FLETCHER SECURITY REVIEW

OMNIBUS SECURITAS

FSR

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

Non-Traditional Aspects of Global Security

Summer 2022
Vol. 9 No. 1


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About FSR

Fletcher Security Review (*FSR*) is a print and online journal managed and edited by students at Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. Drawing on the school's interdisciplinary academic approach, *FSR* engages established and emerging scholars, practitioners, and analysts across a range of security issues. For our contributors, *FSR* works to provide a forum through which to advance ideas and unique perspectives. This is sought in service of our dynamic audience, whose interests span traditional and nontraditional security topics. Ultimately, as a student-run publication, each edition of *FSR* is guided by the passions and perspectives of its editorial staff. To learn more, visit www.fletchersecurity.org.

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Information for Authors
Please send submissions to fletchersecrev@gmail.com. All submissions should be sent as a Microsoft Word file. Short articles should be 1,500 to 2,000 words and long articles should be 3,000 to 5,500 words.

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Editor's Note

Reflective of the unexpected complexities of the past year, *The Fletcher Security Review's (FSR)* 2022 edition addresses non-traditional aspects of and actors in international security. *FSR* stresses the importance of a variety of factors to international security, including the ongoing climate crisis, non-state actors' roles, and legal analyses. As is *FSR*'s tradition, this edition features a range of opinions and theses from scholars, practitioners, and government officials from around the world to bring attention to international security issues that — for various reasons — have typically received less global attention or faced waning attention in recent years. International security is complex, but that does not mean some aspects can be ignored.

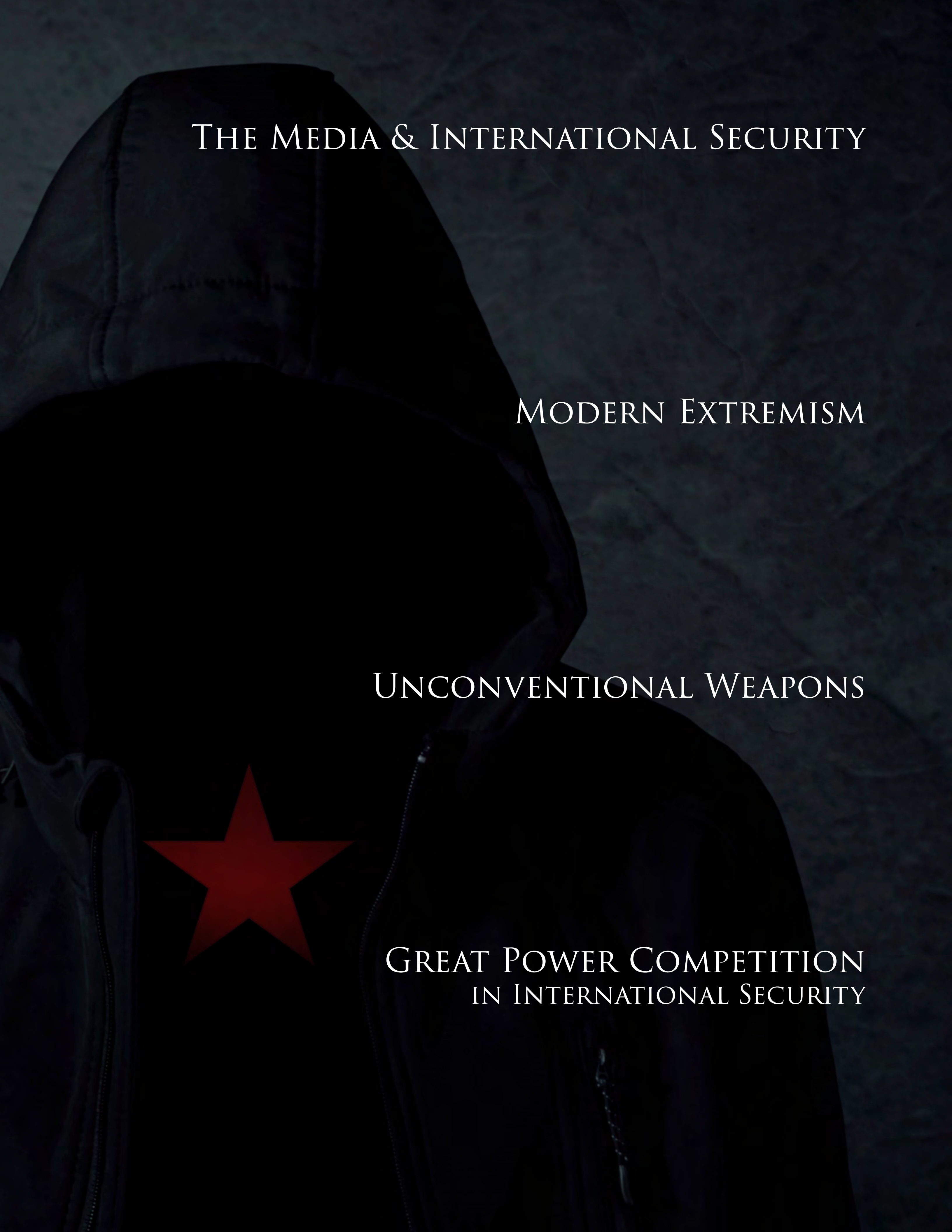
This year's edition is thanks to the tremendous efforts of *FSR*'s leadership. First and foremost, nothing this year would have been possible without the support of our Senior Managing Editor, Dana Hatic. Her brilliance in editing, organizing, and encouragement not only kept our editing teams progressing, but also kept me sane throughout the process. On top of their own editing responsibilities, our Managing Editors, Sophia Warner and Cameron Henley, supported in the later stages of pulling our final product together. I am excited for their innovations and leadership as they take over *FSR* next year. We were excited to solidify the role of National Defense Fellow & Advisor on *FSR*'s leadership team with Col. John Griswold, who provided vital assistance in brainstorming sessions to fill holes in our content, networking, and even contributing an article himself.

The *FSR* staff is indispensable. The true bulk of our work rests with the editing teams, as their solicitations and edits shape the whole edition. Everyone's personal strengths and tenacity helped to overcome the several challenges as the first *FSR* team to meet and work in person during the COVID-19 Pandemic. For the first time, each editing team was designed around a subtopic to try and create a more intentional and comprehensive publication. Our Senior Editors — Juliana Heffern, Jerusha P. Simmons, Cameron Fels, and Dylan Land — provided excellent support and guidance to their editing teams after developing their subtopics. Finally, Bill Reeves's artistic and technical designs of both the print and web versions of this edition continue to bring *FSR* to new levels. We are thrilled to continue our partnership with him.

The Fletcher Security Review is made possible by the continued support of the International Security Studies Program and the Fletcher Russia and Eurasia Program. In particular, I would like to thank Professor Richard Shultz and Arik Burakovsky for their generosity and advocacy. I am thrilled to welcome Professor Abigail Linnington and her exceptional guidance to *FSR*'s Board of Advisors. We thank Professor Emeritus Robert Pfaltzgraff for his years of championship and wish him well in retirement. Stephanie Schwartz's expertise proved indispensable behind-the-scenes. Finally, *FSR* thanks Kathy Spagnoli for her logistical support in the face of new questions and challenges, as well as Alice Enos for her all-around assistance.

Serving as *The Fletcher Security Review's* Editor-in-Chief has been the greatest privilege of my Fletcher career. I am proud of our team and the work we have done to cover a broad range of security issues and reach new audiences. Of course, much of this year's editorial process has been colored by Russia's war in Ukraine; many of our articles were submitted prior to February 2022 and could not be fully adapted to the constantly changing circumstances. The arguments in this edition are solely those of their authors, but we hope that they encourage you to consider new aspects of international security. As these past two years have shown, international security is only going to increase in complexity, so we cannot ignore new and developing aspects.

Rachel L. Goretsky
Editor-in-Chief


The Media & International Security
Modern Extremism
Unconventional Weapons
Great Power Competition
in International Security

NEWS MEDIA

and its Influence on the American Debate Over War and Peace

-By Viola Gienger

A generally well-informed retired diplomat, relieved at the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, expressed surprise months later to learn in casual conversation that no U.S. service members had died in combat there in the last year and a half of the war, until the chaotic and explosive end.[1]

A Vietnam War veteran, lamenting the years of U.S. military presence in Iraq, paused after hearing stories about Iraqi civil society leaders working to defuse their own communities' conflicts before they turned violent. "I've never heard anything about that before," he says.[2]

And as Russian President Vladimir Putin amassed forces in 2021 near the border with Ukraine, in advance of his February 2022 full-scale assault, longtime watchers had to remind journalists repeatedly that Ukrainians had been fighting a war with Russia since 2014, when he captured Crimea and launched the offensive to control eastern Ukraine that had already claimed 14,000 lives.

In different ways, each of these incidents reflects how the U.S. news media increasingly struggles to play its essential role in the American debate over war and peace. Even the most diligent news consumers, flooded with information, disinformation, and infotainment, miss key elements of the biggest stories. Journalists, pressed by deadlines and ever-shrinking resources — due to staff cuts and the elimination of foreign bureaus and even copy desks, for example — leave crucial gaps in coverage. The result is a dearth of the kinds of in-depth, well-rounded news and accountability journalism that the American public and their leaders depend on for decision-making in a democracy.

The al-Qaeda terror attacks of September 11, 2001 that precipitated the war in Afghanistan and also led — via deception — to the war in Iraq, occurred amid a financial collapse in American newspapers that continues even today (though with a few shining exceptions).[3] American broadcast news divisions closed one foreign bureau after another.[4] In recent years, attention to the consequences of the precipitous decline in the U.S. news industry has focused primarily on gaps in local news. But one of the segments of the news industry that has long been hard hit is foreign coverage, impacting the related public discussions of U.S. foreign and defense policy that are crucial to any democracy. Questions of whether and how the United States should prosecute war or how it should deal with growing instances and risks of violent conflict abroad get short shrift. A disaster like Afghanistan's collapse and its humanitarian catastrophe quickly become blips on the screen, both on the news industry's radar and on the little screens of smartphones. Russia's full-scale escalation of the war on Ukraine in February 2022 received impressive attention — and resources — from major media outlets, but within just a few months, the volume and priority it received in news output fell sharply, even as the conflict entered a pivotal stage.

The results have outsized ramifications for those working in the fields of foreign policy and national and international security. How can diplomats, defense officials, political leaders, and other decision makers ensure they are getting and conveying accurate information and making honest choices based on facts (to the extent they have an interest in doing so, but that's another story)? How can their publics hold them to account?

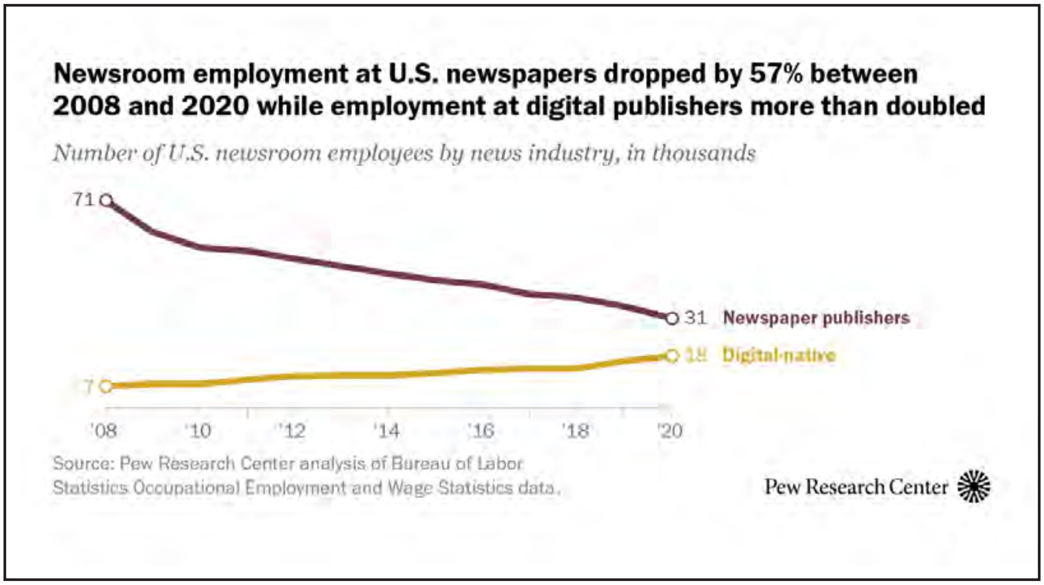
Public Domain: Walter Cronkite in Vietnam with CBS News/February 1968 (NARA)

BARRIERS OLD AND NEW

American journalism has historically been far from perfect in serving the ideal of the Fourth Estate. One need only look at the era of "yellow journalism" at the turn of the twentieth century or the often-racist coverage of the civil rights movement. Even in the heyday of network television news and major newspapers, when each had multiple bureaus on most continents and were driven by that competition, foreign news was colored by the perspectives, traditions, and biases of the privileged — mostly white — men (and occasionally a few women) who won those coveted jobs. Local journalists who assisted them were relegated to uncredited "fixer" status, even when they contributed significantly to the news gathering with their deep knowledge and remarkable courage. As George Washington University Associate Professor Sean Aday wrote, "coverage of foreign policy outside of war tends to be scarce, elite-driven, ethnocentric, and uncritical," and "war coverage is all of those things, only more so."[5]

Among the factors undermining the mission of informing the national debate over U.S. national security today are eviscerated news operations, the competing noise of the Internet, and outdated views of what constitutes news.

With a few exceptions, the financial capacity of news media that serve American audiences has shrunk dramatically over the past two to three decades, and the decline has only accelerated, from major broadcast networks to large U.S. and European newspapers and magazines, to the once cutting-edge digital outlets that have faced recent cutbacks. This is true also of the few European outlets that serve parts of the U.S. public,



such as *BBC News, The Guardian, Reuters*, and *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*.

Pew Research Center estimated in 2021 that total U.S. newsroom employment, including newspapers, broadcast outlets, and online sites, dropped by a quarter overall in a little over a decade ending in 2020.[6] While employment at digital outlets grew 144 percent over that time, it was starting from a small number (7,400) and was far outpaced by the 57 percent plunge in employment at newspapers, which lost about 40,000 jobs. Newsroom employment in broadcast television and cable news remained steady over that time, but radio dropped 26 percent. Exacerbated by the pandemic, "in 2020 alone, a third of large newspapers in the United States experienced layoffs," Pew also reported. In 2018, the research group found that, although newsroom employees were more likely than the American workforce overall to have college degrees, those who do have degrees make less than other college-educated workers.[7]

By 2008, international news was "rapidly losing ground" in terms of devoted space and resources, Pew found. Two-thirds of newspaper executives reported giving less space to foreign coverage, almost half said they cut resources for it, and only ten percent "considered foreign coverage 'very essential.'" "This decline in foreign news occurs as U.S. armed forces confront stubborn insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Biden administration talks of a global war on terrorism and international trade increasingly impacts the everyday lives of Americans," the researchers wrote.[8] Between 1998 and 2010, 18 newspapers and two newspaper chains closed all of their foreign bureaus.[9] In 2015, McClatchy, a major newspaper chain that operated 30 papers — including the likes of the *Miami Herald* and the *Kansas City Star* — closed its remaining four bureaus in Beijing, Mexico City, Istanbul, and Berlin in favor of domestic regional and political news.[10]

There are exceptions. Even during the biggest period of retrenchment, major news outlets like the *Washington Post* and *The New York Times* continued doing extensive foreign reporting. Additionally, new ventures were trying to support international journalism,[11] either by funding journalism (as in the case of the then-new and recently shuttered International Reporting Project and the Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting, which remains vibrant today) or by setting up new digital outlets like *Global Post*, which was acquired in 2015 by public radio station *WGBH* in Boston and its Public Radio International.[12] Today, some major news organizations, such as the *Washington Post*, are even re-establishing permanent foreign presences.[13]

COMPETING WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Notably, resources remain scarce, and professional journalists and major news media now compete for the time and attention of their audiences with the cacophony that is the Internet, especially social media. Serious journalists — national security reporters, policy analysts and commentators, and remaining foreign correspondents — find it increasingly difficult to

Photo by Rahul Chakraborty / Unsplash

transcend the noise of today's information space with facts and fact-based analysis. Journalism Professor Tom Lansner once started a workshop by asking his audience of journalists which headlines they thought would catch the most attention: "Myanmar Army Attacks Rohingya," "Kim Kardashian Kidnapped," or "Capitals Win Stanley Cup."[14] They knew the answer.

Conversely, how many Americans know, for example, that more than 80 million people have been forced from their homes worldwide by violent conflict, and that this figure predates the war in Ukraine, which has displaced millions within the country and forced millions more to cross borders for safety?[15] Further, how many Americans understand what such upheavals ultimately mean to the United States in refugee and other humanitarian crises, including what other conflict dominoes might fall as a result? How many Americans have the information they need to consider the trade-offs between foreign involvement and staying out of it, even though the impact of either decision shows up in their communities each day, in one form or another? How many Americans understand the acute dangers that climate change presents, not only in extreme weather events, but also in the political tensions over the fact that prosperous industrialized countries like the United States are responsible for most warming globally and have consistently failed to live up to their agreements to fund the needed measures for adaptation and mitigation?

"For a variety of reasons, studies consistently show that the American public knows even less about foreign affairs generally and foreign policy specifically than it does about domestic issues," wrote Aday, though he noted, "there is debate about whether citizens still make basically rational if not fully informed decisions about foreign policy."[16] More recently, Pew Research has found a distinction between Americans who mainly get their news from social media and those who rely more on other sources ranging from news websites to broadcast and print. "Those who rely on social media for news are less likely to get the facts right about the coronavirus and politics and more likely to hear some unproven claims," Pew reported.[17]

While Donald Trump's campaign and presidency were a bonanza for major news media in terms of audience growth, little of that attention turned to international news. Glendora Meikle, who worked for the International Reporting Project (IRP) before it closed, wrote for the *Columbia Journalism Review*, "I lost count of the number of IRP fellows who dejectedly relayed that an editor had told them they had no space for a piece that didn't include a 'Trump angle.'"[18] And as the Trump presidency wound down, news website *Axios* declared that statistics show "Americans now want to read about sports, not politics."[19]

International news resounding immediately to U.S. national security garnered a brief spotlight in 2021 during the Afghanistan withdrawal, but at least some of that attention was from right-wing outlets fanning the flames against President Joe Biden.[20] And statistics for online interest in select news events during Biden's first 100 days showed that the only foreign story that grabbed Americans' attention was about the British royals. Not even the news of the cargo ship stuck in the Suez Canal broke through to the top ranks.[21]

COMPLICATING THE NARRATIVE

At the same time, the persistent complexities and nuances of foreign and international affairs create additional burdens for journalists trying to tell these stories and for the audiences trying to comprehend them, never mind the policymakers trying to navigate them.

Perhaps one of the most neglected stories in major American news media in recent years has been the Colombia peace accords and their aftermath. Colombia's drug wars captured legions of U.S. press attention at their height in the 1980s and 1990s, in part due to America's own problems with drug abuse and trafficking. But Colombia's narco-trafficking was part of a half-century of broader and more complex violent conflict that the hard-

Heads of State participate in the Peace Signing ceremony between the Government of Colombia and the FARC E.P.
Photo // Gobierno de Chile // CC 2.0.

fought peace agreement in 2016 between the government of President Juan Manuel Santos and the FARC-EP (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army) rebels intended to end.

The difficult negotiations in Havana, Cuba, barely received mention in major U.S. news media, and after a brief spate of coverage on the agreement itself, the story again receded, despite the wrenching drama that has ensued as a new Colombian president sought to undo the accord and both sides struggled to meet its terms. Today, the agreement is unraveling but receives only sporadic attention in the American news media.[22]

"We need journalists to be holding both the government and the FARC accountable to their peace deal commitments, to help ensure they follow through on them," said Nadja Drost, a special correspondent for *PBS NewsHour* and Pulitzer Center grantee. "In order to do that kind of reporting, we need to do it from the ground."[23]

U.S. media coverage of the political, economic, and social dynamics in Central America are merely episodic, even though they are at the root of the migration and border crises that otherwise consume so much of the American political dialogue. The root causes drew some attention in 2021 but only through the lens of new Vice President Kamala Harris's attempts at finding solutions on the ground.

The continuing and, in some cases, decreasing professional capacity of journalists to cover foreign and global issues is due not only to declining resources, but also a reliance on traditional ways of viewing foreign affairs. Journalists commonly look for the scandal or political games and maneuvering; highlight incremental breaking news or superficial "tension," to the neglect of underlying issues; and obsess over political "leaders," no matter how credible. Citizens become players most often as either victims or heroes in a feel-good story, rather than as persistent, strong community leaders in conflict zones around the world.

Structurally, foreign policy and national security coverage is delineated in most news operations based on "beats" covering the State Department and the Pentagon. The National Security Council is treated as an appendage of the White House beat, and the U.S. Agency for International Development is mostly ignored, except for rare occasions when a big name like Samantha Power takes the helm. Even these stories are most often a personality profile rather than a deep dive into policies and programs that (1) cost taxpayer money and (2) have significant — and not always positive — impact on the ground in areas affected by conflict. Notably, human rights coverage most often focuses on individuals rather than patterns, except on opinion pages. And the burgeoning field of peacebuilding is neglected entirely as too soft and too complicated.

INFORMED FOREIGN POLICY IN A DEMOCRACY

There are exceptions to this pattern, and they may point the way forward. Often, coverage that breaks the mold is funded today not by core newsroom budgets but by foundations such as the Pulitzer Center. When the previously mentioned Nadja Drost addressed the misperceptions about the "peace" in Colombia, she was speaking at a 2018 conference organized by the Pulitzer Center to explore different ways of covering conflict and peace. Started in 2006 with funding from Emily Rauh Pulitzer, the widow of newspaper magnate Joseph Pulitzer Jr., (the Center isn't connected with the famed Pulitzer Prizes), the Center now bills itself as the "largest single source of money for global enterprise reporting."[24] It supports 200 reporting projects per year published in 150 news organizations, including some that once funded their foreign reporting entirely by themselves — the *Associated Press, The New York Times,* the *New Yorker, BuzzFeed News, PBS NewsHour*, and the *BBC*.

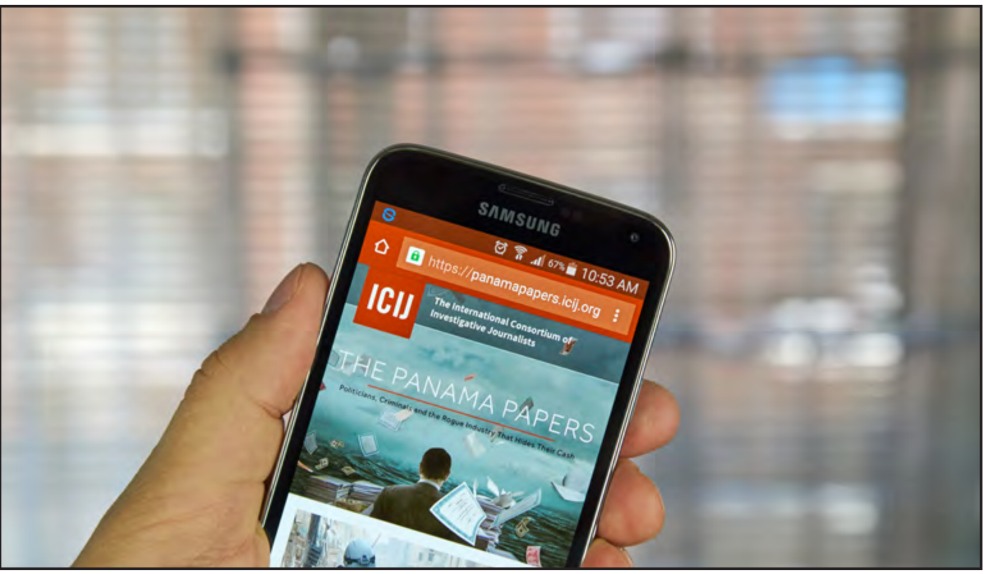
Pulitzer Center
ON CRISIS REPORTING

In addition to covering high-profile conflicts, such as Ethiopia and Afghanistan (including the current humanitarian crisis since the U.S. withdrawal), Pulitzer Center-funded journalists also venture to more obscure locales, such as Mozambique and Guyana, providing stories that would otherwise be neglected.

"One of the things I like to think that we're all trying to do is complicate the moral imagination that our readers have about what's going on in these places — expand the imaginative proximity and make something that sounds so far away so much closer," remarked Jina Moore, a Pulitzer Center grantee and then-East Africa bureau chief at *The New York Times*, at the same conference.

Many similar nonprofit efforts to fund foreign reporting have ultimately collapsed, such as the previously mentioned International Reporting Project. The Seattle-based Common Language Project, which sought to highlight "personal" international stories,[25] went through various iterations over 15 years, including a name change to The Seattle Globalist, before finally shuttering in 2020 amid a "financial crisis."[26] Competition for non-profit funding is no less intense than the brutal race for advertising dollars and audience subscriptions in the for-profit world.

In the realm of international news, nonprofit organizations still thriving include the International Women's Media Foundation, which awards fellowships for women journalists with a hefty roster of donors,[27] and the award-winning International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), which conducts joint reporting with 280 journalists and more than 100 media outlets around the world.[28] ICIJ produced the famous 2016 Panama Papers investigation based on leaked documents, as well as the recent Pandora Papers series that exposed South Dakota and Wyoming as



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international offshore financial havens. Global Press, an umbrella organization founded in 2006 by Cristi Hegranes, is pursuing a different but equally ambitious mission: cultivating an all-woman cadre of journalists with "physical and cognitive diversity" in communities around the world "to counter the disaster-driven narrative that the 24-hour news cycle prioritizes and legacy media perpetuates."[29]

But the most extensive emphasis for investment in U.S. news today is on saving, resurrecting, or, more often, reinventing local news. Northwestern University's Medill Center has its Local News Initiative. The Knight Foundation is investing USD 300 million to support local news and information endeavors and lists 12 organizational partners working with it to bolster local news, including a pioneer in that area, Report for America.[30] Harvard's Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy has made local news a priority for its research agenda. All are crucial, especially considering the gutting of local news organizations over the past two decades. Foundations and media innovators have put money and energy into science and health news, too, especially in the COVID-19 era.

All the while, U.S. foreign coverage still takes a back seat. "International journalists have benefited in recent years from the volume and variety of opportunities," Meikle, the former IRP deputy director, wrote. "But as the number of fellowship programs has increased, the number of funders has not."[31]

The for-profit sector spawns the occasional major start-up. When *Politico* expanded to Europe, it arguably became a leading provider of analysis of foreign news, though through a predominantly political lens more than an examination of government policy and practice. Ben Smith, the prominent founding editor of *BuzzFeed News* who went on to serve for a brief time as media columnist at *The New York Times*, announced in January 2022 that he was leaving that perch to launch a new global general-interest news venture by the end of 2022 with Justin Smith, who left his position as chief executive of *Bloomberg Media*.

"Especially in the last decade," Justin Smith wrote in a memo about the project posted by *Axios*, "I realized that a new cohort of global, digitally-native, educated news consumers had emerged that were poorly served by legacy news media — an insight that has inspired me to launch this new venture." He estimates the potential global audience of "English-speaking, college-educated, professional class" at more than 200 million, "the most worldly audience in human history."[32]

If successful, such a venture might help fill the gaps in public understanding of global affairs in the United States and abroad. But to do so, it will need to do more than rely on the same thinking and structures of news gathering that presently undermine the quality of information Americans receive. The world is full of smart, connected, courageous journalists who aren't from or don't live in "the West," and while some serve on staffs of U.S. news organizations, the vast majority work as freelancers. Pulitzer Center founder and Chief Executive Jon Sawyer has noted "the growing dependence on freelancers for frontline reporting in conflict zones."[33] A new global news organization would do well to scoop up such talent — and more importantly, listen to them.

Brazilian journalist Natalia Viana wrote eloquently on the bias reflected in news media both in the United States and throughout the Global North against local experts and journalists in the Global South. "As news organizations in the North increase their focus on the climate crisis, it's time for community leaders in the South — and the journalism that already regards these leaders as experts in nature conservancy and healing the earth — to be seen as valuable sources of stories, commentary, and solutions," she said.[34]

FILE - Hundreds of people run alongside a U.S. Air Force C-17 transport plane as it moves down a runway of the international airport, in Kabul, Afghanistan, Aug.16. 2021 // Screen Capture from Al Jezzera Video // Open Source.

The recipients of foreign news and information — i.e., the public and the policymakers — bear responsibility, too. Specifically, the American public all too often succumbs to the temptations of infotainment and the easy lure of cat videos, and for failing to support reliable news outlets (though the latter is a chicken-and-egg question, as media outlets too often fail to adjust to the changes in the information and advertising ecosystem that ate their lunch and therefore contributed to their own demise).

Policymakers are getting better about listening to non-traditional voices. This has become especially poignant after the frustrations of the "endless wars" in Iraq and Afghanistan and the Global War on Terror, along with the eye-openers of the "Me Too" movement and Black Lives Matter protests, not to mention the pandemic. Even the field of peacebuilding got a shot in the arm with the 2019 Global Fragility Act, though that has yet to deliver in concrete terms.[35]

Policymakers and political leaders still have work to do. They must not only open their minds to new perspectives and innovative solutions, but also learn how to communicate complexity more effectively and clearly to their constituents. Regardless of what one thought was the right approach to the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, for example, the mantra of "endless war" and "forever wars" became so overwhelming that it entirely snuffed out reasoned debate about how to responsibly end the United States's role.

In a panel discussion as the Biden administration was planning its withdrawal, a longtime proponent of such a move was asked what to do about all the Afghans who had helped the United States or had supported pro-democracy and human rights initiatives, trying to support their country's transition, and who were at risk of becoming targets of the Taliban. The expert's only solution: hand out American visas to any Afghan who wanted to get out. The simplistic response fell far short of a serious answer to a life-and-death issue for millions of people. Yet when Kabul fell to the Taliban, Americans were shocked not only by the collapse but by the absence of a U.S. contingency plan.

Certainly, part of the responsibility for that lies at the feet of U.S. news media. Despite some laudable efforts at non-traditional reporting — notably by the *Washington Post's* Pamela Constable, for example — most often, coverage of the war in Afghanistan was purely defined as a political or military battlefield.[36] The thousands of Afghans trying to make the transition work in their communities and make their voices heard beyond got little more than a nod or a quote. On the rare occasions that such efforts received more media attention, it was either because of a financial scandal or came in the form of a fluffy feel-good story, rather than serious investigation into how and whether these ubiquitous projects were working.

News outlets and journalists must identify novel, more influential ways of conveying the facts and realities of the world. Americans and their leaders are dependent on this information to understand and to cope with the complexity of the global landscape. Swanee Hunt, a former U.S. ambassador to Austria who went on to become a leading advocate of female leaders in communities worldwide, exhorted journalists at the 2018 Pulitzer Center conference to understand their power and use it for good:

“If what you’re doing is talking about the male political leaders who are working with the male warriors, that becomes the primary source. That’s history,” she noted. “And if you’re ignoring the fact that in Nigeria and Liberia, women organize Christian-Muslim marches with thousands and thousands of women who are calling for calm . . . , are those stories front and center? Put them front and center, because what you’re writing becomes the history.”[37]

Major General Chris Donahue, commander of the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne Division, XVIII Airborne Corps, boards a C-17 cargo plane at the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by Master Sgt. Alex Burnett)

[1] Chiara Vercellone, “Fact Check: Deaths in Afghanistan First US Military Combat Deaths There since February 2020,” *USA TODAY*, September 1, 2021, https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/factcheck/2021/09/01/fact-check-11-us-service-members-died-afghanistan-2020/5622880001/.
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Climate Change ar

An extensive and rapidly expanding body of research now shows how rising temperatures have destabilized the world's two poles, the North Pole and the South Pole, causing significant concerns.[38]

However, the world also contains what is often referred to as the "Third Pole," or the Tibetan Plateau. This region faces a similar crisis but has not received the same attention.

THE THIRD POLE

Climate change has had profound effects on the poles' glaciers. Scientific proof validates the critical role the North and South Poles play in managing the world's climate and that rapid ice melt causes sea level rise. This and the continued warming of the planet has brought the poles into the limelight.

The North and South Poles also drive many countries' political, environmental, and economic interests around the world because of their energy reserves (including oil, gas, and minerals) and the possibility of an ice-free trade route. Since no country has a territorial claim over the North or South Poles, several countries close to the polar regions loosely govern their interests by forming councils or enacting treaties to preserve and protect this fragile environment.

Scientists often refer to the Tibetan Plateau as the world's Third Pole. It is home to around 100,000 square kilometers of glaciers containing the largest volumes of ice outside the North and South Poles.[39] Unlike the North and South Poles, the Tibetan Plateau's freshwater resources directly affect the lives of people and animals that depend on the rivers originating from the region. Even though there is less ice compared to the North and South Poles, the ice on the Tibetan Plateau significantly impacts a larger population. Meltwater from the Tibetan Plateau feeds more than ten major rivers of Asia, including the Yangtze, Yellow, Brahmaputra, Indus, Ganges, Mekong, and Salween rivers, sustaining more than 1.7 billion people and making it "Asia's water tower."

However, the Tibetan Plateau, like the North and South Poles, is also warming at a rate up to three times the global average, by 0.3 degrees Celsius per decade, which creates glacial melting.[40] Initially, this melting will increase the river flow and then diminish as less ice remains, leading to water scarcity. According to a 2010 report from the Institute of Governance and Sustainable Development, "climate change-related melting of glaciers could seriously affect half a billion people in the Himalaya-Hindu-Kush region and a quarter of a billion people in China who depend on glacial melt for their water supplies."[41] Eventually, it will threaten the food security of tens of millions of people in Asia, with the potential of inciting conflict.

The World Economic Forum has identified water crises as among the top global risks for the coming decade.[42] In 2015, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's fifth assessment report also warned that

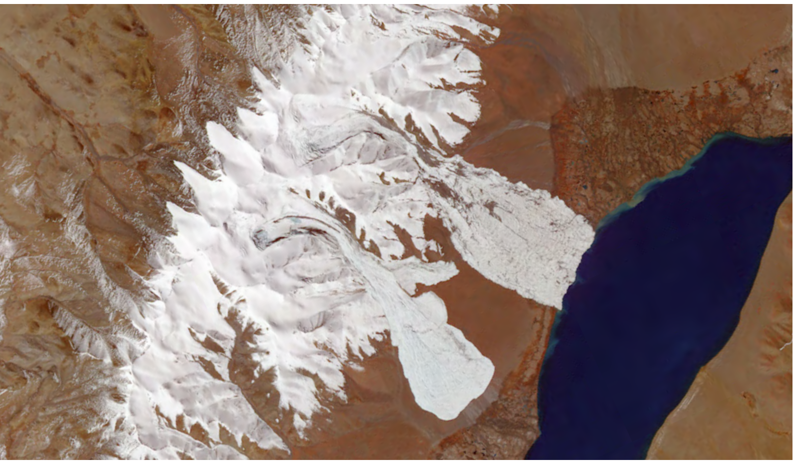
nd Human Rights

ON THE WORLD'S THIRD POLE

-By Dechen Palmo

Photo: Sonja Laukkanen // FLICKR // CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

climate change would reduce renewable surface water and groundwater resources — intensifying competition for water among all sectors and affecting water, energy, and food security.[43]



Aru Range Glacial Avalanches // October 4, 2016 // NASA Earth Observatory.

The melting of Tibetan Plateau glaciers has led to many disasters such as glacier avalanches, surging, and glacial lake outburst flooding. Glacial lakes in Tibet were breached 15 times between the 1930s and 1990s, causing floods and mudslides.[44] In 2016, just months apart, two glacier avalanches occurred in the Aru Range, western Tibet, killing nine people and hundreds of livestock. In 2018, a landslide caused by a melting glacier blocked the Yarlung Tsangpo River at Sedongpu Valley, in Milin County, Tibet.[45] Scientists note that surges and glacier avalanches are expressions of glacier instability, and climate change contributes to all of these natural disasters happening in Tibet.[46] According to Kang Shichang of the Institute of Tibetan Plateau Research, glaciers around Mount Everest have shrunk by ten percent since 1974, evidenced in the fact that a glacial lake downstream of the mountain is now 13 times bigger.[47]

Due to China's power and colonialism, the melting of the Tibetan Plateau is not represented as a critical issue, nor does it get the same attention as the North and South Poles from the international community. Because Tibet is under Chinese occupation, it is mainly the Chinese government's obligation to take effective measures to prevent and redress these climate impacts. However, these obligations are not being kept, which endangers the lives of Tibetan people and millions of others who depend on the rivers coming from Tibet.

WHAT IS HAPPENING ON THE GROUND IN THE NAME OF PROTECTION?

According to a Chinese white paper on climate change response released on October 28, 2021, entitled, "Responding to Climate Change: China's Policies and Actions," China has carried out climate adaptation and ecological restoration efforts to improve the overall ability to adapt to climate change, especially on ecologically fragile areas of the Tibetan Plateau.[48]

Sanjiangyuan (the source of the Yangtze, Yellow, and Mekong Rivers) on the Tibetan Plateau is considered one of the world's most vulnerable areas to climate change. While the source of rivers has been drying up and grasslands are degrading due to global warming, the Chinese government has blamed the ecological degradation of the Sanjiangyuan on the overgrazing of livestock and population growth.[49] Hence, on the pretext of restoring and protecting the ecological environment of the Sanjiangyuan, in 2003 the Chinese government established the world's second largest nature reserve, known as Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve, and forcibly resettled local herders. According to the state media, almost 100,000 Tibetans have been resettled since 2005.[50]

Although the herders are provided with free accommodation and a certain number of subsidies, these resettlements and policy bans on grazing have had profound implications. According to a case study by Professor Fachun Du, Deputy Director of Institute of New Rural Development at Yunnan Agricultural University in Kunming, China, many of these resettled herders in Madoi County of Sanjiangyuan are unable to adapt well to urban life, particularly in the face of higher living expenses.[51]

These resettlement programs are undertaken without the requisite public consultation or adequate information relevant to local contexts. According to Zhao Lianshi of the China Association for the Scientific Expedition of Exotic and Rare Animals, grazing and trampling does not harm or destroy the grassland — but rather, it contributes to its healthy development.[52] This shows that if not done correctly, such policies could adversely affect the people as well as the environment they aim to protect.

These policies also violate basic human rights. Resettlement interferes with the human rights of local Tibetan people. Tibetan herders, who have lived in the region sustainably for thousands of years and have contributed the least to climate change, are the ones who suffer the most and are often the least prepared for climate disasters in the face of Chinese government policies.

Programs to protect the Tibetan Plateau were implemented at the expense of the rights of those who live there. Human Rights Council resolutions on human rights and climate change similarly highlight this disparity, stating that the impacts of climate change "will be felt most acutely by those segments of the population who are already in a vulnerable situation."[53]

The situation of local nomads in Sanjiangyuan does not represent an isolated case: such forced relocation in the name of environmental protection is ubiquitous throughout Tibet.

Chinese scientists have conducted most climate change research on the Tibetan Plateau, influencing government policies based on their findings. However, it is important to note that these Chinese scientists work within political systems that do not allow them to speak clearly or critically. There are also very few Western scientists researching the Tibetan Plateau, and for those that do, their recommendations tend to have a perverse effect on the Chinese government. This has resulted in a large void in climate change research on the Tibetan Plateau.[54]

In July 2018, the State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China published a white paper titled "Ecological Progress on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau," in which China presented itself as progressive in terms of environmental policies and ecological progress in the region. However, the report has been severely criticized by the Central Tibetan Administration based in Dharamshala, which urges the international community to recognize the significance of the Tibetan Plateau and to strengthen climate change research on the Third Pole.[55]

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MEDIA, CONFLICT, AND SECURITY:

A Conversation with Caroline Rose // Interviewed by Alec Dionne

This interview has been edited for length and clarity and was conducted prior to Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED JAN. 11, 2022

Photo by Levi Meir Clancy on Unsplash.

Fletcher Security Review (FSR): What do you perceive as an under discussed or underreported issue in global security right now?

Caroline Rose (CR): It's a very simple answer, but something that is always underreported in both Western and international outlets: human security. We often talk about human security in the context of state-to-state combat and great power competition, as they are some of the larger geopolitical contexts. But what I think is often misrepresented is the basic security and livelihood of the people who are experiencing conflict. Often, humanitarian consequences get only a mention in articles or TV interviews, or it's discussed as just one dimension. In the media, we forget that in terms of conflict, state competition, and geopolitical rivalries, it's all about human security at the end of the day. That is an often-neglected aspect of the coverage.

FSR: Can you speak to the evolving meaning of human security, as we deepen our understanding of the issues?

CR: In the way that I interpret human security, it is about basic physical security, but also freedom and security from psychological trauma, freedom of expression, safe livelihood, and to live as you want without interference from war, conflict, violence, or state repression. There are certainly many ways to interpret the term human security, but this is how I have come to acknowledge it through my career in this field.

FSR: When you read about issues of human security and foreign policy, what tells you that you are reading quality analysis?

CR: For me, it is something that does not regurgitate the talking points, or simply the details and facts that we have seen repeatedly in conflicts — it's something that digs deep into the why and the how. For example, there has been a lot of coverage of the recent violence in the Donbas, with reports noting, "here are the actors involved," and "this is what time it started in the morning," and "this is the statement that both Russia and Ukraine have issued." A piece of quality analysis or reporting will talk about what sparked the violence so early in the morning and why the violence has occurred over so many years (i.e., why the tensions exist in the first place), and detail the efforts taken to address these tensions, including why they have failed so far. There are some outlets where it's important to get information out very quickly, just to get something out to be on top of it. When it comes to analysis, it's incredibly important to remember the why and how and the constraints and incentives that exist that drive state behavior.

Sometimes it's neglected as very simple and written off as something the reader may already know, but I think it is a very important intellectual exercise to ask why these actors are conducting these activities and operations in the first place, what is driving them, and what has interrupted their campaign.

FSR: You just mentioned simplicity, and there is a lot of international relations theory that tries to highlight simplicity. Where do you think the line sits between simple and intuitive, and over-distilled?

CR: Yes, there is a line. This reminds me of a great piece of advice that I received from my former boss, George Friedman. When I was first learning the basic model of geopolitics and how to analyze state behavior without regurgitating everything that was already out there, he told me to keep it simple. When you are trying to understand state behavior, and if you are confused about why a state would pursue a certain action, his advice helped me find really simple reasons; it does not have to be complicated as to why states were engaging in conflict or seeking territorial consolidation. State behaviors could be presented as incredibly complicated, when really the reasons were a desire for territorial acquisition, increased resources, or an ideological or nationalist objective — there are a number of reasons why states pursue outcomes. George Friedman's advice was initially challenging, but in the end, it was key to helping me identify the core motivators of state action. His advice helped me when I got bogged down in a conflict or international development and was searching for a nuanced explanation. Really the answer is usually quite simple: there are core motivators that affect state behavior.

State behaviors could be presented as incredibly complicated, when really the reasons were a desire for territorial acquisition, increased resources, or an ideological or nationalist objective.

FSR: When you are deep in the data, and you have it all in front of you, how do you bring it back and forge it into something that is easily communicated to the rest of the world?

CR: Every analyst struggles with this when they are writing. I think there is also a fear, and an understandable fear, that we do not want to simplify otherwise nuanced and complex developments when it comes to armed conflict. Further, you don't want to psych up certain aspects of human security. You do not want to glamorize or exaggerate the developments that have taken place. Every good analyst takes caution and care in putting their analysis together in a way that respects the actors that are engaged and serves justice to the aspect of human security. For me that piece of advice of looking at the simple motivators — as frustrating as the process can be — has been very liberating. Once you achieve simplicity, you can add detail. Instead of going bottom up, you go top down. That's how I do my analysis; I start with simple motivators, the deterrents, drivers, and timing of state behavior and how these conflicts unfold. From there you expand and add some of the nuance that should be incorporated.

FSR: Let's shift gears and look at how this plays out in practice. You have experience working with publications located not just in the United States and Europe, but also in the Middle East. Can you speak to the different issues that these outlets focus on and any major cultural differences you've seen?

CR: It's refreshing to be interviewed by [news] outlets that are outside the United States or are outside the Washington, DC, "bubble," so to speak. These outlets have different policy priorities, they see conflicts differently, and they identify aspects of conflicts that you otherwise would not see on *CNN* or any major American news outlet. They are diving deeper into some conflicts, especially those that are closer to home. I mostly engage with Arabic language outlets and a lot of them have been really interested in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) discussions. This is a topic that is certainly of concern here in the United States, regarding the efficacy of these negotiations and the chances of a revived JCPOA deal. But these outlets are really keeping track and up to date and are constantly covering the chances of this deal being revived through analyzing the statements being issued by both sides.

Another topic that has been heavily covered is the violence and conflict in the Horn of Africa. The United States has been keeping an eye on this conflict in media outlets, but certainly their coverage is not as consistent as some of the international outlets that I have been privileged to interview with. That has been something that I have really enjoyed. They are following these issues, the statements being issued, and, of course, the United States response, very closely. With the outlets that I engage with, this is always an overriding question. What will the United States do? Is there a policy that the United States has for this? What kind of tools does Washington, DC, have in its tool kit? And if the United States does choose to engage, what kind of outcomes will we see? This has reminded me that despite the very tumultuous past few years that we have had with the previous administration, U.S. actions are still taken very seriously on the international stage, particularly within the Middle East and North Africa.

FSR: We spill a lot of ink here in the United States about the purpose and nature of the news media, as well as the effect that that news infrastructure has on policymaking. Do you see a similar dynamic in the non-Western outlets with which you work? Or is it a different relationship?

CR: It depends. I am interested to see how this plays out with the interviews I conduct down the line. There are some outlets that are a bit more affiliated with the state, especially in the Middle East, where you have outlets closely monitored and influenced by state policy and may have some influence on state policy. In the United States, we typically think of it as being the other way around. With the Trump administration, many news outlets — *Fox News* for example — had considerable leverage to influence the administration's policy. In the Middle East, it's different. When it comes to policymakers and when it comes to the questions of what the United States will do, what they are looking for, or the types of signals that they watch for, and what the United States constraints and incentives are, I certainly think that some of these outlets have influence in the policymaking realm. They are inviting experts and former U.S. officials to speak on air, and when they have these guests share their insights, they create room for influence. But again, I think that there's a spectrum, especially in the Middle East and North Africa, because there is such a broad spectrum of which outlets are closely affiliated with their government and which are more independent.

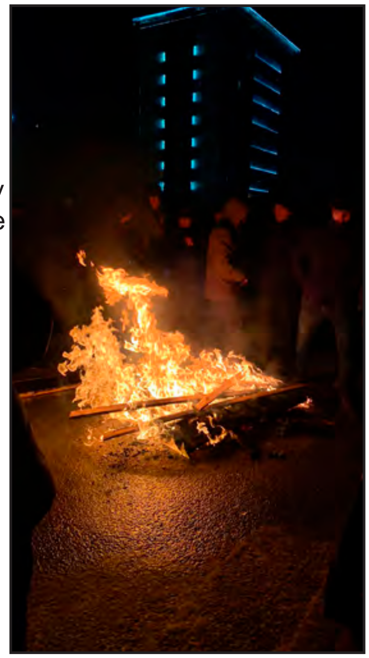
FSR: Over the past few years there has been a fair amount of misinformation and disinformation here in the United States and Europe. This has affected decision making in both the media and government, with lots of time spent on trying to figure out how to address these issues. Have you seen something similar play out with the outlets that you've worked with?

CR: They aren't having the same identity crises with their media that the United States is with its own media landscape. Just because, right after the election of the Trump administration, we started to question the amount of mis- and disinformation that existed, and the level of influence that news outlets were having on our governmental policy. As I mentioned before, I think that in some countries, outlets are owned or heavily influenced by the state, and while that is a well-known fact, it is also a bit more of an entrenched reality, or something that is a bit difficult to change. Whereas in the United States, it's a bit more nuanced, many citizens are coming to face this reality head on and trying to change it. The forces in the information environment are a bit more malleabile. Most of the discussions that I have engaged in have been a panel of experts where each would give their own take and their own perspective. These outlets are lending a voice to a variety of backgrounds, nationalities, and perspectives. I have had a really positive experience engaging with these international outlets.

FSR: What new actors do you see influencing the foreign policy discourse, and where is that going in the future?

CR: We of course see continued influence from state actors, as well as from non-state actors like the media, media figures, and civil society activists who have become a prominent force. On media sites and in some of these interviews, I think they've been able to lend a huge voice to protest movements, and of course they've been able to expand coverage on humanitarian abuses and restrictions to freedom of expression. Activists are frequently featured in the interviews that I have participated in. Those have become a prominent part of how we digest the news.

FSR: In the past decade and a half, we've seen a slew of changes in the tools we have to talk about security and foreign policy. These have improved our ability to get information out to the world from conflict zones, such as Ukraine and Kazakhstan. To what extent are these tools here to stay and have they been a positive improvement?



Kazakhstan Protests // Photo by: Esetok // CC BY-SA 4.0.

CR: Our increased access to information is here to stay, even down to the habits of consumers, where one of the first things they do in the morning is look at the news, and then they continue to look throughout the day. Minute-by-minute coverage has become incredibly important, not only from formal news outlets, but also through informal channels such as Twitter. Many followers and analysts tend to look at these informal outlets and the news. These are only going to grow and expand from here. This is an entrenched reality now.

FSR: Traditionally, news outlets have employed some form of information vetting, yet this doesn't always happen in a world where information moves so quickly. How do you think this feeds into the proliferation of disinformation?

CR: This totally feeds into disinformation. It is challenging to be able to access this information so quickly, in real time, and to keep up with it. I will give an example of the crisis in Kazakhstan, the protest movement that developed, and the deployment of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) into Kazakhstan. That is something a lot of us have been watching in real time. Because news and analysts were trying to get information on this — there was an information blackout for quite some time — people resorted to alternative channels for information and news, which led to the spread of disinformation and coverage of this conflict that did not accurately depict what was happening on the ground. Because the Kazakh government turned off its radio stations and there was an Internet blackout, people were forced to rely on sources that may not have reflected what was going on. The rapidity of information is definitely feeding into the issue, which is why it's important for any consumer of news, any analyst, or anyone who has been watching, to read these sources, to take them with a grain of salt, but also to wait — that is incredibly helpful; waiting to see if these sources are confirmed and, of course, waiting to compare with other news outlets that are circulating these stories. Simply reading and believing sources has become a common habit on sites like Twitter, but it's important that we take this information with grains of salt and compare them with other sources.

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THE VANISHING

A Conversation with Janine di Giovanni
Interviewed by Kelly Crawford


Credit: Rannjan Joawn

This interview has been edited for length and clarity. It was conducted prior to Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Fletcher Security Review (FSR): What was the impetus for writing your book, *The Vanishing: Faith, Loss, and the Twilight of Christianity in the Land of the Prophets?* On one hand, it's a chronology of the storied career of a war correspondent, but on the other hand it's deeply personal as well.

Janine di Giovanni (JDG): Well, I think that the idea of these Christian minorities was really fascinating to me, having worked in the Middle East for so long. I became aware that there were these ancient, ancient people — Assyrians, Chaldeans, speaking Aramaic, the language of Christ — living in these remote villages, and they had somehow survived two millennia of persecution and armies trying to wipe them out.

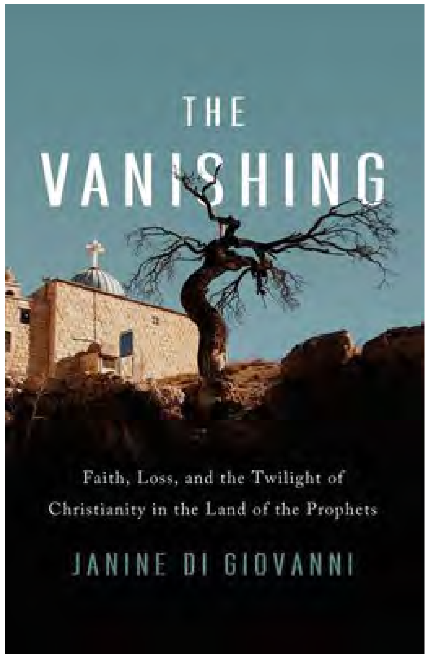
At the time of Saddam, they were terrified because there's this very interesting paradigm. Minorities, in this case Christians, were protected by dictators. So, they saw the American invasion in 2003 as a threat to their existence, but, in fact, they survived. Then, in 2014, ISIS came through and that was much more damaging to their communities. I decided to write the book because I wanted to look in-depth at four communities that were the most vulnerable. I didn't tackle all of the Middle East. I didn't get into Lebanon at all because I think Lebanese Christians are far more assimilated into the system. I thought the Gazan Christians, the Egyptian Christians, the Iraqi Christians, and the Syrians were, are, in grave danger of disappearing.

FSR: In the book, you brought up the Christians and other minorities and it seems like they almost accept a second-class citizenship status in some of the areas in return for protection. Is that a fair statement to make, or is that just something they tolerated in exchange for security?

JDG: There is no official policy on that, so I don't know if you dig through the various constitutions you'd find anything that said, "Christians and minorities will be protected by dictators." But I think it's a fairly common systematic approach. If you look at Egypt, Christians under Mubarak, or Christians under Saddam Hussein, or even post-Saddam, the Christians were much more vulnerable. It is true that Saddam did kind of give them a lot of leeway, and in exchange they gave blocks of votes, absolutely.

FSR: Do American or Western policymakers lending support to governments in the region need to reconcile some of their ideas of civil equality with the system that you just described? Where does that fit in the equation?

JDG: I think the biggest threat to them right now isn't that as much. I don't think their concern is with the political systems in their country. I think their concern right now is survival. Post-ISIS, if you look at Iraqi Christians, their churches were destroyed, turned into rubble. Their villages were burned down. Their farms were scorched. Their irrigation tubes were destroyed. So, I think they fear, certainly, the political systems. I mean the Christians in Iraq are worried about the Kurds. They're sandwiched between the Kurds and Baghdad, so that's an issue. But, really, what's their foremost concern? "Are we, or are our descendants, going to be in these villages in 100 years time?" And the predictions are that no, they will not.



FSR: Is there a place for foreign intervention?

JDG: I don't think so. Realistically, if we didn't intervene in Syria when Bashar al Assad chemically gassed his own people, I doubt very much there'd be any kind of humanitarian intervention for a minute number of Christian minorities. I mean, the only thing that could have happened was Evangelical Christians in the United States might have supported them more. The one thing that I think the Trump Muslim ban did, which was terrible (and of course, Mike Pence is an evangelical Christian, so he was very interested in Christians in the Middle East) is it kind of lured Christians to come to the United States or Canada, but, you know, it banned Muslims from the Middle East. So, it kind of set up a terrible system of good refugees, bad refugees.

FSR: So, when someone is looking for an answer — especially a policymaker — is the answer in the communities that are there, and to strengthen the ties that they have locally?

JDG: Yes, I think that [the] ties they have locally, with their Muslim neighbors — Christians and Muslims have lived together for centuries as neighbors and lived together well. I mean, the rise of more radical groups like ISIS is what threatens them. Or right now, Iranian-backed militias, or Turkish airstrikes. This is much more of a threat to them.

FSR: Looking at the arc of your book — and your career — in gathering all these stories, how do you end up deciding who to talk to? Is it by chance? How much of that is calculated?

JDG: No, I always use some local people to help me. Local people know their community and they know who they're going to bring me to — who will have a story that really illustrates the situation. They'll say, "oh, you know, we've got to go talk to this old woman. She was driven out of her house by ISIS and she lost this many members of her family." So, I'm always guided by local journalists, or local politicians, or local representatives, or just local people.

It's kind of a tenet of field work that you learn how to talk to people, how to interview them, and what usually happens is — it's very organic — one family will say, "well, now you must talk to my cousins in the next village," and then they'll say, "oh, you know you must drive up the mountain and go see the farmer on the right hand side of the road." So, that helps as well.

FSR: After you collect these stories, what's your writing process like?

JDG: I take notes while I'm talking to them. I very rarely record because it freaks people out. I mean, if I'm interviewing a head of state or something maybe, but people don't like to be recorded, so I take notes. I usually go through my notes at night and then when I get back to wherever I'm going I tend to take my notebook and divide [it] up with yellow post-its — which interviews were where — so I can get to them easily.

If I'm writing a book, I go through all my field work and then I sit down and write the book. For this book, it took about three years of field work. Then I sat down, and it took about a year to write. So, that's the process I use. Different people use different things though.

FSR: As you're working through an issue or story, how often does your perception change?

JDG: I don't think I have I have a perception when I start. I think I go into it very open-minded. I have no idea what I'm going to find. I might [say], "okay, I want to write a book about Christians in the Middle East. They're fleeing. People say that in 100 years there will not be Christian communities." I go into it thinking I want to hear what they have to say. So, I don't have any perceptions before. I really don't. I'm very open, like a sponge, to listen to what they have to say.

"I always use some local people to help me. Local people know their community and they know who they're going to bring me to."

FSR: I noticed you have several questions you always ask refugees: how do they receive the news war is coming, when do they decide to leave, and what do they bring? How did you end up with those three questions?

JDG: From years of experience and working with refugees and seeing them, it always really fascinates me, when you have very little time to collect your belongings, what you take with you.

We just had a fire alarm [go off] in my house at 4:00 a.m. My son grabbed the cat, and I immediately grabbed an envelope with our passports and important documents. I grabbed that and I grabbed my computer. If you need to leave somewhere in a hurry, you could leave behind your clothes and your books. Those are replaceable. But there's certain things that you know you might need to get out of a situation quickly, and your passport is one of them.

So, most people, refugees, especially in the Middle East, they bring their gold. Even if they're very poor, their wedding gold is something that even a very poor man would have to offer his wife. So, they take their gold and that is, consistently, what I found. They would bring photographs, they would bring documents, and they would bring something that they could trade to live on in the future, wherever they end up.

FSR: Do any of the people you interview ever demand an explanation from you as a Westerner or American as to why things are happening?

JDG: All the time. Or "why can't your government save us? Why can't the Americans come and help us? Why did the American invasion happen? Why can't your president save the refugees?" Yes, all the time. "Why can't you get me a visa to come to your country?" You have to make it very clear that there are limits to what you can do.

That doesn't mean you can't try to help someone if you are able to. If you're interviewing people, I think it's absolutely fair to bring them food or what they need. But, you know, we're not social workers and we're not diplomats. During the siege of Sarajevo, so many people wanted to leave, and they saw any Westerner as their chance at getting out of the war. Sometimes we could help, but more than often we couldn't, and that was very painful. But you have to define your role and your limits and what you can and cannot do.

FSR: Another common theme in your book reflects denial of impending war. Can you offer any explanation for that?

JDG: Well, we're living in a country right now where many people think a civil war is coming. And yet, I think if you went around and said to people, "are you prepared for a civil war in the United States?" They would say, "no." No one ever wants to think that their neighbors are going to turn on them, but that's exactly what happened in Syria, in the former Yugoslavia, in Africa, in Rwanda. Neighbors turned on neighbors. No one truly believes that where they're living a secure life with their families is going to descend into utter chaos. But that's Ukraine right now. People aren't leaving yet, but they're predicting that millions, between one and 2 million refugees are going to flee into Poland if the Russians do invade. Why aren't they going now?

FSR: Are journalism and academic writing comparable in their approaches to local conflicts? Should a policymaker look at one differently or with a greater weight?

JDG: No, I think they're two different things. First of all, I think that policymakers look at live reports to understand what's happening in real time, and academics often sit in Medford or Cambridge or New Haven — they're not on the Ukrainian border monitoring what's happening. But a journalist or photographer is, so they can get a much more accurate representation of what's happening.

Academics have their place. So do think tanks. I think it's useful to take all that information together and use it along with whatever UN data you can get. I don't think you should rely on one source. I always tell my students: "read UNHCR's report. Read Crisis Group's report. Read Human Rights Watch. Then read *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* and maybe a few academic articles," but usually academic articles are outdated. Is it going to help you understand the Arab Spring by reading the *Clash of Civilizations*? Well, maybe in terms of background, but probably you're going to get more out of it knowing what's going on in real time.

FSR: Is it fair to say that journalism is a real-time, live account, with an impact on policymaking?

JDG: During the war in Bosnia, journalism definitely had a big effect on policymaking. I think the shaming of politicians that were being very cynical about letting Sarajevo run into the longest siege in modern history. And then a genocide at Srebrenica. It took them a long time to act, but they did. They finally did act after the genocide.

I think in terms of Afghanistan and Iraq, it was different, and more complicated, because these were invasions, and journalist reports were really pointing out the disaster of the invasions and the consequence of them.

In terms of Syria, despite horrific reports of chemical gassing or torture, or numerous human rights violations and atrocities, the war is still going on. I think there's a lack of appetite for intervention, which is really based on political will, not on journalism or what journalists can and cannot do. I think there's just less and less political drive to end wars, foreign wars.

FSR: Do you have any opinions on the impact policymakers have on this region of the world or some of these issues that you bring out?

JDG: Well, I think cynically, American foreign policy is really driven by former success stories and not by humanitarian intervention, or by saving lives, or crushing dictators, or preventing genocide. It's more about what is our interest in this region. Are we going to help the Kurds because we want to buffer against Iran or are we going to help the Kurds because we genuinely believe they have a cause for a nation of their own? Are we going to help the refugee crisis in 2015? Will we take in a certain number of people? Well, you know the only country that really, really set a moral example for that was Germany under Angela Merkel. The other European countries really failed, so I think humanitarian issues are less at stake than self-interest.

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THE EXHAUSTION of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Dysfunctional Constitutional Regime

- By Jasmin Mujanović

The footage is grainy. The cacophony of noise pours from the idling helicopters and the columns of police cars, motorcycles, and armored personnel carriers with their engines and blaring sirens.[56] But the scenes are remarkable all the same. They show the city of Banja Luka, the second largest metropolitan area in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), on May 12, 1992. They depict a city under occupation by a regime in the process of orchestrating the first genocide in Europe since the Holocaust.

Mass grave in Bosnia // 1993 | Image Source: Britannica.

By the time the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) leadership in BiH — proxies of the then-regime of Slobodan Milošević regime in Belgrade — had organized this show of force in Banja Luka, much of northern and eastern Bosnia was already in flame. Serb nationalist militias from BiH and neighboring Serbia, backed by elements of the Yugoslav Peoples' Army (JNA) and Serbian intelligence operatives, assisted in the systematic extermination, expulsion, and detention of ethnic Bosniaks and Croats — with animus reserved for the former — as they sacked towns and villages all along BiH's Drina River valley.

In the summer of 1991, the Milošević regime had directed the JNA and Serbian security agencies to assist SDS leaders throughout BiH in creating so-called organizational "cells." Those cells, in turn, would become the primary loci for the delivery and distribution of weapons and munitions to local Serb nationalists, who would form the brunt of what would eventually become the "Army of the Republika Srpska" (VRS), the military wing of the self-declared Republika Srpska (RS) on the territory of BiH.

The formation of the RS and its sister "republic" in occupied Croatia, the Republika Srpska Krajina (RSK), were the realization of a political project by Serbia's nationalist establishment that had been initially concocted as early as 1990 by elements within the country's intelligence and military brass. By 1991, the plan had been fully authorized and finalized by Milošević and his inner circle. It was known as the "RAM plan" (meaning "framework") and "it outlined plans to achieve a Yugoslavia without Slovenia, and to conquer the territories of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina."[57] It was, in short, a blueprint for the creation of "Greater Serbia," the polity which Milošević and his underlings Radovan Karadžić, Ratko Mladić, Goran Hadžić, and others, wanted to create out of the wreckage of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ). The primary purpose of this Greater Serbia initiative was to create a homogenous ethnic space from which all non-Serbs were to be eliminated in one form or another.

Milošević ultimately failed. BiH and Croatia preserved their sovereignty and territorial integrity, as did the rest of the former Yugoslav republics. This included Kosovo, which declared its independence from Serbia in 2008. Two years prior, Montenegro too declared its sovereignty.

Even so, in BiH, the conclusion of the Bosnian War (1992-1995), which had been the focal point of the violence during this decade of bloodshed, was hardly neat. One hundred thousand people were killed in BiH alone — nearly three-quarters of all those killed during the entire Yugoslav dissolution. Of those killed, the majority were Bosniaks, the primary targets of what has since become known as the Bosnian Genocide.[58] Indeed, just under half of all persons killed during the Yugoslav Wars were ethnic Bosniaks of BiH. Aside from this massive disparity of violence, the United States-brokered Dayton Peace Accords in 1995 left BiH internally fragmented. BiH's postwar constitutional regime is both the most complex and possibly the most decentralized in the world. While BiH has 14 separate governments for a territory approximately the size of West Virginia and a population of barely 3 million, it has no state-level ministry of education, healthcare, labor, or energy.

Dayton Peace Accords at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base on 21 November 1995 // Photo Ny: U.S. Air Force/Staff Sgt. Brian Schlumbohm.

The cardinal error of the Dayton Accords, however, was the preservation of the RS as an administrative region — an entity, according to the constitution — within BiH, or, at least, the preservation of the RS on the political-ideological basis on which the entity was founded, namely genocide. Famed American diplomat Richard Holbrooke, the chief architect of the Dayton Accords, wrote the following in his memoir about the period: "I regret that we did not make a stronger effort to drop the name Republika Srpska. We underestimated the value to Pale [i.e. the Serb nationalist leadership in BiH] of retaining their blood-soaked name... In retrospect...I think we should have pushed Milošević harder to change the name of the Bosnian Serb entity. Even if the effort failed" it would have been worth trying."[59]

Holbrooke was, if anything, too conservative in his regrets. BiH currently finds itself embroiled in its worst political crisis since the conclusion of the war. Milorad Dodik, the man who has essentially inherited the mantle of hetman of the Serb nationalist camp in BiH from the genocidaire Karadžić, has orchestrated a secession crisis that is eerily reminiscent of the SDS's activities in 1991-1992. However, Dodik is not a member of the SDS, but the leader of the "Alliance of Independence Social Democrats" (SNSD), a party that enjoyed significant American and European backing in the late 1990s and early 2000s, as it was perceived as a moderate, reformist movement. Dodik himself lived up to the promise, for a moment, referring to the events in Srebrenica as genocide, labeling Karadžić and Mladić as war criminals, and signing off on nearly every major reform initiative then on the table, including moving BiH toward NATO membership.

In time, however, Dodik and his party's politics began to shift. As the United States withdrew from BiH and the Western Balkans, and the EU enlargement process emerged as the primary international framework for the region, Dodik began leaning into familiar nationalist themes. By the start of the 2010s, he was openly referring to BiH as a failed state whose collapse was imminent and inevitable. After the return to power of the hardline nationalist camp in Serbia in 2012, headed by now-President Aleksandar Vučić, and the onset of the Russian occupation of Ukraine in 2014, Dodik's rhetoric became still more radical. He began threatening the secession of the RS entity on a nearly weekly basis and actively building a parallel security apparatus — with Russian and Serbian help — to realize those aims.

These long-term efforts culminated this summer, when the chief international diplomat in BiH, High Representative Valentine Inzko, imposed an anti-genocide denial law. Dodik and the SNSD responded with fury. Bosnian Genocide denial and secessionist threats had become a staple feature of his politics, and the regime had even launched supposed "commissions" to negate the established facts of the killings in Srebrenica, the Siege of Sarajevo, and essentially the entire conduct of the war and genocide by Serb nationalist forces under the command of the convicted genocidaires Karadžić and Mladić.[60]

Inzko opted to impose the law through his internationally mandated "Bonn Powers" because Dodik and his coalition partners in the Croat nationalist Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) had for years obstructed the adoption of a similar law by the Bosnian parliament. Inzko's successor, the former German parliamentarian Christian Schmidt, urged Dodik and all political actors in

BiH to work within the parliamentary process to produce an appropriate domestic law that could supplant Inzko's executive decision. Instead, Dodik began a systematic assault on BiH's constitutional order. He has launched what he refers to as a unilateral "pull out" from the country's Armed Forces, intelligence agency, and tax collection agency.[61] His party has also threatened to broaden these activities to include the state anti-corruption police, customs and border control, and even the BiH's Constitutional Court. In short, these measures signal secession in all but name, modeled almost wholly on the fashion in which Milošević and Karadžić originally created the RS entity.

"Milorad Dodik at the final convention in Belgrade" by Choice for a better life // CC BY 2.0.

Owing to Dayton's extreme decentralization, Dodik and his associates maintain a vice grip on many of the same institutions they are trying to dismantle, including much of the country's judiciary and law enforcement communities, who should be responding to their anti-constitutional activities. As Dodik's effective state capture of these institutions has made such responses difficult to date, pro-BiH actors have looked to the international community to assist in checking Dodik's machinations. To date, only the United States and United Kingdom have responded to these calls with any substance.[62] In January of this year, the United States expanded its sanctions regime versus Dodik — the initial round of which was imposed in 2017 — while imposing similar measures against Milan Tegeltija, his personal advisor, and *Alternativna Televizija*, a regime-aligned television broadcaster. In April, the United Kingdom also sanctioned Dodik, as well as the President of the RS entity, Željka Cvijanović. In early June, the United States added to its sanctions list the SNSD the RS entity Minister of Health and Social Welfare, as well as the President of the Federation entity, Marinko Čavara, a leading member of the HDZ.

However, given the scale of Dodik's systematic assault on the BiH state, these measures are unlikely to be a sufficient deterrent. Dodik not only benefits from the patronage of Russia and Serbia but also increasingly illiberal EU states like Hungary.[63] The United States must either significantly deepen and broaden its sanctions against his regime to effectively cut him off from global financial markets or rely on at least some European states joining its existing efforts. The United Kingdom sanctions have accomplished that to an extent, but the EU's non-compliance with these measures — and the refusal of individual members to join the Anglo-American initiative — remains a major concern.

In the meantime, BiH inches toward its third decade since the end of the Bosnian War, with its existing constitutional and political system all but exhausted. The revanchist politics of Dodik and his enablers have kept the country entombed in dysfunction and chaos. Ironically, the highwater mark of American post-Cold War diplomacy, the Dayton Accords, has become the very catalyst for BiH's renewed drift toward the precipice of conflict. Until American and European policy decisively shifts toward supporting the creation of a rational, liberal, and democratic constitutional framework in BiH, Dodik and those like him will feel empowered to attempt to complete what Milošević and Karadžić started in 1992. And eventually, they might even succeed — at the expense of untold future victims.

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ASSESSING COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (CVE) INITIATIVES ACROSS THE WEST: LESSONS LEARNED

Authors: Elena Savoia, Michael King, Anna Ekström; Diána Hughes, Adam Baker, Lauren LaBrique

INTRODUCTION

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) programs worldwide aim to prevent individuals from engaging in terrorism. However, such programs vary widely in their approaches, which range from public awareness campaigns aimed at educating populations about the risks of violent extremist ideologies to in-person interventions for individuals who have already been radicalized and, in some instances, engaged in terrorist activities.[64]

By design, individual-level approaches aim to disengage individuals from violent extremist groups by addressing their vulnerabilities through psychosocial interventions. These programs are most often implemented by mental health and social service professionals and can include the provision of aid services related to psychological aid, employment, housing, legal support, healthcare, and education. In complex cases, however, multiple professionals from various disciplines may come together to coordinate the intervention. This multi-disciplinary approach generally helps individuals disengage from violent extremist social networks without necessarily addressing their ideological beliefs. That said, interventions can address violent ideologies when program participants themselves seek to engage in the topic, or when deemed appropriate by the professionals leading the intervention. In these cases, credible mentors, religious experts, and former extremists can assist with the intervention's ideological or theological component.[65]

CVE interventions employ social work and psychotherapy to resolve psychosocial issues, such as addiction and mental illness. However, the link between this immediate goal of resolving a client's psychosocial issues and the more distal goal of preventing terrorism remains largely unclear. This is partly due to a limited understanding of radicalization and subsequent mobilization to violence, as well as a lack of standardized knowledge regarding the reversal of these processes through disengagement and deradicalization.[66] To partially fill this gap, and to better understand violent extremist case management, we conducted interviews with CVE professionals working for governmental and non-governmental organizations in four countries: Canada, Italy, Sweden, and the United States. The sample of interviewees included government personnel, lawyers, social workers, psychologists, law enforcement officers, and NGO personnel, as well as former extremist group members now employed by CVE organizations. The interviewees described their experience in managing different types of cases, which addressed *jihadis*, white supremacists, neo-Nazis, anti-government violent extremists, other right-wing violent extremists, and returned foreign fighters (individuals who leave their country of residence to join a non-state armed group in an conflict abroad).[67] Through a content analysis of the 31 interviews, we derived four themes regarding the CVE case management process: (1) assessing risks and needs, (2) building rapport and trust, (3) building collaborations, and (4) providing mental health and social welfare services. A description of each theme is provided below.

ASSESSING RISKS AND NEEDS

Most interviewees noted the importance of assessing risks and needs when managing violent extremist cases. However, interviewees also indicated that it is particularly challenging to determine how likely an individual is to commit an act of violent extremism. An American interventionist we interviewed stated, "our greatest challenge here is distinguishing between individuals who are violent and those who are not. It's hard because we're trying to distinguish between somebody that is simply talking about something from somebody intending to carry out real violence." Discussing the nuances of risk assessment, a Swedish interviewee emphasized the importance of understanding the context surrounding the individual, stating that "knowledge of an extremist's environment is crucial for understanding the problems and assessing the risks and protective factors" for interventions. Similarly, an interviewee from the United States said, " . . . we work to understand the network of people involved and evaluate how dangerous they may be. . . . We look to identify a clear threat of violence, . . . to understand if they are simply viewing violent propaganda or if they are intending to commit an action with tangible dangerous ramifications." In discussing the important elements to consider during this risk assessment process, another interviewee from Sweden highlighted ideology, criminal history, health status, and the individual's ability to engage in conversational communication with the social worker.

File Photo from National Conference on Tackling Extremism in Somalia // 2013 // Public Domain.

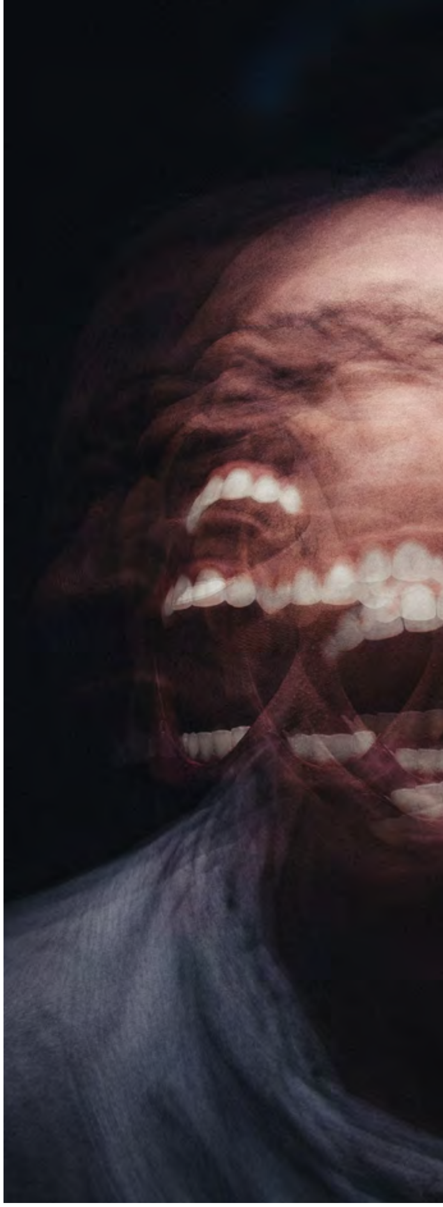
BUILDING RAPPORT AND TRUST

Interviewees described building trust-based relationships with their clients as another key component of a successful intervention, emphasizing the importance of listening, rapport, and open communication. Referencing a case involving a young right-wing extremist, a Canadian social worker noted the importance of incremental trust-building. While "the client cannot have control over all aspects of the relationship," some components of the relationship, "such as the frequency and duration of meetings," can be ceded to the client's control to build reciprocal trust. A director of an intervention-based NGO in the United States explained that he prioritizes listening to the client in order to gain the client's trust. Similarly, an interventionist in Canada noted that listening is "the best way to gain the client's respect and validation." He said he tries to "listen and recognize their feelings, and . . . build trust to later deconstruct views that may be dangerous." Referring to the case of a young man who was preparing to commit an act of violence at a mosque, this interventionist explained that he introduced the client to the same mosque, where the client "ended up befriending the Imam and giving up violence." The interviewee emphasized that "it was crucial to listen and not judge and, instead, try to understand why the client had such views."

Discussing a case involving an individual recently released from incarceration, a Swedish interventionist stated that their organization sought to understand the needs of the client and "the challenges that this individual was dealing with inside the prison . . . [as well as] concerns or fears that might exist surrounding release." Similarly, an interventionist from Canada noted that the rapport established between herself and the client was the foundation of the case's success. She described how, at the start of the intervention, the client felt that no one was "in his corner," but began to recognize that the interventionists genuinely sought to support him. In the United States, an NGO-affiliated interventionist observed that "if they feel respected, it changes the dynamic because now you have somebody else on the other side that you can talk to, and they can help try to make sense of things." In short, strong rapport can "help to overcome the worry and suspicion about the CVE program."

AVOIDING JUDGMENT

Interviewees from Sweden and Canada discussed the importance of having conversations about clients' actions without expressing judgment or shame, in order to create relationships based on open communication and accountability. Establishing environments in which clients feel comfortable and respected enables them to candidly discuss their past and take responsibility for their engagement in violent extremism. Discussing this subject, a social services worker in Sweden remarked that the client "need[s] to be able to feel like they can just talk about what's on their mind and have an honest conversation." Likewise, a Canadian therapist highlighted the importance of creating a space "where [clients] can honestly talk about their involvement in the extremist movement, without downplaying or aggrandizing their experience . . . [and turn] their negative activities and experiences into something positive." Another interviewee explained that, to be held accountable, clients must express doubts about their past and take ownership of their actions. Further supporting this viewpoint, a social worker and senior interventionist in Canada reported that clients begin working toward accountability when they acknowledge that "changing certain aspects of their lives might be beneficial to them."



BUILDING COLLABORATIONS

Many interviewees discussed the importance of establishing collaborative relationships with other professionals and organizations, as well as with the client's personal network of family and friends. One U.S.-based interviewee stressed the importance of interagency collaboration, noting that it is a valuable tool for establishing the information-sharing capabilities that are critical for CVE interventions.

COLLABORATING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

Some interviewees discussed how they incorporated collaboration with local law enforcement into their case management process, especially when their clients were at high risk of committing violence. A clinical social worker in the United States remarked that "there is a great relationship between our team and law enforcement — it's like osmosis, we learn from each other," and an American clinical psychologist noted that "it's great to have this partnership with police where we're both respected and heard." However, other interviewees maintained a more cautious approach toward law enforcement collaboration, with one Canadian interviewee stressing that they only involve law enforcement agencies when the client is engaged in criminal activity.

While many interviewees reported active collaboration with law enforcement agencies, some encountered challenges in this area. One interviewee commented that in some situations, local law enforcement was reluctant to "think outside the box" or consider alternative solutions to incarceration. Interviewees also reported that law enforcement officers often overestimated the threat posed by clients. They explained that this tendency can give some clients the impression that law enforcement officers are simply waiting for them to fail.

Photo by Nsey Benajah on Unsplash.

COLLABORATING WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Mental health professionals such as social workers, therapists, psychological counselors, and certified psychologists were frequently cited as important members of multidisciplinary case management teams, providing both individual and group therapy for clients. A case manager in the United States noted that mental health professionals can coach clients, helping them reconsider their choices, including their involvement in extremist activity. The involvement of mental health experts was seen to make CVE approaches more holistic, thereby reducing the likelihood of escalation. Speaking on the utility of mental health practitioners in crisis situations, one interviewee noted that they are generally able to deescalate verbally "without a need to arrest the individual."

COLLABORATING WITH FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Interviewees highlighted the need to collaborate with an individual's support network — family, friends, school officials, and community and religious leaders. Some interviewees noted that these external support systems were crucial for convincing clients to participate in intervention programming. Additionally, interviewees noted that incorporating family members into the case management process made the client more likely to speak candidly. Family members can also reinforce reintegration efforts at home. Asserting that "peace starts at home," one social worker in Sweden underscored the importance of involving parents: by "arm[ing] parents with knowledge of the situation around them" regarding "gangs, extremism, drugs, or other forms of destructive behavior," they will become better equipped to confront these challenges if, and when, their children face them.

While family members can be beneficial partners in the fight against radicalization, some interviewees acknowledged challenges in engaging with clients' families. One Swedish social worker noted that "parents often defend their children, even if they themselves don't believe in extremist views," alluding to the denial parents experience sometimes when their children are involved in violent extremism. Cultural and language barriers can further complicate parental involvement, with one caseworker in Sweden stating that "parents sometimes don't have the basic knowledge of the societal structure in this part of Europe," and may thus be suspicious or fearful of government organizations. This interviewee contended that parents sometimes lie to defend their children "simply because they're afraid and lack knowledge of the [protective] systems in this country." However, the interviewee also noted that parents may become more productively engaged if provided with knowledge of these systems. A different interviewee described a more extreme example of this dynamic, in which the family of the client also supported the extremist ideology in question, making their inclusion in the reintegration effort substantially more complex.

COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY LEADERS

Interviewees discussed the importance of collaborating with community leaders, religious leaders, and school administrators, especially in cases involving minors. These individuals can assist in the management of cases by protecting the returning fighters' families from becoming socially stigmatized within their communities. According to several interviewees, schools can serve as a supportive space for long-term programming; one interviewee noted that schools can allow for "the provision of discussions, conversations, mentorship, and leisure activities" that are ultimately beneficial for intervention efforts. However, this viewpoint was not held by all interviewees. Some of those interviewed noted that schools often prefer to avoid intervening in CVE-related situations and can even act in ways that are counterproductive to the intervention. Describing a case in the United States, a social worker recalled that "school counselors were defensive and not very open about what was happening," and that the school's underestimation of risk and general lack of involvement "made it difficult for us to work together."

COLLABORATING WITH NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Interviewees reported that nongovernmental organizations engaged in CVE can assist in a variety of ways. NGOs provide unique support and guidance to social workers, law enforcement, and other professionals handling cases;

initiate relationships with clients and their families; and collaborate with government officials to provide subject-matter expertise as needed. However, NGOs often struggle with limited funding. One Swedish interviewee explained that small organizations attempt to overcome this issue by collaborating and pooling their limited resources with other similarly under-resourced groups to better support their clients. Also of note, NGOs that had received government funding encountered unique challenges with client management, as some clients feared that the government funders would require organizations to share information about their cases.

PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES

While interviewees in most countries emphasized the importance of mental health support in the crisis intervention process, some in Canada and the United States found it difficult to convince clients to use mental health services. Various social and political factors fueled their apprehensions. One interviewee found that clients were concerned that attending therapy would damage their "street cred." Another explained that white supremacist clients viewed social workers and mental health professionals as "too liberal" and therefore untrustworthy. Illustrating the necessity of mental health services, an interventionist described a case in which a client diagnosed with histrionic and borderline personality disorders refused mental health treatment; consequently, the intervention could not continue safely. This trend of refusing treatment may result from perceived stigma or a lack of awareness of the need for mental health support.

A social worker in Canada said that they believed group therapy or peer support group programs would benefit their clients, citing reports that many clients feel isolated after disengaging from violent extremist networks. Interviewees discussed how mental health issues hinder interventions and how various logistical barriers prevent interviewees from connecting clients with mental health services. Interviewees described various ways of providing mental health services; some programs maintain in-house mental health professionals, while others use contract workers. However, privacy concerns prevent correctional institutions from informing family members about the mental health concerns of an inmate. One interviewee described how mental health issues contributed to a client's inability to seek out CVE programs. A case manager working for an NGO explained that finding therapists willing to work with extremists is a major challenge in providing mental health support; it can be difficult to overcome "the hurdles of discrimination and biased views from practitioners, who have pre-judgment of certain groups associated with terrorism, extremism, and hate groups."

However, family therapy and individual therapy for clients' family members can facilitate clients' disengagement from extremism. As a youth worker detailed, relationships and communication between individuals and family members can improve when parents enhance their own mental health and parenting methods. This interviewee suggested that improving parental relationships can, in some cases, contribute to the disengagement process. Another interviewee described a case in which the client and their family members initially began attending therapy sessions separately, but later participated in joint-caregiver therapy sessions as treatment progressed. The parents' therapy sessions focused on reducing parent-child conflict, improving parenting strategies, and establishing electronics-use boundaries for the client in the family home to reduce exposure to extremist groups online. After five months of individual therapy, the client joined his parents in family therapy while continuing to work with the interventionist.

Across interviews, interventionists identified programs related to job training, access to and support for education, and housing assistance as some of the most important resources they use during their CVE interventions. Interviewees also highlighted several other useful programs and services, such as addiction treatment, government financial assistance, religious counseling, and tattoo removal services.

DISCUSSION

The CVE interventions described by the interviewees are based on multi-disciplinary approaches anchored in health and social services. As such, the core tenets of these interventions are similar to other types of psychosocial interventions, such as gang disengagement, domestic violence prevention, and suicide prevention. The CVE practitioners interviewed discussed the goals of interventions and strategies they believe are important to reduce the likelihood that the individual will engage in an act of violent extremism. Many of these goals go beyond what can be achieved by a single organization. They depend on the client's access to a whole system of services and tools that the interventionist can use to assess and mitigate the situation. For example, at the start of an intervention, it is important to determine the risk posed by the client to himself and others, but this task is made difficult by limited research on the validity and reliability of risk assessment tools for violent extremists. According to the professionals we interviewed, establishing rapport and communication between the interventionist and client lies at the core of building reciprocal trust and accountability. In some cases, former extremists, now themselves working in CVE, are engaged in this process. "Formers" can sometimes more easily develop trusting relationship with individuals engaged with extremism; extremists may perceive these "formers" as more capable of understanding their views and reasons for engaging in violent extremism. When possible, family members, friends, and community leaders can be engaged in the intervention as well, providing a support network critical to managing the situation. Describing external services useful for case management, interviewees emphasized the key importance of mental health support. They also cited the integration of social welfare support and job training as particularly important elements of the reintegration process.

That said, the case management process for individuals engaged in violent extremism can be uniquely challenging. The literature reports that social workers, for example, are noticing an extra dimension of responsibility when managing these cases.[68] Many have also expressed concern over the stigma sometimes associated with CVE programs and participants, which deters some individuals from seeking help and creates an additional burden for existing program participants. Violent ideologies within CVE set it apart from other types of interventions. Intervention providers often find the intricacies of these ideologies particularly daunting.[69] They may struggle to correctly identify different levels of radicalization without letting misconceptions — including biases about race and gender — influence their assessments. This leads some practitioners to doubt their professional instincts and question the degree of their client's relationship with violent extremist ideologies and the propensity for acting upon them.[70] Practitioners worry about their biases driving them toward overreaction, believing that an individual may be at risk of committing an act of violence when he/she is not.[71] Additionally, the availability of clinically trained social workers and psychologists with knowledge of violent extremist ideologies is quite limited. Finding practitioners with the cultural competence and requisite knowledge of extremist ideologies remains a challenge.

Photo by Maria Oswalt on Unsplash.

Interventions aimed at preventing violent extremism are complex and involve more elements than those discussed in this article. Effective terrorism prevention requires that governments and their citizens be willing to invest in rehabilitation initiatives for violent extremists. Developing competent professionals and enabling them to implement meaningful interventions requires significant investments. The return on this investment is evident. Disengaging and rehabilitating violent extremists curtails terrorist activity, but the merits of this strategy extend beyond this goal. By addressing these individuals' vulnerabilities — such as past trauma and ideological grievances — through voluntary programs, democracies may simultaneously counter terrorism while avoiding further societal polarization and upholding democratic values.

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THE WAR ON TERROR CONTINUES

-By Jytte Klausen

This article was written prior to the strike on July 31, 2022 that killed Ayman al-Zawahiri.

Do *jihadist* terror organizations still represent a serious threat? If so, do they pose a serious threat to the West? The United States and Europe suffered few attacks during the past decade, and yet more *jihadist* groups are launching more attacks over a larger portion of the world than ever before. They all trace their origins and allegiances to al-Qaeda and its breakaway faction, the Islamic State, also known as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

The war in Syria was a boon to the global *jihadist* movement. Together, ISIS and al-Qaeda can now field between 100,000 and 270,000 armed combatants. While the COVID-19 pandemic restricted travel, making it more difficult for terrorist groups to infiltrate Europe and North America, the *jihadist* movement flourished elsewhere. A growing number of states in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia now face the challenge of violent extremism.

Following the chaotic withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan, President Biden declared that the war against *jihadist* terrorism was over.[72] Numerous foreign policy strategists agreed. But the war is not over, and several U.S. intelligence officials have stressed the continued threat to the homeland posed by both al-Qaeda and ISIS.

On October 26, 2021, two months after the American withdrawal from Afghanistan, Undersecretary of Defense Colin Kahl told the Senate Armed Services Committee that Islamic State's Khorasan group in Afghanistan "could potentially" develop the capability to launch external attacks — including those targeting the United States — within six to 12 months. Operating from its new safe haven in Afghanistan, al-Qaeda could achieve that same capability within one to two years.[73]

But is Kahl right to believe that the United States should be more concerned about ISIS than al-Qaeda? Time and time again, the West has underestimated the latter. We may be about to make that same mistake again. Al-Qaeda emerged victorious from the ashes of the jihadist campaign in Syria. Its fighters remain embedded in Syria's northern territory, from which Europe's large cities can be reached by car. Meanwhile, al-Qaeda's leadership is poised to benefit from its newfound refuge in Afghanistan.

THE STATE OF THE GLOBAL JIHAD

ISIS's pseudo-state in Eastern Syria collapsed in March 2019. Since then, the organization has gained ground in Afghanistan and reemerged as an insurgency in Syria and Iraq, with branches in Africa and the Middle East. ISIS likely boasts more adherents in Europe and the United States than al-Qaeda, and it may now be the richest terrorist organization in history.[74]

Following the death of bin Laden, a schism in the *jihadist* movement began to take shape. In late 2011, bin Laden's successor, Ayman al-Zawahiri, dispatched

US ARMY Photo // CC BY 2.0.

Abu Mohammad al-Jolani

his top officials to Syria. He directed them to build a *jihadist* front organization to unify regional *jihadist* fighter groups against the Syrian government. The organization became known as Jabhat al-Nusra, or the Nusra Front.[75] Abu Mohammad al-Jolani, a high-ranking al-Qaeda operative from the Golan Heights, was appointed as the local emir (leader). Answerable ultimately to al-Zawahiri, al-Jolani held authority over all local *jihadist* groups, including al-Qaeda in Iraq, a faction that now employs the title Islamic State in Iraq (ISI).

Two years later, the emir of ISI, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, declared that the Nusra Front was under his leadership. He rebranded the merged organization as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). This was nothing less than a coup. Al-Jolani insisted that al-Nusra remained loyal only to al-Qaeda's emir, Ayman al-Zawahiri. An al-Qaeda negotiator was dispatched to resolve the dispute, but after ISIS dispatched a suicide squad to kill him, open conflict broke out between the two organizations. In February 2014, al-Zawahiri publicly disavowed ISIS. He explained that he had "little choice" but to expel the group and criticized it for a failure in "teamwork" and for displaying excessive violence.[76] In June of the same year, ISIS shortened its name to the Islamic State (IS). Technically, that is still the group's name, but that title also refers to the pseudo-state that was controlled by the organization. To avoid confusion, I will therefore continue to refer to the group as ISIS, while using IS when speaking of the pseudo-state.

The rift triggered ripple effects across the global *jihadist* movement. Members of its various factions were forced to choose sides. Some enlisted with ISIS under al-Baghdadi. Others remained with al-Nusra under al-Jolani.[77] At its height, the Islamic State (IS) occupied about a third of Syria and 40 percent of Iraq. Its emissaries bribed and cajoled local fighter groups to join up with the "caliphate." Soon, they would claim the affiliation of new "provinces" throughout Asia and Africa.

THE AFRICAN MISSION

Al-Qaeda and ISIS both have affiliates in Africa, but those associated with the latter have wreaked the most havoc. They exploit local grievances, assassinate uncooperative local authorities, plunder villages for food, extort taxes from local business, profit from smuggling operations, and abduct children as sex slaves and child soldiers. There are at least a dozen ISIS affiliates, spread across three continents. I will examine several of them below.

A group known as the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) has established itself in Mali and neighboring Burkina Faso and Niger. Initially, the group fought with the

French and Malian Soldiers during Opération Barkhane By TM1972 // CC BY-SA 4.0.

local al-Qaeda affiliate, but recently the two groups have worked in parallel, extracting revenue from smugglers and the local population.[78]

In February 2022, France announced the withdrawal of its military forces from Mali. This was perceived as another loss in the war on terror. French forces had been stationed there for nine years as part of an allied NATO counterterrorism effort aimed at rolling back the *jihadist* presence in West Africa.[79] The French mission had been a military success. AQIM, al-Qaeda's powerful local affiliate — which historically operated in Algeria and in parts of the desert regions of the northern Sahel — was decimated and its leadership killed. But the effort to promote political and economic stability in Mali had utterly failed.[80]

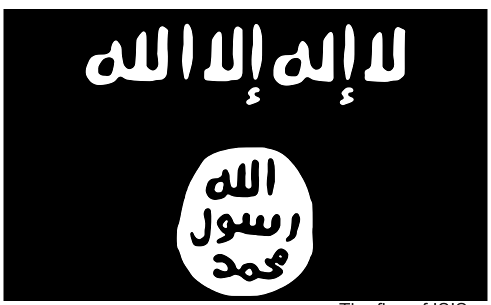
Insignia patch worn by members of The Wagner Group

The withdrawal came after Mali's military junta turned to Russia for support, inviting the Wagner Group to establish a base in its territory. This development received far less attention than the withdrawal itself. The Wagner Group, a mercenary company founded by Russian intelligence officers, is linked to Vladimir Putin. Infamous for its brutality, it has assisted Putin in establishing a power base in Africa and elsewhere. Its employees prop up corrupt regimes that strengthen Russia's influence and its access to mining licenses and natural resources. Through these schemes, Russia also gains new military bases.[81] Today, the organization supplies Putin with an international corps of irregular elite soldiers in Ukraine. Both the United States and the European Union have imposed sanctions on the Wagner Group for its illicit activities.[82]

Another important affiliate is the Islamic State's Central Africa "Province," Wilayat Wasat Ifriqiya. Established by Somali militants who infiltrated the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the group has created insurgencies in the DRC's neighboring states (The Wagner Group has been involved there as well). One offshoot, known as ISIS-Mozambique, or Ahlu Sunna wal-Jama'a (ASWJ), has made inroads in East Africa, where *jihadists* previously had little to no presence.[83] In March 2020, and again in August of the same year, the group attacked Mocimboa da Praia, a coastal city and tourist hub in the Cabo Delgado province of northern Mozambique, displacing 30,000 people. The insurgents retained control until a joint operation by Rwandan and Mozambican military forces retook the city a year later, in August 2021.

In a dramatic operation in May 2021, the group attacked a large-scale natural gas plant run by a French multinational company in Palma, Mozambique.[84] The facility had employed 2,500 local workers but was forced to shut down in the aftermath of the attack (though it has recently announced plans to resume activity).[85] This crisis demonstrated how quickly a small band of *jihadists* can destabilize a region when borders are porous and the central government — in this case, located 1,800 miles to the south — lacks the ability to provide security.

Like ISIS, al-Qaeda continues to operate affiliates in Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, the Caucasus, and Southeast Asia. These include some of the familiar names from the post-9/11 years: AQAP in Yemen; al-Shabaab, a Somali group that has spread into Uganda and Kenya; al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), which previously operated on the coasts of Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya, but has since moved south; and others. Al-Qaeda's new face in the Sahel region is known as Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM). The group has a growing presence in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso, where it competes with Islamic State affiliates for fighters and revenue sources. JNIM has recently moved into Senegal as well.[86] Al-Qaeda affiliates generally avoid mass killings of civilians on the scale of those committed by ISIS affiliates, but JNIM nonetheless killed 53 people in an attack on a military camp in Burkina Faso in November 2021.[87]



The flag of ISIS.

The flag of al-Qaeda.

THE JIHADIST HEARTLAND

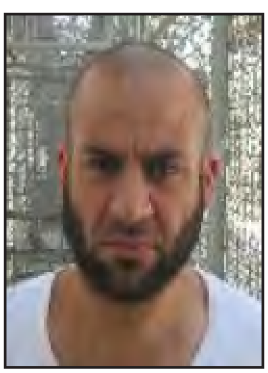


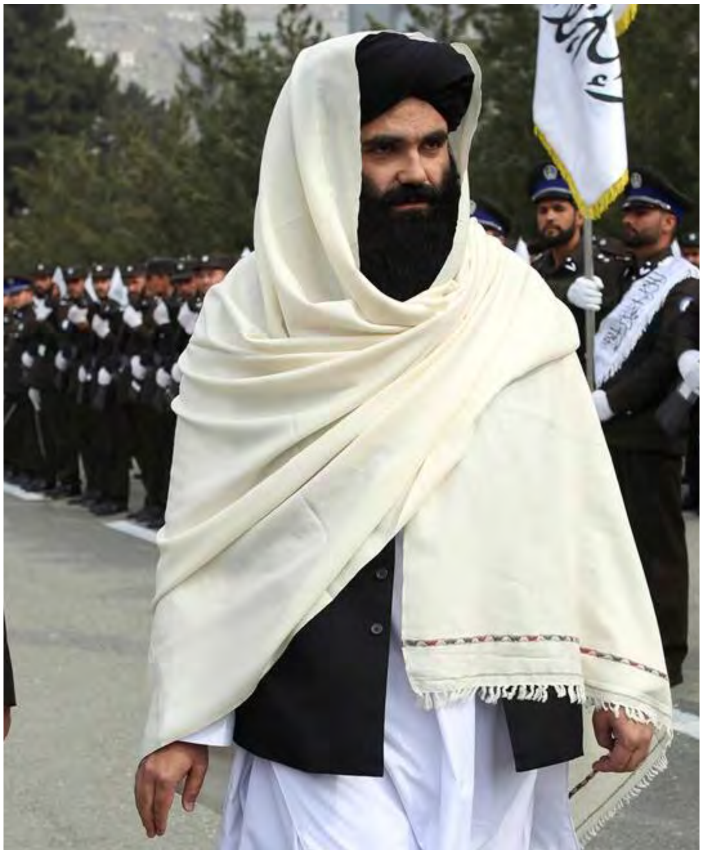
Photo of al-Qurashi detained at Camp Bucca in Iraq.

ISIS's core remains in Syria and northern Iraq. In January 2022, the group mounted an attack against a Kurdish-controlled prison that housed approximately 4,000 captured *jihadist* fighters.[88] This operation demonstrated the extent to which ISIS has rebuilt its offensive capacity. The alleged mastermind behind the prison break was Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi, the leader of ISIS. On February 2, 2022, U.S. Special Forces descended on a nondescript house in a small town in Syria to capture or kill al-Qurayshi.[89] Unwilling to be taken alive, he detonated a bomb, killing himself and several of his family members.[90] In addition to his other roles, al-Qurayshi had managed the distribution of the organization's secret money hoard to affiliates and operatives further afield.[91] John Godfrey, the State Department's acting coordinator for counterterrorism, said at the time of the raid, "the evidence of ties between the ISIS branch or network in Mozambique and the so-called ISIS-Core in Iraq and Syria is quite incontrovertible."[92]

ISIS affiliates have claimed responsibility for attacks in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines; however the strength of these groups remains dubious. Afghanistan is now the more important stronghold. The Afghan affiliate, ISIS-Khorasan, also known as ISIS-K, won notoriety in the final days of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan when one of its suicide bombers attacked Kabul airport amid the chaos of the final evacuation, killing 170 civilians and 13 U.S. troops.[93] ISIS-Khorasan specializes in particularly gruesome atrocities. One particularly heinous example is an attack perpetrated in May 2020 on a maternity hospital run by a Western NGO in a majority Shiite neighborhood in Kabul.[94] The U.S. military was so concerned about the capacity of ISIS-K that the military started to coordinate its strikes against the group with the Taliban. This may be the oddest example yet of the shifting fortunes in the war on terror.[95] A recent United Nations report estimates that the group has upgraded its presence in Afghanistan to about 4,000 fighters, drawing recruits from the Pakistani Taliban, Tehrik-e Taliban (TTP) (not to be confused with the Afghan Taliban).[96]

Al-Qaeda's return to Taliban-controlled Afghanistan is the most significant recent development in the war on terror. In 2014, Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Qaeda's emir, announced with great fanfare the creation of a new regional affiliate, al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS). The group has not yet established a presence in its target region and is currently embedded within al-Qaeda groups in Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda-aligned groups in the Caucasus have also fought alongside the Taliban in Afghanistan and have had a strong presence in Syria. Tajik and Uzbek fighter groups are now relocating to Afghanistan to join up with al-Qaeda's troops.

Al-Qaeda's leadership has longstanding bonds with the Haqqani Network, a Sunni militant organization founded in the 1970s by Jalaluddin Haqqani, a leading Afghan



Sirajuddin Haqqani, reviews Afghan police recruits during ceremony in Kabul, Afghanistan, March 5, 2022.

warlord during the Soviet-Afghan war in the 1980s. The Network, based in North Waziristan, Pakistan, is also a constituent part of the Taliban. (The U.S. Secretary of State designated the Haqqani Network a Foreign Terrorist Organization on September 7, 2012.[97]) Haqqani's son, Sirajuddin Haqqani, is now the deputy leader of the Taliban's government in Afghanistan. bin Laden, his family, and that of Ayman al-Zawahiri were taken in by villagers associated with the network after al-Qaeda's exodus from Afghanistan in 2001.[98] Families have intermarried and oaths of allegiance, known as *bayat*, have been exchanged since the 1990s.

High-level consultations took place between and the Haqqani network even as the Trump administration sat down in Doha in early 2020 to negotiate peace with the Taliban and seek assurances that al-Qaeda would not be allowed to return to Afghanistan.[99] UN Security Council researchers cite intelligence that bin Laden's son Abdallah (not a listed terrorist), visited Afghanistan in October 2021 for meetings with the Taliban. The implications of the visit are unclear, but it suggests that another bin Laden son may soon emerge as an al-Qaeda princeling (Hamza bin Laden, who was groomed by his father to become his successor, was killed in a drone strike in 2019).[100]

THE NEXT ATTACK

For 30 years now, al-Qaeda has experienced cycles of mobilization, attack, suppression, and revival. Will it make another comeback?

After 9/11 and up until bin Laden's death, al-Qaeda's campaign against the "far enemy" — the United States and its Western allies — took the form of what became known as "homegrown" terrorism. It was a faulty label inspired by the role played by domestic-born Muslims and converts as bomb carriers for al-Qaeda. The 2004 train bombings in Madrid and the 2005 London Underground suicide bombings set the paradigm, and while more plots followed, many were averted and others simply failed. Few today remember the follow-up attack to the July 7 London Underground suicide bombings that failed due to defective backpack bombs.

In deep hiding, al-Qaeda's top brass delegated the management of attacks targeting the West to its affiliate in Yemen, AQAP, and its charismatic American-born internet evangelist, Anwar al-Awlaki. We know this from documentary evidence recovered by U.S. Special Forces from bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad. Bin Laden corresponded at great length with his underlings and tried to micromanage attacks in the West.[101]

Further evidence of bin Laden's involvement in a terrorist campaign targeting Europe has continued to crop up in unexpected places. A group of German militants who aligned themselves with the al-Qaeda affiliated Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), an Uzbek group, set up a colony in Waziristan. Calling themselves "the German Taliban," they planned attacks against U.S. bases in Germany. The attacks were foiled, but during the plotters' trial, it was revealed that a member of the group had been communicating directly with bin Laden about more ambitious plans for attacks against infrastructure in Europe and the United States.[102] One unexpected source detailing al-Qaeda's planned European attacks was a memory stick seized from the underpants of an al-Qaeda operative in 2012; it revealed ambitious plans to attack cruise ships and infrastructure in Europe.[103] Bin Laden's last campaign before his death involved a string of thwarted efforts to attack a Danish newspaper that had printed 12 satirical drawings of the Muslim prophet.

Since 2011, there have been only two al-Qaeda directed attacks against the "far enemy," both of which were traced to AQAP. In January 2015, two French brothers, Saïd and Chérif Kouachi, mounted a lethal shooting attack against the editorial staff of satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo. Two days later, their friend and co-conspirator, Amedy Coulibaly, attacked a Jewish supermarket on the outskirts of Paris. The three men, it turned out, were part of a larger group that randomly shot and killed additional civilians over the course of several days. Seventeen people died.[104]

We know al-Qaeda was involved, even if only tangentially, because one of the brothers bragged that he had been sponsored by AQAP in a call to a French TV station, shortly before being killed in a shootout with French police: "I was sent, me, Chérif Kouachi, by

al-Qaeda of Yemen. I went over there, and it was Anwar al-Awlaki who financed me.”[105] Al-Awlaki was killed in 2011, which means the Hebdo attack had been four years in the making. Meanwhile, speaking to a radio station, Coulibaly dedicated his actions to the Islamic State.[106]

The second attack occurred on December 6, 2019, when a Saudi cadet participating in a military exchange program with the United States shot and killed three U.S. sailors in Pensacola. Investigators who accessed his iPhone determined that the cadet had been radicalized as early as 2015, perhaps earlier. He had been directed to join the Royal Saudi Air Force as cover to perpetrate a terrorist mission in the United States. He was in touch with his handlers from AQAP before he arrived in the United States and continued to have contact throughout his stay, up until the attack.[107]

We now know that bin Laden and al-Qaeda plotted to attacks against the West up until his death. Al-Qaeda then appears to have dropped the war against the “far enemy.” A number of reasons might explain this tactical retreat. More than 30 al-Qaeda leaders and top operatives were killed in U.S. drone strikes over a period of five years in 2013. The operatives responsible for planning strikes against the West were among the dead.[108] Following bin Laden’s death in 2011, al-Zawahiri took over leadership. Then, the Syrian civil war broke out.

From 2014, ISIS took the initiative. In 2014, it directed an attack at the Jewish Museum in Brussels. There followed coordinated assaults on a sports stadium, sidewalk cafes, a music hall in Paris on November 13–14, 2015, and four months later, suicide bombings in Brussels. Attacks killed 130 people in Paris and 32 in Brussels. The Brussels-based ISIS network arranged at least 11 further attacks in Europe (we are still learning more about their plans). Six were successful. The command structure went all the way to the top of ISIS and al-Baghdadi himself.

As ISIS lost ground in Iraq and Syria, coordination and initiative shifted to the affiliates. On Bastille Day, 2016, 87 people died when a driver plowed a truck through celebrating crowds in Nice, France. The central Islamic State took responsibility for the attack, but its plotters behind-the-scenes were drawn from ISIS’s Tunisian affiliate.[109] Attacks followed in Berlin (12 dead), in

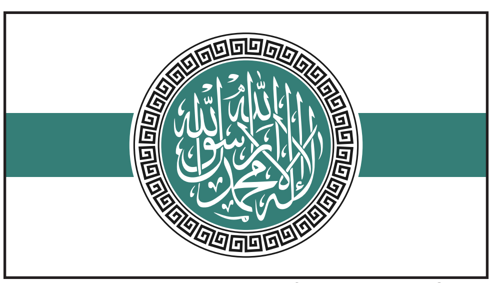
Manchester (22 dead), in Barcelona (13 dead). In these cases too, the central command in Syria claimed responsibility but operational initiative came from ISIS affiliates in Tunisia and Libya.[110]

More recent incidents attributed to ISIS range from mass shootings to knife attacks, but the attackers have acted with no clear lines to ISIS central command or even one of the affiliates. The United States too has suffered do-it-yourself attacks attributed by the perpetrators to ISIS but the number of arrests has declined and are mostly not connected to domestic attacks. They generally involve people trying to go abroad to fight for ISIS or individuals who were returned to stand trial in the United States for crimes committed abroad.

WHY WE SHOULD FEAR AL-QAEDA

Al-Qaeda stopped attacking the West six years ago when leadership set up shop in Syria. Why? A plausible but insufficient explanation is that once al-Qaeda gained safe haven in Afghanistan, it opted for “strategic silence” so as to not endanger the Taliban’s success.[111] Insufficient because al-Qaeda stopped fielding attacks in Europe and the United States years ago when it set up shop in Syria.

In an interview with *Al Jazeera* from May 2015 al-Jolani said that al-Qaeda’s Syria branch — meaning al-Nusra — had no intention to target the West unless “provoked.” al-Qaeda high command — presumably al-Zawahiri — had instructed him not to carry out strikes against the West.[112] The reason was that al-Qaeda (temporarily) suspended the fight against the “far enemy.” The statement made it plain that al-Qaeda chose not to stage attacks in the West.



Flag of Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham.

In July 2016, al-Jolani changed the name of the al-Nusra Front to Jabhat Fateh al-Sham and declared that it had disaffiliated from al-Qaeda. Whether this split is genuine remains a subject of debate among experts. A year later, the group merged with several other fighter groups to form Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), now the largest *jihadist* organization in Syria. HTS is based in Idlib, a province of northeastern Syria bordering Turkey and, in contrast to the current Islamic State, it operates in the open as the local governing authority.[113] Al-Jolani has come to an arrangement — whether it was negotiated or tacitly arranged is not known — with Turkey to allow HTS to control its territory south of a buffer zone controlled by the Turkish Armed Forces.

Abu Mohammad al-Jolani is striving to distinguish HTS’s image from that of al-Qaeda. In a February 2021 interview with *PBS Frontline*, he wore a blue suit rather than his usual *jihadist* fighter outfit and went out of his way to assure listeners that he was a freedom fighter and had no intention of attacking the West.[114] Attempting to furnish itself with a mirage of legitimacy, HTS established an entity called the Syrian Salvation Government as a front for the organization. The charade reached new heights in early January 2022 when al-Jolani, donning a collared shirt and jacket, appeared at a photo op with the pseudo-government’s prime minister for a ceremony celebrating the opening of a new road to Turkey.[115] No elections have taken place and the so-called prime minister is a functionary in al-Jolani’s organization. The UN Security Council estimates that HTS possesses up to 15,000 fighters, making it the single largest *jihadist* fighter group outside of Afghanistan.[116] The U.S. government and the UN Security Council continue to consider HTS a front organization for al-Qaeda and assert that HTS’s leadership still communicates with al-Qaeda’s high command.[117]

Some observers believe that HTS’s breach with al-Qaeda is real. In this interpretation, al-Jolani’s organization is a 2.0 version of *jihadist* aspirations and has ditched bin Laden’s strategic vision of attacking the “far enemy.”[118] Supporting evidence is that HTS arrested the leaders of Hurras al-Din, a direct al-Qaeda affiliate in Syria that is — or was — based in HTS-controlled territory in Idlib.[119] But HTS has a history of tolerating other *jihadist* groups residing in Idlib, routinely arresting their leaders only to release them again.[120]

Even more than ISIS, al-Qaeda maintains the operational capabilities to plan and execute complicated terrorist operations. It has apparently given up attacks on Western targets, but it is an open question whether the course correction is a temporary measure, perhaps designed to make ISIS take the heat, allowing al-Qaeda room to strengthen its organization.

There are now two reasons not to attack the West: Syria and Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda has had a good war. It still has a presence in Syria and gained a new leadership cadre and a new generation of fighters. The U.S. withdrawal lent credence to bin Laden’s belief — one that continues to motivate the movement globally — that the West is weak and that *jihadists* are destined to win a coming apocalyptic confrontation with heretics and unbelievers. The *jihadist* takeover of Afghanistan is also an operational boon to al-Qaeda. Fifteen Afghan provinces, primarily in the eastern, southern, and southeastern regions, now host al-Qaeda fighter groups and their families.

Political willingness to invest in counterterrorism efforts has historically cycled according to the frequency of domestic attacks. When the threat wanes, so does the attention and the resources allocated to the fight against global terrorism. With the enormous challenge of dealing with the Ukraine crisis, counterterrorism will likely remain a low priority for the United States. Europe will be more attuned to the threat because of the land bridge to the *jihadist* hubs and the looming presences of hundreds of returnees from the *jihadist* groups in Syria and Iraq who have melted back into society.

Meanwhile, other problems demand attention: climate change, the war in Ukraine, and great power competition for control and influence in Asia and Africa are all higher priority. But the *jihadists'* global insurgency is not a separate issue to be dealt with another day. It is a threat to social cohesion, and the chaos created wherever *jihadists* pick up arms causes more destabilization and economic distress, more bad governance, and more refugees.

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THE TERRORISM OF TOMORROW IS ALREADY HERE

-By Phil Gurski

Many experts who track global developments in terrorism over time are familiar with the work of American political scientist David Rapoport. The UCLA professor emeritus is best known for what he dubbed the “wave theory of terrorism.” This comprehensive overview of terrorist movements spanning 150 years posits that there have been four such “waves” — or shifts in motivation, techniques, and outcomes — of terrorist activity since the latter half of the nineteenth century.[121]

Rapoport succeeded in applying broad categories to many terrorist movements active at particular stages of modern history. While, as with most social phenomena, there exist “exceptions” to his theory — not every terrorist cause within a given period conforms to the label applied to the totality of the given wave — it is nevertheless a useful framework scholars and policymakers may draw from. Each wave spans a generation, or about 40 years. Generally speaking, the waves dissipate upon the end of their allotted time.

Photo by Josh Withers on Unsplash // Montage by William Reeves

A RESURGENT RELIGIOUS WAVE

The current religious wave of terrorism has persisted since the end of the 1970s. If we follow Rapoport's theory to the letter, this current wave should peter out imminently, as it relates to a series of events that occurred in 1979: the Iranian revolution in February, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December, and the lesser-known — albeit most important — seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca in November.

Some have speculated on what the "fifth wave" of terrorism could look like. The characteristics of the forthcoming wave are less important than many believe. What does matter is that the latest wave should die out soon if theory and history serve as accurate indicators of the future. So far, however, the current wave shows no sign of abating.

There is no evidence that the religious form of terrorism is on the wane; on the contrary, it continues vigorously and may in fact be growing. While the casualties attributed to religious terrorism may be falling as measured by the Global Terrorism Index, a database published annually by the Australia-based Institute for Economics and Peace, the sheer number of groups and actors may be on the rise.[122]

The religious wave is normally associated with Islamist extremism. This term is descriptive of many terrorists and terrorist groups which believe, *grosso modo*, that they have a divine obligation to fight Islam's enemies and establish a perfect Islamic society on Earth.[123] These actors' enemies range from the West in general to Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, and even Muslims (e.g., adherents of Shi'a Islam) who reject the terrorists' interpretation of Islam and the use of violence to impose their convictions.

It is this form of terrorism that has captured the world's attention for decades, especially since the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States. The organizations that engage in this form of terrorism are far too numerous to list here but include the widely familiar al-Qaeda (AQ), Islamic State (ISIS), Boko Haram (BH), al-Shabaab (AS), the Taliban, and hundreds of others. ISIS and AQ have spawned regional branches (known as provinces) or affiliates in many parts of the world.

It must be noted that Islamist terrorism is far from the only manifestation of religious extremist violence. Hindu groups in India, Jewish groups in Israel, Buddhist groups in Sri Lanka and Myanmar, and Sikh groups in the Punjab region all cite faith to call for and justify death and destruction.

And yet when we glance at the number of attacks, casualties, group members, organizations, and countries in which terrorist groups operate, it becomes clear that Islamist extremism remains the most lethal brand of this form of violent extremism. This record of infamy has endured for more than 40 years, surpassing the expectations of Rapoport's Wave Theory. Moreover, Islamist extremism shows no signs of slowing or yielding to a fifth wave or different form of terrorism. This is not to say that it is the sole manifestation of terrorism today — other forms of terrorism do exist, and new methods and motivations may develop — but this growth is unlikely to be at the expense of a downturn in Islamist terrorism.

ISLAMIST EXTREMISM ACROSS THE WORLD: AN OVERVIEW

A quick tour d'horizon will illustrate the continued strength of Islamist terrorists and terrorist organizations. In Afghanistan, the 20-year U.S.-led campaign to quell al-Qaeda terrorism has failed. The Taliban now run the country, as they did in the run-up to the 9/11. Their fundamentalist, exclusionary version of Islam will add to the suffering of ordinary Afghans, and we should assume that their close relationship with AQ will continue. Even the internal conflict between the Taliban and an ISIS affiliate, Islamic State in Khorasan (ISK), itself made up of disaffected Taliban, will not dampen the enthusiasm of Islamist terrorists who can claim to have defeated not one, but two, superpowers: the United States and the Soviet Union. In October 2021, a Pentagon official stated that ISK could be positioned to attack the United States and the West writ large sooner than originally assessed — in as early as six months.[124] AQ was also described as "not far behind" ISK in its own preparations.

The Taliban takeover has bolstered and inspired *jihadi* groups around the world. The Taliban's model will energize many groups, many of which some analysts had described as having on the brink of collapse in recent years. Pakistan, long accused of harboring Taliban-e-Tehrik Pakistan (TTP) has seen a worrying rise in attacks over the past four years.[125]

Moving westward, despite former U.S. President Donald Trump's declaration that ISIS had been "totally defeated" in 2019, the organization shows signs of life.[126] It no longer enjoys the geographic cohesion it experienced during its "Caliphate" heyday, but its core in Iraq and Syria is anything but idle. Further south, in Yemen, the ongoing civil war between the Houthis (supported in part by Iran) and the internationally recognized government (supported by Saudi Arabia and, until lately, the United Arab Emirates) has terrorist overtones. The group has been behind the killing of tens of thousands of Yemenis and the displacement of millions.[127]

These developments bring us to Africa. The continent has morphed into a hotbed of Islamist extremism, where terrorist groups, some affiliated with AQ and others with ISIS, have risen in recent years to cause death and mayhem. Some of the most important terrorist concentrations lie in Morocco, where police have dismantled more than 2,000 terrorist cells and captured more than 3,400 people in terrorism-related cases.[128] In Nigeria, both Boko Haram and an ISIS affiliate, Islamic State Western Africa Province (ISWAP) have been active for over a decade. BH has existed since the late 2010s and ISWAP is a more recent phenomenon. Thousands have been kidnapped, including the infamous Chibok girls, and tens of thousands have been killed and millions of civilians have been displaced.[129] In Burkina Faso, terrorist groups linked to both AQ and ISIS have killed more than 1,500 people and forced 1.3 million to flee their homes.[130] In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a shadowy Islamist extremist group called the Allied Democratic Forces has killed thousands and displaced hundreds of thousands.[131]

Islamist extremist groups in Africa have demonstrated a fierce ability to thwart regional and Western efforts to eradicate them. In Mali, despite the French-led Operation Barkhane since 2013, there have been dozens of attacks and hundreds of deaths. Terrorists recently released a Colombian nun they had held hostage since 2017.[132] Egypt, a locus of terrorism since the 1980s and 1990s, has seen hundreds of police officers and soldiers and more than 1,000 civilians killed by ISIS in Sinai since 2013.[133] In Somalia, al-Shabaab is one of Africa's longest-standing terrorist groups and is active in neighboring Kenya as well.[134] Despite pressure from an international military coalition constructed to eliminate al-Shabaab, from September 2006 to October 2017, the group deployed 216 suicide bombers across 155 attacks, killing as many as 2,218 people.[135]

Boko Haram // Public Domain.

Counterterrorism efforts, both local and foreign, have done little to halt these attacks. When combined with purely criminal enterprises, such as the "banditry" that takes place in many parts of Nigeria and elsewhere, these groups beget a disturbing level of human misery. The immediate future of security and public safety in Africa appears increasingly dim.

Terrorist organizations have also expanded their ability to conduct deadly attacks abroad. In addition to hundreds of small-scale attacks over the last two decades, we have witnessed several in which dozens if not hundreds were killed and/or wounded, including in the United Kingdom, Spain, France, Germany, and the United States. Perhaps most importantly, homegrown radicalized individuals conducted these attacks, in a break from traditional terrorist activity. In addition to this, we must also consider the thousands who left their homelands to join ISIS in the mid-2010s when the terrorist group launched its so-called "Caliphate." Many also carried out attacks in other nations: my own country, Canada, has contributed actors who executed operations in Algeria, Somalia, Iraq, and Bangladesh.

January 6 Insurrection // Photo By: Brett Davis // CC BY-NC 2.0.

FAR-RIGHT EXTREMISM

Many experts and policymakers cite the growing threat from the far right, an umbrella term which usually encompasses white supremacists and nationalists, neo-Nazi groups, conspiracy theorists, and even, for some, involuntary celibates (known as Incels). The situation has become so dire in the United States that the FBI has developed a designation for what it considers "domestic terrorism."[136] Caseloads for domestic terrorism have more than doubled in recent years.[137]

There is no question that the United States has a far-right problem on a scale unseen in other Western nations. The January 6, 2021, insurrection at the United States Capitol exemplifies the severity of this threat. However, fully understanding the situation requires greater context. An increase in the number of investigations does not necessarily reflect an increase in the threat level. Investigations by agencies such as the FBI or the Canadian Security Intelligence Service in Canada or MI5 in the UK do not always uncover actual plots: the purpose of these bodies' efforts is in fact to determine whether a credible threat exists. Drawing a one-to-one mapping between "individuals of interest" and actual terrorist activity is misleading.

While there certainly have been large-scale attacks carried out by far-right actors in the United States (of which the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing is the most salient example), these pale in comparison to their Islamist extremist analogues. Islamist extremists have been behind tens of thousands of such attacks over the past 20 years, ranging in size from casualties in the single digits to those in the hundreds. If we look at

terrorism from a global rather than a local angle, the only viable conclusion is that Islamist terrorism is the single most lethal threat when it comes to this specific type of violence.

WITHER ISLAMIST EXTREMISM? NOT SO FAST

Will Islamist extremism diminish along the lines of Rapoport's Wave Theory, to be replaced by far-right extremism? Current indications would suggest not. It is entirely within the realm of possibility that far-right terrorism may rise in the next few years in select countries. Some hypothesize that the imposition of COVID-19 restrictions, or the economic disruption caused by global climate change, or a growing distrust in government and authority will feed this ideologically diverse set of actors, leading to further terrorist activities. The perceived lack of action on global warming may even engender violence by far-left terrorists seeking to send a message to political elites whose inaction has frustrated activists.

Regardless of whether the two developments transpire, the current number one priority — Islamist violence — will not disappear overnight. If the rise of other forms of violent extremism does force us to take steps to address them, we will be faced with serious resourcing issues. States must ensure that they have enough people to monitor, investigate, and foil attackers and operations. Governments must determine sources of revenue and how to allocate resources to best defend citizens. More importantly, for most people, terrorism does not currently — and is highly unlikely to ever — pose an existential threat to their society. There are cases, however, such as Afghanistan, where the chances of such a threat do exist, but these are the exception, not the rule. The issue should not be exaggerated: policymakers have many serious problems to address and a laser focus on terrorism is not helpful.

Terrorism has existed for millennia, notwithstanding Rapoport's framework starting from the late nineteenth century. As such, it will remain with us in the future, likely to ebb and flow like other social phenomena. At the time of writing, Islamist terrorism is strong and shows every sign of robustness moving forward, it too shall yield to some other form of violent extremism. That day, however, is still a long way off.

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STAGNANT THINGS:

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE'S RESPONSE TO INFORMATION WARFARE

- By Thomas Whittaker & Mike Schwille

Photo by Juhani Pelli on Unsplash // Montage by William Reeves

OVERVIEW

The information environment — too often a buzzword for defense technology firms and military academics — is the highly energetic arena where foreign adversaries and non-state actors alike shape the narrative of the great power competition.

Adversaries engage in operations in the information environment (OIE) as part of strategic posturing, to gain and maintain influence, and to project national power. Nations like China and Russia leverage their centralized governmental and military structures, as well as sociocultural predispositions, to create systems and tactics that enable them to adeptly exploit this space. Their tighter control on instruments of national power enables them to deliver influence with agility and speed. This strategic advantage begs the question: What has the United States done to develop and implement a whole-of-government response to compete effectively in the information environment?

THE NEED

The evolving landscape of social media networks, web-based communications, and other technological advances offers an arsenal of low-cost of entry capabilities through which a user can influence global audiences.

Modern communications technologies empower American adversaries by providing efficient, flexible mechanisms through which adversaries can foster strategic narratives, transmit disinformation and propaganda, and shape global perceptions to their advantage.

Case in point: in 2018, the United States indicted 13 Russian individuals and three companies for providing support to the Kremlin-backed Internet Research Agency (IRA). According to the House Intelligence Committee, more than 126 million Americans had been exposed to content created by the IRA and more than 288 million impressions were linked to content generated by Russian Twitter bots.[138] More concerningly, Russian military operations in Ukraine have demonstrated the campaign-level successes of integrating physical and informational power to influence soldiers on the front line.

This is not a new concept for Russia, which has continually modernized and refined its concepts of "*dezinformatsiya*" and "active measures." The term, *dezinformatsiya*, meaning "disinformation," traces its lineage back to the Russian empire of the early 1900s.[139] So-called active measures have existed since the beginning of the Cold War and serve to influence global attitudes, values, and beliefs toward outcomes more favorable to Russian interests.

China is also using a modern interpretation of an even older strategic construct around exercising informational power for advantage and influence to achieve military objectives. In 2003, Beijing started to formalize this approach as the "Three Warfares" concept. The approach advises on the application of legal, public opinion, and psychological warfare to achieve desired effects against an adversary.[140] Adding to the problem are concerns that China and Russia are borrowing techniques from each other to bolster their respective approaches to OIE.[141]

What are the **Three WARFARES?**
Overview

- China's **Three Warfares** 三种战争 or shortened to 三战 *san zhan* are complementary, asymmetric, concurrent campaigns to win without fighting.
- Approval in 2003 by China's Communist Party, Central Committee and the Central Military Commission indicates support from Party, Government and Military – three main levers of power.
- Specific details in Chapter 2, Section 18 of Chinese People's Liberation Army Political Work Regulations.
- **Psychological Warfare** 心里战争 *xinli zhanzheng*
- **Media Warfare** 舆论战争 *yulun zhanzheng NOTE:* more correctly translated as public opinion warfare
- **Legal Warfare** 法律战争 *falv zhanzheng*

CONGRESSIONAL PRIORITIZATION AND TREATMENT

American democratic principles and values give primacy to the role of Congress in shaping the instruments of national defense and strategy. The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) is an annual Congressional bill that authorizes spending and sets defense policies for the Department of Defense (DoD). The NDAA is where the rubber meets the road for prioritization across the spectrum of defense programs and military operations.

Looking at the last six years of NDAAs, Congressional decisions have produced some noteworthy steps toward forming the building blocks of a more integrated DoD/interagency plan of action for OIE. Nevertheless, when these five NDAAs are analyzed as a whole, the story flow makes evident some concerning patterns: while prioritization has been increasingly directed, the concrete development and implementation of DoD OIE strategy has yet to be effectively activated by DoD.

NDAA FISCAL YEAR 2017

In general, NDAA 17 was relatively quiet on a direct treatment of the OIE issue. However, this NDAA provisioned and empowered key players in the information space. Perhaps most significantly, Section 923 established a unified combatant command for cyber operations, U.S. Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM). NDAA 17 further granted the command with authorities comparable in flexibility to those of U.S. Special Operations Command.[142] In addition to the traditional responsibilities levied on a combatant command to develop strategy, doctrine, and tactics, this legislation further empowered USCYBERCOM with authorities to organize, train, and equip the force.

Beyond the DoD, Section 1287 authorized defense resourcing for the Global Engagement Center (GEC), a newly minted player established in 2016 by Executive Order in the Department of State. The GEC's original focus was on counterterrorism-related messaging and communications. The mission of the GEC has since evolved into a broader coordination of federal and interagency efforts "to recognize, understand, expose, and counter foreign state and non-state propaganda and disinformation efforts aimed at undermining or influencing the policies, security, or stability of the United States, its allies, and partner nations."[143]

NDAA FISCAL YEAR 2018

NDAA 18 brought a more direct treatment of the OIE issue, albeit mostly under the legacy term of information operations. Building upon the increasing momentum of USCYBERCOM, Section 1637 brought a particular focus on fusing the cross-cutting elements within cyber operations with OIE.[144] As detailed in the bill, this legislation required the secretary of defense to establish processes and procedures for the integration of "strategic information operations and cyber-enabled information operations."[145] This bill further required that a senior DoD official be designated to lead efforts in development and oversight of strategy, policy, and guidance, as well as to sustain ongoing efforts (such as DoD coordination with the GEC). It directed concrete efforts toward the development of requirements and planning for OIE, driving down new strategy formation responsibilities to the combatant command level.

This legislation also established a 180-day timeline for delivery of an implementation plan of DoD strategy for OIE. As defined in the NDAA, this implementation plan would require the DoD to determine and define its own roles and responsibilities within a whole-of-government approach, including efforts to create defined actions, establish performance metrics, determine implementation requirements, and project timelines for execution of all tasks contained within the DoD OIE strategy.

NDAA FISCAL YEAR 2019

Compared to its predecessors, NDAA 19 did not generate new guidance for a whole-of-government response. Section 1069 directed a check on actions taken and resources needed for cyber-enabled information operations. Similarly, Section 1632 provided clarifications on the secretary of defense's authority to conduct "military activities or operations in cyberspace short of hostilities," including information operations.[146]

While comparatively silent on progression in organizational alignment or implementation action, NDAA 19 took a clear position on the imperative to recognize and respond to global competition within the information environment, with a particular interest in defending against Russian and Chinese activities. Section 1248 directed the DoD to focus training activities in Europe on responding to adversary cyber electronic warfare and information operations. Section 1261 called for a China-focused strategy that included strategic assessments on "the use of political influence, information operations, censorship, and propaganda to undermine democratic institutions and processes, and the freedoms of speech, expression, press, and academic thought."[147] Similarly, Section 1642 called for "Active Defense" in cyberspace against the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, as well as North Korea and Iran.

NDAA FISCAL YEAR 2020

NDAA 20 reinvigorated many elements contained in NDAA 18. Section 1631 established the DoD Principal Information Operations Advisor (PIOA) to assert senior DoD leadership over OIE. The PIOA assumed the role of "oversight of policy, strategy, planning, resource management, operational considerations, personnel, and technology development across all the elements of information operations of the Department."[148] The position and its additionally defined responsibilities bore much similarity to those levied upon the defense secretary in NDAA 2018. Similarly, we find another reversion to precedent direction on strategy and implementation.

The newly appointed PIOA was tasked with development and updates to the DoD strategy for OIE; a review of DoD posture in OIE; management of joint training and OIE lexicon; and a determination on the combat capabilities to be included in related activities.

This legislation reflected a heightened degree of desired accountability to DoD efforts, with newly defined responsibilities, new congressional reporting requirements, and defined timelines for updates. The undeniably repetitive quality of the 2020 NDAA, coupled with the more nuanced provision regarding common treatment of related DoD lexicon, reflected telling signs of a prevailing issue: The DoD's struggle to implement precedent NDAA guidance.

Like its predecessor, the 2021 NDAA revealed continued difficulties in implementation, most notably in Section 1749, appropriately titled, "Implementation of Information Operations Matters." This section delivered a vigorous forcing function to a stagnating DoD posture in OIE. The first unfulfilled Congressional report was required to provide an overview of the structuring and manning of information operations capabilities and forces across the DoD.[149] Similarly, NDAA 20 had directed the completion and reporting of a "Strategy and Posture Review" for the purpose of developing an OIE strategy. Both reports had been directed in Section 1631 of NDAA 20 and were not yet complete as of NDAA 21.

Interestingly, the 2021 NDAA also called for the designation of a DoD entity to "develop, apply, and continually refine an assessment capability for defining and measuring the impact of Department information operations, which entity shall be organizationally independent of Department components performing or otherwise engaged in operational support to Department information operations.''[150]

Whereas military actions conducted in the traditional warfighting domains usually result in discernable and objective impacts, OIE operations do not easily fit in the template for a standard battle damage assessment. As a result, they present a true head-scratcher for determining what actions exceed the threat threshold of competition, short of armed conflict. The second- and third-order effects of OIE cannot be discounted, so what does it look like to effectively assess cause and effect as strategic messaging becomes manifest in attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors?

NDAA 22 continues to call for more action by DoD to include and fund OIE efforts. Section 1049 is yet another follow-up to NDAA 18 Section 1631. However, it now limits the use of funds until DoD completes the posture review of the information environment. Section 1504 and Section 1509 call for an evaluation of the DoD cyber governance and an assessment of a cyber posture to include the integration and coordination with OIE. These sections call on the DoD to increase its ability to conduct cyber operations and OIE.

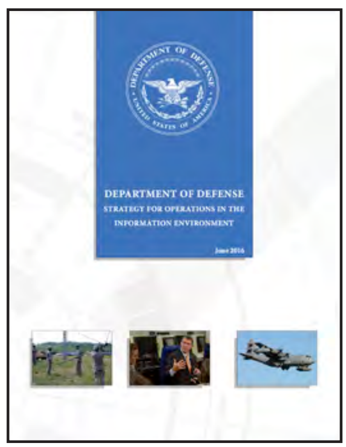
THE DOD RESPONSE

Despite highly engaged adversaries and mounting pressure from Congress to act, the DoD has been slow to generate real momentum regarding OIE. And so, the multi-billion-dollar question: what has the DoD accomplished?

Without a clear path forward for implementation and action, the DoD has failed to realize the full gains of OIE. Nevertheless, the storyline of efforts to this point merit acknowledgement. Arguably, the most proactive steps the DoD has taken toward strategy and implementation were manifested in three efforts: the DoD Strategy for Operations in the Information Environment (2016); the addition of information as a joint function (2017); and the Joint Concept for Operating in the Information Environment (2018).[151]

STRATEGY FOR OPERATIONS IN THE INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

The 2016 Strategy for Operations in the Information Environment (SOIE) acknowledged the need to integrate OIE through all levels of command, but more importantly, it recognized the need to facilitate DoD support of the whole-of-government effort. Published more than six years ago, the document identified 15 task areas across people, programs, policies, and partnerships as the path forward for the DoD. It also provided a desired end-state: "[t]hrough operations, actions, and activities in the information environment, DoD has the ability to affect the decision-making and behavior of adversaries and designated others to gain advantage across the range of military operations."[152]



To meet this end-state, it described several activities that must take place. Initially, the SOIE sought to develop necessary changes to DoD policy, doctrine, and professional military education efforts. These actions aimed to align processes to conduct OIE and prepare the organization for broader integration within the government. The SOIE then sought to enhance organizational structures and capabilities responsible for the conduct of OIE. It focused on concept development, policy and authorities, and the creation of new modes for interagency coordination to "facilitate effective DoD operations in the information environment." [153]

Finally, the SOIE outlined the goals for OIE throughout the DoD, with the intent of achieving a normalization of posture and organizational readiness within the whole-of-government effort to exercise informational power. In this phase, the SOIE sets the goal of sustaining "a well-trained, educated, and ready IO and total-force to meet emerging requirements."[154]

THE INFORMATION JOINT FUNCTION

In July 2017, General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., (then-chairman of the joint chiefs of staff) approved an update to Joint Publication (JP) 1, "Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States." This major doctrinal update elevated "information" to the level of a seventh joint function, alongside the traditionally established joint functions of command and control (C2), intelligence, fires, movement and maneuver, protection, and sustainment. The joint functions are a group of related capabilities and activities that help synchronize, integrate, and direct joint operations.[155] This update marked the first time a new forcing function was created and indicates the level of importance that DoD assigned to the role information.

The creation of the "Information Joint Function" demonstrated a concrete step toward increasing the importance of information within the DoD and remains a significant doctrinal update for the treatment of OIE. By including this change in the bedrock doctrine of JP 1, the DoD created a new forcing function which prioritizes "information" alongside with other joint functions. More specifically, this development delivers a strong foundation for generating momentum and normalization across the military services in the integration of information.[156] While it was a much-needed step, by itself, the elevation of information to a joint function isn't enough to address the policy, organizational, and educational deficiencies related to OIE.

JOINT CONCEPT FOR OPERATING IN THE INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

The 2018 Joint Concept for Operating in the Information Environment (JCOIE) represented an important element of the OIE storyline — it demonstrated continued commitment of the DoD to acknowledge the phased development timeline and desired outcomes of the SOIE. The JCOIE prescribed three primary areas that that must be pursued in order to achieve desired outcomes: (1) Understand information, the informational aspects of military activities, and informational power; (2) Institutionalize the integration of physical and informational power; (3) Operationalize the integration of physical and informational power.[157] The JCOIE provided a further overview of concept-required capabilities needed to support the outcomes. This included a broad scope of requirements with clear implications for future DoD resourcing, acquisition, and authorities.

While the JCOIE clearly recognized the need for developing capabilities and mechanisms to make better sense of the information environment and the impacts of operations therein, many of the requirements have yet to be fulfilled.

ADDRESSING THE REAL CHALLENGES

In many ways, the raw materials for a cohesive DoD and whole-of-government approach to OIE are already there. So why haven't the existing efforts amounted to effective implementation and integration?

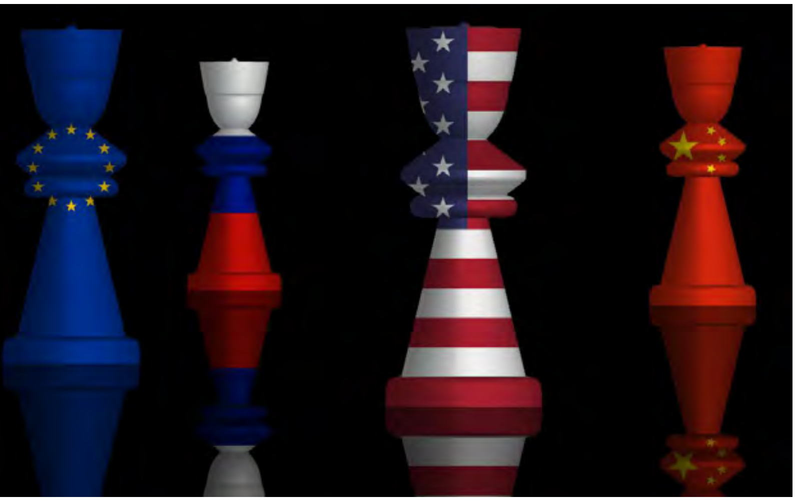
The DoD has become a victim of its own design. As stated in the Joint Concept for Operations in the Information Environment, the DoD has been "hampered by its policies, conventions, cultural mindsets, and approaches to information, has built barriers fostering a disconnected approach to conducting activities in and through a pervasive information environment."[158] The DoD largely acclimated to conducting OIE against asymmetric threats, most obviously in the vein of counterterrorism.

Frankly, the multi-dimensional use of information capabilities by great power competitors and near-peer adversaries has caught the DoD off guard. To be sure, the implications of great power competition within the information space are not an altogether new arena for the DoD. Nevertheless, decades of conflict against terrorist groups and other non-state actors have stagnated the DoD playbook for OIE and hindered the development of the required capabilities needed to execute it. Now, the DoD must compete in a more global information fight against bigger players and faster technology, with more dire consequences. This requires tanks, planes, and ships to confront U.S. adversaries. Yet, it hasn't much affected budgeting requests by the military services to fund the creation of organizations and capabilities directed toward OIE.

While the Marine Corps has created the Marine Information Group, the Air Force has created the 16th Air Force (its own Information Warfare organization), and the Army and Navy have developed increasingly detailed concepts (Information Advantage and Information Dominance, respectively), these efforts are just a drop in the bucket of the individual military service budgets. The development of real OIE capabilities will require a more substantial portion of these budgets to adequately address capability shortfalls. Even as the geographic combatant commands request forces trained and equipped to conduct OIE, the military services have yet to fully invest in the development of these capabilities.

> Frankly, the multi-dimensional use of information capabilities by great power competitors and near-peer adversaries has caught the DoD off guard.

Limited understanding and a low-risk tolerance for OIE are two additional reasons more substantial progress has not been made toward institutionalizing OIE. There is a clear lack of training and education for the joint force to truly answer "What is OIE?" and "How does OIE directly contribute to a commander's mission?"



Given the obvious concerns over unintended consequences of information campaigns, there is a prevailing sense that the DoD needs to predict and understand the potential second- and third-order effects of OIE more fully. However, OIE goes far beyond second- and third-order effects, as impacts extend into the infinite cycle of human consciousness. The expectation that OIE outcomes can be fully calculated is a Sisyphean pursuit that will only result in continued inaction by the United States. The DoD needs to accept the fact that there will always be risk involved in the information fight, as is the case with all military operations. We should take some comfort that U.S. adversaries also bear the consequences for failed OIE. The DoD should be willing to determine (and accept) a true sense of risk tolerance within OIE.

Moving forward, the DoD should focus on building the capability to alleviate the tensions over risk tolerance. As identified in the JCOIE and in NDAA 21, DoD needs to augment its ability to better understand the dynamics and activities of the information environment. More specifically, the DoD needs a more integrated enterprise capability that fuses data streams from across all relevant communications forums of the global information environment to provide a real-time insight on trends in human attitudes, values, beliefs, and behavior.

Partnerships and programs (as defined in the SOIE) are key to the execution of DoD strategy. The U.S. private sector remains a largely untapped player in this space. While adversarial nations enjoy a certain degree of flexibility from centralized structures where tech industries and military apparatuses are joined, the U.S. free market society enables a unique environment for technological advancement. The DoD and government writ large should seek to capitalize on the ability of the U.S. private sector to innovate in ways that our adversaries political and economic systems cannot. Leading American tech firms possess innovative artificial intelligence and machine learning capabilities that could offer a means to detect, collect, analyze, and respond to actions in the information environment.

In this capability, the DoD should connect across the federal space and private sector to obtain, integrate, and operationalize data sources that provide high fidelity into global human interactions. When enabled by algorithmic and analytic tools, these data can be used to provide insights in behavioral modeling across the scope of potential target audiences and to identify patterns and trends in prevailing strategic, operational, and tactical narratives as they relate to political, military, economic, and social systems. By responding to the clear need for this capability (as mandated in NDAA 21 and requested under CPCs in the JCOIE), the DoD may succeed in breaking the biggest logjam to an effective DoD response for OIE.

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KAFKA IN THE KREMLIN:

THE SORRY STATE OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH IN RUSSIA

- By William R. Spiegelberger

The Russian Constitution guarantees freedom of speech. The problem today is that it doesn't guarantee freedom after speech. A little over a decade ago the Russian Parliament began enacting punitive laws targeting disfavored individuals and penalizing the dissemination of disfavored views on selected topics. The results have sometimes been surreal. In 2009, the police arrested journalist and activist Roman Dobrokhotov for brandishing a blank piece of paper. Five years later, in 2014, protesters were taken into custody for holding up their empty hands as if they were wielding placards. In 2016, a man named Gera Knyazev unfurled a banner deploring the murder of Boris Nemtsov, the erstwhile Kremlin insider turned dissident who was assassinated in 2015. The police arrested Knyazev and confiscated his banner on suspicion of "extremism." He was released, and his banner returned, only after he demonstrated that it contained a verbatim quote from none other than President Vladimir Putin. That same year, the police arrested six people for reading the Russian Constitution out loud. Three weeks prior, one of the six, Viktor Kapitonov, was detained for holding a banner on Red Square that read "FOR YOUR FREEDOM AND OURS," the same words that got eight Russians arrested on the same day in 1968 for protesting the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

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>
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These are admittedly odd cases, but they are telling nonetheless: the police act when the Kremlin deems undesirable a person, organization, words, or all the above. The Russian courts' liquidation of Memorial International and the Memorial Human Rights Center in December 2021 is just one example of this weaponization of law.[159] The present article outlines the most relevant weaponized enacted before Putin's 2022 invasion of Ukraine and examines the Kremlin's possible motives for its legalistic repression of opinion. Sadly, it has become only worse since the invasion.

NINE LEGISLATIVE LOW POINTS

Public Protest (June 2012)

In response to protests that overtook Moscow and other Russian cities starting in December 2011, the Russian Parliament in June 2012 revised the law governing public demonstrations and the Code of Administrative Infractions ("CAI") to impose harsh fines for protest-related offenses.[160] The amended CAI Article 20.2 imposes a maximum fine for the organizers of a protest of USD 260 for violating the "established order for conducting a protest;" USD 390 for holding a protest without the necessary permit; USD 650 if the protest interferes with pedestrian or vehicular traffic or causes "overcrowding;" and USD 3,900 if any above infraction of the CAI causes harm to health or property (the analogous fines for legal entities are more than doubled).[161] For participating in a protest that violates the "established order," the maximum fine is USD 260, unless the protest results in harm to health or property, in which case it is USD 3,900.[162] Parliament also imposed vicarious liability by adding a new CAI Article, 20.2.2, which stipulates a fine of up to USD 260 for citizens (USD 3,900 for legal entities) who organize, call for, or participate in a public demonstration or march that violates "public order or sanitary norms and rules," harms greenery, or impedes the movement of pedestrians or traffic (among other things).[163] If the protest causes harm to health or property, the maximum fine rises to USD 1,950 (USD 13,000 for legal entities).[164] On its face, Article 20.2.2 effectively holds organizers and participants responsible for the misdeeds of every person present at a demonstration. Should someone trample the grass (harm the greenery) or relieve themselves in public (violate a "sanitary norm") everyone present at a demonstration could have to pay for the infraction.

Shortly before the law was enacted, the leader of the officially tolerated oppositional Yabloko Party, Sergey Mitrokhin, called it a "monstrous bill which will essentially ban people from protesting."[165] As it turns out, the law did not prevent Russians from taking to the streets.

Accordingly, in July 2014, Parliament upped the stakes by enacting a new provision of the Criminal Code, Article, 212.1, which imposed fines from USD 7,800 to USD 13,000 and a prison term of up to five years for repeated violations of CAI Article 20.2.[166] The Constitutional Court tempered this article somewhat but has left it in force.[167]

"Foreign Agents" (July 2012)

Recently invoked as a means to close Memorial International, which documented Soviet-era rights abuses, and the Memorial Human Rights Center, which focused on present-day violations, this law consists of revisions to the Criminal Code and laws governing civic and non-profit organizations, as well as those governing money laundering.[168] The initial revision, made in July 2012, introduced the term "foreign agent" to denote NGOs that receive any funding, even a kopek, from foreign sources. It obliged such NGOs to register themselves as "foreign agents," comply with a host of reporting requirements, and affix an obtrusive "foreign agent" label to their published materials. Between 2017 to 2020, the law was successively expanded to draw within its scope all persons and entities who receive "organizational" assistance from abroad and who make their views widely known (through social media, for example).[169] As of December 2021, the list of persons

and entities designated as “foreign agents” contained nearly 200 names, over half of which were added in 2021 alone.[170] One recent addition (July 2021) is the aforementioned Roman Dobrokhotov, who was fined USD 13,000 in December 2021 for failing to affix “foreign agent” labels on his investigative website, *The Insider*, based in Latvia.

The impact of the foreign-agent designation varies from case to case. Declared a foreign agent in 2015, the Committee for the Prevention of Torture refused to operate under the imposed conditions and was shut down later that year for violating the law. The Alliance of Doctors, an advocacy group for the rights of medical workers, still operates despite having been designated a foreign agent in 2021.[171] The Anti-Corruption Foundation founded by the now-jailed political activist Alexei Navalny continued to operate for a while after it was designated a foreign agent in 2019, but was later judicially liquidated for extremism in June 2021 on the grounds that the organization advocated a change of government in Russia and offered assistance to unauthorized protestors.

Blasphemy (June 2013)

In June 2012, the court tasked with sentencing the protest-punk and performance-art group Pussy Riot for their “Punk Prayer” performance at the landmark Cathedral of Christ the Savior in central Moscow struggled to find a relevant statue that would justify a sufficiently stern punishment. The group was ultimately sentenced for “hooliganism motivated by religious hatred.”[172] In June 2013, Parliament filled that legislative gap with a new law amending Criminal Code Article 148 to stipulate, among other things, that “public acts expressing manifest disrespect for society, if committed for the purpose of insulting the religious feelings of believers . . . in places specially designated for religious worship or other religious rites or ceremonies” would henceforth be punishable by, among other things, a fine of up to USD 6,500 or three years in jail.[173] People have since been prosecuted under Article 148 for posting on social media such things as the image of a woman lighting a cigarette from a church candle or a photo depicting an obscene gesture made with a church in the background. Most such cases have resulted in a fine or a sentence to community service, but in what was apparently the first prosecution under the blasphemy law (in 2014), a man named Viktor Krasnov ended up losing his business after the police confiscated his computer and the judge sent him to a mental institution on the grounds that a sane person would not have insulted the Russian Orthodox Church. Krasnov had written on his social media page that God does not exist.[174]

“Non-Traditional Lifestyles” (June 2013)

The same day that the blasphemy law was enacted, Parliament passed a law amending the CAI and Child-Protection Law (“CPL”), adding a new CPL

Article 6.21 that imposed penalties for “propagandizing non-traditional sexual relations among minors by dissemination of information aimed at causing minors to adopt a non-traditional sexual lifestyle, to become attracted to non-traditional sexual relations, to have a distorted view of the social equivalence of traditional and non-traditional relations, or the foisting of information about non-traditional sexual relations that arouse interest in such relations.”[175] The fines range from up to USD 65 for individuals to USD 650 for officials, and USD 13,000 for legal entities, with additional penalties imposed if the infraction is publicized by mass media or committed by a foreign or international entity.[176] Apart from providing a firm legal ground for prohibiting such things as gay pride parades, the non-traditional lifestyles law “emboldened right-wing groups who use social media to ‘ambush’ gay people, luring them to meetings and then humiliating them on camera.”[177] It would probably go too far to surmise that the Kremlin passed this law to incite violence, but the message it sends is clear: the LGBT community is an officially disfavored minority.

Secession (December 2013)

Late in 2013, shortly before Russia annexed Crimea, Parliament added a new Criminal Code Article, 280.1, since amended, that imposed punishments for “publicly calling for actions aimed at violation of the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation.”[178] The sanctions currently include a fine up to USD 5,200, four years in prison, and disqualification from occupying certain offices or engaging in certain activity for the same period, with a five-year prison term if the acts in question are “done by way of the mass media or information-telecommunications networks, including the Internet.”[179]

In 2020, Parliament then added a another, similar provision to the Criminal Code, a new Article 280.2, which provides a six- to ten-year prison sentence for “alienation of part of the territory of the Russian Federation or for other actions . . . aimed at violating the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation in the absence of indicia of a crime” committed pursuant to certain other provisions of the Criminal Code, including Article 280.1.[180] On its face, Article 280.2 seems aimed primarily at actions (alienation of territory), in contrast to Article 280.1, which is aimed at words (publicly calling for alienation of territory). To the extent, however, that mere words could be considered “other actions” that are sanctionable under Article 280.2 (unless they are already sanctionable under Article 280.1), then privately calling for alienation of territory could result in a stiffer punishment under Article 280.2 than publicly calling for alienation of territory does under Article 280.1. The official reason for enactment of this Article 280.2 was “to confirm new provisions of the Russian Constitution, which outlaw any steps aimed at the alienation of Russian territories.”[181]

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“Rehabilitating Nazism” (May 2014)

After the pro-Kremlin president of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovych, abandoned his post and fled to Russia in February 2014, the Kremlin promptly began to vilify the new government in Kyiv as a “fascist junta” and the Russian Parliament added a new Criminal Code Article 354.1, entitled “Rehabilitation of Nazism.”[182] Its title notwithstanding, Article 354.1 did more than ban crackpot theories like Holocaust denial; it also imposed fines and jail terms of up to five years for publicly disseminating “knowingly false information about the activity of the USSR during the *Second World War*” (italics added) or “information that expresses manifest disrespect for society regarding the days of military glory and memorial holidays of Russia relating to the defense of the Motherland, as well as profaning the symbols of Russian military glory.”[183] In April 2021, just a few weeks after a judge found that Alexei Navalny defamed a veteran who appeared in a pro-Kremlin video, the law was revised to sanction also the dissemination of knowingly false information about “veterans of the Great Patriotic War.”[184] This revision also increased the fines tenfold to as much as USD 65,000, with the highest penalties applying to officials and those who made their forbidden views known through the mass media.[185]

One lexical point stands out in this law: its conspicuous use of the term “Second World War” instead of “Great Patriotic War,” the name that is far more commonly used in Russia (as it was in the Soviet Union) to describe Russia’s four-year struggle against Nazi Germany. The Great Patriotic War is a truncated version of the Second World War that runs only from June 22, 1941, when the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, instead of from September 1, 1939, when they invaded Poland. It thus excises those events of the Second World War that were and remain the hardest for the Kremlin to justify: the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (1939); the USSR’s joint occupation of Poland with Nazi Germany under the Pact’s Secret Protocol (1939); its occupation and annexation of the Baltic states (1939-1940); the Winter War against Finland (1939-40); and the Katyn Massacre (1940). The law’s use of the term “Second World War” thus deftly encompasses those problematic events without naming them.

“Undesirable Organizations” (May 2015)

This legislation revises five laws.[186] It empowers Russia’s chief law enforcement officer, the Prosecutor General, to designate as undesirable the “activity of a foreign or international non-governmental organization that poses a threat to the foundations of the constitutional order of the Russian Federation, the defense-readiness of the country, or the security of the state.”[187] An NGO that has been declared undesirable may not open offices, distribute materials, carry out operations, or do banking.[188] Anyone continuing to direct the operations of an undesirable organization can be punished by a fine of USD 3,900–6,500, up to six years’ imprisonment, as well as disqualification from holding certain offices or engaging in certain activities for ten years.[189] Unlike being stigmatized as a foreign agent, being branded an undesirable organization necessarily results in liquidation of the offending entity. As of December 2021, the list of undesirable organizations contained forty-nine entities.[190]

The amendments themselves make no provision for contesting the undesirable organization label, although presumably a brave soul could bring some legal action to try to have it rescinded.

Insults and Fake News (March 2019)

In March 2019, Putin signed into law a pair of acts revising the relevant information technology law to sanction the dissemination of disrespectful information and fake news. The first act authorizes the Prosecutor General and Media Supervision Agency (Roskomnadzor) to purge the Internet of “indecent” information that shows “manifest disrespect for society, the state, the official state symbols of the Russian Federation, the Constitution of the Russian Federation, or the agencies executing state authority in the Russian Federation.”[191] If the information is not taken down within 24 hours of receipt of a deletion order, the offending site may be blocked. For individuals the penalty is USD 390–1,300 for the first violation; USD 1,300–2,600 and/or 15 days in jail for the second violation; and USD 2,600–3,900 and/or the same jail term for further violations. The second act authorizes the same agencies to order information providers to immediately delete from their sites any “unreliable information of significance to society that is disseminated as a credible message which threatens to harm the life and/or health of citizens or to property, to result in mass violation of public order and/or public safety, or to interrupt or cause to cease the functioning of life-support, transport/social infrastructure, credit organizations, or energy, industrial or transport installations.”[192] The fines for publishing “fake news,” as defined here, are up to USD 5,200 for citizens, USD 11,700 for officials, and USD 19,500 for legal entities. Navalny taunted the Kremlin the day this anti-insult legislation came into effect by posting this message: “The

Alexei Navalny marching in 2017 by Evgeny Feldman // CC BY-SA 4.0.

Photo by: Firdaus Omar // CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

presidential administration and the government of the Russian Federation are a bunch of thieves, scoundrels, and enemies of Russia. The Federation Council is filled with villains. United Russia is a party of crooks and thieves."[193]

"Extremism" (last amended July 2021)

Entitled "on countering extremist activity," this 2002 law has undergone 17 revisions since its original enactment, most recently in July 2021.[194] The law does not define "extremism," but rather provides various examples, such as "publicly justifying terrorism," "other terrorist activity," and "inciting social, racial, national, or religious discord." Criminal penalties for extremism are separately provided under Criminal Code Article 280, entitled "publicly calling for extremist activity," with a fine of up to USD 6,500, up to five years in prison, and disqualification from occupying state office for three to five years. The vagueness of the extremism law (and others) predictably exerts an *in terrorem* effect because it's hard to tell what conduct or speech may be forbidden (namely the case of Gera Knyazev's "extremist" banner that bore a quote from Putin). It also allows law enforcement "to go after everybody."[195] The extremist-entity list as of December 2021 contained 521 organizations, including hundreds of Jehovah's Witnesses groups (but not, for example, Hezbollah), and three of Alexey Navalny's organizations: the Anti-Corruption Foundation, the Citizens' Rights Protection Foundation, and his main office.[196] The analogous extremist-person list contained 11,704 names.[197] Both lists contain odd inclusions and omissions that would be hard to explain if the law were applied in good faith.[198]

WHY SPECIFICALLY THESE LAWS?

From time to time, Putin has alluded to reasons for enacting speech-limiting legislation. In response to the 2015 murder of the *Charlie Hebdo* journalists in France, he said that those who "act thoughtlessly, insulting the rights and feelings of religious people, should always remember there will be an inevitable backlash," and that Russia has "never permitted and [does] not permit such offensive behavior with regard to people of different faiths," except, apparently, with regard to Jehovah's Witnesses, who are banned in Russia.[199] Usually his approach to the subject is more tongue-in-cheek. He has, for example, asserted that NGOs perform a useful role in Russia and merely must declare where their funds come from. And apropos of Navalny's legal travails, he has stated that "people who fight corruption have to be completely honest themselves . . . if someone accuses other people of stealing, it doesn't mean he's above the law himself."[200] Notably, Putin made a similar point regarding tax evasion to the oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky in February 2003, just a few months before he had Khodorkovsky jailed and his company seized. For all his faults, no one can deny that Putin has a dry sense of humor. However, in approaching the purposes served by the speech-limiting laws, it is probably more productive to focus on what they do than on what Putin says about them.

The laws examined above come in two varieties. First, there are those that principally apply to organizations and individuals, which is to say, to the medium for publicizing facts and opinions, whatever they may be (public protests, foreign agents, undesirable organizations). Second, there are the laws that principally apply to the message, regardless of the medium (blasphemy, non-traditional lifestyles, secession, rehabilitation of Nazism, insults/fake news, extremism).

There is a ready explanation for why the Kremlin should pass both varieties of law, though the explanation itself raises an interesting question. A decade of experience confirms that the Kremlin uses such laws to justify closing organizations and silencing individuals it finds troublesome. No mystery there. The interesting question is why it should rely so heavily on the law instead of on furtive or extra-legal methods to achieve its goals? Why the legalism?[201]

The answer lies in the peculiar role that law has come play in Putin's Russia. In the absence of a separation of powers, Russian law has been serving less as a means for regulating relations among citizens and between the citizen and the state than as a way for Putin to issue broad policy instructions to the state apparatus.[202] Ruling by law — or by what Putin himself has called the "dictatorship of law" — allows him, the ultimate decision-maker on all matters, to give the impression that he has delegated authority. This pseudo-delegation then insulates him from the negative consequences of his instructions. Should a state agency implementing what he instructed it to do by means of the law cause too much trouble, Putin need not admit his mistake, but can take the agency to task, perhaps fire or jail its chief, and thereby bolster his credibility as a competent manager. Stalin famously did just that in his 1930 article "Dizzy with Success," where, with exquisite irony, he criticized his underlings as over-zealous for doing exactly what he told them to do (collectivize agriculture post-haste).

The second variety of laws, i.e., those that apply to the message, serve several additional purposes by creating what may be called unsafe spaces for civil discourse. First, sanctioning talk of subjects like non-traditional lifestyles or the Soviet war effort helps distinguish the Putin Brand from the decadent West. Putin has cast himself as standing for orthodoxy, heterosexuality, territorial integrity, anti-Fascism, honor, and stability. The West, in contrast, stands for the opposite. Putin has not minced words about this us-versus-them distinction. At the Valdai Discussion Club in September 2013, just a few months after the non-traditional lifestyle law came into effect, he said that Western nations are "moving away from their roots, including Christian values . . . Policies are being pursued that place on the same level a multi-child family and a same-sex partnership, faith in God and a belief in Satan."[203] He reiterated this thesis more recently at the October 2021 meeting of the Club, where he stated that some in the West think that "reverse discrimination against the majority in the interests of minorities . . . constitute[s] movement toward public renewal." In Russia, Putin said, "we have a different viewpoint."[204]

Second, some of these laws are a majoritarian sop for a sizable segment of the population. Take, for example, LGBT rights. Most Russians take a dim view of homosexuality. Levada Center, an independent polling agency, reported in 2021 that 69 percent of respondents disagreed with the statement that "adults have the right to enter into same-sex relationships by mutual consent," this figure being nine percentage points higher than in 2013, when the "non-traditional lifestyles" law was passed. [205] Another example is the rehabilitation of Nazism law. Given the enormous sacrifice of the Soviet people in their war against Nazi Germany, what Russian today wouldn't want to believe in the selfless heroism of their parents and grandparents during the Second World War?

Third, some of the unsafe-space laws serve a key populist tactic; namely, to divide those who purport to represent the "real people" or "real Russia" from all others, who are by default deemed to be fifth columnists or even enemies of the people.[206]

The Kremlin tapped this populist vein during the 2011–2012 protests, persistently insinuating that the protestors were LGBT-friendly, if not homosexual, and tainted by foreign ideas and money. In late 2011, various Russian social media sites spread the idea of adopting white ribbons as the emblem of the protest movement. The idea caught on. Putin then addressed the white ribbons in his annual televised question-and-answer show on December 15: "frankly, when I looked at the television screen and saw something hanging from someone's chest, honestly, it's indecent, but I decided that it was propaganda to fight AIDS — that they had pinned up, excuse me, a condom." He then went on to imply that the protest movement was inspired from abroad: "this is a developed scheme to destabilize society that did not rise up on its own."[207]

The Kremlin similarly sought to smear anyone opposed to Russia's attacks on Ukraine as a disloyal fifth columnist after Russia annexed Crimea and occupied Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine in March 2014. The reasoning seemed to be this: if the post-Yanukovych government in Kyiv was a "fascist junta" as the Kremlin claimed, any supporter of that government must necessarily be anti-Russian and "extremist." In support of this narrative, Parliament enacted the law on rehabilitating Nazism in May 2014, a few months after the change of regime in Kyiv. This law made it risky to critically examine fascism, thus helping the Kremlin to monopolize the term "fascist" so that it could mean "an enemy of Russia as defined by the Kremlin." How else would it be possible to think of the new Ukrainian government as fascist? In the Ukrainian parliamentary elections of October 2014, the main right-wing parties Svoboda (Freedom) and Pravy Sektor (Right Sector) won only 4.7 and 1.8 percent of the votes, respectively. In the 2019 elections, they did much worse: a coalition of all the major right-wing parties received only 2.15 percent of the votes cast, well under the threshold required to win a single seat in Parliament. What's more, the Jewish comedian Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine's president since 2019, would no doubt be surprised to learn that he presides over a fascist junta.

Finally, the laws targeting the message by making it harder for people to know what other people are really thinking, undermine a key prerequisite for the formation of public opinion — common knowledge — which is best defined not as what everyone knows, but as what everyone knows that everyone knows.[208] Without the comfort of knowing that one's views are not unique, a degree of heroism is required to express them, and the world is notoriously short on heroes. As an editor of the "foreign agent" news site *Meduza* has said, "it's harder to talk to people now because a lot of people who would gladly speak to us are now wary of being associated with a 'foreign agent.'"[209] If built high enough, the wall of silence that Putin is erecting will result in the “atomized, isolated individuals” that Hannah Arendt saw as the basic building blocks of totalitarian society.[210]

The laws examined here do nothing to advance knowledge or foster a healthy civil society. They can only be seen as expedients for the Kremlin to maintain itself in power at the long-term expense of the people and state. In 1672, King Charles II of England issued a Putinesque proclamation to close the main social media outlets of his day, coffee houses, to “restrain the spreading of false news, and licentious talking of matters of state and, government.”[211] This proclamation and his other attempts to ban “licentious talking” failed, and one suspects that Putin’s similar unsafe-space and anti-NGO laws will ultimately fail as well. Surely, the Russians are too gutsy and smart to allow themselves to be bottled up this way forever. What society ever has ever managed to articulate and address its problems with its tongue cut out.

Photo by Pavel Neznanov on Unsplash.

[159] On December 28, 2021, the Supreme Court liquidated Memorial International. The next day a Moscow municipal court liquidated its sister organization, the Memorial Human Rights Center. In both cases it was alleged that the organizations repeatedly failed to comply with Russia’s “foreign agent” law, which is examined below.
[160] On the 2011-2012 protest movement, see Mischa Gabowitsch, *Protest in Putin’s Russia* (Cambridge: Polity, 2016); Law 54-FZ of June 19, 2004.
[161] State Duma of the Russian Federation, *Code of Administrative Offences of the Russian Federation*, Articles 20.2(1)-(4), No. 195-FZ, Moscow, amended 2012; All ruble-denominated fines have been converted to USD at the January 2022 exchange rate.
[162] Ibid. Art. 20.2(5)-(6).
[163] Ibid. Art. 20.2.2(1).
[164] Ibid. 20.2.2(2).
[165] Alissa de Carbonnel, “Twenty detained as Russia debates tougher protest rules,” *Reuters*, June 5, 2012, https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-russia-protests-idUKBRE8540KH20120605.
[166] Law 258-FZ of July 21, 2014 added a new Criminal Code (“CC”) Art. 212.1.
[167] Jonathan Wiersema, “Protest in Peril? Russia’s Constitutional Court Upholds Article 212.1,” *Kennan Cable*, No. 66, Apr. 2021.
[168] Law 121-FZ of July 20, 2012 amended Law 82-FZ of May 19, 1995, 7-FZ of Jan. 12, 1996, 115-FZ of Aug. 7, 2001, and the CC.
[169] Law 327-FZ of Nov. 25, 2017, 426-FZ of Dec. 2, 2019, and 481-FZ of Dec. 30, 2020.
[170] “Who Has Russia Labeled As A ‘Foreign Agent’?,” *RFE/RL*, https://www.rferl.org/a/kremlin-foreign-media-crackdown/31438446.html (visited Jan. 23, 2022).
[171] Its director, the ophthalmologist Anastasiya Vasilyeva, treated Alexei Navalny for eye injuries that he suffered in a 2017 attack.
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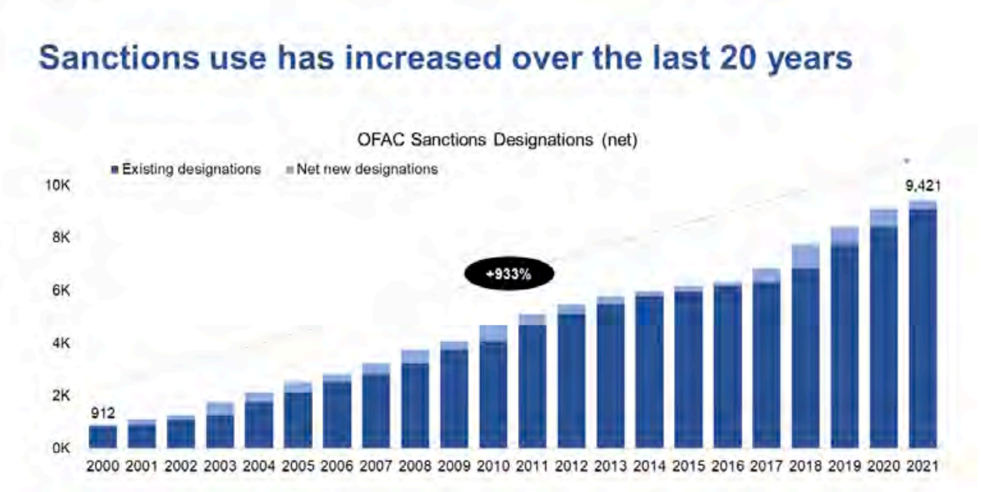
Sanctions Run Amok:
The Undermining of U.S. Power

- By Keith A. Preble

Well into its second year, the Biden administration has continued to grapple with persistent foreign policy challenges while new ones have emerged: North Korea has not curtailed its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs; negotiations with Iran on resuscitating the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) remain stalled; and a Russian troop buildup near Ukraine may signal a potential invasion and full-scale conflict. In confronting these and other challenges, the United States continues to use economic sanctions as a mean of punishing, signaling, and coercing rivals into changing their foreign policy behaviors. As a tool of American economic power, policymakers often see sanctions as “Goldilocks” instruments that are “just right,” albeit ones that require time and patience to facilitate policy change.[212] Like Goldilocks, policymakers often face difficult choices. Military action may quickly bring about desired results but at an extremely high cost, whereas relying on diplomacy alone may be less politically and economically risky but fail to achieve the desired outcome. Economic sanctions represent a middle ground where doing something is better than doing too much or nothing at all. Although their effectiveness remains contested by academics and policymakers, their versatility and perceived benefits makes their use an attractive policy response by the United States in confronting foreign policy challenges.[213]

The United States dominates the global financial system. U.S. economic power both has significant coercive potential and can be wielded unilaterally with few consequences — most countries are unable to challenge the United States’s economic might. Moreover, they are comparatively easier for U.S. leaders to implement than other foreign policy instruments, as they can be imposed by the executive branch alone, without congressional approval. Whether by executive order or legislation, the U.S. Treasury Department, via the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) creates the regulations that guide sanctions implementation. Although other U.S. agencies are also involved in this process, OFAC is responsible for enforcement, administering, and updating the United States’s Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List (SDN), a “blacklist” of entities with whom U.S. companies and individuals cannot do business.[214] The SDN list has grown considerably over the last two decades, a fact highlighted by the Biden administration’s October 2021 sanctions review.[215]

The United States’s use of economic sanctions since 2000 has grown concurrently with the SDN list. In the early 2000s, 69 U.S. sanctions targeted Cuba, Iraq, Libya, Yugoslavia, and Iran, representing 77 percent of the total enacted amount. By 2021, the number of American sanctions programs more than doubled to 176, with 53 percent targeting six states: Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Russia, Syria, and Venezuela.[216] With the explosion of U.S. economic sanctions imposed on countries and entities, the Biden administration has recognized the need to recalibrate how they are employed and the resources necessary to manage such commitments.



Source: US Treasury 2021 Sanctions Review

The October 2021 sanctions review conducted by the U.S. Treasury Department highlighted the need for changes in the use and implementation of economic sanctions through a series of "five steps:" adopting a structured policy framework that links sanctions to clear policy objectives; incorporating multilateral coordination when possible; calibrating sanctions to mitigate unintended economic, political, and humanitarian impacts; making sure sanctions are easily understood, enforceable, and adoptable; and making investments in the Treasury's sanctions technology, workforce, and infrastructure.[217] Paradoxically, as U.S. administrations have come to rely on economic sanctions as a critical policy tool for responding to foreign policy crises, the level of material support for the Treasury has not grown concurrently.[218] Yet these resource problems are only the tip of the iceberg as the United States grapples with efforts by allies and adversaries to evade and mitigate the impact of U.S. economic sanctions. For economic sanctions to be successful, U.S. foreign policy must work in tandem with other forms of economic statecraft while providing U.S. agencies with the appropriate level of resources to achieve desired outcomes.

As Stephanie Zable rightly points out, disdain for the United States's sanctions regime began long before the Trump administration's "maximum pressure campaign" and the "sanctions wall" against Iran touted by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and others in the former administration.[219] As America's use of economic sanctions has increased, U.S. allies and adversaries have sought ways to avoid them. The Helms-Burton Act of 1996 — officially known as the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 — first introduced the concept of extraterritorial and secondary sanctions.[220] U.S. economic sanctions programs against Iran and Cuba were failing to achieve their goals as European countries, Japan, and Canada maintained strong commercial ties with these traditional American adversaries.[221] To combat noncompliant firms whose trade with U.S. adversaries undermined U.S. foreign policy, the United States expanded the scope of "primary" sanctions by developing "secondary" sanctions. Primary sanctions restrict economic engagement between firms in the sanctioning state and the sanctioned state. Secondary sanctions go further: they are designed to disrupt and impede economic relations between the state targeted by economic sanctions and its trading partners (third-party states), following the logic that these disruptions improve the effectiveness of primary sanctions. American secondary sanctions may also impose restrictions on U.S. citizens and firms from doing business with firms in third-party states that continue to deal with firms in the sanctioned country. Legally, they become extraterritorial when the United States imposes fines and other remedies against firms in third-party states.[222] The employment of even a single American by a foreign firm is often enough to trigger the extraterritorial application of secondary sanctions against thast firm.

While the United States backed off enforcing Helms-Burton's extraterritorial provisions after it sparked a diplomatic firestorm between itself and Europe, changes to regulations in the second half of the George W. Bush administration led to a massive increase in the maximum fines permissible under U.S. law in 2009.[223] These changes provided the Obama administration with a potent financial weapon to operationalize against firms advertently or inadvertently undermining U.S. economic sanctions. As U.S. foreign policy prerogatives shifted from Cuba to Iran, the United States wielded these new powers with particular strength against major European financial institutions for violations of Iran sanctions programs (among others). In one instance, U.S. fines approached almost USD 1 billion.[224] Banks based in the EU had few options but to comply given their reliance on the American financial system.

These huge fines accomplished their goal and served as powerful deterrents, at least in the financial sector, as banks became more cautious. Financial penalties, as well as a ratcheting up of sanctions and the United States's departure from the JCPOA, came together to create an atmosphere of overcompliance whereby banks and other companies found it cheaper to exit targeted markets than to continue business there. Accordingly, the United States's lack of support for the JCPOA and the attendant negative impacts to its own firms demonstrated to the EU that it had to exercise greater resolve in countering U.S. flip-flopping on a deal that was largely working and one that the Trump administration had initially certified.

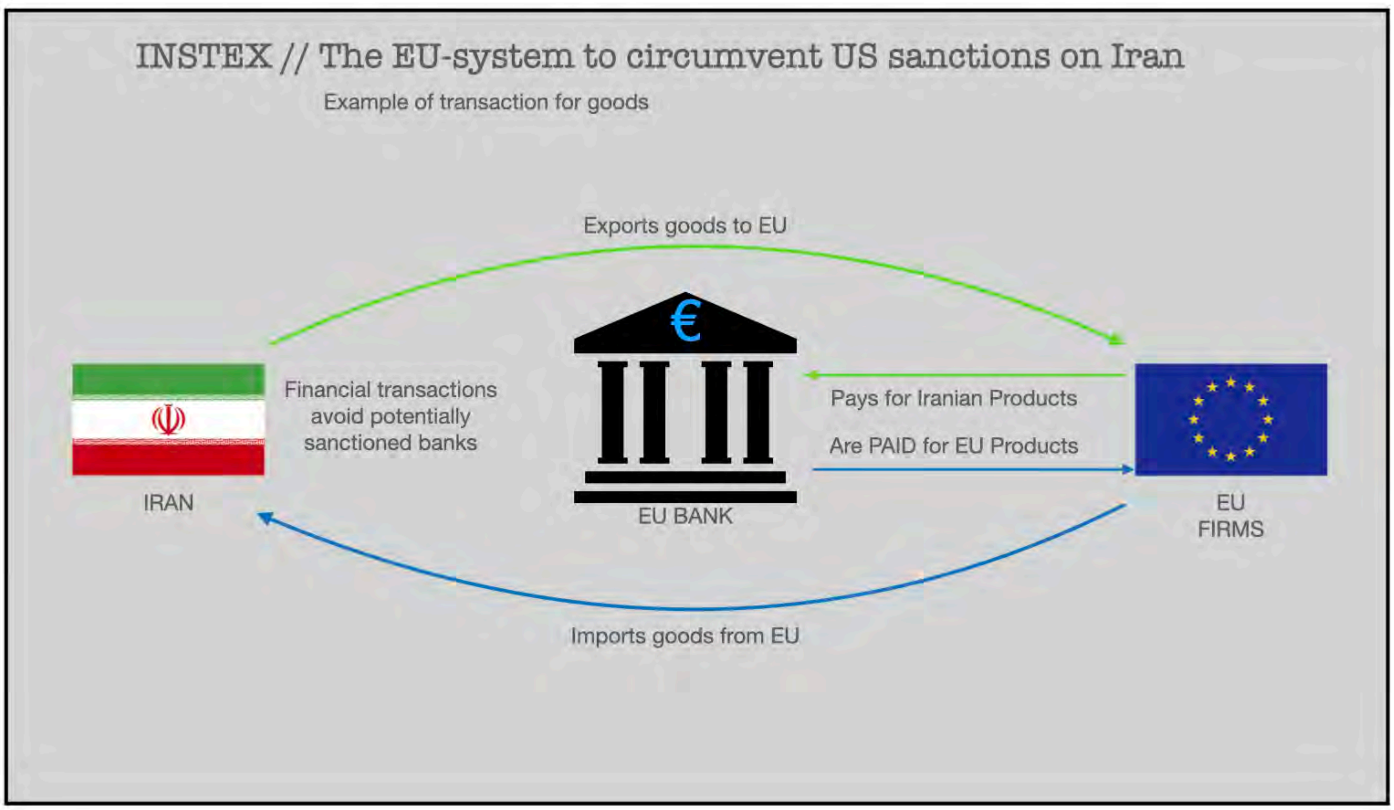
As American foreign policy increasingly relies on sanctions, regulators tasked with their enforcement face internal resourcing challenges while simultaneously working to mitigate external challenges to their effectiveness as allies and adversaries seek to undermine their impact. The overuse of economic sanctions has motivated allies and adversaries alike to find ways to avoid the U.S. dollar and banking system. Such an eventuality would make compliance and enforcement extremely difficult for OFAC, as the United States is unable to go after every single violator.[225] Today, one of the foremost challenges the United States faces in achieving its sanctions' desired effect comes from blocking regulations developed by the European Union in the early 1990s. These were intended to find ways to avoid violating U.S. economic sanctions and were resuscitated during the Trump administration.[226] Eventually, they were transformed into what the EU has called the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX), a special-purpose vehicle designed to facilitate humanitarian trade with Iran.[227]

INSTEX
Secure. Efficient. European.

Special-purpose vehicles are common in business and are created as subsidiaries of parent companies to hedge risk. Should a risky business venture fail, the failure remains confined to the subsidiary and limits the risk to the parent company. INSTEX is a unique special-purpose vehicle that is not backed by a single parent company or the firms utilizing INSTEX for trade. Instead, the transactions are ostensibly guaranteed by the EU member states and European countries that developed it. As of the writing of this piece, INSTEX has ten shareholders: the original "E3" — France, Germany, and the UK — along with Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Finland, Spain, and Sweden.[228] With the backing of ten European governments with significant financial and economic resources assuming the risk of firms using the SPV, INSTEX represents a unique effort at mitigating the impact of U.S. economic sanctions.

Yet INSTEX is not simply a mechanism for saving the JCPOA, but rather reflects a response to Europe's need to balance U.S. economic dominance credibly when that dominance runs counter to EU interest or when the United States and EU are unable or unwilling to find common ground regarding foreign policy. In June 2021, the Biden administration and its EU counterparts held a virtual summit that addressed the issues of economic sanctions and the need for greater coordination in using economic sanctions, both of which are reflected in the Biden administration's September 2021 economic sanctions review.[229] By working with allies on the imposition and enforcement of sanctions, Washington can preserve a critical policy tool on which foreign policymakers rely. The need for improved cooperation in the use and enforcement of economic sanctions may slow the development of SPVs and other bartering systems that have potential to undermine U.S. economic dominance and further undermine the effectiveness of economic sanctions.

Surprisingly, INSTEX has received little public attention from U.S. regulators as EU officials have sought to develop a mechanism that would keep the JCPOA alive and maintain Iranian compliance with the agreement



while providing assistance to firms seeking to avoid potentially staggering fines for violating U.S. economic sanctions.[230] Although it has largely been dismissed as insufficient to challenge U.S. economic dominance in the international system, U.S. policymakers and regulators should worry because it represents a nascent effort at avoiding coercive American economic policies and is bound to spread.[231] While the EU has couched efforts at developing INSTEX around the preservation of the JCPOA, it would be naïve for U.S. policymakers to ignore the realities of these instruments. In hedging its bets for the future, the EU may see INSTEX as a new tool for countering U.S. efforts to impose secondary and/or extraterritorial sanctions again its firms.

Within the INSTEX framework, EU firms can import and export goods from a sanctioned state, but the payments flow between the importing and exporting EU firms rather than between EU and sanctioned firms. A complementary SPV would exist in the sanctioned country. Like INSTEX in Europe, the sanctioned country's SPV would be backed by its respective government and any other potential members that may participate, allowing for payments to be transferred between firms in the sanctioned state in exchange for EU goods.

For example, imagine that an Iranian hospital wishes to purchase antibiotics from a European pharmaceutical company. Because of sanctions against Iran, the European pharmaceutical company might potentially cancel the order because neither the company, nor potentially its bank, is willing to undertake the costly regulatory burdens to clear the transaction with OFAC, deal with the political risk and uncertainty of trading with Iran, or shoulder the risk of fines. Through INSTEX, the EU pharmaceutical company has a new option: rather than receive payments from the Iranian hospital that might run afoul of U.S. sanctions regulators, the exporting EU pharmaceutical company can use INSTEX to find another European firm seeking to import goods from Iran, such as a European food distributor importing pistachios from Iran at a similar cost to the exported antibiotics. The EU food distributor importing pistachios from Iran pays the EU pharmaceutical company seeking to export antibiotics to the Iranian hospital. Financial transactions do not involve potentially sanctioned Iranian banks but instead remain in Europe as the payments are exchanged between the EU pharmaceutical manufacturer and the EU food distributor via the SPV.

In Iran, a similar system exists: the Iranian hospital would pay the Iranian pistachio supplier for the pistachios provided to the EU food distributor. Key to avoiding U.S. sanctions is the fact that financial transactions in Iran do not cross borders beyond the reach of U.S. regulators. The Iranian SPV between Iranian banks facilitate payments. Only the goods exchanged — antibiotics and pistachios — move across borders. Ideally, the SPVs in the EU and Iran would then clear funds for payment only after the goods in question have arrived at their respective destinations.

INSTEX thus makes it exceedingly difficult for OFAC to target violators as it cannot justify punishing banks for financial transactions that occur entirely between European or Iranian firms. OFAC could attempt to sanction logistics agents, shippers, and other entities involved in international trade, but doing so would require significant additional information; international trade involves a host of actors, many of whom conduct legal business activities; tracking, so punishing suspected violators requires time, resources, and, most of all, intergovernmental cooperation. More aggressive sanctions enforcement by OFAC would risk injuring legal commerce by U.S. allies, potentially undermining both U.S. economic and diplomatic interests. As it stands, OFAC lacks the resources necessary to oversee existing sanctions programs; adding additional burdens in identifying hundreds of barter-and-exchange transactions would be exceedingly cumbersome.[232] How would OFAC sanction a shipping company or a single vessel that might hold containers not just to Iran but also to a multitude of other destinations throughout major shipping routes around the globe? Given the Treasury's lack of resources and its reliance on voluntary compliance over the last several years, the prospects of a fully functioning barter-and-exchange mechanism beyond the reach of American law should worry U.S. regulators.

The European Union has not pursued INSTEX beyond the exchange of humanitarian goods, having completed the first transaction between Europe and Iran in 2020 with the delivery of exported medical supplies.[233] While only a few exchanges have occurred between the EU and Iran, the system has room to grow. A marketplace could be developed through INSTEX and counterparts in sanctioned countries where buyers and sellers using the SPV compete for barter and exchange opportunities. Returning to the previous pistachio and antibiotic example, imagine a situation where there is an imbalance between the value of the pistachios and antibiotics. A hospital in Iran might be in a position where it cannot purchase more or is unable to reduce its order due to medical necessity. A pistachio farmer may have lower yields, or market prices of pistachios may fluctuate making the trade more expensive than originally anticipated. In a fully developed exchange, a third or even fourth firm in the EU and/or Iran could participate to offset trade imbalances that might arise. As the exchange grows and more countries and firms participate, the risk of imbalances hindering the system become less problematic.

As more countries sign onto INSTEX, the marketplace would be expected eventually to include exchanges of non-humanitarian goods. With EU governments shouldering the trade risks, exporting firms within the European Union and any other country willing to accede to INSTEX's regulations have much to gain and little to lose. INSTEX could potentially open markets that are closed not only by sanctions, but also by the difficulties

prove detrimental to U.S. foreign policy.

INSTEX is an example of how economic sanctions create potentially lucrative opportunities. When U.S. economic sanctions returned to pre-JCPOA levels after the United States left the agreement, U.S. companies once again became largely prohibited from engaging with Iran. These developments have again created a commercial vacuum in which EU, Russian, Chinese, and other third-party firms can profit from the reimposition of unilateral American economic sanctions. While the climate of fear generated

in securing export credit to facilitate trade. Although the EU has been cautious in managing INSTEX to avoid disrupting transatlantic relations, Chinese and Russian versions of these exchanges operating with their SPV counterparts in sanctioned states — like Iran or Venezuela — would presumably be less amenable to U.S. interests. These types of markets, while initially cumbersome, could become more efficient and effective over time, especially if they are profitable and stimulate competition and economic growth.

The humanitarian impact of American economic sanctions has been well documented.[234] While INSTEX has been marketed as a mechanism for facilitating delivery of humanitarian goods to Iran, it alone fails to explain the development of the special purpose vehicle developed by the E3 — the United Kingdom, Germany, and France.[235] Trade in humanitarian goods to Iran represents a small fraction of overall EU trade, but the use of humanitarian goods in developing and testing INSTEX may provide space for the exchange mechanism to further develop to include other types of goods while avoiding potential sanctions by the United States. The real danger to U.S. interests lies in further growth in INSTEX's membership and the potential granting of a banking license, which would allow INSTEX to extend credit and provide trade financing and services to facilitate intrastate financial transactions banks may fear to undertake.[236] INSTEX may represent the first of many SPVs that could potentially develop in response to U.S. sanctions, serving as a blueprint that tests the limits of U.S. economic power by forcing U.S. policymakers to make tough choices to preserve U.S. economic dominance. While still in its infancy, the use of SPVs like INSTEX represent a movement that, if sustained and largely successful, would

over time due to previous sanctions continues to impede economic relations with Iran, INSTEX member states could envision a marketplace for exchange unhindered by overcompliance.[237] As INSTEX develops, firms in third-party states, especially those from smaller countries who may be unable to take advantage of commercial opportunities with sanctioned entities without fear of U.S. sanctions, could partake as additional governments join to support INSTEX. By opening exchange to countries outside the EU, trade and barter could expand the scope and scale of traded goods and participating firms.

Although INSTEX represents a long-term challenge to U.S. sanctions policy, it has been downplayed by U.S. administrations. While INSTEX's fledgling nature makes it unlikely to be an immediate direct threat to the United States's use of economic sanctions, EU efforts have already set the stage for the development of competing barter and exchange mechanisms by China and Russia, which, if successful could eventually limit the United States's ability to wield sanctions.[238]

Our understanding of INSTEX has been limited by its framing as being merely a vehicle for humanitarian aid. Most significantly, INSTEX has the potential to complicate U.S. sanctions enforcement. Moreover, the manner in which the development of this SPV stood up to the Trump administration's wanton use of economic sanctions has emboldened U.S. allies and adversaries alike to seek ways to circumvent U.S. economic sanctions. As the Biden administration reconsiders its use of economic sanctions from the previous administration, American policymakers should take the development of SPVs and barter-and-trade systems more seriously, rather than relying on sanctions or threats of sanctions to counter their potential or their ability to undermine the United States's economic power. While the United States only threatened to sanction INSTEX, it is unclear whether those sanctions would have been effective or worth the cost of upsetting longstanding transatlantic relations with Europe and quickening the development of these systems of exchange.

Economic sanctions work best when they are paired with other tools of economic statecraft and allocated the necessary resources to be properly managed, implemented, and enforced. Half-measures, idle threats, and an unwillingness to pursue diplomatic engagement will only embolden the EU if, and when, future American administrations re-attempt a unilateral return to "maximum pressure" campaigns against perceived enemies. Instead of furthering U.S. foreign policy interests, such actions may backfire and provide adversaries with blueprints for evading U.S. sanctions and undermining the full potential of U.S. economic power.

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THE LOGIC OF AMERICAN NUCLEAR STRATEGY:

A Conversation with Matthew Kroenig

Interviewed by Dylan Land

Photo by Tony Powell

Fletcher Security Review (FSR): Your book, *The Logic of American Nuclear Strategy*, lays out a theory of deterrence that incorporates nuclear balances of power into games of brinkmanship, which you label "superiority brinkmanship synthesis theory." Can you briefly describe what the theory predicts and how it advances our current thinking of U.S. nuclear policies?

Matthew Kroenig (MK): The superiority brinksmanship synthesis theory builds on the scholarship that has come before it. Thomas Schelling came up with the idea of brinkmanship, where he argued that competitions among nuclear states become games of nuclear chicken in which neither side wants the crash — nuclear war — but they both want to get their way. Each side wants to force the other to swerve. How can you do that when you can't threaten to fight a nuclear war that could result in your own destruction? Schelling argues that in these scenarios, the countries play games of chicken and make nuclear threats to raise the risk of nuclear war, hoping that the other side will back down. Other scholars basically accepted this and assumed that since both sides can definitively hurt one another, nuclear balances of power don't really matter. What matters is the resolve of each country and how willing one side is to run a risk of nuclear war. The country that runs the highest risk will win and the country that does not will back down and lose. In fact, Schelling said international politics in the nuclear age has become a competition in risk taking.

The real world, however, doesn't seem to have agreed that the nuclear balance of power doesn't matter. The United States has always been interested in, as President Kennedy put it, having a nuclear arsenal "second to none." We see China engaged in a massive nuclear buildup now. So, the real world thinks that numbers of nuclear weapons and the nuclear balance of power matter. In my book, I tried to make sense of this puzzle. Essentially, and I think quite simply, I argue that the nuclear balance of power matters because it influences your ability to run risks in crises. It is not that the superior side thinks it can fight and win nuclear wars easily, but rather when they are in these high-stakes games of nuclear chicken, the country with the nuclear advantage is going to be more likely to stand firm and the country that is outgunned is more likely to look for off-ramps. That is the theory; it marries traditional brinkmanship theory with the idea that the nuclear balance of power — and nuclear superiority — does matter. I think this theory does a better job explaining the way the real world works than traditional deterrence theories.

FSR: The superiority brinkmanship synthesis theory posits that nuclear superior countries benefit from their ability to out-escalate inferior states because the expected payoffs of escalating exceed the expected payoff of submitting, which increases resolve and

U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Rachel Maxwell // Public Domain

toleration of greater risks. With possibilities for a win, lose, or disaster outcome, if the superior state is unlikely to ever lose, are there incentives for the superior state to deescalate, and if so, what do they look like?

MK: Political science is not physics; it does not explain everything perfectly. The best we do is to find on-average relationships, and, on average, superior states have the advantage and inferior states do not.

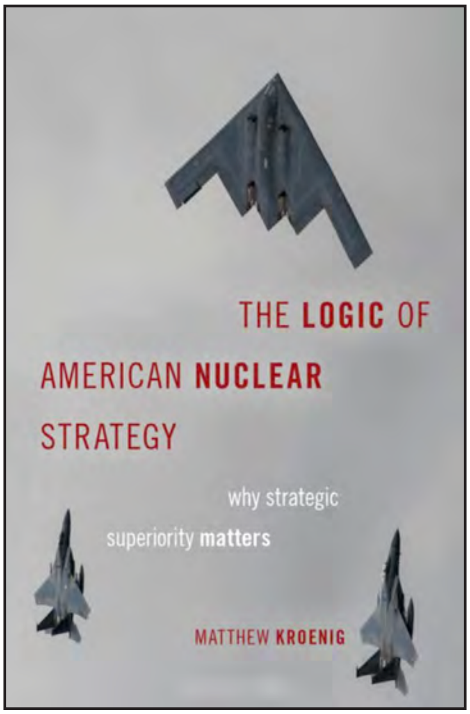
There are no monocausal explanations. It is not that nuclear superiority explains everything; there are other things that matter, like stakes in the crisis and conventional military power. I argue that nuclear superiority is among the factors that do matter, whereas I think previous scholars were too quick to dismiss it and say that nuclear superiority is completely irrelevant. Other stuff matters but nuclear balances of power matter as well. I would not want somebody to think from this that the United States should maintain nuclear superiority to just escalate and always win, because there is a real risk that things spin out of control and result in nuclear war. At every stage of the crisis, leaders on both sides are facing gut-wrenching decisions of whether to escalate and win an important geopolitical victory at the potential risk of a catastrophic nuclear war, or to back down and avoid nuclear war, but lose an important geopolitical interest. So even in the superior states — and we have seen this with Kennedy and the Cuban missile crisis and other examples — leaders are quite cautious, and they worry about nuclear war. Leaders are thinking about other things, it is just that on average, they are going to be more likely to show resolve in the conflict if they have nuclear superiority, and the inferior country is more likely to anticipate more costs than benefits and look for off-ramps. Some have taken from my argument that the implications are to massively expand our nuclear arsenal and go push other countries around but, in fact, that is not what I argue.

FSR: You argue that security interests can be maximized when the United States can minimize its own vulnerability and maximize that of its adversaries. This leads you to the conclusion that it is beneficial for the United States to have nuclear superiority in its force structure. If the United States should seek to maintain its nuclear superiority, how should it approach modernization and how can policymakers maneuver through such contentious debates?

MK: I provide logical, rational reasons why superiority matters. Some have questioned whether it is just that the bigger side thinks it is bigger and stronger and the weaker side thinks its weaker, so it is more of a psychological effect than anything else. But that is not it at all. I go through some nuclear exchange calculations in the book that show that the larger the U.S. force, the smaller the enemy's force, the less physical damage there would be to the U.S. homeland in the event of a nuclear war. That is true both if the enemy strikes first, or if the United States strikes first. So, if we reduce the size of our arsenal, it means that we are making ourselves more vulnerable. If we increase the size of our arsenal, we are making the U.S. homeland less vulnerable — so, force structure and size do matter.

On modernization, there are critics of U.S. nuclear policy and U.S. nuclear modernization that make the same arguments over and over. Fortunately, I do think there is still a bipartisan, mainstream consensus on the need for a strong U.S. nuclear deterrent and the need for modernization. In fact, the United States is in the process of a nuclear modernization program now that started under Obama and continued under Trump. Biden will release his Nuclear Posture Review, and I suspect they are going to continue the same modernization plan. So, I do think the United States will stay on track.

The other question here is about what the right size is for the U.S. nuclear arsenal and whether the United States has sufficient numbers right now. Currently, the U.S. arsenal is capped by the New START Treaty with Russia at 1550 deployed strategic nuclear weapons. But that number was decided in 2010 when New START was signed. Twelve years later, Russia, China, and North Korea have all significantly expanded and modernized their nuclear weapons programs. I think there is no chance that the arsenal we thought was sufficient 2010 is still sufficient in 2022. As such, I have recommended that we really look hard at those New START numbers and think about a possible increase in the size of our nuclear forces.



FSR: Your book critically assesses various arguments about strategic stability and second-strike theory. One of the criticisms of nuclear superiority is that it may degrade strategic stability by incentivizing an inferior adversary to strike first. On the other hand, second-strike theory argues that so long as a country has a second-strike capability, the incentives to conduct a nuclear attack are outweighed by the risks. Can you elaborate on this tension?

MK: There is this conventional notion of strategic stability, which essentially argues that so long as two nuclear powers, say the United States and Russia, both have secure second-strike capability — where they can both ride out an enemy nuclear attack and retaliate with a second strike — there will be stability, and neither side will have an incentive to launch a first attack. Some people argue that it would therefore be irrational for the United States to build more than what is needed for a second strike because it would not buy us anything in addition — Russia will still be deterred by our second-strike capability. At the same time, they also say that if the United States builds up its nuclear forces, its missile defenses, and other capabilities, then maybe Russia will be afraid the United States is going to launch a first strike, and instead of waiting for that first strike — and facing a potential use-them-or-lose-them scenario — decide to attack the United States first. But there is a contradiction here because both of those things cannot be true at the same time. If a second-strike capability is enough to reliably deter an adversary, then even if the United States has a first-strike and a second-strike capability, then that should still hold. Why would an outgunned country purposely start a nuclear war that it is going to lose? I think there are some smart analysts on the other side, but I think it is often advocacy for certain positions where people look for the arguments to get to the conclusion that they want and do not really engage in a rigorous thought process to get to those arguments. If you think about it logically, both of those things cannot be true at the same time.

FSR: You co-authored a 2020 report on Russia's exotic weapons that analyzes Moscow's possible motivations for developing novel weapons systems. The report concludes that a sense of genuine paranoia about the vulnerability of Russia's deterrent may, in part, contribute to its desire for exotic weapons. While you argue that there are benefits to American nuclear superiority, might the U.S. pursuit of nuclear primacy contribute to Russia's paranoia and therefore accelerate Russia's exotic weapons development? On the other hand, you make very clear that the United States has neither the capability nor the intent to undermine Russia's deterrent. How can these misunderstandings be mitigated?

MK: It is hard to know if and how these misunderstandings could be mitigated. Even if the United States was trying to develop a perfect first-strike capability against Russia, we wouldn't tell them. We would probably tell them that the United States is not trying to undermine Russia's deterrent. So, Russia does not believe us when we say that missile defenses are not aimed at them. It would make sense for cautious military planners in Moscow to assume the worst case. I also think the Russians have been impressed by America's technological superiority in the past, for example with stealth technology and precision-guided munitions. Russia has seen what the United States has been able to do in the past, and I think they are not necessarily worried about where we are right now, it is more about where we could go in the future. If the United States continues to invest in missile defenses, or a space-based laser system that Reagan dreamed about that would just zap missiles out of the sky, it is hard to know how that would affect Russia's deterrent. The United States has done things in the past to help ease Russia's anxiety, for example we have done technical briefings to them about the limits of our missile defenses in Europe, and we are a democracy, so it is easy for them to penetrate our information system. I suspect they could be reading some of our classified documents on nuclear capabilities. They can see that we are not able to undermine their deterrent now, but I think that Russia mostly worries about technological breakthroughs and what we might be able to do ten years from now.

FSR: You argue that a more benign international environment must precede arms reductions. In today's geopolitical environment, what should the U.S. approach be to arms control?

MK: When it comes to arms control, there are three main positions. There are some people who see arms control as good in and of itself: it means adversaries are cooperating with each other, they are building fewer of these dangerous weapons, and so it should be pursued regardless of the details. I would put some progressive Democrats in that camp. On the other hand, let's say for some more hawkish Republicans, arms control is always bad because it limits U.S. capabilities, and we cannot trust our adversaries, so let's tear up all agreements. I put myself in the middle, and I think that is where the mainstream of national security policy is. The middle ground, as I see it, believes that arms control is a tool, and so whether the United States should agree to certain treaties or limits depends on the details of arms control agreements. Arms control can be bad, depending on the details, in the same way it can be good, depending on the details. If you have an adversary you think you can actually trust, or one you can trust and verify as Reagan put, and the terms of the deal are advantageous to you, then arms control can make sense. The bottom line is that we should not pursue arms control just for its own sake. A good example is strategic arms control with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. During these arms control negotiations, the United States essentially locked in quantitative parity, but our capabilities were so much better, so much more accurate and prompt. The United States essentially had a qualitative advantage. On paper it looked like parity, but, in reality, the United States was locking in advantages. That is one case in which arms control quite clearly benefited the United States and its allies.

Country	Military Stockpile	Retired Weapons	Total Inventory
Russia	4,477	1,500	5,977
United States	3,708	1,720	5,428
France	290	0	290
China	350	0	350
United Kingdom	180	45	225
Israel	90	0	90
Pakistan	165	0	165
India	160	0	160
North Korea	20	0	20
Total	**9,440**		**12,705**

Estimated Number of Nuclear Warheads as of 2022 // Source: Federation of American Scientists

FSR: China seems to be moving beyond a "lean-in effective" nuclear deterrent force, with recent findings indicating that Beijing plans on tripling the size of its nuclear arsenal. What do you think this implies about China's nuclear ambitions, and how does the shifting multi-polarity affect U.S. deterrence?

MK: This is the topic of a recent report I wrote for the Atlantic Council. Deng Xiaoping said that in foreign policy, China should hide its capabilities and bide its time.[239] I think Xi Jinping has thrown that out the window and thinks it is now time for China to be a superpower. We can see evidence of this shift with his crackdowns on Hong Kong at home, his wolf warrior diplomacy overseas, his military threats against Taiwan, and we see it with this nuclear buildup as well. Xi has ordered the People's Liberation Army to build a nuclear superpower arsenal, and that is what they are doing. The nuclear buildup does raise a challenge the United States has never really faced before: two nuclear superpower peer and near-peer competitors. This is a new problem that we do not really know the answer to. Many nuclear strategists, including myself, are trying to wrestle with the implications of this growing multi-polarity right now.

FSR: You state that strategic technology will continue to change but the benefits of strategic superiority will not. Given the current environment of rapid technological innovation, what do you see as the most important technology the United States should prioritize?

MK: A lot of people who follow traditional academic models of deterrence have been worried that these new technologies are going to undermine stability and possibly call into question second strike capabilities. My main concern is about how technology might undermine U.S. superiority. I believe, however, that so long as the United States and its allies maintain the technological edge, we will be able to maintain stability. If Russia and China — which are revisionist powers — use new technology to gain military advantages, the world could become a very unstable place. We might be on the verge of a new revolution in military affairs: there are so many new technologies coming online at the same time — artificial intelligence, quantum computing, hypersonic missiles, directed energy — and I think we don't quite know which of those, or which combination of those, is going to have a decisive military advantage. I think it would be prudent for the Department of Defense to hedge its bets and invest in a lot of different areas. If I had to place my bet right now though — and I think many would agree with me — my hunch is that artificial intelligence is going to be the big one. If the United States can program algorithms that operate swarms of drones or other existing capabilities more effectively than an adversary, I could see how that could be quite significant on the battlefield.

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What Next for Climate and Security at the UN Security Council: Ireland's View

-By Simon Coveney
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence, Ireland

Photo by Laura Danova on Unsplash.

Before Ireland assumed its seat as an elected member of the United Nations Security Council in January last year, I, together with colleagues and advisors, reflected on what our priorities would be. As a Minister with two portfolios, for Foreign Affairs and for Defence, it was clear that global security in this century cannot be contemplated without a climate lens.

Each year sees new record high temperatures. No country is immune to wildfires, droughts, and storms. The impact of a melting Arctic is global, not local or regional. The evidence is clear: climate change is exacerbating the impacts of fragility, undermining peace and security. My strong sense was, and remains, that if we fail to recognize these links and take appropriate action across all international platforms, we will need to deal with more acute issues in the near future.

The aim to limit global heating to 1.5 degrees Celsius emerged still alive from COP26, though any honest assessment must conclude that this remains a shaky ambition, dependent on driving down global emissions rapidly.[240] The next decade will be crucial.

Making good that ambition to reduce emissions requires political space. A deteriorating global fragility landscape is curtailing the space for resolute action in many countries, perhaps amplified by the effects of the pandemic. Challenging global politics are distracting leaders from the climate challenge. We have more violence globally now than any time since the end of the Cold War, as well as the largest forced displacement crisis ever recorded.[241]

We are seeing in real time across the world how both slow-onset climate related impacts, such as droughts, as well as rapid-onset threats, particularly extreme weather events, are affecting stability.

In our reflections before coming onto the Security Council, it was notable that of the 21 countries most exposed to climate change globally, ten had — and have — ongoing UN Peace Operations.[242] It was evident that climate-related security impacts were felt most acutely by those already living in situations of poverty, marginalization, and conflict, people who lack the capacity and resources to build resilience. I am particularly conscious of the disproportionate effect of climate events and climate-related security situations on women and young people.

Around Lake Chad, for instance, conflict and climate dynamics combine to create a vicious self-reinforcing cycle. Climate change impacts such as reduced rainfall undermine livelihoods and contribute to tensions between farmers and herders, and subsequent conflict undermines communities' abilities to cope and adapt. This is creating an environment that non-state armed groups easily exploit for their own recruitment purposes.[243]

In South Sudan, half a million people were displaced in

2020 and 2021 due to flooding. The forced displacement of these populations has exacerbated conflict and triggered tensions over resources.

Faced with this compound challenge, it is clear to me that there needs to be an intensification of efforts to address interlocking climate-related security risks. Otherwise, we are jeopardizing peace and stability at every level, from the international right down to the local.

CLIMATE AND SECURITY AT THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

Fortunately, global and regional institutions are starting to respond to the risks of climate change to international peace and security. I am pleased to see the recent progress by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in this regard.[244] The European Union too has put Climate and Security at the heart of its global strategy on security in 2016, and since then, it has been weaved throughout its work.[245]

Each year sees new record high temperatures.

No country is immune to wildfires, droughts, and storms.

The African Union has also recognized these risks, highlighting how climate change can aggravate conflict, calling for an "informed Climate-Security-Development nexus for Africa."[246]

The Pacific Islands Forum in its 2018 Boe Declaration characterized climate change as "the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the peoples of the Pacific."[247]

Over the past 12 months of Ireland's elected membership of the UN Security Council, I have seen first-hand the relevance of climate-related security risks to the Council's work. Ireland has been using its voice and influence to ensure that the Council fulfils its role on this issue.

Encouragingly, the UN Security Council is increasingly addressing climate change within its mandate.[248] The progress so far is due to the tireless work of several member states over the last 15 years. As a result, there have been a number of significant developments which have enabled the Security Council and the broader UN system to be more active in addressing climate related risks.

First, climate has been mainstreamed in specific country and regional Council resolutions, beginning with Lake Chad Resolution 2349 in 2017 and subsequently a number of others including Mali, Somalia, Sudan, and West Africa. In 2021, the Council recognized Climate and Security risks outside Africa for the first time, mainstreaming climate change into mandates on Cyprus and Iraq. This ensures that these UN missions are tasked to analyze the impact of climate change on their work.

Second, the establishment by Germany during its presidency of the Council in 2020 of an Informal Expert Group on Climate and Security provides a space for Security Council members to receive in-depth analysis from experts on climate related security risks in particular countries and regions. Ireland, along with Niger, co-chaired

Micheál Martin, Taoiseach of Ireland and President of the Security Council for the month of September 2021, chairs the Security Council meeting on maintenance of international peace and security on the theme Climate and Security. UN Photo/Ariana Lindquist.

this group in 2021. Norway and Kenya are continuing this work in 2022.

Third, and related to this, the wider UN System has taken steps address climate-related security risks more systematically. The Climate Security Mechanism (CSM) was established in 2018 and draws on expertise across the UN in the areas of peacebuilding, sustainable development, and the environment, to integrate climate security analysis and action into its political and programmatic work. Ireland is pleased to support the CSM and to act as its co-chair in 2022, alongside Sweden.

The lack of a thematic resolution on Climate and Security — such as we have for Women, Peace and Security — means that the Council is restricted in how it can deal with the security challenges arising from climate-related events and change.

Finally, the Group of Friends on Climate and Security of the UN General Assembly has steadily garnered support and membership from 60 countries representing all five UN regional groups. This group is chaired ably by Germany and Nauru.

Despite these positive developments, I am convinced that there is more that the Security Council can and must do to address climate-related security risks in order to fully realize its primary responsibility under the Charter to maintain international peace and security.

The lack of a thematic resolution on Climate and Security — such as we have for Women, Peace and Security — means that the Council is restricted in how it can deal with the security challenges arising from climate-related events and change. For example, a resolution could enable a coherent approach to identifying important challenges and developing solutions by putting in place new measures, such as requiring regular reporting by the UN Secretary General on climate-related risks.

There is significant support across the membership of the United Nations for such a thematic resolution. A draft Security Council Resolution tabled by Ireland and Niger in December 2021 was co-sponsored by 113 members of the General Assembly. This was the second- highest number of co-sponsors for a Security Council resolution in the history of the United Nations. This was a remarkable level of support that speaks to the readiness and willingness of the majority of countries in the world for the Council to systematically do more on climate and security. Unfortunately, despite this overwhelming support, the draft resolution did not carry as a result of Russia exercising its veto.

We have listened to the concerns expressed by Russia and India, which declined to support the resolution, along with the views of China, which abstained. These concerns are partly based on fears that the Council will duplicate or set up a parallel workstream to that of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

However, this is not what is being proposed. The UN Security Council has a particular mandate and set of tools at its disposal. These include its mandate for peacekeeping, peacebuilding, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction. I do not believe, in this day and age, that the Council can do its job in these areas without addressing the risks posed by climate change. Omitting climate change from this work risks undermining the peace that the Council is trying to achieve.

While I am disappointed with the outcome of December's vote, I retain the determination to advance this agenda along with our partners.

PATHWAYS FORWARD

I would like to emphasize three areas of focus for Ireland that I believe will advance this agenda:

Firstly, current efforts to strengthen and disseminate the evidence base on climate-related security risks to

UN Photo/Manuel Elías

UN Photo/Ariana Lindquist

inform efforts at the Security Council and elsewhere must be enhanced. This means building on conflict and climate expertise, including that of experts from the most affected countries and regions. This expertise needs to be accessible by decision-makers and should underpin responses at the appropriate scale. For example, multilateral programs such as the Weathering Risk Initiative, a multidisciplinary research project seeking to identify and respond to climate-related security risks, which Ireland and other countries support, can make tangible contributions to this agenda.

Secondly, enabling the UN Security Council to comprehend and deal with climate-related security risks will help ensure it discharges its mandate to maintain international peace and security. A resolution on Climate and Security would provide a framework for doing so, but, in the absence of this, UN Security Council members should strengthen the mainstreaming of climate change in relevant country and regional files based on the latest data and evidence. The UN Secretary General should also be called upon to produce a report on the risks that climate change presents to global peace and security, which can inform the wider work of the Council.

Thirdly, we need to tackle climate and peacebuilding challenges together. This requires a shift from only thinking about the risks that climate change poses for security to also recognizing that climate action can help build peace. It means that we simultaneously address climate change adaptation, increasing resilience, and improving natural resource governance while building peace. It also requires that we resource projects and capacity at the country level. For example, Ireland is supporting the UN Mission in South Sudan to put these principles into practice, including through funding a dedicated Climate Security Advisor.

Finally, we must do more to ensure that climate finance reaches the most vulnerable communities in fragile and conflict-affected states. A recent study has shown that of the USD 14 billion in climate finance implemented under the four major climate change vertical funds[249] in 146 countries, extremely fragile states averaged USD 2.1 per person compared to USD 10.8 per person in fragile states and USD 161.7 per person for non-fragile states.[250] At COP26, developed countries recommitted to the USD 100 billion climate finance goal. We need to ensure that this funding also makes its way to those who are furthest behind.

CONCLUSION

As we look forward to the coming critical decade in our collective effort to tackle climate change, Ireland is determined to play its part. This includes our resolve to ensure that the impacts of climate change on our peace and security are addressed. We will continue to work with partners and in global and regional institutions on this critical task.

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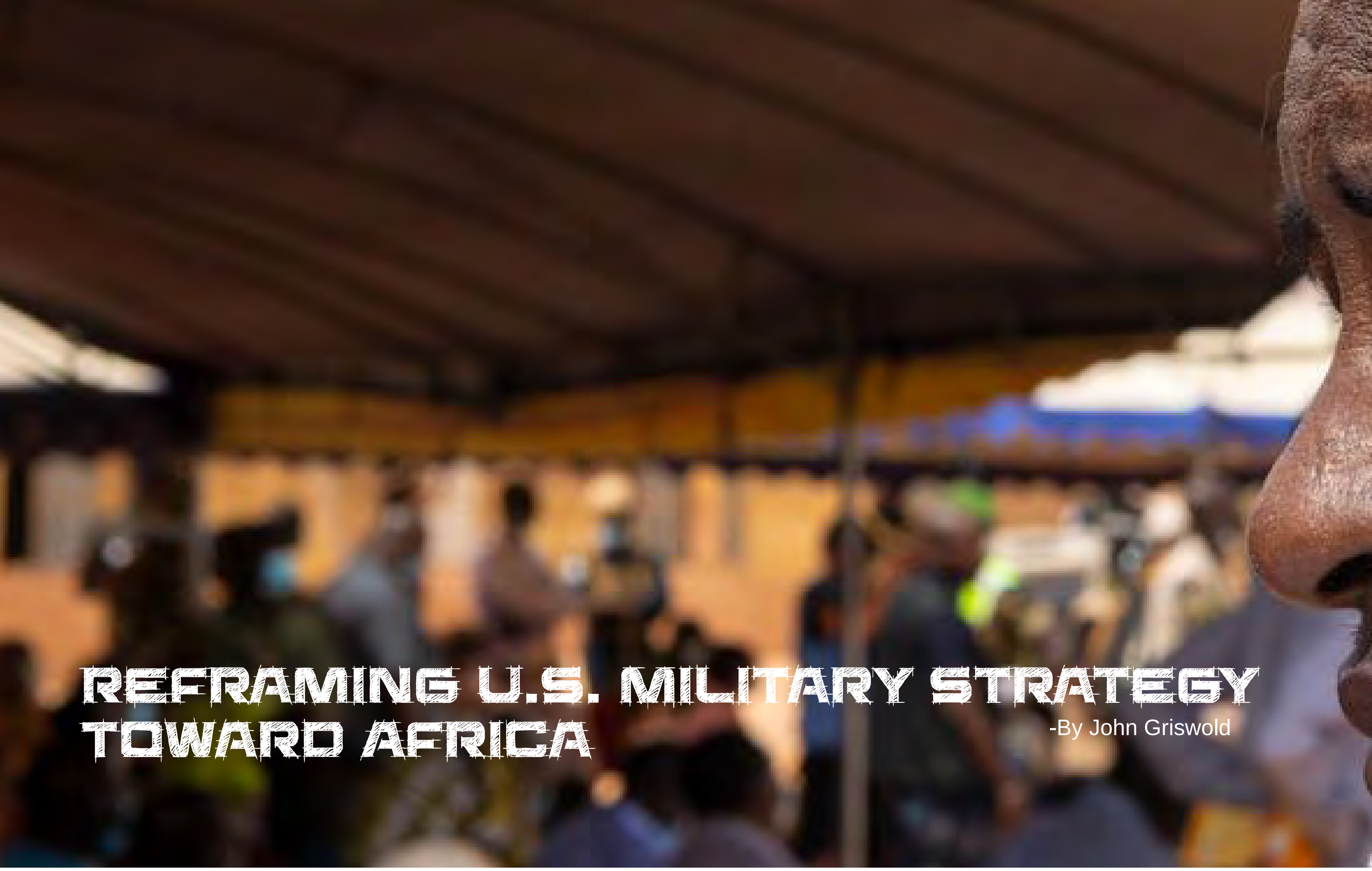

REFRAMING U.S. MILITARY STRATEGY TOWARD AFRICA

-By John Griswold

How can the U.S. military best support the achievement of national strategic objectives in Africa? While much of the foreign policy discourse since President Biden's inauguration has focused on China's growing military capabilities in the Indo-Pacific, curbing the effects of climate change, and the implications of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, scant attention has been paid to U.S. engagement in Africa.[251] It is noteworthy that the Biden administration's Interim National Security Strategic Guidance (INSSG) mentions a continent of more than 1.3 billion people — whose population is expected to double by 2050 — in one paragraph out of 23 substantive pages.[252]

America's apathy comes at a perilous point for many African states. Democratic backsliding continues in African countries once considered to hold promise, with recent coups in Guinea and Sudan, the latter only a recent graduate from the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism.[253] Economic powerhouse Ethiopia, home to headquarters of the African Union and the continent's flagship international airline, Ethiopian Airlines, teeters on the brink of civil war.[254] The U.S. withdrawal from Somalia in early 2021 calls into question America's commitment to the multinational effort to combat al-Qaeda affiliate al-Shabaab, and to democratic governance in Somalia more broadly.[255] ISIS and its affiliates continue to operate in sub-Saharan Africa, from the Sahel to Mozambique.[256] All the while, China and Russia continue to exert economic and military influence throughout the continent.[257]

Despite the myriad challenges and absence of high-level attention to the continent, the U.S. military can play a foundational role in enabling the U.S. government to achieve its interests in Africa. U.S. military engagement in Africa requires reframing — not a wholesale rethink — to place an unwavering focus on improving governance with concerted effort dedicated to strategic and operational thinking. In doing so, America's military presence can more effectively compete with Chinese and Russian military overtures while improving governance and tackling some of the root causes of violence and instability across the continent. Rebalancing effort from counterterrorism and counterinsurgency toward a governance-focused framework better aligns the U.S. military approach with the shared interests of the U.S. government and its African partners.

DEFINING U.S. INTERESTS IN AFRICA

The Biden administration's INSSG provides a useful thumbnail sketch of key U.S. interests on the

Refugees in the Ouallam refugee camp in northern Niger. May 30, 2022 // UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe.

continent. Four themes emerge: improving cultural connections with African civil society; improving economic partnerships while alleviating human suffering; conflict prevention and termination; and "combating the threats posed by climate change and violent extremism "in the face of undue foreign influence."[258] These four themes evoke central tenants of the Trump administration's 2017 National Security Strategy:

> The United States seeks sovereign African states that are integrated into the world economy, able to provide for their citizens' needs, and capable of managing threats to peace and security. Improved governance in these states supports economic development and opportunities, diminishes the attraction of illegal migration, and reduces vulnerability to extremists, thereby reducing instability.[259]

Of the themes found in the Biden INSSG, the latter two stand out as opportune areas for the direct application of military capabilities. The military instrument can play a supporting role in the pursuit of mutual economic prosperity and the promotion of cross-cultural engagement; however, these should be treated as ancillary goals better suited to the influence of American soft power.[260] Both the Trump and Biden administrations identified U.S. security interests tied to countering violent extremism and improving the ability of African nations to provide security for their populations.

THE CURRENT APPROACH

In the spring of 2021, General Stephen Townsend, then-commander of U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), outlined his approach to the continent in his annual posture testimony to Congress. The AFRICOM campaign plan has four interrelated campaign objectives: gain and maintain strategic access and influence; disrupt violent extremist organization (VEO) threats to U.S. interests; respond to crises to protect U.S. interests; and coordinate action with allies and partners to achieve shared security objectives.[261] The overall approach nests well with both the Trump and Biden administrations' national strategic objectives; the command's partner-centric focus has been its trademark since AFRICOM was established in 2007.[262]

While the AFRICOM campaign objectives demonstrate a focus on key U.S. interests, they devote less focus on the root causes of instability. Consider the role of U.S. forces in combating violent extremism: recent discussions of great power competition make U.S. counterterrorism capabilities the centerpiece of the U.S. approach to competition in Africa. In a recent *Foreign Affairs* article, former Special

Operations Command Africa Commander Marcus Hicks, and Field Grade Officers Kyle Atwell and Dan Collini, argued that, “successful great-power competition in Africa hinges on the United States’ ability to win over African governments with a holistic counterinsurgency strategy, one that addresses the root causes of terrorism and lays the political, economic, and developmental groundwork for future stability and prosperity.”[263] Researcher Katherine Zimmerman argued for an active U.S. presence on the continent, critical not only in global competition with China and Russia, but also in countering *Salafi-jihadi* movements in Africa.[264] In his posture testimony, General Townsend stated that, “In Africa, counter VEO efforts are strategic competition.”[265]

This argument confuses means with ends. U.S. military presence in Africa carries significant heft, but presence alone does not lead to attaining strategic objectives. The role of U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) in Africa is illustrative. SOF provide unparalleled capability to target terrorist organizations, as evidenced by the rapid adaptation the SOF community demonstrated in Iraq from 2005–2009.[266] There is an indisputable need to maintain and judiciously employ SOF capabilities to counter terrorist threats to U.S. interests. However, it is unclear that a counterterrorism or counterinsurgency approach can succeed in Africa, where violent extremism has deep roots in local grievances, issues surrounding access to natural resources such as water rights, Salafist religious extremism, or endemic corruption and governance issues.[267] The recent failure of U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine to produce a tangible victory in Afghanistan, let alone security for the Afghan population, provides a counterexample to arguments touting the efficacy of the U.S. approach to counterinsurgency.

Similarly, competition with China and Russia in Africa is not an end unto itself. U.S. military activities focused on a “competition objective” are unlikely to produce a tangible benefit for the African partner, nor are such efforts likely to deter China or Russia from pursuing military gains in support of their own national objectives. If U.S. interests in competition are meant to improve American access and influence for diplomatic and economic gain — as well as for the military’s operational access — episodic or transactional approaches are unlikely to yield the same lasting results as efforts focused on institutional change.

REFRAMING THE U.S. MILITARY APPROACH: GOVERNANCE AS A CENTRAL MOTIVATING IDEA

The United States aims to solve the core problem of a failure of capable and accountable governance in Africa. By acknowledging this strategic challenge, contextualizing it by country and region, and applying the appropriate military capabilities to the problem, the United States is more likely to achieve its objectives of reducing violent extremism and conflict in Africa. Placing governance at the heart of a strategy — while retaining objectives to build access and influence, counter VEOs, etc. — can provide clarity for the effective alignment of ends, ways, and means in pursuit of U.S. national interests in Africa.

The civil war in Ethiopia illustrates the challenges associated with governance failures that undermine both domestic and regional peace and stability. Prime Minster Abiy Ahmed leads the Ethiopian National Defense Force against the minority ethnic Tigray population. Abiy’s inability to effectively bargain with and integrate ethnic Tigrayans into the Ethiopian political structure caused increased regional instability in what was once considered to be a rock of stability in East Africa.[268] As the host of the African Union and a hub of regional economic activity, Ethiopia exerts geopolitical influence well beyond its borders.

Ethiopia’s civil war also has far-reaching implications for countering the threat posed by al-Shabaab in neighboring Somalia. A key regional partner and contributor to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), U.S. military engagement and partnership with Ethiopia to counter violent extremism in the Horn of Africa and beyond remains on hold in the wake of purported human rights violations by Ethiopia against Tigrayans.[269] Additionally, significant cuts to U.S. economic assistance, trade, and other aspects of the U.S.-Ethiopian relationship due to the ongoing civil war may face further reductions.[270] Taken together, Ethiopia's belligerence has destabilized the region, despite U.S. efforts to resolve the conflict.[271] Ethiopia's actions have not only left the United States without a key counterterrorism partner, but have eroded American influence and opened the door for middle powers and even adversaries to gain influence, all the while undermining regional stability.[272]

Neighboring Somalia also demonstrates the limits of a counterterrorism strategy. Prior to the late-2020 decision to remove U.S. forces from the country, the U.S. military waged a long-running campaign to disrupt al-Shabaab and give the Government of Somalia the time and space to establish effective governance. Despite progress in building partner military capacity, al-Shabaab has persisted for over two decades and remains capable of conducting cross-border attacks against U.S. interests and those of U.S. regional partners.[273] The failure of the Somali government to effectively govern is a central cause of continued conflict. While the U.S. military continues to train Somali National Army forces, no amount of military force can compensate for the absence of credible local governance.

CONCLUSION

U.S. policy objectives — and the U.S. military's approach to their pursuit in Africa — do not require a wholesale rejection of current operations, activities, and investments. A more clearly articulated statement of the U.S. military's strategic mission will reveal some ways to better align ends, ways, and means to address the problem. Undeniably, there is a role for direct military action to counter imminent threats to U.S. interests. But rather than an approach centered primarily on U.S. or allied counterterrorism or counterinsurgency operations, U.S. military strategy should even more tightly weave its efforts to improve governance with those of the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

This approach will involve the deployment of forces to help bring about security sector reform within African defense ministries and security services — a non-traditional role that will require adjustments to the value the armed services place on institutional development. It will involve greater assistance in the development of institutions that respect the rule of law, enhancing the prospects for healthier civil-military relations. It will also involve working with traditional U.S. allies to reshape their own practices to help improve the capacity of local forces, not only to fight ISIS-inspired or al-Qaeda-affiliated terrorist groups, but also to build trust with their own populations — helping to inoculate them against virulent extremist ideology.

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>\\THE DIGITAL ASSET BATTLEFIELD BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA-

-By Michael B. Greenwald

United States dollar dominance has underpinned American economic and geopolitical leadership since the Second World War. The tremendous structural and geopolitical advantages the United States derives from the hegemony of the dollar have contributed substantially to Washington's military power, alliances, and strong hand in trade relations with other states. However, the convergence of a shifting international balance of power and the accelerated digitalization of the world economy will have major implications for this pillar of American strength. China's Digital Currency Electronic Payment (DCEP) program places Beijing above the United States in terms of digital currency innovation. Combined with its expanding global economic presence via the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Digital Silk Road Initiatives (DSR), China's efforts could result in a proliferation of the digital yuan and an erosion of the dollar's position abroad.

The primacy of the dollar and its so-called "exorbitant privilege" as the international reserve currency has afforded the United States numerous points of leverage in the international system. It has allowed the United States to impose sanctions on adversaries and punish them without utilizing military force and has enhanced Washington's capacity to combat terrorism, money laundering, and cyber fraud. Global dependence on the dollar also permits the United States to support financial infrastructure, such as common rules of behavior and legal frameworks, data sharing, and policy coordination, thereby strengthening the reliability and resilience of the global financial system. The dollar's status as the world's reserve currency allows — and even requires — the United States to run a trade deficit and a financial account surplus, which in turn allows the American government to borrow more at lower interest rates and attract foreign direct investment.[274] This also leads to greater global demand for the dollar, which results in a stronger dollar, cheaper imports, and less domestic inflationary pressure. The dominant dollar — and America's willingness to spend it — has historically allowed the United States to shape international norms, encouraging more nations to embrace the free-market and democratic customs of the Western world. It also grants the United States significant influence over international bodies such as the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank. Additionally, the abundance of the dollar and its ease of use has led it to dominate trade in certain critical commodities, which gives the United States outsize leverage in these markets. In short, America's superpower status is dependent on the dollar remaining the world's reserve currency.

While debate continues regarding China's ability to unseat the United States as the world's dominant economic power, what is undeniable is China's status as a great economic power and its ambition to continue its ascent. China has invested substantially in physical, social, political, and financial infrastructure across the globe, methodically forging global trade and economic partnerships, expanding its military presence, and boosting its domestic technical prowess. Most importantly, the People's Bank of China (PBOC) has gone all-in on its development of the digital yuan, striving for first-mover advantage and the geopolitical benefits that will accrue. Admittedly, the yuan has thus far failed to depose the dollar. The dollar still accounts for approximately 59 percent of foreign exchange reserves, greater than 60 percent of international trade, 40 percent of international payments, and 85 percent of foreign exchange transactions.[275] America's large and diverse economy, deep and liquid capital markets, independent central bank, and traditionally strong rule of law buoys dollar dominance. China has yet to possess all these attributes. However, American complacency, the global pivot to digital finance, and the PBOC's development of a central bank digital currency (CBDC) weaken the dollar's position. As CBDCs proliferate, the era of unchallenged dollar dominance gives way to one of competition and choice among a basket of currencies, most importantly the digital yuan. Meanwhile, the United States is stuck in preliminary discussions about a digital dollar, falling behind its largest rival. To preserve the strength of the dollar, U.S. policymakers must prioritize dollar innovation as a key national security objective. This innovation must be built on confidence, trust, and proactivity that secures America's leadership of the global monetary system.

>//SIX TRENDS TO WATCH FOR THE DIGITAL YUAN

China is making inroads in its push for a more decentralized global financial system. The following are six geoeconomics trends that will be key to its success in internationalizing the digital yuan.

1. The Rise in Domestic Chinese Use of the Digital Yuan

As of late 2021, Beijing had injected more than USD 23 million worth of digital yuan (RMB 150 million) into the Chinese economy, and the number of individuals with digital yuan accounts had increased to more than 140 million, with over 10 million corporate accounts created.[276] This gradual introduction of the digital currency is accompanied by its new acceptance as a form of payment by well-known retailers like JD.com. This retail giant has already begun using the digital yuan for transactions like business-to-consumer (B2C) payments on its website, business-to-business (B2B) payments to partner firms, cross-bank settlements, and payroll distribution. In January 2022, WeChat also announced that it would make digital yuan payments available to its user base of over 800 million.[277]

2. BRI Digital Yuan Payments

As China further develops the BRI, Beijing may initiate cross-border exchanges and debt payments to occur by way of its DCEP system. More than 140 countries have signed a memorandum of understanding with China regarding the BRI. The ease of all BRI partners operating on the same platform and utilizing the same currency could prompt a natural shift, to the benefit of those countries wishing to avoid the dollar. Indeed, China has already begun cross-border testing a bank-to-bank version of the digital yuan with the United Arab Emirates, Thailand, and Hong Kong,[278] and has integrated the digital yuan into Hong Kong's Faster Payments System.[279]

If China can convince current trade partners and emerging market economies to conduct business in the digital yuan, Beijing can reduce the number of transactions that occur in dollars. This could "immunize China's business along the BRI from U.S. sanctions"[280] and substantially enhance its financial surveillance capabilities. While domestically this information could be used "to wield punitive power over Chinese citizens in tandem with the social credit system,"[281] it would also put Beijing at the forefront of financial technology innovation and further propel its rise in the global financial regime.

Another important consideration is the leverage that the DCEP system will give China over its debtor nations in the BRI. China's approach to supplying infrastructure development, foreign investment, and debt has been accompanied by an updated approach to dealing with foreign economies that strives to make partner countries reliant on China — especially in times of hardship. Though the COVID-19 pandemic has made countries reconsider supply chain risk and reliance on individual countries for essential products and services, nations around the world still have a distinct need for the development services China provides. This is evidenced by the many countries that have chosen to overlook the long-term implications of debt agreements to access the infrastructure development and modern technologies offered by China. Integration of the digital yuan into these partner nations and their economies will only make them more dependent on China.

3. OPEC Turning to The Digital Yuan

As China gains influence among the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) through its partnerships with Iran, Venezuela, and Russia, it could begin purchasing its oil imports using the digital yuan. For instance, China and Iran last year signed a 25-year comprehensive cooperation agreement that details an extended promise of oil for infrastructure development.[282] The PetroDollar system created a direct link between oil prices and the value of the dollar, a system which emerged in the 1970s in large part due to America's strong demand for OPEC oil imports. China is now the world's dominant oil importer, so a switch to the PetroYuan is not farfetched.

The PetroDollar is a keystone of America's longstanding privilege to spend and borrow without the fear of default; a shift away from the use of the dollar in the oil market would play a central role in the reconsideration of domestic economic decisions. The use of a digital yuan in a traditionally dollar-denominated commodity market would also bypass American intermediaries, significantly weakening the U.S. sanctions program. Since the United States has frequently turned to financial sanctions to reign in the behavior of rivals — including China, Iran, and Russia — this is a particularly attractive concept for adversaries of the United States.

4. Europe Turning to The Digital Yuan

As China expands its digital yuan development program and begins to see success at the domestic level, European Union (EU) member states may call on it for help in developing their own programs. In a modernized world, interconnected technical systems for trade and finance will be deemed critical to development. China's experience in constructing such networks and its willingness to invest has already led it to undertake similar projects in countries as diverse as Sri Lanka, Zambia, Laos, and Tajikistan. Such projects are likely to be attractive to European countries, as well.

While EU member states are also looking for other partners to expand the EU's own markets and infrastructure, few can match the economic heft of China and the comprehensiveness of its development plans. The United States has been a long-time economic partner of the United Kingdom and the EU; however, Washington's relatively slow process for passing legislation and its recent imposition of tariffs and sanctions on other economic partners has made it at times a thorn in the side of even friendly nations. In contrast, China can achieve rapid consensus in negotiations and development under its authoritarian government structure. China's value as an economic partner to EU member states was made clear by the December 2020 Comprehensive Agreement on Investment and the entrance of two-thirds of EU member states into the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.[283]

With this kind of economic and financial relationship growing, it seems the stage is set for a large-scale shift to the use of the digital yuan. If China becomes the dominant player in infrastructure development and financial investment in the region, it could simply require European countries to use the digital yuan for debt payments. On top of this, the BRI and DSI already extend into Europe, providing corridors for these transactions outside of American oversight. It is also

important to note that every debt contract China has signed since 2014 contains “a sweeping confidentiality clause that compels the borrowing country to keep confidential its terms or even the loan’s existence” and “obligate[s] the borrower to exclude the Chinese debt from any multilateral restructuring process”.[284] Both features could have significant implications for undermining the public trust in countries with close economic relationships to China and force them to remain dependent on China in times of financial stress.

5. SWIFT Expanding its Relationship with the Digital Yuan

The gradual integration and greater use of the digital yuan will drive its assimilation into the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) system. Notably, in January 2021, SWIFT and the PBOC established a joint venture involving a clearing center and digital currency research institute.[285] As multilateral trade transacted in the digital yuan increases, the complex and long-term commercial relationships that result will necessitate the integration of DCEP with legacy financial systems. Though these changes are unlikely to occur rapidly, the Chinese can and will patiently wait for influence and economic gains.

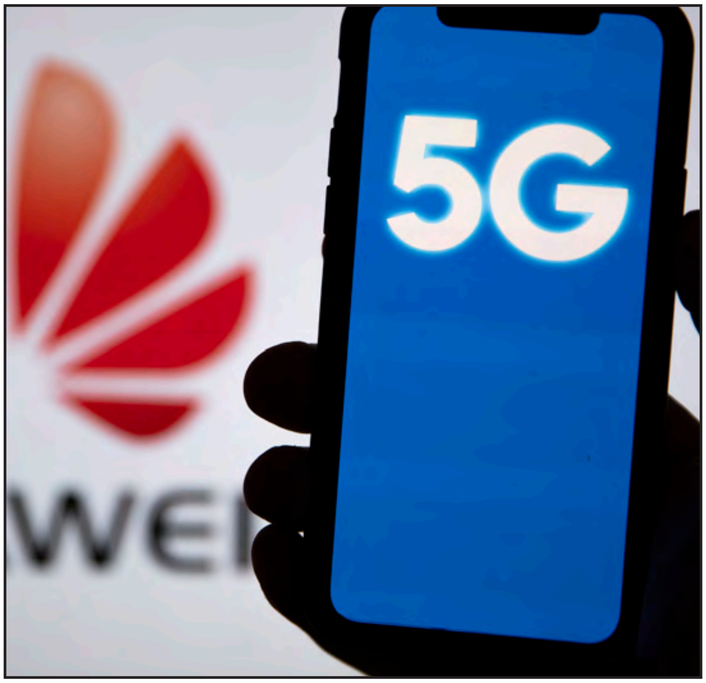
6. The Wave of Momentum Striking U.S. Dollar Denominated Foreign Reserves

The long-term impact of adopting CBDCs could be foreign central banks retreating from the use of the dollar as the preferred reserve currency. Although the dollar remains hegemonic, the margin of its dominance is already diminishing, with its share of global reserves having recently fallen to the lowest level since 1995.[286] Furthermore, China is not the only country pursuing a CBDC to decouple from the dollar-dominated financial system. For instance, Russian officials issued a statement in early April 2021 disclosing how a launch of that country’s own digital ruble could be targeted for 2023. Unsurprisingly, the Russian “CBDC will also have a two-tiered system, akin to China’s digital yuan, wherein the central bank distributes the CBDC to third-party firms like commercial banks that then distribute the CBDC to users.”[287] This is a great example of the cascading benefits accruing to China as a first mover in the space, whereby other countries copy and tack themselves on to its existing infrastructure.

>//IMPLICATIONS FOR GLOBAL FINANCIAL LEADERSHIP AND U.S. POLICY

It is unlikely that the United States will be unseated from the center of the financial system in the immediate future. However, as the digital yuan is developed and the international community modernizes its infrastructure, it could present a credible alternative to dollar-based transactions and will likely encourage a transition to a more diversified use of these two currencies in the broad scheme of international trade and finance.

What will China’s increasing financial influence mean for the international community? During the COVID-19 pandemic, the world watched the World Health Organization contort itself to appease Beijing. China implemented punitive tariffs and import restrictions on Australian goods after Prime Minister Scott Morrison called for further investigation into the origins of COVID-19. It is not hard to imagine how this behavior will compound as China’s leverage over the global economy increases. Greater Chinese influence in international bodies will expand the reach of its ideals through technologies



that reinforce its dominance. In Africa, China has already begun to conduct deals with countries that are implementing its enhanced surveillance technologies, reportedly often built directly into telecommunications infrastructure like 4G and 5G.[288] In fact, Huawei and other Chinese firms are responsible for over 70 percent of this infrastructure development on the African continent and have long-term relationships with many African governments. The inclusion of a digital financial payments system will only serve to further solidify the grip of authoritarian governments on their respective domestic populations. Additionally, although CBDC initiatives in other countries, such as Russia's digital ruble, are only in the early stages of development, Chinese success in this area may encourage their acceleration. This could lead to a splintering of the global financial order orchestrated by America's adversaries.

The ascendancy of the digital yuan is not a foregone conclusion, however. American economic dominance and international trust in the American-led system has been reinforced by decades of domestic political consensus that maintaining this dominance and trust is of vital interest to the American people and their security. The fundamental role of the United States cannot be supplanted overnight, but the world is changing. A peer competitor unlike any other challenges the American-led economic order, and the rapidly evolving digital economy seems to advantage the decisiveness of an authoritarian government. For the United States to maintain its advantage in global financial leadership, the federal government must support and prioritize a national security strategy for dollar innovation. In doing so, the United States should first turn to its traditional strength in allies and establish a third iteration of Bretton Woods — one that is tailored to the twenty-first century. The Biden administration should establish a presidential-level working group with European leaders to frame a digital Bretton Woods. This transatlantic vision should establish guidelines that address the unique financial and technological hurdles of the coming decades, generate stability, and guarantee Western centrality. The United States and EU should also establish a technocratic working group to create a "digital wall of innovation" against China. This working group should coordinate key standards of interoperability, privacy, cybersecurity, and illicit finance, and build a new framework with the Financial Action Task Force for combatting money laundering and terrorist financing. U.S. and EU standards can fill the current vacuum and de facto become the global norm. Rather than assert influence via dollar dominance, the United States will lead the way via dollar innovation. Lastly, dollar innovation should be enshrined as a core objective in the 2022 U.S. National Security Strategy. Such a step would not only signal recognition of the strategic importance of global financial leadership to America's geopolitical position, but also resolve to counter the growing threat posed by the digital yuan.

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BIG POWER COMPETITION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN:

Will Economic or Strategic Logic Prevail?

-By Deepa M. Ollapally

Iranian Army photo of warships attending a joint naval drill with Russia and China in the Indian Ocean // Public Domain | Montage by William Reeves

The Indian Ocean is becoming an area of competition between India and China later than Robert Kaplan foresaw in his seminal 2009 article in *Foreign Affairs*, but sooner than its resident powers might have predicted.[289] So far, the competition has rung high decibel alarm bells in India (and the United States), without having reached the inflection point of actual military “power plays” that Kaplan implied. India and China witnessed military clashes on land in 2020 and currently face an impasse over their disputed border.

What logic has kept the Indian Ocean stable and generally free of conflict, despite growing tensions between regional powers? Neither purely economic nor strategic logic explains the current situation. Rather, it is arguably rooted in the region’s longstanding normative logic of openness and inclusivity, and the recognition that greater gains may be made through economic activity than military conquest. Prior to the arrival of European powers, regional leaders were receptive to simultaneous engagement with multiple political and economic partners. This approach seemingly functioned as a self-evident, common-sensical way to maintain both economic prosperity and Indian Ocean stability and remained largely unchallenged. These beliefs have historically driven state behavior in the world’s third largest ocean, in stark contrast to the maritime security conflicts and warfare that have plagued the world’s first and second largest oceans, the Pacific and the Atlantic.

The main threat to this historic Indian Ocean logic of economic and political openness currently comes from the meteoric rise of China and its massive Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The design and implementation of the BRI — unilateral, statist, nontransparent, and peppered with dual-use projects and agreements — suggests that economics is only part of the motivation. The bigger story is that economics seems to serve as the leading edge for more calculated strategic and political gains. Moreover, Beijing appears willing to absorb the growing unease and pushback of the resident Indian Ocean influencer, India, including New Delhi’s reluctant but growing embrace of the United States in the security sector, without a course correction. A greater politico-security thrust will invariably pose a challenge to the ocean’s openness and commercial architecture.

THE FATE OF THE LONG AND OPEN ARC OF INDIAN OCEAN HISTORY

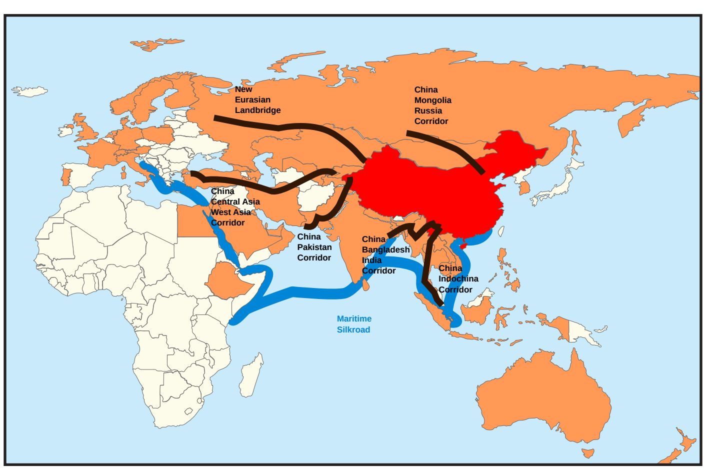
When Vasco de Gama made his landing in southwest India in 1498, he would have been surprised to find a thriving trade network right across the Indian Ocean. Nature’s gift of predictable monsoon trade winds had made this possible for millennia. At the center of this trade was India, which in turn was part of a flourishing set of trade relations extending from East Africa to China. The goal of successive European conquerors was to acquire trade monopolies, by force if necessary. This view was antithetical to the existing Indian Ocean system because as Amitav Ghosh explains, ". . . the concept of a trading monopoly, although common in Europe, is completely foreign to the commercial traditions of the Indian Ocean."[290] While the Europeans wanted exclusive rights, regional maritime states historically competed to attract as many trading partners as possible and demurred at rebuking their long-standing business partners (at great peril, as they learned).

More than 400 years of colonial control of the Indian Ocean destroyed existing pan-oceanic economic ties. The end of colonialism and its empires only led to further political and economic divisions, thanks to the Cold War and the structural bipolarity that characterized the international system. One significant casualty of the Cold War was the rupture of India's historic links to neighboring Southeast Asia, which is taking decades to repair.[291] Since 1991, India's Look East/Act East policies have sought to re-establish economic ties with countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and beyond.[292] Ironically, it was India-China relations that took off, with the latter becoming the largest trading partner for the former by 2008. Many analysts (including this author) believed that these economic ties would offset strategic rivalry.[293] What we did not anticipate was the way economic goals seem to be transforming into Beijing's main strategic objective.

CHINESE ECONOMIC STATECRAFT

Rather than simply reiterate the well-worn "string of pearls" theory, it is important to look at how Chinese projects lead to economic and political control in smaller Indian Ocean states. This will also contribute to the ongoing public debate as to whether the BRI is Chinese grand strategy or simple commercialism. China's modern ventures into the Indian Ocean (from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea in this case) only began in earnest in the early 2000s but they have already outpaced India's efforts in its own backyard.

A major obstacle to interpreting the BRI lies in the limited public scrutiny of projects, which tend to be hammered out government-to-government. The projects are also often dual-use in nature, so they may manifest as economic- or security-related infrastructure. Many projects involve strategic sectors and critical infrastructure of the host



country, from power and telecommunications to ports and airports. In most of the smaller Indian Ocean states, China has become both the dominant investor and defense partner. It is the largest arms exporter to Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Pakistan.

There are more and more disturbing signs of "debt trap" diplomacy, which offers China a predominant position and greater geopolitical clout in the region. The most spectacular case is Sri Lanka, which gave a 99-year lease for the Hambantota port to China in 2017 to cover its huge debts. In 2021, the Sri Lankan foreign minister claimed that the previous government included an option to extend the lease for another 99 years.[294] Last year, the Sri Lankan parliament passed an administrative and governance framework for yet another controversial project, the 269-hectare Colombo Port City, where there are new concerns about the country conceding key sovereign rights to China.[295] Elsewhere, economic primacy seems to embolden Chinese statecraft. In May 2021, the Chinese ambassador to Bangladesh warned that relations would be damaged if the country joined the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) comprising India, the United States, Japan, and Australia. Bangladesh's foreign minister responded that his country was free to make its own choices and expressed surprise that China would involve itself in another country's domestic politics.[296]

In terms of projecting power in the Indian Ocean, China currently suffers from the "tyranny of distance." China has long sea lines of communication (SLOC), and almost 80 percent of its oil imports must transit the Indian Ocean chokepoint of the Malacca Straits, located far from its home military facilities. Reports suggest it is leveraging its merchant marine fleet, one of the largest in the world, to overcome this challenge.[297] Beijing has promulgated regulations so merchant ships can better support the country's navy. For example, Beijing requires certain civilian vessels to be built to military specifications. Chinese commercial vessels have worked with the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) in both exercises and real-world operations.[298] The United States remains the only power with a large naval presence in both the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. The Indian navy is the next largest power in the Indian Ocean. It is possible that commercial shipping firms, such as COSCO and others, can play a role supporting the PLAN's operations in the Indian Ocean, thus augmenting China's access.

PROSPECTS FOR ECONOMIC LOGIC

One significant question is whether the generally open and cooperative nature of maritime relations in the Indian Ocean, which are advantageous to India, China, and all other trading states, can be maintained. As many have noted, the Indian Ocean has an enormous surface area and is not a closed sea. At no time in history has

a single power controlled all ten of the Ocean's choke points.[299] Indeed, during wartime, Chinese trade routes would be highly vulnerable because shipping routes from the oil-rich Middle East region to China follow the Indian coastline for much of their passage.[300] China would require a significant and costly naval force to protect these SLOCs.

The region's powers are increasingly concerned that China's rapidly growing presence in the Indian Ocean has the potential to make it more pointedly Sino-centric. While the Indian Ocean forms a "core" interest only for India, other powers — especially the United States, Japan, and Australia — are engaged in informal coalition-building to ensure what they term a broader "Free and Open Indo-Pacific." Despite these trends, there is little evidence that China is adjusting or rethinking its BRI strategy to address rising fears in the region. This could prove to be a serious miscalculation.

More than a decade ago, Indian Foreign Secretary Shivashankar Menon asked a prescient question about power relations in the Indian Ocean: "This is a test of wisdom . . . if energy and trade flows and security are the issues, why not begin discussing collective security arrangements among the major powers concerned? Is it not time that we began a discussion among concerned states of a maritime system minimizing the risks of interstate conflict and neutralizing threats from pirates, smugglers, terrorists, and proliferators? India's concerns in the north-west Indian Ocean and China's vulnerabilities in the northeast Indian Ocean cannot be solved by military means alone."[301] The answer seems dimmer than ever.

Colonial power politics managed to undo the millennia-old trade system in the Indian Ocean that was open, inclusive, and relatively peaceful. Cold War geopolitical rivalry divided the Indian Ocean once again. Now, big power competition in the twenty-first century threatens to reshape the Indian Ocean in ways that go against the historical grain. But unlike the past, this time around it is likely to be the ambitions (or miscalculations) of a home-grown Asian power that is responsible.

49th Munich Security Conference 2013: "The Rising Powers and Global Governance": From right: Moderator Prof. Charles A. Kupchan (Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations of the United States), Song Tao (Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of China), Shivshankar Menon (National Security Advisor, Republic of India), Dr. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota (Minister of External Relations, Federative Republic of Brazil), Dr. Ng Eng Hen (Minister for Defence, Republic of Singapore, Singapore). Photo by Michael Kuhlmann // CC BY 3.0 DE.

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India's Regional Connectivity and Indo-Pacific Partnerships

-By Constantino Xavier

Standing by one of the India-Nepal border pillars near Jogbani, Bihar State, one gets a ground view of the paradox of geographic proximity and lack of connectivity in South Asia. Through treaty and tradition between the two neighbors, this is an open border. In practice, however, the terrain and lack of infrastructure poses a formidable barrier to the rising demands of modern-day mobility. Whether it is trade, tourism, or transportation, this border still separates more than it connects.

Situated at the midpoint between the Himalayas and the Bay of Bengal, Jogbani offers an excellent panorama of the pivotal role India plays in the future regional and global economic order. Here lies the fault line between two geoeconomic blocs: the continental Eurasian landmass in the north and the maritime Indo-Pacific space in the south. India's capacity to deepen connectivity with Nepal and its other neighbors will be a major factor in determining the success of its Indo-Pacific policy. Northwest of Jogbani, toward Nepal, the snow-clad Himalayas separate the Tibetan plateau from the Indian subcontinent. In 1950, India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, referred to the Himalayas as a "magnificent frontier," claiming "even a child knows that one cannot go to Nepal without passing through India."[302] Time and technology have since proved him wrong: modern roads and fiber-optic cables have replaced the trans-Himalayan caravan routes and there are even plans for a China-Nepal railway across the world's highest mountains.[303]

Looking southwest, in the direction of India, the Indo-Gangetic plain stretches toward the Indian Ocean. This is one of India's least developed regions, with poverty rates akin to Sub-Saharan Africa.[304] It takes at least 24 hours to drive the 700 miles that separate this area from the capital, New Delhi. But there are also encouraging signs of change. There is a new international airport only three hours away, a new cross-border rail link, and a revived shipping route providing Nepali exporters with faster access to India's seaports.

To the north of the border pillar stands a sprawling border management checkpoint, one of India's Integrated Check Posts (ICP). A massive infrastructure investment financed by India, the ICP facilitates the crossing of trucks, goods, and people to and from Nepal.[305] Fences, immigration officials, armed guards, and high-tech software monitor all official border crossings. This is the most visible aspect of India's regional infrastructure investments, including its focus on last-mile connectivity in these landlocked and traditionally neglected borderlands.

To the checkpoint's south, however, there are still farmers, school children, goats, and cows that freely cross the border, which bisects an entire village. The crossing serves as an apt expression of the centuries-old informal links between India and Nepal. Here, locals stroll leisurely across the sovereign line that only exists on the maps and minds of other, faraway people.

Photo // Mountain Goddess // the blue mountain goat // CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

The concrete border pillar looks like a lonely, helpless witness to a village, an ecosystem, and a political economy that refuse to be separated or monitored. In New Delhi or Kathmandu there is talk about fencing the border, but such an idea does not appeal to the inhabitants of this village.

ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AND STRATEGIC COMPETITION

This site by the India-Nepal border pillar highlights the forces of geoeconomic change sweeping across South Asia. But it also underlines the obstacles to integration, marked by a tension between modern controls and historical connections. India faces formidable obstacles to facilitating regional and geopolitical connectivity. Today, South Asia remains one of the world's most disconnected regions. Its history of political partitions, military conflicts, and economic insulation between the 1950s and 1980s left a legacy of regional barriers and disintegration.

While the rest of the world has grown closer through regional integration efforts and expanding interdependence, the countries of the Indian subcontinent have moved further apart, economically speaking. Today, South Asia's intra-regional share of trade is five percent, compared with almost 30 percent in Southeast Asia.[306] This explains India's infrastructure and connectivity deficit on the border with Nepal, as well as with its other land and maritime neighbors. It is often easier to fly thousands of miles from an Indian city to Dubai or Bangkok than to next-door Nepal, Myanmar, or Sri Lanka. There is still no railway link between India and Myanmar, so the only way to travel directly from Iran to Thailand is via China, circumventing the Indian subcontinent.

S. Jaishankar // Minister of External Affairs of India // Public Domain

Correcting this gap in regional connectivity has therefore become one of India's most important foreign policy objectives. Under the Neighborhood First and Act East policies, announced in 2014, there has been slow but significant progress.[307] At the political level, this was reflected in a succession of top-level visits by the Indian prime minister to neighboring countries, including to Nepal after almost 20 years and to Sri Lanka after almost three decades. By intensifying the frequency of such visits,

Prime Minister Narendra Modi signaled that India can no longer afford to neglect a region it used to take for granted. Two factors explain India's urgency to reconnect with the neighborhood. The first is economic, driven by India's reforms since the 1990s, which have generated growing interdependencies with its immediate neighbors. Whether it is trade or investments, bilateral flows have seen significant growth. As Nepal or Bangladesh modernize their economies, escaping the lower income trap, the potential for trade with India and market linkages to New Delhi will grow further. Due to its centrality, size, and economic predominance, India should be a natural geoeconomic hub for most of South Asia.

The second factor is geostrategic, reflecting India's urgency to respond to China's growing economic presence in the region. Except for India and Bhutan, all other South Asian countries signed on to Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative. China's trade incentives, investments, loans, and grants for the region have grown exponentially in the last 10 years, often delivering on critical infrastructure projects that India had neglected for decades. Facing competition with China, India worries about Beijing's growing ability to convert economic ties into political, diplomatic, and security leverage over its neighbors, and the risk to its role as South Asia's predominant power.[308]

Driven by these economic and geostrategic factors, India has done much to prioritize the region. In Bhutan and Nepal, Indian hydropower projects have taken off after years of delays, and there has been progress towards an integrated regional energy market. In Nepal, India has also completed several road projects and is now investing in the rail sector, including a new cross-border link to Kathmandu.

Bangladesh has witnessed the most significant progress in integration with the Indian economy; after more than half a century, rivers are again being used for bilateral trade and transit, and New Delhi is financing the construction of new cross-border roads, bridges, and railways. In Sri Lanka, India is investing in the ports sector, having secured one of Colombo's transshipment terminals, and it is fleshing out plans for greater energy interdependence. In the Maldives, India is financing one of the most ambitious infrastructure projects in decades, linking several islands through a new bridge. Finally, despite the coup in Myanmar, India is racing to complete important connectivity investments there, including a trilateral highway to Thailand.

These initiatives reflect New Delhi's geoeconomic priority to foster interdependency by deepening connectivity with its neighbors, especially in the infrastructure and transportation sectors. But this political determination is not always easily translated into effective policy implementation. It has stressed the Indian state's limited foreign policy capacity and exposed its institutional and economic weaknesses.

For example, India quickly realized that it does not have China's deep pockets to give out grants and loans. Nor are India's ebbing public sector companies as strong, nimble, and unaccountable as their

Chinese counterparts while operating abroad. India's private sector has also shied away from investing in neighboring countries, especially in the high-risk infrastructure sector.[309]

It will take the Indian government significant time to change gears after decades of stagnation, insulation, and disinterest in the region. Slow and bureaucratic decision-making processes across different ministries have delayed important projects.

Initiatives to recalibrate foreign policy requires mounting the hurdle of domestic mobilization: to allow for power to be traded with Nepal or to sign a new shipping agreement with Sri Lanka, there are a panoply of domestic organizations and interests involved, some holding veto powers. Political tensions between the central government and regional border states have proved to be a further impediment, for example in a water sharing agreement with Bangladesh.

So, while New Delhi has finally recognized regional interconnectivity as a foreign policy priority, the impact of these new marching orders is still limited. The paradox is that while India is now doing more — and doing so better and faster than before — in South Asia, this is still far too little and slow given neighboring countries' rising demand and China's formidable competition.

DEVELOPING REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

This capacity gap, coupled with India's rising threat assessments about China's behavior across Asia, is driving New Delhi to deepen its regional partnerships with Indo-Pacific powers. This marks a sea change in India's attitude towards South Asia, where it traditionally resented involvement from extra-regional powers, including the United States during the Cold War. Proudly non-aligned, India could afford the luxury of predominance in South Asia, thereby insulating the region from outside influence. New Delhi was then the informal arbiter of the economic or political destinies of Nepal or Sri Lanka.

Today, this posture is no longer sustainable in an increasingly competitive, interconnected, and open region. India is thus learning when and how to deepen its extra-regional partnerships to better link up with the neighboring states of the subcontinent, as well as with Indo-Pacific countries. This cooperative approach marks a way to compensate for its increasingly obvious weaknesses regarding economic connectivity. In particular, India's growing relationships with the Quad countries — the United States, Australia, India, and Japan — exemplify New Delhi's novel strategic approach.

With Japan, India has developed an ambitious vision for regional connectivity under the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" moniker. Tokyo and New Delhi now periodically exchange assessments about infrastructure investment opportunities in Bangladesh or Sri Lanka. While India and Japan do not always operate jointly, they have benefitted from coordinating their policies to limit China's maneuverability in the region.[310]

Australia has also returned as a geostrategic actor to South Asia, after a long absence since its military supported the Allied offensive from Burma into India during the final phase of World War II. Canberra has recently embraced a geoeconomic role in partnership with India, focused on shipping, natural gas supply chains, and other connectivity initiatives involving Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives in the Northeast Indian Ocean.[311]

Finally, the United States's new Indo-Pacific strategy recognizes India as "a like-minded partner and leader in South Asia."[312] This explains, for example, Washington's financial support for a new power transmission line project in Nepal. While this was a strictly bilateral project between the United States and Nepal under the Millennium Challenge Corporation, it required India to play ball by agreeing to import future power generated in Nepal.

It is such India-Nepal connectivity projects, including the development of the border at Jogbani, which will determine the success of New Delhi's Neighborhood First policy. By connecting with Nepal, India is also accelerating the Indian subcontinent's geoeconomic pivot to the Indo-Pacific.

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[306] Sanjay Kathuria, *A Glass Half Full: The Promise of Regional Trade in South Asia*, (Washington, DC: *World Bank,* 2018).
[307] Constantino Xavier, "Sambandh as Strategy: India's new approach to regional connectivity," *Centre for Social and Economic Progress*, January 21, 2020. https://csep.org/policy-brief/sambandh-as-strategy-indias-new-approach-to-regional-connectivity/.
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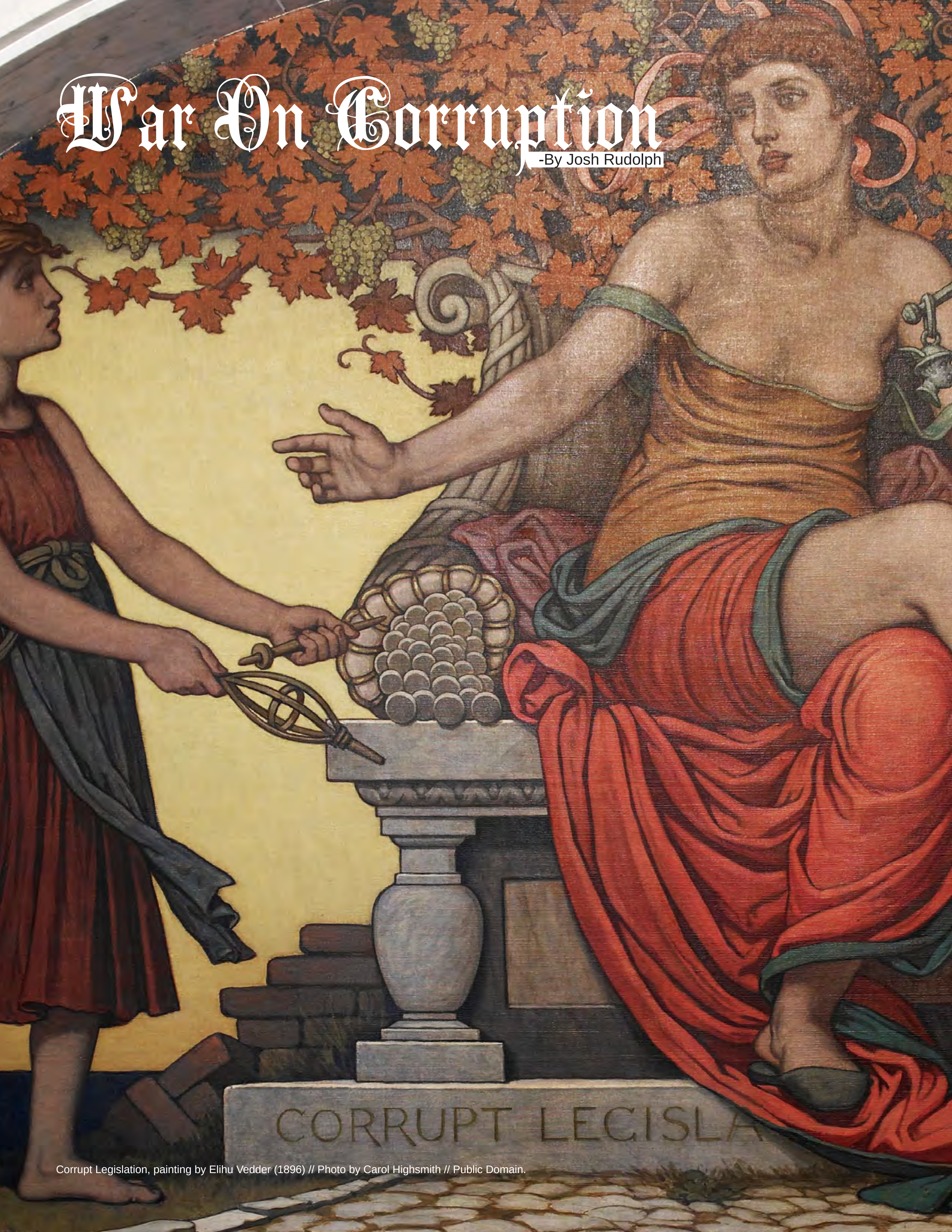
War On Corruption

-By Josh Rudolph



Corrupt Legislation, painting by Elihu Vedder (1896) // Photo by Carol Highsmith // Public Domain.

Kleptocracies seem to enjoy powerful coherence between their domestic and foreign policies, given that they wield power at home and abroad through the same corrupt assemblage of actors, networks, tactics, and resources. By prioritizing the fight against corruption and kleptocracy, the United States can similarly pursue the most internally coherent grand strategy since it combined the containment of communism with neoliberal deregulation to win the Cold War. Doing so will require deeply reorienting foreign and domestic policy priorities by featuring the opposite side of the U.S. economic model, with less cowboy and more sheriff: well-regulated clean capitalism under the rule of law.

The Biden administration is spearheading the most serious effort in recent memory to organize the United States around fighting corruption. Sustaining that momentum beyond Russia's invasion of Ukraine and through the second Summit for Democracy in December 2022 will require making permanent new task forces and other responses, broadly scoping financial rules around real estate and investment advisors, increasing the emphasis on domestic ethics reform, launching defamation defense and rapid response funds, developing a strategy to enda offshore financial secrecy, working with Congress on the most ambitious program of anti-corruption legislation since Watergate, and cooperating with other major democracies to crack down on professional enablers of corruption.

DOMESTIC - FOREIGN COHERENCE

To sustainably tap into a country's resources and talents, its domestic political culture and foreign policy must align. Historically, foreign policies that have had the widest amount of social support — from the French Revolution to the ideological struggles of the twentieth century — have been underpinned by broad domestic consensus about matters of justice.[313]

In the twenty-first century, kleptocratic regimes such as Russia and China have emerged with a powerful degree of overlap between the players, networks, maneuvers, and plunder deployed to buy elite loyalty at home and exert influence abroad. The same oligarchs and other proxies whom kleptocrats rely upon to prevent democracy or rule of law from sprouting at home are also tasked with undermining democratic processes in other countries. The foreign and domestic sides of this coin — kleptocracy within autocratic countries and foreign interference to undermine the sovereignty of other countries — are rooted in the political exploitation of corruption. Corrupting foreign democratic processes also helps autocrats maintain domestic power by stoking fears of an enemy at the gates as justification for repression, by undermining liberal democracies as attractive alternatives to authoritarian rule, and by persuading domestic citizens that aggression abroad — such as Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine — creates space on the world stage for the restoration of

national or imperial greatness. All this allows kleptocrats a solid degree of coherence between their domestic and foreign policies.

However, kleptocracies have two major vulnerabilities. First, nobody likes to be stolen from. Unlike in the Cold War — when autocrats were organized as communists who could at least claim some moral high ground against supposedly cutthroat capitalists — kleptocracies have no compelling ideology. This lack of appeal was most recently displayed by Russia and China's joint response to Biden's Summit for Democracy, in which Moscow and Beijing claimed to also be democracies.[314]

This assertion was quite absurd considering that their populations are not free to choose their leaders or policies. Second, their dirty money is stashed in the West. Because their way of maintaining power involves destroying the rule of law at home, the safest place for kleptocrats and oligarchs to protect their stolen money from future confiscation is to launder it abroad and secretly buy mansions, yachts, jets, and other assets in countries with deep markets, secure property rights, and anonymous entities.[315] That means that Western governments could cut off the lifeblood of kleptocracy if they get serious about finding this dirty foreign money.

Anti-corruption offers a strategic imperative that has eluded the West since the Cold War ended: an organizing principle that could make foreign policy coherent with the domestic political situation. A foreign policy centered around anti-corruption would counter adversarial regimes organized as thieves weaponizing corruption rather than communists stockpiling missiles as in the past. Combatting kleptocracy can be done with more consistency than containing communism, as it requires fewer tradeoffs around supporting corrupt autocrats who keep communist elements at bay. By embracing the struggle against corruption and kleptocracy, Western foreign policy can align with people all over the world aspiring to rid their own countries of graft — a key driver of protests in recent years leading to changes in several governments.[316] Support for rule of law around the world also advances U.S. economic interests by providing U.S. exporters with a level playing field. Facilitating such a reality positions U.S. companies to win business contracts without having to compete against bribes paid by Chinese state-owned companies or bids underwritten by the laundered money of Russian oligarchs.

As for U.S. domestic political interests, fighting corruption is one of the only issues that could receive support from most Americans, whether they hear Joe Biden elevate anti-corruption as a "core national security interest," Donald Trump boast that he will "drain the swamp," or Bernie Sanders castigate a "rigged system." All those characterizations would apply to the professional enablers — such as lawyers, real estate agents, hedge fund managers, and others — who secretly handle the proceeds of corruption without having to ask where the money comes from or alert the government to suspicious activity.[317] Biden has enjoyed broad domestic political support for sanctioning Russian oligarchs and seizing their yachts.[318] The extent to which messages about corruption resonate with Americans is unfortunately unlikely to change soon, as it is ultimately driven by levels of income inequality that remain at historic highs. As such, organizing U.S. policy around fighting corruption will remain as well-suited to the domestic political economy as it is to the challenge of foreign kleptocracy. But the public will grow inured to the language and habituated to impunity unless political momentum starts translating into reforms and accountability at home.

> Kleptocracies weaponizing corruption while publics hunger for justice points to anti-corruption as a natural ingredient to any new grand strategy.

These developments — kleptocracies weaponizing corruption while publics hunger for justice — point to anti-corruption as a natural ingredient to any new grand strategy meant to replace the deregulatory approach to capitalism that was in place at the end of the Cold War and then overstayed its welcome. Neoliberalism was arguably well-suited to U.S. strategic interests during the Cold War because it showed how the ideological opposite of communism could deliver more growth and liberty. American foreign and domestic policies should now contrast with kleptocracy by delivering a series of historic results that would usher in a new era of well-regulated clean capitalism under the rule of law.

BIDEN'S ANTI-CORRUPTION MOMENTUM

During Donald Trump's four years in office, Americans perceived corruption in the United States to be worse than ever before, as Trump attacked COVID-19 relief oversight, whistleblowers, oil company disclosures, anti-bribery laws, and the truth about election integrity.[319] Since the 2020 election, the United States has mobilized against corruption like never before. The first step was to use democracy and the rule of law to preserve democracy in the face of corrupt efforts to thwart the transition of power. The second step came in 2021, when President Joe Biden established "countering corruption as a core United States national security interest," using his first national security study memorandum to task executive departments and agencies with developing a U.S. strategy on countering corruption.[320] The third step was in December 2021, when the release of that strategy kicked off the Summit for Democracy, which focused on fighting corruption as one of the three areas for policy deliverables.[321] The fourth step has been the strong U.S.-led response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine: severely sanctioning the world's leading kleptocracy, seizing the yachts of Russian oligarchs, establishing task forces to target their other assets and enablers, and coordinating all the above with the European Union and other allies.

Together with regulatory releases by the Treasury Department, the most powerful series of U.S.

developments in December aimed to give law enforcement access to financial information about U.S. real estate, shell companies, investment advisors, lawyers, accountants, trust administrators, and other movers of dirty money. With sufficient follow-through, this initiative could show Americans what it looks like to actually do something about “draining the swamp” by cleaning up at home while also targeting that second Achilles’ heel of kleptocracies. Meanwhile, the State Department and USAID launched a host of new policy programs to hold crooks accountable, while the White House gave the entire government marching orders to coordinate and prioritize anti-corruption across multilateral engagement, bilateral diplomacy, foreign assistance, and more. Coordinated by the White House, departments and agencies must provide annual progress reports to the president, with the first such report coinciding with Biden’s planned second Summit for Democracy in December 2022. Most recently, in response to Russia attacking Ukraine, the U.S. government sanctioned the Kremlin’s oligarchy and established two new task forces to enforce sanctions and otherwise hold the Russian kleptocracy accountable: the U.S.-focused Task Force KleptoCapture and the multilateral Russian Elites, Proxies, and Oligarchs (REPO) task force.[322]

To sustain this historic momentum, the Biden administration should prioritize seven deliverables this year.

First, the U.S. government should permanently entrench its new anti-corruption task forces and coordinating bodies into the bureaucratic systems of the executive branch. In 2021, before the Justice and Treasury departments launched Russian oligarch enforcement task forces in response to the war in Ukraine, USAID and the U.S. Department of Commerce each established an anti-corruption task force, the State Department established a coordinator on global anti-corruption, and the intelligence community committed to increasing its prioritization of corruption. Each department and agency’s progress report at the second Summit for Democracy should include plans to establish permanently resourced and well-staffed bureaus, offices, and units with strong authorities and dedicated high-level leadership. This would make the new structures robust to changes in administration and well-positioned to take on future challenges such as strategic corruption perpetrated by China.

Second, the Treasury should promulgate anti-money laundering regulations for the real estate and investment advisory markets in a manner that covers a broad scope of professionals. For real estate, that means title insurers, real estate agents, escrow agents, and real estate lawyers, and potentially also property management companies, real estate investment companies, and real estate development companies.[323] These professionals should not only have to identify beneficial owners but also establish full anti-money laundering programs to scrutinize property transactions and report suspicious activity. Rules for investment advisors should cover SEC-registered advisors and those managing less than USD 100 million, as well as those solely advising venture capital funds, family offices, rural funds, single-state funds, and overseas advisors with fewer than 15 U.S. clients.[324] Separately, as Treasury continues setting rules for its forthcoming company ownership registry, it should broadly provide timely and easy access to the database and establish a system of verifying information for accuracy.[325]

Third, the Domestic Policy Council should contribute domestic ethics initiatives to Biden’s anti-corruption strategy in 2022 just as comprehensively as the National Security Council developed foreign policy programs in 2021. Upon seeing the strategy in December 2021, former head of the Office of Government Ethics Walter Shaub was disappointed that it did not include sections on the Office of Government Ethics, whistleblowers, the Federal Election Commission, presidential emergency powers, executive branch aggrandizement, Justice Department independence, or conflicts of interest.[326] These omissions should be remedied by December 2022.

Fourth, as USAID and State launch eight programs to focus foreign assistance on transnational corruption and support anti-corruption reformers, they should prioritize not only standing up new bureaucratic structures but also influencing facts on the ground around the world. One example of that would be establishing a new independent nonprofit insurance company to extend liability coverage at modest cost to journalists who seek protection from defamation lawsuits meant to deter them from fearless reporting. Another example would be surging anti-corruption programming in countries that entered windows of opportunity for reform in the past year or two, like Moldova, the Dominican Republic, and Zambia, as well as countries that end up entering new windows in 2022, like if incumbents ruling through cronyism such as Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan or Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus get replaced by new leaders committed to fighting corruption.

Fifth, the administration should build upon and flesh out its pledge that “departments and agencies will work with partners in multilateral fora to push for ending offshore financial secrecy.”[327] Key to ending offshore financial secrecy would be Treasury working through the OECD to lead an international campaign pressuring secrecy havens to swiftly adopt, administer, and enforce radical reforms, employing some of the same senior officials who recently orchestrated the successful campaign for a global minimum tax. And while Treasury, State, and Justice have other carrots and sticks to encourage offshore jurisdictions to turn away from offering financial secrecy, USAID and Commerce bring diverse sets of tools, from support for the local anti-corruption civil society to commercial diplomacy and economic assistance, to help havens pursue alternative development plans. Countries do not intentionally set down the path of becoming the secrecy haven for the world’s worst dictators, crooks, and human rights abusers, but encouraging them to abandon the associated revenue streams would require an interagency strategy invoking the full toolkit of economic statecraft. This interagency initiative should be led by the White House and undertaken in close collaboration with the United Kingdom, given that the worst offending small island havens are British Overseas Territories and crown dependencies.

Sixth, the Biden administration should work with Congress to advance a comprehensive program of anti-corruption legislation — such as the following examples — unseen since the historic series of new laws that followed Watergate. Most importantly, and key to ensuring Treasury spends the last two years of Biden's term implementing landmark reforms, the administration should follow through on its pledge to work with Congress on legislation like the bipartisan Enablers Act.[328] Congress should also grant the administration's request to boost the budget of the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network and update the Corporate Transparency Act to make ownership data public and broaden the scope of reporting entities to cover all U.S. trusts, partnerships, foundations, and any other entities and arrangements deemed important by Treasury. The Protect Our Democracy Act would guard against presidential abuses of power, from rules governing emergency declarations and foreign emoluments to transparency around presidential pardons and tax returns. The Ban Congressional Stock Trading Act would prohibit lawmakers and their families from buying and selling stocks while in office. The Foreign Extortion Prevention Act would criminalize the demand side of bribery. Congress should resuscitate the five out of six counter-kleptocracy bipartisan provisions that were originally included in last year's defense authorization act before being removed at the last minute by a few individual Republicans.[329]

Seventh, the Biden administration should build on its close coordination with allies on Russia sanctions to similarly coordinate anti-money laundering reforms with the four major democracies that — together with the United States — are home to most of the professional non-bank enablers who move and hide dirty money on behalf of the world's worst dictators and crooks. In particular, the United States and Australia are the only two democracies that still need to impose anti-money laundering laws on non-bank enablers, while the United Kingdom and Germany need to enforce the rules they have on the books, and Switzerland needs both a broader law and stronger enforcement. All democracies would do well to dedicate more resources toward administering transparency mechanisms like ownership registries and enforcing financial integrity laws and other measures of accountability. That diplomatic effort would capitalize internationally upon the Biden administration's leadership to clean up the financial system at home by pressuring key allies to do the same, forming the foundation for a broad-based international system to keep out dirty money.

CONCLUSION

Clean capitalism under the rule of law offers an appealing contrast to kleptocracy, analogous to how free-market deregulation once outmatched communism, making anti-corruption just as essential to U.S. grand strategy in the twenty-first century as neoliberalism and containment were during the Cold War. Corruption is also public enemy number one within democracies, where publics are losing faith in the fairness of their political and economic systems.

Building resilience to this threat through historic and concrete anti-corruption reforms would show that democracies can deliver for their citizens and defend themselves from autocratic corruption in ways that are coherent with the domestic values of inclusive and liberal democratic capitalism under the rule of law.

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[328] Without mentioning the Enablers Act by name, Biden's anti-corruption strategy unambiguously described its key provisions when committing to "[work] with the Congress as necessary to secure additional authorities … to make sure that key gatekeepers to the financial system—including lawyers, accountants, and trust and company service providers—cannot evade scrutiny." United States Strategy on Countering Corruption, The White House, 11 and 23.
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Don
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Donets'k
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UKRAINE
Kaunas
Vilnius
Hrodna
Warsaw
Warszawa
Brest
(Kyiv)
Odesa
MOLDOVA

FLETCHER SECURITY REVIEW

OMNIBUS SECURITAS