communities to identify with a larger, multiethnic Chinese nation but faced various forms of passive and active resistance. In 1958, the party moved decisively to destroy the local power structure and create pastoral collectives. The Tibetans and the Hui Muslims in the region rebelled but were repressed with great violence, which was followed by a severe famine. Parallel events occurred across the Tibetan Plateau, creating a legacy that shapes Han-Tibetan relations today.

Conflicting Memories interweaves translated excerpts from 15 sources from the post-Mao era—speeches, memoirs, film scripts, oral histories, fiction, narratives of spiritual journeys, and others—with 13 interpretive essays by impressively qualified Western and exiled Tibetan scholars. Several documents present the official Chinese view that the imposition of Han rule in the 1950s and 1960s was essentially benevolent and successful, even if some mistakes were made. But most of the sources, chiefly those published unofficially or outside China, offer the victims' perspectives on forced labor, imprisonment, torturous "struggle sessions" (during which people were forced to publicly confess to various misdeeds), and the destruction of monasteries and religious relics. All the contributions by Tibetans express an intense commitment to their distinctive culture and religion.

Woeser's book takes up the story with the arrival of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. Her father was a military propaganda officer who used his personal camera to document the public humiliation and torture of leading monks and aristocrats, the destruction of historic sites, triumphal rallies and marches, and posed images of smiling Tibetan youths holding portraits of Mao. Years after her father's death, she decided to publish the

photos abroad. Her close reading of each picture tells readers as much as she could find out about who is portrayed, what happened to them, and the memories triggered in survivors when she showed them the images.

Africa

Nicolas van de Walle

Bring Back Our Girls: The Untold Story of the Global Search for Nigeria's Missing Schoolgirls
BY JOE PARKINSON AND DREW HINSHAW. HarperCollins, 2021, 432 pp.

Parkinson and Hinshaw have written a powerful account of the jihadi terrorist group Boko Haram's 2014 abduction of 276 students from the Government Girls Secondary School in the northeastern Nigerian town of Chibok, which generated an international social media campaign for their release under the hashtag #BringBackOurGirls. The authors spoke to around 20 of the girls who were abducted and later freed and gained access to the journal that one of them had managed to keep during her three years in captivity. The result is a fine-grained picture of their harrowing ordeal, during which they hid in a forest with their captors in precarious circumstances, while the Nigerian army led a desultory and ineffectual search for them. The book also relates the complex and multilayered negotiations for their release, which it suggests were complicated by the international notoriety the girls had gained, as it increased their value as hostages in the eyes of Boko Haram leaders. The narrative ends in 2017, when the negotiations resulted in the release of 82 of the girls. At least 100 of them are still missing today.

Gendered Institutions and Women's Political Representation in Africa
EDITED BY DIANA HOJLUND MADSEN. Zed Books, 2020, 272 pp.

Over the course of the last three decades, many African countries have instituted quotas to increase the representation of women in their legislatures and in leadership positions in political parties. By most quantitative measures, such quotas have succeeded. But have they substantially altered public policies in a manner that benefits the welfare and rights of women? This collection of generally excellent essays offers convincing evidence from half a dozen African countries that the answer is mostly no. The case studies collected here suggest that the reform of formal institutions to increase women's representation has often been undermined by various informal institutions that continue to enforce patriarchal norms in day-to-day politics. For instance, regardless of official party commitments to gender equality, the patron-client relationships that undergird much of African politics are still dominated by men, especially at the local level. Other factors have also limited progress. In South Africa and Tanzania, for example, female parliamentarians are constrained by conservative attitudes that still hold sway among party elites and that discourage them from proposing more progressive social policies.

In This Land of Plenty: Mickey Leland and Africa in American Politics
BY BENJAMIN TALTON. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019, 288 pp.

To End a Plague: America's Fight to Defeat AIDS in Africa
BY EMILY BASS. PublicAffairs, 2021, 470 pp.

These two fascinating histories of U.S. involvement in Africa illuminate the role of American civil society activists in U.S. foreign policy—and also the extent to which they have viewed their work in sub-Saharan Africa as an extension of their progressive commitments at home. Talton portrays Mickey Leland, who was a Democratic congressman from Texas, as emblematic of a generation of African American leaders who came of age during the civil rights struggle and understood international issues through the prism of Third World radicalism. In the 1970s and 1980s, they exerted a significant influence on U.S. policies on Africa, the book argues, notably on Leland's two signature issues: apartheid in South Africa and the brutal Ethiopian famine of the early 1980s. On Leland's sixth trip to Ethiopia, in 1989, he died when a small plane on which he was flying to visit a refugee camp on the border with Sudan crashed. Talton's narrative operates both as a biography of the charismatic Leland and his political evolution from a radical activist in Houston to a well-established Washington insider and as an insightful history of the role that groups such as the Congressional Black Caucus played in U.S. policy toward Africa during the later years of the Cold War.

Bass is a veteran AIDS activist, and her book tells the story of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, the broadly successful initiative that U.S. President George W. Bush launched in 2003. Like many elements of U.S. foreign policy, PEPFAR is largely unknown to the broader public but is sustained by the support of a network of foundations, activists, and civil society actors. The book is not a formal history of PEPFAR and includes little detailed discussion of the program's policies. Bass, however, appears to have dealt with or interviewed all the key players in PEPFAR, and her book nicely balances accounts of the debate over the program and the difficulties in running it with the reflections of the Africans she met on the frontlines of the battle against the disease. Leland viewed the fight against hunger in Africa as a natural extension of his early days fighting poverty in Houston; Bass describes the community of U.S. AIDS activists as similarly transferring their commitments from the domestic arena to the international.

Regional Integration in West Africa: Is There a Role for a Single Currency?
BY ESWAR PRASAD AND VERA SONGWE. Brookings Institution Press, 2021, 180 pp.

The Economic Community of West African States is perhaps the strongest subregional organization in Africa. In 2019, the member governments agreed to form a currency union, which they intend to launch by 2027. Prasad and Songwe's short book assesses the plan's prospects. They concede that the potential economic benefits of a currency union are significant in terms of

greater trade and investment and that it could enhance the macroeconomic discipline of member governments and protect them from external shocks. Still, their informative account focuses mostly on the likely pitfalls. They argue that a successful launch of such a union would require much greater economic and policy integration among the countries and much stronger institutional mechanisms for fiscal coordination and risk management. In the absence of such arrangements, they recommend taking more modest steps to further the financial and economic integration of the region, such as harmonizing economic and financial policies and encouraging the development of a regional financial market.

Beyond the Sand and Sea: One Family's Quest for a Country to Call Home
BY TY MCCORMICK. St. Martin's Press, 2021, 288 pp.

In the massive Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya, the weather is hot, the landscape is barren, and relief agencies and the authorities alike generally treat the hundreds of thousands of Somali inhabitants, many of whom have lived there for decades, with suspicion, hostility, and abuse. In this environment, McCormick, an editor at this magazine, meets Asad, a young man who is a gifted writer. The book tells the tale of Asad's struggle to leave the camp for the United States and the story of his sister Maryan, who found her way there a decade earlier. The shift in perspective between the two siblings is a great strength of the book. Asad is what many Americans might think of as the ideal immigrant: he earns the American dream through hard work, intelligence, and stamina, ultimately winning a scholarship and admittance to Princeton University. Maryan's experience is more typical—and in many ways more revealing about the risks and tradeoffs that even fortunate refugees face. She, too, worked hard and shone at school, but once in the promised land, she struggled with a controlling husband, low-paying jobs, and loneliness. McCormick's book offers rare insight into the extreme difficulties with which some people live and the amazing ability that some of them show to dream and persist, even when the odds are slim and success presents challenges of its own.

SIMON TURNER

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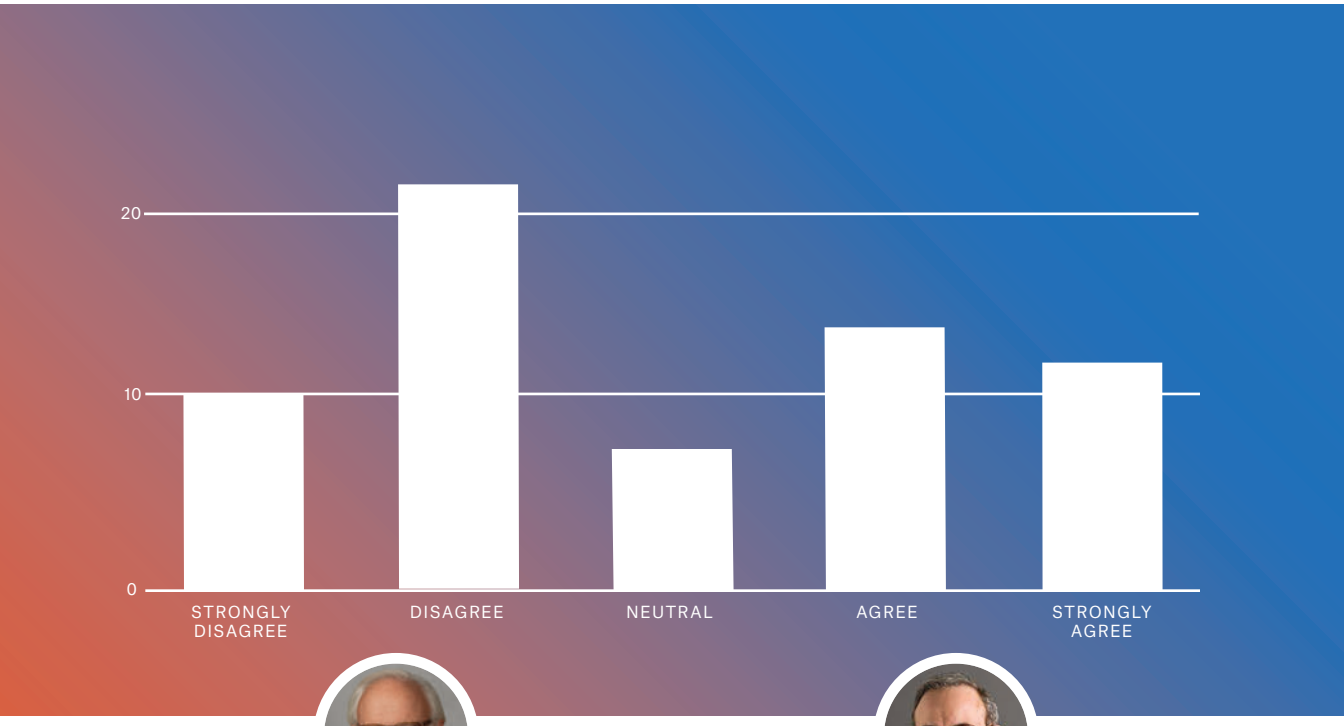
Is the Two-State Solution No Longer Viable?

Foreign Affairs Brain Trust

We asked dozens of experts whether they agreed or disagreed that the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is no longer viable. The results are below.



STRONGLY DISAGREE, CONFIDENCE LEVEL 9

Martin Indyk

Distinguished Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations

"There is no other solution that can actually resolve the conflict. The other 'solutions' will only perpetuate it. However, the parties are not ready to pursue the two-state solution at the moment. There needs to be a ripening process that generates new leaders, a new willingness to take risks, and renewed efforts to rebuild trust in the intentions of the other side."

STRONGLY AGREE, CONFIDENCE LEVEL 10

Marwan Muasher

Vice President for Studies, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

"Political and demographic considerations have led to this conclusion. The Israeli government is not interested in ending the occupation. The international community, by giving lip service to the two-state solution while not accompanying it with a credible plan and not holding Israel accountable, has contributed to this eventuality."

→**See the full responses at ForeignAffairs.com/TwoState**

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