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CONDITION: Mamma Donâ€™t Let Your Babies Grow Up to Vote for Republicans:



Aaron Rupar @atrupar

McCarthy: "Matt Gaetz said, 'I don't care if we go to plurality and we elect Hakeem Jeffries,'"



4:12 PM â™ Jan 3, 2023

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Aaron Rupar: â€œMcCarthy: â€œMatt Gaetz said, â€œI don't care if we go to plurality and we elect Hakeem Jeffriesâ€â€œ!

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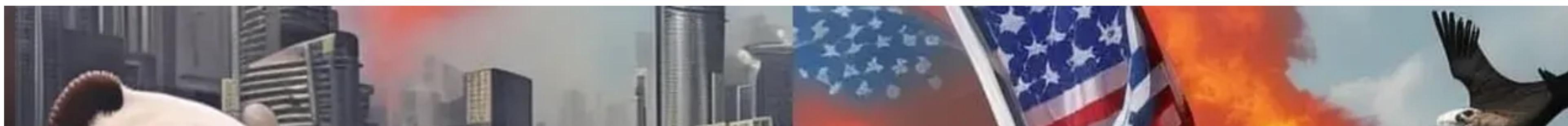
Gibraltar

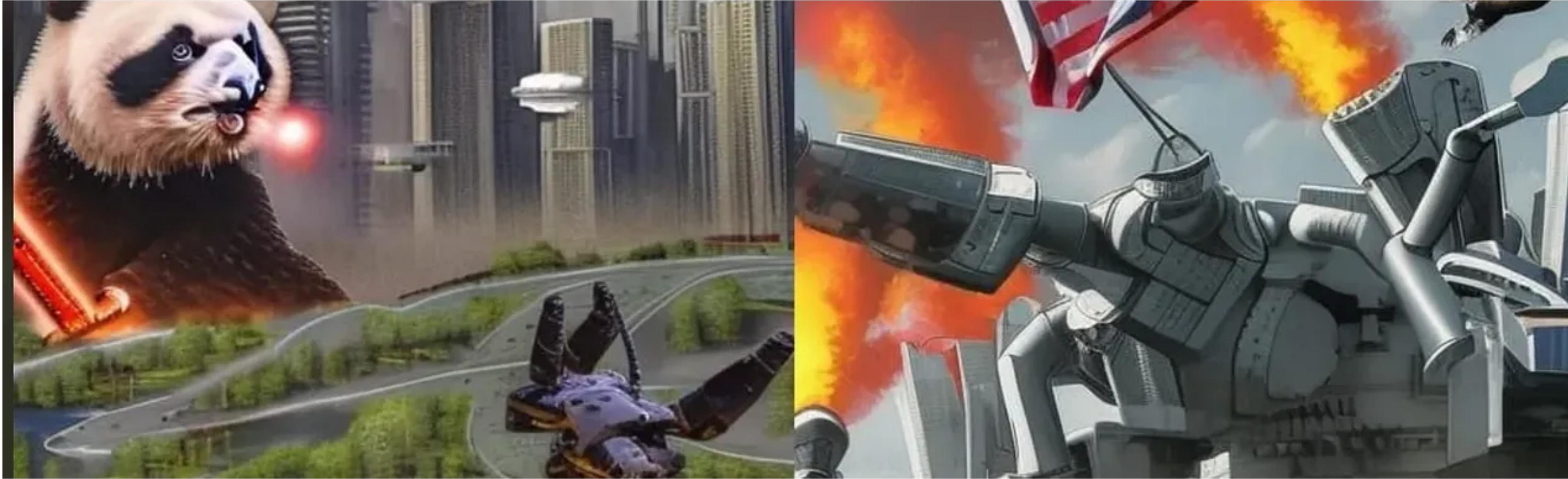


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FOCUS: Welcome to $\tilde{A}^{3/4}e$ New Cold War Thunderdome!:





Gideon Rachman is, I think, talking a great deal of sense here:

Gideon Rachman: [Stopping China's growth cannot be a goal for the west](#): "Deterrence and trade will have to go hand in hand!"

And yet, and yet, and yet, I do not see how this is going to be accomplished.

For I find this from Biden's National Security Advisor both extremely disturbing and yet hard to dispute:

Jake Sullivan: [Remarks at the Special Competitive Studies Project Global Emerging Technologies Summit](#): "We have to revisit the longstanding premise of maintaining relative advantages over competitors in certain key technologies. We previously maintained a sliding scale approach that said we need to stay only a couple of generations ahead. That is not the strategic environment we are in today. Given the foundational nature of certain technologies, such as advanced logic and memory chips, we must maintain a large lead as possible..."

"Stopping China's economic growth" would seem to be a key piece of maintaining as large of a lead as possible in foundational technologies, would it not?

So I am unhappy.

But.

Look: I understand that in many ways the fleet has sailed.

Too much "wolf warrior" bulls**t in the Infosphere, the PLA's sea-grabs in the South China Sea, the growing tendency to use external displays of military force for internal political purposes—a Wilhelmine Germany-like ruling élite without any plausible domestic utility trying to solidify popular support by busying giddy minds with foreign quarrels.

All of these, plus a *écono* limits partnership with an adventurist, cruel, and irrational chaos monkey of a Muscovy.

All of these have made it not irrational to judge that:

- the value of the US-China trade relationship for domestic prosperity,
- plus the hope that productive economic integration will strengthen forces within China pushing for a world régime of *gentle commerce*,
- weigh less in the balance than the goal of keeping China from even thinking that it should spend the resources to seriously challenge American potential military power

It used to be that, if a process promised to substantially strengthen the PLA in the long run, that was a negative but not a decisive negative. Can that position still be maintained? I think not—not until there is a shift in China's régime back towards the principles of the golden age of Chinese economic development enunciated by Hu Jintao, Jiang Zemin, and Deng Xiaoping. As Adam Smith wrote: defense is more important than opulence.

I do have grave doubts that what are now called *frontier AI* technologies will be of potentially decisive military importance over the next two generations. But I also know that I may well be wrong. They are Heavy and Deep Magic indeed.

So I would not say that Jake Sullivan is making a mistake in saying that simply maintaining a two-generation lead in advanced information technologies is no longer sufficient as an overriding policy goal for the Free World.

And I would not say that Joe Biden is wrong in backing him.

Yes, I find myself in a very unusual position, for me at least. I have, after all, bet my career on the *gentle commerce* rather than the *explosives and killer robots* approach to foreign policy and global order. But China's alliance with Muscovy keeps me from seeing a way forward. And things are complicated by the fact that I do not understand what war will be like in the rest of the 21st century—it will not, as it was between 1914 and 1945, be determined by mass society-wide industrial capacity and mobilization.

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MUST-READ: Prediction without Understanding or Parsimonious Modeling:

Noah Smith directs me to:

Arman Khachiyian & al.: [Using Neural Networks to Predict Micro-Spatial Economic Growth](#): "We apply deep learning to daytime satellite imagery to predict changes in income and population at high spatial resolution in US data. For grid cells with lateral dimensions of 1.2km and 2.4km (where the average US county has dimension of 55.6km), our model predictions achieve R2 values of 0.85 to 0.91 in levels, which far exceed the accuracy of existing models, and 0.32 to 0.46 in decadal changes, which have no counterpart in the literature and are 3-4 times larger than for commonly used nighttime lights. Our network has wide application for analyzing localized shocks!"

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BRIEFLY NOTED:

ONE IMAGE: The Most Icelandic Icelandic Lighthouse:





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ONE VIDEO: The Current State of AI:

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Very Briefly Noted:

- **Dean Baker:** [More Mind Reading at the NYT](#): â€˜You have to wonder if job applicants at the *New York Times* are tested on their mind-reading abilityâ€™. The strike wave hitting the United Kingdom. The article [by Stephen Castle] reports on the hardline stance against pay increases by Conservative Prime Minister Rishi Sunakâ€‘ tells us that Mr. Sunakâ€™s opposition is actually due to his concern for the working classâ€‘. Sunakâ€‘ insists that agreeing to raises could embed inflation, which he sees as the real enemy of working peopleâ€‘â€‘!
- **Graham Alison & al.:** [Case File: Thucydides Trap](#): â€˜It was the rise of Athens, and the fear that this instilled in Sparta, that made war inevitableâ€‘!
- **Elle Griffin:** [Let's study all the utopian novels this year](#)â€‘!
- **Zvi Mowshowitz:** [Covid 12/29/22: Next Up is XBB.1.5](#): â€˜Itâ€™s time once again for our favorite game show, â€œhow much trouble will this new variant cause?â€‘â€‘!
- **Jake Sherman & John Bresnahan** (2015): [Scalise: I 'regret' speech to white supremacy group](#): â€˜Louisiana Rep. Steve Scalise is in full damage control mode and has publicly apologized for a 2002 speech to a white supremacist groupâ€‘ the European-American Unity and Rights Organization (EURO)...
- **Koichi Hamada:** [Barbarians at Democracyâ€™s Gates](#): â€˜The conventional wisdom, particularly in liberal circles, is that the arc of history always bends toward peace, tolerance, equality, justice, and democracy. But recent political violence â€“ not least the Capitol riot in the US â€“ has made clear that there is no room for complacencyâ€‘!
- **Simon Johnson:** [The Next Stage of the Hot Cold War](#): â€˜Oil demand and supply are quite unresponsive to oil prices in the short run, but historically quite responsive over 5-10 years. To counter Russia in 2023 and beyond, the West needs to focus more intently on reducing demand for fossil fuels, particularly oil, and increasing the supply of alternative energy sourcesâ€‘!
- **John Mullany:** [Happy \(unofficial\) 60th birthday to the field of health economics](#)â€‘!
- **Timothy B. Lee:** â€˜[Honestly it's 2022](#) and editors at legacy news organizations should stop picking headlines without consulting writers. This was an artifact of print layout requirements and limited 20th Century communications technologies. Editors might still want to write headlines for freelancers, but at a minimum they should email/text the writer and say "we're planning to run with this headline. Is that OK?â€‘â€‘!

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Â§s:

Matthew Klein: [For the love of Zeus, stop misusing Thucydides](#): â€˜The Peloponnesian War has everything you could want if youâ€™re interested in international relations. Complicated diplomacy, dramatic battles, tangled and shifting alliances, ideological struggles, rapacious empires, political intrigue, revolutions, coups, class warfare, civil strife, and incredibly colourful characters are all in there. Study this history carefully and you will gain important insights into the nature of war and peace. Reading Thucydidesâ€™s account seems like the obvious way to do this. He was a thoughtful writer â€“ consider the elision between the Melian dialogue at the end of book five and the introduction of the Sicilian Expedition at the start of book six â€“ and the worldâ€™s first proper historianâ€‘. [But] Thucydidesâ€‘ had an enormous axe to grind. Absorbing his analysis uncritically would be comparable to learning about the wars in mid-20th century Southeast Asia solely by reading Kissingerâ€™s memoirsâ€‘!

John Timmer: [What are companies doing with D-Waveâ€™s quantum hardware?](#): â€˜D-Wave's computers are especially good at solving optimization problemsâ€‘. There are quantum systems based on superconducting hardware that are being used commercially; it's just that they're not general-purpose computers. D-Wave offers what's called a quantum annealerâ€‘. Annealers can't solve the same full range of mathematical problems as general-purpose quantum computers, such as the ones made by Google, IBM, and others. But they can be used to solve a variety of optimization problemsâ€‘. Unlike with general-purpose quantum computers, it hasn't been mathematically demonstrated that quantum annealers can consistently outperform traditional computers. But unlike general-purpose quantum computers, they have for several years had a high numbers of bits, good connectivity, and reasonable error rates. And a number of companies are now using them to solve real-world problemsâ€‘!

Doug Jones: [Slava Ukraini](#): â€˜Russiaâ€™s attempted seizure of Ukraine this year, and the ensuing ongoing war, crystallized a new international divisionâ€‘ [between] [a Western/maritime rimland](#) and an Old World heartlandâ€‘. The division in attitudes between the West and the two Eurasian powers has developed only recently, but it has rootsâ€‘. Where access to the sea and trade was limited, autocracy was (and is) more likely to prevail. Also, maritime zones tend to [smaller political units](#)â€‘. Individualism, constitutional government, national self-determinationâ€‘ developed in a particular geographic and historical context. A large portion of the world does not (*pace* the American Declaration of Independence) hold these ideals as self-evident truths, and even regards them (not always entirely without reason) as a mask for cynical power politics. And so [The End of History](#) is unfinished workâ€‘!





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