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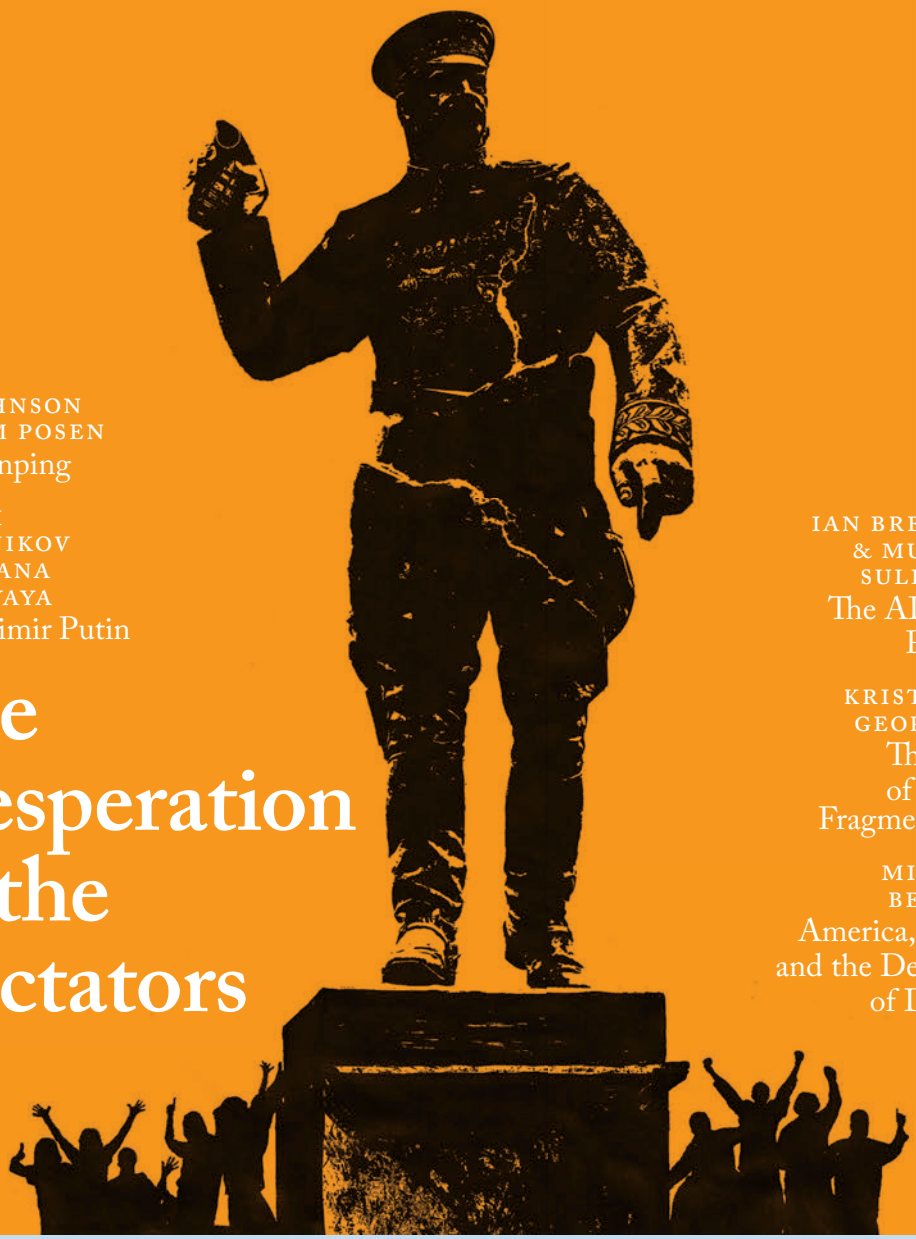
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2023



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Essays

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

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Delusions of Détente

Why America and China Will Be Enduring Rivals

MICHAEL BECKLEY

With U.S.-Chinese relations worse than they have been in over 50 years, an old fairy tale has resurfaced: if only the United States would talk more to China and accommodate its rise, the two countries could live in peace. The story goes that with ample summitry, Washington could recognize Beijing's redlines and restore crisis hotlines and cultural exchanges. Over time and through myriad points of face-to-face contact—in other words, reengagement—the two countries could settle into peaceful, if still competitive, coexistence. Talk enough, some analysts contend, and the United States and China might even strike a grand bargain that establishes stable spheres of influence and something akin to a G-2 to solve global problems such as climate change and pandemics.

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Illustration by Matt Chase

From this perspective, the dismal state of U.S.-Chinese relations is not an inevitable result of two ideologically opposed great powers clashing over vital interests. Rather, it is a mix-up between partners, blown out of proportion by the United States' overreaction to counter China's overreach, as Susan Shirk, a Sinologist and former U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state, has put it. For the past two decades, the thinking goes, China has simply been doing what rising powers usually do: flexing its muscles and demanding a greater say in global affairs. Although many of China's actions, such as its menacing of Taiwan, worry advocates of reengagement, the main target of their critique is the United States—specifically, its relentless pursuit of primacy and the self-serving actors behind it.

In this dark imagining, grandstanding politicians, greedy defense contractors, sensationalizing pundits, overzealous human rights activists, and belligerent bureaucrats fan the flames of rivalry for profit, creating an echo chamber that crowds out different perspectives. Some individuals are supposedly repeating hawkish narratives to protect their careers. The result, the journalist and author Fareed Zakaria has argued, is that "Washington has succumbed to dangerous groupthink on China." The fact that most Americans also hold hawkish views on China just provides more evidence of how irrationally aggressive U.S. policy has become. "The problem today isn't that Americans are insufficiently concerned about the rise of China," the historian Max Boot has insisted. "The problem is that they are prey to hysteria and alarmism that could lead the United States into a needless nuclear war."

For those advocating reengagement, the solution to this cycle of hostility is straightforward. First, defuse tensions through vigorous diplomacy, commerce, and people-to-people exchanges. Next, create a new forum where officials from each country can meet regularly to hash out agreements. According to the historian Adam Tooze, regardless of the exact structure of negotiations, the basic objective is the same: "accommodation of China's historic rise." For some advocates of reengagement, accommodation would merely entail reducing trade barriers to China, a move U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen proposed earlier this year. Other observers, however, favor more drastic concessions. The political scientist Graham Allison, for example, has urged in these pages that the United States accept China's traditional sphere of influence in Asia. Presumably, that would mean

giving Beijing greater freedom in the South China Sea, letting go of Taiwan, and relinquishing American power in the region.

It is an enticing vision. The world would certainly be better off if great powers could settle scores through diplomacy rather than by squaring off in a security competition. Yet the history of great-power rivalry, and of U.S.-Chinese relations in particular, suggests that greater engagement is unlikely to mend ties between the countries and, if performed hastily, could actually catalyze violent conflict. Of the more than two dozen great-power rivalries over the past 200 years, none ended with the sides talking their way out of trouble. Instead, rivalries have persisted until one side could no longer carry on the fight or until both sides united against a common enemy. For example, the United States and China paused their rivalry to ally against the Soviet Union during the latter half of the Cold War, a contest that ended only when the Soviet Union sputtered into terminal decline. In every case, shifts in the balance of power were preconditions for sustainable settlements. Before those shifts, periods of détente were usually just chances to regroup and reload for the next round of competition. In some cases, such as when the United Kingdom sought to improve relations with Germany from 1911 to 1914 and again in 1938, pursuing détente paved the road to war.

The United States and China are unlikely to buck this pattern. Their vital interests conflict and are rooted firmly in their respective political systems, geographies, and national experiences. Many of the connections binding the countries together, such as their extensive trade, are also driving them apart by giving policymakers additional reasons to fight and pressure points to exploit. Neither side can make major concessions without exposing itself. And after decades of dealing with each other, both governments have accumulated long lists of grievances and view the other with deep mistrust. The United States tried to work with China repeatedly from the 1970s to the 2010s, yet top Chinese leaders consistently viewed U.S. outreach, especially the American attempt to integrate China into the U.S.-led liberal order, as an insidious form of containment—a plot designed to weaken the grip of the Chinese Communist Party and lock China into economic dependence and political subservience to the West. American outreach to China during this period was more extensive than the proposals being seriously considered by U.S. policymakers today. Nevertheless, these overtures failed to fundamentally change

Chinese assessments of American intentions or dissuade efforts by the CCP to dominate East Asia and beyond.

The fact is that the U.S.-Chinese rivalry is unlikely to wind down without a significant shift in the balance of power. The United States needs to make policy choices based on this reality and not get caught up in a fantasy. This does not mean cutting off diplomacy or shutting down talks completely, but being clear eyed about what that type of engagement can realistically achieve. There are reasons to hope for a medium-term mellowing of Chinese power that might open space for a real diplomatic breakthrough. To get there, however, the United States and its allies must deter Chinese aggression in the near term and avoid concessions that disrupt favorable long-term trends.

BAD BLOOD

The United States and China have become what political scientists call "enduring rivals," meaning countries that have singled each other out for intense security competition. Over the past few centuries, such pairs have accounted for only one percent of the world's international relationships but more than 80 percent of its wars. Think of the repeated clashes between India and Pakistan, Greece and Turkey, China and Japan, and France and the United Kingdom.

Rivals feud not because they misunderstand each other but because they know each other all too well. They have genuine conflicts of vital and indivisible interests, usually including territorial disputes, the main cause of war. Their redlines and spheres of influence overlap. One side's attempts to protect itself, such as by modernizing its military, inherently threaten the other. If their economies are intertwined, as is often the case, rivals wield trade as a weapon, seeking to monopolize the production of strategic goods and lord it over the other side. The United Kingdom and Germany, for example, waged a fierce commercial competition before coming to blows in World War I.

Rivals also usually espouse divergent ideologies and view the success or spread of the other side's system of beliefs as a subversive threat to their own way of life. For instance, revolutionary France not only tried to conquer its European rivals; it also threatened to topple their monarchical regimes through the power of its example. In the lead-up to World War II, fascist powers faced off against democracies, and during the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union divided much of the world into capitalist and communist blocs. What is more,

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rivals share a history of bad blood. Their mutual hostility is fueled by past acts of aggression and the fear of more to come. Just ask the Chinese today how they feel about Japan.

Once underway, rivalries are extremely difficult to end. According to data collected by the political scientists Michael Colaresi, Karen Rasler, and William Thompson, there have been 27 great-power rivalries since 1816. These struggles lasted for more than 50 years on average and ended in one of three ways. By my count, 19 of them—the vast majority—culminated in war, with one side beating the other into submission. Another six rivalries ended with the two sides allying against a common foe. In the early 1900s, for example, the United Kingdom set aside its differences with France, Russia, and the United States to gang up on Germany; the result was World War I. Finally, there was the Cold War. When the Soviet Union collapsed, its rivalries with the United States and China ended peacefully, although in prior decades Moscow had waged a small border war against China and multiple proxy wars with Washington in different parts of the globe. Today, many people fear a new cold war between the United States and China, but historically, that type of tense standoff has been the best possible outcome because it avoids full-scale fighting.

Confronted by this record, those advocating for greater U.S. engagement with China might respond that they do not seek the immediate end of the U.S.-Chinese rivalry but merely détente, a cooling-off period that allows the sides to put guardrails on their relationship. Yet the history of great-power détente provides little comfort. Such periods have rarely lasted long, even under favorable circumstances. The most successful case, the Concert of Europe—an alliance of monarchies founded in 1815 after the Napoleonic Wars to crush liberal revolutions—had all the ingredients for a durable détente: a common ideology, a common foe, and partnerships forged in war. But its top leaders stopped meeting after 1822, sending lower-level emissaries instead. By the 1830s, the concert was riven by a cold war between its liberal and conservative members. The concert worked well when members' core interests aligned, but when the conservative consensus cracked, so did the concert, which erupted in a hot war over Crimea in 1853. That failure illustrates a more general point: guardrails are more often the result of peace, not effective methods to maintain it. They typically are erected in good times or immediately after crises—when they are least needed—only

to be destroyed in bad times. The most elaborate guardrails in history were installed after World War I, including the Kellogg-Briand Pact outlawing war and the League of Nations, a formal collective security organization; they failed to prevent World War II.

Those calling for Washington to engage more deeply with Beijing characterize the pursuit of détente as risk free: it might fail, but it can't hurt and is worth a try. But when conflicts of interest between rivals are severe, overeager efforts to induce détente can be destabilizing. The Anglo-German détente of 1911 to 1914 contributed to the outbreak of World War I by feeding Germany false hopes that the United Kingdom would remain neutral in a continental war. Between 1921 and 1922, the world's largest naval powers gathered in the U.S. capital to discuss disarmament at the Washington Naval Conference. The effort eventually backfired, however, inching Asia closer to World War II as the United States signaled it would oppose Japanese expansion but would not build the naval power necessary to enforce that prohibition. The Munich Agreement of 1938, which gave Germany permission to annex part of Czechoslovakia, enabled the Nazis to invade Poland the next year. In 1972, the United States and the Soviet Union declared their commitment to "peaceful coexistence" and signed arms control and trade agreements. Détente began to unravel the next year, however, as the superpowers squared off on opposite sides of the Yom Kippur War, followed by a proxy conflict in Angola in 1975, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, and several terrifying nuclear crises in the early 1980s. As so often occurs, détente had meant different things to each side. The Americans thought they had frozen the status quo; the Soviets believed they had been recognized as a superpower with all the attendant privileges, including the right to spread revolution. Once events exposed those conflicting interpretations, the U.S.-Soviet rivalry came roaring back.

Once underway, rivalries are extremely difficult to end.

The bottom line is that great-power rivalries cannot be papered over with memorandums of understanding. Diplomacy is necessary but insufficient to resolve disputes nonviolently. Sustainable settlements also require stable balances of power, which usually emerge not through happy talk but after one side realizes it can no longer compete.

HATERS GONNA HATE

Today, the U.S.-Chinese relationship has all the trappings of an enduring rivalry. For starters, the main issues under dispute are essentially win-lose affairs. Taiwan can be governed from Taipei or Beijing but not both. The East China and South China Seas can be international waters or a Chinese-controlled lake. Russia can be shunned or supported. Democracy can be promoted or squelched. The Internet can be open or state censored. For the United States, its chain of alliances in East Asia represents vital insurance and a force for stability; for China, it looks like hostile encirclement. How should climate change be handled? Where did COVID-19 come from? Ask around Beijing and Washington, and one is likely to hear irreconcilable answers.

More fundamentally, the two rivals hold divergent visions of international order. The CCP wants a world in which what it sees as ancient autocratic civilizations are free to rule their traditional spheres of influence. The United States, by contrast, wants to consign those spheres to the dustbin of history by protecting the sovereignty of weaker countries and integrating them into an open trade order. The U.S.-Chinese rivalry is more than a set of diplomatic disputes—it is also a struggle to promote different ways of life.

To make matters worse, neither side can credibly reassure the other without losing some ability to hold it accountable. Advocates of reengagement call for the United States and China to respect each other's redlines. But achieving a sustained thaw in relations would require at least one side to abandon many of its redlines altogether. China wants the United States to end arms sales to Taiwan, slash the overall U.S. military presence in East Asia, share U.S. technology with Chinese companies, reopen the U.S. market to a flood of Chinese exports, stop promoting democracy in China's neighborhood, and let Russia win its war in Ukraine. The United States, for its part, wants China to dial back its defense spending, refrain from aggression in the Taiwan Strait, cease its militarization of the South China Sea, rein in industrial subsidies and espionage, and withdraw its support for Russia and other autocracies.

Yet neither side could grant such concessions without empowering the other to push for more. If China backed off Taiwan militarily, for example, the island could drift toward independence; but if the United States stopped arming Taiwan, the military balance would shift radically in Beijing's favor. If China allowed Russia to lose in Ukraine, the CCP would face a reeling nuclear power on its doorstep and a

triumphant United States freed to focus on Asia; but if the United States let Russia win, a Chinese-Russian axis could be emboldened to take even more territory, such as Taiwan or the Baltic states, from a demoralized West. If China abandoned its industrial policies, it would further cede technological primacy to the United States; but Washington would not abide Chinese mercantilism without hollowing out both the U.S. economy and what was left of the open global trading order. If the CCP stopped propping up autocracies, it would risk waves of popular revolutions, such as occurred in 1989 and the early years of the twenty-first century, that could energize liberal activists at home and bring to power regimes abroad that would be more inclined to sanction China for its human rights record. If the United States stopped aiding and protecting fledgling democracies, however, some could disappear behind Beijing's digital iron curtain.

These conflicting interests cannot be traded away by diplomats sitting around a table because they are rooted not just in each country's political system but also in their historical memories and geographies. Contemporary Chinese political culture is ingrained by two cataclysms: the "century of humiliation" (which took place from 1839 to 1949), when the country was ripped apart by imperialist powers, and the revolutions of 1989 that toppled the Soviet Union and other communist regimes and nearly undid China's. The CCP's prime directive is to never let China be bullied or divided again—a goal, China's leaders believe, that requires relentlessly amassing wealth and power, expanding territorial control, and ruling with an iron fist. As an economic late bloomer, China must use mercantilist methods to climb up global value chains long monopolized by the West. With China surrounded by 19 countries, many of them hostile or unstable, the country's leaders believe they must carve out a broad security perimeter that includes Taiwan, chunks of India, and most of the East China and South China Seas, where 90 percent of China's trade and most of its oil flow. Expansion is also a political imperative. The CCP justifies its autocratic rule in part by promising to recover territories lost during the century of humiliation. Demilitarizing those areas now would mean surrendering the CCP's solemn mission to make China whole again and, consequently, diminishing its ability to use anti-foreign nationalism as a source of legitimacy.

American interests are perhaps less entrenched but remain too fixed to give up without a struggle. As a rich democracy surrounded by allies and oceans, the United States likes things the way they are.

Its main foreign policy goal is to prevent overseas threats from spoiling the wealth and freedom its citizens enjoy at home. Many Americans would love to avoid foreign entanglements, but the world wars and the Cold War showed that powerful tyrannies can and should be contained—and that it is better to do so early, before an aggressive country has overrun its region, by maintaining strong alliances in peacetime. Americans may eventually forget that lesson as the generations that won World War II and the Cold War pass on. But for now, it continues to shape U.S. foreign policy, especially toward China. When American policymakers observe China trying to redraw the map of East Asia, supporting Russia's invasion of Ukraine, or locking ethnic minorities in concentration camps, they see not just a series of policy disagreements but a multifaceted assault on the order that has undergirded U.S. security and prosperity for generations. With the stakes seemingly so high, compromise, even on a single issue, is hard for leaders on both sides to stomach.

Cold wars are awful but better than hot ones.

Champions of reengagement correctly point out that China and the United States are bound together by various forms of mutual vulnerability. Neither country wants war, runaway climate change, pandemics, or a global depression. The U.S. and Chinese economies are intertwined. Both governments possess nuclear arsenals and want to prevent other countries from acquiring them. With the costs of conflict so potentially devastating and the benefits of cooperation so manifest, peace should be relatively easy to maintain, at least in theory.

In practice, however, mutual vulnerability may be exacerbating the rivalry. For example, both countries are engaging in conventional military provocations, perhaps under the assumption that the other side would never risk a nuclear exchange by opening fire. Scholars call this the "stability-instability paradox," whereby excessive faith in nuclear deterrence makes conventional war more likely. Some Chinese analysts argue that the People's Liberation Army could destroy U.S. bases in East Asia while China's nuclear forces deter U.S. retaliation against Chinese mainland targets. Meanwhile, some American defense planners advocate decimating China's navy and air bases early in a conflict, believing that U.S. nuclear superiority would compel China to stand down rather than escalate. Instead of dampening tensions, nuclear weapons may be inflaming them.

The same goes for economic interdependence. As the international relations scholar Dale Copeland has pointed out in *Foreign Affairs,* when trade partners become geopolitical rivals, they start to fear being cut off from vital goods, markets, and trade routes. To plug their vulnerabilities, they embark on quests for self-reliance, using various instruments of state power, such as aid, loans, bribes, arms sales, technology transfers, and military force, to secure their economic lifelines. The result is a "trade-security spiral" that Copeland has shown helped fuel several of history's greatest wars. By contrast, the independence of the U.S. and Soviet economies was a stabilizing force in the original Cold War, as the historian John Lewis Gaddis has observed.

China's economic situation today bears more resemblance to the economies of Germany, Italy, and Japan in the first half of the twentieth century: China imports most of its raw materials through chokepoints it cannot fully control, relies heavily on exports to the United States and its allies for revenue, and has good reason to worry that those countries would cut off its access to resources and markets in a crisis. Having watched the West cripple Russia's economy with sanctions, China is reportedly redoubling its efforts to decouple from the United States. Through its so-called dual circulation policy, China is using subsidies and trade barriers to reorient its economy around its domestic market and is carving out privileged zones abroad to secure raw materials and markets lacking at home. Those moves, in turn, have alarmed the United States, which is responding with its own campaign for economic primacy. Rather than bringing the two countries together, commerce is driving them farther apart.

ENGAGEMENT OR CONTAINMENT?

Those pushing for more engagement with China argue that the United States should "test the proposition" that diplomatic overtures could kick-start a cycle of cooperation with China, as the scholar Jessica Chen Weiss proposed in *Foreign Affairs* last year. But that proposition has been tested many times in recent decades, and the results have been far from reassuring. The United States made concessions during that era of engagement that would be unthinkable today, including fast-tracking China's integration into Western supply chains, transferring weapons to China's military and advanced technology to CCP-owned firms, welcoming China's entry into major international organizations, quietly encouraging Taiwan to consider peaceful unification,

and downplaying CCP human rights abuses. Yet internal documents reveal that top Chinese leaders repeatedly interpreted such U.S. overtures as insincere or even threatening.

The examples are plentiful. Following the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, U.S. President George H. W. Bush sent an apologetic letter to the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping expressing his determination to "get the relationship back on track" after the United States had imposed sanctions in response to the CCP's brutal crackdown. Bush presumably meant resuming work as tacit allies, with the United States dropping sanctions and furnishing technology, intelligence, and economic access to China. But Deng wasn't buying it. Instead, as the scholar (and current National Security Council official) Rush Doshi reported, Deng thought the United States had been "deeply involved" in the "counterrevolutionary rebellion" and was "waging a world war without gunsmoke" to overthrow the CCP.

Nine years later, U.S. President Bill Clinton visited Beijing to cement his engagement policy, which included granting China "most favored nation" trading status without the human rights standards normally required of a "nonmarket economy," the designation the United States assigns to former and current communist countries. In a gesture of goodwill, Clinton became the first U.S. president to publicly articulate the "three no's" regarding Taiwan: no independence, no two Chinas, and no membership for Taipei in intergovernmental organizations. A few months later, however, the Chinese leader Jiang Zemin warned the CCP foreign policy bureaucracy that Washington's "so-called engagement policy" had the same aim as a "containment policy": "to try with ulterior motives to change our country's socialist system." Jiang further asserted that "some in the United States and other Western countries will not give up their political plot to westernize and divide our country" and would "put pressure on us in an attempt to overwhelm us and put us down." The bottom line was that "from now on and for a relatively long period of time, the United States will be our main diplomatic adversary."

During the following decade, the George W. Bush administration encouraged China to become a "responsible stakeholder" in the international order and launched a series of U.S.-Chinese "strategic economic dialogues." The Obama administration expanded those dialogues to cover all major issues in the relationship and put out a joint statement respecting China's "core interests"—all in pursuit of "strategic reassurance." But Chinese leaders were not reassured. As the scholars Andrew

Nathan and Andrew Scobell wrote in 2012, after reviewing Chinese sources: "The Chinese believe the United States is a revisionist power that seeks to curtail China's political influence and harm China's interests." Although Chinese leaders welcomed U.S. technology and market access, they were more struck by the threats the United States posed to their regime, including its massive military presence in their region, its efforts to negotiate a trans-Pacific trade bloc that would have excluded Beijing, the army of U.S. nongovernmental organizations meddling in China's internal affairs, and the numerous times that senior U.S. officials declared that the purpose of engagement was to liberalize China. Bad memories, such as the 1999 U.S. bombing of China's embassy in Yugoslavia, were much more present in the minds of CCP leaders than good ones—a common psychological phenomenon in a rivalry.

Supporters of reengagement would like to see Washington explain that it wants to include China in a positive-sum international order. But Chinese leaders understand U.S. offers of inclusion perfectly well, perhaps better than many Americans do. They saw what happened when Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev tried to integrate the Soviet Union into the Western order. As Deng predicted, opening the window to the "fresh air" of U.S. engagement also allowed in "flies" in the form of subversive political forces. To prevent something similar from happening in China, the CCP developed an authoritarian capitalist system designed to extract the benefits of an open global order while keeping liberal political pressures at bay. For Americans, this turned out to be as good as it got: a partial Chinese integration that helped the CCP strengthen itself for a future contest over international borders and rules.

That epic struggle now seems at hand. Determined not to suffer Gorbachev's fate, or worse, Chinese President Xi Jinping has spent his time in power building a fortress around China and himself. His national security strategy calls for the opposite of the reforms and concessions that destroyed the Soviet Communist Party but also brought the Cold War to a peaceful end. A massive military buildup, the reassertion of party control over every institution, an epic campaign to sanctions-proof the CCP: these are not the hallmarks of a regime interested in reengaging with a liberal superpower. Rather, they are the telltale signs of an aggrieved dictatorship gearing up for "worst-case and extreme scenarios and . . . major tests of high winds, choppy waters, and even dangerous storms," as Xi now repeatedly warns his comrades.

BATTEN DOWN THE HATCHES

The most likely scenario in the years to come is a cold war in which the United States and China continue to decouple their strategic economic sectors, maintain a military standoff in East Asia, promote their rival visions of world order, and compete to produce solutions to transnational problems. Cold wars are awful but better than hot ones. Many ties that bind the United States and China—especially their dense economic links—are exacerbating their insecurities and becoming new arenas of conflict. For U.S. policymakers, it may be better to find avenues to create buffers between the two sides than to try to make them more interdependent.

A cold war does not rule out all forms of cooperation. After all, the United States and the Soviet Union worked together to eradicate smallpox even as they competed for dominance. Historically, great-power rivals, even those at war, have often maintained at least some trade in nonstrategic sectors and societal links with each other. Diplomatic talks can continue, provided they are not preceded by destabilizing concessions, as they signal to allies and adversaries alike that the United States is not hell-bent on a superpower throwdown. A cold war does, however, entail U.S. containment of China, a strategy that differs in three fundamental ways from reengagement.

First, containment prioritizes deterrence and denial over reassurance. The United States should mollify China when it can, but not at the expense of weakening U.S. capabilities or sending mixed signals about U.S. resolve on vital issues. For example, the United States can deny support for Taiwanese independence, but it must also accelerate arms sales to Taipei, diversify and harden the U.S. base structure in East Asia, and convey through a robust military presence nearby that a Chinese assault on Taiwan would be met with a severe U.S. response. Similarly, the United States can limit its economic restrictions on China to a "small yard" of sectors, as the Biden administration currently aims to do, but it must also stock up on ammunition, especially antiship missiles, to avoid pairing economic pressure with military negligence—a deadly combination that blazed imperial Japan's path to Pearl Harbor.

Second, containment reverses the order of carrots and sticks in diplomatic negotiations. Whereas engagement involves enticing one's opponent to the negotiating table, containment starts by building up capabilities and then pursuing diplomacy from a position of strength. For example, some members of the Trump and Biden administrations

reportedly considered unilaterally reducing U.S. tariffs or delaying sanctions on Beijing as a sign of good faith. A better approach would be to hold talks with allies, as occurred at the G-7 meeting in May, to consolidate a free-world economic and security bloc to check Chinese coercion and then collectively seek to settle the trade and technology wars with Beijing.

Third, containment measures success by whether the United States effectively defends its interests and values, not by whether U.S.-Chinese relations are friendly. Those promoting reengagement claim that competition with China has consumed U.S. foreign policy and that the United States lacks a vision for the world beyond bludgeoning Beijing. But the United States has espoused the same vision for decades. It is called the liberal order, an open commercial system in which participants can trade and prosper in peace without fear of being gobbled up by revanchist empires. It is the system that made China's escape from poverty possible by pacifying Japan and giving the Chinese people unprecedented access to foreign capital, technology, and markets. It is the system that American policymakers have repeatedly asked China to help uphold. But the CCP has instead become a serious threat to that system with its aggressive territorial claims, rampant mercantilism, and support for Russia's brutalization of Ukraine. Some advocates of reengagement call for sacrificing aspects of the order—rules of international trade, and human rights laws—to improve ties with China. Some even suggest offering concessions on international borders and access to waterways in East Asia. A policy of containment would do the opposite by insisting that China compromise its revisionist aims and, if the CCP refuses, accepting that the liberal order will not revolve around a tight U.S.-Chinese partnership any time soon.

> Containment does not have to lead to violent conflict.

Containment may seem counterproductive at first because Chinese leaders will howl with the outrage typical of their "Wolf Warrior" diplomacy. But sometimes the policy that appears most fraught in the near term offers the best chance for a lasting peace—and the policy that seems safest in the moment could be disastrous in the long run. Reengagement, a seemingly prudent middle course between appeasement and containment, may be the most dangerous of all because it neither satisfies Chinese demands nor deters Beijing from taking what it

wants by force. Since Chinese leaders repeatedly perceive U.S. offers of engagement as stealth containment, the choice the United States faces is not between engagement and containment but between a meek and waffling, yet still provocative, form of containment and a clear and firm version that at least has some hope of deterring Chinese aggression.

Then, of course, there is capitulation. The United States could avoid conflict with China, at least in the short term, by recognizing China's territorial claims and withdrawing U.S. forces from East Asia. Few advocate such extreme concessions. But part of what makes the case for engagement compelling is the implicit assumption that if outreach fails, the United States can always hit the reset button, grant China a sphere of influence, and emerge relatively unscathed. The thinking goes that it is better to accommodate China and risk appeasement than to contain China and risk war.

The problem with capitulation, however, is that Chinese demands cannot be satisfied by the United States alone. To make the CCP happy, Taiwan would have to accept absorption by a brutal dictatorship, and neighboring countries would have to beg Beijing for permission to venture beyond their coastlines. None of that is likely, which is why the most probable result of U.S. retrenchment would be not an immaculate transition to peaceful Chinese hegemony but violent chaos. A fully militarized Japan; a nuclear breakout by Seoul, Taipei, and Tokyo; and an emboldened North Korea are only the most obvious risks. Less obvious are potential knock-on effects, such as the collapse of Asian supply chains and U.S. alliances in Europe, which might not survive the shock of seeing the United States create a security vacuum for China to fill.

Perhaps Americans could ride out the resulting storm from the safety of the Western Hemisphere, but the history of both world wars suggests they would eventually be sucked into the Eurasian vortex. At a minimum, the United States would need to arm itself to the teeth to hedge against that possibility—as well as against the possibility of a Chinese colossus that sets its sights on U.S. territories in the western Pacific after overrunning East Asia. Either way, the United States would be back where it started—containing China—but without allies, secure supply chains, forward-deployed forces, or much credibility. To compensate, the United States might have to become a garrison state, with its wealth and civil liberties eroded by breakneck militarization.

Capitulation might be worth a try if the only alternatives were a catastrophic hot war or an endless and financially crippling cold war.

But there are reasons to hope that U.S. containment of China can be a temporary way station to a brighter future. During the original Cold War, containment was designed to block Soviet advances until the weaknesses of the communist system sapped Moscow's power and forced the Soviets to radically scale back their ambitions. That should be the same goal with China today, and it may not take four decades to get there. The drivers of China's rise are already stalling. Slowing growth, soaring debt, autocratic incompetence, capital flight, youth unemployment, and a shrinking population are taking a toll on Chinese comprehensive national power. The CCP has also made enemies near and far. Many of China's neighbors are beefing up their militaries, and major economies, led by the G-7, which controls more than half the world's stocks of wealth, are imposing hundreds of new trade and investment barriers on Beijing every year. China garnered goodwill across the global South by doling out more than $1 trillion in loans to over 100 countries. But most of those loans will mature around 2030, and many will not be paid back. It is hard to see how a country saddled with so many liabilities and facing so many rivals can continue to compete with a superpower and its wealthy allies. The United States does not need to contain China forever, just long enough to allow current trends to play out. Should that occur, Xi's dream of Chinese dominance will start to look unattainable, and his successors may feel compelled to address, through diplomatic moderation and internal reform, the country's economic stagnation and geopolitical encirclement.

In the meantime, containment does not have to lead to violent conflict. Competition could see the United States and China engage in a technology race that pushes the frontiers of human knowledge to new heights and creates innovative solutions to transnational problems. It could also mean the two rivals cultivate internally peaceful blocs of like-minded states, and in which they use nonviolent means, including the provision of aid, to try to win hearts and minds and expand their influence at the margins. This type of rivalry might not be so bad for the world and certainly would be better than the great-power wars that have characterized most of modern history. The "one world" dream of a single, harmonious international system may be impossible for now, but that does not rule out peaceful, if tense, relations between two rival orders. Containing China in that competition will entail severe risks and costs, but it is the best way to avoid an even more destructive conflict.

The AI Power Paradox

Can States Learn to Govern Artificial Intelligence—Before It's Too Late?

IAN BREMMER AND MUSTAFA SULEYMAN

It's 2035, and artificial intelligence is everywhere. AI systems run hospitals, operate airlines, and battle each other in the courtroom. Productivity has spiked to unprecedented levels, and countless previously unimaginable businesses have scaled at blistering speed, generating immense advances in well-being. New products, cures, and innovations hit the market daily, as science and technology kick into overdrive. And yet the world is growing both more unpredictable and more fragile, as terrorists find new ways to menace societies with intelligent, evolving cyberweapons and white-collar workers lose their jobs en masse.

Just a year ago, that scenario would have seemed purely fictional; today, it seems nearly inevitable. Generative AI systems can already write more

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Illustration by Daniel Liévano

clearly and persuasively than most humans and can produce original images, art, and even computer code based on simple language prompts. And generative AI is only the tip of the iceberg. Its arrival marks a Big Bang moment, the beginning of a world-changing technological revolution that will remake politics, economies, and societies.

Like past technological waves, AI will pair extraordinary growth and opportunity with immense disruption and risk. But unlike previous waves, it will also initiate a seismic shift in the structure and balance of global power as it threatens the status of nation-states as the world's primary geopolitical actors. Whether they admit it or not, AI's creators are themselves geopolitical actors, and their sovereignty over AI further entrenches the emerging "technopolar" order—one in which technology companies wield the kind of power in their domains once reserved for nation-states. For the past decade, big technology firms have effectively become independent, sovereign actors in the digital realms they have created. AI accelerates this trend and extends it far beyond the digital world. The technology's complexity and the speed of its advancement will make it almost impossible for governments to make relevant rules at a reasonable pace. If governments do not catch up soon, it is possible they never will.

Thankfully, policymakers around the world have begun to wake up to the challenges posed by AI and wrestle with how to govern it. In May 2023, the G-7 launched the "Hiroshima AI process," a forum devoted to harmonizing AI governance. In June, the European Parliament passed a draft of the EU's AI Act, the first comprehensive attempt by the European Union to erect safeguards around the AI industry. And in July, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for the establishment of a global AI regulatory watchdog. Meanwhile, in the United States, politicians on both sides of the aisle are calling for regulatory action. But many agree with Ted Cruz, the Republican senator from Texas, who concluded in June that Congress "doesn't know what the hell it's doing."

Unfortunately, too much of the debate about AI governance remains trapped in a dangerous false dilemma: leverage artificial intelligence to expand national power or stifle it to avoid its risks. Even those who accurately diagnose the problem are trying to solve it by shoehorning AI into existing or historical governance frameworks. Yet AI cannot be governed like any previous technology, and it is already shifting traditional notions of geopolitical power.

The challenge is clear: to design a new governance framework fit for this unique technology. If global governance of AI is to become

possible, the international system must move past traditional conceptions of sovereignty and welcome technology companies to the table. These actors may not derive legitimacy from a social contract, democracy, or the provision of public goods, but without them, effective AI governance will not stand a chance. This is one example of how the international community will need to rethink basic assumptions about the geopolitical order. But it is not the only one.

A challenge as unusual and pressing as AI demands an original solution. Before policymakers can begin to hash out an appropriate regulatory structure, they will need to agree on basic principles for how to govern AI. For starters, any governance framework will need to be precautionary, agile, inclusive, impermeable, and targeted. Building on these principles, policymakers should create at least three overlapping governance regimes: one for establishing facts and advising governments on the risks posed by AI, one for preventing an all-out arms race between them, and one for managing the disruptive forces of a technology unlike anything the world has seen.

Like it or not, 2035 is coming. Whether it is defined by the positive advances enabled by AI or the negative disruptions caused by it depends on what policymakers do now.

FASTER, HIGHER, STRONGER

AI is different—different from other technologies and different in its effect on power. It does not just pose policy challenges; its hyperevolutionary nature also makes solving those challenges progressively harder. That is the AI power paradox.

The pace of progress is staggering. Take Moore's Law, which has successfully predicted the doubling of computing power every two years. The new wave of AI makes that rate of progress seem quaint. When OpenAI launched its first large language model, known as GPT-1, in 2018, it had 117 million parameters—a measure of the system's scale and complexity. Five years later, the company's fourth-generation model, GPT-4, is thought to have over a trillion. The amount of computation used to train the most powerful AI models has increased by a factor of ten every year for the last ten years. Put another way, today's most advanced AI models—also known as "frontier" models—use five billion times the computing power of cutting-edge models from a decade ago. Processing that once took weeks now happens in seconds. Models that can handle tens of trillions of

parameters are coming in the next couple of years. "Brain scale" models with more than 100 trillion parameters—roughly the number of synapses in the human brain—will be viable within five years.

With each new order of magnitude, unexpected capabilities emerge. Few predicted that training on raw text would enable large language models to produce coherent, novel, and even creative sentences. Fewer still expected language models to be able to compose music or solve scientific problems, as some now can. Soon, AI developers will likely succeed in creating systems with self-improving capabilities—a critical juncture in the trajectory of this technology that should give everyone pause.

AI models are also doing more with less. Yesterday's cutting-edge capabilities are running on smaller, cheaper, and more accessible systems today. Just three years after OpenAI released GPT-3, open-source teams have created models capable of the same level of performance that are less than one-sixtieth of its size—that is, 60 times cheaper to run in production, entirely free, and available to everyone on the Internet. Future large language models will probably follow this efficiency trajectory, becoming available in open-source form just two or three years after leading AI labs spend hundreds of millions of dollars developing them.

As with any software or code, AI algorithms are much easier and cheaper to copy and share (or steal) than physical assets. Proliferation risks are obvious. Meta's powerful Llama-1 large language model, for instance, leaked to the Internet within days of debuting in March. Although the most powerful models still require sophisticated hardware to work, midrange versions can run on computers that can be rented for a few dollars an hour. Soon, such models will run on smartphones. No technology this powerful has become so accessible, so widely, so quickly.

AI also differs from older technologies in that almost all of it can be characterized as "dual use"—having both military and civilian applications. Many systems are inherently general, and indeed, generality is the primary goal of many AI companies. They want their applications to help as many people in as many ways as possible. But the same systems that drive cars can drive tanks. An AI application built to diagnose diseases might be able to create—and weaponize—a new one. The boundaries between the safely civilian and the militarily destructive are inherently blurred, which partly explains why the United States has restricted the export of the most advanced semiconductors to China.

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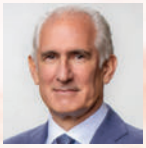

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All this plays out on a global field: once released, AI models can and will be everywhere. And it will take just one malign or "breakout" model to wreak havoc. For that reason, regulating AI cannot be done in a patchwork manner. There is little use in regulating AI in some countries if it remains unregulated in others. Because AI can proliferate so easily, its governance can have no gaps.

What is more, the damage AI might do has no obvious cap, even as the incentives to build it (and the benefits of doing so) continue to grow. AI could be used to generate and spread toxic misinformation, eroding social trust and democracy; to surveil, manipulate, and subdue citizens, undermining individual and collective freedom; or to create powerful digital or physical weapons that threaten human lives. AI could also destroy millions of jobs, worsening existing inequalities and creating new ones; entrench discriminatory patterns and distort decision-making by amplifying bad information feedback loops; or spark unintended and uncontrollable military escalations that lead to war.

AI will initiate a seismic shift in the balance of global power.

Nor is the time frame clear for the biggest risks. Online misinformation is an obvious short-term threat, just as autonomous warfare seems plausible in the medium term. Farther out on the horizon lurks the promise of artificial general intelligence, the still uncertain point where AI exceeds human performance at any given task, and the (admittedly speculative) peril that AGI could become self-directed, self-replicating, and self-improving beyond human control. All these dangers need to be factored into governance architecture from the outset.

AI is not the first technology with some of these potent characteristics, but it is the first to combine them all. AI systems are not like cars or airplanes, which are built on hardware amenable to incremental improvements and whose most costly failures come in the form of individual accidents. They are not like chemical or nuclear weapons, which are difficult and expensive to develop and store, let alone secretly share or deploy. As their enormous benefits become self-evident, AI systems will only grow bigger, better, cheaper, and more ubiquitous. They will even become capable of quasi autonomy—able to achieve concrete goals with minimal human oversight—and, potentially, of self-improvement. Any one of these features would challenge traditional governance models; all of them together render these models hopelessly inadequate.

As if that were not enough, by shifting the structure and balance of global power, AI complicates the very political context in which it is governed. AI is not just software development as usual; it is an entirely new means of projecting power. In some cases, it will upend existing authorities; in others, it will entrench them. Moreover, its advancement is being propelled by irresistible incentives: every nation, corporation, and individual will want some version of it.

Within countries, AI will empower those who wield it to surveil, deceive, and even control populations—supercharging the collection and commercial use of personal data in democracies and sharpening the tools of repression authoritarian governments use to subdue their societies. Across countries, AI will be the focus of intense geopolitical competition. Whether for its repressive capabilities, economic potential, or military advantage, AI supremacy will be a strategic objective of every government with the resources to compete. The least imaginative strategies will pump money into homegrown AI champions or attempt to build and control supercomputers and algorithms. More nuanced strategies will foster specific competitive advantages, as France seeks to do by directly supporting AI startups; the United Kingdom, by capitalizing on its world-class universities and venture capital ecosystem; and the EU, by shaping the global conversation on regulation and norms.

The vast majority of countries have neither the money nor the technological know-how to compete for AI leadership. Their access to frontier AI will instead be determined by their relationships with a handful of already rich and powerful corporations and states. This dependence threatens to aggravate current geopolitical power imbalances. The most powerful governments will vie to control the world's most valuable resource while, once again, countries in the global South will be left behind. This is not to say that only the richest will benefit from the AI revolution. Like the Internet and smartphones, AI will proliferate without respect for borders, as will the productivity gains it unleashes. And like energy and green technology, AI will benefit many countries that do not control it, including those that contribute to producing AI inputs such as semiconductors.

At the other end of the geopolitical spectrum, however, the competition for AI supremacy will be fierce. At the end of the Cold War, powerful countries might have cooperated to allay one another's fears and arrest a potentially destabilizing technological arms race. But

today's tense geopolitical environment makes such cooperation much harder. AI is not just another tool or weapon that can bring prestige, power, or wealth. It has the potential to enable a significant military and economic advantage over adversaries. Rightly or wrongly, the two players that matter most—China and the United States—both see AI development as a zero-sum game that will give the winner a decisive strategic edge in the decades to come.

From the vantage point of Washington and Beijing, the risk that the other side will gain an edge in AI is greater than any theoretical risk the technology might pose to society or to their own domestic political authority. For that reason, both the U.S. and Chinese governments are pouring immense resources into developing AI capabilities while working to deprive each other of the inputs needed for next-generation breakthroughs. (So far, the United States has been far more successful than China in doing the latter, especially with its export controls on advanced semiconductors.) This zero-sum dynamic—and the lack of trust on both sides—means that Beijing and Washington are focused on accelerating AI development, rather than slowing it down. In their view, a "pause" in development to assess risks, as some AI industry leaders have called for, would amount to foolish unilateral disarmament.

But this perspective assumes that states can assert and maintain at least some control over AI. This may be the case in China, which has integrated its tech companies into the fabric of the state. Yet in the West and elsewhere, AI is more likely to undermine state power than to bolster it. Outside China, a handful of large, specialist AI companies currently control every aspect of this new technological wave: what AI models can do, who can access them, how they can be used, and where they can be deployed. And because these companies jealously guard their computing power and algorithms, they alone understand (most of) what they are creating and (most of) what those creations can do. These few firms may retain their advantage for the foreseeable future—or they may be eclipsed by a raft of smaller players as low barriers to entry, open-source development, and near-zero marginal costs lead to uncontrolled proliferation of AI. Either way, the AI revolution will take place outside government.

To a limited degree, some of these challenges resemble those of earlier digital technologies. Internet platforms, social media, and even devices such as smartphones all operate, to some extent, within sandboxes controlled by their creators. When governments have summoned

the political will, they have been able to implement regulatory regimes for these technologies, such as the EU's General Data Protection Regulation, Digital Markets Act, and Digital Services Act. But such regulation took a decade or more to materialize in the EU, and it still has not fully materialized in the United States. AI moves far too quickly for policymakers to respond at their usual pace. Moreover, social media and other older digital technologies do not help create themselves, and the commercial and strategic interests driving them never dovetailed in quite the same way: Twitter and TikTok are powerful, but few think they could transform the global economy.

This all means that at least for the next few years, AI's trajectory will be largely determined by the decisions of a handful of private businesses, regardless of what policymakers in Brussels or Washington do. In other words, technologists, not policymakers or bureaucrats, will exercise authority over a force that could profoundly alter both the power of nation-states and how they relate to each other. That makes the challenge of governing AI unlike anything governments have faced before, a regulatory balancing act more delicate—and more high stakes—than any policymakers have attempted.

MOVING TARGET, EVOLVING WEAPON

Governments are already behind the curve. Most proposals for governing AI treat it as a conventional problem amenable to the state-centric solutions of the twentieth century: compromises over rules hashed out by political leaders sitting around a table. But that will not work for AI.

Regulatory efforts to date are in their infancy and still inadequate. The EU's AI Act is the most ambitious attempt to govern AI in any jurisdiction, but it will apply in full only beginning in 2026, by which time AI models will have advanced beyond recognition. The United Kingdom has proposed an even looser, voluntary approach to regulating AI, but it lacks the teeth to be effective. Neither initiative attempts to govern AI development and deployment at the global level—something that will be necessary for AI governance to succeed. And while voluntary pledges to respect AI safety guidelines, such as those made in July by seven leading AI developers, including Inflection AI, led by one of us (Suleyman), are welcome, they are no substitute for legally binding national and international regulation.

Advocates for international-level agreements to tame AI tend to reach for the model of nuclear arms control. But AI systems are not

only infinitely easier to develop, steal, and copy than nuclear weapons; they are controlled by private companies, not governments. As the new generation of AI models diffuses faster than ever, the nuclear comparison looks ever more out of date. Even if governments can successfully control access to the materials needed to build the most advanced models—as the Biden administration is attempting to do by preventing China from acquiring advanced chips—they can do little to stop the proliferation of those models once they are trained and therefore require far fewer chips to operate.

For global AI governance to work, it must be tailored to the specific nature of the technology, the challenges it poses, and the structure and balance of power in which it operates. But because the evolution, uses, risks, and rewards of AI are unpredictable, AI governance cannot be fully specified at the outset—or at any point in time, for that matter. It must be as innovative and evolutionary as the technology it seeks to govern, sharing some of the characteristics that make AI such a powerful force in the first place. That means starting from scratch, rethinking and rebuilding a new regulatory framework from the ground up.

The overarching goal of any global AI regulatory architecture should be to identify and mitigate risks to global stability without choking off AI innovation and the opportunities that flow from it. Call this approach "technoprudentialism," a mandate rather like the macroprudential role played by global financial institutions such as the Financial Stability Board, the Bank of International Settlements, and the International Monetary Fund. Their objective is to identify and mitigate risks to global financial stability without jeopardizing economic growth.

A technoprudential mandate would work similarly, necessitating the creation of institutional mechanisms to address the various aspects of AI that could threaten geopolitical stability. These mechanisms, in turn, would be guided by common principles that are both tailored to AI's unique features and reflect the new technological balance of power that has put tech companies in the driver's seat. These principles would help policymakers draw up more granular regulatory frameworks to govern AI as it evolves and becomes a more pervasive force.

The first and perhaps most vital principle for AI governance is precaution. As the term implies, technoprudentialism is at its core guided by the precautionary credo: first, do no harm. Maximally constraining AI would mean forgoing its life-altering upsides, but maximally liberating it would mean risking all its potentially catastrophic downsides. In other

words, the risk-reward profile for AI is asymmetric. Given the radical uncertainty about the scale and irreversibility of some of AI's potential harms, AI governance must aim to prevent these risks before they materialize rather than mitigate them after the fact. This is especially important because AI could weaken democracy in some countries and make it harder for them to enact regulations. Moreover, the burden of proving an AI system is safe above some reasonable threshold should rest on the developer and owner; it should not be solely up to governments to deal with problems once they arise.

AI governance must also be agile so that it can adapt and correct course as AI evolves and improves itself. Public institutions often calcify to the point of being unable to adapt to change. And in the case of AI, the sheer velocity of technological progress will quickly overwhelm the ability of existing governance structures to catch up and keep up. This does not mean that AI governance should adopt the "move fast and break things" ethos of Silicon Valley, but it should more closely mirror the nature of the technology it seeks to contain.

In addition to being precautionary and agile, AI governance must be inclusive, inviting the participation of all actors needed to regulate AI in practice. That means AI governance cannot be exclusively state centered, since governments neither understand nor control AI. Private technology companies may lack sovereignty in the traditional sense, but they wield real—even sovereign—power and agency in the digital spaces they have created and effectively govern. These nonstate actors should not be granted the same rights and privileges as states, which are internationally recognized as acting on behalf of their citizens. But they should be parties to international summits and signatories to any agreements on AI.

Such a broadening of governance is necessary because any regulatory structure that excludes the real agents of AI power is doomed to fail. In previous waves of tech regulation, companies were often afforded so much leeway that they overstepped, leading policymakers and regulators to react harshly to their excesses. But this dynamic benefited neither tech companies nor the public. Inviting AI developers to participate in the rule-making process from the outset would help establish a more collaborative culture of AI governance, reducing the need to rein in these companies after the fact with costly and adversarial regulation.

Tech companies should not always have a say; some aspects of AI governance are best left to governments, and it goes without saying that states should always retain final veto power over policy decisions.

Governments must also guard against regulatory capture to ensure that tech companies do not use their influence within political systems to advance their interests at the expense of the public good. But an inclusive, multistakeholder governance model would ensure that the actors who will determine the fate of AI are involved in—and bound by—the rule-making processes. In addition to governments (especially but not limited to China and the United States) and tech companies (especially but not limited to the Big Tech players), scientists, ethicists, trade unions, civil society organizations, and other voices with knowledge of, power over, or a stake in AI outcomes should have a seat at the table. The Partnership on AI—a nonprofit group that convenes a range of large tech companies, research institutions, charities, and civil society organizations to promote responsible AI use—is a good example of the kind of mixed, inclusive forum that is needed.

China and the United States both see AI development as a zero-sum game.

AI governance must also be as impermeable as possible. Unlike climate change mitigation, where success will be determined by the sum of all individual efforts, AI safety is determined by the lowest common denominator: a single breakout algorithm could cause untold damage. Because global AI governance is only as good as the worst-governed country, company, or technology, it must be watertight everywhere—with entry easy enough to compel participation and exit costly enough to deter noncompliance. A single loophole, weak link, or rogue defector will open the door to widespread leakage, bad actors, or a regulatory race to the bottom.

In addition to covering the entire globe, AI governance must cover the entire supply chain—from manufacturing to hardware, software to services, and providers to users. This means technoprudential regulation and oversight along every node of the AI value chain, from AI chip production to data collection, model training to end use, and across the entire stack of technologies used in a given application. Such impermeability will ensure there are no regulatory gray areas to exploit.

Finally, AI governance will need to be targeted, rather than one-size-fits-all. Because AI is a general-purpose technology, it poses multidimensional threats. A single governance tool is not sufficient to address the various sources of AI risk. In practice, determining which tools are appropriate to target which risks will require developing a living and

breathing taxonomy of all the possible effects AI could have—and how each can best be governed. For example, AI will be evolutionary in some applications, exacerbating current problems such as privacy violations, and revolutionary in others, creating entirely new harms. Sometimes, the best place to intervene will be where data is being collected. Other times, it will be the point at which advanced chips are sold—ensuring they do not fall into the wrong hands. Dealing with disinformation and misinformation will require different tools than dealing with the risks of AGI and other uncertain technologies with potentially existential ramifications. A light regulatory touch and voluntary guidance will work in some cases; in others, governments will need to strictly enforce compliance.

All of this requires deep understanding and up-to-date knowledge of the technologies in question. Regulators and other authorities will need oversight of and access to key AI models. In effect, they will need an audit system that can not only track capabilities at a distance but also directly access core technologies, which in turn will require the right talent. Only such measures can ensure that new AI applications are proactively assessed, both for obvious risks and for potentially disruptive second- and third-order consequences. Targeted governance, in other words, must be well-informed governance.

THE TECHNOPRUDENTIAL IMPERATIVE

Built atop these principles should be a minimum of three AI governance regimes, each with different mandates, levers, and participants. All will have to be novel in design, but each could look for inspiration to existing arrangements for addressing other global challenges—namely, climate change, arms proliferation, and financial stability.

The first regime would focus on fact-finding and would take the form of a global scientific body to objectively advise governments and international bodies on questions as basic as what AI is and what kinds of policy challenges it poses. If no one can agree on the definition of AI or the possible scope of its harms, effective policymaking will be impossible. Here, climate change is instructive. To create a baseline of shared knowledge for climate negotiations, the United Nations established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and gave it a simple mandate: provide policymakers with "regular assessments of the scientific basis of climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation." AI needs a similar body to regularly evaluate the state of AI, impartially assess

its risks and potential impacts, forecast scenarios, and consider technical policy solutions to protect the global public interest. Like the IPCC, this body would have a global imprimatur and scientific (and geopolitical) independence. And its reports could inform multilateral and multistakeholder negotiations on AI, just as the IPCC's reports inform UN climate negotiations.

The world also needs a way to manage tensions between the major AI powers and prevent the proliferation of dangerous advanced AI systems. The most important international relationship in AI is the one between the United States and China. Cooperation between the two rivals is difficult to achieve under the best of circumstances. But in the context of heightened geopolitical competition, an uncontrolled AI race could doom all hope of forging an international consensus on AI governance. One area where Washington and Beijing may find it advantageous to work together is in slowing the proliferation of powerful systems that could imperil the authority of nation-states. At the extreme, the threat of uncontrolled, self-replicating AGIs—should they be invented in the years to come—would provide strong incentives to coordinate on safety and containment.

On all these fronts, Washington and Beijing should aim to create areas of commonality and even guardrails proposed and policed by a third party. Here, the monitoring and verification approaches often found in arms control regimes might be applied to the most important AI inputs, specifically those related to computing hardware, including advanced semiconductors and data centers. Regulating key chokepoints helped contain a dangerous arms race during the Cold War, and it could help contain a potentially even more dangerous AI race now.

But since much of AI is already decentralized, it is a problem of the global commons rather than the preserve of two superpowers. The devolved nature of AI development and core characteristics of the technology, such as open-source proliferation, increase the likelihood that it will be weaponized by cybercriminals, state-sponsored actors, and lone wolves. That is why the world needs a third AI governance regime that can react when dangerous disruptions occur. For models, policymakers might look to the approach financial authorities have used to maintain global financial stability. The Financial Stability Board, composed of central bankers, ministries of finance, and supervisory and regulatory authorities from around the world, works to prevent global financial instability by assessing systemic vulnerabilities and coordinating the

necessary actions to address them among national and international authorities. A similarly technocratic body for AI risk—call it the Geotechnology Stability Board—could work to maintain geopolitical stability amid rapid AI-driven change. Supported by national regulatory authorities and international standard-setting bodies, it would pool expertise and resources to preempt or respond to AI-related crises, reducing the risk of contagion. But it would also engage directly with the private sector, recognizing that key multinational technology actors play a critical role in maintaining geopolitical stability, just as systemically important banks do in maintaining financial stability.

Few favor containing AI—and all incentives point toward inaction.

Such a body, with authority rooted in government support, would be well positioned to prevent global tech players from engaging in regulatory arbitrage or hiding behind corporate domiciles. Recognizing that some technology companies are systemically important does not mean stifling start-ups or emerging innovators. On the contrary, creating a single, direct line from a global governance body to these tech behemoths would enhance the effectiveness of regulatory enforcement and crisis management—both of which benefit the whole ecosystem.

A regime designed to maintain geotechnological stability would also fill a dangerous void in the current regulatory landscape: responsibility for governing open-source AI. Some level of online censorship will be necessary. If someone uploads an extremely dangerous model, this body must have the clear authority—and ability—to take it down or direct national authorities to do so. This is another area for potential bilateral cooperation. China and the United States should want to work together to embed safety constraints in open-source software—for example, by limiting the extent to which models can instruct users on how to develop chemical or biological weapons or create pandemic pathogens. In addition, there may be room for Beijing and Washington to cooperate on global antiproliferation efforts, including through the use of interventionist cybertools.

Each of these regimes would have to operate universally, enjoying the buy-in of all major AI players. The regimes would need to be specialized enough to cope with real AI systems and dynamic enough to keep updating their knowledge of AI as it evolves. Working together,

these institutions could take a decisive step toward technoprudential management of the emerging AI world. But they are by no means the only institutions that will be needed. Other regulatory mechanisms, such as "know your customer" transparency standards, licensing requirements, safety testing protocols, and product registration and approval processes, will need to be applied to AI in the next few years. The key across all these ideas will be to create flexible, multifaceted governance institutions that are not constrained by tradition or lack of imagination—after all, technologists will not be constrained by those things.

PROMOTE THE BEST, PREVENT THE WORST

None of these solutions will be easy to implement. Despite all the buzz and chatter coming from world leaders about the need to regulate AI, there is still a lack of political will to do so. Right now, few powerful constituencies favor containing AI—and all incentives point toward continued inaction. But designed well, an AI governance regime of the kind described here could suit all interested parties, enshrining principles and structures that promote the best in AI while preventing the worst. The alternative—uncontained AI—would not just pose unacceptable risks to global stability; it would also be bad for business and run counter to every country's national interest.

A strong AI governance regime would both mitigate the societal risks posed by AI and ease tensions between China and the United States by reducing the extent to which AI is an arena—and a tool—of geopolitical competition. And such a regime would achieve something even more profound and long-lasting: it would establish a model for how to address other disruptive, emerging technologies. AI may be a unique catalyst for change, but it is by no means the last disruptive technology humanity will face. Quantum computing, biotechnology, nanotechnology, and robotics also have the potential to fundamentally reshape the world. Successfully governing AI will help the world successfully govern those technologies as well.

The twenty-first century will throw up few challenges as daunting or opportunities as promising as those presented by AI. In the last century, policymakers began to build a global governance architecture that, they hoped, would be equal to the tasks of the age. Now, they must build a new governance architecture to contain and harness the most formidable, and potentially defining, force of this era. The year 2035 is just around the corner. There is no time to waste.

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Putin's Age of Chaos

The Dangers of Russian Disorder

TATIANA STANOVAYA

After Russian President Vladimir Putin launched an invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Russian elites acted as if the war had not really changed anything on the home front. Even as the campaign foundered and the West tightened sanctions on the Russian economy, those with power in Moscow seemed to carry on as usual. Since last autumn, however, things have been getting a little more complicated. A surprisingly successful Ukrainian counterattack in the region of Kharkiv in September 2022 exposed the vulnerability of Russian military positions. Irked, the Kremlin launched a military mobilization that caused tremendous social anxiety, although only for a short period. Then in October, a Ukrainian strike on the Kerch Strait bridge left the key link between Crimea and mainland Russia engulfed in smoke and flames. It also revealed how flexible the Kremlin's supposed redlines actually were; an event

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Illustration by Matt Needle

that had seemed intolerable just months prior ultimately produced no tangible response from the state and left elites with the growing sense that Russia's war could rebound onto its own territory.

The following months have only ratcheted up the pressure. The Ukrainian front has provided little good news for the Kremlin, with the exception of the seizure of the Ukrainian city of Bakhmut in May. And in the meantime, a new front has opened up at home. Unknown assailants—most likely connected to Ukrainian security services—have attacked Moscow with drones. Paramilitaries have raided across the border into the Russian region of Belgorod. And most shocking, the forces of Yevgeny Prigozhin, the leader of the Wagner private military company, carried out an open rebellion in June, seizing much of the city of Rostov-on-Don, sending a column of troops racing toward Moscow, and even shooting down a number of Russian aircraft, killing over a dozen Russian pilots in the process.

It is becoming harder for the Kremlin to sweep bad news under the carpet.

Prigozhin's uprising captured the world's attention—and deeply disturbed Moscow's elite. Despite its swift resolution (in a deal brokered in part by Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko), many in Moscow struggle to understand Putin's handling of the crisis. On the one hand, the Russian president has publicly and ruthlessly condemned Prigozhin as a "traitor," but on the other hand, he has allowed the mercenary leader to move freely within the country and even hosted him in the Kremlin for negotiations at the end of June.

These events were unprecedented in contemporary Russia. And yet they do not seem to have ruffled the status quo; people continue their lives as if nothing had happened. To be sure, generals are now daring to complain more openly about the top brass. But the overall situation in the army remains stable, and to date the Russian government and military have not reshuffled or arrested any army personnel.

Don't be fooled: this ostensible resilience to bad news and the seeming indifference to ongoing events are deceptive. It is becoming increasingly difficult for the Kremlin to sweep unwelcome developments under the carpet. The war has begun to change Russia, and profound internal shifts are likely underway—in Putin's regime, in the elites' perception of Putin, and in the public's attitude toward the war. Indeed, the militarization of Russian life is empowering ultranationalist hard-liners in

the elite, eclipsing an old guard of ideologues that the Russian public has begun to view as increasingly out of touch with the realities of the war. The perception of Putin's weakening has further revealed the regime's deep flaws: the habitual inclination of the authorities to underestimate domestic political risks, ignore long-term developments in favor of addressing immediate challenges, and refuse responsibility for the growing number of incidents on Russian territory linked to the war.

Prigozhin's mutiny has pushed the situation to an extreme and may pave the way for the emergence of a more radicalized, hawkish, and ruthless state. Threats to the Kremlin, such as the Wagner rebellion, and the revelations of the government's weakness, will not necessarily lead the public to turn against Putin and bring down the regime. Instead, these developments are transforming Russia into a far less cohesive entity, one rife with internal contradictions and conflicts, more volatile and lacking predictability. With so much pressure turning inward, the space for debate about the ongoing war in Ukraine may open somewhat, even if not for outright dissent. But at home, the order that Putin built will become more disorderly, and the world will have to contend with a more dangerous and unpredictable Russia.

FRAGILE STATE

In the months leading up to Prigozhin's rebellion, Russia found itself in the unexpected position of watching the war come home. In early May, just days before the annual Victory Day parade in Red Square, unknown attackers used drones to try to hit targets in Moscow, including the Kremlin. Then, at the end of May and into June, paramilitary groups aligned with Ukraine crossed into the Russian region of Belgorod. They caused mayhem and briefly seized various settlements. Other regions neighboring Ukraine have also been enduring continual shelling. The Kremlin's response to these events has been startlingly passive; it has simply sought to hit the mute button. Television news and talk shows have focused instead on the supposed efficacy of Moscow's air defenses and advanced a narrative about the supposed ruthlessness of Ukrainians and their Western "masters." With rare exceptions, Putin has barely commented on these attacks on Russian soil, preferring to delegate that responsibility to the Defense Ministry.

The Kremlin's propensity to downplay seemingly shocking events is in line with how Putin saw the war. He maintained a deep-seated belief

that ordinary Russians brim with patriotism, that the elites remain controllable and loyal to the state, that a path to victory in Ukraine is still open, and that Russia's economy is resilient enough to endure until he achieves his goals. Consequently, senior officials in the presidential administration, taking cues from Putin's cool demeanor and aversion to panic, often convinced themselves that everything was fine and that their anxiety would be more harmful than prudent. Kremlin insiders, speaking privately about the war's impact on political stability, bragged about the authorities' capacity to maintain political control, with one insider offering the cautious caveat that all would be well "if the military does not let us down." They cited consistently high public support for the "special military operation" in Ukraine and strong approval ratings for both Putin and the government.

Prigozhin's growing discontent preceding the mutiny failed to alarm these insiders. Even as late as June 23, when Prigozhin had already initiated his rebellion, many sources close to the Kremlin continued to believe that nothing of major concern was happening and that Prigozhin was still useful for achieving certain political objectives, such as channeling the frustration of ultranationalists. In addition, many officials were convinced that people close to Putin in the Kremlin were supervising Prigozhin and that Wagner would not try to challenge the Russian state. Then, reports made clear that Wagner forces had seized the military command center for Russian operations in Ukraine in the city of Rostov-on-Don, that a column of Wagner soldiers was advancing on Moscow, and that Wagner forces had even shot down Russian helicopters.

These events served as a sobering revelation: Putin had misjudged Prigozhin and his outrage, underestimating the danger posed by the voluble and volatile caterer turned mercenary commander. The rebellion was, in large part, the product of Putin's inaction. His detached and aloof stance and his reluctance to intervene in the escalating conflict between Prigozhin and the two most senior Russian military officials—Sergey Shoigu, the defense minister, and Valery Gerasimov, the chief of the general staff—helped spark the revolt. The rebellion exposed not only Putin's management failures, the negligence that embittered and inflamed Prigozhin, but also how the state had shot itself in the foot. After all, Wagner has grown into a fighting force with tens of thousands of soldiers only thanks to billions of dollars in state funding, access to the state's resources, and its links to high-profile officials who have endorsed the mercenary outfit's activities.

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In the wake of the rebellion, it has become much harder for the Kremlin to project an aura of unflappable control and political competence. Just a week after the mutiny, Putin made an unscheduled public appearance in Dagestan. His staff was unprepared for this event and his behavior, including hugging members of the crowd, surprised many in the Kremlin and was seen as evidence that he was acting emotionally and spontaneously, seeking affirmation. In front of the cameras, he held babies, shook hands, and posed for selfies with an adoring public. The scene was striking given that Putin has rarely allowed himself such interactions in the years since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Although Putin may have wanted to demonstrate his closeness with ordinary Russians in the wake of Prigozhin's mutiny, many observers interpreted the spectacle as a sign of the president's acute need to experience the adulation of Russian citizens—a measure perhaps of his own sense of vulnerability.

The Kremlin's mishandling of the war, compounded by Prigozhin's ensuing mutiny, has made the government appear irresponsible and the state weak. Even the drone attacks inspired bewilderment as to why Russian defense systems could not thwart them and stoked a perception among ordinary Russians, as well as those hawks who support the war in Ukraine, of the state's frailty, its inability to ensure the safety of the capital city (never mind the country at large), and the failure of authorities to stop enemies from infiltrating Russian territory. A cursory look at public discussions on social media reveals speculation among Russians about the potential presence of Ukrainian sympathizers "among us," ready to "stab us in the back."

SOMETHING ROTTEN

Many observers are used to viewing Putin's regime as the product of a social contract in which the state guarantees stability in return for the people granting the Kremlin significant freedom to manage political life. Since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, however, the value of domestic stability has been gradually eclipsed by a deeper need for geopolitical security—that is, protection from the hostile West—that has accompanied an upsurge in nationalist sentiment. Now, after the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Russians hunger for geopolitical security. The people have delegated to Putin the right to deal with the West—which many Russians believe threatens their country's very existence—even if that causes domestic turmoil owing to stringent sanctions and crackdowns

on liberals. Polls show that since the war began, the percentage of Russians who overtly admire Putin has grown from eight to 19 percent, and 68 percent of Russians now say they want him to be reelected, a significant jump from 48 percent of Russians before the war. The war has also increased support for all official institutions: the cabinet, regional governors, parliament, and even the ruling party, United Russia.

But Putin's passivity in the face of internal military threats and his aloof stance may become a major problem for the regime in the near future. There are signs that Russians, despite their increased support for state institutions, are becoming much more ambivalent about the country's authorities. They are beginning to doubt the ability of the political class to fulfill its responsibilities. At the end of May, a drone attack targeted Rublyovka, a famous upscale Moscow suburb where many wealthy and influential Russians live. Some social media users were not altogether sorry for the attack and suggested that the rich and powerful were getting their just deserts. Rublyovka has long been a symbol of the affluent, parasitic elite associated with both the Yeltsin era and the current regime. Many pro-Kremlin bloggers and ordinary Russians hoped that the attack would serve as a wake-up call to this elite, compelling them to become more involved in helping salvage the war with Ukraine and responding more resolutely to attacks on Russian territory.

Anti-elite sentiment also propelled the rise of Prigozhin. He had been gaining visibility and popularity in recent months as his forces operated in Ukraine. According to the Levada Center, an independent Russian polling firm, Russians saw the capture of Bakhmut by Wagner fighters in May as the most important event of that month. A study by another polling group, Romir, found that Wagner's triumph in Bakhmut had elevated Prigozhin for the first time into the ranks of the top five most-trusted politicians in Russia, after Putin, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Shoigu, and Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin. His climb was stratospheric: at the beginning of the year, Prigozhin had ranked 158th among trusted Russian political figures.

Ordinary Russians were struck by Prigozhin's brazen confrontation with the Defense Ministry and his complaints that his troops were desperately short of ammunition. The public perceived him as a crusader against corruption and someone who dared to challenge the spoiled elites. A local eyewitness to Wagner's seizure of Rostov-on-Don described Prigozhin in a Facebook post as "a simple, ordinary man going to have it out with the fat cats of every stripe and color," a sentiment that

explains the warm welcome Rostov residents gave Wagner fighters. That disgruntlement with the powers that be—"the fat cats"— to some extent explains the ease with which Prigozhin took control of the city. The same eyewitness reported with incredulity that the state was entirely missing in action. "The buildings of the provincial and city administration and the provincial government were completely deserted," she noted. "In the blink of an eye, the military, with whom the frontline city had been filled, disappeared. The FSB [the Federal Security Services] barricaded itself inside its own building."

The Wagner rebellion was, in large part, the product of Putin's inaction.

Many Western observers have suggested that these military troubles will push the elites and broader society to crave peace. Unfortunately, the reality is much bleaker: challenging situations tend to make Russia only more determined and brutal in waging its war and in quashing dissent at home. Prigozhin's mutiny was not a rejection of the war but can be understood instead as the result of dissatisfaction with the inefficient prosecution of the war. Reactions to the drone attacks and incursions by paramilitaries into the Belgorod region in the spring are instructive. According to Levada polling, these events only fueled support for the war among Russians, with people becoming more hostile toward ordinary Ukrainians and anxious about the fate of the "special military operation." The attacks did not in any way increase public desire for peace talks or a Russian withdrawal from Ukraine, a country that is perceived now more than ever as a threat to Russia's existence. According to polling by Levada, Russians have started to conclude in recent months that the war will be long and drawn out. In May, 45 percent of respondents said they believed the war would last more than another year—the highest percentage since the conflict began (in May 2022, it was 21 percent). They are adapting to that reality and steeling themselves for tough times ahead; they are not seeking to halt the war, and antiwar sentiment remains at best subdued, at worst entirely suppressed.

If anything, the country is becoming more committed to the fight—not in pursuit of imperial ambitions but out of a more desperate concern for its very survival. The faction advocating for a "resolute response" to the enemy is gaining new supporters, according to an op-ed in Russian *Forbes* by Denis Volkov, Levada's director, interpreting the results of recent polls. In the wake of Prigozhin's uprising, many Russians want

to see the state be bolder, more decisive, consistent, and firm. This is backed up by the latest Levada polls, conducted at the end of June, which revealed a shift in people's attitudes: the mutiny had led to a slight decline in confidence in Shoigu and a significant decline in confidence in Prigozhin. In other words, the mercenary commander's revolt has not inspired Russians against a struggling state but rather frightened them with the prospect of destabilization and disorder.

The mutiny and the events that preceded it suggest that the regime may be much less resilient than it appears: a frazzled Kremlin; a detached Putin who is failing to deal with internal conflicts; a frustrated society that is perplexed by the state's lethargic reaction to previously unimaginable events; trembling elites ready to fly away the second the regime crumbles (the Kremlin is now trying to investigate who among officials and the top managers of state corporations dared leave Moscow during Prigozhin's mutiny and why); and the shell-shocked military and security services that, following the mutiny, will certainly try to patch up their vulnerabilities and quash growing internal dissent in their ranks.

Putin, lulled into complacency by his conviction that people love him and the elites are loyal to him, may do little to arrest this decay. At the same time, the security services may seek more control and clamp down on society. Together, these dynamics may lead to incoherence in government behavior, further complicating the situation. Instead of dislodging the regime, Prigozhin's jolt to the Kremlin will make the government not only more repressive and more brutal but also more chaotic and unpredictable.

THE HARDENING LINE

This situation plays squarely into the hands of Russia's hard-liners, a camp that consists of the security service, hawkish conservatives, pro-war military correspondents, and radically anti-Western TV pundits. They advocate for tightening the screws, hunting for traitors, and placing the country on a war footing to accumulate all the resources necessary to win. The current political and social conditions leave virtually no alternative for the regime other than to become less tolerant of even minor suspicious activities, such as any suggestion of the need to reconcile with the Ukrainians, never mind overt opposition to the war. A significant portion of Russian society may end up supporting and even aiding a new crackdown. The public mood has become less indulgent of those privileged Russians who try to maintain a distance from the war, continue leading luxurious

lifestyles, and conduct business as usual. It is becoming harder in Russia to maintain a passive or distant position on the war; everywhere, Russians feel pressured to perform their patriotism conspicuously.

Since the invasion, the Russian state has marginalized antiwar forces and left no room for liberal-minded figures by cracking down on protests (which were not massive to begin with) and enacting a raft of bills de facto outlawing antiwar and antiregime activities. That repression and that stiffening of patriotic feeling has opened a larger space for far more active, hardcore, and daring hawks to gain ground in politics and the national conversation. A younger and bolder cohort of hawks may supplant a more traditional older generation of conservative ideologues, including the likes of Alexander Bastrykin, the head of the Investigative Committee, Sergei Naryshkin, the chief of the Foreign Intelligence Service, and Nikolai Patrushev, the secretary of Russia's Security Council, as well as figures such as Dmitry Medvedev, the former Russian president and now deputy head of the Security Council, and Vyacheslav Volodin, the chair of the State Duma. These ideologues helped foster and promote "Putinism," the president's brand of nationalist, anti-Western, antiliberal ideas with an emphasis on traditional values such as the importance of family, children, spiritual bonds, and the primacy of state interests over private rights. These men also contributed to the climate that precipitated Putin's invasion of Ukraine. But the ongoing war has stripped them of their political uniqueness, turning the entire political mainstream conservative and hard-line.

Worse, the old guard now has little to say about wartime realities, with great uncertainty about the course of the war, enormous Western military aid to Kyiv, the absolute lack of any decent exit strategy, and a dismal future looming for the country. Leaders such as Medvedev and Patrushev, who have long promoted the confrontational, anti-Western policy and rhetoric of Putin's regime, now appear to many jingoistic hawks to be removed from reality—both physically and intellectually far from the nitty-gritty of the war—even as they remain high-profile figures close to the president.

As their star wanes, a new generation of hawks is rising. Some of these new hawks are yesterday's young technocrats, such as Putin's chief domestic policy adviser, Sergei Kiriyenko, who is now in charge of the four Ukrainian regions that Moscow announced it was annexing last fall, or Marat Khusnullin, the deputy prime minister tasked with overseeing the reconstruction of destroyed Ukrainian territories

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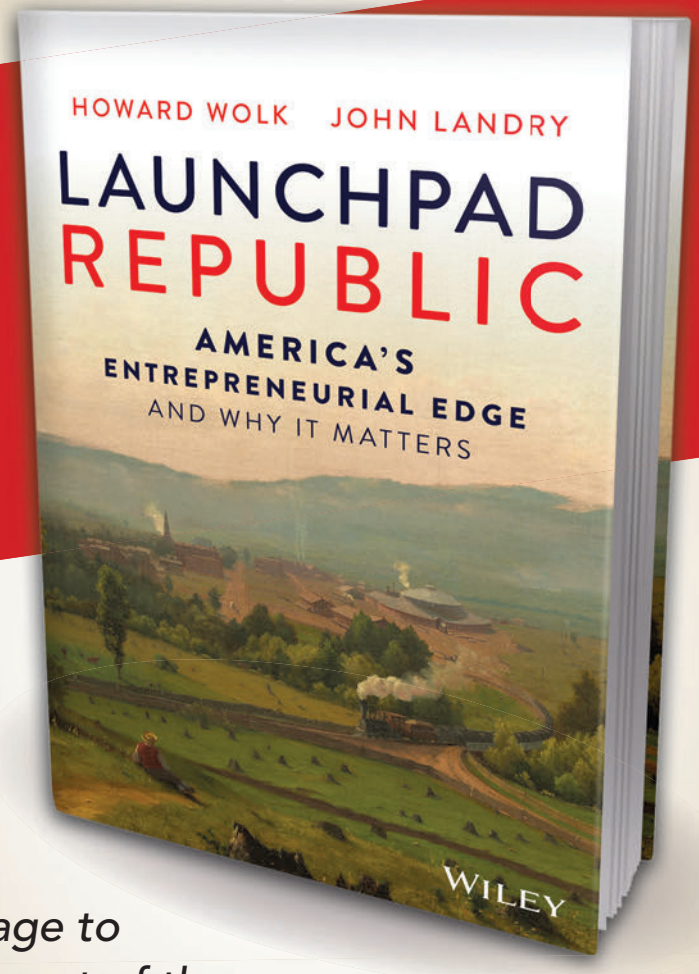

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now under Russian control. These officials spend a lot of time in the occupied areas, regardless of the personal risks, thereby demonstrating their courage and diligence in action to Putin and the elites in general. The new hawks also include practitioners involved in military affairs, who are closely observing the course of the war and have become for many Russians key sources of information about its developments. By contrast, officials such as Patrushev drone on endlessly about an "Anglo-Saxon" conspiracy to seize Russian territory and spout far-fetched theories (including the bizarre notion that U.S. officials want to settle Americans in Russia and Ukraine in the event of the catastrophic eruption of a volcano at Yellowstone National Park).

Some senior members of the establishment have benefited from the hawkish turn, however—notably Shoigu, the defense minister, and Viktor Zolotov, the head of the Rosgvardia domestic military force. They may become the main beneficiaries of Prigozhin's suppressed insurgency: Zolotov can now more easily beef up the ranks of Rosgvardia to deal with events like Prigozhin's mutiny, and Shoigu can use the rebellion as an occasion to settle scores with internal opponents in the army. Unlike the desk-jockey ideologues, these leaders can directly access administrative resources and forces to alter facts on the ground and show true power. To put it simply, Medvedev can write another rant on the social media app Telegram, and Patrushev can give his one-hundredth interview raging about the evil Americans, but Shoigu and Zolotov can deploy real physical force to deal with challenges and demonstrate to Putin their indispensability (even if Shoigu, as defense minister, remains responsible for so many of the last year's military setbacks).

The clash of hawks, old and new, will shape Russia's response to its struggles in Ukraine and at home. The more challenges the regime faces, the more quickly it will evolve into something darker. The Russian public is growing more desperate, anti-Western, and anti-Ukrainian, and Russian elites are becoming increasingly anxious and fractious. Most senior officials, businessmen, and politicians had hoped to simply wait out the war, but now they find themselves hostage to Putin's ambitions. More overtly hawkish and powerful groups such as the military command or the so-called Chekists in the national security establishment will try to secure order, especially after Prigozhin's mutiny, to boost the regime's capacity to endure the war, avoid defeat, and avert even the most tentative attempt to organize another mutiny in the future.

All these moves will occur against the backdrop of Putin's weakening leadership, a factor that will contribute to the regime becoming more chaotic, indiscriminate, and internally rancorous and competitive.

In truth, Putin and those old ideologues close to him, such as Patrushev, are becoming in some senses obsolete, their ideas out of step with elite sentiment regarding Ukraine and the West. Regardless of how conservative and hawkish the elites become, they remain more pragmatic than Putin. They are less obsessed with the notion of "saving" Ukrainians, and unlike Putin, they do not presume that Kyiv will inevitably fail. They also have a more accurate understanding of Russia's capacity to wage war. And many find Putin's tendency to ignore alarm bells incomprehensible. That is why many pro-war activists are calling for radical reforms to establish what would effectively be a military dictatorship. That is why even Prigozhin managed to win significant visibility and attention. He advocated alternative war strategies and argued for the necessity of using all conceivable financial, economic, and social resources to bolster military power. No one is seriously considering or discussing a diplomatic end to the war: a notion that looks to many high-profile Russians like a personal threat, given all the war crimes that their country has committed and the responsibility that the entire elite now bears for the carnage in Ukraine.

GOING OFF SCRIPT

The system has started to learn to operate independently of Putin. This development does not yet reflect the solidifying of anti-Putin sentiment or emerging political opposition. It reflects a realization of the inadequacies of the president's detached managerial style that allowed genuine threats to the regime to go neglected. By completely underestimating Prigozhin's radicalization and Wagner's escalating conflict with the military, Putin has come across as an aging leader who is beginning to falter in ways he would never have before. Even the miscalculations that led to the decision to move against Ukraine were not perceived as harshly as the utter loss of control that enabled Prigozhin's uprising, the largest domestic conflict between state and private armed forces. Putin appears less powerful after conspicuously dropping charges against Prigozhin, not demanding justice for the killings of pilots during the mutiny, and allowing enormous budget expenditures to go to a private military company that eventually dares to attack the state.

Other factions are already moving into the space opened by Putin's weakness. Putin could become a tool in the hands of new, more dynamic and pragmatic hawks, who are quickly learning how to use the president's emotions and well-known beliefs to their advantage. The presidential administration has become adept at not simply pandering to Putin but actively limiting what he knows by feeding him flattering reports on the patriotism of the populace, innumerable documents on the decline of the West, and tales of Ukrainians longing for liberation. They depict a world eagerly waiting for Russia to upend the existing international order. A few years ago, Putin's staff mainly sought to avoid incurring the president's irritation, typically when he received unwelcome news. Now, they are honing their skills in shaping Putin's moods, either by directing his anger toward their opponents or by encouraging his optimism when it benefits them. Maintaining extreme anti-Western and anti-Ukrainian views may help the new hawks achieve their political goals, and the concurrent radicalization of the regime could lead authorities to become much harsher toward their domestic foes. But a government that lacks firm political leadership, strategic vision, and coherence will be less capable of strategic thinking and agreeing on long-term priorities. Factions in government will focus primarily on outmaneuvering one another and advancing their narrow interests.

The war has left Russia grasping for certainties in an exceedingly uncertain world.

Contrary to what analysts might have anticipated would follow Prigozhin's uprising—attempts by the Kremlin to consolidate its power, dismantle private militias, and integrate Russia's panoply of armed groups into something more coordinated and coherent—the exact opposite may occur. Dmitry Mironov, Putin's influential aide and former bodyguard, proposed in June formalizing units of soldiers from the martial subculture known as the Cossacks, a move that may irritate Shoigu and a Defense Ministry already wary of the proliferation of autonomous militarized groups. The Kremlin has also discussed separating the border forces from the FSB; the Rosgvardia seeks to acquire heavy weaponry and additional forces from the interior ministry; and purges in the army coupled with possible military setbacks on the Ukrainian front may ignite localized protests against the army's command. It was widely expected that Wagner would be dismantled after its uprising; instead, it seems Putin will allow the mercenary outfit to

carry on under Prigozhin's successor, Aleksei Troshev. In other words, rather than concentration, the security forces may see further fragmentation, with rival factions vying for new prerogatives and powers.

At the same time, however, the political class is shifting its attention inward to address the country's own flaws and failures that Prigozhin's revolt exposed rather than focusing on Putin's historic mission of liberating Ukrainians. The more the war becomes a quagmire, the more deputies, pundits, senators, and popular bloggers seek to highlight and address domestic problems that they blame for making Russia less effective in conducting the war. This inward turn could lead to a more pragmatic approach to the war against Ukraine even as it could make the state far more ruthless toward its own citizens.

Ordinary Russians still seem to support the war and back Putin, but they are also becoming frustrated, gradually showing impatience with elites, and feeling increasingly vulnerable because of the clumsy actions (and inaction) of the authorities. Putin may enjoy high approval ratings, but they will mask growing uncertainty, social anxiety, and (as yet) unchanneled discontent about the course of the events. True sources of political risk for the regime may appear in the form of figures who back Putin and are generally loyal to the authorities (as Prigozhin was) but who, over time, could come to pose significant problems.

For the foreseeable future, the Kremlin will be wrestling simultaneously with diverging internal forces: a deepening crisis of Putin's leadership, a growing lack of political accountability, increasingly ineffective responses by the authorities to new challenges, an intensifying fragmentation among elites, and a society that is growing more antiestablishment.

If previously, domestic affairs were secondary to the dominant military agenda, the reverse may come true. The war could become a backdrop to more urgent domestic challenges. At home, Russia's future appears bleak, marked by ever-greater fractiousness among elites, Putin's shrinking influence, and a more ideological and stricter regime in which security services play a more prominent role. These changes will make Russia's geopolitical actions less predictable, and even contradictory, as the Kremlin reacts to shifting circumstances instead of following its own strategic direction and priorities. Putin saw the invasion of Ukraine as an act of destiny, the fulfillment of a historical script. Instead, the war has left Russia grasping for certainties in an exceedingly uncertain world.

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The End of the Russian Idea

What It Will Take to Break Putinism's Grip

ANDREI KOLESNIKOV

On June 17, 2023, Russian President Vladimir Putin staged a special ceremony on the St. Petersburg waterfront to mark the anniversary of three flags: the flag of the Russian Federation, otherwise known as Peter the Great's tricolor, formally unfurled in 1693; the imperial Russian flag, introduced by Tsar Alexander II in 1858; and the Red Banner, the Soviet Union's hammer and sickle, adopted by the Soviet state 100 years ago and later used by Joseph Stalin. Putin watched the event from a boat as the National Philharmonic and the St. Petersburg State Choir performed the national anthem, which, thanks to a law Putin enacted in 2000, has the same melody as its Stalin-era counterpart. The portentous rite unfolded in front of the Lakhta Center tower, the country's tallest building, as well as the $1.7 billion headquarters of Gazprom, the state-run gas company that has become another crucial symbol of Putin's Russia.

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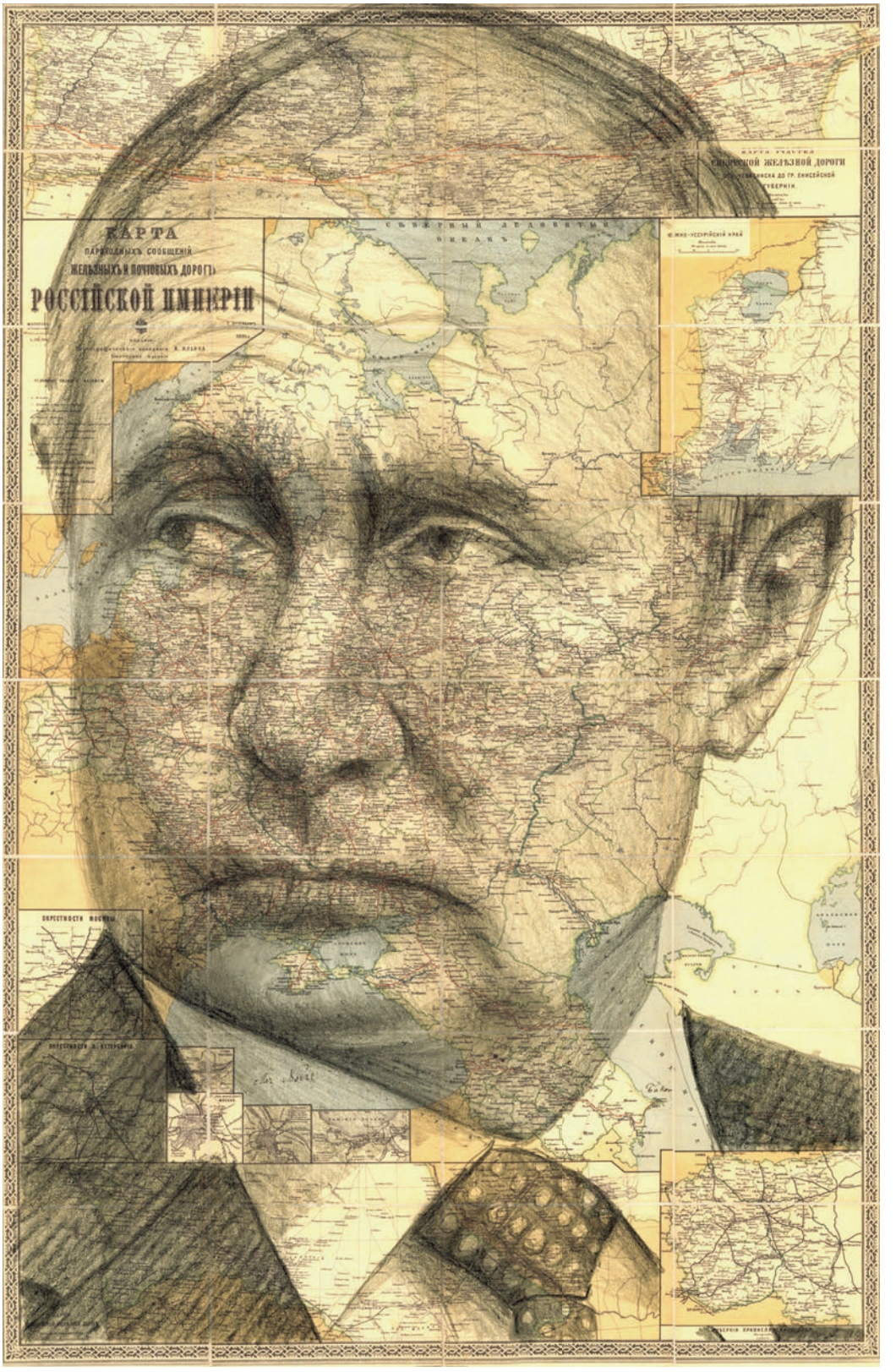

DAVID RUMSEY MAP COLLECTION

Illustration by Daniel Baxter

In some respects, the choice of flags was not surprising. Since the launch of Russia's "special military operation" in Ukraine in February 2022, Stalinist nationalist imperialism has become the de facto ideology of the Putin regime. Tsar Peter I, who styled himself the first emperor of all Russia after his victory in the Great Northern War in 1721, and Alexander II, who was emperor of Russia, king of Poland, and grand duke of Finland, are closely associated with Russia's imperial aspirations. And Putin has emphasized that the Soviet Union—especially in its triumph over Nazi Germany in World War II, when Stalin appealed to nationalism rather than Marxism to consolidate support and rally the population—carried out Russia's imperial destiny under a different name. Of course, Putin has not openly referred to Stalin or declared himself Stalin's heir. But for more than a decade, the Kremlin has presented the Stalinist period as an era of greatness in which imperial traditions were respected and national values cherished. And more recently, in his language of power and his intolerance of dissent, Putin has come to resemble Stalin in his final phase in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Yet the two tsars and Stalin also viewed empire as a means to what they understood to be a modern state. In the early eighteenth century, Peter borrowed Western innovations, including advances in shipbuilding and other technologies, and Western ideas about government management and even styles of dress. A century later, Alexander abolished serfdom and carried out progressive judicial reforms influenced by European examples. As for Stalin, in the 1930s he pushed for Western-style industrialization and catch-up development even as he transformed Marxism, a modern European ideology, into Soviet Marxism-Leninism at the cost of countless human lives. By contrast, Putin's opening to the West was short-lived, more or less ending in 2003, less than four years after he came to office, when he took full control of parliament and the authorities arrested Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the billionaire investor and one of the symbols of a free market and independent thinking in Russia, on trumped-up charges.

Now, Putin seeks something different from any of these predecessors: an empire without modernization. To fully apprehend Russia's continuing intervention in Ukraine and how it has been presented to the Russian people, it is necessary to recognize this impulse. Putin resurrected the Russian imperial idea with the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and expanded it with the launch of the "special operation"

eight years later. Buttressed by the abstract and archaic teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church, he has also embraced an older strain of nationalist ideology in which the decadent West is the enemy and Russia has a messianic destiny to oppose its harmful influence. If Peter I, as Pushkin once said, cut a window to Europe, 300 years later, the man who sits in the Kremlin is boarding up that window.

Putin's dramatic reorientation of the Russian state is not unprecedented. At least since the beginning of the nineteenth century, Russia has repeatedly swung toward and away from the West, as well as between modern Western-style conceptions of state power and Russia's place in the world, and nationalist, reactionary ones. Much the same has happened with the state's attitudes toward Stalinism. Three times in the last 70 years—under Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev in the 1950s and 1960s, under Premier Mikhail Gorbachev in the 1980s, and under Russian President Boris Yeltsin in the 1990s—Soviet and Russian leaders have sought to rid the country of Stalinist ideas and Stalinist discourse, only to have those precepts return, even if just tacitly. For much of the past century, Russia's political ideas have been shaped by the struggle between liberal and totalitarian tendencies, or what could be called de-Stalinization and re-Stalinization.

What is particularly striking about Putin's Russia, however, is the extent to which it has combined re-Stalinization with antimodern imperialism. In reviving some of the most extreme versions of what in the nineteenth century was called "the Russian Idea"—a concept originally meant to convey the country's separateness and exalted moral stature but that in practice came to stand for raw militarized expansionism—Putin has drawn on a pernicious ideological tradition to shape both the campaign in Ukraine and his long-term vision of power. Although Putinism may be finite, its advanced state of development and its deep roots in anti-Western thought suggest that it may take more than the outcome of war for Putin's hold over Russian society to break.

HOLY RUSSIAN EMPIRE

For much of Russian history, the twin pillars of the Russian state were the Russian Orthodox Church and the military. In ancient times, the daily life of Russians was organized and regimented by church bells. Their sounds were later complemented by those of Russia's cannons on the battlefields of early modern Europe. If the bell embodied the controlling order of the state, the cannon backed that order by

physical force—and sometimes superseded it. In his 1966 study of Russian culture, *The Icon and the Axe*, the American historian James H. Billington points out that in the late seventeenth and late eighteenth centuries, church bells in provincial Russian towns and monasteries were melted down to make cannons for the Russian army. In reviving and glorifying the archconservative values of the Russian Orthodox Church and steadily remilitarizing the country, Putin has forged his own bell and cannon doctrine.

As Russia emerged as a major empire in the eighteenth century, these symbols of power were complemented by broader visions of the Russian state. At first, the contradictions of Russia's swing toward Europe and the Enlightenment were ignored: Russian Empress Catherine II could correspond with Voltaire even as she continued to enslave the peasants. After its victory over Napoleon in 1812, Russia gained a new sense of patriotism and unity, as well as a place in the European order, despite its retrograde autocracy. The failed Decembrist revolt of 1825—led by aristocratic Russian officers who refused allegiance to the new tsar, Nicholas I, and sought to abolish autocratic rule—exposed the need for European-style modernization. But during his reign, the conservative Nicholas (1825–55) opted for reaction rather than reform. It was in this era that Russian thinkers began to formulate a comprehensive state ideology.

In 1832, the education minister, Count Sergey Uvarov, introduced a doctrine he called "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality." In some respects, it bore the imprint of Europe. Like other Russian aristocrats, Uvarov thought and wrote in French; he also spoke German and kept up a correspondence with Goethe. But Uvarov believed that Western ideas posed a threat to Russia, and he sought to keep in check any modernizing impulses that could undermine the foundations of tsarist power, or what he called autocracy. In his model, orthodoxy, or the Russian Orthodox Church, served as a means of safeguarding Russia's separate identity, whereas nationality provided the link between the tsar and the people. Even before he had given the doctrine its final formulation, he had made clear his expansionist aims. In a letter to Nicholas in 1832, Uvarov wrote that "the energy of autocratic power is a necessary condition for the existence of the Empire."

In this same period, meanwhile, a second tendency in Russian thinking about the state emerged with the birth of the Slavophile movement. Beginning in the 1840s, the debate between "Westernizers" and

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"Slavophiles" became a central theme in the political conceptualization of Russia. The Westernizers viewed the tsarist state as backward and argued that Russia could only compete with the great powers of the West through European-style modernization and constitutionalism. The Slavophiles were also dissatisfied with the tsar's absolute power but believed that Russia, founded on its own unique values, stood apart from the West and was morally superior to it. But that romantic vision gradually evolved into something else. Unlike the early Slavophiles, who opposed despotism, their successors in the second half of the nineteenth century defended it, arguing that any attempts to limit autocracy would weaken or undermine Russia's place in the world.

Russian imperialists saw Moscow as the successor to Rome.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, these ideas were pushed in a new direction with the work of the Russian philosopher and ideologue Nikolai Danilevsky. In his influential *Russia and Europe* (1869), Danilevsky argued that Russia and the Slavic countries belonged to a special cultural-historical category or type, a widely debated theory that marked the beginning of the pan-Slavic movement. Among other things, he envisioned a union of all Slavic nations that would be ruled from Constantinople, or what the Russians called Tsargrad—emperor city. Danilevsky was also deeply suspicious of the West and its modernizing ideas. "Europe is not only something alien to us, but even hostile," he wrote. These theories have long found echoes in Putin's own rhetoric about Russia as a "state-civilization" defined in opposition to its European counterparts. In the October 2022 meeting of the Valdai Club, the annual forum that Russia has hosted since 2004 that has in the past included prominent foreign analysts and scholars, Putin invoked Danilevsky directly to explain why the West must be resisted.

In 1856, the novelist Fyodor Dostoyevsky added his own vision of Russia's special destiny with his concept of the Russian Idea. Although a great connoisseur of European culture, Dostoyevsky, like other Slavophiles, believed that the West was declining and that an ascendant Russia would take its place. He described this conceit in a letter to the poet Apollon Maykov in which he admired the poet's allusion to Russia's ability "to complete what the West began." As Dostoyevsky saw it, the state should serve as the guardian of the country's special path and revive the system of universal Christian morality that had

preceded the Enlightenment—values that reigned before Europeans became obsessed with ideas of progress, freedom, and individual rights. But this vision gradually took on more radical forms. During the World War I era, a wave of patriotic philosophers, liberal and conservative, embraced the idea of a purifying war through which the nation could rejuvenate itself, unify its people, and push back against the decadent modernity that had overrun Europe. Intertwined with pan-Slavism and the dream of a Slavic empire, these notions fed a new nationalist imperialism.

Yet another strand of nineteenth-century state ideology that would come to cast a long shadow on the Russian state is the "Third Rome" thesis. In the 1860s, Russian imperial thinkers began to promote the old sixteenth-century idea that Moscow was the successor of Rome and Constantinople as the center of world Christianity, the legitimate heir to the Byzantine Empire, and the last Christian kingdom, and thus bore a messianic destiny. Indeed, to many on Russia's far right, the state has always had a mission to defend and spread its traditional values and spirituality in the world. In a speech in April, Patriarch Kirill, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church and a crucial mouthpiece for the Kremlin, traced this messianic vocation back to Russia's defeat of the Teutonic knights in 1242 and its victory over the Mongols in 1380: "Wasn't this what the holy prince Alexander Nevsky fought for? Wasn't this why our great predecessors fought on the Kulikovo Field?"

PUTIN VS. SATAN

Paradoxically, little of this reactionary tradition held much sway when Putin first came to power 23 years ago. At the time, post-Soviet Moscow was awash in Western ideas. Under Gorbachev in the 1980s, the Soviet government had progressively abandoned social controls and opened up to liberal thinking. Then, after the Soviet Union's dissolution, the economist and acting Russian prime minister Yegor Gaidar, with the backing of Russian President Boris Yeltsin, undertook dramatic reforms that transformed the shell of a 70-year-old Marxist empire into a market economy with modern Western-style political institutions. Although this wholesale restructuring was controversial, it helped usher in a new concept of Russia: one of Gaidar's principles was that it was impossible to build a liberal economy on the scale of an empire and that for the reforms to succeed, the country would have to redefine itself as a nation-state.

In his early years, Putin did not oppose continued modernization based on market principles. But from the outset, he has publicly regretted the collapse of the Soviet empire and sought new ways to regain control of Russian society. He took advantage of the country's economic liberalization and its lucrative natural resources, which allowed him to lavishly reward loyalists and strengthen the state's grip on the political and economic system. When he returned to the presidency in 2012 after Dmitry Medvedev's one-term administration, he began to dismantle the liberal reforms that he and Medvedev had earlier supported. By that point, he was already openly embracing authoritarianism and repression and had begun using conservative ideology to justify the shift. He was also increasingly irritated by the West—he claimed the United States and its allies did not treat Russia as an equal partner or consider its interests and were fomenting internal opposition and turning civil society organizations against the government—and he felt less need to maintain the appearance of political pluralism and free speech. As the Kremlin now saw it, Russia's liberal economists served solely to maintain macroeconomic stability and could be reduced to mere technocrats.

Rather than driving Putin's changing conception of power or the evolution of the Russian political system, the annexation of Crimea in 2014 was the result of those developments. Even as Russia continued to supply much of Europe's gas and oil and to draw on Western investments and technologies, Putin gave voice to an older, more spiritual idea of the state as empire. Already, in 2013 he had begun to portray the Russian Orthodox Church as the bedrock of a Russia that included the historic lands lost in 1991. "At the heart of the Russian nation and the Russian centralized state," he said, "are the common spiritual values that unite the entire large European territory, on which today Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus are located. This is our common spiritual and moral space."

By 2022, Putin and many around him were actively adopting the most extreme forms of Russian nationalist-imperialist thought. A common refrain in Putin's circle is that the West is in moral and spiritual decline and will be replaced by a rising Russia. Since the "special operation" in Ukraine began, the Kremlin has used these claims to justify the disruption of ties with Europe and the United States and an ever more sweeping repression of Russian civil society, including attacks on Western-oriented human rights organizations,

the promulgation of laws targeting gay and transgender people, and broad new restrictions on organizations and individuals identified as "foreign agents." Putin's ideologues now suggest that Russia can only uphold its status as the defender of civilization by combining a reinvigorated empire with the conservative precepts of the church. "We are fighting a war to have peace," Alexander Dugin, the ultra-nationalist thinker and self-styled Kremlin philosopher, said in June.

Today, Kyiv has taken the place of Constantinople/Tsargrad in right-wing discourse, with Putin effectively assigning the role of lost Byzantium to Ukraine. According to Kremlin propaganda, Ukraine is slipping into the grip of a dangerous and "satanic" West that has been encroaching on the historical lands of Russia and the canonical territory of the church. In a post on Telegram, a messaging service popular among Russians, in November 2022, Medvedev cast Russia's fighting in Ukraine as a holy war against Satan, warning that Moscow would "send all our enemies to fiery Gehenna."

THE EMPEROR UNCLOTHED

Part of what makes the Putin regime so threatening is the way it has simplified traditional ideas to the extreme. As the historian Andrei Zorin has observed, in Count Uvarov's era in the early nineteenth century, "the past was called upon to replace a dangerous and uncertain future for the empire," In Uvarov's view, Russian autocracy and the Orthodox Church were "the last alternative to Europeanization." By the early twentieth century, however, nationalist ideologues were already using the concept of Russian exceptionalism to defend an unvarnished militarism. "Russia's national idea . . . has become incredibly crude," the Russian philosopher Georgy Fedotov, who had left Soviet Russia for France, wrote in 1929. "Epigones of Slavophilia . . . have been hypnotized by naked force, which made them miss the moral idea."

At the time Fedotov wrote these words, the Soviet state was already putting them into practice. Stalin called 1929 "the year of the great turning point"—that is, the beginning of forced industrialization, which required forced labor and forced collectivization and drained the peasantry of all its resources. A year later, the Soviet authorities established the gulag, and a period of mass repression soon followed. But Fedotov's insight may have even greater relevance today.

As the struggle in Ukraine continues, the Kremlin's obsession with naked force has become more and more apparent. In Putin's version,

the Russian Idea amounts to little more than territorial expansion and the repression of domestic dissent in defense of a sacralized state. The regime's embrace of this concept in its most primitive form has coincided with a shift from soft authoritarianism into what is now closer to a hybrid totalitarianism modeled on Stalinist precepts. In addition to the complete suppression of civil society and independent media and the brutal repression of any form of dissent, the state now makes new political demands of Russians themselves. In many situations, it is no longer acceptable for people to just passively acquiesce to the regime, as they could in past years; they must express their support loudly. Russian schools now include mandatory "patriotism" lessons, textbooks dictate the correct interpretation of Putin's actions, and citizens are sometimes required to participate in pro-Putin rallies. By such means, Putin is imposing a totalitarian regime that seeks to possess sole control of how events are explained to the country—and what Russians are supposed to think about them.

The Kremlin is waging a war against memory.

Perhaps most revealing is the effort to suppress knowledge of the political persecutions of the Soviet era. In late 2021, just before the invasion of Ukraine, the Russian government shut down Memorial, an organization devoted to preserving the memory of Stalin-era crimes; after all, the Putin regime no longer regards Stalin's purges as a negative event. But the closure of Memorial is only one example of a much broader erasure. Already in 2020, authorities in the city of Tver removed a memorial plaque from the site of a mass shooting of Polish prisoners of war in World War II, part of the notorious mass killings by agents of the NKVD, Stalin's secret police and the predecessor to the KGB, in the spring of 1940 known as the Katyn massacre. Since then, the Russian media and parliament have sought to rewrite the history of Katyn, rehashing false Soviet narratives that blame the Nazis.

This campaign has accelerated over the past year. In April, residents in Russia's Perm region discovered that a monument commemorating Poles and Lithuanians who had been deported there from Lithuania in 1945 had been demolished. A few weeks later, a monument and a cross marking the mass graves of Lithuanians shot by the NKVD near the eastern city of Irkutsk in the 1930s were destroyed. And in July,

a Polish memorial at Levashovo Memorial Cemetery in St. Petersburg—a cemetery that was established in 1990 to commemorate the victims of Stalin's political repressions—was removed. Local authorities are likely the instigators of these actions: amid the conflict in Ukraine, they have sensed the change in Russia's ideological climate. Putin is waging a war against memory. As his Kremlin sees it, victims of past political persecution were opponents of the Russian state, just as their present-day counterparts—opponents of Putin—are now. To affirm a just cause for Putin's reprisals, the regime needs to repress the record of Stalin's.

Stalin's dictatorship, based on nationalism, imperialism, naked force, and what became a growing anti-Westernism, led to millions of deaths in the gulag and set back the country's development by decades while causing multitudes to live in constant fear of arrest. Putin's autocracy, by adding a messianic, anti-Western worldview to these currents, has now plunged into a senseless quagmire in Ukraine, resulting in vast destruction, the reversal of Russia's economic development, and the imposition of an antimodern consciousness on the elite and the general population. The return of the Russian Idea in today's Kremlin is thus the product of two centuries of ideological corruption—a process that has been spurred by recurring fears of the West.

As George Kennan observed in his "Long Telegram" from Moscow to the U.S. secretary of state in 1946, Russian rulers "have always feared foreign penetration, feared direct contact between Western world and their own, feared what would happen if Russians learned truth about world without or if foreigners learned truth about world within." As a consequence, he wrote, "they have learned to seek security only in patient but deadly struggle for total destruction of rival power, never in compacts and compromises with it." In Putin's Russia, this kind of thinking has led to the "special operation" in Ukraine—a cynical perversion of the idea of "defending the fatherland" from the West at a time when no one has attacked the fatherland. Citizens are being asked to risk their lives for this idea, and Russian boys have been turned into cannon fodder.

THE PLOT AGAINST RUSSIA

In entering a world of ideological necessity, the Kremlin has unleashed forces it cannot always contain. One surprising example is Yevgeny Prigozhin, a convicted thief and fraudster who reinvented himself as

a serial entrepreneur, eventually running a Kremlin-favored catering business and, later, the Kremlin-backed Wagner mercenary outfit. His rebellion in June 2023 should not be misunderstood as a direct challenge to Putin's system. Prigozhin, as much as any of the other characters around the president, is a product of that system and an embodiment of the concept of naked force. If he had any disagreements with Putin, they were—as the dissident and writer Andrei Sinyavsky, parodying his own differences with the Soviet regime, once put it—"stylistic."

At the same time, however, Prigozhin is a product of Putin-style state capitalism, in which the Kremlin distributes tax revenues to various outsourcers. This is what Putin's Russia has been reduced to: a feudal system in which the supreme leader hands out pieces of property to his vassals to manage or delegates functions to them at his subjects' expense. As one of these outsourcers, Prigozhin was paid more than $1 billion in state—that is, taxpayer—money to create a private army that was not fully controlled by the state. He was allowed to briefly cause chaos and in the end was not punished for his antics. Such an anomalous situation can be explained only by the extreme personalist nature of Putin's autocracy and the need to defend the homeland from Western attacks and promote Russia's military influence abroad, as for example in Africa. Prigozhin was valuable because he was a supplier of expendable human material. In this case, he felt he might be losing his government contract and decided to show his capabilities. His goal was not to displace Putin but to be recognized as an equal partner of the president. But he made a false start and overplayed his hand. In his eruption, Prigozhin malfunctioned, frightening Putin but not significantly shaking his hold on power.

Paradoxically, the Kremlin has seemed less concerned about the real possibility of more rebellions from within than about imagined dangers from without. In fact, the regime's main ideological precept is simple, revolving around a single imaginary threat: the West is out to destroy the Russian state. In the words of Sergey Kiriyenko, the first deputy chief of the presidential administration and a chief Kremlin spin doctor, "The goal of those who are trying to fight against Russia today is very clear. . . . They want Russia to cease its existence." Russian officials bombastically refer to this as a "civilizational challenge" or "existential threat." The simplicity of this premise has made it a key

rationale for continuing the "special military operation" in Ukraine, which officials, including Putin, are finally calling a war, even as they punish ordinary Russians for doing so.

Russians were certainly not seeking to sacrifice themselves for the state before February 2022. The government's promotion of the idea of a heroic death "for the fatherland" emerged only after the "special military operation" began. Now, Putin argues that death on the battlefield means a life not lived in vain. As he told a group of mothers whose sons had been killed in the fighting in November 2022, "With some people . . . it is unclear why they die—because of vodka or something else. . . . Their lives passed without notice. But your son did live—do you understand? He achieved his goal." Already, this idea has permeated Russian culture. Consider the Russian pop star Shaman, who has been transformed by the Kremlin's propaganda machine into a mouthpiece of military expansionism. In his recent hit "Let's Rise," he not only claims that "God and truth are on our side" but calls on Russians to praise the fallen—"those who found themselves in heaven and are no longer with us."

Helping advance a warrior cult, the Russian Orthodox Church has become a crucial ideological and propaganda instrument of the regime. But it has also lost its Christian message. Consider the case of Father Ioann Burdin, a pacifist village priest in the Kostroma region northeast of Moscow: after his parishioners informed on him, he was fined for discrediting the army in his sermons and in March 2023, was banned from leading services. Russia's diocesan court ruled that his pacifism was inconsistent with the teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church. (Burdin has correctly pointed out that the church is serving the state, rather than Christ.)

An even more powerful tool than church decrees, however, may be the Kremlin's rewriting of history. As the sociologist Lev Gudkov has observed, long before the invasion of Ukraine, the government began nurturing the idea in Russian textbooks that the country is "a national unit that emerges as the empire expands." In this framing, the colonization of neighboring territories serves as a projection of Russian national superiority while "conflating regime interests with the interests of the people." (As a joke making the rounds in Moscow has it, "Russia borders on whatever country it wants.") Just like Stalin-era textbooks, many of which were compiled with Stalin's personal involvement, today's textbooks betray the extraordinary

lengths that officials and educators loyal to the regime have gone to adapt history to Putin's nationalist-imperialist ideas.

The government's new "Concept of Teaching Russian History to Non-History Higher Education Institutions," introduced in the winter of 2022–23, makes two key points. First, it stresses the importance of a strong centralized authority, which it says is "essential for maintaining national statehood." Second, in interpreting the events that brought about Russia's actions in Ukraine—including, according to the document, the "attempt to create a 'belt of instability' around Russia" and the "refusal" of the United States and NATO to "discuss threats to Russia's security"—it asserts that they were all instigated by the West. According to the document, Ukraine's leadership "had turned [Ukraine] into 'anti-Russia' and, with the help of NATO, was preparing for the 'return of Crimea and Donbas'" to Kyiv. It was this existential threat, the government says, that "led to the inevitability of a special military operation by Russia in 2022."

AFTER THE AUTOCRAT

Putin's attempt to resurrect an empire by naked force is failing. The imperial model is on its last legs and can no longer be revived. The question is: For how much longer will ordinary Russians be receptive to Putinism, Russian messianism, and the state's increasingly flimsy justifications for using military power? The evidence is contradictory: according to the Levada Center, an independent research organization, Prigozhin's mutiny has had little effect on Putin's approval ratings. In the eyes of ordinary Russians, Putin won that battle, and the country has remained relatively calm. Russian society may be mobilized, but not all citizens are involved in the fighting, and Putin has been able to show that for those who are not on the battlefield, the state can continue to provide relatively tolerable living conditions. People may not trust the authorities, but that does not prevent them from supporting the regime and its uncontested leader and even showing their loyalty when necessary.

Ordinary Russians, long conditioned to ignore their own opinions, tend to follow the arguments that the state gives them. Consider the law used to designate certain Russian individuals, including this author, as "foreign agents." According to the Levada Center, in an October 2021 poll, shortly after the law was expanded, just 36 percent of respondents supported the government's claim that it seeks to limit

the "negative influence of the West on our country." But by September 2022—eight months into the "special operation"—57 percent of those polled agreed that the government had good reasons for designating prominent Russians as foreign agents. In short, ideology does work, but only when reduced to simple points hammered into people's heads.

Yet the mutiny, during which no one seemed to rally around Putin, also exposed the extent of public ambivalence toward the regime. Putin can count on the indifference of the population, which has allowed him to take the country into, and sustain, a disastrous military adventure, and, in this case, to quickly end a failed rebellion. But that same indifference could be fatal if the regime truly comes under threat. Having been conditioned for so long to be passive observers of events, Russians are unprepared to defend their president. Similarly, many condemn those who have fled the country to avoid mobilization yet fear being conscripted themselves. They also find the archaic conceits that the state feeds them about the satanic West and the special destiny of Russia at odds with their modern, urban Western lifestyles.

Putin will find words to present defeat as victory.

Despite the Putin regime's glorification of arms and empire, financial well-being remains far more important to most Russians. Before 2022, sociologists found that a substantial majority felt that the country's greatness lay in its economic rather than its military might. To some extent, the government has been able to bridge this ideological gap between the state and the people by offering better pay to those who serve in the military. Moscow is now plastered with posters conveying the message that fighting in Ukraine is a "real job" for "real men," unlike, say, driving a taxi or working as a security guard. Another financial incentive is the benefits that families of soldiers receive if they are killed or permanently disabled. In June, Putin boasted about the growth of real incomes in Russia, but the private sector is withering. Rising incomes are being driven instead by ever-greater transfers from state coffers, whether through social payments or higher salaries, especially for security forces, service members, and mercenaries. This is growth due to destruction and death, not innovation or productivity.

One sign of how far Russia has traveled down the road to totalitarianism is the imposed dominance of official thought. Earlier in

the Putin era, Russian society enjoyed a great diversity of political currents and debates. Liberal thought in various forms, embraced by a number of Russian politicians, was very influential; policy debates and alternative points of view could be heard. But liberalism has become Putin's main enemy. Its public supporters are now in prison or have been thrown out of the country, and its channels of information have been destroyed. Now, questioning government policy is not just forbidden; it is viewed as an anti-state act.

At the end of earlier totalitarian phases, Russia has traditionally reversed course: Alexander II's Great Reforms of 1861, Khrushchev's de-Stalinization of 1956, Gorbachev's perestroika of 1985, Yeltsin's reforms of 1992. But an end to Russian actions in Ukraine is unlikely to mean the end of Putinism as a political and ideological phenomenon. Putin will find words to present defeat as victory. For citizens, in any case, the Russian Idea will remain a sledgehammer that the state can continue to wield against them. In a personalized dictatorship, the pendulum will swing the other way only when the dictator himself steps aside or leaves the scene. Putinism has a chance to outlive Putin, but Russian history, including the history of Stalinism, shows that as soon as an autocrat disappears, a new era of liberalization can begin. After Stalin, people had the opportunity to think and breathe, although the regime remained communist. Similarly, the end of Putin would inevitably start a cycle of de-Putinization, though the underlying structure of the state would likely survive for some time.

Of course, change could come from within the system itself: at least historically, all political transformation in Russia has come from the top. It is possible that a new group of reformers could emerge from among the moderate members of the existing elite—liberals who are still serving in government or the civil service. This new group would have to decide just how radically they want to change the country. If they embarked on a new course of modernization and opening to the West, it could provoke conflicts between former Putinist circles and the counter-elite returning from abroad or being released from prisons.

Still, a pragmatic or conciliatory path, resulting from compromise between elite and counter-elite, could also be followed. If such an outcome is hard to imagine now, it cannot be ruled out. But before a more constructive, less messianic vocation for the Russian state can be born, the Russian Idea must die.

Graduate School Forum Showcase:

Technology and the Human Lens

The Changing Nature of Power and Leadership

We may not have the flying cars or teleportation the movies promised, but technology shapes every aspect of our lives today–including international affairs and policy.

We see its effects on military conflict, governance, trade, culture, and the environment. It inundates us with noise that needs to be filtered. It redistributes the power of information and reshapes how we build relationships and work with others. It transforms how we learn and how we pass on what we know.

Yet technologies are defined by the people and the contexts that created them. Without context, the forces driving our era of rapid change may be misunderstood—and our responses miscalculated.

Training in international affairs and policy develops the ability to recognize the cultural, economic, social, and political forces at work in the world. Schools' interdisciplinary curricula and diverse communities integrate differing perspectives. Programs distinguish themselves by their flexibility and adaptability, as well as the teamwork and leadership skills they build. They help students develop a toolkit to evaluate and process information on a global level.

As you search for the right degree, ask how the school incorporates technology into their ways of teaching and their course content. Ask what experiential opportunities will expose you to technology-based and traditional learning. Look at how they bring different voices into the conversation. Examine how they cultivate leadership qualities in students, as well as engage current policymakers, to build the future of international relations.

Even as artificial intelligence and other paradigm-shifting technologies rework the mechanisms of discourse, conflict, economics, and geopolitics, they are still the product of their human creators. Students of international affairs and policy can ensure that a nuanced human lens is applied amid rapid technological change.

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

Contents

Christopher Miller, PhD
Associate Professor of International History
The Fletcher School at Tufts University

Dynamic Frameworks to Address Complex Geopolitics in Today's Technological Landscape

What role does technology play in geopolitics and international affairs today?

The role of technology in geopolitics and international affairs is as important as ever, shaping global power dynamics and countries' strategies. A quarter of global trade is either in semiconductors or in goods that wouldn't exist if it weren't for semiconductors. This industry is more concentrated than any other, and it creates not only positions of economic influence but also geopolitical power for those who control access to this technology. The United States is trying to restrain the technological chip-making progress of China, which is spending billions of dollars to catch up, and China's leadership is deeply fearful this gives the United States leverage over China that can be used both during peace and wartime.

In response, our curriculum emphasizes the study of digital diplomacy, cybersecurity, and the study of emerging technologies' political and economic impact. Fletcher students are keen on understanding the connections between these issues, and the curriculum and degree programs are designed to promote intersectional thinking and problem-solving.

What skills do students need in order to understand and manage contemporary crises?

A lot of discussion about technology fails to put it in proper historical context. Everyone's impulse is to say, "This is fundamentally new," but usually it isn't. I first became interested in semiconductors and microchips because of the role they played in the Cold War space race and arms race; these issues have been relevant for decades. Understanding how technology has impacted politics and international relations historically is key to making sense of its relevance today.

To understand and manage crises, students need a combination of critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills. My classes at Fletcher focus on cultivating analytical abilities, decision-making under pressure, and devising effective crisis communication techniques. Many classes involve simulated crisis scenarios and case studies to enable students to develop practical crisis management skills.

How do you best prepare a student to be adaptable in a fast-changing global environment?

With complicated problems, you need complex frameworks to make sense of them. Fletcher's approach to every issue is to bring multiple different analytics to bear on problems. One of my main goals in the classroom is to get students excited about seeing these new frameworks. Gaining new analytical purchase on difficult issues is something students finding enlightening.

My classes at Fletcher try to draw explicit connections between academic thinking and real-world problems. The study of history––which my classes focus on––provides case studies that help students develop analytical toolkits that can be deployed to future dilemmas. We ultimately can't predict the crises that we'll have to address in the future, especially when it comes to the interaction of new technologies and politics. But understanding the impact of technology and international affairs in the past provides templates for making sense of the present and future.

FLETCHER

The graduate school of global affairs at Tufts University

Hitoshi Mitomo
Professor
Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies
Waseda University

The Role of Digital Technology in Geopolitics and Sustainability in the Asia-Pacific Region

The Asia-Pacific region has varying degrees of digital development. While the digital divide remains wide and digital technology profoundly impacts geopolitics in the Asia-Pacific region, it is expected to play a crucial role in realizing sustainability. Digital technology has facilitated the spread of information, enhanced connectivity, and reshaped the economic landscape. Moreover, it has also intensified the competition for regional dominance. Countries in the Asia-Pacific are increasingly engaged in cybersecurity and information warfare, seeking to protect their national interests and influence the regional narrative. Digital platforms have become battlegrounds for strategic messaging, propaganda, and influence operations.

How does fake news impact countries?

Fake news, misinformation, and disinformation impact both within and across countries, and they struggle to counteract it. In countries where mass media information is unreliable or heavily controlled, social networking sites serve to communicate the truth. In many movements for democratization, social networking played a crucial role. As social media is gaining importance, fake information negatively affects the country's stability, especially regarding political and human rights issues. In addition, generative artificial intelligence (AI) can affect the dissemination of fake news. Deepfakes, which can be visual or auditory, and manipulated images, can be used to spread false information and misrepresent individuals. Generative AI makes it difficult for people to distinguish between genuine and artificially generated content, which amplifies the potential for fake news to spread rapidly and deceive a broad audience. It can also be leveraged to personalize and target fake news content to specific individuals or groups.

How can societies balance regulating false information and freedom of speech?

It has been argued that the spread of disinformation should be subject to regulatory and legal restrictions since spreading false information and misinformation can have harmful consequences, such as undermining public trust, inciting violence, or influencing essential decision-making processes. However, regulatory measures raise concerns about potential abuse of power, censorship, and stifling of legitimate speech. While there are countries in the Asia-Pacific where freedom of expression is not ensured, there is a movement toward democratization in many parts of the region. The balance between regulating false information and upholding freedom of speech has been debated in many societies.

What role is education expected to play?

Education plays a crucial role in combating the spread of fake information. The Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies (GSAPS)provides an education that equips individuals with the tools to navigate and evaluate the vast information available by promoting critical thinking, media literacy, and information source evaluation skills. GSAPS' curriculum ensures that students develop these skills as an integral part of their education. Of course, we must remember the importance of building trust—especially at the individual level—in the classic sense: by building mutual understanding through increased mutual trust across the Asia-Pacific.

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

Ginevra Fontana

Graduate of the Diploma Programme 2022-2023
Diplomatische Akademie Wien
Vienna School of International Studies

An Interdisciplinary Approach to Current Issues

Graduate programs at the Diplomatische Akademie Wien-Vienna School of International Studies (DA) prepare students to excel in a range of international careers. Located in the heart of Vienna, the DA is near international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, diplomatic missions, and cultural institutions. With its vast alumni network in over 120 countries and 14 active alumni chapters worldwide, the DA offers an excellent balance between theoretical and practical approaches.

How is the role of technology in geopolitics and international affairs changing? How is this reflected in your curriculum or ways of teaching?

Technology developments have always affected geopolitics and international affairs: as history teaches, they play a major role in both armed conflicts and social changes. The speed at which discoveries and products are nowadays developed and made accessible to the public has increased exponentially—effectively speeding up the process to a previously unimaginable tempo. The curriculum at the DA is designed to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to comprehend and engage with these transformations in a timely and effective manner, by implementing a holistic interdisciplinary approach through a wide and varied course offer.

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

As the oldest professional school in the world, the DA has prepared students throughout the centuries to understand and manage crises, as attested by its numerous distinguished alumni throughout history and all over the globe. The current curriculum focuses on interdisciplinary approaches to support the development of the skillset needed to educate adaptable and capable professionals. Particular attention is reserved for multilingualism and intercultural dialogue, further fostered by the various cultural and interest-based societies, which allow for advocacy and independent student activities. The DA's students and alumni distinguish themselves for their sound academic background, think-outside-the-box mentality, and flexible approach to complex issues—all skills honed with their training.

How do you best prepare a student to be adaptable in a fast-changing global environment?

The DA focuses on state-of-the-art education, offering three post-graduate courses that cater toward different demographics: the Diploma Program, a one-year course aimed at preparing professionals for the international arena, with the Class of 2023 as its fifty-ninth graduating class; the Master in Advanced International Studies, a two-year master's degree hosted in cooperation with the University of Vienna; and the Master of Science in Environmental Technology and International Affairs, hosted in cooperation with the TU Wien. A Master of Science in Digital International Affairs is currently being established.

The curriculum offered at the DA is diverse and well-balanced, spanning from digital diplomacy to trade law, international history to crisis management, environmental economics to ethics of technology, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence. The choice between theoretical and practical courses is well-balanced, allowing students to seek out and tailor their education to their professional objectives and personal academic interests. The DA prides itself on expanding its curriculum every year, hosting visiting academics and conferences to focus on current issues and keeping in stride with all recent developments and discoveries.

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

Shaun Coughlin
Trust and Safety, Google
2006 School of Global Policy and Strategy Graduate
UC San Diego

Facing Policy Challenges as Technology Evolves

When you think about human rights and social justice globally, what are the main risks and rewards you see as technology evolves?

I worked on human rights and international justice at the U.S. State Department when the Assad regime increased its killing of civilians in the Syrian civil war and ISIS showed its depravity to the world by beheading captives. These conflicts present a great example of both the risks and rewards of technology. We saw how a regime or terrorist organization could use social media for propaganda and disinformation operations, while human rights defenders shared videos of atrocities to galvanize world action and civil society organizations debunked misinformation, such as the investigative journalism group Bellingcat, who geolocated and validated alleged atrocities depicted in social media posts.

What informs your thinking about these challenges?

The School of Global Policy and Strategy (GPS) and UC San Diego prepared me with two incredibly useful tools: an analytic framework and cross-cultural understanding. At GPS, we looked at policy challenges through the lens of incentive structures by identifying key stakeholders and influencers, understanding their interests, and identifying conflicts and commonalities in desired outcomes. Cultural understanding came from a combination of the diverse student body and array of outside learning opportunities offered on campus. In the evolving technology space, applying these tools can generate critical insights into needs, such as stress-testing generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools in ways they could be exploited by violent extremists, or ensuring diversity and inclusion are incorporated into product design, such as developing phone cameras that capture outstanding photos of all skin tones.

In addition to collaboration and teamwork, what skills will prepare graduates of the future to manage crises and analyze risk?

Two skills stand out for me: quantitative proficiency and writing for brevity.

Senior officials and executives hope for a quantified measure of a crisis or risk whenever possible. It allows for prioritization relative to other crises and risks and creates the opportunity for measuring when you have successfully transitioned out. While it may take a greater aptitude to be the person designing the quantification system, at minimum it is important to be proficient enough to understand its operation, application, and outputs. The GPS curriculum ensures quantitative proficiency while offering opportunities for those interested to gain advanced skills. Also, within private and public sector institutions, decision processes are driven mostly by short memos as opposed to long papers, especially when informing or influencing senior executives or government officials. If a paper is too long, it will not be read—and GPS requires expertise in short-form writing for impact, thereby positioning students for success.

How do you collaborate with current students?

I regularly connect with current students to help expand their outlook on job opportunities. For example, someone interested in online mis/disinformation and dreaming of a job at Google may not be aware of positions of interest with federal government agencies. Or someone interested in foreign policy may not know that USAID and the Department of Commerce have their own foreign services. Other alumni and the GPS career and professional development center exponentially expanded my awareness of professional possibilities, and I enjoy paying it forward.

UC San Diego
SCHOOL OF GLOBAL POLICY AND STRATEGY

Nina Kelsey

Associate Professor of Public Policy and International Affairs
The Elliott School of International Affairs
The George Washington University

Intersections of Science, Technology, and International Affairs: Navigating Challenges and Seizing Opportunities

Cybersecurity. Artificial intelligence (AI). Climate change. Decarbonization. 5G—and 6G. Smart cities. Adaptation to climate stress and disasters. The rise of commercial space programs. Nuclear security. Smart agriculture. Offshoring and homeshoring of critical industrial technologies. Technology transfer for innovations such as critical drugs, genetically modified crops, or cutting-edge energy technologies.

Today, the most interesting problems in international affairs are all intertwined with science, technology, and innovation. There are two ways to respond to this trend: specialize or generalize. Policy practitioners need to do both.

On the one hand, international affairs work will increasingly require specialized knowledge. Deep science and technology expertise helps practitioners do things such as translate the science of climate change for policymakers, assess cybersecurity risks, handle biosecurity and disease management cooperation problems, and understand the ways AI could upend competitive advantage in industry or even how humans see and understand the world.

On the other hand, to cope with the rapidity and unpredictability of technological change, practitioners also need to be able to quickly grasp new developments and adapt to change. That requires fast, flexible, rigorous thinking and communication, with broad science and policy literacy and versatile problem-solving skills.

The Elliott School offers an unmatched playing field to pursue both.

We're a great place to specialize. You'll dig deep into specialized programs, institutes, and courses from cybersecurity to space policy to sustainable development—many taught by active policy practitioners. Moreover, George Washington University offers an unusual range of other schools that can further your expertise, in engineering and applied sciences, public health, law, public policy, business, media and public affairs, and arts and design. At the Institute for International Science and Technology Policy, where I work, connecting students to the right expertise is a core part of our mission.

But we're also a great place to generalize and get practical experience. What excites me about my teaching and research in climate policy is that I'm often dealing with policy problems that haven't been solved. How do we get to a zero-carbon energy grid? How do we protect ecosystems from unprecedented pressures? It's people such as my students that will go on to create those solutions.

My teaching emphasizes rigorous, open-ended approaches to break down the important aspects of a problem—technologically, socially, politically—and figure out how those building blocks could be changed or rearranged to allow a novel solution. I focus on tools to do that: frameworks for organized, critical thinking, efficient research skills, and practice in concise, clear policy writing.

There's no better place to learn this than Elliott—not just because of our own resources but because the opportunities to turn theory into practice are so accessible. Given our location in the heart of Washington, many of my students work next door in the executive branch, the World Bank/IMF, K Street, or leading nonprofits. The unique fun of being here is that what we discuss in class one day may be what a student wrestles with at work the next.

Elliott School of International Affairs
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Professor Henry Schwalbenberg

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

Understanding Technology-Driven Changes through an Interdisciplinary Lens

What sets Fordham IPED apart from other international affairs programs?

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

How does Fordham IPED prepare its students in anticipating changes in the international affairs landscape brought about by technological innovations?

Our core curriculum, consisting of economic, political, and quantitative courses, provides our students with an advanced interdisciplinary knowledge of global economic relations. Our electives allow students to specialize in the fields of international development studies, international and development economics, development and finance, international banking and finance, or in global environmental and resource economics. These give our students the analytical expertise to anticipate and adapt to shifts in the global economy brought about by technological innovations. A pressing concern to many of our faculty is understanding the technological changes needed to develop a green economy that will promote poverty reduction in the developing world.

What unique advantages are available for students in Fordham IPED?

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. Through an endowed summer intern fellowship program, we fund a number of field placements for our students to gain practical experience not only here in New York but also in Washington D.C., as well as in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America.

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

We have a small class size of roughly 20 students, providing the opportunity for close interactions with our supportive and distinguished faculty. Our students, drawn from around the world, come from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds. We admit our students from among the top 40% of all applicants to U.S. graduate programs and offer generous scholarships to exceptional students.

Lastly, we have a strong alumni network and close association with various international organizations. Our placement record is strong, with about 38% of alumni in the private sector, 23% in the nonprofit sector, 30% in government, and the remaining 9% in academia. Our graduates 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

Andrew Grotto

William J. Perry International Security Fellow
Director, Program on Geopolitics, Technology, and Governance
Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies
Stanford University Ford Dorsey Master's in International Policy

Studying International Affairs in Silicon Valley—Balancing Policy, Leadership, and Technical Skills

What is it like studying international affairs in the heart of Silicon Valley?

Technology is front and center in international affairs. Digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning systems, cloud computing, semiconductors, and quantum technologies, have both civilian and military applications in a geopolitical context of interdependent economies. Societies' increasing reliance on them is an opportunity for strengthening social, political, and economic bonds but also a vulnerability that threat actors can exploit.

Many of the innovations and companies behind these technologies were created in Silicon Valley by Stanford researchers and students. So, we feel a heightened sense of responsibility to the world for maximizing the chances that digital technologies are used ethically to advance peace and prosperity.

How do you prepare students for leadership in international affairs?

The curricular heart of our master's in international policy (MIP) program is the core, which emphasizes policy problem-solving skills. Students also choose a specialization. We offer four, including the one I lead: Cyber Policy and Security. The program concludes with participation in capstone projects with world-class, external partner organizations.

The MIP degree is also customizable: beyond the core, capstone, and specialization requirements, students "choose their own adventure." Faculty and staff help students map out their coursework, and students rely on each other for advice as well.

Overall, the MIP experience helps students build the intellectual infrastructure to take any problem, break it down into smaller parts, identify stakeholders, build coalitions, design implementable solutions, and communicate them effectively. Students graduate with the tools and mindset necessary to be effective leaders and problem-solvers.

What does leadership look like, especially when it comes to the intersection of digital technologies and geopolitics?

Technological advances happen so fast that it is essential for students to develop and practice foundational skills: how to lead people and organizations, and how to triage problems and prioritize the most urgent ones. Being an effective communicator is also critical. These are skills woven through our curriculum and that students carry through their careers, no matter what policy issues they are working on.

Do MIP students have opportunities to enhance their technical skills?

We want our students to become changemakers in whatever career path they choose. This means having foundational analytical, quantitative, and interpersonal skills and the confidence to use them. It also requires knowledge about the technical dimensions of digital technologies—how they work, how they fail. We encourage students to supplement their policy coursework by taking advantage of the myriad opportunities that Stanford offers for delving deeper into the underlying technologies, whether through coursework or broader engagement with the Stanford and Silicon Valley innovation ecosystems.

We have no prior expectations about our students' technical abilities or lack thereof. That is because different career paths require vastly different degrees of technical depth—some paths require a "conversational" level of fluency in tech, while others require true fluency. We help students map this out when they get here. They also help each other out—the MIP community is small and tight-knit, and our students often coordinate taking more technical courses together.

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

Arancha González
Dean
Paris School of International Affairs
Sciences Po

Preparing Future Leaders, Inspiring Change in the Digital Era

What makes Sciences Po and the Paris School of International Affairs (PSIA) unique?

Founded 150 years ago, Sciences Po's uniqueness is remaining faithful to its original approach: multidisciplinary collaboration in both research and teaching in social and human sciences, permanent dialogue between sciences and applied knowledge, and international openness and social inclusion.

At PSIA, we continue this tradition by providing students education and professional training in the most salient fields of international affairs. Located in Paris, at the heart of Europe, and with English as the language of instruction, we attract students from over 100 countries and diverse academic backgrounds. Our specialized master's programs and wide range of thematic and regional concentrations allow students to personalize their curriculum and chart their very own career paths.

Per QS World University Rankings, PSIA is a global leader, as reflected in Sciences Po's continuous top-three ranking for politics and international studies since 2019.

How does PSIA prepare students to shape global affairs?

We attract the brightest students from across the planet and instill these future leaders with the knowledge, skills, and experiences to understand, navigate, and shape the complexities of our world. By the end of their two years in PSIA, graduates are ready to be agents of change in the public and private sectors.

World-renowned professors and leading practitioners teach specialist courses that balance conceptual foundations with the most up-to-date operational training and best practices. Students at PSIA have regular opportunities for hands-on practice and to engage with world leaders and scholars through our extensive series of public events, including our annual intergenerational flagship youth and leaders summit.

You're launching a dual degree Master's in Technology and Global Affairs this year. Why?

Technology is increasingly shaping international affairs. It drives innovation and enhances connectivity at a global scale, but it also presents fundamental ethical and security challenges to our societies, our economies, and our forms of governance. This groundbreaking degree, jointly delivered by PSIA and IE University in Madrid, will help students gain knowledge in technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, augmented realities, or cybersecurity tools. They will learn about the impact these technologies are having on citizenship and rights, geopolitics and security, and prosperity and sustainable growth, as well as the role that technology can play to address global pressing challenges, such as climate change. Students will explore what kind of global architecture is needed to govern them.

You joined PSIA, having held senior roles at the United Nations and in the Spanish government. What qualities do tomorrow's leaders need to be successful?

In my experience, leadership transcends titles and positions. It is about embodying values such as compassion, fighting intolerance, and rejecting injustice; coherence, as incoherent leaders are not only inefficient but also build mistrust; commitment, not just holding on to power but rather using it for a purpose, and, courage, daring to succeed but also to fail. These are values that PSIA cherishes and cultivates in leaders. Ultimately, it is about a sense of responsibility toward addressing global challenges that makes us rise higher together.

SciencesPo
PARIS SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Debak Das
Assistant Professor
Korbel School of International Studies
University of Denver

Developing a Diverse, Critical, and Practical Toolkit to Tackle a Fast-Changing Global Environment

How is the role of technology in geopolitics and international affairs changing? How is this reflected in your curriculum or ways of teaching?

The role of technology has expanded manifold in geopolitics and international affairs. From cyber security to artificial intelligence (AI), autonomous systems, hypersonics, and nuclear weapons to the use of cryptocurrencies as tools of democratic activism—especially in the Global South—emerging technologies now shape international affairs more than ever.

At the Korbel School, we grapple with these issues not only from the point of view of present challenges in international affairs but also through theoretically informed historical analysis. For example, in my emerging issues in international security class, we focus on how each new technological development in international relations affects a broad range of issues, such as climate change, energy security, biosecurity, the war in Ukraine, security in the Indo-Pacific, and the role of the Global South in international affairs.

What practical experience do you provide for students with both technology-based and traditional discourse?

We equip students with both hands-on experience and a broad range of analytical skills. Beyond providing students with the tools to critically analyze the intersection between technology and international affairs, we also ensure that students are exposed to policymakers and practitioners in the government, private sector, and civil society through guest lectures and short courses. Many master's degrees at Korbel also require students to have internships in either international organizations, U.S. government agencies, think tanks or other nongovernmental organizations. These provide students with the practical experience required to be successful after their degrees are complete.

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

To manage a crisis, students first need a clear understanding of the issue's historical background. They also require critical thinking and strategic analytical skills along with the ability to produce thoughtful—yet realistic—solutions. Managing crises also requires quick thinking and the ability to make difficult decisions under pressure. In the classroom, I get students to practice all these skills in wargames and simulation exercises based on current international crises. At a broader school level, my colleagues and I run the Sié Simulations, hosted by the Sié Chéou-Kang Center for International Security and Diplomacy, that apply wargames to real-world crises. These dynamic exercises teach students to think through different constraints faced by decision-makers, alongside practicing policymaking firsthand at a granular level.

How do you best prepare a student to be adaptable in a fast-changing global environment?

The key to being adaptable in a fast-changing environment is to have a diverse toolkit at your disposal. I aim to equip students with the tools of critical thinking and analysis with a focus on enhancing substantive knowledge, historical understanding, and evidence-based argumentative skills. Experiential learning is key to this process. It helps our students have analytical frameworks and heuristics at hand to be able to distil information in a sharp and coherent way and adapt to any new challenges that they are faced with.

Josef Korbel School of International Studies
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

Dr. Joel S. Hellman
Dean and Distinguished Professor of the Practice
Georgetown University School of Foreign Service

Georgetown's School of Foreign Service: Expanding and Innovating to Meet the Moment

How is the School of Foreign Service (SFS) adapting its academic offerings to meet the changing global landscape, including technological advances?

The School of Foreign Service was the first school in the United States dedicated to preparing leaders to understand the world and to change the world in the face of newly emerging global challenges. As we look to our next century, those challenges are deeply connected with how technology is changing international affairs. And SFS is changing to meet those challenges.

For example, with total grants of over $100 million, SFS created the Center for Security and Emerging Technology (CSET), which has now become the leading provider of data-driven analysis on the security implications of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), advanced computing, and biohazards. With sixty-five full-time staff and hundreds of student research assistants since 2019, CSET has been transforming the policy dialogue in Washington by bringing leading experts on technology and security together with SFS's world renowned faculty in international affairs. Researchers at CSET have taught more than twenty classes at SFS on the impact of emerging technologies on global security and international relations, and SFS students regularly serve as research assistants and co-authors of policy briefs at CSET, launching them on careers in these critical areas.

We've also created a whole new range of courses across our master's degree programs that look at the impact of new technologies on all aspects of international affairs. Students can focus on science, technology, and international affairs through a concentration in our Master of Science in Foreign Service (MSFS) program that examines how all aspects of science and technology are reshaping security and diplomacy. Importantly, this year, we are launching a new master's degree in environment and international affairs that looks deeply into the science of climate change and environmental degradation and how they are shaping international affairs and global public policy. We are also launching a new master's degree in migration and refugees, which has been reshaped not only by politics but by core issues, such as global warming and environmental change, leading to record numbers of forced migration around the world. With these new programs, SFS is once again leading the way in shaping a new generation of leaders to confront a new set of global challenges.

What differentiates SFS from its competitors in graduate education?

With our Washington, DC location, we have always been dedicated to linking together the worlds of analysis and practice to develop sustainable solutions to pressing global problems. Especially when it comes to fast-moving emerging technologies, it is critical to combine the experience of practitioners deeply engaged in problem-solving with the analytical rigor of the country's best professors of international affairs. Washington, DC is the hub for decision-making that will ultimately determine how we deal with the risks and opportunities presented by new technologies in international affairs. With its century-old history, SFS is the place where those decision makers gather to grapple with these new issues. There has never been a more exciting and consequential moment to be at SFS.

SFS | GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY School of Foreign Service

Mohamad Mirghahari
Sharkey Distinguished Visiting Scholar
School of Diplomacy and International Relations
Seton Hall University

Studying International Relations at the Intersection of Technology and Geopolitics

As the director of School of Diplomacy's National Security Fellowship (NSF) program, how is the changing role of technology in international affairs reflected in the research your students are doing?

Over the years, we have witnessed a rapid evolution in the use of technology and its implications for national security, geopolitics, and international relations. From cybersecurity to strategic messaging and information warfare, our graduate students' research reflects a growing recognition of the critical interplay between technology and geopolitics. Their research explores the risks and opportunities, ethical considerations, policy implications, and international cooperation required to navigate the evolving landscape of technology in international affairs and national security. All these elements are incorporated and presented to U.S. government agencies with real world impacts and recommendations.

Specifically, how does artificial intelligence (AI), social media, and other forms of new technology factor into the classroom experience?

Artificial intelligence, social media, and other forms of technology play a crucial role in our fellowship when assessing how the intersection of technology and geopolitics impacts national security. As our national security fellows conduct research and develop their policy recommendations, they do real-time analysis of social media and open-source intelligence. They develop case studies to support their policy recommendations and implications. Overall, social media, AI, and other technologies are integral to all our research projects for U.S. government agencies.

What practical opportunities, both technology-based and through traditional discourse, does the NSF program provide for students?

During the year, our national security fellowship students can wed their research skills with unique access to data to develop policy recommendations. In partnership with FNA—a deep technology, AI, and machine learning firm specializing in advanced network analytics and simulations—the NSF students can develop statistical analysis models to enhance their recommendations along with an assessment of the potential impact their recommendations could have to policy.

What skills do students need to prepare to understand and manage crises in the global arena?

From critical thinking and analysis to collaboration and teamwork, our students learn to work across their teams in a manner that will acclimate them to the crises and strategic surprises of the real world. By developing these skills, students will better understand, navigate, and manage crises in the global arena and thereby contribute to effective crisis response, conflict resolution, and long-term stability.

Any advice for young professionals considering a career in international affairs?

Develop a strong academic foundation, cultivate critical language skills, gain real world experience, network and seek mentorship, keep abreast of local, national, and international developments, be adaptive and never stop learning. Pursuing a career in international affairs requires patience, perseverance, and continual learning. Begin by being proactive and seizing opportunities; be open to diverse paths and possibilities, and remember that your passion, dedication, and commitment will guide you in the right direction.

SCHOOL OF DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

Manuel Muñiz
Dean
IE School of Politics, Economics & Global Affairs

Shaping the New Generation of Impactful Global Leaders

How is the role of technology in geopolitics and international affairs changing? How is this reflected in your curriculum or ways of teaching?

We live in an exponentially changing world, with breakthroughs in artificial intelligence, biotechnology, energy storage, and quantum computing. It is therefore imperative that we study the political, economic, and societal implications of change and that we advance solutions to the challenges it brings.

From a global order perspective, technology has become a full domain for foreign policy—one where our strategic interests and values are at stake. This is why technology is present in all our programs. The twenty-first century will be impossible to navigate without an understanding of technology and its impact on societies. Our economics students dive into the implications of automation, e-platforms, and the circular economy. Our international relations students learn about tech diplomacy, the geopolitics of emerging technologies, or the intersection of technology and democracy. We are also currently designing a joint Master in Technology and Global Affairs with Sciences Po to allow for a singular training path for those with a clear interest in these matters.

What practical experience do you provide for students with both technology-based and traditional discourse?

IE University is among the most innovative academic institutions in the world. We see the arrival of disruptive technologies as an immense opportunity to enhance our pedagogy and mold responsible leaders. At the same time, we have always emphasized the ethical use of emerging technologies.

An example of our work in this area is the Tech4Democracy program, an initiative we lead in partnership with the U.S. Department of State, which supports startups in the field of democracy-affirming technologies, such as data for policymaking, fact-checking, digital trust, or GovTech.

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

We firmly believe that learning outside the classroom is just as important as learning inside of it. This is why we adopt a practice-based approach, organizing a series of simulations, role-play exercises, and competitions.

Our students, for example, built a mock refugee camp and designed a humanitarian response. Through this, they learned the advantages of proper team management in uncertain contexts. In other exercises, students simulated the negotiation of trade agreements.

This applied learning methodology produces very effective graduates, and IE University has been consistently ranked among the best in employability worldwide.

How do you best prepare a student to be adaptable in a fast-changing global environment?

We give students the tools they need to be adaptable and resilient. Our unique international environment and outlook shapes global citizens, able to navigate complex economic, political, and social dynamics that go beyond borders and cultures.

On top of our applied learning methodology, students also engage with global speakers through events and outreach activities. We recently organized a transatlantic conference, which fosters debates on the U.S.-Europe relationship and broader Ibero-American issues, as well as or the Concordia Europe Summit, with seventy-five decisionmakers having high-level and interactive conversations centered on the theme of democracy, security, and geopolitical risk.

ie UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF POLITICS, ECONOMICS & GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Ted Wittenstein
Executive Director, International Security Studies
Lecturer in Global Affairs
Yale Jackson School of Global Affairs

The Yale Jackson School Focuses on Artificial Intelligence, Emerging Technologies, and National Power

How is the role of technology in geopolitics and international affairs changing? How is this reflected in your curriculum or ways of teaching?

Technology is the backbone of our global commerce and communication and defense systems and a key aspect of the critical infrastructure that powers our modern civilization. Technologies and information spread instantaneously, while the world economy and supply chains are integrated to a degree unprecedented in history.

Yet despite the immense benefits that have resulted from this global connectivity, significant vulnerabilities persists and threats are on the rise. Competition over strategic technologies and contests for advantage are growing but without standard international rules of the road. Moreover, the future likely will prove even more transformative due to advances in artificial intelligence (AI). Machines capable of sophisticated information processing, toward the frontier of autonomy, pose tremendous opportunities for economic growth and societal well-being. But the potential threats also are extraordinary: autonomous weaponry, AI-augmented cyberwarfare, sophisticated disinformation campaigns, and geopolitical instability as nations race to deploy these unpredictable technologies.

A signature new initiative of Yale's Jackson School of Global Affairs and International Security Studies (ISS), the Schmidt Program on Artificial Intelligence, Emerging Technologies, and National Power examines how AI has the potential to alter the fundamental building blocks of world order. The Schmidt Program offers a new yearlong course, team-taught by faculty across the university, that spans the disciplines of computer science, data science, economics, engineering, history, international relations, law, philosophy, physics, and political science. Through this exposure to leading scholars across multiple fields, this innovative course equips aspiring policy leaders with the requisite technical fluency to identify and respond to emerging threats and opportunities.

What practical experience do you provide for students with both technology-based and traditional discourse?

Students familiarize themselves with AI tools through traditional classroom discussion combined with hands-on demonstrations, simulations, and group project work. For example, rather than merely discuss the challenge of disinformation and its impact on global affairs, students design their own disinformation bot and learn to utilize AI to detect disinformation online. The result is that non-STEM students appreciate the technical aspects of the challenge, while STEM students gain great exposure to the broader legal, policy, and ethical implications of the basic scientific research.

How do you best prepare a student to be adaptable in a fast-changing global environment?

In today's hyper-connected and high-tech world, future thinkers need to be flexible thinkers, creative problem-solvers, and work well in interdisciplinary teams. In the Schmidt Program, students engage in group project work designed to simulate realistic scenarios and solve global challenges. For example, students participate in the Yale-Renmin Student Dialogue on AI, emerging technologies, and U.S.-China relations, in which they engage in actual diplomatic exchange with Chinese counterparts. Another student group composed of global affairs and computer science students developed a new startup company based on a group project from class. From their interdisciplinary expertise, they sought to utilize AI for commercial imagery analysis to aid in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

Yale JACKSON SCHOOL OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Lionel C. Johnson
Professor of Practice, Public Administration and International Affairs
Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs
Syracuse University

Leveraging Technology Requires a Human Touch

Over four decades, Lionel Johnson's career has encompassed the government, nonprofit, and private sectors. He has been president of the Pacific Pension and Investment Institute since July 2014 and previously served as senior vice president of the Initiative for Global Development. He was vice president and director of international government affairs at Citigroup. As a member of the U.S. Foreign Service, Johnson was assigned to embassies in Haiti, the Philippines, and Kenya and served as special assistant to Secretaries of State George P. Shultz and James A. Baker III. In addition to teaching, he directs Maxwell's graduate international relations internship program in Washington, D.C., and other sites.

How do you prepare students to adapt to a world driven by technological advances?

First, the ability to hear and listen is just as important as the ability to articulate in both written and verbal terms. Second, we have instant telecommunications and artificial intelligence in this era, but it's essential to analyze and think critically. Nothing is ever what it appears to be, and you must be willing to invest the time and resources to get to a position based on facts. Fact-based decision-making is critical. It's learning to discern, think, and formulate points of view about complex issues that have been vetted by as many people and institutions as possible.

How do you help students understand their place in this changing environment?

I encourage them to think about their career as a continuum of various opportunities and experiences, not only in government and the nonprofit space but also in the private sector. Government resources are finite across the board. Institutional investors such as pension funds, endowments and companies have a responsibility and need to be at the table. It's not just about profits but also about using that capital responsibly and sustainably to help address common problems. We have so many impressive innovators worldwide that, given a little bit of opportunity, capital can bring new ideas to fruition. The fundamental issues related to income and wealth disparity that we see around the world and are driving so much unrest require a response that brings in the talent and the insights of a range of people and institutions.

What practical experience helps students engage with these opportunities?

Students come into Maxwell internships with a commitment to learning, and they finish with an appreciation of how complex the world is and how difficult decision-making can be. I am finding that they are shocked by how much they are exposed to in their internships' early days. The U.S. Agency for International Development, the State Department, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation all have Maxwell students. There is a vibrant nonprofit community in Washington where students are in places such as the Council of the Americas and Oxfam America. Those interested in the policy side get opportunities on Capitol Hill; I would add how impressed I've been with the number of students interested in the intelligence community. Those deployed in places such as the National Security Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency are also getting meaningful experiences.

Syracuse University
Maxwell School of
Citizenship & Public Affairs

Dr. Mohammad Ayatollahi Tabaar
Associate Professor
Department of International Affairs
Texas A&M University

How the Persian Gulf is Reshaping the World: Technology and Threats

Region of instability

Nuclear technology and its geopolitical consequences have regained center stage in recent years. Increasing tensions among great powers and the spread of nuclear weapons to other states, combined with new technologies in weapons systems, cyberspace, and media, all threaten to undermine global and regional order.

Long dominated by oil and religious politics as well as armed conflicts, many Persian Gulf and broader Middle East states are now competing for advanced nuclear technology for strategic and domestic leverage. Iran has effectively established itself as a nuclear threshold state, and in response, Arab states have taken steps to develop civilian nuclear reactors. Some have even sought alternative nuclear suppliers in China and Russia, given U.S. refusal to provide an indigenous enrichment program, a critical element for states seeking the weapon option.

Arab states in the Persian Gulf have now established strong energy and economic ties with U.S. rivals. Multitrillion-dollar sovereign wealth funds are flowing across the globe, including to Chinese businesses and their high-tech sectors. This massive surge of wealth and investments has led some experts to state that the Persian Gulf is reshaping the world. The nexus of energy, nuclear ambitions, and chronic instability makes the region an evolving hotspot in international politics in the coming years.

Why the Bush School?

The Bush School is equipped to train the next generation of policymakers focused on proliferation and recent technological advances. Having both academic and practitioner backgrounds, our faculty have contributed to scholarship and debates on critical foreign policy issues. My own research on Iran's foreign and nuclear policy has appeared in international relations journals as well as policy outlets such as *Foreign Affairs*.

Armed with theoretical foundations and methodological tools, students learn to conduct research, analyze contemporary issues, and be informed participants in policy debates. They delve into primary sources and examine declassified documents to understand how policy is made and implemented, and then further shaped by social media.

What practical experiences do you offer students?

Students complete a capstone project for a real-world client in their final semester. We offer a wide range of cutting-edge topics covering diplomacy, cyber, defense, intelligence, and more for government and nongovernmental entities in and outside of the United States. In the past decade, my capstone students have reported to the Department of State and the National Security Council on topics such as proxy warfare, Iran's nuclear politics, U.S. strategic options toward Iran, the role of Russia and China in the Middle East, and hostage diplomacy.

This intense course pushes students to learn quickly about a topic they may know little about and produce a nuanced yet concise report for policymakers. They conduct interviews and background conversations with national security advisors, ambassadors, policy experts, academics, and journalists. Thanks to the ever-advancing communication and media technologies, our students engage with experts with diverse opinions and backgrounds, which, in turn, further elevate their critical thinking and communication skills.

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

Ryoji Nakagawa, PhD
Dean
Graduate School of International Relations (GSIR)
Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto Japan

Technology's Impact on International Relations

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

Looking back in history, the steam engine developed by James Watt in 1769 not only revolutionized the power of machines but also revolutionized locomotion when applied to steamships and steam locomotives. The invention of textile machinery, such as the flying shuttle invented by John Kay in 1940, revolutionized production. These inventions brought about a dramatic change in the international position of Britain. Technological innovations in chemistry, electricity, petroleum, and iron and steel since the 1870s have greatly contributed to the development of the United States and Germany and subsequent changes in international relations. Nuclear development was crucial to relations between the two great powers during the Cold War.

Even today, semiconductor technology has decisive significance in the security and economic relations between the United States and China and is the focus of the United States' decoupling/derisking policy.

At the Graduate School of International Relations (GSIR), guidance is provided so that students can consider the meaning of these technologies in international relations while comprehensively clarifying international relations from political, economic, and cultural perspectives. This includes, for example, the implications of things such as the development of dual-use technology for U.S. security policy, agricultural technology development in sub-Saharan Africa on food security, and nuclear development in North Korea on relations with the United States.

How does GSIR best prepare a student to be adaptable in a fast-changing global environment?

Our curriculum offers four clusters of programs in global international relations. These clusters are global governance, sustainable development, culture, society, and media, and global Japanese studies. They are aimed at students with diverse backgrounds and interests from over thirty-two countries, some of whom are working policymakers from overseas, sponsored by their governments, or on scholarship programs from the Japanese government. The courses are provided by scholars and practitioners, including experienced external lecturers such as diplomats, economists, journalists, managers of nongovernmental organizations, and entrepreneurs from the private sector.

Our curriculum gives students opportunities to promote their understanding of what is happening in the real world and encourages them to find clues to address global issues. We also offer more practical courses, such as professional training that provides hands-on experience in international development in Asia and beyond, from practitioners who have experience working for national, regional, and international organizations. The global Japanese studies cluster encourages students to learn from the experiences of Japan and other Asian countries, developing alternative and critical insights into global affairs beyond Western paradigms. Furthermore, GSIR has been strengthening the double master's degree program, which offers qualified students an opportunity to study at overseas partner universities and research institutes in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Asian and European nations. Through this program, students can earn two master's degrees in as short as two years. This program prepares them to work in a rapidly changing world. We continue to update our program to maintain relevance to the changing needs of professional schools in international relations.

RITSUMEIKAN UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of
International Relations

Ambassador Piper Campbell (retired)
Chair, SIS Department of
Foreign Policy & Global Security

Samantha Bradshaw
Professor, School of International Service
American University

Meeting Tomorrow's Security Challenges Today

How is international affairs changing due to rapid advancements in technology?

Campbell: Technology is reshaping every aspect of international affairs. Disinformation and foreign influence operations undermine democratic processes. Drones, robotics, and bioweapons change how defense officials evaluate offensive and defensive capabilities. Innovations in surveillance technology affect human rights, including privacy, intellectual property, freedom of assembly, and political advocacy. Due to cultural differences and the intrinsically borderless nature of many technologies, debates about international norms and the regulation of technology are a new area of contention within international and regional bodies. New innovations in generative artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum computing will reshape things further. We are reshaping what we teach to prepare practitioners.

Bradshaw: Today's complex challenges require a multidisciplinary approach that provides students with both a theoretical and analytical toolkit to understand, evaluate, and act on the biggest questions of our time. New technologies, such as drones, change the power balance between state and non-state actors; we talk about how this affects the nature of conflict and how policymakers can limit harmful or unanticipated effects. Misinformation spread on social media raises difficult questions about the boundaries of speech; students explore how platforms balance competing social and cultural obligations with profit. Advancements in AI provide new tools for public safety, hiring and recruiting, education, banking, and healthcare, but they also risk perpetuating bias and inequality: how can technologists ensure that these systems are built in ways that are both just and effective? We want to be part of that conversation.

At American University, we offer classes that tackle these questions, bridging academic theory and public policy to give students a deep and nuanced understanding of the problem and an analytical toolkit to develop and evaluate new policies. Our globally oriented and multidisciplinary faculty offer students a variety of perspectives on issues at the nexus of new technology and international relations, including those from history, political science, economics, and international development.

How do you build in real-world experiences to prepare students to adapt in a fast-changing global environment?

Bradshaw: We incorporate opportunities for both a practicum and an internship, usually with government, industry, or nongovernmental organizations, which give students real-world experiences in project management and consulting. For the practicum, students spend one semester working in teams with clients, including U.S. and international government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and businesses, to conduct policy and program analyses. Students draw on their research and their qualitative and quantitative skills to prepare final oral and written analyses and recommendations.

Campbell: Internships and practica are great opportunities to network and make connections. When I served in government, managing crises was critical; this will be even more important as technology increases connectivity, bringing things occurring abroad closer to home and speeding up decision cycles. Analytical and communication skills are both critical in this regard. Our ability to bring practitioners to campus as teachers and panelists means students hear firsthand accounts of difficult decision-making. Many of our courses also include simulations and scenarios during which students practice crisis management skills.

SCHOOL *of* INTERNATIONAL SERVICE
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY • WASHINGTON, DC

Professor Moyara (Mo) Ruehsen
Middlebury Institute of International Studies

How New Technologies are Changing Global Security

How are new technologies changing the global security field?

There's a lot of excitement around artificial intelligence (AI) and how it can enhance the work of governments and private sector compliance professionals in detecting criminal activity, such as financial sanctions evasion and cross-border smuggling.

More criminal activity is migrating online and being conducted with alternative communication methods and payment methods. So, we need to keep up with "older" technologies, such as blockchain forensics. Criminals may not be using Bitcoin as often as they did, but we have the technology to track what they're doing on other blockchains.

Beyond my field of financial crime, my colleagues have been using open-source tools to monitor extremist group hate speech and satellite imagery to monitor shipping traffic and nuclear weapons facilities.

How is this shifting power dynamics? What do you see as the peril and the promise of these new technologies?

With the advent of ChatGPT and digitally manipulated voice and video, we're starting to see what AI is capable of. Just as AI can help the good guys, it can also be abused by the bad guys. I worry about what awaits us once criminals and rogue states master their own AI capabilities.

How is this reflected in what you teach and how you teach it?

No one can singlehandedly keep up with all the new technologies—we rely on a team of professional practitioners who teach these cutting-edge techniques. I am constantly adapting my own courses. For example, I was teaching a course called cyber-enabled financial crime, but most financial crime today is already cyber-enabled. The cases I used in that course are now part of my introductory typologies course.

What skills are most critical for students to build so they can understand and address emerging threats in a fast-changing global environment?

Traditional communication skills, including written and spoken communication, cross-cultural communication, and foreign language skills, will always be important, especially because many threats are transnational and require close collaboration with foreign counterparts. Language translation technology is no substitute for building interpersonal cross-cultural relationships.

Blockchain forensics for tracing crypto assets is another exciting development. We train our financial crime students in advanced blockchain analytics techniques and how to use public tools that highlight the flow of funds and recognize patterns.

Other critical skills include data analytics, which is getting more sophisticated. Coding classes, such as Python and SQL, are becoming standard components of data analytics curricula.

What do you see on the horizon? Where do you see emerging needs and opportunities for people entering this field in the coming years?

While it's entertaining to watch movie characters such as James Bond and Jack Ryan and their high-speed car chases, most of the exciting work in the international security space will be done with a computer. While there will always be a need for digital skills within federal agencies, law enforcement, and the military, there is also a need for these skills in the private sector—it's a growth industry.

Middlebury Institute *of*
International Studies at Monterey

Brian Fonseca
Director, Jack D. Gordon Institute for Public Policy
Founding Executive Director, Cybersecurity@FIU program
Steven J. Green School of International & Public Affairs
Florida International University

Educating Leaders to Address the Global Cyber Landscape

How is the Green School of International & Public Affairs preparing students for cybersecurity's crucial role in international relations and government policy?

Through programs such as the Cybersecurity and Technology Policy track of the Master of Arts in Global Affairs program, students gain knowledge and skills to navigate an increasingly complex cybersecurity landscape. Multidisciplinarity, experiential learning, and practical skills prepare students for the global cyber policy workforce. The multidisciplinary curricula includes faculty from the Green School, College of Law, and College of Engineering as well as practitioners from government and industry. Coursework topics include cyber warfare and cybersecurity policy and its legal and ethical dimensions. By emphasizing pathways to internships, providing research opportunities, and engaging students with the workforce, students acquire practical knowledge and insights into the challenges and best practices of cybersecurity.

What skills are needed so Green School students will understand the impact of technology in global affairs and how to effectively harness it?

We emphasize hard and soft skill development to ensure graduates are prepared to enter global cyber and technology policy workforces. This includes a sophisticated understanding of the existing and emerging technological landscape—for example, artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, Internet of Things, quantum computing—and how technologies impact societies, governance, security, economics, and international relations. Students must develop critical thinking and analytical abilities to assess implications of technology adoption, evaluate risks and benefits, and formulate strategic policies—and have the communications skills necessary to inform and influence policymakers.

How can tomorrow's leaders combat crises and threats posed by AI and social media—and utilize them as positive forces?

Graduates must be prepared to tackle unprecedented challenges due to the speed and breadth of technological disruption. Artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, mobile technologies, extended reality, and biotechnologies will have a profound impact on societies and their interactions in the international system. Aspiring professionals should embrace a wide range of multistakeholder approaches to innovating policy solutions for the greater good, including collaborative governance, international engagement, agile policy development, and running policy innovations through testbeds such as regulatory sandboxes and pilot programs.

What sets the Green School apart from other graduate programs in international relations and public policy?

Our programming emphasizes multidisciplinarity, experiential learning, and practitioners in the classroom. Faculty provide meaningful exposure to technical and legal curricula to ensure students are equipped to think holistically about persistent cyber policy issues. Experiential learning engages students in policy-relevant research and includes partnerships with government agencies and industry leaders. For example, the Gordon Institute for Public Policy leads a Cyber Threat Intelligence Fellowship program that provides students with specialized curriculum, professional development activities, near-peer mentorship from alumni in the workforce, and internship opportunities. The program has a placement rate of over 80% and was highlighted before the U.S. Congress by the Honorable Avril Haines, Director of National Intelligence. Such dimensions provide a comprehensive and forward-thinking education, equipping students to address complex challenges in international relations and public policy in the twenty-first century.

FIU | Steven J. Green School of International & Public Affairs
Florida International University

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

Shaping Higher Education for the Fourth Industrial Revolution

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

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

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

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

How does Thunderbird help students prepare to manage global challenges?

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

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

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

THUNDERBIRD
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A unit of the Arizona State University Enterprise

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Xi's Age of Stagnation

The Great Walling-Off of China

IAN JOHNSON

In the early months of 2023, some Chinese thinkers were expecting that Chinese President Xi Jinping would be forced to pause or even abandon significant parts of his decadelong march toward centralization. Over the previous year, they had watched the government lurch from crisis to crisis. First, the Chinese Communist Party had stubbornly stuck to its "zero COVID" strategy with vast lockdowns of some of China's biggest cities, even as most other countries had long since ended ineffective hard controls in favor of cutting-edge vaccines. The government's inflexibility eventually triggered a backlash: in November 2022, antigovernment protests broke out in Chengdu, Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Beijing, an astounding

IAN JOHNSON is Stephen A. Schwarzman Senior Fellow for China studies at the Council on Foreign Relations and the author of the forthcoming book *Sparks: China's Underground Historians and Their Battle for the Future*. A Beijing-based correspondent for *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and other publications for 20 years, he was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting on China in 2001.

Illustration by Hokyoung Kim

development in Xi's China. Then, in early December, the government suddenly abandoned zero COVID without vaccinating more of the elderly or stockpiling medicine. Within a few weeks, the virus had run rampant through the population, and although the government has not provided reliable data, many independent experts have concluded that it caused more than one million deaths. Meanwhile, the country had lost much of the dynamic growth that for decades has sustained the party's hold on power.

Given the multiplying pressures, many Chinese intellectuals assumed that Xi would be forced to loosen his iron grip over the economy and society. Even though he had recently won an unprecedented third term as party general secretary and president and seemed set to rule for life, public mistrust was higher than at any previous point in his decade in power. China's dominant twentieth-century leaders, Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, had adjusted their approach when they encountered setbacks; surely Xi and his closest advisers would, too. "I was thinking that they would have to change course," the editor of one of China's most influential business journals told me in Beijing in May. "Not just the COVID policy but a lot of things, like the policy against private enterprise and [the] harsh treatment of social groups."

But none of that happened. Although the zero-COVID measures are gone, Beijing has clung to a strategy of accelerating government intervention in Chinese life. Dozens of the young people who protested last fall have been detained and given lengthy prison sentences. Speech is more restricted than ever. Community activities and social groups are strictly regulated and monitored by the authorities. And for foreigners, the arbitrary detention of businesspeople and raids on foreign consulting firms have—for the first time in decades—added a sense of risk to doing business in the country.

For more than a year, economists have argued that China is embarking on a period of slowing economic growth. To account for this, they have cited demographic changes, government debt, and lower gains in productivity, as well as a lack of market-oriented reforms. Some have talked of "peak China," arguing that the country's economic trajectory has already or will soon reach its apex and may never significantly overtake that of the United States. The implication is often that if only Beijing would tweak its economic management, it could mitigate the worst outcomes and avoid a more dangerous decline.

What this analysis overlooks is the extent to which these economic problems are part of a broader process of political ossification and ideological hardening. For anyone who has observed the country closely over the past few decades, it is difficult to miss the signs of a new national stasis, or what Chinese people call *neijuan.* Often translated as "involution," it refers to life twisting inward without real progress. The government has created its own universe of mobile phone apps and software, an impressive feat but one that is aimed at insulating Chinese people from the outside world rather than connecting them to it. Religious groups that once enjoyed relative autonomy—even those favored by the state—must now contend with onerous restrictions. Universities and research centers, including many with global ambitions, are increasingly cut off from their international counterparts. And China's small but once flourishing communities of independent writers, thinkers, artists, and critics have been driven completely underground, much like their twentieth-century Soviet counterparts.

Today in China, even bus drivers must listen to lectures on "Xi Jinping Thought."

The deeper effects of this walling-off are unlikely to be felt overnight. Chinese society is still filled with creative, well-educated, and dynamic people, and the Chinese government is still run by a highly competent bureaucracy. Since Xi came to power in 2012, it has pulled off some impressive feats, among them completing a nationwide high-speed rail network, developing a commanding lead in renewable energy technologies, and building one of the world's most advanced militaries. Yet *neijuan* now permeates all aspects of life in Xi's China, leaving the country more isolated and stagnant than during any extended period since Deng launched the reform era in the late 1970s.

In the months since Beijing ended its COVID restrictions, foreign journalists, policy experts, and scholars have begun to return to the country to assess the future of China's government, economy, and foreign relations. Many have tended to focus on elites in the capital and have related China's isolation and economic slowdown to frictions between Washington and Beijing or to the effects of the pandemic. Speaking to people from different regions and classes, however, offers a different view. Over several weeks in China this spring, I spoke to a few big-picture thinkers, such as the business journal editor. But I decided to spend most of my time with a much broader cross section

of Chinese people—doctors, business owners, bus drivers, carpenters, nuns, and students—whom I have known for years. Their experiences, along with broader trends in civil society and government, suggest that China's leaders have begun to sacrifice technocratic progress and even popular support in their pursuit of stability. Beijing's bet seems to be that in order to withstand the pressures of an uncertain world, it must turn inward and succeed on its own. In doing so, however, it may instead be repeating the mistakes of its Eastern bloc predecessors in the middle decades of the Cold War.

MOVING MOUNTAINS, BUILDING FORTRESSES

The Xi administration's obsession with control might seem to be something that mainly hurts intellectuals or urban professionals. And it is true that ever more pervasive restrictions on civil society have shuttered magazines, driven artists out of the country, and caused hundreds of thousands of middle-class people to emigrate. Yet the tightening is having a deep impact on ordinary Chinese people as well. Consider the experience of participants in an annual folk religion pilgrimage to a holy mountain near Beijing. Mao's zealots destroyed many of the original temples in the 1960s, but in the late 1980s, the mountain's mainly working-class visitors raised money to rebuild them, and for more than 30 years, the annual 15-day event was largely self-managed and self-financed. Over the past two decades, authorities encouraged this traditional communal activity, which drew on Han Chinese folk practices, as a useful counterweight to religions such as Christianity, which they view as foreign and subject to outside influence. Officials showered the pilgrimage with positive media coverage, allowing it to grow rapidly into one of the country's largest religious festivals, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors.

But state sponsorship has now brought state supervision. Over the past decade, the government has imposed rules on religious sites across China, closing down unauthorized places of worship, forbidding minors from attending religious services, and even insisting that religious sites fly the national flag. In the case of the holy mountain near Beijing, the government transferred management of the site's temple complex to a state-owned company, which has deployed private security guards and uniformed police to patrol the shrines and has cluttered the mountain with party propaganda. Near the top, next

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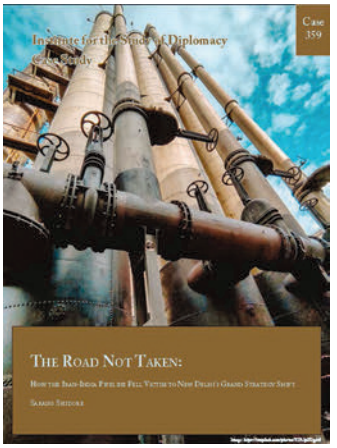

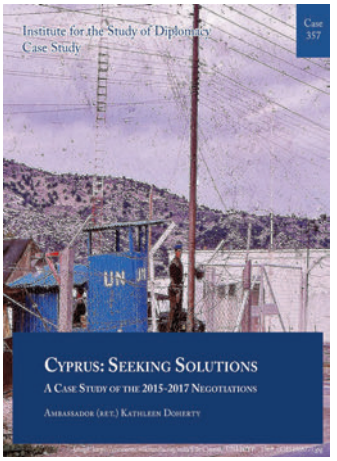

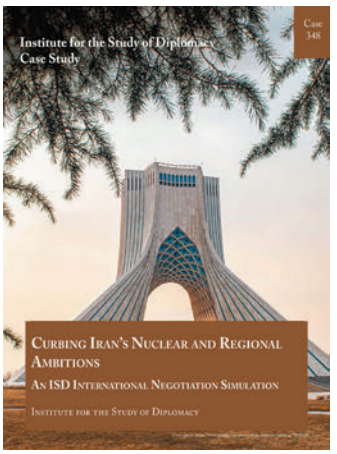

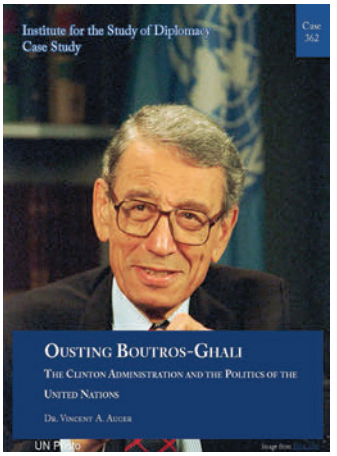

to a shrine to the Buddhist goddess of mercy, managers from the state enterprise erected a giant billboard emblazoned with hammers and sickles. One panel displays the oath of allegiance that new members must take when they join the party. Another panel announces in huge characters: "The Party is in my heart. Eternally follow the Party line."

As a result of this overt politicization, the number of visitors is down, and on some days this spring, no pilgrims came at all. Many people who attend the temple or work there are intensely patriotic and support the party line on many issues. Bring up the United States, the war in Ukraine, or a possible invasion of Taiwan, and they will passionately argue that the Americans seek to contain China, that Washington is to blame for Russia's assault on Ukraine, and that Taiwan must reunite with China or face invasion. But they are also dismayed by the slowing economy, the government's handling of the pandemic, and political "study sessions" at work—even bus drivers must now listen to lectures on "Xi Jinping Thought" and download mobile phone apps that instruct users on party ideology. Observing a squad of police officers march past, one manager who has worked on the mountain since the 1990s expressed disappointment at how much the pilgrimage has changed. "In China today," he said, "you can't do anything without taking care of one thing first: national security."

China's leadership shuns debate and feels no compulsion to explain itself.

Still more consequential may be the state's now ubiquitous presence in Chinese intellectual life. Chinese leaders have always viewed universities somewhat suspiciously, installing party secretaries to oversee them and surrounding them with walls. Still, for decades, universities were also home to freethinking academics, and their gates were rarely shut to visitors. Since Xi came to power, however, these freedoms have gradually been eliminated. In 2012, the government began to impose bans on teaching subjects such as media freedom, judicial independence, promoting civil society, and independent historical inquiry. Then, with the onset of the pandemic, the government expanded surveillance and added new security measures that have since become permanent, transforming universities into fortresses.

One day in May, I arranged to meet a professor and four of his graduate students at Minzu University of China, a leafy campus on

the western side of Beijing founded to train new leaders among the country's 55 recognized non-Han ethnic minorities, such as Tibetans, Uighurs, and Mongolians. Before the pandemic, I usually met him at a university canteen or café. Now, visitors entering the campus must present their faces to a camera at a turnstile so that the authorities know precisely who is entering. The professor suggested that we convene off campus at a Mongolian restaurant, and we used a private room to avoid eavesdroppers. "Maybe it's better that they don't know we're meeting," he said.

The professor was hardly a dissident. He strongly supports unification with Taiwan and has researched the shared cultural roots of mainland Chinese and Taiwanese society. With the help of local officials, he rebuilt a traditional meeting place for members of a clan in his hometown in southeastern China. In earlier years, he also traveled widely and held fellowships abroad, and he is now working on a book about a religious movement that took hold in China in the 1920s.

Over the past decade, however, the government has incrementally stymied much of his research. He now needs approval to attend conferences abroad and must submit his writing for vetting before publishing it. His new book cannot be published in China because discussions of religious life, even that of a century ago, are considered sensitive. And state authorities have so thoroughly obstructed the anthropology journal he has been editing that he has resigned his post. Over the past three years, the journal has prepared 12 issues, but only one has made it past the censors.

Outside universities, the boundaries of what can be published have similarly narrowed, even affecting analysis of initiatives and ideas that Xi supports. In the first decade of this century, for example, one public intellectual I know wrote several groundbreaking books on old Beijing. Although Xi is widely seen as a champion of the capital's old city, the writer now avoids the issue, and publishers will not reprint his earlier works because they discuss the endemic corruption that underlies the destruction of historic areas. Instead, he has reverted to seemingly distant and apolitical subjects in order to obliquely criticize the present situation. His new focus: Beijing's thirteenth-century history under Genghis Khan, which he portrays as an open, multicultural time—in implicit contrast to today. "It's easier to write about the Mongolians," he said. "Most censors don't see the parallels."

WHAT MISTAKES?

Ordinary Chinese workers have a different set of concerns, mostly relating to the economy and the pandemic. During the first quarter of 2023, China's slowing economy barely reached the government growth target of five percent, and it achieved that level only with heavy state spending. The youth unemployment rate is over 20 percent, and many people wonder how their children will be able to get married if they cannot afford to buy an apartment. Figures for the second quarter were slightly better, but only compared with the second quarter of last year, when the economy was nearly brought to a standstill by COVID lockdowns. A variety of indicators show growing vulnerabilities in a range of sectors, and many Chinese feel they are in a recession. A group of textile manufacturers from Wenzhou in coastal Zhejiang Province told me that sales across China are down 20 percent this year, forcing them to lay off staff. They believe the economy will recover, but they also think that the go-go years are gone. "We're in a cloudier era," one of them said.

Many business owners point to the sharp decline in foreign visitors. The plunge is partly due to COVID travel restrictions, which have been relaxed only recently, but it is also a reflection of how difficult it has become to move around the country. To visit China today is to enter a parallel universe of apps and websites that control access to daily life. For outsiders, ordering a cab, buying a train ticket, and purchasing almost any goods requires a Chinese mobile phone, Chinese apps, and often a Chinese credit card. (Some apps now accommodate foreign credit cards, but not all vendors accept them.) Even a simple visit to a tourist site now requires scanning a QR code on a Chinese app and filling out a Chinese-language form. On one level, these hindrances are trivial, but they are also symptomatic of a government that seems almost unaware of the extent to which its ever more expansive centralization is closing the country off from the outside world.

The whiplash course of the pandemic in China—from months-long closures to the uncontrolled spread when the harsh measures ended—has also left lasting scars. Although much of the international coverage focused on the lockdowns in big cosmopolitan cities such as Shanghai, rural areas were hit particularly hard by the subsequent wave of infections. Outside urban centers, medical services are often rudimentary, and when the authorities suddenly began ignoring the disease, many people succumbed to it. One doctor who works in an

emergency ward in a rural district near Beijing said he was stunned by the number of elderly people who died in the weeks after the controls were lifted. "We were told that it was normal that old people died," he said. "But aren't we supposed to be a civilization that is especially respectful of the elderly? I was so angry. I guess I still am."

In elite circles closer to the government, it is common to hear such concerns downplayed or brushed off. In May, the editors of the *Beijing Cultural Review*, a mainstream media publication, told me that the government's handling of the pandemic may have been a bit heavy-handed and that officials underestimated the economic damage caused by zero COVID. But now that they had reversed course, they said, the economy would soon bounce back. "Maybe it'll take three years," an editor told me. "But it will recover, and people will move on."

That's not necessarily a Pollyannish view. Over its nearly 75 years in power, the government has withstood a series of major crises: the Great Famine of 1958–61 and the Cultural Revolution of 1966–76, which together led to tens of millions of deaths; the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989, in which the government unleashed the military on peaceful student demonstrators with the world watching; the Falun Gong crackdown of 1999–2001, in which the authorities killed more than 100 protesters and sent thousands to labor camps; and the Sichuan earthquake of 2008, in which more than 60,000 people died—in significant measure because of faulty government construction, especially of public schools. These incidents riveted the country and led some to wonder whether China's leaders could escape repercussions.

Especially over the past forty years, the party's control of the media and its ability to maintain fast-paced growth allowed it to quickly tamp down grievances. After the Falun Gong protests, for example, the government's portrayal of the group as a cult became part of the historical narrative; at the same time, the authorities loosened control over folk religious groups as long as they avoided politics. In 2001, China joined the World Trade Organization, and under a technocratic leadership that encouraged international investment and private enterprise, the country enjoyed double-digit economic growth.

It is possible that such techniques can still work. As the Chinese astrophysicist and dissident Fang Lizhi observed in 1990, "About once each decade, the true face of history is thoroughly erased from the memory of Chinese society." Likewise, if faster growth returns, the current crises could quickly be forgotten, making the immediate

post-COVID era just another blip in the party's relatively stable control of China over the past nearly half century. At least that may be the government's assessment, helping explain why it has not changed course despite the recent upheavals.

But such comforting assumptions ignore a key lesson of the past: that the party also survived by adapting and experimenting. After Mao died, for example, party elders around Deng realized that the party confronted a crisis of legitimacy. They introduced market reforms and relaxed the party's grip on society. Likewise, after the 1989 Tiananmen massacre and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Deng and his immediate successors came to believe that a lack of economic progress underpinned both events and pushed through wide-ranging reforms that transformed China into an emerging economic superpower.

This adaptive authoritarianism can be attributed in part to a generation of leaders who saw the People's Republic as a work in progress that could be continually improved rather than as a fixed political system that had to be preserved at all costs. Leaders such as Deng had helped found the new country in 1949, but they knew that it was prone to large-scale crises that needed correction. In the aftermath of the Mao years, they also realized that their rule was precarious. Relinquishing political control was off the table, but most other things were open for discussion. Today it's almost shocking to read government policy documents from the Deng era. For example, the 1982 party directive Document 19 explicitly allowed religious practices that are now increasingly banned, such as home-based preaching and baptism. Underground religious movements were to be treated gently because the state had "used violent measures against religion that forced religious movements underground," the document said.

There are few signs today of such self-critical reflection. Although it is difficult for outside observers to know the inner workings of the current leadership, the about-face by fiat on zero COVID is in keeping with Xi's overall approach. In decades past, if accidents or disasters occurred that reflected poorly on the party, leaders such as former president Hu Jintao and former prime minister Wen Jiabao visited the locales in question to show they cared, drawing on much the same playbook as their Western counterparts in such situations. Xi also travels often around China, but rarely to express condolences, let alone to take implicit government responsibility for failures. Instead, he mostly visits local communities to exhort them to comply with

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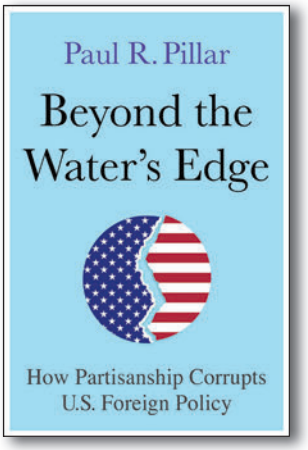

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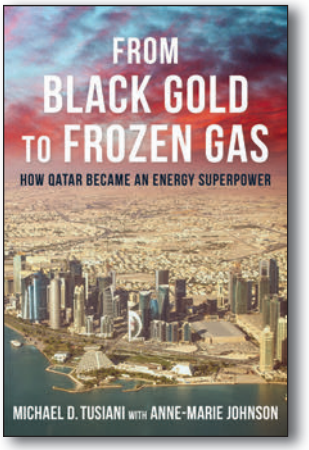

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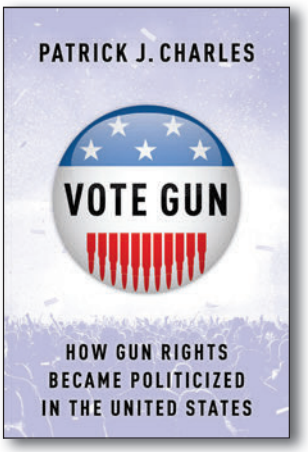

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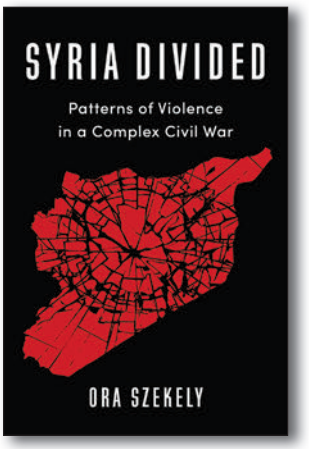

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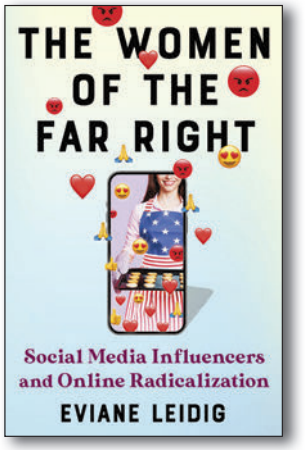

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party doctrine and government policy. This feeds into the impression among many Chinese people of an increasingly remote leadership that allows few dissenting viewpoints, shuns internal debate, and feels no compulsion to explain itself to the public.

THE BERLIN TRAP

For many who live in this era of *neijuan,* the question is how long it will last. Although the Chinese Communist Party of today differs from its historical counterparts in other countries, some Chinese thinkers see broad parallels between China's inward turn and the stifling atmosphere of Eastern bloc countries during the height of the Cold War. One striking analogy that some mention is the Berlin Wall. When it was first erected in 1961, this symbol of communist oppression consisted of rolls of barbed wire strung down the middle of the street; it only gradually acquired its final form as an all but impermeable series of concrete barriers buttressed by a network of watchtowers and searchlights. From the start, it seemed to demonstrate the inherent failure of the East German state to build a desirable place to live, and many saw it as an anachronistic effort to lock people in their own country. Yet it was also remarkably successful, allowing the regime to stabilize itself and survive for another three decades. The wall couldn't save the German Democratic Republic, but it bought the leadership time.

Now, China's rulers seem to be building and perfecting their own twenty-first-century version of the Berlin Wall. Although tens of thousands of Chinese citizens languish in prisons or house arrest for their views, the barrier is not primarily physical. Instead, state power is exercised through an increasingly complete system of censorship of speech and thought, whether on the Internet or television or in textbooks, movies, exhibitions, or even video games, to create a widely accepted historical narrative that makes the party seem essential for China's survival. It also now includes the idea that China should build all key technologies on its own, rejecting the principles of comparative advantage that have been the bedrock of globalization. These efforts amount to a more subtle form of control, giving people the illusion of freedom while guiding them away from anything that would challenge the regime.

But like its East German counterpart, China's wall is intended to forestall an existential challenge. Just as East Germany faced collapse

from uncontrolled emigration in the 1950s, China was facing its own crisis in the two decades before Xi took the helm as new technologies such as the Internet helped foster the first nationwide movement against the party. The source of dissent was not an organization with members and bylaws but a loose alliance of critical intellectuals, victims of party abuse, and ordinary citizens unhappy with local conditions. Condemnation of one-party rule began appearing in the media, online, and in underground magazines and documentary films. Leaders such as Hu and Wen had to respond.

At first, they did so by allowing a public discussion of national crises and sometimes by undertaking reforms in response. In 2003, for example, after the death of a student who had been beaten by police caused a national outcry, Wen announced an immediate modification of police custody laws. But fearful that too much citizen oversight could challenge the party's authority, leaders soon resorted to new social controls. A turning point came in late 2008, after the Beijing Summer Olympics had ended and the world's spotlight was off China. The government arrested the dissident writer and future Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo and soon implemented greater surveillance of social media. Xi ramped up this trend and systematized it. To cap it off, he oversaw the rewriting of the party's official history in 2021, downplaying past debacles such as the Cultural Revolution and glorifying his own policies. Using the tools of the digital age, Xi transformed China's wall from an ad hoc assembly of rules and regulations into a sleek, powerful apparatus.

Chinese dissidents are far more nimble than their Soviet-era counterparts.

As in East Germany, this tactic has been successful—at least up to now. Many people have internalized the party's version of history: in that telling, its leaders saved China from foreign domination and made China strong and powerful, and therefore only the party, even if it has a few flaws, can lead the people into the future. This belief system, however, relies on the party's efficient management of China's many challenges. That was relatively easy over 45 years of remarkably durable economic growth, which allowed people to set aside their objections to the long arm of the party-state; as in most countries, it is difficult to organize against a regime that is bringing rapid gains in standards of living. In the communist states of Eastern Europe,

the general prosperity of the immediate post–World War II era had diminished by the 1970s, causing many to look to dissidents and critics for explanations of their new reality. Could this happen in a China entering a similar long-term stagnation?

THE WAITING GAME

The differences between Xi's China today and the Eastern bloc of the 1960s and 1970s are many. In those years, the countries in the Soviet sphere experienced a shortage economy, with lines for bread and years-long waits to buy automobiles. There are no signs of such privation in China today. Nonetheless, the government's pursuit of total control has set the country on a path of slower growth and created multiplying pockets of dissatisfaction. Critics of the regime point out that Beijing's restrictions on information very likely created the conditions that led to the COVID-19 crisis: in late 2019, local officials hushed up early warnings of the virus because they feared that bad news would reflect poorly on them. That silence allowed the virus to gain a foothold and spread around the world. Although censorship keeps these and other government-induced problems out of the public eye, it also cuts off some of the smartest citizens from global trends and the latest research. Such knowledge barriers, as they become self-reinforcing, can only hurt China. If even the United States is dependent on other lands, such as the Netherlands and Taiwan, for advanced chips and other technologies, one wonders whether China can really go it alone, as its leaders now seem to imagine.

The party can control and weaponize information, but dissenters are also surprisingly well entrenched. Aided by digital technology, they are also far more nimble than their Soviet-era counterparts. Among China's educated elite, many persist in opposing the regime's version of reality. Even though they are banned, virtual private networks, which allow users to bypass Internet controls, are now widespread. Underground filmmakers are still working on new documentaries, and samizdat magazine publishers are still producing works distributed by basic digital tools such as PDFs, email, and thumb drives. These efforts are a far cry from the street protests and other forms of public opposition that attract media attention, but they are crucial in establishing and maintaining the person-to-person networks that pose a long-term challenge to the regime.

In May, I visited the editor of an underground magazine in a relatively remote part of south Beijing. He publishes a fortnightly journal featuring contributions by academics across China, who often use pen names to protect their identities. Their articles challenge the party's account of key crises in its history, filling in events that have been whitewashed. Some of the editing work is now done by Chinese graduate students working abroad. This model of underground digital publishing was adopted last year by protesters, who used VPNs to upload videos to Twitter, YouTube, and other banned sites. Such online platforms function as storehouses, allowing Chinese people to download information that the state is trying to suppress.

In this case, the editor commissions the articles, edits them, and sends them abroad for safekeeping in case the authorities raid his office. The journal's layout is also created abroad, and volunteers inside and outside China email each issue to thousands of public intellectuals across China. The magazine is part of a growing community that has been systematically documenting the party's misrule, from past famines to the COVID pandemic. Although his journal and similar efforts may ordinarily reach only tens of thousands of people in China, the articles can have a much larger impact when the government errs. During the COVID crisis, for example, the magazine's editor and his colleagues noticed a spike in readership, and others found that their essays were even going viral. In good times, this pursuit of the truth might have seemed quixotic; now, for many of the Chinese, it is beginning to seem vital. As they spread, these anonymous informal networks have opened a new front in the party's battle against opposition, the control of which now requires far more than simply throwing dissidents in jail.

I sat with the editor in his garden for a couple of hours, under trellises of grapes he uses to make wine. The skies were deep blue, and the sun was strong. The cicadas of a Beijing summer day drowned out the background noise. For a while, it felt as if we could be anywhere, maybe even in France, a place that the editor has enjoyed visiting. He has published the journal for more than a decade and has now handed off most of the work to younger colleagues in China and abroad. He was relaxed and confident.

"You can't do anything publicly in China," he said. "But we still work and wait. We have time. They do not."

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The End of China's Economic Miracle

How Beijing's Struggles Could Be an Opportunity for Washington

ADAM S. POSEN

As 2022 came to an end, hopes were rising that China's economy—and, consequently, the global economy—was poised for a surge. After three years of stringent restrictions on movement, mandatory mass testing, and interminable lockdowns, the Chinese government had suddenly decided to abandon its "zero COVID" policy, which had suppressed demand, hampered manufacturing, roiled supply lines, and produced the most significant slowdown that the country's economy had seen since pro-market reforms began in the late 1970s. In the weeks following the policy change, global prices of oil, copper, and other commodities rose on expectations that Chinese demand would surge. In March, then Chinese Premier Li Keqiang announced a target for real GDP growth of around five percent, and many external analysts predicted it would go far higher.

ADAM S. POSEN is President of the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

Illustration by Deena So'Oteh

Initially, some parts of China's economy did indeed grow: pent-up demand for domestic tourism, hospitality, and retail services all made solid contributions to the recovery. Exports grew in the first few months of 2023, and it appeared that even the beleaguered residential real estate market had bottomed out. But by the end of the second quarter, the latest GDP data told a very different story: overall growth was weak and seemingly set on a downward trend. Wary foreign investors and cash-strapped local governments in China chose not to pick up on the initial momentum.

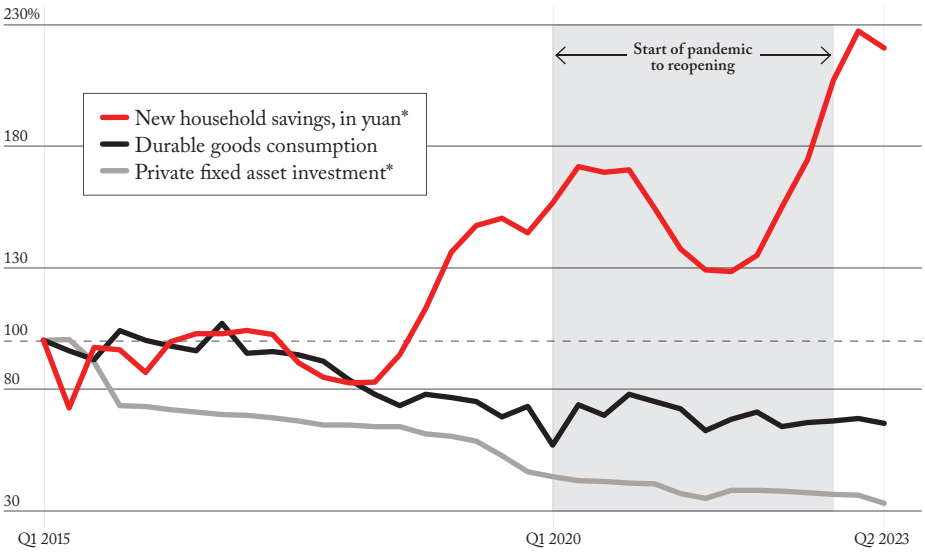
This reversal was more significant than a typical overly optimistic forecast missing the mark. The seriousness of the problem is indicated by the decline of both China's durable goods consumption and private-sector investment rates to a fraction of their earlier levels, and by the country's surging household savings rate. Those trends reflect people's long-term economic decisions in the aggregate, and they strongly suggest that in China, people and companies are increasingly fearful of losing access to their assets and are prioritizing short-term liquidity over investment. That these indicators have not returned to pre-COVID, normal levels—let alone boomed after reopening as they did in the United States and elsewhere—is a sign of deep problems.

What has become clear is that the first quarter of 2020, which saw the onset of COVID, was a point of no return for Chinese economic behavior, which began shifting in 2015, when the state extended its control: since then, household savings as a share of GDP have risen by an enormous 50 percent and are staying at that high level. Private-sector consumption of durable goods is down by around a third versus early 2015, continuing to decline since reopening rather than reflecting pent-up demand. Private investment is even weaker, down by a historic two-thirds since the first quarter of 2015, including a decrease of 25 percent since the pandemic started. And both these key forms of private-sector investment continue to trend still further downward.

Financial markets, and probably even the Chinese government itself, have overlooked the severity of these weaknesses, which will likely drag down growth for several years. Call it a case of "economic long COVID." Like a patient suffering from that chronic condition, China's body economic has not regained its vitality and remains sluggish even now that the acute phase—three years of exceedingly strict and costly zero-COVID lockdown measures—has ended. The condition is sys-

DISTRESS SIGNALS

Indicators of insecurity among Chinese citizens and companies



Note: Chart displays savings, consumption, and investment as share of GDP, indexed with the first quarter of 2015 equaling 100 percent. | *Indicates four-quarter moving average. *Sources: National Bureau of Statistics of China; People's Bank of China.*

temic, and the only reliable cure—credibly assuring ordinary Chinese people and companies that there are limits on the government's intrusion into economic life—cannot be delivered.

China's development of economic long COVID should be recognized for what it is: the result of President Xi Jinping's extreme response to the pandemic, which has spurred a dynamic that beset other authoritarian countries but that China previously avoided in the post–Mao Zedong era. Economic development in authoritarian regimes tends to follow a predictable pattern: a period of growth as the regime allows politically compliant businesses to thrive, fed by public largess. But once the regime has secured support, it begins to intervene in the economy in increasingly arbitrary ways. Eventually, in the face of uncertainty and fear, households and small businesses start to prefer cash savings to illiquid investment; as a result, growth persistently declines.

Since Deng Xiaoping began the "reform and opening" of China's economy in the late 1970s, the leadership of the Chinese Communist

Party deliberately resisted the impulse to interfere in the private sector for far longer than most authoritarian regimes have. But under Xi, and especially since the pandemic began, the CCP has reverted toward the authoritarian mean. In China's case, the virus is not the main cause of the country's economic long COVID: the chief culprit is the general public's immune response to extreme intervention, which has produced a less dynamic economy. This downward cycle presents U.S. policymakers with an opportunity to reset the economic leg of Washington's China strategy and to adopt a more effective and less self-harming approach than those pursued by the Trump administration and—so far—the Biden administration.

NO POLITICS, NO PROBLEMS, NO MORE

Before the pandemic, the vast majority of Chinese households and smaller private businesses relied on an implicit "no politics, no problem" bargain, in place since the early 1980s: the CCP ultimately controlled property rights, but as long as people stayed out of politics, the party would stay out of their economic life. This modus vivendi is found in many autocratic regimes that wish to keep their citizens satisfied and productive, and it worked beautifully for China over the past four decades.

When Xi took office in 2013, he embarked on an aggressive anticorruption campaign, which along the way, just happened to take out some of his main rivals, such as the former Politburo member Bo Xilai. The measures were popular with most citizens; after all, who would not approve of punishing corrupt officials? And they did not violate the economic compact, because they targeted only some of the party's members, who in total make up less than seven percent of the population. A few years later, Xi went a step further by bringing the country's tech giants to heel. In November 2020, party leaders made an example of Jack Ma, a tech tycoon who had publicly criticized state regulators, by forcibly delaying the initial public offering of one of his companies, the Ant Group, and driving him out of public life. Western investors reacted with concern, but this time, too, most Chinese were either pleased or indifferent. How the state treated the property of a few oligarchs was of little relevance to their everyday economic lives.

The government's response to the pandemic was another matter entirely. It made visible and tangible the CCP's arbitrary power over

everyone's commercial activities, including those of the smallest players. With a few hours' warning, a neighborhood or entire city could be shut down indefinitely, retail businesses closed with no recourse, residents trapped in housing blocks, their lives and livelihoods put on hold.

All major economies went through some version of a lockdown early in the pandemic, but none experienced anything nearly as abrupt, severe, and unrelenting as China's anti-pandemic measures. Zero COVID was as unsparing as it was arbitrary in its local application, which appeared to follow only the whims of party officials. The Chinese writer Murong Xuecun likened the experience to a mass imprisonment campaign. At times, shortages of groceries, prescription medicines, and critical medical care beset even wealthy and connected communities in Beijing and Shanghai. All the while, economic activity fell precipitously. At Foxconn, one of China's most important manufacturers of tech exports, workers and executives alike publicly complained that their company might be cut out of global supply chains.

Economic long COVID will likely plague the Chinese economy for years.

What remains today is widespread fear not seen since the days of Mao—fear of losing one's property or livelihood, whether temporarily or forever, without warning and without appeal. This is the story told by some expatriates, and it is in keeping with the economic data. Zero COVID was a response to extraordinary circumstances, and many Chinese believe Xi's assertion that it saved more lives than the West's approach would have. Yet the memories of how relentlessly local officials implemented the strategy remain fresh and undiluted.

Some say the CCP's decision to abandon zero COVID in late 2022 following a wave of public protest indicated at least some basic, if belated, regard for popular opinion. The about-face was a "victory" for the protesters, in the words of *The New York Times*. Yet the same could not be said for ordinary Chinese people, at least in their economic lives. A month before the sudden end of zero COVID, senior party officials told the domestic public to expect a gradual rollback of pandemic restrictions; what followed a few weeks later was an abrupt and total reversal. The sudden U-turn only reinforced the sense among Chinese people that their jobs, businesses, and everyday routines remain at the mercy of the party and its whims.

Of course, many other factors were at play in the immense, complex Chinese economy throughout this period. Business failures and delinquent loans resulted from a real estate bubble that burst in August 2021, and remain a persistent drag on growth and continue to limit local government funding. Fears of overregulation or worse among owners of technology companies also persist. U.S. trade and technology restrictions on China have done some damage, as have China's retaliatory responses. Well before the onset of COVID, Xi had started to boost the role of state-owned enterprises and had increased party oversight of the economy. But the party had also pursued some pro-growth policies, including bailouts, investment in the high-tech sector, and easy credit availability. The COVID response, however, made clear that the CCP was the ultimate decision-maker about people's ability to earn a living or access their assets—and that it would make decisions in a seemingly arbitrary way as the party leadership's priorities shifted.

SAME OLD STORY

After defying temptation for decades, China's political economy under Xi has finally succumbed to a familiar pattern among autocratic regimes. They tend to start out on a "no politics, no problem" compact that promises business as usual for those who keep their heads down. But by their second or, more commonly, third term in office, rulers increasingly disregard commercial concerns and pursue interventionist policies whenever it suits their short-term goals. They make examples of a few political rivals and large multinational businesses. Over time, the threat of state control in day-to-day commerce extends across wider and wider swaths of the population. Over varying periods, Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela, Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey, Viktor Orban in Hungary, and Vladimir Putin in Russia have all turned down this well-worn road.

When an entrenched autocratic regime violates the "no politics, no problem" deal, the economic ramifications are pervasive. Faced with uncertainty beyond their control, people try to self-insure. They hold on to their cash; they invest and spend less than they used to, especially on illiquid assets such as automobiles, small business equipment and facilities, and real estate. Their heightened risk aversion and greater precautionary savings act as a drag on growth, rather like what happens in the aftermath of a financial crisis.

Meanwhile, the government's ability to steer the economy and protect it from macroeconomic shocks diminishes. Since people know that a given policy could be enforced arbitrarily, that it might be expanded one day and reversed the next, they become less responsive to stimulus plans and the like. This, too, is a familiar pattern. In Turkey, for instance, Erdogan has in recent years pressured the central bank into cutting interest rates, which he hoped would fuel an investment boom; what he fueled instead was soaring inflation. In Hungary, a large fiscal and monetary stimulus package failed to soften the pandemic's economic impact, despite the success of similar measures in neighboring countries.

The same trend is already visible in China because Xi drove up the Chinese private sector's immune response to government intervention. Stimulus packages introduced since the end of the zero-COVID policy, meant to boost consumer spending on cars and other durable goods, have not gained much traction. And in the first half of this year, the share of Chinese companies applying for bank loans remained about as weak as it was back in 2021—that is, at half their pre-COVID average—despite efforts by the central bank and finance ministry to encourage borrowing at low rates. Low appetite for illiquid investment and low responsiveness to supportive macroeconomic policies: that, in a nutshell, is economic long COVID.

Once an autocratic regime has lost the confidence of the average household and business, it is difficult to win back. A return to good economic performance alone is not enough, as it does not obviate the risk of future interruptions or expropriations. The autocrat's Achilles' heel is an inherent lack of credible self-restraint. To seriously commit to such restraint would be to admit to the potential for abuses of power. Such commitment problems are precisely why more democratic countries enact constitutions and why their legislatures exert oversight on budgets.

Deliberately or not, the CCP has gone farther in the opposite direction. In March, China's parliament, the National People's Congress, amended its legislative procedures to make it easier, not harder, to pass emergency legislation. Such legislation now requires the approval of only the Congress's Standing Committee, which is made up of a minority of senior party loyalists. Many outside observers have overlooked the significance of this change. But its practical effects on economic policy will not go unnoticed among

households and businesses, who will be left still more exposed to the party's edicts.

The upshot is that economic long COVID is more than a momentary drag on growth. It will likely plague the Chinese economy for years. More optimistic forecasts have not yet factored in this lasting change. To the extent that Western forecasters and international organizations have cast doubt on China's growth prospects for this year or the next, they have fixated on easily observable problems such as chief executives' fears about the private high-tech sector and financial fragility in the real estate market. These sector-specific stories are important, but they matter far less to medium-term growth than the economic long COVID afflicting consumers and small businesses at large, even if that syndrome is less visible to foreign investors and observers. (It may be apparent to some Chinese analysts, but they cannot point it out in public). And although targeted policies may reverse problems limited to a particular sector, the broader syndrome will persist.

China today is gripped by widespread fear not seen since the days of Mao.

In recent months, Bank of America, the Economist Intelligence Unit, and Goldman Sachs, for example, have each adjusted downward their forecasts for Chinese GDP growth in 2023, shaving off at least 0.4 percentage points. But because the persistence of economic long COVID has not yet sunk in, and because many forecasts assume, erroneously, that Beijing's stimulus programs will be effective, China watchers still overestimate prospects for growth in the next year and beyond. Forecasts of annual GDP growth in 2024 by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (5.1 percent) and the International Monetary Fund (a more modest 4.5 percent) could be off by 0.5 percent or more. The need to correct downward will only grow over time.

China's private sector will save more, invest less, and take fewer risks than it did before economic long COVID, let alone before Xi's second term. Durable goods consumption and private-sector investment will be less responsive to stimulus policies. The likely consequences will be a more volatile economy (because macroeconomic policy will be less effective in inducing households and smaller businesses to offset downturns) and more public debt (because it will

take more fiscal stimulus to achieve the desired impact). These, in turn, will drive down average economic growth over time by reducing productivity growth, in addition to reducing private investment in the near term.

Yet Xi and other CCP leaders may simply take this as vindication of their belief that the country's economic future lies less with the private sector than with state-owned enterprises. Even before the pandemic, government pressure was leading banks and investment funds to favor state-owned enterprises in their lending, while investment in the private sector was in retreat. Research by the economist Nicholas Lardy has found that the share of annual investment going to China's private-sector firms peaked in 2015 and that the state-owned share has risen markedly since then, year-over-year. Economic long COVID will reinforce this trend, for two reasons. First, private investors and small businesses will err on the side of caution and remain liquid rather than make large loan-financed bets. Second, any tax cuts or stimulus programs aimed at the private sector will deliver less immediate bang for the buck than investment in the state sector. Add to this Xi's ongoing push for self-sufficiency in advanced technology, which is subjecting a growing share of investment decisions to even more arbitrary party control, and the outlook for productivity growth and returns on capital only dims.

OPEN-DOOR POLICY

U.S. and allied officials, some of whom see strong Chinese growth as a threat, might take heart from the country's current ailment. But a slower-growing and less stable Chinese economy will also have downsides for the rest of the world, including the United States. If the Chinese keep saving rather than investing and continue to spend more on domestically delivered services than on tech and other durable goods that require imports, their overall trade surplus with the rest of the world will keep growing—any Trump-style efforts to curtail it notwithstanding. And when another global recession hits, China's growth will not help revive demand abroad as it did last time. Western officials should adjust their expectations downward, but they should not celebrate too much.

Neither should they expect economic long COVID to weaken Xi's hold on power in the near future. As Erdogan, Putin, and even Maduro can attest, autocrats who break the "no politics, no problem"

compact tend to remain in office despite slowing, sometimes even cratering, growth. The perverse reality is that local party bosses and officials can often extract yet more loyalty from a suffering populace, at least for a while. In an unstable economic environment, the rewards of being on their good side—and the dangers of drawing their ire—go up, and safe alternatives to seeking state patronage or employment are fewer. Xi might take economic measures to paper over the cracks for some time, as Orban and Putin have done successfully, using EU funds and energy revenues, respectively. With targeted government spending and sector-specific measures, such as public-housing subsidies and public assurances that the government's crackdown on tech firms is over, Xi might still temporarily boost growth.

But those dynamics will not last forever. As many observers have rightly pointed out, youth unemployment in China is troublingly high, especially among higher-educated workers. If CCP policies continue to diminish people's long-term economic opportunities and stability, discontent with the party will grow. Among those of means, some are already self-insuring. In the face of insecurity, they are moving savings abroad, offshoring business production and investment, and even emigrating to less uncertain markets. Over time, such exits will look more and more appealing to wider slices of Chinese society.

Even if outflows of Chinese financial assets remain limited for now, the long-term incentives are clear: for average Chinese savers, who hold most, perhaps even all, their life savings in yuan-denominated assets, buying assets abroad made sense even before the pandemic. It makes even more sense now that prospects for growth at home are diminishing, and the risks from CCP caprices are rising.

The United States should welcome those savings, along with Chinese businesses, investors, students, and workers who leave in search of greener pastures. But current policies, enacted by both the Trump and the Biden administrations, do the opposite. They seek to close off American universities and companies to Chinese students and workers. They restrict inward foreign investment and capital inflows, and they discourage Chinese companies from moving into the U.S. and allied economies, whether for production or for research and development. They reduce downward pressure on the yuan and diminish, in the eyes of ordinary Chinese people, the contrast between their government's conduct and that of the United States. These policies should be reversed.

Easing these restrictions need not involve reducing trade barriers, however much this might benefit U.S. economic and foreign policy on its own terms. In fact, if the American economy did a better job of attracting productive Chinese capital, labor, and innovation, those inflows would partly make up for the substantial economic costs incurred as a result of the U.S. trade conflict with China. Neither would Washington need to water down national security restrictions on critical technologies. To prevent illicit technology transfers by Chinese investors, the United States and its allies should, of course, restrict access to some specific sectors, just as they restrict certain sensitive exports. In truth, however, most Chinese intellectual property theft from U.S. companies takes the form of cybercrime, reverse engineering, and old-fashioned industrial espionage—that is, for the most part, it needs to be addressed directly by means other than restricting inward foreign investment.

Washington should think in terms of suction, not sanctions.

Removing most barriers to Chinese talent and capital would not undermine U.S. prosperity or national security. It would, however, make it harder for Beijing to maintain a growing economy that is simultaneously stable, self-reliant, and under tight party control. Compared with the United States' current economic strategy toward China, which is more confrontational, restrictive, and punitive, the new approach would lower the risk of a dangerous escalation between Washington and Beijing, and it would prove less divisive among U.S. allies and developing economies. This approach would require communicating that Chinese people, savings, technology, and brands are welcome in the United States; the opposite of containment efforts that overtly exclude them.

Several other economies, including Australia, Canada, Mexico, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and Vietnam, are already benefiting from inflows of Chinese students, businesses, and capital. In so doing, they are improving their own economic strength and weakening the CCP's hold at home. That effect would be maximized if the United States followed suit. If Washington goes its own way instead—perhaps because the next U.S. administration opts for continued confrontation or for greater economic isolationism—it should at the very least allow other countries to provide off-ramps

for Chinese people and commerce, rather than pressuring them to adopt the containment barriers that the United States is installing. When it comes to Chinese private commerce, the United States should think in terms of suction, not sanctions, especially as the CCP exercises firmer control of Chinese businesses.

The more Beijing tries to stave off outflows of useful factors of economic production—for instance, by maintaining strict capital controls and limiting listings of companies in the United States—the more it will deepen the sense of insecurity driving those outflows in the first place. Other autocrats have tried this self-defeating strategy; many were forced to keep temporary capital controls in place indefinitely, only to drive people and companies to make more efforts to get around them. As seen repeatedly in Latin America and elsewhere, including during the final decline of the Soviet Union, such policies almost invariably spur more outflows of people and capital.

The Chinese economy's affliction with economic long COVID presents an opportunity for U.S. policymakers to change strategy. Instead of trying to contain China's growth at great cost to their own economy, American leaders can let Xi do their work for them and position their country as a better alternative—and as a welcoming destination for Chinese economic assets of all kinds. Even knowledgeable officials tend to overlook how well this strategy served the United States in facing down systemic rivals in the twentieth century. It is often forgotten that it was far from evident during the Great Depression that the U.S. economy could outperform fascist regimes in Europe, and similar uncertainty about relative growth performance recurred throughout much of the Cold War. Despite that uncertainty, the United States emerged victorious in part because it maintained an open door for people and capital, siphoning off talent and investment and, ultimately, turning autocratic regimes' own economic controls against them. As the CCP struggles with its self-afflicted economic long COVID, that strategy is worth reviving today.

The Price of Fragmentation

Why the Global Economy Isn't Ready for the Shocks Ahead

KRISTALINA GEORGIEVA

We are living through turbulent times, in a world that has become richer but also more fragile. Russia's war in Ukraine has painfully demonstrated that we cannot take peace for granted. A deadly pandemic and climate disasters remind us how brittle life is against the force of nature. Major technological transformations such as artificial intelligence hold promise for future growth but also carry significant risks.

Collaboration among nations is critical in a more uncertain and shock-prone world. Yet international cooperation is in retreat. In its place, the world is witnessing the rise of fragmentation: a process that begins with increasing barriers to trade and investment and, in its extreme form, ends with countries' breaking into rival economic blocs—an outcome that risks reversing the transformative gains that global economic integration has produced.

KRISTALINA GEORGIEVA is Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund.

A number of powerful forces are driving fragmentation. With deepening geopolitical tensions, national security considerations loom large for policymakers and companies, which tends to make them wary of sharing technology or integrating supply chains. Meanwhile, although the global economic integration that has taken place in the past three decades has helped billions of people become wealthier, healthier, and more productive, it has also led to job losses in some sectors and contributed to rising inequality. That in turn has fueled social tensions, creating fertile ground for protectionism and adding to pressures to shift production back home.

Protectionism and decoupling come at a cost.

Fragmentation is costly even in normal times and makes it nearly impossible to manage the tremendous global challenges that the world now faces: war, climate change, pandemics. But policymakers everywhere are nevertheless pursuing measures that lead to further fragmentation. Although some of these policies can be justified by the need to ensure the resilience of supply chains, other measures are driven more by self-interest and protectionism, which in the long term will put the world economy in a precarious position.

The costs of fragmentation could not be clearer: as trade falls and barriers rise, global growth will take a severe hit. According to the latest International Monetary Fund projections, annual global GDP growth in 2028 will be only three percent—the IMF's lowest five-year-ahead forecast in the past three decades, which spells trouble for poverty reduction and for creating jobs among burgeoning populations of young people in developing countries. Fragmentation risks making this already weak economic picture even worse. As growth falls, opportunities vanish, and tension builds, the world—already divided by geopolitical rivalries—could splinter further into competing economic blocs.

Policymakers everywhere recognize that protectionism and decoupling come at a cost. And high-level engagements between the world's two largest economies, the United States and China, aim to reduce the risks of further disintegration. But broadly speaking, when it comes to trying to turn back the tide of fragmentation, there is a troubling lack of urgency. Another pandemic could once again push the world into global economic crisis. Military conflict, whether in Ukraine or

elsewhere, could again exacerbate food insecurity, disrupt energy and commodity markets, and rupture supply chains. Another severe drought or flood could turn millions more people into climate refugees. Nonetheless, despite widespread recognition of these risks, governments and the private sector alike have been unable or unwilling to act.

A more shock-prone world means that economies will need to become much more resilient—not just individually but also collectively. Getting there will require a deliberate approach to cooperation. The international community, supported by institutions such as the IMF, should work together in a systematic and pragmatic manner, pursuing targeted progress where common ground exists and maintaining collaboration in areas where inaction would be devastating. Policymakers need to focus on the issues that matter most not only to the wealth of nations but also to the economic well-being of ordinary people. They must nurture the bonds of trust among countries wherever possible so they can quickly step up cooperation when the next major shock comes. That would benefit poorer and richer economies alike by supporting global growth and reducing the risk that instability will spread across borders. Even for the richest and most powerful countries, a fragmented world will be difficult to navigate, and cooperation will become not only a matter of solidarity but of self-interest, as well.

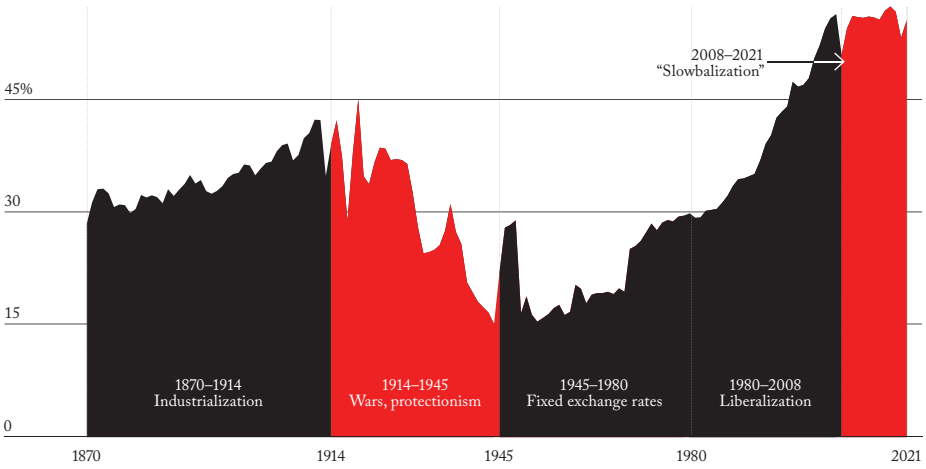
A FRAGILE WORLD

Two world wars in the twentieth century revealed that international cooperation is critical for peace and prosperity and that it requires a sound institutional foundation. Even as World War II was still raging, the Allies came together to create a multilateral architecture that would include the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions—the IMF and the World Bank—together with the precursor to the World Trade Organization. Each organization was entrusted with a special mandate to address the problems of the day requiring collective action.

What ultimately followed was an explosion of trade and integration that transformed the world, culminating in what came to be known as globalization. Integration had accelerated in previous historical eras, especially in the wake of the Industrial Revolution. But during the world wars and the interwar period, it had sharply retreated, and in the immediate postwar era, the fragmentation of the Cold War threatened to prevent it from recovering. The international security and financial architecture the Allies built, however, allowed

THE PHASES OF GLOBAL INTEGRATION

Sum of exports and imports as a percentage of GDP



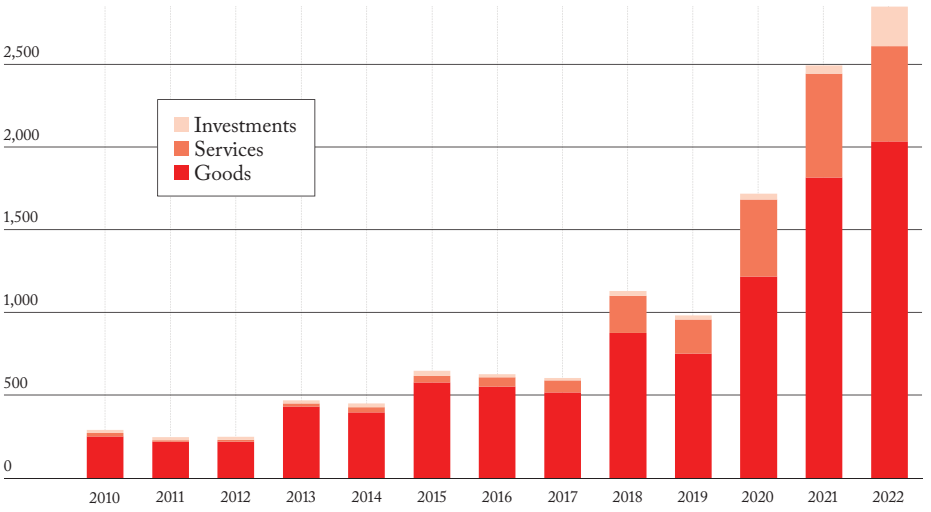
Note: Sample's composition changes over time. *Sources: Peterson Institute for International Economics; Jordà-Schularick-Taylor Macrohistory Database; Penn World Table (10.0); World Bank; IMF staff calculations.*

integration to come roaring back. Since then, that architecture has adapted to massive changes. The number of countries in the world has grown from 99 in 1944 to nearly 200 today. In the same period, the earth's population has more than tripled, from around 2.3 billion to around 8.0 billion, and global GDP has increased more than tenfold. All the while, the expansion of trade in an increasingly integrated global economy has delivered substantial benefits in terms of growth and poverty reduction.

These gains are now at risk. After the 2008 global financial crisis, a period of "slowbalization" began, as growth became uneven and countries began imposing barriers to trade. Convergence in living standards within and across countries has stalled. And since the pandemic began, low-income countries have seen a collapse in their per capita GDP growth rates, which have fallen by more than half, from an average of 3.1 percent annually in the 15 years before the pandemic to 1.4 percent since 2020. The decline has been much more modest in rich countries, where per capita GDP growth rates have fallen from 1.2 percent in the 15 pre-pandemic years to 1.0 percent since 2020. Rising inequality is fostering political instability and undermining the

WALLED OFF

Number of trade restrictions imposed annually worldwide



Sources: Global Trade Alert; IMF staff calculations.

prospects for future growth, especially for vulnerable economies and poorer people. The existential threat of climate change is aggravating existing vulnerabilities and introducing new shocks. Vulnerable countries are running out of buffers, and rising indebtedness is putting economic sustainability at risk.

In a more fragile world, countries (or blocs of countries) may be tempted to define their interests narrowly and retreat from cooperation. But many countries lack the technology, financial resources, and capacity to successfully contend with economic shocks on their own—and their failure to do so will harm not only the well-being of their own citizens but also that of people elsewhere. And in a less secure world with weaker growth prospects, the risk of fragmentation only grows, potentially creating a vicious downward spiral.

Should this happen, the costs will be prohibitively high. Over the long term, trade fragmentation—that is, increasing restrictions on the trade in goods and services across countries—could reduce global GDP by up to seven percent, or $7.4 trillion in today's dollars, the equivalent of the combined GDPs of France and Germany and more than three times the size of the entire sub-Saharan African economy. That

is why policymakers should reconsider their newfound embrace of trade barriers, which have proliferated at a rapid clip in recent years: in 2019, countries imposed fewer than 1,000 restrictions on trade; in 2022, that number skyrocketed to almost 3,000.

As protectionism spreads, the costs of technological decoupling—that is, restrictions on the flow of high-tech goods, services, and knowledge across countries—would only add to the misery, reducing the GDPs of some countries by up to 12 percent over the long term. Fragmentation can also lead to severe disruption in commodity markets and create food and energy insecurity: for example, Russia's blockade of Ukrainian wheat exports was a key driver behind the sudden 37 percent increase in global wheat prices in the spring of 2022. This drove inflation in the prices of other food items and exacerbated food insecurity, notably in low-income countries in North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. Finally, the fragmentation of capital flows, which would see investors and countries diverting investments and financial transactions to like-minded countries, would constitute another blow to global growth. The combined losses from all facets of fragmentation may be hard to quantify, but it is clear that they all point to lower growth in productivity and in turn to lower living standards, more poverty, and less investment in health, education, and infrastructure. Global economic resilience and prosperity will depend on the survival of economic integration.

A GLOBAL SAFETY NET

In a world with more frequent and severe shocks, countries have to find ways to cushion the adverse impacts on their economies and people. That will require building economic buffers in good times that can then be deployed in bad times. One such buffer is a country's international reserves—that is, the foreign currency holdings of its central bank, which provide a readily available source of financing for countries when hit by shocks. In the aggregate, reserves have grown tremendously over the past two decades, on par with the expansion of the world economy and in response to financial crises. But those reserves are heavily concentrated in a relatively small group of economically stronger advanced and emerging market economies: just ten countries hold two-thirds of global reserves. In contrast, reserve holdings in most other countries remain modest, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, parts of Latin America, oil-importing states in the Middle East, and

small island states—which, taken together, account for less than one percent of global reserves. This uneven distribution of reserves means that many countries remain highly vulnerable.

No country should rely on its reserves alone, of course. Consider how a household, which cannot save enough money for every conceivable shock, purchases insurance for a home, a car, and health care. Similarly, countries are better off if they can complement their own reserves with access to various international insurance mechanisms that are collectively known as "the global financial safety net." At the center of the net is the IMF, which pools the resources of its membership and acts as a cooperative global lender of last resort. The net is buttressed by currency swap lines, through which central banks provide one another with liquidity backstops (typically to reduce financial stability risks), and by financing arrangements that allow countries within specific regions to pool resources that can be deployed if a crisis hits.

In a less secure world with weaker growth prospects, the risk of fragmentation only grows.

Protecting countries and their people against shocks contributes to stability beyond their borders: such protection is a global public good. A global safety net that pools international resources to provide liquidity to individual countries when they are struck by calamities is thus in the interest of individual countries and the world. The COVID-19 crisis provides a good example. With the pooled resources of the IMF, member countries received liquidity injections at an unprecedented speed and scale, helping them finance essential imports such as medicines, food, and energy. Since the pandemic, the IMF has approved over $300 billion in new financing for 96 countries, the broadest support ever over such a short period. Of this, over $140 billion has been provided since Russia's invasion of Ukraine to help the fund's members address financing pressures, including those resulting from the war.

Although the global financial safety net helped manage the fallout from COVID and the effects of Russia's invasion, it is sure to be tested again by the next big shock. With reserves unevenly distributed, there is a pressing need to expand the world's pooled resources to insure vulnerable countries against severe shocks. The IMF's nearly $1 trillion in lending capacity is now only a small part of the overall safety net. Although self-insurance through international reserves has sharply

increased for some countries, pooled resources centered on the IMF have increased far less than self-insurance and have shrunk markedly relative to measures of global financial integration. That is why the international community must strengthen the global financial safety net, including by expanding the availability of pooled resources in the IMF.

DEALING WITH DEBT

Even if the global financial safety net is strengthened, some countries might exhaust their buffers in the face of global economic shocks and accumulate economic imbalances over time—notably, higher fiscal deficits and rising debt levels. Although debt is up everywhere, the problem is particularly acute for many vulnerable emerging-market and low-income countries as a result of recent economic jolts, rising interest rates, and, in some cases, policy errors on the part of governments. By the end of 2022, average debt levels in emerging-market countries had reached 58 percent of GDP, a significant increase from a decade earlier, when that figure stood at 42 percent. Average debt levels in low-income countries had increased even more sharply over that period, from 38 percent of GDP to 60 percent. About one-quarter of emerging-market countries' bonds are now trading at spreads indicative of distress. And 25 years after the launch of a broad-based international debt relief initiative for poor countries, about 15 percent of low-income countries are now considered to be in debt distress, with another 40 percent at risk of ending up in that situation.

The costs of a full-blown debt crisis are most keenly felt by people in debtor countries. According to one analysis by the World Bank, on average, poverty levels spike by 30 percent after a country defaults on its external obligations and remain elevated for a decade, during which infant mortality rates rise on average by 13 percent and children face shorter life expectancies. Other countries are affected as well. Savers lose their wealth. Borrowers' access to credit can become more limited.

To ensure debt sustainability in a world of more frequent climate and health calamities, individual countries and international organizations must do everything they can to prevent the unsustainable accumulation of debt in the first place—and failing that, to support the orderly restructuring of debt if it becomes necessary. If debt crises multiply, the gains that low-income countries have made in recent decades could quickly evaporate. To prevent that from happening, international institutions can help countries focus on economic reforms that would

Crate expectations: a container ship in Shanghai, July 2023

spur growth, improve the effectiveness of budgetary spending, enhance tax collection, and strengthen debt management.

Reducing the costs of debt crises means resolving them quickly. Doing so is not easy. The creditor landscape has changed significantly over the past several decades, with new official creditors such as China, India, and Saudi Arabia entering the scene and the variety of private creditors expanding dramatically. Quick and coordinated action by creditors requires mutual trust and understanding, but the increase in the number and type of creditors has made that more challenging, especially since some key creditors are divided along geopolitical lines.

Consider the case of Zambia, Africa's second-biggest copper producer. Over the past decade, it ramped up spending on public investment financed by debt, but economic growth failed to follow, and the country ran out of resources to meet its debt repayments, defaulting in 2020. Its official creditors took almost a year to agree to a deal to restructure billions of dollars of loans. This milestone required the mostly high-income group of creditors known as the Paris Club to cooperate with the new creditor countries. But the job will be fully complete only when private creditors also come forward and agree to a comparable deal with Zambia—work that is already underway.

Although reaching an agreement for Zambia took time, official creditors have been learning how to work together, in this case under a Common Framework established by the G-20. The technical discussions taking place through the new Global Sovereign Debt Roundtable—initiated in February 2023 by the IMF, the World Bank, and the G-20 under India's presidency—are also helping build a deeper common understanding across a broader set of stakeholders, including the private sector and debtor countries. This development holds promise for highly indebted countries, such as Sri Lanka and Ghana, that still need the international community to decisively follow through on commitments to provide critical debt relief.

Reducing the costs of debt crises means resolving them quickly.

But creditors and international financial institutions must do more. Debtors should receive a clearer road map of what they can expect from creditors in the timing of key decisions. Creditors also need to find ways to more quickly clear hurdles to reaching consensus. For instance, earlier information sharing can help creditors and debtors resolve debt crises in a more cooperative fashion, with help from institutions such as the IMF. And if private creditors demonstrate that they can do their part and provide debt relief on terms comparable to those offered by official creditors, it will reassure the official creditors and give them the confidence to move faster.

International financial institutions and lenders must also develop mechanisms to insure countries against debt crises in the event of major shocks. Such mechanisms play a crucial role in ensuring that a liquidity crunch does not tip countries into more costly debt distress. One promising idea would be to take a contractual approach to commercial debt. This could involve including clauses in debt contracts that would automatically trigger a deferral of debt repayments if a country experienced a natural disaster such as a flood, drought, or earthquake.

Debtors must do their part, too, starting by being more proactive when it comes to risk mitigation, and better coordinating their debt management strategy with fiscal policy. Governments must also show a willingness to tackle the underlying policy mistakes at the heart of more fundamental debt challenges. For instance, Zambia's strong commitment to undertaking necessary economic reforms, such as

removing fuel subsidies that mostly benefited wealthier households, meant that the IMF could move forward with its own financial support and that official creditors were more willing to provide debt relief.

THE FIGHT AGAINST FRAGMENTATION

The IMF has long played a central role in the global economy. It is the only institution empowered by its 190 members to carry out regular and thorough "health checks" of their economies. It is a steward of macroeconomic and financial stability, a source of essential policy advice, and a lender of last resort, poised to help protect countries against crises and instability. In a world of more shocks and divisions, the fund's universal membership and oversight are a tremendous asset.

But the IMF is just one actor in the global economy and just one among many important international financial institutions. And to keep up with the pace of change in a fragmenting world, the fund's financial model and policies need a refresh. An important first step would be completing the 16th General Review of Quotas. The IMF's quota resources—the financial contributions paid by each member—are the primary building blocks of the fund's financial structure, which pools the resources of all its members. Each member of the IMF is assigned a quota based broadly on its relative position in the world economy, and the IMF regularly reviews its quota resources to make sure they are adequate to help its members cope with shocks. An increase in quotas would provide more permanent resources to support emerging and developing economies and reduce the fund's reliance on temporary credit lines. It is essential that the IMF's membership come together to bolster the institution's quota resources by completing the review by the December 2023 deadline.

The IMF's better-off members need to make a concerted effort to urgently replenish the financial resources of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust. The trust, which is administered by the IMF, has provided almost $30 billion in interest-free financing to 56 low-income countries since the onset of the pandemic, more than quadruple its historical levels. This funding is critical to ensure that the IMF can continue meeting the record demand for support from its poorest member countries. And to address the economic risks created by climate change and pandemics, the fund's better-off members should also scale up their channeling of Special Drawing Rights (an IMF reserve asset, which it allocates to all its members) to more

vulnerable countries through the fund's newly created Resilience and Sustainability Trust.

The IMF must also continue working to enhance representation inside the organization. It is important that the fund reflect the economic realities of today's world, not that of the last century. Decision-making at the fund requires a highly collaborative approach and inclusive governance. This would support more agility and adaptability in the IMF's policies and financing instruments to better serve the needs of its members.

Finally, the IMF cannot be truly effective in today's fragmented world unless it continues to deepen its ties with other international organizations, including the World Bank, other multilateral development banks such as the African Development Bank, and institutions such as the Bank for International Settlements and the World Trade Organization. All those international financial institutions must join forces to foster international cooperation on the most pressing challenges facing the world.

In 1944, the 44 men (and zero women) who signed the Bretton Woods agreement sat at one table in a modestly sized room. The small number of players was an advantage, as was the fact that most of the countries represented were allies fighting together in World War II. Today, finding consensus among 190 members is much more difficult, especially as trust among different groups of countries is eroding and faith in the ability to pursue the common good is at an all-time low. Yet the world's people deserve a chance at pursuing peace, prosperity, and life on a livable planet.

For nearly 80 years, the world has responded to major economic challenges through a system of rules, shared principles, and institutions, including those rooted in the Bretton Woods system. Now that the world has entered a new era of increasing fragmentation, international institutions are even more vital for bringing countries together and solving the big global challenges of today. But without enhanced support from higher-income countries and a renewed commitment to collaboration, the IMF and other international institutions will struggle.

The period of rapid globalization and integration has come to an end, and the forces of protectionism are on the rise. Perhaps the only thing certain about this fragile, fragmented new global economy is that it will face shocks. The IMF, other international institutions, creditors, and borrowers must all adapt and prepare. It's going to be a bumpy ride; the international financial system needs to buckle up.

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China's Road to Ruin

The Real Toll of Beijing's Belt and Road

MICHAEL BENNON AND FRANCIS FUKUYAMA

This year marks the tenth anniversary of Chinese President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative, the largest and most ambitious infrastructure development project in human history. China has lent more than $1 trillion to more than 100 countries through the scheme, dwarfing Western spending in the developing world and stoking anxieties about the spread of Beijing's power and influence. Many analysts have characterized Chinese lending through the BRI as "debt trap diplomacy" designed to give China leverage over other countries and even seize their infrastructure and resources. After Sri Lanka fell behind on payments for its troubled Hambantota port

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project in 2017, China obtained a 99-year lease on the property as part of a deal to renegotiate the debt. The agreement sparked concerns in Washington and other Western capitals that Beijing's real aim was to acquire access to strategic facilities throughout the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, and the Americas.

But over the last few years, a different picture of the BRI has emerged. Many Chinese-financed infrastructure projects have failed to earn the returns that analysts expected. And because the governments that negotiated these projects often agreed to backstop the loans, they have found themselves burdened with huge debt overhangs—unable to secure financing for future projects or even to service the debt they have already accrued. This is true not just of Sri Lanka but also of Argentina, Kenya, Malaysia, Montenegro, Pakistan, Tanzania, and many others. The problem for the West was less that China would acquire ports and other strategic properties in developing countries and more that these countries would become dangerously indebted—forced to turn to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other Western-backed international financial institutions for help repaying their Chinese loans.

In many parts of the developing world, China has come to be seen as a rapacious and unbending creditor, not so different from the Western multinational corporations and lenders that sought to collect on bad debts in decades past. Far from breaking new ground as a predatory lender, in other words, China seems to be following a path well worn by Western investors. In so doing, however, Beijing risks alienating the very countries it set out to woo with the BRI and squandering its economic influence in the developing world. It also risks exacerbating an already painful debt crisis in emerging markets that could lead to a "lost decade" of the kind many Latin American countries experienced in the 1980s.

To avoid that dire outcome—and to avoid spending Western taxpayer dollars to service bad Chinese debts—the United States and other countries should push for broad-based reforms that would make it more difficult to take advantage of the IMF and other international financial institutions, imposing tougher criteria on countries seeking bailouts and demanding more transparency in lending from all their members, including China.

HARD BARGAINS, SOFT MARKETS

In the 1970s, the Harvard economist Raymond Vernon observed that Western investors had the upper hand when negotiating deals in the

developing world, since they had the capital and know-how to build factories, roads, oil wells, and power plants that poorer countries desperately needed. As a result, they were able to strike bargains that were highly favorable to themselves, transferring much of the risk to developing countries. Once the projects had been completed, however, the balance of power shifted. The new assets could not be taken away, so developing countries had more leverage to renegotiate debt repayment or ownership terms. In some cases, contentious negotiations led to nationalizations or sovereign defaults.

Similar scenarios have played out in several BRI countries. Major Chinese-funded projects have generated disappointing returns or failed to stimulate the kind of broad-based economic growth that policymakers had anticipated. Some projects have faced opposition from indigenous communities whose lands and livelihoods have been threatened. Others have damaged the environment or experienced setbacks because of the poor quality of Chinese construction. These problems come on top of long-standing disputes over China's preference for using its own workers and subcontractors to build infrastructure, edging out local counterparts.

The biggest problem by far, however, is debt. In Argentina, Ethiopia, Montenegro, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Zambia, and elsewhere, costly Chinese projects have pushed debt-to-GDP ratios to unsustainable levels and produced balance-of-payments crises. In some cases, governments had agreed to cover any revenue shortfalls, making sovereign guarantees that obligated taxpayers to foot the bill for failing projects. These so-called contingent liabilities were often hidden from citizens and other creditors, obscuring the true levels of debt for which governments were liable. In Montenegro, Sri Lanka, and Zambia, China made such deals with corrupt or authoritarian-leaning governments that then bequeathed the debt to less corrupt and more democratic governments, saddling them with responsibility for getting out of crises.

Contingent liabilities on debt to state-owned enterprises are not unique to the BRI and can plague privately financed projects, as well. What makes BRI debt crises different is that these contingent liabilities are owed to Chinese policy banks rather than to private corporations, and China is conducting its debt renegotiations bilaterally. Beijing is also clearly negotiating hard, because BRI countries are increasingly opting for bailouts from the IMF, even though they often come with tough conditions, rather than trying to negotiate further relief from Beijing. Among the countries that the IMF has intervened to support in recent years are

Sri Lanka ($1.5 billion in 2016), Argentina ($57 billion in 2018), Ethiopia ($2.9 billion in 2019), Pakistan ($6 billion in 2019), Ecuador ($6.5 billion in 2020), Kenya ($2.3 billion in 2021), Suriname ($688 million in 2021), Argentina again ($44 billion in 2022), Zambia ($1.3 billion in 2022), Sri Lanka again ($2.9 billion in 2023), and Bangladesh ($3.3 billion in 2023).

Some of these countries resumed servicing their BRI debts soon after the new IMF credit facilities were in place. In early 2021, for instance, Kenya sought to negotiate a delay in interest payments for a struggling Chinese-funded railway project linking Nairobi to Kenya's Indian Ocean port in Mombasa. After the IMF approved a $2.3 billion credit facility that April, however, Beijing began withholding payments to contractors on other Chinese-financed projects in Kenya. As a result, Kenyan subcontractors and suppliers stopped receiving payments. Later that year, Kenya announced that it would no longer seek an extension of debt relief from China and made a $761 million debt service payment for the railway project.

The stakes for Kenya and the rest of the developing world are enormous. This wave of debt crises could be far worse than previous ones, inflicting lasting economic damage on already vulnerable economies and miring their governments in protracted and costly negotiations. The problem goes beyond the simple fact that every dollar spent servicing unsustainable BRI debt is a dollar that is unavailable for economic development,

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social spending, or combating climate change. The recalcitrant creditor in today's emerging market debt crises is not a hedge fund or other private creditor but rather the world's largest bilateral lender and, in many cases, the largest trading partner of the debtor country. As private creditors become more keenly aware of the risks of lending to BRI countries, these countries will find themselves caught between squabbling creditors and unable to access the capital they need to keep their economies afloat.

HIDDEN FIGURES

Beijing had multiple objectives for the BRI. First and foremost, it sought to help Chinese companies—mostly state-owned companies but also some private ones—make money abroad, to keep China's huge construction sector afloat, and to preserve the jobs of millions of Chinese workers. Beijing also undoubtedly had foreign policy and security goals, including gaining political influence and in some cases securing access to strategic facilities. The large number of marginal projects Beijing undertook hints at these motivations: Why else fund projects in countries with huge political risks, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo or Venezuela?

But accusations of debt trap diplomacy are overblown. Rather than deliberately miring borrowers in debt in order to extract geopolitical concessions, Chinese lenders most likely just did poor due diligence. BRI loans are made by Chinese state-owned banks through Chinese state-owned enterprises to state-owned enterprises in borrowing countries. The contracts are negotiated directly, rather than opened to the public for bidding, so they lack one of the benefits of private financing and open procurement: a transparent market mechanism for ensuring that projects are financially viable.

The results speak for themselves. In 2009, the government of Montenegro asked for bids on a contract to build a highway connecting its Adriatic port of Bar with Serbia. Two private contractors participated in two procurement processes, but neither was able to raise the necessary financing. As a result, Montenegro turned to the China Export-Import Bank, which did not share the market's concerns, and now the highway is a major cause of Montenegro's financial distress. According to a 2019 IMF estimate, the country's debt-to-GDP ratio would have been just 59 percent had it not pursued the project. Instead, the ratio was forecast to rise to 89 percent that year.

Not all BRI projects have underperformed. Greece's Piraeus port project, which expanded the country's largest harbor, has delivered

the win-win outcomes Beijing promised, as have other BRI initiatives. But many have left countries suffering under crushing debt and wary of deeper engagement with China. In some cases, the leaders and elites who negotiated the deals have benefited, but the broader populations have not.

China's BRI does pose problems for Western countries, in other words, but the primary threat is not strategic. Rather, the BRI creates pressures that can destabilize developing countries, which in turn creates problems for international institutions such as the IMF and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, to which those countries turn for assistance. Over the last six decades, Western creditors have developed institutions such as the Paris Club to deal with issues regarding sovereign default, to ensure a degree of cooperation among creditors, and to manage payments crises equitably. But China has not yet agreed to join this group, and its opaque lending processes make it hard for international institutions to accurately assess how much trouble a given country is in.

CAUTION AND PRESSURE

Some analysts have argued that the BRI is not a cause of the current debt crisis in emerging markets. Countries such as Egypt and Ghana, they point out, owe more to bondholders or multilateral lenders such as the IMF and World Bank than to China and are still struggling to manage their debt burdens. But such arguments mischaracterize the problem, which is not simply bad BRI debt in the aggregate but also hidden BRI debt. According to a 2021 study in the *Journal of International Economics*, approximately half of China's loans to the developing world are "hidden," meaning that they are not included in official debt statistics. Another study published in 2022 by the American Economic Association found that such debts have resulted in a series of "hidden defaults."

The first problem with hidden debt occurs during the buildup to a crisis, when other lenders do not know that the obligations exist and are therefore unable to accurately assess credit risk. The second problem comes during the crisis itself, when other lenders learn of the undisclosed debt and lose faith in the restructuring process. It does not take much hidden bilateral debt to cause a credit crisis, and it takes even less to shatter trust in efforts to resolve it.

China has taken some measures to ease the strain of these debts, hidden and otherwise. It has provided its own bailouts to BRI countries, often in the form of currency swaps and other bridge loans to borrower central banks. These bailouts are accelerating, with one working paper

published in March 2023 by the World Bank Group estimating that China extended more than $185 billion in such facilities between 2016 and 2021. But central bank swaps are far less transparent than traditional sovereign loans, which further complicates restructurings.

China's preference for not disclosing lending terms and renegotiating bilaterally may help protect its economic interests in the short term, but it can also derail restructuring efforts by undermining the two foundational elements of any such process: transparency and comparability of treatment—the idea that all creditors will share the burden equitably and be treated the same.

The IMF's policies for lending into murky distressed debt situations have evolved over decades, growing more flexible so that the fund can lend into and "referee" debt restructurings. But although the IMF was well suited to this role when the creditors were Paris Club members and even sovereign bond hedge funds, it is not well positioned to deal with China. Moreover, the mechanisms that the IMF and Western creditors have developed to alleviate the worsening sovereign debt crisis among BRI countries are insufficient. In 2020, the G-20 established a Common Framework intended to integrate China and other bilateral lenders into the Paris Club's restructuring process with IMF oversight and support. But the Common Framework has not worked. Ethiopia, Ghana, and Zambia have all applied for relief through the mechanism, but negotiations have been extremely slow, and only Zambia has reached a deal with creditors. The terms of that agreement, moreover, were underwhelming for Zambia, Zambia's non-Chinese official creditors, and, most important, for the prospects of future restructurings.

> It does not take much hidden bilateral debt to cause a credit crisis.

Under the deal, reached in June 2023, Zambia's official creditor debt was revised down from $8 billion to $6.3 billion after a major BRI loan was reclassified as commercial (even though it was covered by Chinese state-backed export credit insurance). Furthermore, the agreement may only temporarily reduce Zambia's interest payments on official debt. If the IMF concludes that Zambia's economy has improved at the end of its program in 2026, the country's interest on official credits will ratchet back up. That creates a terrible set of incentives for the Zambian government, whose cost of capital will increase if its creditworthiness improves and could cause friction between the IMF and China down the road. These results are not surprising: the

Common Framework provides the carrot of IMF support but lacks a stick to deal with a recalcitrant creditor, especially one with China's geopolitical leverage over borrowers.

Another initiative aimed at easing the brewing BRI debt crisis is the IMF's Lending Into Official Arrears program. In theory, the program should allow the IMF to continue lending to a distressed borrower even when a bilateral creditor refuses to provide relief, but it, too, has proven ineffective. In Zambia, China holds more than half of official debt, making it extremely risky for the IMF to extend additional financing. Even in other cases in which China does not hold a majority of official debt, China simply has too much economic leverage over borrowers relative to the IMF, and the fund's staff and leadership will always err on the side of caution when attempting to resolve conflicts between member states.

As long as the IMF continues to exercise such caution, Beijing will continue to use its leverage to pressure the fund into supporting borrowers even when it does not have complete visibility into their indebtedness to China. To prevent future debt restructurings from becoming as challenging as the ongoing ones in Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, and Zambia, the IMF will need to undertake substantial reforms, strengthening its enforcement of transparency requirements for member states and taking a much more cautious approach to lending into heavily indebted BRI borrowers. Such a course correction is unlikely to originate from within the IMF; it will have to come from the United States and other important board members.

SLOW LEARNERS AND FAST LENDERS

Some analysts have argued that China is going through a "learning process" as a debt collector, that Chinese lending institutions are fragmented, and that the process of building understanding, trust, and organized responses to sovereign debt crises takes time and cooperation. The implication is that Western creditors should be flexible while Beijing grows into its new role—and that the IMF should keep cutting checks in the meantime.

But patience will not solve the problem because China's incentives (and those of any other holdout creditor) are not aligned with those of the IMF or creditors who wish to expeditiously negotiate the restructuring of debts. This is why the IMF must strictly enforce requirements that oblige member states to be transparent about their debt obligations.

Even if the Chinese lending landscape is fragmented, moreover, the IMF and the members of the Paris Club should treat the Chinese government as capable of organizing its state-owned entities and providing a state-level response in debt restructurings. Beijing appears to be capable of doing so in bilateral debt renegotiations. In 2018, for instance, Zambia announced plans to restructure its bilateral debt with China and to delay ongoing BRI projects because of debt concerns. But after meeting with China's ambassador to Zambia, then President Edgar Lungu reversed course and said there would be no disruption of the Chinese-financed projects, suggesting that Beijing had been able to coordinate with a number of Chinese state-owned enterprises and state-owned banks to avert a blowup. If China could do so bilaterally, it should be able to do so multilaterally, as well.

One drawback of adjusting the IMF's approach to the BRI debt crisis is that it would slow the fund down, preventing it from responding quickly to new crises. This is clearly a tradeoff. The IMF cannot act as both an unequivocal lender of last resort and an enforcer of the norms of transparency and comparability. It must be able and willing to withhold credit assistance when its requirements are unmet. The non-Chinese taxpayers who fund the IMF should not see their money pay for bad Chinese lending decisions.

GOOD FOR THE IMF, GOOD FOR THE WORLD

Members of the G-7 and the Paris Club have several options for addressing the BRI debt crises. First, the United States and other bilateral creditors could assist BRI borrowers in coordinating with one another. Doing so would improve transparency, enhance information sharing, and enable borrowers to negotiate with Chinese creditors as a group instead of bilaterally. China's approach of conducting renegotiations secretly and bilaterally disadvantages BRI borrowers, as well as other creditors, including the IMF and the World Bank.

Second, the IMF should establish clear criteria that distressed BRI borrowers must meet before they can receive new credit facilities from the fund. These criteria should be agreed on by a number of IMF board members in order to insulate the fund's staff and leadership from conflict with China, which is also an important board member of the IMF. Transparency related to BRI debts is not the only area that these criteria should address. The IMF should also set much clearer criteria regarding which BRI loans will be considered official credits, as opposed

to commercial ones. China has claimed that some major BRI loans are commercial rather than official loans because they are priced at market rates, even though they come from state-owned lending institutions such as the China Development Bank. The IMF has considered these classification questions case by case. But this approach is proving unworkable, since it enables scenarios such as the Zambian one in which a sizable portion of official debt suddenly becomes commercial overnight, enabling China to seek better terms. A continued ad hoc approach by the IMF will likely lead to similar gamesmanship and conflict in future restructuring negotiations. The IMF should simply clarify which BRI lending institutions will be considered official creditors in any restructuring process.

Under some recent IMF programs, borrowers have continued to service BRI debts through their state-owned enterprises while receiving sovereign debt relief at the national level. The only way to prevent this behavior is for the IMF to require borrowers to identify and commit to including all state-owned enterprise debts with sovereign guarantees in restructuring processes. Otherwise, BRI lenders will simply pick and choose which state-owned enterprise loans they would like to include in restructurings based on whether they think they can get a better deal through restructuring or through a bilateral renegotiation on the side.

Requiring distressed countries to meet these criteria before they get new credit facilities would make the IMF less agile and limit its ability to respond quickly to balance-of-payments crises. But it would give borrowers and the sovereign finance industry much-needed clarity and certainty on the requirements for IMF intervention. It would also insulate IMF staff and leadership from recurring conflicts with China during every debt restructuring.

Some will no doubt frame such reforms as "anti-China." In truth, however, they are simply the steps necessary to protect the principles of transparency and comparability in sovereign debt restructuring. Western countries must be able to stand up for key elements of the rules-based international order when they are imperiled while still cooperating with China, which is an important member of that order.

Finally, these reforms are the only way to protect the IMF from the fallout of the BRI debt crisis. Conflicts over BRI debt will continue to impede debt-relief efforts, undermining both the economic health of indebted developing countries and the effectiveness of the IMF. Only a reformed IMF can reverse the damage—to developing countries and to itself.

Back in the Trenches

Why New Technology Hasn't Revolutionized Warfare in Ukraine

STEPHEN BIDDLE

The war in Ukraine is being waged with a host of advanced technologies, from remotely operated drones to space-based surveillance, precision weapons, hypersonic missiles, handheld jammers, artificial intelligence, networked communications, and more. Many argue that this array is transforming warfare, with omnipresent surveillance combining with newly lethal weapons to make legacy systems such as the tank obsolete and to make traditional methods such as large-scale offensive action impractical. As the military analyst David Johnson has put it, "What I believe we are witnessing is a pivotal moment in military history: the reascendance of the defense as the decisive form of war." Drones, artificial intelligence, and rapid adaptation of commercial technologies in Ukraine are creating "a

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genuine military revolution," according to military strategist T. X. Hammes. Former Google chief executive and Pentagon adviser Eric Schmidt has argued that Ukraine is showing that "the future of war will be dictated and waged by drones."

But in many ways, this war seems quite familiar. It features foot soldiers slogging through muddy trenches in scenes that look more like World War I than *Star Wars*. Its battlegrounds are littered with minefields that resemble those from World War II and feature moonscapes of shell holes that could be mistaken for Flanders in 1917. Conventional artillery has fired millions of unguided shells, so many as to strain the production capacity of the industrial bases in Russia and the West. Images of code writers developing military software accompany scenes of factory floors turning out mass conventional munitions that lack only Rosie the Riveter to pass for images from 1943.

This raises the question of how different this war truly is. How can such cutting-edge technology coexist with such echoes of the distant past? The answer is that although the tools in Ukraine are sometimes new, the results they produce are mostly not. Armies adapt to new threats, and the countermeasures that both sides have adopted in Ukraine have dramatically reduced the net effects of new weapons and equipment, resulting in a war that in many ways looks more like a conflict from the past than one from an imagined high-tech future. U.S. defense planners should understand that the war in Ukraine does not portend a "revolution in military affairs" of the kind that has often been predicted but somehow never quite arrives. Policymakers and analysts should closely study what is happening on the ground in Ukraine, but they should not expect their findings to produce transformational change in U.S. military strategy. Instead, as has often been the case in the past, the best path forward will involve incremental adaptations, not tectonic shifts.

HEAVY LOSSES?

One way to assess the net results of the use of new weapons in Ukraine is to look at the casualties they have inflicted. Those who see a military revolution in Ukraine usually argue that new surveillance techniques, such as coupling drones with precision weapons, have made the modern battlefield radically more lethal. Yet the realized lethality (as opposed to the potential lethality) of Russian and Ukrainian weapons in this war is little different from that seen in previous wars, and in some cases it is actually lower.

Consider, for example, tank losses. Many revolutionists see heavy tank casualties in Ukraine as the key indicator for the tank's looming obsolescence in the face of newly lethal precision antitank weapons. And tank losses in Ukraine have certainly been heavy: Russia and Ukraine have each lost more than half the tanks with which they entered the war. At the time of the invasion, Russia had about 3,400 tanks in active service. But in the first 350 days of the war, it lost somewhere between 1,688 (the number verified photographically by the open-source organization Oryx) and 3,253 (the number claimed by the Ukrainian Defense Ministry), for a loss rate of somewhere between 50 percent and 96 percent. Ukraine fielded about 900 tanks at the time of the invasion and lost at least 459 (the Oryx figure) in the first 350 days, for a loss rate of at least 51 percent. Both countries have either built or been given additional vehicles as replacements. Russia, especially, has extensive reserves of older vehicles that have been pressed into service. Damaged tanks can sometimes be repaired and returned to battle. So even though the armor fleets in the field have thus not shrunk massively, it is clear that many tanks have been lost in battle.

In war, new technology matters, but adaptations dramatically dampen its effects.

Yet these are not unusually heavy loss rates for major warfare. In just four days during the Battle of Amiens in 1918, the United Kingdom lost 98 percent of the tanks it had when the fighting began. In 1943, the loss rate for German tanks was 113 percent: Germany lost more tanks than it owned at the beginning of the year. In 1944, Germany lost 122 percent of the tanks with which it started the year. The Soviet Union's loss rates for tanks in 1943 and 1944 were nearly as high, at 109 percent and 80 percent, respectively. And in a single battle in Normandy (Operation Goodwood, in July 1944), the United Kingdom lost more than 30 percent of all its armor on the continent in just three days of fighting. Few, however, argued that the tank was obsolete in 1918 or 1944.

Or consider aircraft losses. Some have suggested that modern antiaircraft missiles are so lethal to traditional piloted aircraft that these, too, are headed for the ash heap of history. And like tanks, aircraft have suffered heavy losses in Ukraine: in almost a year and a half of fighting, the Ukrainian air force has lost at least 68 aircraft, or more

than a third of Ukraine's prewar fleet; the Russian air force has lost more than 80 of its preinvasion inventory of 2,204 military aircraft. Yet this level of destruction is hardly unprecedented. In 1917, the life expectancy of a new British pilot was just 11 days. In 1943, the German Luftwaffe lost 251 percent of the aircraft it had at the beginning of the year. Its loss rate for 1944 was even higher: in the first half of the year alone, it lost 146 percent of its January strength. The Soviet loss rate for aircraft was 77 percent in 1943 and 66 percent in 1944. Yet few argued that the piloted airplane was obsolete in 1917 or 1943.

Or consider artillery. Since at least 1914, artillery has inflicted more casualties in major wars than any other weapon. And today, some observers believe that as many as 80 to 90 percent of Ukrainian casualties have been caused by artillery fire. Many accounts of the fighting in Ukraine feature scenes of the two armies using drones to find enemy targets and then using networked communications to quickly relay the information for precision engagement by guided artillery. Of course, not all artillery in Ukraine is precision guided; most rounds fired by either side are relatively old-fashioned. But the teaming of these unguided rounds with new drone reconnaissance and rapid-targeting systems is often described as a new and profound development in Ukraine. If one assumes, however, that 85 percent of Russian casualties are caused by Ukrainian artillery, that Russia suffered as many as 146,820 casualties in the first year of the invasion (the Ukrainian Defense Ministry's figure), and that Ukraine fired a total of around 1.65 million rounds of artillery in the first year (as the Brookings Institution has estimated), then drones and the mix of guided and unguided artillery in the Ukrainian army inflicted, on average, about eight Russian casualties per hundred rounds fired in the first year of the invasion.

That rate exceeds the world war rates, but not by much. The historian Trevor Dupuy estimated that in World War II, around 50 percent of casualties were caused by artillery, which means that on average, it inflicted about three casualties per hundred rounds fired. In World War I, the figure was about two soldiers wounded or killed per hundred rounds fired. Casualties per hundred rounds has thus grown since 1914 but at a steady, almost linear annual rate of around an additional 0.05 casualties per hundred rounds. Artillery in Ukraine looks more like an incremental extension of long-standing trends than a revolutionary departure from the past.

STALEMATES AND BREAKTHROUGHS

Of course, casualty infliction is only one element of warfare—armies also seek to take and hold ground. And many revolutionists think that new equipment has changed the patterns of advance and retreat in Ukraine relative to historical experience. In this view, today's newly lethal weapons have made offensive maneuver prohibitively costly, inaugurating a new era of defense dominance in which ground is much harder for attackers to take than in previous eras of warfare.

Yet the Ukrainian war to date has been far from a uniform defensive stalemate. Some attacks have indeed failed to gain ground or have done so only at great cost. The Russian offensive at Bakhmut eventually succeeded, but only after ten months of fighting and a casualty toll of perhaps 60,000 to 100,000 Russian soldiers. Russian offensives in the spring of 2022 gained little ground, and the Russian attack on Mariupol in southern Ukraine in February lasted almost three months before an outnumbered defense was overwhelmed and the Russians captured the city. Ukraine's counteroffensive in Kherson began with weeks of slow, expensive attrition warfare in August and September 2022.

But other attacks have moved much farther and faster. Russia's initial invasion in February 2022 was poorly executed in many ways, yet it gained over 42,000 square miles of ground in less than a month. Ukraine's Kyiv counteroffensive then retook over 19,000 square miles in March and early April. Ukraine's Kherson counteroffensive in August 2022 eventually gained almost 470 square miles, and its Kharkiv counteroffensive in September 2022 retook 2,300 square miles. The war has thus presented a mix of successful offense and successful defense, not a pattern of consistent offensive frustration. And all this—both the breakthroughs and the stalemates—has occurred in the face of new weapons and equipment. Conversely, older legacy systems such as tanks played prominent roles in both the offensive successes and failures. These variations are hard to square with any technologically determined new epoch in war.

This, too, is an important echo of the past. The popular imagination sees World War I as a technologically determined defensive stalemate and World War II as a war of offensive maneuver unleashed by the tank, the airplane, and the radio. This perception encourages observers today to look for another such epochal shift in Ukraine. But in reality, neither world war followed a uniform, technologically determined

Don't tread on me: a destroyed Russian tank in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine, July 2023

REUTERS / STRINGER

pattern: the same technologies produced both offensive actions that took ground quickly and defensive stalemates in which battle lines barely moved. Both world wars displayed wide variations in offensive success that correlate poorly with variations in equipment.

In World War I, for example, the trench stalemate of 1915–17 dominates the popular image of the conflict. Yet the initial German invasion of Belgium and France in 1914 advanced more than 200 miles in four weeks in spite of modern machine guns and artillery. The German spring offensives of 1918 broke through Allied lines on the western front three times in succession and took nearly 4,000 square miles of ground using virtually no tanks; the subsequent Allied Hundred Days Offensive then drove the Germans back over open ground on a roughly 180-mile front, capturing more than 9,500 square miles of German-held territory in the process. In fact, 1918 as a whole saw more than 12,500 square miles change hands in some eight months of fighting. World War I also saw many unsuccessful offensives, but stalemate is not the whole story.

Conversely, the popular image of World War II is dominated by tanks and blitzkrieg offensives. And certainly, there were plenty of tank-equipped offensive breakthroughs, whether during the German invasions of France in 1940 or of the Soviet Union in 1941, or during

the American offensive in Operation Cobra in Normandy in 1944. But the war also saw some of the most costly offensive failures in military history. The 1943 Battle of Kursk in Russia cost the German attackers more than 160,000 casualties and destroyed more than 700 German armored vehicles but failed to break through Soviet defenses. The failed British offensive at Goodwood in 1944 has been described by the historian Alexander McKee as "the death ride of the armored divisions." Repeated Allied attacks on the Gothic Line in Italy in 1944 and 1945 produced failure after failure at the cost of more than 40,000 Allied casualties. Like World War I, World War II involved a great deal of variance in outcomes: it was not a simple, uniform story of offensive success. And in Ukraine, both the war's offensive successes and its defensive stalemates have occurred in the face of drones, precision weapons, hypersonic missiles, and space-based surveillance. In none of these wars have the tools predetermined the results.

ADAPT OR PERISH

The reason technological advances are not more determinative in war is that they are only a part of what shapes outcomes. How combatants use their technology and adapt to their enemy's equipment is at least as important and often more so.

This has been true since the dawn of the modern era. For over a century, weapons have been lethal enough that armies who mass exposed forces in the open have suffered annihilating loss rates. As early as 1914, as few as four 75-millimeter field guns could saturate an area the size of a football field with lethal shell fragments in a single volley. A French version of this—the 1897 Model Soixante-Quinze—could do this 15 times in one minute with sufficient ammunition. An army that simply charged defenses armed with such weapons would be committing suicide. Even heavily armored tanks can be destroyed en masse by modern antitank weapons if they operate this way: the British tanks that charged German antitank guns at Goodwood and the German tanks that charged Soviet antitank guns at Kursk offer vivid examples.

As a result, most armies adapt in the face of modern firepower. Sometimes this means deploying new tools to counter enemy technology: antitank guns encourage the development of tanks that use heavier armor, which encourages the use of bigger antitank guns, then

still heavier armor, and so on. Multiple cycles of these technological measure-countermeasure races have already occurred during the war in Ukraine. For example, expensive, sophisticated drones were countered by guided antiaircraft missiles, encouraging combatants to deploy simpler, cheaper, and more numerous drones, which have been countered by simpler, cheaper antiaircraft artillery and handheld jammers, and so on. The long-range guided HIMARS missile systems the United States provided to Ukraine in June 2022 use GPS signals for guidance; the Russians now routinely jam the signals, which has dramatically reduced the accuracy of the missiles. Technical countermeasures are ubiquitous in war, and they quickly limit the performance of many new weapons.

But the most important adaptations are often not technological but operational and tactical. They involve changes in the way armies use the tools at their disposal. Over a century ago, armies developed tactics that reduced their exposure to enemy fire by exploiting dispersion, cover, concealment, and suppressive fire. The complex topography of the earth's surface provides many opportunities for cover (impenetrable obstacles such as hillsides) and concealment (opaque obstacles such as foliage) but only if armies disperse by breaking large, massed formations into smaller subunits that can fit into the patches of forest, the interiors of buildings, and the irregular folds in the earth that offer the greatest opportunities to escape hostile fire.

For centuries, armies have augmented such natural cover by digging trenches, bunkers, and fieldworks. And by 1917, armies discovered that by combining suppressive fire with sprints from cover to cover, they could reduce casualties during brief periods of exposure to gunfire and survive forward movement on the battlefield. Attackers learned to combine infantry, tanks, artillery, engineers, aircraft, and more to enable this "fire and movement" style of fighting: infantry who could see concealed enemies, tanks that could bring firepower forward to destroy the enemies, artillery to provide suppressive fire to cover the attackers' movement, engineers who could clear mines, and aircraft to strike from above and protect troops from enemy airplanes. Defenders learned to distribute dug-in forces into depth to delay offensive advances by such attackers while rearward reserves maneuvered to reinforce defenses at the threatened point. These methods were what broke the trench stalemate in 1918, and continued extensions of these concepts have been in use ever since.

Air forces, unlike ground armies, cannot dig in for cover and still fly combat missions. But air forces can avoid enemy fire in other ways. They can restrict aircraft to altitudes and flight paths designed to evade enemy air defenses. They can coordinate their operations with ground forces or other aircraft in ways that suppress the fire of enemy air defenses during brief periods of aerial exposure. They can move between multiple runways to reduce vulnerability to preemptive attack on the ground. And air forces, too, can reduce their formation density when in flight; the massed thousand-bomber raids of World War II are now a thing of the past. As anti-aircraft weapons have grown more lethal, air forces, like ground forces, have increasingly adapted to reduce their vulnerability.

Casualty rates in Ukraine have not been unusually high by historical standards.

These methods can be extremely effective when used properly. Unhindered by suppressive fire, a single BGM-71 guided antitank missile crew can destroy seven tanks at ranges of over one and a half miles in just five minutes. If forced by suppressive fire to take cover and relocate between shots, its kill rate can be reduced to one tank or fewer. A 100-soldier infantry company massed in the open on a 200-yard front can be wiped out by a single battalion volley from hostile artillery; dispersed over a 1,000-yard front with a depth of 200 yards, the same unit might suffer less than ten percent losses. If the unit has even partially concealed itself and the artillery misses the formation's center, losses might be reduced to as little as five percent.

Dispersion can also make targets unworthy of engagement. A $100,000 guided 155-millimeter artillery shell is too expensive to fire at a two-man target even if a drone locates the soldiers' foxhole perfectly. When soldiers spread out on the battlefield, it makes more economic sense to try to hit them with cheaper, unguided rounds. But that has drawbacks, too: artillery risks detection every time it fires, so to fire multiple unguided rounds at a single small target makes the shooter vulnerable to counterfire in exchange for a limited payoff. Aircraft that could be shot down quickly if they overfly enemy air defenses are far less vulnerable if they fly below enemy radar while firing from behind friendly lines.

Such methods can be challenging to implement correctly, however. Most armies can manage dispersion, cover, and concealment at the

small-unit level, if only by digging in. This reduces casualty rates, but it also limits what an army can accomplish if this is all it can do. Air forces can restrict themselves to low altitudes in safe rear areas, but this limits their contribution to the fighting.

To take ground on a large scale and prevent the enemy from doing so requires forces to coordinate deep defenses with mobile reserves; to combine infantry, armor, artillery, engineers, air defense, and more, on the offensive; and to integrate fire and movement on a large scale—and these are much harder tasks. Some militaries have mastered these skills; others have not. When defenses are deep, prepared, and backed by mobile reserves, they have repeatedly proved very hard to break through—regardless of whether the attackers have tanks or precision-guided weapons. But when defenses are shallow, poorly prepared, or inadequately supported by reserves, attackers that can implement combined arms and fire-and-movement methods on a large scale have been able to break through and take ground quickly—even without tanks and even against precision-guided weapons. Think, for example, of the German infantry breakthroughs in 1918 or the Ukrainian gains in the face of Russian drones and precision weapons at Kharkiv in 2022.

The Ukraine war is more evolutionary than revolutionary.

New technology does matter, but the adaptations that armies have increasingly adopted since 1917 dramatically dampen its effects on outcomes. Precision weapons that are devastating on the proving ground or against exposed, massed targets yield much lower casualty rates against dispersed, concealed forces. And as weapons have grown more lethal over time, armies' adaptations have kept pace accordingly. In the nineteenth century, for example, armies typically massed their forces to battlefield concentrations of approximately 2,500 to 25,000 troops per square mile. By 1918, those figures had fallen by a factor of ten. By 1945, they had fallen by another factor of ten. By the time of the 1991 Gulf War, a force the size of Napoleon's at Waterloo would be spread over an area about 3,000 times as large as the one the French army occupied in 1815.

This combination of ever more lethal technology but ever more dispersed and concealed targets has produced far less net change in realized outcomes over time than one would expect by looking only at the weapons and not at their interaction with human behavior. Better tools always help, and Western assistance to Ukraine has been

critical in enabling Ukraine to cope with a numerically superior Russian army. But the actual battlefield impact of technology is shaped powerfully by its users' behavior, and in Ukraine, as in the last century of great-power warfare, that behavior has usually been a better predictor of outcomes than the tools themselves.

PLUS ÇA CHANGE

Although the Ukraine war has seen plenty of new equipment, its use has not yet brought transformational results. Casualty rates in Ukraine have not been unusually high by historical standards. Attackers in Ukraine have sometimes been able to advance and sometimes not; there has been no pattern of uniform defensive stalemate. This is because those fighting in Ukraine have responded to newly lethal weapons just as their predecessors did: by adapting with a combination of technical countermeasures and further extensions of centurylong trends toward increased dispersion, cover, concealment, and suppressive fires that have reduced both sides' exposure to hostile firepower.

Losses are still heavy, as they have often been in major wars, but loss rates in Ukraine have not prevented major ground gains in offensives at Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Kherson. Success on the attack is hard, and it normally requires a combination of offensive skill and defensive error, as it has for generations. In Ukraine, as in the past, when skilled attackers have struck shallow, ill-prepared defenses that have inadequate reserves or logistical support, they have broken through. But in Ukraine, as in the past, when this combination has been absent, the result has usually been stalemate. This is not the result of drones or access to broadband Internet, and it is not anything transformational. It is a marginal extension of long-standing trends and relationships between technology and human adaptation.

If the Ukraine war is more evolutionary than revolutionary, what does that mean for defense planning and policy? Should Western countries abandon the pursuit of modern weapons and equipment and freeze doctrine development? Of course not. Evolutionary change is still change, and the whole point of adaptation is that militaries must adopt new methods and equipment. A 1916 tank would stand little chance on the battlefield of 2023—the stable attrition rates of warfare since World War I are products of continuous, two-sided adaptation in which combatants have always worked to avoid allowing rivals to gain much of an edge.

The crux of the revolution thesis, however, is an argument about the pace and nature of needed change. If warfare is being revolutionized, then the traditional, incremental updating of ideas and equipment is insufficient, and something more radical is needed. Tanks, for example, should be mothballed, not modernized. Robotic systems should quickly replace humans. Preparation for large-scale offensive action should be replaced with a heavy emphasis on defense and injunctions against attack in all but exceptional conditions.

The war in Ukraine, to date, offers little support for such ideas. It is still in progress, evidence is imperfect, and the future course of the fighting could be different. But so far, few of the observable outcomes are consistent with an expectation of revolutionary change in results or a need for radical reequipment or doctrinal transmogrification. This, too, is consistent with previous experience. It has been almost 110 years since the tank was introduced in 1916. Some have argued that the tank is obsolete because of technological improvements in antitank weapons. This argument has been commonplace for over 50 years, or almost half the entire history of the tank. Yet in 2023, both sides in Ukraine continue to rely on tanks and are doing everything they can to get their hands on more of them.

The U.S. Air Force redesigned itself in the 1950s around an assumption that the nuclear revolution had replaced conventional warfare and that future aircraft would be needed primarily for nuclear weapons delivery. The subsequent nonnuclear war in Vietnam was waged with an air force that was designed for a transformational future that never arrived and that proved ill suited for the war it actually fought. Or consider U.S. Army doctrine. This was reshaped in 1976 to reflect a view that precision weapons had made offensive action prohibitively costly under most conditions, yielding a new emphasis on mostly static defense from prepared positions. This "Active Defense" doctrine was highly original but ill conceived and had to be abandoned in favor of the more orthodox "AirLand Battle" concept that the U.S. military used for successful offensive action in Kuwait in 1991.

Calls for revolution and transformation have been commonplace in the defense debate in the generations after World War II. They have mostly not fared well in light of observed experience in that time. After a year and a half of war in Ukraine, there is no reason to think that this time they will be proved right.

INDIA

The world's newest economic superpower

Over the last 500 years, the emergence of the Great Powers happened only when those states had a population large enough to produce a surplus of goods that the rest of the world wanted.

Since gaining independence from the United Kingdom 76 years ago, India has become the world's fifth-largest economy, boasting various industries that contribute to global development.

According to the India Electronics and Computer Software Export Promotion Council (ESC), India is the world's largest exporter of electronics and software.

"India continues to be the leader in the field of IT and IT-enabled services. Driven by our world-class local talent, innovation and advanced technology, India's IT sector is helping power the nation's growth and attract foreign investments," said **ESC Chairman Sandeep Narula**.

And in education, India is becoming an increasingly popular option among international students.

"India is a powerhouse in the fields of research and innovation with a strong track record of attracting foreign students. But beyond the country's top-notch quality of education, India's vibrant and diverse culture allows for a kind of personal development that no academic curriculum in the world can provide," said **Shiv Nadar University Vice Chancellor Dr. Ananya Mukherjee**.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Powering global electronics, software and IT

As the largest exporter of IT products and services in the world, India accounts for 11% of global computer services exports. The **Electronics and Computer Software Export Promotion Council** plays a huge role in driving the country's tech industry forward and advancing digital transformation on a global scale.

"India is a fantastic country rich in history, culture, and growing technological capabilities. I'm sure India will continue to play a very strong role in the growth of other nations," said **ESC Chairman Sandeep Narula**, who pointed out that the country sold $230 billion worth of IT products around the world between March 2022 and 2023.

ESC Vice Chairman Veer Sagar added, "With Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the helm, India has set strategic laws and systems that ensure the technology coming out of the country is secure, tested and created ethically."

On what makes India the world's fastest-growing tech and IT hub, **ESC Executive Director Gurmeet Singh** said, "From India's enormous consumer market to its expert services and high-quality products that other countries outsource, India provides high-value opportunities at competitive prices."

ESC is holding the 24th edition of the country's top IT event, INDIASOFT, in New Delhi from 17-19 January 2024. The annual event will bring together more than 1,500 Indian electronics and IT exhibitors and more than 700 foreign delegates from 80 nations. ■

https://www.indiasoft.org

Adani Solar: Building the world's first ever fully integrated PV ecosystem

Recognized as India's first and largest vertically integrated high-efficiency solar panel manufacturer, Adani Solar is a major force in accelerating the clean energy transition in and outside India.

Founded in 2017, Adani Solar is the solar photovoltaic (PV) manufacturing arm of Adani Group, one of the largest conglomerates in India with a world-class energy, transport and utility infrastructure portfolio.

Living up to the group's tagline of 'Growth with Goodness,' Adani Solar has contributed to India's nation-building and sustainability projects, as well as to global efforts to fight climate change by making solar energy affordable and accessible through its high-quality products.

"Today, we proudly support the renewable energy demands in India and the USA." said **Adani Solar Chief Marketing Officer Rahul Bhutiani**.

"Adani Solar remains committed to creating the entire solar PV value chain in India. This will help create the requisite transparency and traceability that are increasingly the need of the continuously evolving and extremely responsible and conscious clean energy community in the U.S. and the world at large. We aim to be the PV module supplier of choice: reliable, ethical, and transparent," said Bhutiani. ■

https://www.adanisolar.com

In 2011, Shiv Nadar became the country's youngest university to receive the Ministry of Education's recognition as an Institution of Eminence.

India's banking and financial services sectors also expanded quickly.

"India's financial sector has been gathering steam thanks to the massive amount of policy and technology reforms made by the country's current strong political leadership and its competent regulators," said **IDFC FIRST Bank Managing Director and CEO Vembu Vaidyanathan**.

Adani Solar Chief Marketing Officer Rahul Bhutiani

Axis Bank Managing Director and CEO Amitabh Chaudhry agreed: "India's banking sector is strong and capable of serving anyone who is looking to invest in the country."

In the energy sector, India's commitment to climate action remains strong.

Adani Solar is India's first and largest vertically integrated solar company, the government's push for green energy sources catapulted the growth of the solar manufacturing sector which is now the world's second-largest.

"India has made significant progress in transitioning to clean energy in recent years which has led to the creation of significant investment opportunities. The country is well-positioned to become a viable alternative to support the green energy efforts of the world," said **Adani Solar Chief Marketing Officer Rahul Bhutiani,** .

Meanwhile, **ReNew Chairman and CEO Sumant Sinha** said that the country has become one of the world's "most exciting investment destinations" for clean energy.

"The Indian market is already the third-largest power market in the world. And given the per capita consumption of energy in India, India will have a power market the size of the entire European Union in 20-30 years," Sinha said.

Meanwhile, IndianOil, the country's largest oil refiner and fuel retailer, eyes more domestic and foreign partnerships in developing green energy technology.

"We recognize that collaborations create and accelerate better solutions, especially when it comes to saving the environment. From advanced biofuels research to green hydrogen supply and production, we look forward to working with long-term partners to save the planet," said **IndianOil Chairman Shrikant Madhav Vaidya**.

SPONSORED SECTION

A young Indian university leads the way in research and innovation

A hotbed of innovations in information technology and global business solutions, India attracts thousands of international students eager to learn what its universities can offer and how they helped build the world's fifth-largest economy.

According to the latest All India Survey for Higher Education, around 50,000 international students go to India every year.

Dr. Ananya Mukherjee, Vice-Chancellor of Shiv Nadar University identified three key reasons India has become a top choice for international students: affordable world-class education, access to cutting-edge technology, and a multicultural approach to education.

Established in 2011, Shiv Nadar became the youngest university to be designated as an Institution of Eminence by the Indian Ministry of Education just last year. It was also the first in the country to establish a Center for Genomics and Spatial Transcriptomics (STOMICS).

"In India, international students get access to world-class education and exceptional training at budget-friendly fees," said Mukherjee, who added that they also benefit from the low cost of living in the country.

"Our goal is to become a globally-recognized research university that removes as many barriers as possible, financial hurdles included, to generating new knowledge. We offer scholarships to deserving students and provide research grants for studies in various sectors, like engineering, social science, and natural sciences," she said.

Because of continuous government investment in infrastructure, India has become a leader in science and technology. Mukherjee expects more universities and organizations from both the public and private sectors to increase spending on research and development.

Shiv Nadar University's campus in New Delhi

"India has always been at the forefront of scientific discovery, but more so in recent years," said Mukherjee, who looks forward to the technological innovations to be presented during India's presidency of the Group of 20 leading economies (G20) this year.

"Shiv Nadar empowers its students and researchers to create pathbreaking studies and solutions that address the most pressing problems of India and the global community. To do that, the university provides a dynamic, discovery-driven environment that is equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure and cutting-edge laboratory facilities," she said.

In just 12 years, Shiv Nadar has created a vast and diverse community of researchers, scientists, and industry experts from all over the world to show a multicultural educational experience creates better solutions to global challenges and bigger opportunities for collaboration.

"India is a dynamic country and a melting pot of cultures. International students get introduced to new perspectives and diverse environments that push their curiosity and understanding of both the world in general and their specialized areas of study," said Mukherjee.

"Shiv Nadar has a faculty pool from the world's best universities. We offer our students unparalleled education that combines theoretical knowledge, the experience of being in India, and practical insights from our global network of industry thought leaders," she added.

https://snu.edu.in/home

SHIV NADAR
INSTITUTION OF EMINENCE DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY
DELHI NCR

A total transformation in four years

IDFC FIRST Bank's three pillars of growth

Trust, the cornerstone of the financial services sector, is earned over time. No depositor or business will entrust their hard-earned wages or well-deserved profits to a bank that fails to project rock-solid stability, adequate competence and completely trustworthy.

In the wake of the 2023 banking crisis in the United States that saw the closure of Silicon Valley Bank, Signature Bank, and First Republic Bank, as well as the liquidation of Silvergate Bank, many banks around the world, including legacy institutions, are strengthening their reserves and reputation.

The first pillar: Strengthening the books and reputation

In India, IDFC FIRST Bank has continuously strengthened its foundations, both financial and reputational, determined to become one of the country's leading financial institutions. Born out of the merger of IDFC Bank and Capital First in December 2018, IDFC FIRST Bank is already a transformed institution.

From 2019 to 2023, the IDFC First Bank increased lending to the much safer retail segment, raised operating profits from $136 million to $569 million, cleared troubled legacy infrastructure loans, and went from losses to profits of $100 million.

But the bigger progress was reputational, the bank has been able to raise current account and savings account (CASA) deposits from $651 million upon the merger in 2019 to $8.8 billion, far outpacing the industry. The bank claims CASA deposits grew by 44% for the 2023 fiscal, even after reducing savings account interest rates from 7% to 4% in 2021.

"We tell our employees income earned unethically is not worth earning. We are a new bank, and we are embedding ethics as one of the key DNA strands in the bank," said **Managing Director and CEO V. Vaidyanathan**, referring to IDFC FIRST Bank's 'Near and Dear' test, which involves asking employees if they would recommend its proposed

IDFC FIRST Bank CEO and Managing Director V. Vaidyanathan

products to their loved ones.

"We take our ethical banking theme very seriously. It's not a slogan, we must live it every day. For example, we sat down one day and studied our fee structure on savings accounts. It was complicated, like all other banks. We tried simplifying it so our customers could understand them. But product managers justified every caveat and covenant, from home branch, non-home branch, in-city, out of city branches, on-us, off-us, ad-valorem, everything," Vaidyanathyan explained.

"But it was a mess. Calculating fees would require calculators and customers to be mathematicians. We said to hell with this, let's make it zero. Thus, our zero-fee banking was born. Today, we are the only bank that offers zero fees on 28 essential services like cash deposits, cash withdrawals, ATM, IMPS, RTGS, NEFT, and so on. At our bank, customers don't need any calculators. They can be in peace," he also said.

The second pillar: Going digital

The bank was able to reach more customers thanks to the Indian government's efforts to advance the nation's digital ecosystem.

"India has put together Digital Public Goods (DPGs) built on the foundation of Aadhaar, mobile phones, and bank accounts. India Stack is truly transforming the way we make payments, do our KYC (know-your-client), do cash flow analysis, do e-agreements, and set up e-mandates. This has benefited small entrepreneurs in India as they can now get small ticket loans as low as $100 or $200 because of the means put together by the Government. Our bank is at the forefront of using these DPGs," Vaidyanthan said.

The third pillar: Delivering social good

"Can you believe that we financed 2.1 million water and sanitation loans, like loans of $300 to $400 for toilets? And our repayment rate is 99.5%. We allow loans a 100% prepayment fee waiver for our WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) loans. We want no prepayment fees from this income profile," the IDFC First Bank chief said.

"We believe the 30 million loans provided by us have, along the line, created employment opportunities. We can't count exactly how many, but it has to be in the millions. Even our paperless transactions and green branches are ESG (environmental, social, and governance) investments. A good part of our business is naturally ESG, but we didn't categorize them that way. Now that we realize the power and urgency of ESG, we will make more focused efforts from now on," Vaidyanathan said.

"Our features cost us money. Sometimes, it is not very clear what the payback is. For instance, we can't know the value of our zero fees for savings accounts or our giveaway credit cards. But, we are building the bank for the long run, and trust is key for the long run," he also said.

https://www.idfcfirstbank.com

IDFC FIRST Bank

ALWAYS YOU FIRST

SPONSORED SECTION

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Europe's Geoeconomic Revolution

How the EU Learned to Wield Its Real Power

MATTHIAS MATTHIJS AND SOPHIE MEUNIER

The European Union once preached a tripartite gospel: monetary orthodoxy, fiscal austerity, and free-flowing trade and investment, with multilateral institutions watching and guiding from above. That was before its faith in the survival of the liberal economic order was shaken by Chinese mercantilism and, to a lesser extent, by the trade wars of U.S. President Donald Trump. In recent years, and with increasing zeal over the course of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, the bloc has undergone nothing short of a conversion. Like much of the rest of the world, EU policymakers and politicians now pray at the altar of geoeconomics.

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They have rediscovered the economy as a battleground for geopolitical competition—and industrial policy as a weapon for states to wield against one another. In the process, European leaders have abandoned, in part or in whole, the economic and ideological principles they once held sacred.

The EU's executive body, the European Commission, has been central to this reformation. When its president, Ursula von der Leyen, took office in 2019 and announced that hers would be a "geopolitical" commission, reactions in Beijing, London, and Washington ranged from polite skepticism to quiet snickering. National security was by definition a national matter, and the EU simply was not in the business of geopolitics, certainly not when it came to wielding economic tools for political purposes.

Four years on, von der Leyen has transformed her Brussels shop from a bureaucratic secretariat implementing the will of European national leaders into a major macroeconomic and geoeconomic actor in its own right. As a result, the bloc is today more cohesive and better prepared to navigate growing geopolitical rivalries. Von der Leyen is a frequent visitor at the White House, in contrast to many of her predecessors. She is now widely seen as the answer to Henry Kissinger's famous question, "Who do I call when I want to call Europe?"

Several conditions and crises combined to make this transformation possible under the unlikely leadership of the historically archliberal technocrats in Brussels. There was the impact of the pandemic, which saw the European Commission emerge as the guardian of European solidarity after EU leaders agreed to set up a large-scale macroeconomic recovery and resilience instrument to accelerate Europe's long-overdue break with austerity. There was also a growing belief that the EU needed better answers to counter unfair competition and aggressive pressure tactics from China and the United States. These shifts coincided with rapid technological advances in clean energy, big data, and artificial intelligence, which the EU now seeks to harness through industrial policy—in concert with the rest of the world or, if necessary, against it.

FREE AND FAIR?

Anyone who has taken a college course on European politics knows that EU bureaucrats do not typically think of the economy as being downstream from geopolitical competition. To do so would run counter

to the bloc's history and unique institutional structure, which have instilled in European leaders a lasting belief in the benefits of economic interdependence and strict rules—including steadfast fiscal and monetary orthodoxy—to prevent unfair competition. The same precepts anchor the modern EU's crowning achievements: the single market and the euro. One is based on the free trade of goods and services, the unrestricted flows of capital and people, and fair competition; the other is based on a joint commitment to price stability and a belief in fiscal discipline. Both ensure that Europe will thrive in an open world economy, a global order in which the World Trade Organization steadily removes barriers to trade and the International Monetary Fund guarantees relatively free and balanced flows of capital.

EU policymakers and politicians now pray at the altar of geoeconomics.

To be sure, the EU (or European Economic Community, as it was formerly known) started as a political peace project intended to forever prevent another Franco-German war. But its method of choice was invariably regional economic integration. Interdependence, the thinking went, would yield prosperity and act as a pacifying force. Giving up national sovereignty in economic and trade affairs was therefore a winning game that would leave everyone better off. The resulting changes were unprecedented. Nowhere else had nation-states ever relinquished as much control over their economies to a supranational institution as they had in Europe.

In the process, European leaders turned the continent into a bastion of market liberalism and deregulation. With the passage of the 1987 Single European Act—an imperfect compromise between the socialist French President François Mitterrand, who wanted stronger EU institutions, and the conservative British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who touted the virtues of freer markets—European policymakers radically eased trade restrictions, prohibited state subsidies, and opened public procurement tenders to competition from across the bloc. To build a genuine single market, member states either adopted joint product standards or agreed to recognize each other's national regulations. To preclude gridlock, moreover, almost all guidelines and regulations relating to the single market would be approved through qualified majority voting among member states rather than the unanimity required for decisions in most other domains, such as taxes or foreign and security policy.

A road map to the euro was finalized in 1992. At Germany's insistence, the new currency was orthodox and austere in design. It would come with an independent central bank whose sole mandate would be to keep inflation below but close to the two percent mark. There would be a strict "no bailout" rule. Eurozone members were expected to maintain low public deficits and declining sovereign debt-to-GDP ratios. These stipulations were often ignored in the early years of the euro. But the rules were tightened, once again at Germany's urging, after the Eurozone crisis in 2010–12, when European leaders were forced to come up with emergency bailout packages to prevent several member states from defaulting on their debts. It was now practically illegal for member states to adopt activist fiscal policies that could stimulate domestic demand.

Research by the Oregon State University political scientist Alison Johnston and one of us (Matthijs) has shown that these rules were an uneven bargain—ideal for the export economies of Germany and several small northern countries but a disaster for almost everybody else in the eurozone. The problem was that the euro had taken away the traditional mechanisms with which states absorbed economic shocks at the national level, including currency devaluation and demand-side fiscal stimulus, without replacing them with new mechanisms at the European level. The default response to any crisis was therefore austerity (usually through tax increases and cuts to public spending) or internal devaluation (through public- and private-sector wage restraint). Yet Berlin remained firm, insisting that fiscal discipline and the lack of commonly issued debt at the EU level reduced moral hazard—that is, the risk that certain member states would live beyond their budgetary means.

A FISCAL RUBICON CROSSED

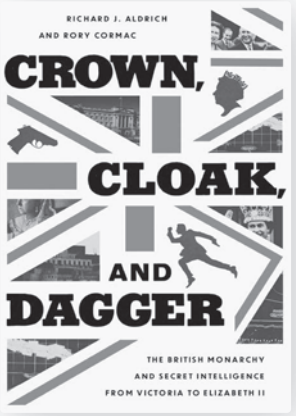
The eurozone's fiscal straitjacket was loosened somewhat under Jean-Claude Juncker, who served as president of the European Commission from 2014 to 2019 and favored a more flexible interpretation of the rules. He was joined in this effort by Mario Draghi, then the president of the European Central Bank (ECB), who in 2015 embarked on a program of quantitative easing. But it took a devastating pandemic for the EU to fully turn its back on austerity and monetary orthodoxy.

In a cruel twist of fate, the first member states to feel the full force of COVID-19 were Italy and, soon thereafter, Spain—the two

economies, besides Greece, that had struggled the most during the sovereign debt crisis. As casualties rose and a local quarantine in the northern Italian region of Lombardy turned into a nationwide lockdown, the EU initially struggled to come up with a reasonable collective response. The first reaction of most member states in March 2020 was to close their borders, despite calls from the European Commission not to do so. The ECB, too, fumbled its early reaction to the pandemic. Christine Lagarde, the ECB president and a lawyer by training, stated that it was not the bank's role to close the spreads in yield between German and Italian bonds. Her words predictably sent financial markets into a tailspin.

By mid-April 2020, however, the contours of a more coordinated strategy were emerging. European Union states still set their own public health policies, but they agreed to cooperate closely in managing international travel and supply chains. The commission, at the same time, negotiated with vaccine manufacturers on member states' behalf. The ECB recovered from its earlier misstep and began fighting the pandemic's economic fallout with overwhelming monetary firepower. On the fiscal front, meanwhile, the idea of a more activist EU-wide approach gained traction. In May, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron announced a set of proposals for the EU's long-term economic response to the pandemic. Among them was a 500 billion euro (about $550 billion) COVID recovery fund, which would be financed through bonds issued jointly at the EU level. This was a first, since Germany had always been strongly opposed to issuing EU-wide, rather than country-level, bonds. (Merkel had vowed back in 2012 that Europe would not share debt liability: "Eurobonds? Not as long as I live!")

Some observers hailed the eurobonds proposal as a historic "Hamiltonian moment" for the EU, in reference to Alexander Hamilton, the eighteenth-century U.S. secretary of the treasury, under whose tenure the federal government assumed the wartime debts of individual U.S. states. In truth, however, the transformative power of the Franco-German foray lay elsewhere: in the more proactive role that Macron and Merkel envisioned the EU could take whenever economics and geopolitics shaded into each other. The French and German leaders called on the EU to conceive a joint health strategy, speed up digitalization and the green energy transition, and adopt a more deliberate industrial policy. This level of interventionism, much



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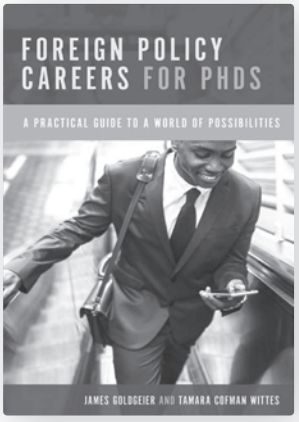

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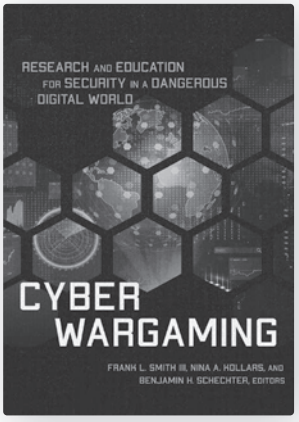

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like the eurobonds, was something Germany had long balked at. It was less a Hamiltonian moment than a throwback to the dirigisme of former French President Charles de Gaulle.

The European Commission took up Macron and Merkel's ideas by designing a massive stimulus plan, with 500 billion euros in grants and another 250 billion euros in loans. Roughly two-thirds of the money would aid individual member states' economic recovery from the pandemic. The rest would flow into an EU fund for environmental and digital policies and into a broad array of existing EU economic and social programs. Few expected such an ambitious plan to pass muster with EU national leaders, who would need to sign off on it. But to everyone's surprise, leaders in the European Council agreed on a final package—christened "Next Generation EU"—totaling more than 800 billion euros, roughly half of which would consist of grants raised from jointly issued debt.

The stimulus package secured the commission's position as the EU's central guarantor of economic solidarity and social cohesion, not least because the lion's share of the grants would go to the poorest member states in Europe's south and east. It marked what appears to be a lasting break with fiscal austerity. (Just this April, the commission proposed more flexible fiscal rules, which would give national governments more leeway to reduce budget deficits and sovereign

debt at their own pace). And just as Next Generation EU has already done, the commission's newfound flexibility in fiscal policy could allow Europe to put real money behind its ambition to remain a heavyweight in a more competitive global economy.

FROM RULES TO TOOLS

The global COVID-19 pandemic overlapped with a second, separate awakening that accelerated the EU's geoeconomic turn: the sobering realization by European leaders that they were living in a meaner and harsher world than in prior decades. In the face of an assertive China, a revanchist Russia, and, until early 2021, a confrontational United States under Trump, the EU initially hoped to hold down the fort of the liberal international economic order. That attitude revealed a certain naiveté, and it started to cost the union, as both China and the United States—no longer even pretending to play by the rules—championed their domestic industries and ate away at Europe's market share.

Once the realization hit, however, the bloc swiftly changed tack. Kantian idealism was out; Hobbesian realism was back in. The European Commission declared a new doctrine of "open strategic autonomy," which has found expression in a series of new unilateral measures meant to equip the bloc for a global economy headed not for growing openness and cooperation but for closure and zero-sum competition. Most of these new instruments are defensive in nature: they seek, for instance, to secure the bloc's supply of critical raw materials and access to essential technology or to guarantee that the carbon price of imports is equivalent to the one EU producers must pay. Others are more offensive: they include retaliatory measures against states that refuse to act reciprocally or counter efforts by other countries to coerce EU members into adopting foreign policies that conflict with EU values such as democracy or the rule of law.

As early as 2017, Juncker told the European Parliament that the EU was not a bunch of "naive free traders" and that it "must always defend its strategic interests." At the time, Juncker was laying the groundwork for the European Commission's new and innovative mechanism for investment screening, which went live in 2020. This tool now helps EU governments review foreign direct investment by states outside the union. Its goal is to better identify and block investments that could undermine a member state's national security, much

as the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States seeks to protect the country from the predations of outside investors on security grounds—although in the EU, national governments retain the ultimate say over which transactions to approve.

In the first two years after the investment screening framework was introduced, EU officials reportedly examined more than 600 inbound investments, most of them, in order of importance, from the United States, the United Kingdom, China, the Cayman Islands, Canada, and the United Arab Emirates. The EU's prioritization of this issue highlights a broader shift—also evident in a dataset compiled by one of us (Meunier) and the Indiana University political economist Sarah Bauerle Danzman—toward greater investment scrutiny on national security grounds across industrialized democracies in recent years. Lately, EU officials have discussed the possibility of screening outbound investments, too, which would give member governments a say in European firms' investment strategies abroad, especially in critical sectors such as advanced semiconductors, quantum computing, and artificial intelligence.

Kantian idealism was out; Hobbesian realism was in.

Some of the additional tools introduced since 2020 close long-standing regulatory gaps between Europe and the rest of the world. For instance, the EU has long enforced a level playing field in its single market when it comes to government procurement but has never had similar legislation for non-EU members. Last year's International Procurement Instrument, which had been stuck in development hell for a full decade, finally closed this gap. Going forward, the European Commission will determine if non-EU countries grant EU-based companies fair access to compete for public works contracts. If a given country fails this test, the EU will retaliate in kind: when a company from the offending country makes a bid for the EU's own public procurement tenders, it will suffer an automatic price penalty or may be excluded from bidding altogether. Last year also saw the adoption of the Foreign Subsidies Regulation, which enables the EU to prevent market distortions caused by subsidies given to foreign firms that then compete with EU firms on takeover bids (in the EU or abroad) or for public procurement.

In addition to taking these long-delayed steps, the EU is also reacting to newer challenges, such as the growing weaponization

of economic interdependence. Among its more original measures is a new anti-coercion instrument, which the commission expects to enter into force in the fall. It allows the EU to retaliate against countries that use economic pressure tactics to interfere in national political matters, as the Trump administration did when it threatened to impose import tariffs on French wine if France went ahead with plans for a digital tax on U.S. technology giants or as China did when it imposed a de facto import ban on Lithuania after it allowed Taiwan to open a Taiwanese Representative Office in its capital, Vilnius. In the future, the EU could punish such behavior by imposing tariffs and quotas, withholding exports, excluding foreign companies from public procurement, and restricting access to European capital.

Some of this new geopolitical equipment is simply a belated response to the bullying tactics of the previous U.S. administration (and preparation for a possible future U.S. administration with similar policies). Yet most of it is meant to overcome economic challenges from China and Russia. This, at least, seems to be the message behind Brussels's first-ever economic security strategy, unveiled in June. In it, EU leaders make the usual references to multilateral cooperation and the rules-based international order, but it is obvious from a close reading of the text that in their search for partners, they will first and foremost look to like-minded countries such as India, Japan, and the United States. Accordingly, the strategy emphasizes bilateral and "plurilateral" cooperation of varying formats and degrees of institutionalization, from the G-7 to high-level economic talks, investment partnerships, and raw materials clubs. There is no reference to China. The EU has indeed come a long way from presenting itself as a guardian of the multilateral liberal order.

A QUIET REVOLUTION

Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has undoubtedly further focused the minds of the leaders in Brussels. Over the course of successive sanctions packages, the EU has banned or phased out Russian oil and gas imports; frozen Russian assets, including the reserve holdings of Russia's central bank; and imposed export controls on dual-use goods and technologies. It has committed more than five billion euros in military assistance to Ukraine, often in the form of reimbursements for member states that ship weapons to Kyiv. In 2022, it provided or pledged nearly 12 billion euros in nonmilitary

aid; that number is closer to 18 billion euros for 2023, with another 50 billion euros pledged through 2027. Russian aggression has even breathed new life into EU enlargement, with Ukraine and Moldova now on the official list of EU membership applicants. Evidently, the "pause" to EU enlargement that Juncker declared in 2014 is over.

But the path to strategic autonomy is not without pitfalls or difficulties. For one thing, serious disagreements and tensions remain, both among and within member states. The only way Merkel felt she could sell her German constituents on the EU's 2020 stimulus package and the jointly issued debt it entailed, for instance, was by emphasizing that it was a one-off gesture of solidarity occasioned by a once-in-a-century pandemic—and that was the easy part. It will be much more difficult for the EU to raise its own revenue through EU-wide taxation to pay down its debt. Some member states, including Italy, have not been able to spend all the money they were allocated in a timely fashion, mostly for national bureaucratic reasons. Others, such as Hungary and Poland, have not met the criteria for receiving the funds in the first place. And even though Germany seems to be losing the argument over the future of the bloc's stringent one-size-fits-all budgetary rules, the risk of a Euroskeptic popular backlash in northern Europe is never far away.

Second, opinions diverge on industrial policy. Even inside the European Commission, the officials in charge of the relevant portfolios, Thierry Breton and Margrethe Vestager, do not see eye to eye. Breton, the commissioner for the single market, fears that U.S. and Chinese subsidies—such as those for their respective electric car industries—will leave Europe far behind unless it adopts similar strategies and will cause serious damage if the cold war between the United States and China ever turns hot. Vestager, the commissioner for competition, fears that too much largesse in public aid for high-tech sectors will exacerbate cleavages between the bloc's rich and poor economies. (Her fears are not unfounded: since 2020, France and Germany together have disbursed more than 75 percent of all state aid spent across the EU.) And since industrial policy has traditionally been the preserve of national governments, it is not clear whether the EU can be as quick and nimble as the United States or as unflinching and thorough as China.

Third, weaning the European economy off Russian fossil fuels is one thing; "de-risking" its economic links to China (the European

Commission's preferred term for "decoupling") is quite another, even if it is done only in small pieces. The clash between interests and values is much more uncomfortable in the case of China; the market integration involved is of a completely different order of magnitude. Millions of good European jobs depend on access to the Chinese market. France, Germany, and Italy rely heavily on China for their growth. So does much of central and eastern Europe, which has welcomed closer business and investment ties to China as part of Beijing's "17+1" initiative, even though many of the participating countries have soured on the forum, especially after all three Baltic countries withdrew their membership, resulting in the initiative being renamed "14+1." And Beijing has plenty of ammunition to fight back. Starting in August, it will restrict exports of gallium and germanium, two chemical elements that are essential for semiconductor manufacturing, and there is every reason to believe that this is just the beginning. If the EU deploys its full geoeconomic arsenal against China, will European officials be ready for the economic and financial consequences? Von der Leyen may be eager to coordinate her China policy closely with the United States, but many other European leaders are less than enthusiastic.

Millions of good European jobs depend on access to the Chinese market.

The last and most important unresolved question is whether the EU can achieve anything akin to sovereignty or strategic autonomy without being a credible military power. One of the ironies of the Russian invasion of Ukraine is that it exposed Europe's continued reliance on the United States for its defense. And yet, with the occasional exception of Macron, European leaders have shown little excitement for a proper EU defense pillar within NATO, let alone full EU strategic autonomy in security affairs. This impasse is unlikely to be resolved until the war in Ukraine ends in some sort of peaceful settlement—unless Trump returns to the White House in January 2025, in which case, all bets are off.

These uncertainties do not lessen the transformation underway. A quiet revolution with major consequences for transatlantic relations and international economic affairs has taken place in recent years. Its success still hangs in the balance. But the EU has already proved capable of innovating and reinventing itself in a volatile world.

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Erdogan the Survivor

Washington Needs a New Approach to Turkey's Improviser in Chief

HENRI J. BARKEY

In July, during NATO's annual summit in Vilnius, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan unexpectedly greenlit Sweden's bid to join the alliance. This move provoked a degree of celebration and praise that individual leaders rarely get at a summit. U.S. President Joe Biden applauded Erdogan's "courage, leadership, and diplomacy." "This is a historic day," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said.

Vilnius was a momentary break in a pattern of disheartening friction between Turkey and the West, and especially between Turkey and the United States. The U.S.-Turkish partnership now appears to be the most contentious relationship within the NATO alliance. Erdogan's bid to block Sweden's accession was, in part, retaliation against Washington after it punished Turkey for purchasing a Russian air defense system. This five-year dispute has become one of the gravest conflicts in the history of U.S.-Turkish relations, exacerbating mistrust and provoking recriminations.

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Illustration by Clay Rodery

Turkey is buckling under domestic problems such as soaring inflation, a refugee influx, and the aftereffects of a devastating earthquake. But in the run-up to its presidential elections in May, Erdogan chose to lay the country's problems—especially its looming economic crisis—at Washington's doorstep. Erdogan told Turks that, by voting for him, they would "teach the United States a lesson."

Policymakers must not hope that Erdogan's eventual support for Sweden's accession to NATO represents a category shift. The chaos leading up to Vilnius, and Erdogan's anti-Western election rhetoric, merely represent the most recent twists in the long corkscrew of mixed signals, miscommunication, and mistrust that has characterized the U.S.-Turkish relationship over decades. George Harris, a former senior State Department official, published *Troubled Alliance: Turkish-American Problems in Historical Perspective* back in 1972; key dynamics it describes still exist. But in the face of a torrent of reports and proposals to repair the relationship, even the once close ties between U.S. and Turkish citizens have continued to degrade steadily. Indeed, they have become so weakened that another major crisis, real or imagined, could inflict the kind of damage to U.S.-Turkish relations that neither country will be able to reverse.

The United States must take an entirely new approach. The reset must start with an understanding of how vastly Turkey has changed since Washington set its default mode of relating to Ankara. Washington holds a uniquely hard-to-dislodge perception that Ankara is a "normal" ally. It has operated from this wish even in the face of contradictory evidence, as if its behavior alone could make that dream a reality. Mostly, Washington has sought to avoid public disputes, pretending that disagreements are trivial; the recent U.S.-Turkish rapport can best be termed transactional. But the security environment around Turkey has transformed, and in Erdogan, the United States confronts an unusual populist-authoritarian leader determined to reconstruct Turkish identity and national interests to reflect his own vision.

Thanks to its geopolitical and military significance and its economic potential, Turkey is an invaluable ally. Washington will have no choice but to work closely with Ankara to accomplish its global strategic goals. And for the foreseeable future, Washington will continue to have to confront a demanding, swaggering, unpredictable leader in Erdogan, one willing to selectively generate crises that risk damaging the essence of the two countries' relationship.

And yet there is a unique opportunity to change the relationship dramatically. That opportunity first opened when the partnership came under new strain after Turkey's purchase of the Russian air defense system. Over the course of this affair, U.S. leaders broke their entrenched pattern of engagement by uncharacteristically punishing the Turkish government for an act that would undermine NATO.

Now is the moment for Washington to make this exception a rule. When Erdogan goads the West, Washington has typically worried that a strong response will legitimize his provocations. This is a serious misjudgment. The United States must, instead, meet Erdogan's provocative unpredictability with consistency and firmness.

Paradoxically, this approach—and not a hollow pretense of normality—is the path to an ordinary, dependable relationship with an indispensable ally. And Washington now finds itself in an especially favorable position to shape the long-term future of the relationship to its advantage, because Erdogan's increasingly incoherent improvisations and his mismanagement of Turkey's economy seem to have finally backed him into a corner.

SCENE CHANGE

Erdogan is no ordinary leader. During his 20 years in power, he has transformed Turkey, transfiguring its political system to render himself nearly the sole decision-maker, eviscerating the rule of law, and seizing control of the judiciary, the security services, the central bank, and the press. It is easy to conflate Turkey with Erdogan and to reduce dealing with the country to assessing his motives; Erdogan himself encourages this. But no successful strategy toward Turkey can be developed without understanding the broader historical backdrop.

The United States' difficulties with Ankara stem, first, from the changing nature of Turkey's security environment. Since the end of the Cold War, the rise of new powers and burgeoning instability in the Middle East have coincided with a decline in state power globally and the emergence of complex quandaries such as steep increases in migration and displacement, the growth of the global drug trade, and changes in the technologies used in warfare.

The end of the Cold War also loosened the behavioral straitjackets that constrained the conduct of many states, including Turkey. During his 1989–93 tenure, President Turgut Ozal undertook economic reforms that helped Turkey emerge as a powerful international actor. Ozal saw

Turkey as a bridge between the East and the West. Representing a Muslim-majority country but also a committed friend of the United States, he strengthened Turkey's economic and political ties with a range of allies across Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia.

To the United States, Turkey was never just another NATO ally. Turkey also provided platforms to project U.S. power across the Middle East, particularly in the aftermath of the first Gulf War; Turkey served as a bulwark of stability in an increasingly fragile region. But it was the United States that first upset this equilibrium. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, U.S. President George W. Bush's Middle Eastern interventions unleashed a chain of profoundly destabilizing events in Turkey's neighborhood.

Initially, Erdogan sought to undo the arbitrary rule under which he had suffered.

The United States did not mean to upend its relationship with Turkey. But its adventures in the Middle East had immense unintended consequences. Iran, the region's preeminent revisionist state, was threatened by the U.S. military lodged on two of its borders and sought to defend itself by upping the ante; Iraq became a federal state that included an empowered Kurdistan Regional Government. Turkish Kurds were emboldened and inspired by this development.

And as an indirect result of U.S. intervention, in the following decade the Arab Spring turned the region upside down. Initially, Erdogan imagined that the Arab Spring would give him opportunities to help Muslim Brotherhood–inspired leaders such as Egypt's Mohamed Morsi take power in lieu of pro-American ones. But in 2013, widespread protests erupted in Istanbul; Erdogan saw them as a local Arab Spring designed to overthrow him.

The rise of the Islamic State, also known as ISIS, brought tensions to a boil. After ISIS swiftly took over huge swaths of territory in Iraq and Syria, U.S. President Barack Obama wanted Erdogan to allow the United States to use Turkish air bases and for Turkey to better defend its southern border so jihadis could not cross it to join ISIS. But Erdogan assumed that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad would be overthrown. He even hoped he would: Assad, he reckoned, could be replaced by an Islamist leader whom Turkey could influence. So Ankara failed to heed Obama's requests.

In desperation—and in the absence of Turkish assistance—Washington partnered instead with the Syrian Democratic Forces, whose

dominant Kurdish units had close ties with the Kurdistan Workers' Party, an organization both Ankara and Washington consider a terrorist group. Washington went a step further, sending U.S. troops to train and assist Syrian Kurds. The Kurdish question is Turkey's Achilles' heel; any U.S. effort to help Kurds, as Washington first did in Iraq, is perceived by Ankara as a grave strategic threat. Fearing a demonstration effect would embolden Kurdish citizens in Turkey, Ankara invaded northern Syria three times over U.S. objections, dislodging the SDF from regions near the Turkish border and driving out Kurds who lived there.

At a tremendous cost in lives, the SDF succeeded in subduing ISIS. But both Turkey and the United States were left deeply disgruntled: in Turkey's view, the United States chose to ally with Kurdish nationalist terrorists and even appeared to support Kurdish autonomy everywhere. To Washington, it seemed as if Ankara tacitly backed jihadi terrorists.

Meanwhile, as the arc of instability spread, a perception set in that the United States was moving on and moving out, preparing for a pivot to Asia and leaving the Middle East behind. In this vacuum, Erdogan made bold plays to change the very nature of Turkey's role in the international order.

ROLE REVERSAL

From 2003 until roughly 2009, during his early years as prime minister, it appeared as if Erdogan would emulate Ozal. Abroad, Erdogan sought to enhance Ankara's clout and open doors by liberalizing the Turkish economy and its politics. He also focused on Turkey's European Union accession process, which had stalled.

These diplomatic overtures were well received by Turkey's people, its neighbors, and its traditional allies. In 2004, Erdogan's foreign policy adviser described the organizing principle of Turkey's foreign policy as "zero problems with the neighbors," signaling that Turkey's new government would seek to put an end to the conflicts that had marred its foreign relations. It was an attempt at building soft power.

At its core, however, "zero problems with the neighbors" had more to do with consolidating Erdogan's position at home. Erdogan rose to power within an Islamist movement that always felt insecure and persecuted. Even after he became prime minister, he had to defend his legitimacy against a long-dominant military-bureaucratic coalition that harbored deep suspicion of his Islamist roots.

Erdogan experienced firsthand the vehemence of this establishment antagonism when the Turkish military forced his political party, the Welfare Party, from power with a public memorandum in 1997. At that time, Erdogan was the mayor of Istanbul. The next year, the authorities sentenced Erdogan to ten months in prison for publicly reading a poem by one of Turkey's most revered authors.

Initially, Erdogan sought to undo the arbitrary rule under which he had suffered. Seeking support from abroad was a way to shore up his position against the military, which relied on immense behind-the-scenes influence to rule Turkey. But the military-bureaucratic coalition overplayed its hand in the 2007 presidential elections. Erdogan called for snap parliamentary elections, and his subsequent victory spelled the end of the military's influence.

After that, he systematically took control of every major Turkish institution: not just the parliament and the judiciary but the press and public universities. In his view, Erdogan is Turkey and Turkey is Erdogan. He alienated many of his domestic allies, including some who had helped bring him to power. The rule of law has been eviscerated; arbitrary "justice" has become its hallmark, and the art of politics in Turkey has been reduced to Erdogan watching.

In addition to remaking the country's institutions, Erdogan sought to reshape Turkey's identity, overturning the vision of the Turkish republic's founder, Kemal Ataturk. Ataturk had sought to build a secular, nationalist, elitist, somewhat autarkic state allied with the industrialized world. Erdogan's new conception of Turkey's identity conjoined Turkish nationalism with Islam. The two became inseparable, part of a continuous historical tradition reaching back beyond the Ottoman Empire to Islam's founding. This conjunction enabled Erdogan to construct religious rationales for controversial decisions. To justify compelling Turkey's central bank to lower interest rates to fight inflation, he pointed to his religion's opposition to usury.

On the international stage, Erdogan's vision is expansive and revisionist; he has sought to position himself as both a kingmaker and a disrupter. He began articulating this wish when, in 2013, he contended that "the world is bigger than five," referring to the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. He has repeated this at nearly every UN meeting since. It is not an unreasonable critique of the post–World War II international order. Erdogan also judged, however, that Turkey deserves a permanent seat on the Security Council.

At the same time, Erdogan presents Turkey, broadly defined as a civilization, as a premier "anti–status quo" and anti-imperialist force. He offers a vision in which Western dominance and Western dominance alone represent the contemporary imperialist threat. His conception of imperialism is, thus, limited: he does not discuss Chinese or Russian imperialism or that of the Ottoman Empire. Despite his antipathy toward Ataturk, Erdogan has recruited Ataturk's memory to this cause. The Turkey scholar Nicholas Danforth has cataloged how Erdogan rebrands Ataturk as "an anti-imperialist hero for Muslims and the entire Third World" and the Ataturk presidency as "the first great blow" in an anti-imperialist offensive that Erdogan intends to win.

HOME GAME

By the early 2010s, Erdogan had jettisoned his "zero problems with the neighbors" policy to adopt a more overtly conflictual approach to countries such as Egypt, Israel, and the United Arab Emirates. He eventually espoused the "Blue Homeland" doctrine, previously a fringe ultranationalist worldview claiming Turkish authority over a significant part of the eastern Mediterranean. To put this doctrine into practice, in 2019, Erdogan signed a maritime agreement with Libya to assert primacy across a swath of the Mediterranean Sea, preventing other countries from constructing oil pipelines and exploiting seabed resources there.

Cyprus, Greece, the United States, the Arab League, and the European Union all condemned the Libya deal. This sort of provocative and unpredictable behavior has appeared to isolate Erdogan, leaving him with no friends in his region with the exception of Qatar. To mobilize against Turkey, in 2021, Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority created the East Mediterranean Gas Forum to exploit and market gas found in their waters.

Erdogan relishes toeing the edge of full-blown diplomatic crises. But he can also be pragmatic; he sees keeping other countries off balance as a strategy, part of how he projects power. A maximalist, he wants to demonstrate a willingness to stick to his goals more steadfastly than his adversaries do theirs and to push issues to the limit. In one especially dramatic example that took place in April of this year, Turkey bombed an airport in Iraqi Kurdistan in what appeared to be an attempt to assassinate Mazloum Abdi, the commander of the Syrian Kurdish forces. The bombs missed the runway, probably deliberately.

But had they hit their mark, they could have also killed several members of the American military escorting the commander.

Not infrequently, Turkish shells still land uncomfortably close to U.S. forces stationed in northern Syria. Brinkmanship feels empowering, and Erdogan is partly motivated by a desire for payback. Western democracies have often criticized his rule, especially his tendency to jail his opponents. And his discomfort with U.S. power has long been evident. Erdogan has signaled that Turkey seeks "strategic autonomy" from the United States. In 2016, Erdogan's government imprisoned Andrew Brunson, an American pastor living in Izmir, on spurious charges. Three Turkish nationals working at U.S. consulates were detained a year later. In both instances, Erdogan engaged in the style of hostage diplomacy that Iran and Russia have perfected.

But Erdogan's brinkmanship is designed for domestic consumption as much as it is for an international audience. The political scientist Marianne Kneuer has argued that "antagonizing 'Western' liberal democracies" is an increasingly successful domestic "legitimation strategy" for many authoritarian leaders. Any authoritarian ruler who comes to power by demolishing an entrenched establishment will always worry that someone else could do the same to him, and Erdogan is no exception. No matter how much other countries oppose him, he is most afraid of his own citizens. In 2013, Istanbul was rocked by major demonstrations against his rule; Erdogan worried that an Arab Spring–type movement would engulf Turkey, sweeping him away.

Then, in July 2016, Erdogan faced a coup attempt; he claimed it was orchestrated by Fethullah Gulen, a former close ally and religious leader based in the United States. After the coup failed, Erdogan dubbed it "a gift from God," using it as a pretext to unleash an unprecedented wave of purges in Turkey's military, universities, and other institutions. Many of these perceived opponents did not even support Gulen. Ever suspicious of the United States, Erdogan accused Washington of coordinating the coup.

WILD CARD

Erdogan has become accustomed to slinging insults at his domestic adversaries without consequences, and he tends to assume the same lack of repercussions will hold abroad. In 2017, he suggested that the leaders of the Netherlands were all "Nazi remnants"; in 2020, he said that French President Emmanuel Macron needed "mental treatment."

Accusing Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis of trying to block a Turkish arms deal with the United States, Erdogan said Mitsotakis "no longer exists for me" and that he would refuse to meet with him.

The United States, however, has its own unshakable and unreasonable assumption: that Ankara is a genuine ally. American leaders are not used to regarding Turkey as antagonistic, and given the other complexities in the region, they do not want to imagine that it could be, even when they should. As far back as 1993, a long-serving U.S. diplomat acknowledged that the U.S. "tilt toward Turkey has become institutionalized over the years" and "the Turks have exploited their advantages."

The U.S. approach to Turkey under Erdogan has had two competing themes. In one, Turkey is an extremely important ally. In the other, Turkey's leader is a wild card and not worth taking too seriously. (A case in point: although Erdogan vowed never to meet with the Greek prime minister again, the two men held a friendly meeting at the Vilnius summit.) By and large, Washington looked the other way when Erdogan meddled in Syria and undermined the fight against ISIS. Few will admit it, but a degree of denigration lurks beneath the surface of the U.S. strategy toward Turkey, a soft bigotry of low expectations.

Until recently, this somewhat paternalistic approach played into Erdogan's hands. Even as he derided U.S. power, Erdogan could take U.S. and NATO support for granted. NATO membership provides Turkey with weapons, diplomatic support, and cachet that no other Middle Eastern country can claim. In the late 2010s, however, U.S.-Turkish relations moved rapidly toward a new crisis.

AN EXPENSIVE ERROR

Like many other U.S. allies, Turkey lined up to buy the F-35, the United States' fifth-generation stealth fighter. It hoped to purchase as many as 100, and in a demonstration of faith in Turkey and its industries, Washington fashioned a favorable deal: Turkish aviation industries were slated to manufacture a bevy of F-35 parts, including fuselages, with potential export revenues in the billions of dollars. The United States would also allow Turkey to serve as a maintenance hub for other F-35 customers. But the deal was thrown into disarray when, in 2017, Erdogan brokered a $2.5 billion deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin to buy Russia's S-400 mobile surface-to-air missile system.

In every conceivable way, the United States warned Turkey that if it went ahead with the purchase from Russia, it would be evicted

completely from the F-35 program, because integrating the S-400 missile system into NATO systems would compromise the F-35's sensitive technologies. The U.S. Congress passed a resolution calling for sanctions against Turkey if it completed the arms deal with Russia.

Even given Erdogan's past brinkmanship, his insistence on the S-400 deal dumbfounded observers. He justified his move as he typically has, turning the tables to argue that the United States had unfairly declined to sell Turkey its equivalent missile system, the Patriot. He did not seem to believe that Washington would follow through with its threats. But he was wrong. In 2019, after the S-400s arrived, the United States unceremoniously kicked Turkey out of the F-35 program and imposed sanctions.

Erdogan wants to position himself as both a kingmaker and a disrupter.

The S-400s remain in storage because the Turkish government understands that deploying them would rupture relations with Washington. In addition to wasting $2.5 billion on the missile system, Turkey lost its early outlays to buy the F-35s and future export revenues, and its air force will be deprived of a state-of-the-art fighter plane available to 17 other countries, including nearby Greece, Israel, and Romania.

Faced with the prospect of its air force losing its edge, Turkey asked to buy new F-16s and upgrade kits for its existing fleet from the United States. The Biden administration supports this step. But in a sign of Turkey's diminished clout in Washington, this request also met with bipartisan opposition in the U.S. Congress after Turkey stalled on Sweden's NATO membership and repeatedly conducted military overflights of Greek islands in the Aegean Sea. Congress has emerged as a fulcrum of opposition to Turkey; it is likely to attach further conditions on how the F-16s can be used before it finalizes any sale.

For Washington, Erdogan's S-400 purchase crossed a redline; it affected Washington's own security concerns. Erdogan's threats to block Sweden's accession to NATO were, in part, an effort at payback. At the summit in Vilnius, Erdogan unexpectedly reversed himself at the eleventh hour, consenting to Sweden's accession.

Erdogan may have hoped his brinkmanship would enhance the perception of him as an invaluable power broker. After Vilnius, he spun a story that his clever maneuvering forced concessions from the West. But these concessions were small, and in the end, the outcome in Vilnius represented a defeat. Despite capturing so much attention,

Erdogan's grandstanding alienated his allies. Creating international dustups over such a vital issue as Sweden's NATO membership and at such a crucial juncture for NATO has made him look smaller.

DON'T PLAY IT AGAIN, UNCLE SAM

The United States has feared standing up to Turkey in part because it does not want to aggravate a rift. Erdogan has woven a rich conspiratorial narrative in Turkey that Washington is jealous of his foreign policy accomplishments, determined to undermine Turkish morals by backing LGBTQ groups, and even bent on overthrowing the Turkish government. In a 2019 poll, more than 80 percent of Turkish respondents named the United States as a leading threat to Turkey. This is unsurprising given the drumbeat of anti-American rhetoric that emanates from Turkish government circles and their allies in the media: earlier this year, then Turkish Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu said that any would-be Turkish leader who pursues pro-American policies is a "traitor."

But Washington's reticence has allowed a profound cognition gap and a trust deficit to develop between Turkey and the United States. It may be difficult for Americans to comprehend, but Ankara perceives them as consistently hostile. No matter what steps the United States takes, these moves tend to either be misread or deliberately misrepresented by Turkey.

Meanwhile, American confidence in Turkey is at an all-time low. No U.S. official would risk readmitting Turkey into the F-35 program based solely on a promise that the S-400s will never be removed from storage. Indeed, the United States has begun to invest in new naval and air infrastructure in Greece, including the soon-to-be-completed Alexandroupoli port, to hedge against its dependence on Turkey.

More broadly, it is difficult to overstate how much Erdogan has damaged the trustworthiness of Turkish institutions. Its statistics are unreliable, its central bank is undependable, and its judicial system's decisions are inscrutable. The Turkish justice system's lack of credibility particularly affects its relations with its allies, who are inundated with often far-fetched extradition requests for Erdogan's opponents.

When Ankara complains that Sweden or the United States does not repatriate "terrorists," the problem becomes not only a political one but also a legal one. Allies cannot trust the fairness or veracity of Turkish indictments or that people extradited to Turkey will be fairly treated. Western officials look with concern on cases such as that of Osman Kavala, a philanthropist, and Selahattin Demirtas, formerly the head

of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party. They were subjected to sham trials in Turkey, where they remain incarcerated despite binding rulings by the European Court of Human Rights to release them.

Turkey's weak rule of law also affects economic relations. The U.S. State Department's 2022 investment climate guidance points to "concerns about the [Turkish] government's commitment to the rule of law" as the cause of historically low foreign direct investment. Tens of thousands of investigations have been launched against people who "insult" the president, and those who are investigated may lose their jobs or be jailed. (Ironically, these spurious prosecutions resemble what Erdogan himself endured as mayor of Istanbul.) Such obvious abuses make investors nervous. Foreigners will not invest if they are not assured that business disputes and regulatory matters will be fairly adjudicated.

To turn things around, Washington must take the initiative. U.S. leaders must be frank about their concern that the U.S.-Turkish relationship is in danger of deteriorating beyond repair. The United States must stress that, although NATO has shortcomings, the alliance has persisted for a reason: its members share not only interests but also values. This distinguishes the United States' relationship with Turkey from those it maintains with other troubled democracies. Washington may forge strong partnerships with populist-authoritarian rulers such as Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, for example, but India is not a member of NATO, so the expectations are different.

Pretending Erdogan's provocations are not serious only inflames and encourages him. The United States must vigorously counter the anti-American rhetoric that originates from Erdogan, his government, and his allied press outlets. And it must clarify that it will not tolerate certain behaviors from Turkey, especially actions that endanger American lives, such as the many close calls in Syria and Iraq.

American leaders cannot complain intermittently; they must meet Erdogan's unpredictability with consistency. When Erdogan crosses a line, there must be a response. His inconsistency means that no hard and fast rules of engagement can be applied to every situation. But U.S. leaders can express their displeasure by canceling meetings and visits with high-ranking officials. They can register more significant anger by, for example, holding congressional hearings on Turkish disinformation campaigns.

The United States would benefit from coordinating with other allies on the receiving end of Erdogan's affronts. Washington has

already commenced this process: the development of the port of Alexandroupoli is just one example. U.S. leaders have also decidedly changed their approach to Cyprus, lifting its long-standing arms embargo and engaging with Nicosia more closely on a variety of security-related issues.

Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine created new dilemmas for the U.S.-Turkish relationship but also new opportunities. Putin and Erdogan, like-minded autocrats with a deep mistrust of the West, have begun to turn more to each other for needs only the other can provide. Erdogan opposed sanctions on Russia, arguing that Turkey was "not bound by the West's sanctions." The United States has shown some flexibility and tolerance regarding Turkey's sanctions-busting activities; as oil and gas prices spiked, swelling Turkey's import bill and overwhelming its current account, Turkish-Russian trade ballooned.

Putin stroked Erdogan's ego by allowing him to play a role in a wheat deal that let Ukraine export grain and fertilizers through the Black Sea. These exports are critical for developing countries facing severe food shortages. Turkey also sold Bayraktar drones to Ukraine. Erdogan has basked in the plaudits he has received for serving as a mediator. But these events also reveal just how desperate Turkey is for any bit of foreign currency it can get.

TOUGH LOVE

Erdogan emerged from Vilnius with his wings clipped—and he returned home to an economy that is in shambles. Thanks to the reforms enacted by Ozal and, for a time, Erdogan, the Turkish economy performed exceedingly well during the early years of this century. Foreign direct investment hit a record high, rising from $1 billion in 2000 to $22 billion in 2007.

But over the last decade, the government's low-interest-rate policy encouraged a dangerous culture of consumption. Citizens are spending more and more of a currency whose value is simultaneously cratering. The consumption frenzy has pushed an explosion in importation, pressuring Turkey's current account. Financing the deficit is getting more expensive by the month thanks to Turkey's rising risk premium. The Turkish manufacturing sector, which in 2021 accounted for 21 percent of GDP, risks being badly weakened by increasing input costs. To avert a catastrophe, Turkey will have to try to leverage its geopolitical importance to solicit help from the United States.

The Turkish population may not be pro-American; even Erdogan's opponents harbor suspicions about Washington. But much of the Turkish population has suffered under Erdogan's erratic authoritarianism and economic mismanagement. Despite the repressive environment he has created and the fear it engenders, this past May, almost 48 percent of voters chose to remove him from office. The United States has a chance to empower Turkish civil society and opposition politicians by showing that although it may not support Erdogan, it supports Turkey. The key will be economic aid.

All indications are that when Turkey's crisis finally peaks, it will devastate the country's already beleaguered economy. Recently, Erdogan grudgingly abandoned his longtime dedication to lowering interest rates in response to economic stress. But it is still not clear that he comprehends the magnitude of the effort awaiting Turkey.

Despite Erdogan's attempts to attract investment from the Gulf states and bolster trade with China, Turkey is, and will remain, wholly embedded in the Western economic system. That deep integration affords Western powers opportunities to influence Turkey for the better. Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States have historically been Turkey's principal sources of foreign direct investment: in 2021, they accounted for nearly two-thirds of it. And Western countries remain the main buyer of Turkish goods and services. In 2022, the United Kingdom received 5.1 percent of Turkish exports, the United States 6.7 percent, Germany 8.4 percent, and another ten EU countries 42.5 percent.

Further increasing exports to the West will be a linchpin of Turkey's economic recovery. The exports in question are predominantly industrial goods, whose production drives the growth of well-paying jobs. But Turkey must significantly restructure its state institutions in order to expand market access for Turkish exports and win buy-in from major financial markets. Any true economic rescue will have to rely on Western economies; China, Russia, and the Middle East have relatively little to contribute.

A stabilization plan will be painful but doable. Turkey enjoys significant economic advantages: its proximity to European and Middle Eastern markets, its educated and relatively young workforce, and its seasoned business community that is integrated with the rest of the world. Turkey is well positioned to benefit from "friend shoring," a growing practice of repositioning production and supply chains in countries deemed politically reliable.

Turkey will almost certainly have to ask for assistance from the International Monetary Fund. The United States will inevitably play an essential role in helping shape the contours of an IMF plan and its financing. But Washington must insist on making IMF support conditional on improvements to the rule of law, such as restoring the Turkish central bank's autonomy and shoring up the credibility of financial institutions that produce economic statistics.

Turkey may need to seek economic help from Russia, and the United States should tolerate some of these arrangements. But it must push back against Turkey exporting electronic goods that directly help Moscow prosecute its war against Ukraine. The United States has already sanctioned some Turkish companies, and Turkish leaders have said they will curtail such exports. The Ukraine war will likely continue, however, increasing pressure on Putin and intensifying his need for components. This July, Putin suspended the wheat deal Turkey helped broker. For both Washington and Ankara, this is an opportunity to launch a discussion on how to better coordinate dealings with Russia in the future.

> Erdogan is most afraid of his own citizens.

Like many maximalist leaders who have held on to power for decades, Erdogan has surrounded himself with minions and created a media echo chamber in which most people have little choice but to praise him. At times, he must imagine that he is infallible. But even though he is an ideologue, Erdogan is also a pragmatist. He will agree to make changes, even ones he dislikes, if he fears his survival is at stake. And his survival is now at stake.

During the S-400 crisis, in an unusual shift, Washington stuck to its guns, following through on precisely what it promised it would do. As a result, it delineated what could be a more resolute method of engaging with Turkey more broadly. Ankara must know it cannot grandstand on everything and negotiate indefinitely. Now, the United States must hold the line. Going forward, Washington should not just bandage surface wounds or seek to restore a golden age in U.S.-Turkish relations that never existed. By acting firmly and consistently, the United States can craft a new kind of relationship: a normal one, much more akin to the relationship it enjoys with Italy or Portugal. It must seize the chance.

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REVIEW ESSAY

Innovation and Its Discontents

Societies Get the Technology They Deserve

DIANE COYLE

Power and Progress: Our Thousand-Year Struggle Over Technology and Prosperity BY DARON ACEMOGLU AND SIMON JOHNSON. PublicAffairs, 2023, 664 pp.

In the space of just a few months, the specter of artificial intelligence has come to haunt the world. The release in late 2022 of ChatGPT, the most prominent of a new wave of generative AI models, has ignited concerns about the potentially disastrous consequences of the technology. Depending on the telling, AI could lead to the rapid spread of misinformation, kill democracy, eliminate millions of jobs, or even result in the end of the human species. These fears have overshadowed discussions of the technology's promise. Whereas the rapid advances of recent decades—in telecommunications and digital technology, for instance—were often greeted with unwise euphoria, the recent leaps forward in AI have inspired much more circumspection about the direction of technological change. Many people are questioning the hype, realizing that innovation may not always be a good thing.

Power and Progress: Our Thousand-Year Struggle Over Technology and Prosperity, by the economists Daron Acemoglu and Simon Johnson, was completed before ChatGPT and other AI models had been released. The current panic about AI makes the book's emphasis on the ubiquity of techno-optimism already seem like a relic of a bygone age. But its authors nevertheless anticipate the current concerns, warning that AI is "the mother of all inappropriate technologies." They blame a small libertarian oligarchy for creating the harmful AI tools that have already begun destroying good jobs around the world, and they warn that if national governments fail to curtail the damage done by these tools, they will exacerbate inequalities in their

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own societies. The state, Acemoglu and Johnson argue, must find a way to share the benefits of these advances more broadly. Countries should create an "institutional framework and incentives shaped by government policies, bolstered by a constructive narrative, to induce the private sector to move away from excessive automation and surveillance, and toward more worker-friendly technologies."

In discussing today's challenges, the authors draw on a millennium's worth of examples of how societies have wrestled with technological change. Innovation is not and has never been an autonomous, natural force that people have no choice but to adapt to. How people understand technologies—the narrative they construct about the role of new inventions—helps determine whether those technologies will have positive or detrimental consequences. Once new technologies have been developed and deployed, they can have very different effects on jobs and incomes, depending on whether they are used to assist human workers or to replace them. And perhaps most important for the present moment, the new economic gains that come with technological advances will be shared widely only if the state and social institutions such as unions can provide a counterweight to the market power of the tech companies. People become impotent in the face of new technology only if society permits it.

BAD NARRATIVES, TERRIBLE OUTCOMES

Technological innovations—better plows in the Middle Ages, the cotton gin and the mechanized loom in the nineteenth century, computational technologies in the last 20 years—have transformed the world. But progress has never been smooth. Every wave of innovations carries its own problems; many people lose out.

How societies imagine the role of technology is almost as important as the technology itself. For technological change to proceed in a broadly beneficial way, a shared vision must take hold in society. Consider, for instance, the widely accepted vision of a relatively swift transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, which has motivated the rapid invention and increasingly affordable adoption of alternatives, including photovoltaics and wind.

Bad narratives about technology can lead to terrible outcomes. For instance, the construction of the Panama Canal from 1903 to 1914 grew out of a spectacularly misguided vision. This waterway connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans was the brainchild of Ferdinand de Lesseps, a French diplomat and the much-feted developer of the Suez Canal, which was completed in 1869. Although the Suez Canal had been long delayed, over budget, and underperforming in terms of traffic, it still fed a fever for canals in the late nineteenth century—the techno-optimism of its day—and generated huge profits for its investors. Riding high on this success, Lesseps determined to realize the long-standing dream of a canal across Central America. As with his plans for the construction of the Suez Canal, he articulated a compelling vision of the power of technology to connect the world and boost trade. But the project was an

engineering disaster, badly planned and executed, as well as a human catastrophe that exposed workers to an epidemic of yellow fever. The Panama Canal Company went into receivership, and Lesseps died with a shattered reputation, the dethroned cryptocurrency king of his day. The vision was a mirage, leading Lesseps and his investors to ruin.

Acemoglu and Johnson argue that, as with the canal-building craze in the nineteenth century, the vision guiding those developing and harnessing AI today is anything but benign. These creators measure technological progress in terms of machines achieving parity with humans, thereby directing innovators to create products to replace humans. Instead, the authors suggest efforts and investment should be driven by the idea of "machine usefulness" to create technologies to help humans achieve their aims.

The book traces the origins of AI's bias toward human replacement to the British mathematician Alan Turing, who suggested that machines could be said to "think" if their process of step-by-step algorithmic calculation produced results that were indistinguishable from human outputs. This raises the intriguing prospect of imagining an entirely different version of "progress" in computing, the authors argue, defined in terms of something humans cannot do well, although the book does not include an example. In the absence of a positive, shared vision of how to channel the powers of AI, societies will struggle to address abiding concerns about technology and the inequalities of capitalist market economies.

INNOVATION AND DESPAIR

The most glaring impact of any major new technology is how it transforms the economy, affecting jobs and livelihoods. Innovations including the introduction of electricity in place of steam, the telegraph, and faster tractors all transformed the productivity and outputs of businesses. But innovations can also lead employers to change the size and composition of their workforces, depending on whether adding more workers will deliver higher profits or boost their marginal output (the extra output gained from each increase in input). If demand for the product grows, then the productivity-enhancing technology is good news; even if the technology replaces some workers, the overall number of jobs may grow. This was seen with the introduction of ATMs after 1969, which cut the number of bank tellers but increased the total number of jobs in banking. But if the technology results in only cost cutting and "de-skilling" (when jobs that require skilled workers replace jobs that do not), then most workers will suffer. These outcomes followed the automation of manufacturing that began in the late 1970s, which coincided with a recession and contributed to massive downsizing in U.S. Rust Belt communities.

Every major era of innovation has spawned concerns about how innovations affect jobs. In 1960, the Democratic presidential candidate, John F. Kennedy, observed that the "steady replacement of men by machines—the advance of automation—is already threatening to destroy thousands of jobs and wipe out entire plants.

It is creating fear among workers, and among the families of workers. It is menacing the existence of entire communities." These concerns continued to prey on the minds of politicians. During the 1992 U.S. presidential election, the Democratic candidate, Bill Clinton, responded to anxiety over automation by promising to introduce retraining programs and implement a strategy to create "the world's best-educated workforce." Otherwise, he warned, "downward trends in wages and benefits, increasing costs for health care, and more job insecurity will be the order of the day."

The current technological wave has revived these concerns. Researchers at OpenAI, Open Research, and the University of Pennsylvania have estimated that nearly 50 percent of all U.S. jobs could have half their functions performed by AI. Historically, however, fears of mass technology-induced redundancies have generally proved to be unfounded. Indeed, contrary to Acemoglu and Johnson's assertion that robotization has cut jobs and wages, economists, on balance, believe that firms that have used automation the most have expanded jobs and pay higher wages.

Experts are still debating these questions; the most common question, however, is, as the economist David Autor put it in the title of an essay, "Why Are There Still So Many Jobs?" The short answer is that technology does not simply destroy the need for human labor; it changes the nature of jobs in a society and therefore the kinds of workers a society needs. Automation often reduces the level of skill required to do existing tasks, a phenomenon that shaped the New Hampshire textile industry in the nineteenth century. The introduction of machines created new jobs for highly skilled, well-paid engineers who could repair and refine the sometimes temperamental new equipment while unskilled workers carried out the regular operation of the machines. As textile technology became more standardized, the specific engineering need dissipated because workers could now fix their own machines. But demand for textiles grew as the economy expanded—and with it, the number of jobs available. The result was that all workers in the sector enjoyed higher wages, not just the specialists.

Such historical analogies, although useful, can obscure the disruption that technological change can bring. The Industrial Revolution caused poverty, disease, and squalor at the same time that it created a large and prospering middle class. The impending AI-enabled automation of the jobs of lawyers, journalists, teachers, and others may have similar unintended and unforeseeable consequences. Acemoglu and Johnson do not offer optimism on this score. They write that "if everybody becomes convinced that artificial intelligence technologies are needed, then businesses will invest in artificial intelligence even when there are alternative ways of organizing production that could be more beneficial." Both the AI-hype narrative and "the market"—the decisions made by individual businesses—are likely to lead to job losses and more middle-class immiseration.

TAMING THE GIANTS

No outcome is inevitable. The social outcomes of automation will be determined by policy and institutional responses, and history offers some useful examples of solutions. The experience of the Industrial Revolution is particularly instructive. In response to the spread of steam-driven textile factories, mining, and railroads, which unleashed new problems and created great inequalities, the state expanded its functions dramatically. It began to set standards for communications, product safety, and the provision of education, while society responded with the invention of unions, cooperatives, mutual societies, educational associations, and public libraries funded by philanthropy or subscriptions. It was not simply technology that delivered progress but also the creation of social counterweights to private power that tried to ensure that the benefits of innovations were spread widely.

Acemoglu and Johnson highlight how a similar dynamic played out in the mid-twentieth century. After World War II, demand increased, and economies in North America and Europe were expanding. Well-organized unions were effective guardians of their members' interests. Public education became more widespread, and governments saw stewardship of markets as one of their key responsibilities. Accordingly, many Western countries embraced economic planning, whereby state agencies set a strategic direction for private investors and businesses and coordinated the necessary infrastructure and public services.

The trick will be figuring out how to achieve those kinds of outcomes in the present century. Some of Acemoglu and Johnson's prescriptions, which include breaking up Big Tech companies, would require U.S. government actions that are highly unlikely. The authors' suggestions for better enforcement of laws that protect competition and block monopolies are more realistic. In many countries, including the United States, the prevention of enormous mergers and acquisitions by Big Tech firms has become a priority. The United Kingdom's Competition and Markets Authority moved in April to stop Microsoft's takeover of the video game company Activision Blizzard, prompting Brad Smith, Microsoft's vice chair and president, to hyperbolically declare that it was the company's "darkest day" in four decades in the country. It was a telling overreaction from a tech giant used to getting its way. Regulators are likely to zero in on highly technical issues such as the bundling of digital products, the interoperability and interconnection of networks and systems, and standards governing the operation of the technologies. The results of lawsuits over such matters will determine whether new entrants can break into the market, and fights over such foundational issues will reveal much about how power is exercised in Silicon Valley. Governments are unlikely to try to break up the tech giants, but their efforts to rein them in will nonetheless be highly consequential.

Acemoglu and Johnson also discuss a number of familiar remedies for the inequities produced by technological progress, including a universal basic income, which would provide a guaranteed income for all citizens, including those whose jobs

are lost to automation. Acemoglu and Johnson are opposed to such a program, rightly noting that a modest guaranteed income is inferior to the ability to access broader social goods such as a public transportation network or a public school system. Generally, Acemoglu and Johnson favor collective responses to protecting social welfare, such as encouraging the strengthening of unions at Amazon and Starbucks, over campaigns for better wages, working conditions, and jobs. They also propose new training programs, as well as participatory processes for discussing and determining how civil society organizations might regulate technologies.

They also favor strong privacy regulation to protect individuals from surveillance technologies. How to govern data is a subject of active debate in most countries, but there are complicated tradeoffs. For example, is the collection of a person's location data by a mapping application an act of surveillance or simply a technical necessity? People's use of an app seems to grant consent to companies to harness users' data, yet securing individual consent app by app arguably puts an excessive burden on users and platform designers alike. The authors frame questions about data governance in terms of the "ownership" of data, but that overlooks the fact that useful data is largely relational—that is, produced by the interaction between an individual and various apps—and not strictly individual.

As with many books about the promise and perils of digital technologies, the list of proposals at the end of this one is both overly detailed and underwhelming. A tax on digital advertising, the rollout of training schemes, the construction of a stronger social safety net, and the imposition of wealth taxes would improve the living standards of working people and moderate the behavior of technology firms. But the authors' list of policies—even if they could be implemented in the polarized political environments of most Western democracies—does not add up to a positive vision that can ensure digital technologies deliver shared prosperity. Fixing the problems caused by AI is not the same as determining the best form of society and how technology can help build it. *Power and Progress* concludes with the example of the turnaround in the perception and treatment of HIV/AIDS patients in the 1990s, when activists helped change social norms and prompted massive funding of medical research. It is an encouraging example, but it is hard to see a close parallel between the battle against the well-defined problem of treating HIV/AIDS and the broad, diffuse panic about AI and digital technologies, which raises a wide variety of policy questions.

It remains to be seen how any vision or narrative could take hold and bring about the changes the authors want to see. Artificial intelligence and other new technologies can provoke panic, but they have not inspired much clarity of thinking. The well-known observation of the Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci comes to mind: "The old world is dying, the new is struggling to be born. In this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear." Those symptoms are readily apparent. Less clear is whether we might miss the old world once it is gone.

REVIEW ESSAY

Born in the Bloodlands

Ukraine and the Future of the European Project

MICHAEL KIMMAGE

The Russo-Ukrainian War: The Return of History
BY SERHII PLOKHY. Norton, 2023, 400 pp.

In Europe in the 1990s, it looked as if the nation-state were fading away. After World War II, Franco-German and Anglo-German tensions had melted into the European Union and the NATO alliance, to the lasting benefit of western Europe. Something similar occurred in eastern Europe after the fall of communism, when the countries of the region traded national assertion for European integration. After millennia of war among empires and nations, Europe had opted for openness, peace, and prosperity.

No country appreciated the decline of the European nation-state more than the United States: European nationalisms had been giving Washington headaches for almost a century. In 1914, a fanatical Serbian nationalist assassinated Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand, starting a world war that eventually drew in the United States. Two decades later, a crazed German nationalist helped push the United States into World War II. Presidents George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama all cheered the creation of a Europe where it seemed that national enmities had dimmed and national borders had softened.

But this view underestimated the salience of the nation-state and the endurance of nationalism. From the French Revolution in 1789 to Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution in 1989, nation-building movements were a driving force on the continent. After the fall of the Soviet Union, nationalist rage flared in the Balkans, and

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Illustration by John Lee

far-right political parties chipped away at European integration—in Hungary, Poland, and even in Germany, where the right-wing party Alternative for Germany was founded in 2013 with the aim of restoring German nationhood. The 2016 Brexit vote, too, dealt a blow to the European project.

And now, Europe's first major war since 1945 has arisen between two nation-states that were carved from the Soviet Union. Russia and Ukraine have demonstrated in different ways that Europe never became a postnational paradise. The continent is once again being shaped by conflict among nations. As the historian Serhii Plokhy writes in *The Russo-Ukrainian War,* his masterful new book, war has "been the main instrument used to create the European system of nation-states." The war raging in Ukraine is merely the latest chapter in a "long history of wars of national liberation, which can be traced back to the American Revolution" and runs through the hot and cold wars fought against the Russian and the Soviet empires.

Russia's war against Ukraine will not diminish the pull of national belonging in Europe. A Ukrainian defeat would result in lasting national (and nationalist) grievances. A Ukrainian victory would not cement the country's membership in the West on the basis of cosmopolitan liberalism or postnational pacifism. Ukraine's self-creation within the West will be achieved through a war to preserve and defend the Ukrainian nation. As much as Europe has changed Ukraine since 1991, drawing it away from its Soviet past, Ukraine will shape Europe. The nature of its postwar nationhood will change the idea of Europe.

A FORK IN THE ROAD

A war fought in the name of history can be comprehended only through the study of history. Plokhy, a distinguished and prolific historian of Russia, the Soviet Union, and Ukraine, is thus well positioned to explain the present moment. In *The Russo-Ukrainian War*, he expertly juxtaposes the histories of Russia and Ukraine, especially the paths they took during the Soviet era and afterward. Through their divergences, he traces Russian President Vladimir Putin's motivations for waging his terrible war and Ukraine's fierce resistance to Russia's invasion.

Within the Soviet Union, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was subordinate to Moscow and subject to top-down Russification, although together with the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, it was one of the three privileged "East Slavic" republics. After World War II, the Ukrainian republic emerged as the Russian republic's junior partner, leading in the 1970s to what Plokhy describes as "a Russo-Ukrainian condominium at the leadership level." Had the Soviet Union not begun to fragment in the 1980s, a distinctive sense of Ukrainian nationhood might have subsided into Sovietism, Plokhy argues. But as he details in his book *The Last Empire*, it was the Ukrainians' will to gain their independence that put the final nail in the Soviet coffin. In October 1991, the vast majority of Ukrainians voted to leave the Soviet Union. Two months later, the Soviet Union was no more.

The Soviet Union died suddenly, but the idea of the Russian Empire—or at least Moscow's imperial reflexes—

lived on. One reason for this was the 30 million ethnic Russians and Russian speakers who found themselves outside Russia in the 1990s. For the Kremlin, it was unclear where Russia ended. Perhaps it had no meaningful borders, some members of the elite theorized. Another incitement to empire was a widely held sense of Russia as a great power with regional entitlements, a sense rooted in centuries of historical experience.

Russia's first post-Soviet leader, Boris Yeltsin, never fully embraced the imperial purview, but he never fully rejected it, either. Plokhy details how Yeltsin, starting with the first Chechen war (1994–96), enabled "a highly militarized Russian state." Putin inherited this state in 2000 and further centralized it. He shared none of Yeltsin's ambivalence about Russia's imperial aims, concentrating on the projection of Russian power in Ukraine, Africa, Central Asia, the Middle East, and the South Caucasus.

Relations between Russia and Ukraine were relatively quiet until 2004, when Putin's preferred Ukrainian presidential candidate, Viktor Yanukovych, won a dirty election. Ukrainians protested in what became known as the Orange Revolution, and the election result was annulled. The hero of this revolution, Viktor Yushchenko, who was backed by the West, became Ukraine's president later that year, after winning a fairer election. The events of 2004 "put Ukraine and Russia and, subsequently, Russia and the West on a collision course that would eventually lead to war," Plokhy writes. The Russian elite could only conceive of Ukraine through zero-sum logic: it was either "ours" or "theirs." In the words of Gleb Pavlovsky, a Kremlin adviser, the Orange Revolution "was our 9/11."

Putin's reaction to the possible emergence of a democratic and Western-oriented Ukraine had three phases. First, he tried to co-opt the country, a project that began to show promise in 2010, when Yanukovych, the Moscow-backed candidate who had lost in 2004, became president. But Yanukovych got tripped up in 2014, when he abruptly rejected, at Putin's urging, an association agreement with the EU, which would have strengthened economic ties between Ukraine and the bloc. When Ukrainian citizens protested his turn away from the EU, Yanukovych deployed the special police to brutalize and arrest the demonstrators. His actions inadvertently sparked the Maidan revolution, ensuring his political demise and leaving Ukraine more Western-oriented than ever before.

Unable to co-opt Kyiv, Putin waged a limited war against Ukraine in 2014 and 2015. In this second phase, he occupied and annexed Crimea, invaded eastern Ukraine, and preserved his options through an open-ended diplomatic process between 2014 and 2022. By not going all in, Putin could forestall a radical break with the West, and by not formally ending the war, he could keep the pressure on Ukraine. Moscow hoped that Ukraine might return to the Russian fold or that more amenable leadership might materialize in Kyiv. None of that came to pass.

The third phase in Putin's efforts began on February 24, 2022, when roughly 190,000 Russian troops began crossing into Ukrainian territory. Over the course of this massive invasion, Russia's military has underperformed on

the battlefield and committed atrocious war crimes. At the core of Russia's failure, however, has been "the Russian president's distorted view of history and complete lack of understanding of Ukrainian society and its democratic foundations," Plokhy writes.

BECOMING UKRAINE

Plokhy illuminates Ukraine's long-standing efforts to break free from foreign occupiers and forge its own identity. Before 1991, the Ukrainian nation had struggled to find a modern form. Outside control had been a constant: by the Russian Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire until World War I; by Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and the Soviet Union in the interwar years; by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union during World War II; and by the Soviet Union between 1945 and 1991. An unfortunate legacy of control by outside forces was widespread corruption within the independent Ukrainian state. An upside, however, was what Plokhy terms Ukraine's "strong regionalism," which inhibited authoritarian tendencies in Kyiv.

The European landscape also presented Ukraine with significant challenges in the post-Soviet period. Europe was "expanding" in the 1990s, as NATO and the EU started to spread east. Speaking at a NATO meeting in 2005, Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko said that the Orange Revolution protesters "wanted to see Ukraine in Europe, not as a neighbor of Europe, because we are a country located in the center of Europe." Yushchenko was right: Ukraine is in the center of Europe. (If this point is valid, however, then Belarus is also a country located in the center of Europe—a notion that Russia finds unacceptable.) Yet European institutions shifted east without ever offering the possibility of membership to Kyiv.

Meanwhile, Russia was not willing to grant Ukraine any real autonomy. "Russia's recognition of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the post-Soviet states would be conditional on alliance with Moscow," Plokhy writes. In Putin's eyes, the Orange Revolution had threatened this alliance—and he was prepared to use force to highlight the costs of defying Moscow. Europe and the United States would wish Ukraine well in confronting this threat. But on the ground, Ukraine was on its own.

Twenty-first-century Ukraine could not solve its fundamental security problem. It could not deter Russia from invading in 2014; it could not subsequently expel Russia from Ukrainian territory; and it could not change Russia's perception that Ukraine belonged to its imperial dominion. After returning to the presidency in 2012, after four years as prime minister, Putin became increasingly aggressive on the international stage. At the same time, Ukraine was still struggling with rule of law and separation of powers, despite the demands from the Maidan revolution. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, who governed from 2014 to 2019, "exemplified the failure of the system to free itself from oligarchic influence," Plokhy notes.

Under Poroshenko, Ukraine did not join NATO or thwart corruption. Yet it was gaining economic strength and drawing closer to the EU. Post-Maidan Ukraine was suffused with civic spirit. According to Plokhy, the 2014 war produced a much more homogeneous country, since objections to Russian

heavy-handedness were shared across Ukraine, becoming one element of a common national story. Ukraine was no longer in a geopolitical no man's land: Washington had emerged as the main partner for the reform and modernization of Ukraine's security sector. When Volodymr Zelensky was elected president, in 2019, some denigrated the elevation of a former comedian to high office as a decadent turn. It was in fact a generational change in leadership and a sign of the country's democratic bona fides.

Zelensky's emphasis on civic identity consolidated Ukraine's turn toward Europe. Poroshenko had emphasized the military and religious faith as essential aspects of what it means to be Ukrainian. One of his 2019 campaign slogans was "Army! Language! Faith!" Zelensky, who is Jewish by background, promoted a Ukraine that was bound by a civic patriotism and relaxed about questions of linguistic, ethnic, and religious diversity. The television comedy that made him famous, *Servant of the People*, was a meditation on civic activism. Zelensky's inclusive vision was important before the war of 2022. Once the war began, this civic patriotism bound Ukrainians organically to the state and the military, beginning a new chapter in Ukrainian history.

ALL WARS ARE LOCAL

Plokhy devotes five superb chapters of *The Russo-Ukrainian War* to the ongoing war. They describe events that have been etched into global consciousness: the early morning attack on Ukrainian cities to mark the beginning of the invasion; the defense of Kyiv and Zelensky's transformation into a wartime leader; the mass atrocities at Bucha and Irpin; and the stunning Ukrainian counteroffensive in September 2022. Most important, the war narrated in these chapters is explained by the history that precedes it. In the war, Plokhy sees the culmination of Ukrainian nationhood. But he also anticipates that "Ukraine's successful resistance to Russian aggression is destined to promote Russia's own nation-building project." Ukraine is building a national identity that is harmonious with the West, a process that is likely to stoke an equal and opposite reaction in Russia, which may have broken permanently with the West.

The final two chapters of Plokhy's book place the war in a global frame, documenting the high degree of transatlantic unity behind Ukraine, the levying of sanctions against Russia, the movement of Ukraine toward membership in the EU, and Finland's and Sweden's applications for membership in NATO. Plokhy gently critiques the West's tepid approach to Ukraine before 2022, arguing persuasively that it did too little to help build Ukraine's military capabilities. He also suggests that China will emerge as "a key beneficiary" of the conflict, poised to leverage the enmity between Russia and the West to its advantage.

Unlike the rest of the book, these chapters feel perfunctory. They also downplay the contrast between the unity the war has forged in the West and the distinct lack of solidarity with Ukraine—and even support for Russia—it has inspired elsewhere in the world. Plokhy is too quick to conclude that the "war buried Russia's hopes of becoming a new global center in the multipolar world envisioned by Russian politicians and diplomats since the

1990s." Russia has diminished its stature by mismanaging the war, but before the war, it correctly assessed the reality of a multipolar world, in which it has proven surprisingly easy for Russia to evade Western sanctions, pin blame for the war on the West, gain access to arms and ammunition, and find buyers of Russian energy perfectly willing to help fund Moscow's war machine.

Historians will strain to balance the war's intensely national colorations with its many global implications. This war did not begin as a proxy war between Russia and the United States. Putin may have gone to war because of his vision of Russia's place in the world. But his more visceral motivations follow from Russian history and from his warped view of Ukrainian history. Ukrainians may be defending their country for the sake of abstractions such as democracy or Europe. But their more visceral motivations follow from Ukrainian history and, in a sense, from Russian history. *The Russo-Ukrainian War* is the best possible guide to this regional history. Other books will flesh out the war as an event in global history.

A EUROPE WHOLE AND FREE?

The Russo-Ukrainian War will not be an easy book for U.S. policymakers to digest, although it offers them some affirmation. Nobody will have a prob-

lem with Plokhy's reading of the war as one of national liberation for Ukraine. This reading strikes some of the deepest chords in American foreign policy. From the Greek Revolution of 1821 to the struggles for freedom in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland, the United States has thrilled to European efforts at national liberation, which Washington tends to equate with Europe's democratization (and not with the outbreak of war). The central train station in Prague is named after President Woodrow Wilson to honor the American aspiration for a Europe of liberated and democratic countries.

The problem for Washington is that, as Plokhy points out, the war will spur nation building in a Russia that will always remain just at the edge of Europe. It remains unclear what kind of Russia the war will create. It might be a country bent on expanding in perpetuity, driven by an appetite for conquest or by a fear of collapse. A powerful Ukraine grounded in Western security structures would be impossible for Putin to accept; it might be impossible for any Russian leader to accept. And although Russia's defeat could yield a country freed from its imperial-authoritarian impulse and eager to make peace with Europe, the more likely outcome is that it would produce a Russia animated by grievance and resentment of the West.

The United States will do what it can to give Ukraine victory. It has a good chance of succeeding in this noble endeavor. If it does succeed, however, it will still have lost the postnational Europe that had previously been the desired end state of Washington's strategy—one that undergirded the concept of a liberal international order. This situation will force the United States and its allies back toward something akin to containing Moscow, as they did during the Cold War—an approach that will play out mostly in eastern Europe, where the determination and protection of borders have led to countless wars, of which the Russian-Ukrainian war is only the most recent. Plokhy's extraordinary book reminds readers of this history. Although containing Russia will be necessary in the twenty-first century, it will not be easy.

The Russo-Ukrainian War offers insights for Ukrainian policymakers as well. As they shepherd their country into European institutions, which is clearly their goal, they will have to balance two competing realities. The war will situate a Ukrainian nation in the West, with borders that will be set on the battlefield. This nation will derive strength from the wartime heroism of Ukrainians. The echoes of the American Revolution will make Ukraine's story intuitively comprehensible to Americans, deepening Ukraine's most important strategic partnership. It will take diplomatic finesse, however, to reconcile Ukraine's national strength with the postnational spirit of the EU. Created to tame European nationalism, the EU now finds itself on the fault line of an epic conflict between two nation-states, as does the United States. As they make their way into Europe, Ukrainians should avoid the temptations of an ethnonationalism forged in war and should instead hold fast to the civic patriotism Zelensky has championed.

The Merchant's Leviathan

How the East India Company Made the Modern World

CAROLINE ELKINS

Empire, Incorporated: The Corporations That Built British Colonialism
BY PHILIP J. STERN. Harvard University Press, 2023, 408 pp.

When the East India Company commissioned Richard Greenbury to paint the events that unfolded in 1623 on Amboyna, a clove-producing island in what is now the Indonesian archipelago, the artist's rendering was so disturbing that it had to be altered. Titled *The Atrocities at Amboyna*, the painting depicted the torture and beheading of ten English merchants by Dutch agents for allegedly trying to usurp control of the region's lucrative spice trade. Even with Greenbury's changes, the painting inflamed public fury, directed at London's Dutch citizens, who appealed to King Charles I's Privy Council for protection. The painting was so incendiary that after just two weeks on display at the company's headquarters, the king ordered it removed, and it was never seen in public again.

But the memory of the events at Amboyna endured. Between 1624 and 1781, the East India Company published a dozen times a pamphlet titled *A True Relation of the Unjust, Cruel, and Barbarous Proceedings Against the English*, complete with two powerful woodcut frontispieces that depicted Dutch interrogators torturing with fire and water the English merchants, now martyrs. The Amboyna Massacre, as it was known, became part of the company's and, by extension, the British Empire's origin story in Asia. Defeat at Amboyna and the cruel deaths of its merchants steered the company away from the East Indian spice trade and competition with the powerful Dutch monopoly trading company, the

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Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, or VOC. Instead, the East India Company turned to cotton and silk textile trading with the Mughal Empire in South Asia, eventually expanding its lucrative trade to commodities such as tea and the illegal trafficking of opium while extending its reach across the Indian subcontinent and into the Persian Gulf, China, and elsewhere in Asia.

What began in the ignominy at Amboyna would end in the creation of a globe-spanning empire and the modern world as we know it. The East India Company, arguably the most enduring public-private partnership in history, helped make the British Empire, fuel the industrialization of Europe, and knit together the global economy. It was chief among dozens of other chartered companies granted monopoly rights and sovereign claims through politically issued charters. These companies, the avatars of the crown, merged the pursuit of profit with the prerogatives of governance, although, much like the VOC, they often governed as they pleased, without legally enforceable responsibilities. Importing raw materials, they fed the Industrial Revolution's manufacturing sector, stimulated demand for foreign products, and dominated London's burgeoning capital markets while also undertaking the state's bidding in establishing the British Empire. Chartered companies helped claim nearly a third of the world's territory for the United Kingdom, making its empire the largest ever known.

Scholars have long debated the significance and lingering impact of these imperial-era firms. Some analysts, focusing on profit and scale, see present-day corporate behemoths as contemporary manifestations of chartered companies. Others see the largest of them all, the East India Company, as even more powerful: one BBC writer saw it as "the CIA, the NSA, and the biggest, baddest multinational corporation on earth," whose power, much like that of a company such as Meta, went virtually unchecked for years. Chartered companies often existed beyond the reach of state regulation and in many ways functioned as states in their own right, with their own forms of sovereignty. Their legacy extends to contemporary tensions between hefty multinational technology corporations and the countries that struggle to restrain them.

Philip Stern's landmark book, *Empire, Incorporated: The Corporations That Built British Colonialism*, resists facile comparisons between today's multinational corporate giants and the chartered companies of yesteryear. It traces the evolution over four centuries of the British Empire's joint-stock corporations, the East India Company among them, and their role in the state's imperial designs, what Stern calls "corporate colonialism." Urging his readers to reflect "on the present quandaries of public and private power more through genealogy than analogy," Stern painstakingly demonstrates how joint-stock "venture colonialism" financed and shaped the British Empire, forging legacies that endure to the present day.

THE RISE OF THE CHARTERS

Born from incessant warfare, the East India Company and the VOC became two of the most powerful corporations the world has ever known. Both were

granted chartered monopolies—the East India Company in 1600 from Queen Elizabeth I and the VOC in 1602 from the States General of the recently founded Dutch Republic—and possessed powers typically associated with sovereign states, including the right to build forts, raise armies, mint currency, wage war, sign treaties, and engage in diplomacy with non-European entities.

They were also unmistakably merchant companies on the cutting edge of financial innovation that, when combined with unbridled ambition and the license to wage war, generated incredible wealth, enough to fuel the Dutch Golden Age of the seventeenth century and the British Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In Amsterdam, paintings by grandmasters such as Rembrandt and Johannes Vermeer adorned the era, and pathbreaking ideas, including those of the philosophers Baruch Spinoza and Hugo Grotius, spread far and wide. In London, imported commodities contributed to the growth of domestic manufacturing and the emergence of an urban middle class. Many at the time, including the conservative politician and thinker Edmund Burke, saw the fortunes of the East India Company and those of Great Britain as being inextricably linked. The VOC emerged as the first publicly listed company, paying average yearly dividends of 18 percent for almost two centuries. At its height, the VOC was worth the equivalent of around $7.9 trillion in today's dollars—a figure greater than the combined current valuations of Alibaba, Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, AT&T, Bank of America, Berkshire Hathaway, Chevron, ExxonMobil, Facebook, Johnson & Johnson, McDonald's, Netflix, Samsung, Tencent, Visa, Walmart, and Wells Fargo.

The East India Company evolved into a permanent joint-stock company in 1657. Much like modern corporations, it had the legal status of a person with rights but few obligations, transferable shares, limited liability, and a separation between management (the directors) and owners (the shareholders). As with the VOC, anyone could invest in the enterprise of imperial commerce, at once profiting financially and staking a nationalist claim to overseas power. By the early nineteenth century, the East India Company had a private army of 200,000 (twice the size of the United Kingdom's), accounted for nearly half the country's trade, and ruled over the bulk of the Indian subcontinent. Shareholders annually elected merchant-statesmen who crafted and implemented policy, determining the fates of millions who were beholden to the company.

The VOC and the East India Company blurred the lines between public and private in pursuit of profit and power. They were not alone. European states chartered and assisted scores of private companies that, in turn, provided the twin engines of imperial and capitalist expansion around the globe. In England's march to amass its empire, the Muscovy Company was granted its charter in 1555, followed by the Levant Company in 1592, the East India Company, the Virginia Company in 1606, the Newfoundland Company in 1610, the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670, and the Royal African Company in 1672. There were scores of other

chartered companies that were granted monopoly rights and that financed and drove the earliest attempts to found English colonies and profit from trade in all manner of raw materials as well as enslaved peoples.

English merchants, laying the economic and political foundations of empire, nonetheless relied on state intervention to guarantee their access to markets. Gunboats kept the doors of trade open in, for instance, China during the Opium Wars of the nineteenth century. The navy policed colonial waters, protecting merchant shipping, especially after the Battle of Lagos, a devastating loss in 1693 of a convoy of merchant ships in the Mediterranean at the hands of the French. The disaster helped fuel subsequent British defense spending, almost half of it going to the navy.

Protective tariffs also supported the trading companies' commerce at home while helping to finance their military activities overseas. Imperial companies contributed handsomely to the state coffers through customs duties, with just five chartered companies, principally the East India Company, accounting for about a third of Great Britain's customs duties in the mid-eighteenth century. The chartered companies also helped generate large-scale employment, whether in London's ports or on the high seas and the battlefields of empire. The Levant Company alone employed some 5,000 sailors by the end of the seventeenth century, and by the early nineteenth century, the East India Company would amass an enormous private security force far greater than that of most states.

VENTURE COLONIALISM

There is arguably no single scholar more well versed, incisive, and thought provoking than Stern in analyzing the evolution of joint-stock corporations in the British Empire. His first book, *The Company-State* (2011), is among the most important volumes dissecting the business model of the East India Company from its founding at the start of the seventeenth century to the Battle of Plassey in 1757, after which the company cemented its position as the ruler of much of Bengal. Armed with a charter granting it broad rights from the Cape of Good Hope to the Strait of Magellan, the company in its first 150 years was, in Stern's words, a "company-state," or a "commercial, political, and diplomatic intermediary" between England and its growing empire in the East. Fending off demands for "free trade" and an end to state-sponsored monopolism and mercantilist policy, the company insisted its monopoly was in truth a civic-oriented enterprise, the handmaiden for England's economic prosperity and global power.

With *Empire, Incorporated*, Stern takes in the entirety of British "company-states," moving beyond sovereigns and statesmen, understanding that empire depended on investors, creditors, convicts, entrepreneurs, landowners, and embezzlers, among others, as much as on politicians. "Their efforts produced," according to Stern, "what one might call venture colonialism, a particularly prolific, if controversial, brand of overseas expansion that was bound across four centuries by the conviction that the public business of empire was and

had always been best done by private enterprise." The crucial medium through which private enterprise did its work in empire was the joint-stock corporation, which, by Stern's telling, shaped "British colonialism from its sixteenth-century origins through the era of decolonization" and, with it, "would endure to exert an inordinate influence in and over the modern world." These companies signed treaties, made territorial claims, subdued and exploited local populations, and lined the pockets of European investors while often operating like states with transnational reach, as opposed to subjects governed by laws and obligations. In so doing, they laid the foundations for the future economic and political imbalance between the West and the rest of the world.

Empire, Incorporated is, at once, a history of the modern joint-stock corporation as well as an important and bold reframing of the history of the British Empire. Beginning with the incorporation of the Muscovy Company, the British firm founded to trade with Russia and the first ever English joint-stock company, and ending with the 1982 Falklands War, Stern ranges broadly from the so-called discoveries of New England by European explorers in the sixteenth century and the nascent plantation systems of the Caribbean to the South Sea Bubble of 1720 and the interior of East Africa in the nineteenth century, clearly showing how joint-stock corporations "pooled resources, risk, management, self-regulation, and rights" to reach incredible scales in their overseas ventures. Throughout, Stern never loses sight of how difficult it is to locate any clear dividing line between commercial and state activity. Corporations did not merely play a supporting role in any kind of public-private partnership, but they often took the lead in the expansion and administration of empires. Stern suggests that governments may have to begin imagining today's multinational giants, such as Google and Microsoft, in terms reminiscent of the East India Company; not as subjects to be dictated to by states, but as actors with rights and obligations not unlike those of states.

Empire, Incorporated sketches a vivid reimagining of the corporation, illuminating individuals who played outsize roles in the pursuit of profit and power. Thomas Smythe, the chief architect of British mercantilism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was not only a founder of the East India Company, but he also served as a governor for the Muscovy Company and the Levant Company and served as the Virginia Company's treasurer. As the joint-stock corporations evolved overseas, Smythe was among the founders of what would become the British Empire, as important as any statesman, if not more so, in creating templates—or, in entrepreneurial terms, proofs of concept—that were reproduced over and over again for four centuries. Smythe's efforts in the early modern era influenced later business titans, such as Cecil Rhodes and his British South African Company in the nineteenth century. Much like Smythe, Rhodes—as chairman of the De Beers diamond company, joint managing director of the Goldfields of South Africa Company, prime minister of the Cape Colony, and managing director of the British South Africa Company, which colonized through violent means

Conquered: the Mughal emperor of India surrendering Bengal to agents of the British East India Company in 1765

present-day Zimbabwe—was a businessman, politician, and empire builder whose chartered company, in Stern's analysis, "secured its financial power with political power and vice versa."

PRIVATE DESPOTS

Recasting the British Empire as a story of "corporate colonialism," as Stern does, still leaves only a partial picture. David Livingstone, the famed nineteenth-century British missionary and explorer, summed up the United Kingdom's imperial credo in three words: Christianity, commerce, and civilization. Stern's work may be masterful on the topic of commerce, but it does not delve much into the realm of ideas. The imperatives of power and profit certainly drove company-states, much as they do corporations today. But company-states in the age of empire did not operate in ideological vacuums, nor do modern-day corporations. The United Kingdom's nineteenth-century civilizing mission, although rarely mentioned in Stern's work, was an article of faith at home and in the empire. It compelled countless missionaries, such as Livingstone, to spread the gospel and Western norms around the globe, while baby-faced colonial administrators set out to refashion the empire's subjects in the United Kingdom's liberal image. This sense of noblesse oblige, however misplaced, partly fueled condemnations of the company-state, reflecting tensions that endure today. One just needs to consider calls to reimagine capitalism, like those expressed at the Obama Foundation's first Democracy Forum in 2022, and the wrangling over issues such as corporate social responsibility that can pit the profit motive against a sense of liberal purpose.

Indeed, the East India Company was not above reproach, nor was it eternal. It drew plenty of ire in its day—a point Stern scarcely explores—and eventually found itself subdued and snuffed out by the British state. As early as the seventeenth century, an English member of parliament described chartered companies as "bloodsuckers of the commonwealth." Their destructive behavior extended to local populations through famine-inducing measures, exploitative labor policies, and scorched-earth tactics. The economist Adam Smith derided state-sponsored joint-stock companies for their "negligence and profusion," insisting they were holdovers from a bygone era of capitalist organization that stymied economic growth and gave rise to gross mismanagement and abuse. Burke spearheaded the impeachment trial of Warren Hastings, the East India Company's governor-general of Bengal, in the House of Lords, outraged not by Great Britain's imperial ambition but with Hasting's conduct and that of East India Company officials, whom Burke derided. "School boys without tutors, minors without guardians," he said at the trial. "The world is let loose upon them, with all its temptations; and they are let loose upon the world, with all the powers that despotism involves." Parliament, particularly after the East India Company's fiscal crisis and massive government bailout in the 1770s, insisted on diminishing the company's corporate sovereignty, replacing it with increased oversight until, in the aftermath of the seismic rebellion in India in 1857, it nationalized the company's administration under the aegis of the British crown. Less than 20 years later, the company was dissolved, although its corrupt practices—"a form of laundering racket mixed with what might later be called a Ponzi or pyramid scheme," according to Stern—lived on in the empire's other company-states, as well as in some of today's multinational corporations.

In 1896, *The Spectator* said the "joint-stock system of exploitation and government . . . [which had been] glorified into a religion by prophets who are carried beyond the bounds of reason by their zeal in the cause of a powerful group of financiers." Later, in the aftermath of the South African War of 1899–1902, the imperial critic John Hobson chafed at companies such as Rhodes's in southern Africa, saying such an enterprise was "little else than private despotism rendered more than usually precarious in that it has been established for the sake of dividends."

But what was this despotism? Stern largely avoids the question, leaving *Empire, Incorporated* reading more, at times, like an annual report than a critique of the exploits of joint-stock corporations in the British Empire. Indeed, readers will not glean here what underlies modern debates about the symbols and legacies of empire, such as the Rhodes Must Fall movement at Oxford University (where students want the institution to disown Rhodes and his colonial baggage) or the protests in Bristol in 2020 that toppled the statue of Edward Colston, the director of the Royal African Company who oversaw the forcible transport of around 85,000 Africans to the Americas. That may be an admirable quality of the book: more facts, less polemics. Stern's analysis, nevertheless, lacks the unflinching

examination of the East India Company's cruelties and chaos that readers can find, for instance, in William Dalrymple's *The Anarchy*. By comparison, Stern's account sanitizes the record of European company-states, which were directly responsible for unspeakable atrocities, including famine, torture, rape, murder, and enslavement.

Gargantuan private companies today occasionally liken their size and success to yesteryear's corporate behemoths. Former Google executive Dan Doctoroff called Alphabet, Google's parent company, the "single most ambitious company that has ever existed," with the possible exception of the "Dutch East India Company, [which] had the power to wage war." But others condemn the postcolonial dimensions of today's capitalism, sometimes pairing present-day market forces with latter-day historical injustices to drum up outrage. Anupam Mittal, People Group's founder and CEO, bristled at Google's new billing system, calling the corporate giant the "Digital East India Company" and its policies "neocolonialism at its worst," likening its commissions to *lagaan*, a tribute that Indian serfs in centuries past paid from their harvests to feudal lords.

Governments and corporations today can and must learn from the global giants that funded and drove Europe's empires. These companies, launched as capitalist enterprises, rapidly became public-private partnerships, acquiring and maintaining territory while transcending sovereign boundaries and often remaining at arm's length from the laws of sovereign states. Much like some of today's multinational corporations, they were masterful at lobbying, bribing, and creating new company structures and forms to avoid state-driven legislation that, more often than not, failed to rein them in. The U.S. Congress's recent questioning of Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook's outsize influence on political outcomes had certain parallels with Burke's eighteenth-century interrogation of Hastings in Parliament.

Such necessary critiques can be unsatisfying in the face of global existential crises that demand solutions rather than handwringing and finger wagging. Whether it be the East India Company or Facebook, multinational companies have often exploited state weaknesses and outright failure. One just needs to cast an eye at today's global commons—from technological infrastructure and mass digital communication to basic needs such as food and financial credit—to see the ways in which states are failing and dependent on public-private partnerships, often fully outsourcing some responsibilities to private actors. Multinational corporations will play an essential role in finding solutions for the crucial issues of the age, including climate change, inequality, and artificial intelligence.

Stern offers, in an earlier essay, a possible path forward. The centuries-old lesson from the East India Company and others like it is to acknowledge the limitations of domestic and municipal laws in reining in multinational corporations that operate with state-like power and influence. Perhaps it's time to reimagine, in Stern's words, "global governance . . . to include corporations not as subjects but as actors" whose "rights and obligations" are regulated by international law.

Recent Books

Political and Legal

G. JOHN IKENBERRY

The Civic Bargain: How Democracy Survives
BY BROOK MANVILLE AND JOSH OBER. Princeton University Press, 2023, 312 pp.

Manville and Ober urge defenders of liberal democracy to take the long view. The book provides fascinating portraits of four great breakthroughs in citizen self-rule: classical Athens, republican Rome, parliamentary Great Britain, and the United States. Each was a world-historical experiment in building collective self-government; politics, that is, without a boss. What allowed these democratic experiments to endure for centuries? Manville and Ober argue that despite their manifold differences, they shared a core set of features. They built institutions that divided and dispersed political authority, creating procedures for collective decision-making. They fostered trust and a spirit of compromise. They conceived of themselves as organic, evolving entities rather than as sets of static players. They understood the importance of civic education, which reinforced the norms of citizenship rights and responsibilities. Most important, Manville and Ober argue, the great democracies survived because they forged and maintained a "civic bargain," a political pact about who is a citizen, how decisions are made, and the distribution of responsibilities and entitlements. As a result, these democracies were able to persevere through recurring crises and face down existential threats.

Authoritarian Century: Omens of a Post-Liberal Future
BY AZEEM IBRAHIM. Hurst, 2022, 336 pp.

Ibrahim argues that the ongoing authoritarian and populist backlash to liberalism is rooted in the fragile core of the liberal project itself. From its Enlightenment beginnings onward, liberalism's guiding belief has been that human beings have equal and inherent moral worth; the grand task of liberalism is to bring more fully into existence a society in which people are treated with dignity and are free to pursue their own well-being. A liberal society is ultimately a "work in progress," but its

legitimacy rests on its continuous movement toward the ideals of openness and pluralism. The problem, Ibrahim claims, is that this model is always threatened by reactionary forces that do not want to live in an open, multicultural society and by critics who doubt that liberalism can guarantee sufficient progress. The failings of liberal democracy—including the corruption of elites, inequality, and economic stagnation—have led to a loss of faith in public institutions and a dangerous creeping rejection of the entire model of liberal society. Ibrahim does not offer a silver bullet; he acknowledges liberalism's failings, looks for ways to reform and strengthen laws and democratic processes, and insists that only liberal values have the capacity to guide the world to a better future.

Global Policymaking: The Patchwork of Global Governance
BY VINCENT POULIOT AND JEAN-PHILIPPE THÉRIEN. Cambridge University Press, 2023, 294 pp.

Focusing on the United Nations and its ecosystem of summits, assemblies, and commissions, Pouliot and Thérien find, perhaps not surprisingly, that the process of global governance tends to be chaotic and haphazard. The term of art they use to describe global policymaking is bricolage—a French word for tinkering that nicely captures the improvisational, patchwork character of such governance. The book looks closely at the operations of the United Nations in sustainable development, human rights, and the protection of civilians in war. In each area, the authors find governments, NGOs, and international bureaucrats caught in inherently unresolvable clashes of values and interests. The UN's 2005 initiative to create the Human Rights Commission, for instance, revealed tensions among countries from the global North and South and required the papering over of deep disagreements about sovereignty, the role of experts, the inclusion of NGOs, and the universality of rights. Global governance is a story of politics and social conflict, in which the costs and benefits of outcomes are unequally distributed, and values and worldviews stubbornly resist calls for harmony and consensus. Policymakers cannot make the world better if they do not understand how it works.

The United Nations as Leviathan: Global Governance in the Post-American World
BY ROLAND RICH. Rowman & Littlefield, 2022, 296 pp.

For many years after the end of the Cold War, the United States played the role of a benign hegemon, stabilizing the global system, providing public goods, and fostering multilateral problem solving. Rich, an Australian diplomat, contends that this approach to world order has now broken down, and in the emerging "post-American world," the United Nations is the only body capable of generating a peaceful and cooperative order. Taking a leaf from the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes's famous treatise, the book makes the case for turning the UN into a sort of benign Leviathan. Governments around the world should cede some authority to the global body to craft solutions and build coalitions to tackle pressing problems. Membership

should be extended beyond nation-states to the wider constituencies of global business and civil society. The secretary-general should not be selected by the permanent five member states of the Security Council but by the wider General Assembly. Rich proposes that the UN should become less reliant on funding from its member states—a dependence that limits and shapes its operations. Instead, an international tax on currency transactions or airline travel could become a direct source of funding for the UN and give it the independence to step out of the shadows of the state system. Rich recognizes the major obstacles to reforming the UN but suggests that growing crises and dangers make failure to reform the institution even more unthinkable.

Economic, Social, and Environmental

BARRY EICHENGREEN

Europe's Coming of Age
BY LOUKAS TSOUKALIS. Polity, 2022, 246 pp.

In this short, elegant book, Tsoukalis draws on a lifetime of scholarship on European integration to argue that the European Union can exert a moderating influence in a world of polarized great powers. Europe can provide leadership on several global issues, such as data privacy and the green energy transition, where China and the United States are at odds. Yet the EU struggles to reconcile the imperatives of competing in the global economy with the need to fulfill its domestic social contracts. Its member states are burdened by heavy debts and unfavorable demographics. Internal rifts—such as the battle over the United Kingdom's exit from the EU and disputes between the European Commission and the Polish and Hungarian governments—show that not everyone is happy with the EU's direction. But to guarantee Europe's prosperity, liberty, and security, the only way forward is deeper and wider integration. The EU needs a foreign policy focused on its neighborhood and characterized by a combination of engagement and containment. Advancing this policy may require creating a quasi-federal polity freed of the requirements of unanimity that govern—some would say hinder—EU decision-making. A subset of member states may have to move in this direction on their own. Doing so will not be easy, but as Tsoukalis argues, echoing former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, there is no alternative.

The Corporation in the Twentieth Century: The History of American Business Enterprise
BY RICHARD N. LANGLOIS. Princeton University Press, 2023, 816 pp.

Langlois follows the business historian Alfred Chandler in describing the origins of the modern business enterprise in terms of technological developments. The rise to dominance of the large, multidivisional corporation in the early twentieth century, Langlois shows, reflected the advent of steam power, electricity, and nationwide transportations system. But it

also stemmed from the collapse of anonymous "arm's-length markets" in the Great Depression and the rise of antitrust policies favoring integrated companies over cartels. Unlike Chandler, whose seminal book on the rise of the modern corporation, The Visible Hand, was published in the 1970s, when the large corporation was at its apogee, Langlois questions whether businesses will inevitably seek to organize production internally, within the corporation, rather than externally, via markets. Indeed, no sooner did Chandler detail the advantages of the large, vertically integrated firm than this corporate form went into decline. Trade liberalization, financial deregulation, and new information technologies facilitated outsourcing, contract production, and just-in-time inventory management, giving rise to a very different kind of American corporation, as epitomized by the likes of the technology firms Apple and Dell, which do much of their manufacturing through contractors abroad. How markets and corporations will interact in the future, Langlois concludes, will depend on technological developments but also on political decisions by those responsible for macroeconomic, financial, and trade policies.

We Need to Talk About Inflation: 14 Urgent Lessons From the Last 2,000 Years
BY STEPHEN D. KING. Yale University Press, 2023, 240 pp.

An economist, an adviser to investment banks, and a public intellectual, King ruminates on the return of inflation. The author was among those who warned that inflation was on the horizon in 2021 and cautioned that it was unlikely to be transitory. His focus here is on the pressures facing central banks and the misjudgments they make, specifically on monetary policies. He attributes these errors in some cases to flawed economic models, and in others to political pressures. A fuller account of the return of inflation would have placed more emphasis on the effects of COVID-19, including both pandemic-related supply chain disruptions and the fiscal measures adopted by governments in response. King points to a combination of monetary policy rules and central bank independence as the best defense against inflation but concedes, somewhat dispiritingly, that politics tend to trump economics. Inevitably, central banks find it difficult to counter political pressure to turn on the monetary taps. In reaching this conclusion, King channels Arthur Burns, the U.S. Federal Reserve chair who presided over the Great Inflation of the 1970s and who despaired over the inability of central bankers to resist the coercion of politicians.

Seven Crashes: The Economic Crises That Shaped Globalization
BY HAROLD JAMES. Yale University Press, 2023, 376 pp.

Most histories of economic and financial crises focus on episodes when spending collapsed owing to deficient aggregate demand, such as the Great Depression of the 1930s, or the global financial crisis of 2008–9. Inspired by the economic crisis that COVID-19 spawned, James looks instead at crashes caused by supply-side disruptions, including the Great Famine

affecting Ireland and much of Europe in the 1840s, disruptions to international trade and finance owing to World War I, and the 1970s oil shocks. These crises elicited a nationalist response, as governments scrambled to secure essential supplies, in the process deepening their involvement in the economy. Yet these supply-linked crashes also deepened globalization, as banks, firms, and governments sought to strengthen the weak links in supply chains that prompted the crisis in the first place. The crash of the 1840s encouraged the construction of global railway and telegraph networks, facilitating the growth of a global grain trade. The crisis of the 1970s sped containerization and spurred regional and multilateral trade liberalization. The Great Lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the diffusion of remote work and digitization. The author concludes, optimistically, that "we learn most when the present is most dismal."

Military, Scientific, and Technological

LAWRENCE D. FREEDMAN

The Origins of Victory: How Disruptive Military Innovation Determines the Fates of Great Powers
BY ANDREW F. KREPINEVICH, JR.
Yale University Press, 2023, 568 pp.

Krepinevich, an influential figure in U.S. military circles, offers an update on the development of his ideas since he first came to the fore in the early 1990s, when he highlighted "the revolution in military-technical affairs" as militaries began marshaling sensors, advanced communications systems, and accurate weapons to more efficiently use their firepower. He now argues that the United States no longer enjoys the competitive advantage it gained from the innovations of the 1990s. Other countries have caught up in adopting their own systems of precision warfare. To regain its edge, the United States will need to find the next form of disruptive innovation, whether through artificial intelligence, quantum computing, synthetic biology, or hypersonics. He turns to past cases for guidance: the Royal Navy's commitment to Dreadnought-class ships in the early twentieth century, for instance, followed by the U.S. embrace of aircraft carriers; the revival of the German army after its defeat in World War I; and the creation of the "precision system" by the United States, starting with Vietnam and ending with Desert Storm in 1991. His analysis is full of absorbing detail although his approach risks overstating technology as the driver of change. Perhaps wisely, he has not yet sought to incorporate lessons from the Russian war in Ukraine, although these might challenge some of his assumptions.

Holding Their Breath: How the Allies Confronted the Threat of Chemical Warfare in World War II
BY M. GIRARD DORSEY. Cornell University Press, 2023, 306 pp.

The 1925 Geneva Protocol banning the use of poison gas grew out of the revulsion the weapon caused during World War I. Countries agreed to

the ban despite claims that poison gas was more humane than other weapons—and despite the lack of any means of enforcing the ban other than retaliating in kind. Other international agreements, such as the 1936 Second London Naval Treaty that granted merchant vessels some protection against submarines, collapsed, but this protocol held during World War II. The major powers continued to develop chemical weapons, and the British government took the precaution of distributing gas masks to the population. Still, no chemical weapons were used in combat during the war. Drawing on extensive research in British, Canadian, and U.S. archives, Dorsey demonstrates that these countries actively considered using poison gas, with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill most willing to deploy it. Dorsey shows that although Allied leaders were aware of the normative and legal constraints preventing them from turning to the weapon, they discussed its possible use in planning for a German invasion of the United Kingdom in 1940, the liberation of occupied Europe in 1944, responses to the V-1 and V-2 missile attacks on London, and the invasion of Japan.

Original Sin: Power, Technology, and War in Outer Space
BY BLEDDYN E. BOWEN. Oxford University Press, 2023, 256 pp.

The "original sin" of the book's title is that space technologies were developed not for the collective benefit of humankind but for their military applications. Bowen sees the associated technologies as tainted and worries that space has become a competitive and dangerous domain. But he acknowledges that as sins go, this one may not be wholly original. Terrestrial affairs have also long been influenced by military considerations. To stick with the biblical metaphor, this book is a comprehensive and thorough account of the particular "fall" of developing space-related technologies with military uses. Bowen accepts that there can be no return to a lost Eden but hopes that countries can avoid militarizing space so much that they lose opportunities for beneficial cooperation. He notes that space-based military systems can be used in earthly conflicts, and he insists that space should not be imagined as a military "high ground" where battles will be fought far removed from earth but rather as a "coastal or littoral zone" close to terra firma.

Brave Men
BY ERNIE PYLE. Penguin Random House, 2023, 544 pp.

The Soldier's Truth: Ernie Pyle and the Story of World War II
BY DAVID CHRISINGER. Penguin Random House, 2023, 400 pp.

Two books revisit the life and vision of Pyle, one of the great American war correspondents of World War II. He reported from across the globe, from the battle of Britain in 1940 to his death during the battle of Okinawa in early 1945. His interest was less in strategy and tactics than in the human side of war. He opted for a "worm's eye view," he said, fascinated by how

ordinary people, especially his beloved infantrymen, coped with the demands of long and grueling campaigns. The welcome republication of Brave Men, his 1944 book based on his dispatches from the Allied landings in Sicily, Anzio (near Rome), and Normandy, and their aftermaths, demonstrate why he found such a large and appreciative audience. In sharp, simple prose, Pyle explained to those back home the conditions of life and death on the front. The writing remains fresh and perceptive, with short descriptions of the personalities and backgrounds of those he met but also helpful details on the work of engineers constructing routes past damaged bridges and the role of frontline medics.

Brave Men is introduced by Chrisinger, whose own book investigates what it was that drove Pyle to keep returning to the front to endure all its associated dangers, privations, and stresses when he could otherwise have enjoyed his house in New Mexico and made the most of his professional and financial success. Chrisinger points to Pyle's natural affinity for frontline soldiers and his desire to tell their stories but also to his complicated personal life. His wife, Jenny, had bipolar disorder and was, on occasion, suicidal. Pyle had his own struggles, with bouts of depression and drinking. This book is not a full-scale biography, but with liberal quotes from Pyle's columns and letters home to his wife and friends, it is a nicely constructed and well-written account of these critical years of the war. Chrisinger travels to the sites of the landings and battles that the war correspondent covered 80 years ago to see what remains and to provide more context than Pyle could about why and how those battles were fought.

The United States

JESSICA T. MATHEWS

Hand-Off: The Foreign Policy George W. Bush Passed to Barack Obama
EDITED BY STEPHEN J. HADLEY, PETER D. FEAVER, WILLIAM C. INBODEN, AND MEGHAN L. O'SULLIVAN. Rowman & Littlefield, 2023, 774 pp.

At the end of a U.S. presidential administration, outgoing National Security Council staff prepare transition memos for the incoming team. The memos are classified and usually not publicly available for decades. Never have they been declassified (with surprisingly minor redactions) and published for a general audience as in this volume edited by Stephen Hadley, President George W. Bush's last national security adviser. Reflecting the Bush administration's preoccupations, a quarter of the original 40 memos dealt with the "war on terror." The president's so-called Freedom Agenda—his desire to aggressively spread democracy around the world—is also a central theme. Hadley and his predecessor Condoleezza Rice, who later served as Secretary of State, write that Bush fully understood that "freedom and democracy could not be imposed by force" but then label the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq "special cases." The volume does not attempt to be a balanced history of Bush's foreign policy. There is, for example, a single chapter on China and three on various diseases. The treatment of Iraq begins three years after the president's fateful decision to invade. Too often, the postscripts that accompany the memos—mostly written by the original authors reflecting on their policy's subsequent ups and downs—come across as an apologia. Still, the book is a valuable window into what senior officials were thinking at the time and makes a notable contribution to governmental transparency.

King: A Life
BY JONATHAN EIG. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2023, 688 pp.

Eig brilliantly portrays the many dimensions of the civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., in a book readers will find hard to put down. King appears as an extraordinarily courageous, deeply troubled, terribly flawed, and incredibly talented man who did nothing less than change the country in a career that spanned only 13 years. Eig has been able to draw on sources unavailable to previous biographers, including memories recorded by King's wife and father, thousands of newly released FBI documents, and extensive records belonging to the official historian of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference of which King was the founding president. Using this material, Eig sheds new light on King's profoundly important first 25 years, his relationship with his difficult father, and the FBI's relentless campaign against him. The FBI's appalling, unceasing surveillance—including a blackmail package that suggested he commit suicide—was carried out with U.S. President Lyndon Johnson's knowledge and support. For years before his assassination in 1968, King endured constant physical violence; he was imprisoned

29 times, shot at, stabbed, and punched in the face. And yet he was more than a martyr. As Eig notes, "In hallowing King, we have hollowed him." Eig's balanced treatment of King's manifest greatness and his human flaws, including his sexual infidelity, turns an icon back into a man and produces a biography that will be very difficult to surpass.

Six Stops on the National Security Tour: Rethinking Wartime Economies
BY MIRIAM PEMBERTON.
Routledge, 2022, 234 pp.

Dying by the Sword: The Militarization of U.S. Foreign Policy
BY MONICA DUFFY TOFT AND SIDITA KUSHI. Oxford University Press, 2023, 304 pp.

Two volumes address the consequences of what President Dwight Eisenhower famously warned of in 1961, when he described the growing "military-industrial complex," the huge military establishment that would have "grave . . . economic, political, even spiritual . . . implications" that would be felt "in every city, every Statehouse, every office of the Federal government." Pemberton focuses on the military budget, which is now nearing $1 trillion per year: how it became so big, what it funds, its impacts on communities around the country, and how the linked forces of members of Congress, the military, and defense contractors work together to push its constant growth. The military's workforce, which includes active-duty soldiers, reserves, and civilians, exceeds three million people. In addition to thousands of bases within the United States, the military maintains 750 bases in at least 85 countries. No other country owns more than a handful of bases abroad. The U.S. defense budget is larger than the rest of the discretionary federal budget combined, and private contractors now account for more than half of it. According to Pemberton, a well-funded force of congressional lobbyists and a revolving door that guides retired generals and admirals into senior roles at arms manufacturers keep the money flowing into private hands even in the absence of clear threats. At first glance, communities should be expected to benefit from military projects funded with huge sums of federal money. Yet a majority of the states that have received the most military contracts over many decades have poverty rates above the national average.

Toft and Kushi work from an ambitious data set they have created that covers every U.S. military intervention since 1776—a total of 392 operations by their reckoning, more than double the number covered in other such compilations. They classify interventions by type, region, causes, consequences, and length and supplement the empirical data with case histories. The authors argue that the data reveal patterns of U.S. military activity through six historical eras they succinctly define in terms of the country's prime strategic objective at the moment, from winning independence from Great Britain in the 1700s to fighting jihadist terrorism in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Since the end of the Cold War, the data show a sharp uptick in the use of force, more interventions in semi-democratic countries, shifts in objectives, and a widening gap in the level

of hostility between the United States and the countries in which it chooses to intervene. This amounts, they argue, to Washington's increasing propensity to use "force-first diplomacy" in the face of ill-defined threats. These interventions frequently backfire and threaten long-term national interests. The authors' conclusions go beyond what their numbers prove, but the data they have amassed provide powerful insights into the trajectory of both recent and long-term American foreign policy that deserve close attention.

Merchants of the Right: Gun Sellers and the Crisis of American Democracy BY JENNIFER CARLSON. Princeton University Press, 2023, 288 pp.

In the United States, there are 100 million more guns than people, mass shootings occur nearly twice a day on average, and the country has by far the weakest gun laws of any peer country. In attempting to understand these facts, Carlson largely eschews the familiar focus on the National Rifle Association, the Republican Party, and the Supreme Court. Instead, she takes a bottom-up approach by delving into the political and cultural views of gun sellers and gun buyers. She finds that gun ownership has become an increasingly accepted way of dealing with feelings of insecurity in the United States' volatile democracy. Guns represent an "ethic of security (i.e., guns as a bulwark against victimization)" but also an "understanding of freedom (i.e., guns as a vehicle of individual rights)" and "a particular stance against the state (i.e., guns as a defense against government control and liberal indoctrination)." In this subculture, steeped in conspiracy theories, guns are not simply a means of personal protection but a symbol of political identity and empowerment. If Carlson's conclusion is correct, it leads to the profoundly depressing notion that reducing gun violence in the United States will depend not merely on finding acceptable legislative formulas for gun control but on the vastly larger task of somehow mending the deadly partisanship and polarization that currently grip the country.

Western Europe

ANDREW MORAVCSIK

Homelands: A Personal History of Europe BY TIMOTHY GARTON ASH. Yale University Press, 2023, 384 pp.

For nearly a half century, Garton Ash has commented on central and eastern Europe using an approach that melds scholarship and journalism. This book's organization as a chronology from World War II to the present hints at the rigor of scholarship, yet its division into short vignettes tilts decisively toward journalism. The analysis is peppered with visceral images and juicy personal anecdotes, which convey the sense of being right where history was happening. Ash's narrative peaks with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989—a defining moment for him, when intellectual engagement, pragmatic politics, and moral legitimacy seemed to converge in a just cause. Yet the moment did not last. In

many countries, communist systems gave way to governments with questionable democratic credentials. The European Union is strong and stable, but it has forsaken its founding aspiration to become a United States of Europe. Migration makes European societies more diverse culturally and strong economically but now spawns populist protest and rancor. The borders within Europe are more open than ever before, yet proponents of liberal internationalism are on the back foot. Ash clearly remains convinced that defending, improving, and extending his youthful ideal of a Europe free, whole, and diverse is necessary. He admits, however, that a lifetime of intellectual striving toward that goal has not revealed how it can be achieved.

Protecting the Ballot: How First-Wave Democracies Ended Electoral Corruption
BY ISABELA MARES. Princeton University Press, 2022, 264 pp.

In the late nineteenth century, many liberal idealists believed that fair elections with universal suffrage could solve social problems, if only elites did not frustrate their outcomes through vote buying, ballot stuffing, intimidation, or selectively targeted public patronage. A few decades later, incumbent politicians in many countries banned such practices even though such a move threatened their own political survival. In this study of Belgium, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, Mares argues that limits on electoral corruption were not produced by a popular uprising from below but rather by splits among elites themselves. Those elites with fewer private resources or less access to government largess rebelled, objecting to the spiraling cost of elections and forming complex coalitions to dampen the power of insiders. Today, Western democracies face similar challenges: special interests and wealthy elites use gerrymandering, enormous campaign spending, control of the press, manipulation of social media, and foreign disinformation to block change, leaving voters ever more dissatisfied. Yet it is far from clear how societies can ensure fairer elections. If this study is correct, reform in more institutionally inflexible, decentralized, and socially unequal polities, such as the United States, will prove especially challenging.

Untied Kingdom: A Global History of the End of Britain
BY STUART WARD. Cambridge University Press, 2023, 550 pp.

This book investigates a piece of unspoken conventional wisdom: since the loss of the empire, the British people have become unsure what their country represents, an uncertainty that may well trigger the dissolution of the United Kingdom itself. Oddly, given that the author fixes on this hypothetical future, the book itself is almost entirely about the past. Indeed, it barely touches on the current movement for devolution within the United Kingdom. Rather, the author, an imperial historian, details with telling anecdotes how "British" many imperial and formerly imperial subjects felt themselves to be over the past century, not least those who immigrated to the United

Kingdom over the past half century. Many of these individuals did not reject the United Kingdom but were rejected by the British, who refused to recognize them as equal co-nationals of the British Commonwealth. That rejection encouraged the process of decolonization that resulted in the independence of dozens of countries across the world in the twentieth century. Today we see the melancholy result of this complex process: a post-Brexit United Kingdom, unsure of its own identity, beset with challenges from within, and struggling unsuccessfully to retain the sovereign position in world politics it once held.

1923: The Crisis of German Democracy in the Year of Hitler's Putsch
BY MARK WILLIAM JONES. Basic Books, 2023, 432 pp.

This book revisits German history in 1923, the year of Hitler's failed Beer Hall Putsch, when his Nazi Party attempted to seize the city hall in Munich. The putsch took place in Bavaria, Germany's most conservative region, where even moderate conservatives were anti-republican opponents of the Weimar government in Berlin. Hitler was jailed, but he rightly expected that the support he had enjoyed on the moderate right, and the knowledge he had of their own plotting against the Weimar Republic, would assure a swift release. Hitler remained a marginal figure in German politics for almost a decade, until the Great Depression hit, in 1929, and fanned public discontent that he and his comrades exploited. The author, a professor of history in Ireland, claims that this experience shows that moderates should have used the failed 1923 putsch to crush Hitler and the Nazi Party forever. Yet one might conclude instead that German elites should have done just as they did after World War II: tolerating peaceful extremists, while quietly working with social democrats to strengthen the German economy and build up economic links with the rest of the world to shield against future economic crisis.

Between Brussels and Beijing: The Transatlantic Response to the Chinese Presence in the Baltic Sea Region
EDITED BY OLEVS NIKERS AND OTTO TABUNS. Lynne Rienner, 2023, 225 pp.

This book, published by the Jamestown Foundation in cooperation with policy analysts in Latvia, contains case studies assembled to show why Scandinavian and Baltic countries, Germany, and Poland should be more vigilant with regard to economic and political relations with China. Beijing systematically uses investment and trade, research cooperation, and, in particular, ownership in foreign infrastructure to bolster its defense industry, grow its economy, and realize geopolitical ends. In recent years, Europe has also begun debating how to protect itself against such tactics but remains undecided and divided over exactly how to proceed. Accordingly, it is somewhat surprising that, beyond showing that China seeks to acquire dual-use firms and presses small countries to support its views on Taiwan, the authors present surprisingly little evidence of outright Chinese malfeasance.

Western Hemisphere

RICHARD FEINBERG

Learning Diplomacy: An Oral History. BY LUIGI R. EINAUDI. Xlibris, 2023, 686 pp.

Einaudi, who served for decades in the U.S. State Department and later worked at the Organization of American States, has gifted us an erudite, detailed, and at times dramatic personal account of the major conflicts that transfixed inter-American relations during his distinguished tenure. Very much the State Department professional, Einaudi relished the diplomatic life—the business of crafting memos and speeches, networking, coordinating interagency decisions, resolving deeply rooted interstate conflicts—even as he recoiled at the disruptions that domestic politics caused and sorely resented White House meddling. Although professing nonpartisanship, Einaudi seems most comfortable with Republicans who saw themselves as realists: he disdains President Jimmy Carter's human rights advocacy and faults President Bill Clinton's Haiti intervention but sympathizes with President Ronald Reagan's support for the Nicaraguan contra fighters. He discounts the overwhelming evidence that President Richard Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger supported the ouster of Chilean President Salvador Allende in 1973. But Einaudi played the long game, surviving the rotations in U.S. presidential politics by judiciously staying just below the radar and by virtue of his intellectual gravitas, bureaucratic savvy, and indefatigable work ethic. A consummate diplomat, Einaudi is not above settling scores; his pointed, if understated, barbs add spice to this most valuable historical record.

Dictators in Twenty-First-Century Latin America: Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Ecuador, and El Salvador. BY OSVALDO HURTADO. TRANSLATED BY BARBARA SIPE. Rowman & Littlefield, 2022, 308 pp.

Hurtado, who served as president of Ecuador from 1981 to 1984, delivers a thunderous, emotive denunciation of his political nemesis, Rafael Correa, who was president of the country from 2007 to 2017. Hurtado painstakingly details the machinations through which Correa undid the checks and balances of liberal, representative democracy and concentrated power in his own hands. In addition, Hurtado locates Ecuador in the broader context of democratic backsliding elsewhere in Latin America with condensed but compelling comparative studies of other autocrats, including Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, Evo Morales in Bolivia, Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, and Nayib Bukele in El Salvador. Hurtado explicitly avoids much discussion of socioeconomics; in his country studies, the major causes underlying democratic backsliding appear to be the decline of traditional political parties and the opportunistic ambitions of emerging caudillos who seize on a common "deficit of cultural values and civic virtues." Hurtado accepts that elections and public referendums often facilitated these

authoritarian revivals, but he does not consider whether liberal institutions are always good fits for certain highly fragmented societies enduring severe demographic stress. Nevertheless, Hurtado's book is quite timely, as Ecuador is again facing political upheaval—and Correa's possible return to power.

Falling Long-Term Growth Prospects: Trends, Expectations, and Policies
EDITED BY M. AYHAN KOSE AND FRANZISKA OHNSORGE. World Bank Group, 2023, 564 pp.

This important, disturbing study foresees stagnation in many developing economies during the remainder of this decade. In Latin America and the Caribbean, growth will likely stall at around two percent per year. The factors depressing growth include insufficient and inefficient investment, disappointing labor productivity, the diminishing growth of labor forces as populations age, and the sluggish merchandise trade. Global financial crises, climate change, and the COVID-19 pandemic have added to these woes. The World Bank experts repeat their standard policy solutions but seem to doubt that these measures will be widely adopted: improving the climate for private investment, widening the labor-market participation of women and older workers, raising the quality of K–12 education, and promoting international trade in services through enhanced language and digital skills. They offer one note of optimism, however. Given Latin America's wealth in the natural resources necessary for green technologies, such as lithium and copper, investments in the transition away from fossil fuels could boost growth in the region. But if the World Bank's more pessimistic projections hold, political volatility will surely follow. Incumbent governments will likely be defeated at the ballot box—or attempt to maintain power through increasingly authoritarian methods.

Voyager: Constellations of Memory
BY NONA FERNÁNDEZ. TRANSLATED BY NATASHA WIMMER. Graywolf Press, 2023, 136 pp.

In this imaginative, poetic work—part memoir, part novella—Fernández braids the mysteries of the cosmos, the neural map of the human brain, and the traumas of contemporary Chilean history. Intertwining the personal and the historic, Fernández recalls her mother's agitation at watching Jaime Guzmán, a prominent supporter of the 17-year military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet, on television—and her quiet glee when Guzmán was assassinated in 1991. Fernández recounts her own participation in a poignant memorial ceremony for 26 victims of a military death squad in Chile's Atacama Desert, one of the world's best spots for astronomical observations. Fernández is critical of her son's high school for preventing him from suggesting publicly that Pinochet's many political supporters should not have the right to participate in a democracy. But in her telling of Chile's past, Fernández omits the cataclysmic disruptions that rocked the country under the ill-fated socialist coalition of Pinochet's predecessor, President Salvador Allende. Chile's current left-leaning government often makes the same

cognitive error and thus has failed, so far, to construct a historical narrative that rings true to most Chileans, regardless of their political inclinations.

Narcas: The Secret Rise of Women in Latin America's Cartels.
BY DEBORAH BONELLO. Beacon Press, 2023, 176 pp.

As a journalist for Vice News, Bonello spent over a decade traveling in Colombia, Mexico, and Central America in search of women entrepreneurs working the global supply chains of illegal narcotics. Bonello attempts, with some success, to subvert the stereotypes of women as passive victims or as gangster molls serving as mere accessories for dominant males. Instead, she finds strong females boldly seeking money, power, and status for themselves and their families. These uncompromising executives routinely employ violence as a business tactic and may even relish the accompanying adrenaline rush. Traveling the dusty back roads of Honduras and Guatemala, where the formidable cartels easily co-opt or displace local authorities, the reader grasps the futility of the endless "war on drugs." Bonello instructively distinguishes between the rational business of the international narcotics trade and the sadistic, misogynist gangs in El Salvador, where an old-school patriarchy prevails. Bonello's own point of view is ambiguous. She is thrilled to witness female empowerment and admittedly sympathetic to her subjects and their rags-to-riches stories, but she also finds herself naturally repelled by the inescapable bloodletting that fills the lives they've chosen.

Eastern Europe and Former Soviet Republics

MARIA LIPMAN

German Blood, Slavic Soil: How Nazi Königsberg Became Soviet Kaliningrad
BY NICOLE EATON. Cornell University Press, 2023, 330 pp.

Eaton's extremely rich historical account sheds light on the Kremlin's decision in late 1947 to expel the German population of Königsberg, the region that would become the Soviet territory (and now Russian exclave) of Kaliningrad. At the outset of World War II, as Nazi Germany pushed into eastern European countries, Königsberg's German leadership engaged in the brutal domination and extermination of Jews and Slavs. As the war turned against Germany, the Red Army laid siege to Königsberg, forcing many Germans to flee. Around the same time, reports emerged of the Nazi killing of over 7,000 Jewish prisoners from a nearby concentration camp. In contrast to their entry into Eastern European countries as liberators, Soviet soldiers entered Königsberg in 1945 as avengers, engaging in months of pillage, rape, and murder. Despite this brutality, Eaton emphasizes that the eviction of the remaining Germans was not a foregone conclusion. From around the middle of 1946, the local Soviet authorities made a strong effort to integrate and Sovietize local Germans. But faced with the extreme

devastation and abominably high death rate in the region, they eventually chose to scapegoat Germans as irredeemable fascists. Although as communists these officials espoused internationalism and rejected racism, they embraced a racist approach to Germans, whom they treated as an inferior people. This hastened the Kremlin's order to expel the community in 1947.

After Violence: Russia's Beslan School Massacre and the Peace That Followed
BY DEBRA JAVELINE. Oxford University Press, 2023, 600 pp.

In 2004, a school in Beslan, a small town in the Russian republic of North Ossetia, became the scene of a horrendous terrorist attack by Chechen militants in which over 1,100 people were taken hostage. The attack was followed by a bungled rescue operation that saw over 330 people killed, most of them children. Javeline, a political scientist, explains how, despite credible predictions that Ossetians might take part in retaliatory anti-Chechen ethnic violence, Beslan's survivors engaged instead in tenacious, if mostly futile, political activism. In her meticulous research, based on an original survey of over 1,000 survivors and their families, as well as focus groups, media accounts, activists' reports, and much more, Javeline studied the emotions and actions of people in the wake of the tragedy in order to determine which emotions made people receptive to the prospect of retaliatory violence and which drove people toward peaceful political activism. Unlike earlier research, her rigorous analysis shows that feelings of anger and hatred did not produce support for violence. Instead, and perhaps paradoxically, those emotions generated political participation, as did a sense of alienation from the Russian government.

State-Building as Lawfare: Custom, Sharia, and State Law in Postwar Chechnya
BY EGOR LAZAREV. Cambridge University Press, 2023, 330 pp.

Contrary to many conventional accounts that portray Chechnya as a lawless realm, the political scientist Lazarev's well-researched study draws on extensive field work to describe this region of Russia as a scene of legal pluralism: Russian state law combines with *adat* (customary law) and sharia (Islamic law). Ramzan Kadyrov, Chechnya's tyrant and a staunch ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin, uses Russian state law while strongly emphasizing his commitment to Islam. By promoting sharia as well as *adat*, he ensures the support of various segments of Chechen society and its elites. Most important, he keeps all authorities—whether legal, religious, or traditional—under tight control. The consolidation of the regime he has built grants Kadyrov a high degree of autonomy from the federal center (notwithstanding Chechnya's heavy economic dependence on Moscow). Lazarev also documents Chechen preferences for alternative legal systems. For example, women are much more likely than men to prefer the application of state law, apparently in the hope that it might grant them some protection

in a patriarchal society. Despite the intricacies of its subject, the book is highly readable, its academic narrative interspersed with curious legal cases and episodes from the author's own experience navigating Chechnya.

Babi Yar: A Document in the Form of a Novel; New, Complete, Uncensored Version
BY ANATOLY KUZNETSOV.
Macmillan, 2023, 496 pp.

A blend of memoir and fiction, Kuznetsov's book offers an eyewitness account of the Nazi occupation of Kyiv between 1941 and 1943. A teenager at the time, he lived with his family right next to Babi Yar, a ravine where, in 1941, the Nazis murdered over 33,000 Jews. All together, the Nazis killed about 100,000 people in the same spot, among them Kyiv residents and Soviet prisoners of war. At 14, Kuznetsov started recording what he saw. Those records formed the basis of his book, a story of barbarism, extreme privation, and continual mortal danger. The book's major episodes include a series of explosions on Khreshchatyk, Kyiv's main street, organized by Soviet operatives within days of the start of the Nazi occupation, apparently aimed at turning the Nazis' rage toward the city's residents, who had often welcomed their German occupiers as liberators. This episode and many more were absent from the 1967 Soviet edition of Kuznetsov's chronicle, which was mutilated by Soviet censors. The full version was published in the West after the author's defection in 1969 and has just been republished, 50 years later. To Kuznetsov, Babi Yar was a symbol of wanton savagery committed by two murderous regimes. His condemnation—"I hate you, dictators!"—sounds tragically timely as Russia now wages a brutal war against his native Ukraine.

Red Closet: The Hidden History of Gay Oppression in the USSR
BY RUSTAM ALEXANDER.
Manchester University Press, 2023, 228 pp.

Having published an academic study of gay people in the Soviet Union, Alexander now shares his findings with a broader audience. His collection of true stories of gay life in the Soviet Union opens with a chapter about a young Scottish man who came to Moscow in 1932, attracted by both communist ideas and the lack of legal constraints on gay behavior. When gay sex among consenting males was criminalized the following year, he was so astonished that he wrote a letter to the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin asking for clarification of this sudden change of policy. He never got a response, but at least he was able to safely leave the Soviet Union. Other chapters recount the stories of victims of anti-gay legislation, from Vadim Kozin, one of the most popular Soviet singers of the 1930s, who spent years in the gulag, to unremarkable men and even one KGB officer jailed for their "sexual perversion." During the looser decades that followed Stalin's death, in 1953, a few legal experts dared to argue for the decriminalization of homosexuality. But it remained a criminal offense until 1993, two years after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Middle East

LISA ANDERSON

Locked Out of Development: Insiders and Outsiders in Arab Capitalism
BY STEFFEN HERTOG. Cambridge University Press, 2023, 75 pp.

This brisk, clear, and devastating portrayal of the consequences of decades of misguided economic policy in the Arab world is a bracing, if deeply disheartening, read. Arguing that the Middle East's welfare states of the 1950s and 1960s failed to address the challenges of increasing populations and declining resources, Hertog traces the development of a two-tiered economy in most of the countries of the region, particularly republics such as Algeria, Egypt, Syria, and Tunisia. The insiders in the formal economy—big business and official labor unions—continue today to benefit from their privileged access to everything from regulatory exemptions to generous pensions, while both entrepreneurs and workers in the swelling informal economy are deprived of the legal status that provides such benefits. This dynamic distorts the labor market and inhibits investment in education, promotes cronyism, and blocks genuine reform. Hertog provides data from several monarchies, including Morocco and Jordan, that suggest a version of this dynamic also obtains there. He doesn't extend his analysis to the Gulf states, but he doesn't need to: there, most of the population—well-heeled expatriates and migrant laborers alike—is officially locked out of the world of the insiders.

The One State Reality: What Is Israel/Palestine?
EDITED BY MICHAEL BARNETT, NATHAN J. BROWN, MARC LYNCH, AND SHIBLEY TELHAMI. Cornell University Press, 2023, 372 pp.

An unusually matter-of-fact, sober, and dispassionate exploration of the political institutions and arrangements governing the territory once ruled by the British in their Palestine Mandate, this book is a model of scholarly engagement with challenging political issues. The editors argue that the continued embrace of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian impasse obscures realities on the ground and promotes increasingly irresponsible wishful thinking on the part of policymakers in the United States and Europe. They present a powerful case for fresh and frank analysis. The volume brings together uniformly strong essays by a variety of scholars and experts that explore the religious arguments for Jewish control of the entire territory, the historical dynamics of settler colonialism, the complex rationales for limited and partial citizenship regimes, the Palestinian Authority as a mechanism of indirect rule, and the changing perspectives of the American Jewish community, Arab governments, and U.S. policymakers. Insisting that there is nothing to be gained in continuing to foster the illusion that a two-state solution is possible, the authors urge a candid and clear-eyed acknowledgment of reality: the existence of one state, Israel, governing the entire territory through multiple, separate, and unequal legal and administrative regimes.

The Economic Statecraft of the Gulf Arab States: Deploying Aid, Investment, and Development Across the MENAP
BY KAREN E. YOUNG. I.B. Tauris, 2023, 192 pp.

Over the last 15 years, Gulf states have begun to exercise their considerable economic power more boldly in the Middle East, North Africa, and Pakistan—a region known as the MENAP. The impact of their grants, loans, and investments—both public and private—looms increasingly large. Not only has their engagement with countries in Africa and South Asia furthered growing South-South economic links; it has also helped them eclipse the United States, Europe, and the allied international financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund as donors, investors, and even as political models. Although the Gulf sometimes competes in these recipient regions with an equally audacious Chinese economic statecraft, both China and the Gulf are exporting a model of state capitalism and unapologetic authoritarianism quite at variance with the free market and liberal democracy promoted by the West after the Cold War. Young's detailed and sharp description of the economic paradigms and policies of the Gulf states is an invaluable guide to a complex challenge to the now threadbare economic order promoted by Washington.

Beyond the Lines: Social Networks and Palestinian Militant Organizations in Wartime Lebanon
BY SARAH E. PARKINSON. Cornell University Press, 2023, 270 pp.

Many countries in the Middle East have collapsed in recent decades into multiparty civil wars fueled by region-wide contests. Parkinson seeks to examine how such prolonged strife shapes and reshapes patterns of social identity, affiliation, and agency. She studies an early forerunner of such conflict in the Lebanese Civil War of 1975–90, with its varied and evolving cast of insurgents and occupiers, proxies and patrons. Focusing particularly on several Palestinian militant groups, she traces the relationships forged and reinforced under duress, as extended families regrouped when they lost members and camps, and villages mobilized to provide health care not because they wanted it but because they needed it. When the soldiers are not uniformed officers of the state and the battlefront is not a distant prospect, war becomes part of everyday life: sisters turn into comrades and villages produce battalions. Perhaps not surprisingly, women took on unaccustomed, and often unacknowledged, roles in militant operations, serving as couriers, informants, and occasionally combatants. When the guns fell silent, peacemaking required the difficult unraveling of multiple layers of pride, fear, loyalty, and betrayal.

Order Out of Chaos: Islam, Information, and the Rise and Fall of Social Orders in Iraq
BY DAVID SIDDHARTHA PATEL.
Cornell University Press, 2023, 240 pp.

The increasing number of states whose governments have splintered, dissolved, or simply disappeared in the twenty-first-century Middle East raises questions about how people organize themselves when centralized authority vanishes. In this examination of social and political organization in Basra in the wake of the 2003 U.S. invasion and the subsequent collapse of the Iraqi government, Patel provides a subtle, persuasive answer in documenting the rise of Shiite political leaders and movements in the city. By assessing the results of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in 2003–4 and subsequent visits in 2011, as well as geospatial analysis and electoral data, he shows that the introduction of Friday sermons in Shiite mosques after the fall of Saddam Hussein's government allowed congregants to cooperate in addressing both local concerns such as trash collection and national issues such as elections. The novelty of these sermons, the physical distance of the mosques, and the hierarchical structure of Shiite practice all helped mobilize residents in a way that the bonds of tribe, ideology, and Sunni practice could not.

Asia and Pacific

ANDREW J. NATHAN

No Limits: The Inside Story of China's War With the West
BY ANDREW SMALL. Melville House, 2022, 288 pp.

When and why did China's relations with the West go off the rails? Washington and Tokyo began to feel uneasy about Beijing around 2010, when Chinese policymakers decided that the global financial crisis had at long last tipped the power balance in their favor and started a push for global supremacy. It took longer, about a decade, for policy in western European capitals to catch up. By then, China's aggressiveness in promoting its own components for Europe's information infrastructure and its belligerent conduct during the COVID-19 pandemic had crystallized the consensus that Chinese behavior threatened European security. The last straw was when the Chinese leader Xi Jinping promoted China's relations with Russia from an alliance of convenience to a real partnership just before the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Small, a one-time optimist about China's integration with the West, observed the historic reversal in process as he traveled through Western and Asian capitals in the past decade. He tells the story with a combination of close detail and clear analysis that will inform both specialists and generalists. Xi did come close to achieving a stranglehold over European economies and information

systems and even to splitting the Atlantic alliance, but he pushed too soon and too hard—and now the West seeks to keep China at arm's length.

China's Law of the Sea: The New Rules of Maritime Order
BY ISAAC B. KARDON. Yale University Press, 2023, 416 pp.

Kardon asks the right question: not whether China complies with the so-called rules-based international order but how China—like other countries—seeks to use or change international law to serve its interests. His technical but admirably clear study concerns Beijing's approach to international maritime law, but his analysis can be extended further to other domains such as human rights and international trade law. Kardon turns from the familiar focus on the contested sovereignty of land formations to the less studied issue of who controls the water around such formations—in China's case, those in the South China Sea, the East China Sea, and the Yellow Sea. China has built a large expert bureaucracy to interpret existing rules and articulate new ones, always in ways that strengthen Beijing's claims. It has also built an impressive range of sea-based armed units to impose these theories in action. Chinese interpretations of the law often contradict the letter of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and are seldom accepted by other states. Yet China has often still been able to impose its legal claims. In so doing, Kardon notes, "China is not so much changing the rules as it is reducing their importance."

Sparks: China's Underground Historians and Their Battle for the Future
BY IAN JOHNSON. Oxford University Press, 2023, 400 pp.

Johnson vividly describes the work of independent documentary filmmakers, independent journalists, amateur historians, novelists, and memoirists who obsessively pursue the forbidden truths of totalitarian misrule in China. The documentarian Hu Jie, for instance, produced pioneering films about *Spark*—a pamphlet of dissent—all of whose amateur staff were arrested in 1960 and sent to labor camps after producing just two issues; about the half-mad imprisoned poet Lin Zhao, who was tortured and executed during the Cultural Revolution for criticizing Mao Zedong; and about a middle school deputy headmistress whose students beat her to death during the Cultural Revolution. Documentarian Ai Xiaoming recorded the remote, barren landscape where thousands of political prisoners died by famine in a labor camp in the late 1950s. The freelance journalist Jiang Xue wrote on the Internet about the tragedies of the COVID-19 lockdown in Wuhan. One group of amateur historians produces a free electronic newsletter, and another distributes a free stapled magazine by courier service, both seeking to avoid the official registration requirements for periodicals. Such work is dangerous, and censorship bars most Chinese from seeing it. But these brave videos and writings have found their way abroad through translations into English and platforms such as YouTube, so the facts they document will not be lost.

The Return of the Taliban: Afghanistan After the Americans Left
BY HASSAN ABBAS. Yale University Press, 2023, 320 pp.

This chatty and deeply informed account covers the negotiations that led to the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in 2021, the makeup of the new regime, its religious ideology, its foreign relations, and the many problems it faces now that it governs. The regime is split along numerous fault lines—regional, ethnic, generational, and factional—and is subject to interference from numerous regional powers, including China, India, Iran, Qatar, Russia, and Turkey. The most influential outside power is Pakistan, but relations are strained because of Kabul's tacit support for a militant group that has routinely struck targets within Pakistan in recent years. Most leaders in the new regime are politicians with clerical titles, not serious religious thinkers, and Abbas describes internal factional dynamics as "reminiscent of the Italian mafia." Political fissures are exacerbated by the regime's economic and financial problems and by the challenge from the Islamic State's franchise in the country. Abbas sees fluidity beneath the regime's hard carapace and optimistically suggests that a Western policy of engagement could push the Taliban toward pragmatism. But he does not say whether it would be possible for the regime to relax its harsh policies on the crucial issue of women's rights.

Narratives of Civic Duty: How National Stories Shape Democracy in Asia
BY ARAM HUR. Cornell University Press, 2022, 204 pp.

Classic democratic theory sees civic duty—an individual's willingness to vote, pay taxes, serve in the military, and so on—as a defining feature of a healthy democratic culture, but scholars have not established what circumstances produce this attitude. Analyzing the South Korean experience, Hur suggests that Koreans contribute willingly to the state not because they are more Confucian or more moral than other people but because the twentieth-century struggles against Japanese colonialism, the North Korean invasion, and the postwar military dictatorship forged a belief that Koreans are a distinct race with their own state, which they had to fight for to create and protect. Civic duty is weaker in an ethnically divided society such as Taiwan, Hur's comparison case, because citizens of the majority Taiwanese ethnicity still associate the state with the rule of the minority Chinese mainlanders. She argues that civic duty is shaped by the "national stories" that people tell, which strengthen or weaken links among people, their sense of nationality, and the state. Although she does not explore the subject in great detail, she suggests that different national stories can also strengthen or weaken popular support for authoritarian regimes.

Outsourcing Repression: Everyday State Power in Contemporary China
BY LYNETTE H. ONG. Oxford University Press, 2022, 286 pp.

China's rapid growth in the first decade of the twenty-first century was produced partly by municipal governments seizing massive areas of suburban farmland and older urban residential areas to sell to developers. Ong's penetrating fieldwork over this period revealed how officials were often able to evict residents from their housing without triggering a massive backlash. They either used "thugs for hire" to threaten holdouts or summoned socially connected brokers to encourage people to move voluntarily. With the skillful use of these techniques, officials often achieved "harmonious demolition" at low political cost, transforming the landscape of Chinese conurbations without provoking social turmoil. Hidden behind private actors, the local authorities could violate the rights of citizens and still retain public support.

Victorious in Defeat: The Life and Times of Chiang Kai-shek, China, 1887–1975
BY ALEXANDER V. PANTSOV. TRANSLATED BY STEVEN I. LEVINE. Yale University Press, 2023, 736 pp.

Pantsov draws on Chiang Kai-shek's diaries and Russian archives not used by previous researchers to provide the most intimate account yet of the Chinese Nationalist Party leader's personality, relationships, and dramatic career, which was second in its importance for twentieth-century China only to that of his communist rival, Mao Zedong. The author charts a sure path through the twisting byways of that history, maintaining a focus on Chiang's emotional swings and his ruthless treatment of family members, colleagues, soldiers, and citizens. Chiang emerges as neither the corrupt fascist of standard historiography nor the tragic patriot of recent more favorable reassessments but as an authoritarian nationalist and revolutionary who suffered successive betrayals by ally after ally, including warlords, Kuomintang politicians, the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, Mao, and U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt. It was not until Chiang fled to Taiwan in 1949 that he gained a secure grip on power, albeit over a much smaller territory. There, his dictatorial regime pushed through social and economic reforms that ironically laid the foundation for today's flourishing Taiwanese democracy.

Africa

NICOLAS VAN DE WALLE

History of South Africa: From 1902 to the Present
BY THULA SIMPSON. Oxford University Press, 2022, 632 pp.

Starting with the end of the Boer wars in 1902 and ending with the COVID-19 emergency, Simpson finely traces the political history of South Africa since the beginning of the twentieth century. He has little to say about the evolution of the country's economy or that of its cultural and social institutions.

Instead, armed with fascinating details and anecdotes, he focuses on its contentious politics, from labor strife in the first half of the century to the harshly repressed protests against the apartheid government in the latter half of the twentieth century. A mostly implicit theme of the book is that the end of apartheid and the emergence of majority rule has not made South African politics any less fractious. From the violence among competing Black factions and groups in the early 1990s to the massacre of 34 striking miners in 2012 to the growing use of violence by elements of the ruling African National Congress, it is hard to escape the conclusion that the historical legacies of brutality and cruelty continue to cast a heavy shadow over the country today.

Ancient Africa: A Global History, to 300 CE
BY CHRISTOPHER EHRET.
Princeton University Press, 2023, 224 pp.

Using an erudite mix of linguistic analysis, genetics, and archaeological evidence, Ehret crafts a fascinating assessment of the technological and religious innovations of early African societies. Countering the view that Africans have always depended on the rest of the world for progress, he masterfully synthesizes a large literature to argue that Africans independently made key early advances in the development of ceramics, iron smelting, crop and livestock breeding, and weaving. For instance, he points to two sites in present-day Cameroon and the Central African Republic, where people smelted iron as early as 2200 BC, some 400 years before such technology was developed in the Middle East. Similarly, he argues that Africans probably devised the first religious doctrine of monotheism as early as 900 BC. In addition to telling a fascinating story of early African invention, Ehret's book deserves to be read because of its nimble approach to history, using deduction and an accumulation of evidence from very different sources to build a convincing account of early technological advancement.

Parties, Political Finance, and Governance in Africa: Extracting Money and Shaping States in Benin and Ghana
BY RACHEL SIGMAN. Cambridge University Press, 2023, 310 pp.

The overwhelming majority of governments in Africa exploit state resources to remain in power, usually to help win elections. Making excellent use of surveys, interviews of officials, archival research, and data on individual government ministers, Sigman's new book notes that this practice varies greatly across states, depending on the nature of the party system in place. When, as in Ghana, the party system is well institutionalized, and parties are stable and well organized, political leaders delegate the extraction of resources from the state to party networks. But when, as in Benin, political parties are weak and poorly institutionalized, leaders cannot delegate this task to party officials and need to extract the resources themselves from the state through the coercion of midlevel bureaucrats. The book argues that the latter approach is more destructive to the state's developmental capacity because it undermines the autonomy and independence of officials.

The Ideological Scramble for Africa: How the Pursuit of Anticolonial Modernity Shaped a Postcolonial Order, 1945–1966
BY FRANK GERITS. Cornell University Press, 2023, 318 pp.

Historical accounts of the era of African decolonization and independence often frame the politics of the moment in terms of the ideological conflict of the Cold War. In his erudite account of this period, Gerits argues that, for African leaders, the independence struggle was not about capitalism and communism but rather the shaping of an African development project that could offer a riposte to European colonial visions of modernity. Leaders often hoped to harness either U.S. or Soviet support for their pan-African project, Gerits suggests, but their primary concern was undoing the psychological damage of colonialism by constructing an alternative path to modernity. This is a useful corrective to accounts of the era that examine the period solely through the lens of great-power competition. Just what this anticolonial modernity consisted of is not always clear in Gerits' account, but his book provides an interesting analysis of the diplomatic activity of the era, including the tension in U.S. diplomacy between anticolonial sentiment and respect for the prerogatives of the traditional colonial powers.

Weaponizing Water: Water Stress and Islamic Extremist Violence in Africa and the Middle East
BY MARCUS D. KING. Lynne Rienner, 2023, 245 pp.

Conflict and environmental degradation often go hand in hand. Many recent civil wars have been exacerbated by the decline of resources, such as land and water, caused by both global warming and population pressures. King's book starts from this premise, and the three cases of Islamist extremist insurgencies he examines—the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria, and al Shabab in Somalia—take place in locations that clearly suffer from desertification and growing water shortages. King ably describes these dynamics and argues that all three insurgencies have weaponized the need for water to cause terror and advance their strategic goals. They have sought to take over water infrastructure, for instance, and have tried to control irrigated lands. They have also poisoned water wells of communities they target and planted land mines near water sources to limit access. King discusses policy options for governments inside and outside Africa, but he concludes pessimistically that the weaponization of water resources is likely to characterize a growing number of conflicts.

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THE ARCHIVE

October 1957

"The Silence in Russian Culture"

ISAIAH BERLIN

In a 1957 essay, the British philosopher and intellectual historian Isaiah Berlin, who had spent his childhood in Russia, considered the nature of Soviet rule. He described Soviet leaders as ensnared by a destructive inertia: their country was struggling, but any attempt to change course could imperil the Communist Party's grip on power.

Soviet life is constructed to strive for goals. It makes little difference what the particular goals may be—military or civil, the defeat of the enemy within or without, or the attainment of industrial objectives—announced goals there must be, if Soviet society is to continue to be. . . .

The leaders of the Soviet Union, for all we know, may by now be secretly hankering after the peaceful existence, to abandon the exiguous splendors and unending cruelties and miseries of the régime and subside into "normal" existence. If they harbor any such desires, they know that in the short run, at least, this is not practicable. For Soviet society is organized not for happiness, comfort, liberty, justice, personal relationships, but for combat. Whether they wish it or not the drivers and controllers of this immense train cannot now halt it or leap from it in mid-course without risk of destruction. If they are to survive and above all remain in power, they must go on. Whether they can replace parts of it while it is moving, and so transform it (themselves) into something less savage, less dangerous to themselves and mankind, remains to be seen. At any rate that must be the hope of those who do not think war inevitable.

In the meanwhile this caricature of dirigisme has discredited the tradition of social idealism and liquidated the intelligentsia connected with it, perhaps more decisively than unaided persecution could have done. Nothing destroys a minority movement more effectively than the official adoption and inevitable betrayal and perversion of its ends by the state itself. There are cases where nothing succeeds less well than success.


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