

1. Jantelagen: Why Swedes won't talk about wealth

In Stockholm's richest inner-city neighbourhood, Östermalm, private yachts and floating cocktail bars hug the marina. The adjacent tree-lined boulevard, Strandvägen, boasts some of the most expensive real estate in the Swedish capital, as well as exclusive boutiques and independent restaurants. Nearby, ornate 18th Century buildings house luxurious office spaces and private member's bars.

The area is packed with people in designer sunglasses soaking up the autumn sunshine. But finding someone who's comfortable talking about their wealth is almost impossible.

"I'm not going to tell you how much I make because I don't know why I should," says 30-year-old Robert Ingemarsson, who has a senior job in marketing. Asked what he does with his money, he says simply: "I spend it on stocks. I like investing".

Standard narratives about Sweden tend to highlight its social democracy, high taxes and low income inequality by global standards. But while this stereotype is rooted in facts, the gap between the rich and the poor has been steadily widening since the 1990s. The top 20% of the population now earn four times as much as the bottom 20%.

A high income is a badge of success in many countries, but Swedes have a deep-rooted aversion to talking about their cash. Our repeated efforts to arrange interviews with young, wealthy Swedes proved tricky; off-the-record, people were happy to talk about large second homes, family yachts, sports cars or champagne sprees in nightclubs, but getting them to formalise their comments was a struggle.

But why is this? While discussing your wealth feels perfectly appropriate in some parts of the world, why does it seem like nobody in Stockholm is proud of being rich?

The concept of *Jantelagen*

Lola Akinmade Åkerström, an author on Swedish culture who's been living in Stockholm for more than a decade, says talking about money is "a very uncomfortable subject" in Sweden. She argues that boasting about wealth – or even discussing a moderate salary with a stranger – is such a taboo that many Swedes would actually feel "more comfortable talking about sex and bodily functions".

It is a view shared by Stina Dahlgren, a 28-year-old Swedish journalist who spent several years living in the US. "Over in the States, when you say that you're earning a lot of money, people are cheering for you and they say: 'good for you, good work'. But over here in Sweden, if you say that you have a good salary... people think you're weird," she says. "You don't ask about salaries, you don't ask about money."

Many cultural commentators agree that a large part of the taboo can be explained by a deep-rooted Nordic code called *Jantelagen*, which promotes the idea of never thinking you are better than anyone else and calling out those who break this norm.

"Jantelagen is an unspoken societal rule that exists here in Sweden and a lot of the Nordics," explains Akinmade Åkerström, who explores the topic in her book *Lagom: The Swedish Secret of Living Well*. "It's about not being too flashy, not bragging unnecessarily, and it's a way of kind of keeping everybody – for the most part – equal... to remove sources of stress within group settings."

"Jantelagen is a mechanism for social control," he argues. "It's not just about wealth, it's about not pretending to know more than you do or acting above your station."

Akinmade Åkerström argues that while Sweden has fought hard to maintain a global image as a classless social democracy, many Swedes still surround themselves with people in similar income brackets. This, she says, means that the rules of *Jantelagen* can therefore shift depending on the company; bragging is more acceptable among those with similar backgrounds.

“Behind closed doors with others of the same socio-economic status, they [richer people] are more comfortable. They can talk about their summer homes or their cars with everybody on the same level.”

A vocal backlash

However, growing numbers of young, successful Swedes are starting to criticise *Jantelagen*, and calling for a more vocal conversation about wealth and success.

These include Nicole Falciani, 22, who began earning money from blogging as a teenager and is now a major influencer, with 354,000 followers on Instagram.

“I would love it if *Jantelagen* would disappear, because I think that would be so much better for everyone living here... Our society would be much more open if we could talk about money,” she argues. “It's quite a nice thought that everyone should be equal and that we are all the same. But it doesn't work, because if you're working harder than anyone else, then you should be proud of it.”

Cornelius Cappelen, an associate professor in comparative politics at the University of Bergen in Norway, believes the rise of social media is behind the youth backlash against *Jantelagen*. He argues that blogging and video-blogging in particular support the kind of “rampant individualism” that promotes standing out from the crowd, which has, until recently, been far less prevalent in Nordic countries than other western nations, particularly the US.

“More and more people use the term [*Jantelagen*] as an abuse – especially many young people explicitly claim that they hate the mentality,” he argues.

Akinmade Åkerström also believes that social media has had a major impact. Since bragging has become commonplace on Facebook and Instagram, Swedes whose personal achievements stand out have started to feel more comfortable making their success public, she argues.

“There are very skilled, talented people that have been suppressed by *Jantelagen*, but then they've seen mediocre people bragging (online) with confidence.”

The author believes that *Jantelagen* is also becoming less popular due to a rise in immigration. In Sweden, the most diverse of the Nordic nations, around 25% of people were born abroad or have two foreign parents. “What other cultures are bringing in is celebrating your success, celebrating talented people, celebrating skills,” she says.

2. Why do some studies show that women are less competitive than men?

The field of experimental economics has exploded in the past decade, and with it has developed the study of gender differences. Women have different attitudes than men toward competition, toward risk, toward altruism, researchers say. When we think about the gender gap in pay, it's easy to blame discrimination, but here an argument has emerged about another kind of sexism—the damning effects of gendered norms.

Muriel Niederle, a professor at Stanford, has studied these issues at length. In 2007, she and Lise Vesterlund published an experiment in which they rewarded people for adding up two-digit numbers over and over again. This is a task that men and women can perform equally well. Yet the researchers found that women were much less confident in their abilities, and this caused them to shy away from situations in which they would have to compete with others.

Gender and competitive games

In the non-competitive version of the experiment, participants would get 50 cents for every right answer. In the competitive setup, they entered a winner-takes-all tournament where the highest-scoring player got \$2 for every right answer, and the other players got nothing.

When the men and women were forced to compete, women won as often as men. But when Niederle and Vesterlund gave people a choice between the two setups, 75 percent of men chose to enter the competitive tournament, compared to only 35 percent of the women.

“In terms of money maximizing choices, high-performing women enter the tournament too little and low performing men too much,” Niederle wrote in a recent discussion of these kinds of papers.

“The result is that few women enter the competition and few women win the competition,” she continued.

An issue of confidence

In another one of her experiments, Niederle and co-author Alexandra Yestrumskas paid people to solve as many mazes as they could in 10 minutes. Participants could elect to work on easy mazes or hellish mazes. Easy mazes paid 50 cents each; hard mazes paid 25 cents each for the first four solved, and \$3.50 each thereafter.

This scheme forces people to assess their own skills. If you’re bad at solving mazes, you’ll make more money on the easy track. If you’re good at solving mazes, you should risk the hard track, which pays a lot more, but only if you can bang these things out.

At first, none of the participants knew how difficult the hard mazes were going to be, but they did get to try out the easy mazes. This way, the researchers found out who was good at doing mazes, and who was bad at them. The participants then got to choose to continue with the easy mazes, or to try doing the harder mazes.

All the men who killed it on the easy mazes tried the harder mazes. But only 65 percent of high-performing women decided to try the harder maze. Even among the low-performers, 88 percent of men chose the hard mazes, compared to 42 percent of women.

Is it that men just like a challenge and women don’t? Not so. In a follow-up experiment, the researchers informed the participants whether they were high-performing or low-performing after observing them on the easy mazes. With that knowledge, high-performing women were now twice as likely to choose the hard track. Again, this is a story about confidence in yourself. Men have it. Women seem to lack it. But a little encouragement can go a long way.

Well, now what?

Why do women behave this way? Culture, perhaps, can be more influential here than biology. An experiment from 2012 found that school-age girls in Colombia are even more competitive than boys, while the opposite was true in Sweden. In Niederle’s experiments, lack of self-confidence played a big role in explaining why women chose the easier maze game, and why they chose not to participate in the tournament game.

So one way to combat these differences would be to give women more encouragement. Niederle calls this the “Lean In” approach, after Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg’s book which told women that they should more aggressively pursue opportunities at work.

Changing the idea of competition

Another approach: changing the way that the world treats competition. In corporate world, some amount of American Psycho-ing is probably necessary. But sometimes there is competition that serves no end.

There’s a perception that competition is good, that it brings out the best in someone—but it can just as well drive children away, and prevent them from realizing her full potential.

3. After “sissees” appear on TV, China debates the definition of masculinity

BEIJING — What makes a man a man? The notion of masculinity is under fierce debate in China after a back-to-school television show, mandatory viewing for returning students, showed men with appearances deemed by some to be too effeminate or “sissy.”

Intense grooming has become a requirement in China’s entertainment industry, following the trend in South Korea for men with perfect skin and impeccable hair. Chinese movies and pop videos are now full of men who have embraced their natural slenderness and have clearly spent a lot of time on their looks.

But Chinese netizens, many of them writing comments with homophobic overtones, think the trend has gone too far and that androgynous men — derided as “little fresh meats” — are “poisoning China’s youth.”

This latest round of chest thumping began earlier this month after the broadcast of a program called “First Class for the New Semester,” jointly produced by China Central Television and the Ministry of Education. Parents and students are required to watch the program together on the Saturday night before the fall semester begins. China has more than 200 million students from elementary grades through high school, according to a 2013 report by the China Youth Research Center.

The show provoked fierce reactions, including from parents objecting that the show’s opening act featured the four-man group New F4, with the male celebrities wearing makeup. The show also included movie star Jackie Chan as well as an entrepreneur, an artist and an aircraft designer.

But detractors seized on the four singers, calling them “pretty girls that cannot have babies,” and asked authorities to take them off the air. One father of a 5-year-old boy, identified as Mr. Feng,

told the [Communist Party-controlled Global Times](#) that he was worried that the stars would influence his son to behave in a feminine way at school.

Xinhua, the powerful state news agency, lambasted the singers as “sissy pants” and said they were “not men, but not women.”

“They look androgynous and wear makeup. They are slender and weak,” the influential opinion columnist using the pen name Xinshiping wrote. “The impact this sick culture will have on our young generation is immeasurable. The youth are the future of the country. ... What a country’s pop culture embraces, refuses and conveys is something that matters to the future of a country.”

With men like these, China will never become the strong and prosperous country it hopes to be, the commentator wrote. “To nurture those who will shoulder the job of helping our nation reach its renaissance,” the article said, according to a translation by [the Sixth Tone website](#), “we must shield them from undesirable cultures.”

The state-run 21st Century newspaper then [posted an article](#) called “If a teenager is sissy, then the country is sissy.”

It noted that a WeChat post titled “Let’s get rid of male stars with female appearances” had gone viral. The post blamed overly feminine males for “weakening the spirit of the society” and “swallowing the courage of the nation,” and ignited a raging debate on WeChat, the dominant Chinese social media platform.

Then another state paper, the Beijing Youth Daily, weighed in with a similar view. “Some children are loyal fans of these effeminate idols and they will copy whatever their idols say or do. ... If we set no limit to this trend, more people will be proud of this effeminacy and our society and our country’s masculinity will be in crisis,” the paper said, according to the Global Times.

But others have urged tolerance and understanding of different ways of being.

Sun Jiashan, a researcher at Chinese National Academy of Arts, does not think these “feminine” male stars have a negative effect on society.

“They are still far from becoming the mainstream cultural trend in society,” he said, according to the 21st Century magazine. “Besides, we should not set male and female aesthetic standards against each other.”

Another popular commentator, Yang Yi, said he didn’t like these men’s styles but that it was wrong to try to get them off the screens. “I’ve stopped watching TV because there are so many men with female appearances on the screen. But I think that is their choice and their right,” he said.

One mother said she would respect her son’s choices.

“It is important to stay true to your heart,” Zhang Yukun, mother of a 4-year-old boy, told the Global Times, adding, “I will give my son all my support as long as he chooses a path he likes.”

Even China’s usually relatively homogeneous state media have offered a wide range of views on the issue.

The China Women’s Daily, the paper of the Communist Party’s Women’s Federation, agreed that people should not be defined by appearances. “No matter what kind of persona style or quality he or she chooses to present, whether it is strong-willed or gentle, that doesn’t stop them from being an excellent person,” the article said, according to a [translation by the South China Morning Post](#).

Elsewhere, commentators said that the emergence of the Chinese “metrosexual” was the result of China’s rapid economic growth and stable social environment.

“Gone are the days of tough guys like Hong Kong martial arts movie stars Jackie Chan and Jet Li as the audience is losing interest in their machismo-laden acts,” wrote [Shen Si](#), a cultural commentator for The Global Times. Instead, audiences — especially female audiences — loved “tender” male stars.

“In the last 30 years, Chinese people have enjoyed a lot material benefits due to the achievements of the reform and opening-up,” he wrote. “Relatively low threat of war and terrorism also bring about peaceful life for citizens. Thus, masculinity becoming less admirable in contemporary China is quite reasonable.”

Social diversity should be respected, he said.

Surprisingly, a military newspaper also defended the stars’ rights to look the way they chose.

A commentary in the People’s Liberation Daily said that it was an “objective fact” that more men were paying more attention to their appearances.

But it said that it wasn’t what was outside that determined the measure of a man. “The masculinity required to nurture the modern society does not lie in appearance,” it wrote in the commentary. “The key is to create a kind of inner character with courage and responsibility.”

4. OBITUARIES

Ruth Bader Ginsburg, liberal giant of the Supreme Court, dies (Los Angeles Times)

By [DAVID G. SAVAGE](#) STAFF WRITER , SEP. 18, 2020 4:44 PM

- 1) **WASHINGTON** — Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who championed women's rights — first as a trailblazing civil rights attorney who methodically chipped away at discriminatory practices, then as the second woman to serve on the Supreme Court, and finally as an unlikely pop culture icon — has died at her home in Washington.
- 2) Ginsburg, who had battled cancer for more than a decade, died Friday evening due to complications of the disease, the U.S. Supreme Court announced. She was 87.
- 3) A feminist hero lovingly dubbed Notorious RBG, Ginsburg emerged over the last decade as the leading voice of the court's liberal wing, best known for her stinging dissents on a bench that has mostly skewed right since her 1993 appointment.
- 4) "Our nation has lost a jurist of historic stature. We at the Supreme Court have lost a cherished colleague," Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. said. "Today we mourn, but with confidence that future generations will remember Ruth Bader Ginsburg as we knew her — a tireless and resolute champion of justice."
- 5) Her death in the middle of the presidential campaign sets the stage for a momentous fight over whether President Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) can replace her with a conservative jurist before the November election.
- 6) McConnell has already said he intends to have a vote, although he did not say when it would be held. It remains unclear whether enough Republicans would go along with such a move, and Democrats are certain to oppose it. McConnell refused to consider President Obama's Supreme Court nominee during the 2016 election year, saying the new president should decide.
- 7) Ginsburg's health had been precarious for more than a decade. She was successfully treated for cancer of the colon, pancreas and lung, but had a recurrence of pancreatic cancer in the spring.
- 8) Some liberal activists had urged her to retire in 2014, when Obama could have chosen her successor. But she said she was determined to serve as long as her health permitted.
- 9) President Trump had just finished speaking at a campaign rally in Minnesota when he was told of Ginsburg's death.
- 10) "She just died? Wow. I didn't know that," he said. "She led an amazing life. What else can you say? She was an amazing woman.... I'm sad to hear that."

- 11) He made no immediate comment about whether he would move to replace her.
- 12) Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden called Ginsburg “not only a giant in the legal profession, but a beloved figure. ... And she practiced the highest American ideals as a justice: equality and justice under the law, and Ruth Bader Ginsburg stood for all of us.”
- 13) Biden said whoever is elected in November should choose her replacement.
- 14) “This was the position the Republican Senate took in 2016 when there were almost 10 months to go before the election,” he said. “That’s the position the United States Senate must take today. The election is only 46 days off.”
- 15) Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D- Calif.), the ranking Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, said the nation had “lost a truly amazing woman tonight, a trailblazer for women, a once-in-generation legal mind and a passionate champion for the rights of all Americans.
- 16) “Under no circumstances should the Senate consider a replacement for Justice Ginsburg until after the presidential inauguration,” she said.
- 17) For her first two decades, Ginsburg was a respected but not highly influential member of the high court — a reliable liberal vote who was often overshadowed by Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, the first female justice and the court’s swing vote.
- 18) But after O’Connor and Justice John Paul Stevens retired, Ginsburg became a major force on the court, her soft voice and diminutive stature belying a biting tongue and inexhaustible energy that pushed her to work through numerous health scares, including a 2018 fall that left her with broken ribs.
- 19) She wrote several major decisions, including a 1996 ruling in *U.S. vs. Virginia* that opened the doors of Virginia Military Institute to women and struck down discriminatory admissions policies of state-run schools. She supported abortion rights, gay rights, affirmative action and the strict separation of church and state.
- 20) But Ginsburg was best known for her impassioned dissents, which she often delivered in court while wearing a special dark, beaded “dissent collar” over her traditional black robe.

5. Why the China-U.S. rivalry is at a crucial turning point—and what it means for business

(From Fortune)

As Chinese companies continue their rise in the Global 500, the competition between the two economic superpowers is intensifying.

BY GEOFF COLVIN

August 10, 2020 4:10 PM GMT+8

1. Rarely do relations between great powers degenerate as quickly as they did when the U.S. and China **skirmished** in late July. When the U.S. ordered China to **close its consulate** in Houston within 72 hours, it looked like punishment for alleged theft of COVID-19 research and other valuable information by Chinese hackers; the Justice Department had announced charges that same day. Or perhaps it was a further response to Beijing's crackdown on Hong Kong, for which the U.S. had **already revoked** the city's special status in trade relations.

skirmish n. 小规模战斗; 小冲突

5. The consulate confrontation marks a particularly clear and dramatic advance in a trend the whole world will feel: the intensifying competition between the world's two largest economies. It adds heavily to a broader uncertainty, a combination of highly **consequential** unknowns that together will redirect our future. They're **distilled** in two big questions, both of which arose in the late-July collapse of relations: Where will the U.S.-China rivalry take us? Which country will emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic with the least long-term economic and social damage? Both questions, moreover, are intertwined with a third: Which of two **starkly** different presidential candidates will America choose? Together, their answers will mark a turning point in the world's progress.

consequential adj. 随之而来的; 相应发生的; 作为结果的; 重要的; 将产生重大结果的;

distill v. 蒸馏; 用蒸馏法提取; 用蒸馏法制造(酒等); 吸取...的精华; 提炼; 浓缩;

starkly adv. 完全, 分明地, 赤裸裸地

6. New data, presented in Fortune's 2020 Global 500 ranking of the world's biggest corporations, reveals a landmark change in the U.S.-China rivalry. For the first time, there are more Global 500 companies based in mainland China, including Hong Kong, than in the U.S.—124 vs. 121. If you include Taiwan, the total for Greater China is 133.

7. The reversal of leadership reflects long-running trends. The number of U.S. companies in the ranking has been declining every year since 2002, when it was 197. The number of Chinese companies has been increasing every year since 2003, when mainland China placed 11 on the list.

8. Of the three questions in the triple turning point, the future of the U.S.-China relationship arguably holds the greatest world-historical significance. Harvard China expert Graham Allison frames the relationship as “an inherent, deep, structural rivalry,” a rising power threatening a solidly dominant power. The U.S.-China rivalry is dangerous, Allison tells Fortune, in large part because it's deeply emotional, particularly for those Americans who feel that the nation's rightful and only place is to be “No. 1” in the world order. Allison has famously called it “**Thucydides's trap**” after the ancient Greek historian's recounting of how Sparta's response to the threat of Athens's rise led to a 30-year war.

Thucydides's trap “修昔底德陷阱”, 指一个新崛起的大国必然要挑战现存大国, 而现存大国

也必然会回应这种威胁,这样战争变得不可避免。此说法源自古希腊著名历史学家修昔底德,他认为,当一个崛起的大国与既有的统治霸主竞争时,双方面临的危险多数以战争告终。

9. While the U.S. and China are a long way from that, the current situation is bad and deteriorating fast. “Every topic that matters is getting worse,” says Ian Bremmer, founder and president of the Eurasia Group consulting firm. “Huawei, Hong Kong, the South China Sea, Taiwan, the U.S. withdrawal from the WHO over China, you name it.”

10. Most experts agree that over the past year the relationship has fallen into a self-reinforcing downward spiral. “I’m sitting in Washington, and it feels as if we’re in the center of this hurricane and there’s only one direction we’re heading in,” says Scott Kennedy, an expert on Chinese business and economics at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. As Beijing aggressively pushes territorial claims on the Indian border, over Taiwanese airspace, and in the South China Sea—actions intended as messages to the U.S., diplomats say—the U.S. has pressured allies to ban telecom equipment from Huawei (No. 49 on the Global 500) and has even pondered banning U.S. travel by members of the Chinese Communist Party and their families, an estimated 270 million people, including the CEOs of nearly every important Chinese company.

11. The shift in the Global 500 is significant because this rivalry is founded on economic might. Analysts can **quibble over** which country’s economy is biggest. The U.S. remains well ahead when the comparison is based on currency exchange rates, with 2019 U.S. GDP of \$21.4 trillion vs. China’s \$14.3 trillion. But based on purchasing power **parity**, a measure that adjusts for the countries’ differing price levels, China is slightly ahead of the U.S.—\$21.4 trillion vs. \$20.5 trillion as of 2018, the most recent year for which the World Bank has data. The gap is probably wider now and continuing to widen. That’s the measure that counts, says Allison, because it shows “who can build the most drones” or fund the most research.

- **quibble over** 争辩不休, 争辩琐事, 诡辩
parity n. 平价; 同等; 相等; 胎次; 分娩

12. It also makes China the world’s largest market for increasing numbers of products and services. It “will be the first market where new products are launched,” says Kennedy, “so Chinese consumers will have a greater say in the direction of industries. The American market may not be large enough to be where products are **scaled up**.”

scaled up 按比例增加[提高]

13. For that and other reasons, U.S. companies will be highly unlikely to leave China. A billion prospering consumers cannot be **forsaken** by any business that hopes to remain globally competitive. In addition, few companies will want to remove China from their supply chains entirely. While trade tensions and the pandemic have shown many companies worldwide that they were too reliant on Chinese suppliers, Chinese companies often have manufacturing expertise that can’t be found elsewhere. Besides, foreign companies that ditch China—in favor of India and Vietnam, for example—may find that China becomes less welcoming when those companies want to sell to the Chinese market.

forsaken *v.* 放弃(forsake 的过去分词); 弃绝; 抛弃; 摒弃

14. China's economic strengths are **sobering**, but to understand this rivalry fully, GDP alone is too **gross** a measure. The critical field of conflict is technology, the foundation of economic growth and national security. Since the founding of the People's Republic, Chinese leaders, including the President, have declared a national policy to "catch up and surpass" the developed world's technology. For China's leaders, "technological progress is not only a means to economic and military **prowess**," writes Harvard's Julian Baird Gewirtz, "but also an ideological end in itself—offering final proof of China's restoration as a great power after decades of struggle."

sobering *adj.* 有节制的; 清醒的, 冷静的; 朴素的, 柔和的; 持重的

gross *adj.* 总的, 毛的; 严重的; 令人不快的; 粗鲁的

prowess *n.* 英勇; 高超技艺

15. And tech is where the two countries are most noticeably decoupling. Huawei is the world's No. 1 maker of 5G networking equipment and, as of this year's second quarter, the No. 1 maker of phones. But its products are virtually outlawed in the U.S., and its CFO has been under house arrest in Canada for 18 months on U.S. charges of bank fraud, wire fraud, and theft of trade secrets, charges she and the company vigorously deny. For its part, China has effectively banned some of America's most ubiquitous tech giants, including Google and Facebook. "We've gone from a more integrated world to a **Splinternet**," says Bremmer. "Tech is by far the **crux** of the competition right now, the most important piece and the most dangerous."

Splinternet 分裂网 The splinternet (also referred to as cyberbalkanization or Internet Balkanization) is a characterization of the Internet as splintering and dividing due to various factors, such as technology, commerce, politics, nationalism, religion, and interests.

crux *n.* 关键; 难题; [天]十字座; 坍塌

16. The technology war is being fought on many fronts—A.I., 5G, voice recognition, facial recognition, fintech, and others. A.I. is the most important because it **turbocharges** all the rest. A recent article coauthored by Allison and an anonymous U.S. tech industry leader argues that China is far more advanced in A.I. than the U.S. national security community realizes—noting the advantages China gains by having a population four times the size of the U.S. "In A.I., brainpower matters more than computing power," they write, and China graduates 1.3 million STEM students annually vs. America's 300,000, and 185,000 computer scientists vs. America's 65,000. Even in the U.S., of every 10 computer science Ph.D.s graduating, three are American and two are Chinese; most Chinese postdocs will eventually return home.

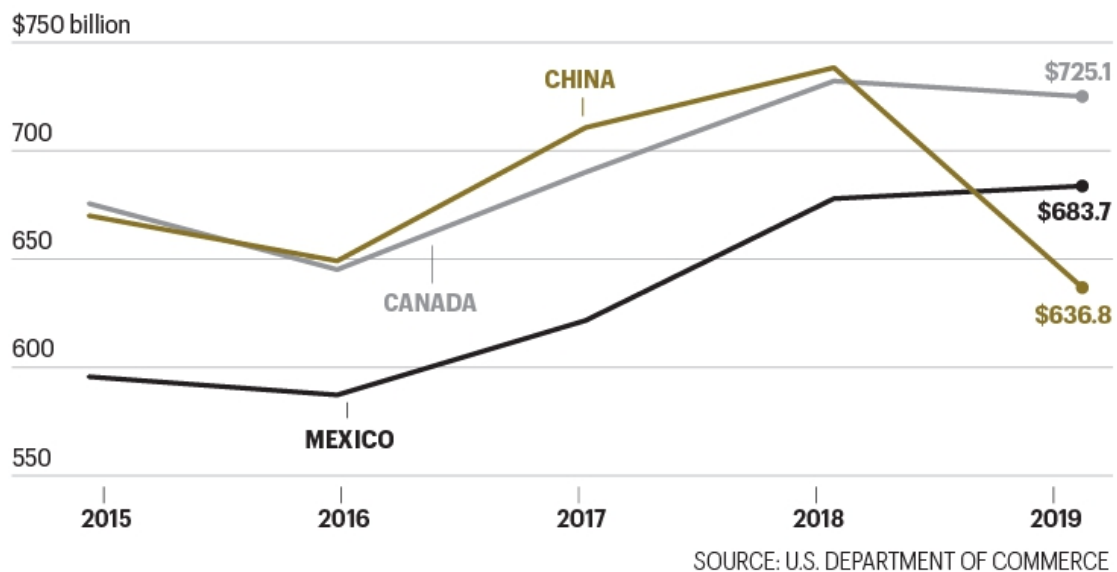
Turbocharge *v.* 用涡轮给增压, <非正式>快速增加

17. But if China seems like an economic and technological **steamroller** about to **squash** the U.S., it isn't. A closer look shows that despite China's strengths, this rivalry's future remains highly

uncertain.

- **steamroller n.** 蒸汽压路机；不可阻挡之势；一种带有内燃机的类似机械
v. 压路；压垮；以不可阻挡之势前进
- **squash vt.** 压制；压扁 **vi.** 变扁；挤进

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18. Start with those 124 mainland Chinese companies in the Global 500. Though they outnumber U.S. companies, they're smaller, accounting for only 25% of total Global 500 revenue vs. America's 30%. A large majority of the Chinese companies—68%—are state-owned enterprises; they didn't get big by winning in the **rough-and-tumble** competition of open markets. While the list includes Chinese tech **behemoths** that compete internationally—Alibaba Group, Huawei, Lenovo—it also includes many purely domestic businesses; several are coal miners or electric utilities.

rough-and-tumble adj. 杂乱无章的；混乱的

behemoth n. 巨兽；庞然大物；异常巨大的东西

19. The nature of these companies makes a big difference to their power in the strategic rivalry. The key question is this: How have they grown so large? "Was it by innovation, smart managerial practices, and good corporate governance," asks Kennedy, "or have they gotten there through the power of the Chinese **mercantilism** and **largesse** from Chinese state-owned banks?"

mercantilism [mɜː'kæntɪlɪzəm] **n.** 重商主义；商人本性。 重商主义一种政治学说，强调

保持国际收支盈余以积累黄金的重要性。并由此提倡政府严密控制经济政策，认为自由放任的政策可能会导致黄金的流失。

largesse n. 慷慨援助；施舍

20. Even China's eventual **accession** to the title of World's Largest Economy may not be as inevitable, or at least not as imminent, as many people believe. If both countries were to continue to grow their GDP (calculated at market exchange rates) at their 2019 **nominal rates**, China wouldn't pull even with the U.S. until about 2050, writes Ruchir Sharma, Morgan Stanley Investment Management's chief global strategist, in a recent Foreign Affairs article. If China's growth slowed by just one percentage point, it wouldn't catch up until 2090, meaning "few Americans alive today are likely to be around to see the United States fall to second place."

accession n. 到达；即位；加入

nominal rates 名义利率（相对于 **real interest rate** 实际利率），是央行或其它提供资金借贷的机构所公布的未调整通货膨胀因素的利率。

21. The most probable future is what some analysts are calling Cold War II. It won't be like the first cold war; the USSR was a much weaker economy than the U.S. and scarcely trade outside Eastern Europe. But it's a conflict, already underway, in which the adversaries **field** every weapon but bombs and bullets while also interacting civilly on some issues of mutually beneficial trade. "In commodities such as liquefied natural gas and agriculture," says Bremmer, "the U.S. and China will be doing business with each other." Just as they did last year, when the U.S. exported \$13.8 billion of agricultural products and \$3.1 billion of oil and gas to China.

field vt. 接球；派……上场；顺利处理

24. At this triple turning point, we're left without answers—only with the certainty of a less stable world. Relations between the two great powers are **fraying**, leading who knows where. But the **scenarios** aren't all bad. Maybe China and the U.S., rationally pursuing self-interest, will manage their relationship as corporate-style competition. Multiple effective vaccines—from the U.S., China, and elsewhere—could **vanquish** COVID-19 in less than a year. In that scenario, economies would revive, people could hug each other again, and global anxiety would **unclench** at least a bit.

fray 分崩离析，瓦解，开始崩溃

scenario n. 剧本；情节梗概，局面，前景，预测

vanquish v. 征服；克服；击败

unclench v. 弄开；撬开；松开

25. In an unstable world, even the extreme scenarios—good and bad—seem **plausible**. Planning is harder; bets are riskier. In all of our lives, there's less room for error.

plausible adj. 似真实合理的；动听的；看起来有道理的，貌似可信的

6.

Biden says the Taliban are 'not good guys.' So why is the U.S. cooperating with them against ISIS-K?

USA TODAY

Almost overnight, U.S. forces in Afghanistan have gone from being mortal enemies of Taliban insurgents to being stuck in an awkward marriage of convenience against a mutual enemy – ISIS-K – that appears bent on mounting more deadly terrorist attacks against the U.S.-led evacuation effort.

Call it a shotgun wedding Kabul style, or one with AK-47s and American-made M4 military assault rifles that the ragtag Taliban are now carrying after their blitzkrieg takeover of Afghanistan.

It is yet another example of the old political adage, “The enemy of my enemy is my friend.” But this one comes with a lot of caveats – and concerns.

One of them is that the current Taliban is chock full of former members of al-Qaida and local and regional militant groups like the Haqqani Network, which the U.S. government designated as a terrorist organization back in 2012 because of its alliances with al-Qaida.

Recently, the Taliban brought to Kabul one of its top operatives, Khalil al-Rahman Haqqani, to head security matters there U.S. officials believe. That means American military leaders could be collaborating – perhaps closely – with a U.S.-designated “global terrorist” with who has had a \$5 million U.S. bounty on his head since 2011.

“It reminds me of that quote from Winston Churchill, defending his cooperation with Stalin against the Nazis,” said David Priess, a former CIA intelligence officer who used to deliver the president's daily briefing. “To paraphrase, ‘If Hitler invaded Hell, we’d be allies with the devil.’”

ISIS-K claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing at Hamid Karzai International Airport. The death toll included 11 Marines, a Navy corpsman, an Army soldier and at least 169 Afghan people. Biden vowed to hunt down the culprits and U.S. officials said the ISIS-K poses a continuing threat.

ISIS-K considers the Taliban, noted for its brutality, to be insufficiently devout in its adherence to Islam. The two militant groups have engaged in attacks on each other.

It’s no secret that for years after 9/11, the U.S. government cooperated with unfriendly governments, including Russia and China, in sharing intelligence about al-Qaida. But examples of it cooperating with a militant or terrorist organization are not publicly known, according to Priess and other current and former intelligence officials.

“In extreme circumstances, and I think we would all agree that this is an extreme circumstance, working with people or groups that previously would have been unimaginable, or at least unpalatable, becomes practical and even necessary,” said Priess, author of “The President’s Book of Secrets,” a history of U.S. presidents and their use of intelligence.

'They're not good guys, the Taliban'

Biden said pretty much the same thing Thursday as he defended his handling of the crisis.

“They're not good guys, the Taliban. I'm not suggesting that at all,” he said at the White House after the last of three deadly attacks that killed 13 U.S. service members and injured dozens of other people. But he added that the Taliban share some of the same goals as the United States, including keeping the airport open and getting U.S. forces out of the country.

“So it's not a matter of trust, it's a matter of mutual self-interest,” Biden said. He added that he had been given “no evidence thus far ... that there has been collusion between the Taliban and ISIS in carrying out what happened today.”

More ISIS-K attacks possible

Marine Corps Gen. Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr., commander of U.S. Central Command, discussed the uneasy alliance with the Taliban when discussing the “very, very real threat streams” suggesting that more ISIS-K attacks were imminent.

He said that U.S. forces had been working with the Taliban since mid-August, initially to allow American citizens through their security checkpoints ringing the airport. But that collaboration has developed into a mutual effort to identify and neutralize potential attacks by the regional offshoot of the Islamic State terror group.

U.S. intelligence indicates the possibility of rocket attacks, McKenzie said, and the U.S.-occupied airbase had good defenses against those. But he said ISIS-K was also believed to be planning vehicle-borne IED attacks – and that the U.S. vulnerability to those required working with the Taliban to shut off traffic leading to and from the airport.