# Northwestern Round 2 Wiki

## 1AC

Advantage 1 is Platforms–

#### The *Amex* decisioncreated a *de facto* “platform exceptionalism” rule that prevents plaintiffs from challenging *any instance* of platform dominance

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(Herbert, “Antitrust and Platform Monopoly,” 130 Yale L.J. 1952)

A. Against Platform Exceptionalism

In *Amex*, the Supreme Court disregarded a basic principle about markets, which is that they consist of close substitutes.212 Instead, it lumped production complements into the same market, and in the process, it stymied coherent economic analysis of the problem. To be sure, power in one side of a two-sided market cannot be assessed without determining what is occurring on the other side. But one does not need to group the two sides into the same “market.” Rather, a relevant market should be determined by reference to the side where anticompetitive effects are feared. Then, assessing power requires the fact finder to consider offsetting effects, some of which may occur on the other side.213

Second, the Court ignored an important distinction between fact and law. Disputes about market boundaries involve questions of fact. Nevertheless, the majority wrote—as a matter of law—that two-sided platforms compete exclusively with other two-sided platforms. These dicta have already produced mischief in lower-court decisions. For example, it led one court to conclude that a merger between a two-sided online flight-reservation system and a more traditional system could not be a merger of competitors.214

Third, without argument or evidence, the Court required litigants to show market power indirectly in vertical restraints cases by reference to a relevant market, even though superior techniques are available. Direct measures are particularly useful in digital markets, where the necessary data are easy to obtain and product differentiation makes traditional market definition unreliable.215 This was another breach of the boundary between fact and law.

Fourth, the Court misunderstood the economics of free riding, ignoring the fact that when a firm is able to recover the value of its investments through its own transactions, free riding is not a problem.

Fifth, the Court failed to perform the kind of transaction-specific factual analysis that has become critical to economically responsible antitrust law. Rather, it simply assumed, without examining the actual transactions before it, that losses on one side of a two-sided market are inherently offset by gains on the other side.216 Amex’s antisteering rule produced immediate losses for both the affected cardholder and the affected merchant. The only beneficiary was Amex, the operator of a platform able to shelter itself from competition. That competition, in turn, would have benefitted both cardholders and merchants.

Markets differ from one another.217 This is why we apply mainly antitrust law to some markets, regulation to others, and some mixture of the two to yet others. It is also why antitrust is so fact intensive, particularly on issues pertaining to market power or competitive effects. Indeed, the biggest advantage that antitrust has over legislative regulation is its fact-driven methodology. Antitrust courts do and should avoid speaking categorically about market situations that are not immediately before them and avoid making cursory conclusions based on inadequate facts. Within the antitrust framework, there is no reason to think that digital platforms are unicorns whose rules as a class differ from those governing other firms. Every market has its distinct features, but the ordinary rules of antitrust analysis are adequate to consider them. The *Amex* decision is a cautionary tale about what can happen when a court is so overwhelmed by a market’s idiosyncrasies that it makes grand pronouncements, abandoning well-established rules for analyzing markets in the process.

#### The full scope of *Amex* is unclear—companies will exploit it to misuse their platforms—that’s effectively impossible to police

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(Lina, “The Supreme Court just quietly gutted antitrust law,” July 3, <https://www.vox.com/the-big-idea/2018/7/3/17530320/antitrust-american-express-amazon-uber-tech-monopoly-monopsony>)

Antitrust laws have never permitted monopolistic firms to wield their market power against one set of customers so long as they benefit another set of players. Yet this kind of “balancing” is exactly what the Second Circuit ratified. Consider: Under the logic the appeals court used, an anticompetitive scheme by Uber to suppress driver income would not be considered illegal unless those bringing the suit showed that riders were also harmed.

What’s more, the court said, plaintiffs have to meet this new burden at the very earliest stage of litigation.

Last Monday, a 5-4 majority on the Supreme Court upheld that approach. Not only does the decision show stunning disregard for core elements of antitrust law, it carelessly mangles long-accepted legal rules along the way to establishing its position. Perhaps most strikingly, it overrides or ignores facts established by the district court.

For example, the Supreme Court states that AmEx’s increased merchant fees reflect “increases in the value of its services,” even though the lower court expressly found that AmEx’s price hikes exceeded the value of the cardholder rewards.

In practice, the Court has shielded from effective antitrust scrutiny a huge swath of firms that provide services on more than one side of a transaction — and, in today’s digital economy, there are many (as Justice Stephen Breyer noted in a dissent he read from the bench to emphasize his concerns).

Worse yet, the Court left unclear what kinds of businesses actually qualify for this new rule. As the Open Markets Institute, for which I work, explained in an amicus brief, deciding an antitrust case using the amorphous concept of a “two-sided” market will incentivize all sorts of companies to seek protection under this bad new theory.

What kinds of companies might have more freedom to exert pressure on customers, as a result of this decision? Not newspapers, the Court said: Readers are “largely indifferent” to the number of advertisements on newspaper pages, even though advertisers are looking to reach readers. So someone suing a newspaper on antitrust grounds (say, for prohibiting advertisers from doing business with other newspapers) would not have to prove that a newspaper’s conduct harmed both readers and advertisers.

On the surface, the Court’s language suggests that the special rule would apply to Amazon’s marketplace for third-party merchants, to eBay, and to Uber — but not to Google search or Facebook. Indeed, the Justice Department’s antitrust division chief, Makan Delrahim, has also come to this conclusion about the scope of the decision. But the Court’s opinion hardly delivers a clear and workable standard for judges to go by.

One can imagine the reams of studies Google would commission to show that targeting users with advertising did indeed amount to a “transaction” with users that users highly valued — a showing that, if successful, would likely qualify it for the shield of the special rule. If so, Google might be able to impose exclusionary contracts on advertisers and significantly boost the prices it charges them. Amazon, meanwhile, can continue to squeeze the suppliers and retailers reliant on its platform with little worry about being charged with the abuse of monopsony power.

Federal judges generally lack the expertise needed to independently assess the hyper-complex economic studies that this new rule will spur. Rather than focusing on the conduct between a company and one set of its customers, the new rule requires a much more involved showing.

#### This is accelerating—recent Circuit decisions doubled down on *Amex* – to expand it to new sectors, and mergers

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(Kaj, “Antitrust After American Express: Down a Competitive Effects Rabbit Hole,” September 21, <https://techlawdecoded.com/antitrust-after-american-express-down-the-competitive-effects-rabbit-hole/>)

These are no longer just predictions, but lived realities. Since American Express came down, parties opposing government antitrust enforcement actions have taken that decision and run with it.

Antitrust in tech markets after American Express

In the two years since the American Express decision, courts have already relied on it to toss out two more major antitrust cases brought by the government, both involving tech markets.

Sabre/Farelogix

The first of these cases involved the DOJ’s effort to block a merger. Sabre was seeking to acquire Farelogix, its competitor in offering booking services to airlines. Sabre operates a two-sided transaction platform that connects airlines to travel agencies (or travelers) for the sale of tickets and other services. Farelogix provides IT solutions to airlines that are used to sell tickets to travel agencies (or travelers).

The DOJ concluded that the deal would harm competition. It believed that Farelogix acted as a competitive constraint on Sabre to the extent that it provided an alternative for airlines that rely on such third-party services to sell tickets to travel agencies and end customers. The evidence at trial—including company documents and testimony from airlines—showed that the two viewed each other as competitors and that some airlines were able to use this to seek lower commission fees from Sabre. The court hearing the case found that “it is logical to conclude that part of Sabre’s interest in acquiring Farelogix is to mitigate the risk” resulting from the fact that its technology enables airlines to bypass Sabre’s transaction platform.4

Nevertheless, the court ruled that the DOJ failed to meet its burden of proof to “show that this purchase will harm competition on both sides of the two-sided market” for travel services provided to airlines and travel agencies. Citing the American Express decision, the court said: “As a matter of antitrust law, Sabre, a two-sided transaction platform, only competes with other two-sided platforms, but Farelogix only operates on the airline side of Sabre’s platform.” Therefore, it was not enough to prove that the merger would harm competition on only the one side of the two-sided market that Farelogix is active on.

And so despite the extensive evidence of competition between the companies, the court had to conclude that, as a matter of law, “Sabre and Farelogix do not compete in a relevant market.” To succeed in blocking the merger, the DOJ would have had to “produce evidence that the anticompetitive impact of the merger on the airline side of the [transaction] platform would be so substantial that it would sufficiently reverberate throughout the [platform] to such an extent as to make the two-sided [transaction] platform market, overall, less competitive.”

Qualcomm

The second case that shows how American Express left its mark on antitrust is a monopolization (abuse of a dominant position) case brought by the Federal Trade Commission against Qualcomm. The case involved modem chips used in smart phones. Qualcomm made the chips, but it also held important patents for the technology. Rival chip makers licensed that technology from Qualcomm to produce their own competing chips.

The FTC alleged that Qualcomm had abused a dominant market position when it refused to sell its chips to smartphone manufacturers unless they also entered into a patent license (which required making a royalty payment) for any chips that they acquired from not only Qualcomm but also any of its rival chip makers. This practice, the FTC argued, imposed an anti-competitive surcharge on rivals’ chips which raised the barriers for competing with Qualcomm. This, in turn, hurt the phone manufacturers by inflating the price they paid for chips.

The court hearing the case in the first instance agreed, and ruled for the FTC. But an appeals court overturned the decision. On the main antitrust theory of the case, the appeals court reasoned that the FTC had failed to prove that Qualcomm’s “no license, no chip” policy harmed the “area of effective competition.”5 Although its evidence had shown how the policy could have increased costs for Qualcomm customers (phone makers) who buy the chips, it had not shown how the policy harmed competition by directly impacting Qualcomm competitors (rival chip makers). It pointed to the ruling in American Express that the DOJ in that case had failed to meet its burden of proof because it did not show how restrictions imposed on merchants “have anticompetitive effects that harm consumers” (italics my own).

The analogy to the Qualcomm case seems to have been that the FTC needed to connect all the dots—customers and competitors alike—in proving anticompetitive effects. Showing that the “all-in” (royalty plus sales) price charged to customers might have been inflated by Qualcomm’s licensing practices was not enough because it “falls outside the relevant antitrust markets” at issue.

Down the competitive effects rabbit hole

The *American Express*, *Sabre/Farelogix* and *Qualcomm* cases share three traits in common that show how the half-century transformation of antitrust into an Economism-driven, predictive framework is undermining enforcement, especially in tech markets.

First, the cases show how the government agencies bringing an antitrust case and the courts rendering the decisions in them must undertake a massive burden. They have to dissect the inner workings of a market and then make predictions or conjectures about actual competitive effects in the market that result from the conduct at issue. In American Express and Sabre/Farelogix, it was proving lower output and higher overall “net” (or “two-sided”) prices on multi-sided transaction platforms. In *Qualcomm*, it meant proving “an anticompetitive surcharge on rivals’ modem chip sales” by directly linking up proof of harm to customers with proof of hindering competitors.

In all three instances, the burden imposed by the courts for proving these so-called “actual anticompetitive effects” was simply too high for the government to meet. *Qualcomm* arguably went even further in raising the evidentiary bar for tech cases. The influential appeals court issuing that decision went so far as to declare that “novel business practices—especially in technology markets—should not be ‘conclusively presumed to be unreasonable and therefore illegal without elaborate inquiry as to the precise harm they have caused or the business excuse for their use’” (italics my own). Requiring “elaborate” and “precise” proof would seem to doom all but the slam-dunk government actions against tech.

Second, the trio of cases shows how proof of actual anticompetitive effects depends heavily on economic theory and models. The Supreme Court sets the pace in American Express by relying entirely on a string of academic articles by economists—citing nothing from the fact record of the case before it—to construct its “two-sided transaction platform” market and reach the critical conclusion that “[e]valuating both sides of a two-sided transaction platform is [] necessary to accurately assess competition.”

Sabre/Farelogix picks up the baton and runs with it, relying on that theory-based legal holding in American Express to ignore an exhaustive factual record of company documents, executive testimony, and third-party complaints showing close competition between the merging companies. Qualcomm then carries the baton across the finish line when it frames the case with a skepticism of “novel” theories of competitive harm by citing blanket assertions in two academic article about how antitrust cases of technology markets skew towards over-enforcement.6 When it comes to economic theory and a predictive antitrust that requires proof of actual anticompetitive effects, the tail wags the dog.

Third, these three cases rest on a critical assumption—arguably bordering on a blind faith—that economics is up to the task of proving actual competitive effects. Baked into the courts’ reasoning is that economics can be used to understand and predict complex market environments that change in real-time in often unexpected ways. Yet, as discussed in my recent article, it has yet to be empirically proven—or seriously tested—that economics can perform the sort of analyses and predictions that would justify its having become the foundational underpinning of the enforcement of the antitrust laws. If anything, real-world experience in competition law practice combined with general research on uncertainty and decision-making suggest that expert judgments are poor predictors in complex environments like those at issue in antitrust cases.

And as they push antitrust further down an Economism-driven path, the courts provide little guidance on how plaintiffs are to meet their super-sized burden for proving actual anticompetitive effects. In American Express and Sabre/Farelogix, the government’s case is thrown out because it failed to prove an increase in the “net” or “two-sided” prices on a multi-sided transaction platform. But such a thing exists only as a figment of a court’s imagination. It does not exist in the real world. No one pays it, and no one charges it. And it’s unclear how an antitrust plaintiff is to go about the precarious exercise of weighing benefits to one side of a market against the harms to another. In American Express, for example, would it mean weighing the swipe fees charged to merchants against the rewards points earned by shoppers? In the absence of any guidance, it can safely be assumed that economic theories and models are expected to conjure such “net” prices into existence.

The trio of cases, therefore, reflects and even propels a broader trend that has eviscerated antitrust enforcement—especially in tech—by erecting high barriers for plaintiffs to prove actual anticompetitive effects using dubious economic tools.

A modern antitrust in peril

With the Sabre/Farelogix and Qualcomm cases, the American Express decision has rounded out its influence on the three main pillars of US antitrust law: mergers, monopolization, and contracts in restraint of trade.

None of the three cases sets out groundbreaking new law. Their significance lies rather in accelerating a trend, half of a century in the making, among policymakers, academics, and judges to require antitrust plaintiffs to take on an ever-increasing burden of proof in using economic tools to show how market conduct harms competition. Each such case is an individual brick in a rising wall—reaching its tallest heights in tech markets that are especially difficult to understand and predict—that plaintiffs must scale to bring a successful antitrust case.

The consequence is not just an intellectual failing about humankind’s ability to make accurate predictions in unpredictable markets. It also means lax antitrust enforcement and the mass-consolidation of economic power across the economy.

#### First, mergers—*Amex* undermines enforcement against nascent acquisitions

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(Steven, “Dominant Digital Platforms: Is Antitrust Up to the Task?” yalelawjournal.org/pdf/SalopEssay\_rnon2ejq.pdf)

This most recent agency loss involved an acquisition by a dominant digital platform. Sabre is a digital platform that permits airlines to post schedules, fares and seat availability and allows travel agents to access this information, make travel bookings and pay for them. Sabre proposed to acquire Farelogix, which provides technology to airlines. This technology allows an airline to disintermediate Sabre by allowing the airline to connect directly to travel agencies and provide travel agencies with information and ticket-booking services itself. Thus, this acquisition was analytically like a vertical merger, where Farelogix sells a critical input (i.e., its technology) to airlines, which they use to compete with Sabre for the business of travel agents. The competitive concern is that Sabre would foreclose airlines’ ability to acquire the Farelogix technology input.

Perhaps attempting to exploit the horizontal-merger structural presumption and avoid the difficulties they faced in AT&T/Time Warner, the DOJ did not litigate the case as a vertical merger. Instead, the complaint alleged that Sabre and Farelogix competed in the provision of booking services for airline tickets sold through travel agencies. This competition is indirect, resulting from Farelogix working with the individual airlines to disintermediate Sabre. However, the trial court did not miss the point. It observed that “Sabre and Farelogix view each other as competitors” and found that “the record reflects competition between Sabre’s and Farelogix’s direct connection solutions for airlines.”94

Having concluded that competition was reduced by the merger, the trial court nonetheless rejected the DOJ’s complaint on the grounds that Farelogix and Sabre do not compete in the two-sided platform market.95 While Sabre provides services to customers on both sides (i.e., to both airlines and travel agencies), Farelogix provides services to only one side (i.e., to airlines, but not to travel agencies). The travel agency services are provided by the airlines themselves, using the Farelogix technology.

This approach was both defective and unnecessary because Sabre competed with the combination of Farelogix and the airlines.96 Yet the court thought that American Express compelled the opposite result, despite its own fact-finding and the vertical nature of the transaction. If other U.S. courts similarly follow this same defective approach, the result will be underdeterrence of anticompetitive acquisitions by digital platforms.97 Indeed, this approach would lead to ludicrous results. Under this reasoning, Microsoft could have legally ended the competitive threat from Netscape and Java simply by acquiring them instead of trying to destroy them.

#### Uncontested platform exclusion stifles innovation

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(Rebecca, “Antitrust’s High-Tech Exceptionalism,” 130 Yale L.J. 588)

American competition policy has a big problem. Actually, it has four big problems: Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Google. What was once a dynamic pool of smaller start-ups, the high-tech sector has now coalesced around just four companies that together reported over $773 billion of revenue in 2019.1 Each reigns over its own segment of the high-tech marketplace: Amazon controls the retail sector, Apple dominates devices and apps, Facebook owns social media, and Google virtually governs the internet itself. To the extent Silicon Valley still churns out a steady stream of startups, it is more to feed these beasts by acquisition than to produce meaningful rivals to their empires.2

Of course, not everyone agrees that this state of affairs is a problem at all. To some, the size of these firms is merely a symptom of their success. Relentless innovation, a customer-is-king mentality, network effects that benefit consumers, and economies of scale have made these firms ever larger and their products ever better for American consumers. Some even contest the idea that they are large at all by arguing that in a properly defined market, each firm faces significant rivalry and thus lacks market power. Some think that American antitrust law should pat itself on the back for fostering the competitive conditions that let these innovative companies thrive.3

However, this view is increasingly unpopular, and for good reason. Each of these companies, in its own way, holds the keys to competitive entry in many important online markets. To bring an app to market, a developer must deal with Apple; to reach online shoppers, retailers must use Amazon, and so on. Without a meaningful choice between platforms, independent sellers, developers, and websites must pass through a privately maintained bottleneck often on unfavorable terms. These restrictions on competition harm consumers by reducing the output and raising prices for goods that must pass through the bottleneck, and by reducing firms’ incentives to innovate—if they know a large portion of their profits will be appropriated by the platform, they have less incentive to bring new products to market. And by controlling the throttle of technological innovation, each dominant firm can stave off the possibility that one of these nascent companies will build a rival network—a platform that can break the bottleneck itself.4 Long-term, stable platform dominance means consum ers likely will not see the kind of Schumpterian innovation associated with great technological leaps forward.5 Rather, consumer welfare depends on these platforms’ internal incentives to innovate, which are weakened in the absence of true rivalry.6 In short, there is a growing recognition that as much as these companies have innovation to thank for their success, their current tactics are making it hard for the next generation of disruptive innovators to take over. If antitrust law continues to stand by, consumers will pay the price.

#### Prospect of big tech acquisition dampens innovation

Allensworth, Professor of Law at Vanderbilt Law School, ‘21

(Rebecca, “Antitrust’s High-Tech Exceptionalism,” 130 Yale L.J. 588)

E. Whither Innovation?

As a theoretical matter, big tech’s refusals to deal and predatory copying suppress innovation. A retailer with a new idea for a household product will be less inclined to invest in producing it if he knows Amazon can appropriate the returns. A developer with a better “app for that” will be less likely to bring it to market if she believes Apple or Facebook might someday remove it from their platforms. And if a rival search company cannot hope to keep its data private from Google, it will not invest in building a better search engine to try to take on the giant.

Whether big tech stifles innovation as an empirical matter is less clear, but there is anecdotal evidence that it does. During a recent hearing following the House Judiciary Committee’s investigation into competition abuses among high-tech firms, Representative Cicilline read a quote that he said was typical of the entrepreneurs he interviewed: “If someone came to me with an idea for a website or a web service today, I’d tell them to run. Run as far away from the web as possible.”111 Venture capital, while booming overall,112 is shy about funding projects that might compete with Big Tech. The best-case scenario for a start-up is acquisition by one of the big four—a lucrative payday, for sure, but nothing compared to what could come from actually toppling a dominant firm. This puts a ceiling on the upside, and with the ever-present risk of failure, it likely leads to under-investment in new ideas. As one funder put it, “[w]e don’t touch anything that comes too close to Facebook, Google or Amazon.”113

CONCLUSION: “ANTITRUST IS GREEDY”

The promise that we saw in high tech during its first boom—that it would change the way we work, communicate, shop, and play—has largely been realized. Few can argue with the efficiencies that digital communication and commerce have brought to our lives and markets. But, as Professor Herbert Hovenkamp has said, “antitrust is greedy.”114 It wants not only efficiency in end products, but efficiency in the competitive process that brings them about. During the dot-com era, American antitrust institutions became enthralled with the idea that encouraging the development of dynamic, innovative products required compromising our commitment to dynamic, innovative markets. That compromise contributed—in a way that is often overlooked—to the current competition crisis in big tech.

#### Specifically, AI acquisitions have increased six-fold.

CB Insights ’19 – data analytics company [CB Insights; private company with a business analytics platform and global database that provides market intelligence on private companies and investor activities, targeted at private equity, venture capital, investment banking, angel investing, and consulting professionals by providing insights about high growth private companies; 9-17-2019; "The Race For AI: Here Are The Tech Giants Rushing To Snap Up Artificial Intelligence Startups"; CB Insights; https://www.cbinsights.com/research/top-acquirers-ai-startups-ma-timeline/; accessed 8-15-2021]

Artificial intelligence has long been a major focus for tech leaders across industries. Big corporations across every sector, from retail to agriculture, are trying to integrate machine learning into their products. At the same time, there is an acute shortage of AI talent.

This combination is fueling a heated race to scoop up top AI startups, many of which are still in the early stages of research and funding.

Below, we dig into AI acquisition trends, from which companies are the most acquisitive to what areas of focus are attracting the most attention.

TECH GIANTS LEAD IN AI ACQUISITIONS

The usual suspects are leading the race for AI: tech giants like Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft, Google, & Apple (FAMGA) have all been aggressively acquiring AI startups in the last decade.

Among the FAMGA companies, Apple leads the way, making 20 total AI acquisitions since 2010. It is followed by Google (the frontrunner from 2012 to 2016) with 14 acquisitions and Microsoft with 10.

Apple’s AI acquisition spree, which has helped it overtake Google in recent years, was essential to the development of new iPhone features. For example, FaceID, the technology that allows users to unlock their iPhone X just by looking at it, stems from Apple’s M&A moves in chips and computer vision, including the acquisition of AI company RealFace.

In fact, many of FAMGA’s prominent products and services came out of acquisitions of AI companies — such as Apple’s Siri, or Google’s contributions to healthcare through DeepMind.

That said, tech giants are far from the only companies snatching up AI startups.

Since 2010, there have been 635 AI acquisitions, as companies aim to build out their AI capabilities and capture sought-after talent (as of 8/31/2019).

The pace of these acquisitions has also been increasing. AI acquisitions saw a more than 6x uptick from 2013 to 2018, including last year’s record of 166 AI acquisitions — up 38% year-over-year.

In 2019, there have already been 140+ acquisitions (as of August), putting the year on track to beat the 2018 record at the current run rate.

#### Tech behemoths won’t take DOD contracts. Antitrust would encourage smaller firms to develop AI for the sole purpose of defense needs.

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3. Are smaller vendors more likely to produce innovative products that meet the Pentagon’s needs?

Tech industry leaders have relatively **little incentive** to work with the Pentagon. Their companies already enjoy **broad customer bases** and financial independence from U.S. government contracts—including those **at the Pentagon**.89 DOD contracts involve **applying** AI technology in varied, complex, and **operationally demanding** environments with **low tolerance** for error. Similarly, industry has **little motivation** to take on unique DOD **data management** and privacy requirements, such as data compartmentalization, protection against deceptive or compromised data inputs, and strict **data accountability** provisions complicating **algorithm training**.90 Finally, some commercial AI advances will easily convert into Pentagon applications. Others will require significant, difficult adaption and productization.

Antitrust action could create **smaller AI firms** targeting DOD business as their “**niche**.” With the Pentagon as their **sole customer**, these firms could focus on its unique needs, tailoring broader AI innovations for the Pentagon through **productization** and **organizational adaptation**. They could follow the example of **Palantir**, which makes 50 percent of its revenue from **government contracts**,91 or Kratos (60 percent).92 In the last five years, a **number of companies** have emerged in this mold, including Anduril Labs (2017), Shield AI (2015), Descartes Labs (2014), and Uptake (2014). As smaller firms’ primary, high-value customer, the Pentagon can **dictate** their innovation objectives, ultimately yielding AI applications better suited to **defense needs**.

#### Military AI ushers in the erosion of conventional deterrence – developing it is necessary to prevent great power wars.

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Yet if ever there were a time to **get serious** about the coming revolution in **military affairs**, it is **now**. There is an emerging consensus that the United States' top **defense-planning priority** should be **contending** with **great powers** with **advanced militaries**, primarily **China**, and that **new technologies**, once intriguing but speculative, are now both **real** and **essential** to **future military advantage**. Senior military leaders and defense experts are also starting to agree, albeit belatedly, that when it comes to these threats, the United States is **falling dangerously behind**.

This reality demands more than a revolution in technology; it requires a revolution in thinking. And that thinking must focus more on how the U.S. military fights than with what it fights. The problem is not **insufficient spending** on defense; it is that the U.S. military is being countered by **rivals** with **superior strategies**. The United States, in other words, is playing a **losing game**. The question, accordingly, is not how **new technologies** can improve the U.S. military's ability to do what it already does but how they can enable it to operate in **new ways**. If American defense officials do not answer that question, there will still be a **revolution in military affairs**. But it will primarily **benefit others**.

It is still possible for the United States to adapt and succeed, but the scale of change required is enormous. The **traditional model** of U.S. **military power** is being **disrupted**, the way Blockbuster's business model was amid the rise of Amazon and Netflix. A military made up of **small numbers** of **large**, **expensive**, **heavily manned**, and **hard-to replace** systems will not **survive** on **future battlefields**, where swarms of **intelligent machines** will deliver violence at a **greater volume** and **higher velocity** than **ever before**. Success will require a **different kind of military**, one built around **large numbers** of **small**, **inexpensive**, **expendable**, and **highly autonomous** systems. The United States has the money, human capital, and technology to assemble that kind of military. The question is whether it has the imagination and the resolve.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES, OLD PROBLEMS

**Artificial intelligence** and other emerging technologies will change the way **war is fought**, but they will not change its nature. Whether it involves longbows or source code, war will always be violent, politically motivated, and composed of the same three elemental functions that new recruits learn in basic training: move, shoot, and communicate.

Movement in warfare entails hiding and seeking (attackers try to evade detection; defenders try to detect them) and penetrating and repelling (attackers try to enter opponents’ space; defenders try to deny them access). But in a world that is becoming one giant sensor, hiding and penetrating—never easy in warfare—will be far more difficult, if not impossible. The amount of data generated by networked devices, the so-called Internet of Things, is on pace to triple between 2016 and 2021. More significant, the proliferation of low-cost, commercial sensors that can detect more things more clearly over greater distances is already providing more real-time global surveillance than has existed at any time in history. This is especially true in space. In the past, the high costs of launching satellites required them to be large, expensive, and designed to orbit for decades. But as access to space gets cheaper, satellites are becoming more like mobile phones—mass-produced devices that are used for a few years and then replaced. Commercial space companies are already fielding hundreds of small, cheap satellites. Soon, there will be thousands of such satellites, providing an unblinking eye over the entire world. Stealth technology is living on borrowed time.

On top of all of that, quantum sensors—which use the bizarre properties of subatomic particles, such as their ability to be in two different places at once—will eventually be able detect disruptions in the environment, such as the displacement of air around aircraft or water around submarines. Quantum sensors will likely be the first usable application of quantum science, and this technology is still many years off. But once quantum sensors are fielded, there will be nowhere to hide.

The future of movement will also be characterized by a return of mass to the battlefield, after many decades in which the trend was moving in the opposite direction—toward an emphasis on quality over quantity—as technology is enabling more systems to get in motion and stay in motion in more places. Ubiquitous sensors will generate exponentially greater quantities of data, which in turn will drive both the development and the deployment of artificial intelligence. As machines become more autonomous, militaries will be able to field more of them in smaller sizes and at lower costs. New developments in power generation and storage and in hypersonic propulsion will allow these smaller systems to travel farther and faster than ever. Where once there was one destroyer, for example, the near future could see dozens of autonomous vessels that are similar to missile barges, ready to strike as targets emerge.

Technology will also transform how those systems remain in motion. Logistics—the ability to supply forces with food, fuel, and replacements—has traditionally been the limiting factor in war. But autonomous militaries will need less fuel and no food. Advanced manufacturing methods, such as 3-D printing, will reduce the need for vast, risky, and expensive military logistics networks by enabling the production of complicated goods at the point of demand quickly, cheaply, and easily.

In an even more profound change, space will emerge as its own domain of maneuver warfare. So far, the near impossibility of refueling spacecraft has largely limited them to orbiting the earth. But as it becomes feasible to not just refuel spacecraft midflight but also build and service satellites in space, process data in orbit, and capture resources and energy in space for use in space (for example, by using vast solar arrays or mining asteroids), space operations will become less dependent on earth. Spacecraft will be able to maneuver and fight, and the first orbital weapons could enter the battlefield. The technology to do much of this exists already.

THE MILITARIES OF TOMORROW

Technology will also radically alter how militaries shoot, both literally and figuratively. Cyberattacks, communication jamming, electronic warfare, and other attacks on a system’s software will become as important as those that target a system’s hardware, if not more so. The rate of fire, or how fast weapons can shoot, will accelerate rapidly thanks to new technologies such as lasers, high-powered microwaves, and other directed-energy weapons. But what will really increase the rate of fire are intelligent systems that will radically reduce the time between when targets can be identified and when they can be attacked. A harbinger of this much nastier future battlefield has played out in Ukraine since 2014, where Russia has shortened to mere minutes the time between when their spotter drones first detect Ukrainian forces and when their precision rocket artillery wipes those forces off the map.

The militaries of the future will also be able to shoot farther than those of today. Eventually, hypersonic munitions (weapons that travel at more than five times the speed of sound) and space-based weapons will be able to strike targets anywhere in the world nearly instantly. Militaries will be able to attack domains once assumed to be sanctuaries, such as space and logistics networks. There will be no rear areas or safe havens anymore. Swarms of autonomous systems will not only be able to find targets everywhere; they will also be able to shoot them accurately. The ability to have both quantity and quality in military systems will have devastating effects, especially as technology makes lethal payloads smaller.

Finally, the way militaries communicate will change drastically. Traditional communications networks—hub-and-spoke structures with vulnerable single points of failure—will not survive. Instead, technology will push vital communications functions to the edge of the network. Every autonomous system will be able to process and make sense of the information it gathers on its own, without relying on a command hub. This will enable the creation of radically distributed networks that are resilient and reconfigurable.

Technology is also inverting the current paradigm of command and control. Today, even a supposedly unmanned system requires dozens of people to operate it remotely, maintain it, and process the data it collects. But as systems become more autonomous, one person will be able to operate larger numbers of them single-handedly. The opening ceremonies of the 2018 Winter Olympics, in South Korea, offered a preview of this technology when 1,218 autonomous drones equipped with lights collaborated to form intricate pictures in the night sky over Pyeongchang. Now imagine similar autonomous systems being used, for example, to overwhelm an aircraft carrier and render it inoperable.

Further afield, other technologies will change military communications. Information networks based on 5G technology will be capable of moving vastly larger amounts of data at significantly faster speeds. Similarly, the same quantum science that will improve military sensors will transform communications and computing. Quantum computing—the ability to use the abnormal properties of subatomic particles to exponentially increase processing power—will make possible encryption methods that could be unbreakable, as well as give militaries the power to process volumes of data and solve classes of problems that exceed the capacity of classical computers. More incredible still, so-called brain-computer interface technology is already enabling human beings to control complicated systems, such as robotic prosthetics and even unmanned aircraft, with their neural signals. Put simply, it is becoming possible for a human operator to control multiple drones simply by thinking of what they want those systems to do.

Put together, all these technologies will displace decades-old, even centuries-old, assumptions about how militaries operate. The militaries that embrace and adapt to these technologies will dominate those that do not. In that regard, the U.S. military is in big trouble.

A LOSING GAME

Since the end of the **Cold War**, the United States' approach to **projecting military force** against regional powers has rested on a series of **assumptions** about how conflicts **will unfold**. The U.S. military assumes that its forces will be able to move **unimpeded** into forward positions and that it will be able to **commence hostilities** at a time of **its choosing**. It assumes that its forces will operate in **permissive environments**-that adversaries will be **unable to contest** its **freedom of movement** in any domain. It assumes that **any quantitative advantage** that an adversary may possess will be **overcome** by its own **superior ability** to **evade** detection, **penetrate** enemy defenses, and **strike targets**. And it assumes that U.S. forces will suffer **few losses** in combat.

These **assumptions** have led to a force built around relatively **small numbers** of **large**, **expensive**, and **hard-to-replace** systems that are optimized for moving undetected close to their targets, shooting a limited number of times but with extreme precision, and communicating with impunity. Think stealth aircraft flying right into downtown Belgrade or Baghdad. What's more, systems such as these depend on **communications**, **logistics**, and **satellite networks** that are almost **entirely defenseless**, because they were designed under the **premise** that no adversary would ever be able to **attack them.**

This military enterprise and its underlying suppositions are being called into question. For the past two decades, while the United States has focused on **fighting wars** in the **Middle East**, its competitors-especially **China**, but also **Russia**-have been dissecting its way of war and **developing** so-called anti-access/area-denial (or A2/AD) capabilities to **detect U.S. systems** in **every domain** and **overwhelm them** with large salvos of precision fire. Put simply, U.S. rivals are fielding **large quantities** of **multimillion-dollar weapons** to destroy the United States' **multibillion-dollar military** systems.

China has also begun work on **megaprojects** designed to **position it** as the **world leader** in **artificial intelligence** and other advanced technologies. This undertaking is not exclusively military in its focus, but every one of these **advanced-technology megaprojects** has **military applications** and benefits the **People's Liberation Army** under the doctrine of "**military-civil fusion**." Whereas the U.S. military still largely treats its data like engine exhaust-a **useless byproduct**-China is moving with **authoritarian zeal** to stockpile its data like **oil**, so that it can power the **autonomous** and **intelligent** military systems it sees as **critical** to **dominance** in **future warfare**.

The United States' position, **already dire**, is **rapidly deteriorating**. As a 2017 report from the rand Corporation concluded, "U.S. forces could, under plausible assumptions, lose the **next war** they are **called upon to fight**." That same year, General Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, sounded the alarm in stark terms: "In **just a few years**, if we do not **change** the **trajectory**, we will **lose** our qualitative and quantitative **competitive advantage**."

The **greatest danger** for the United States is the **erosion of conventional deterrence**. If leaders in **Beijing** or **Moscow** think that they might **win a war** against the United States, they will run **greater risks** and **press their advantage**. They will take actions that steadily undermine the United States' commitments to its allies by casting doubt on whether Washington would really send its military to defend the Baltics, the Philippines, Taiwan, or even Japan or South Korea. They will try to **get their way** through **any means necessary**, from coercive diplomacy and economic extortion to meddling in the domestic affairs of other countries. And they will steadily harden their **spheres of influence**, turning them into areas ever more **hospitable** to **authoritarian ideology**, **surveillance states**, and **crony capitalism**. In other words, they will try, as the military strategist Sun-tzu recommended, to "win without fighting.

#### Consensus of the best theoretical and empirical research concludes US military primacy deter great power war and nuclear proliferation cascades that cause extinction

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Stephen Brooks, William C. Wohlforth is Daniel Webster Professor of Government in the Dartmouth College Department of Government, America Abroad: Why the Sole Superpower Should Not Pull Back from the World (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 103-110.

Consistency with influential relevant theories lends credence to the expectation that US security commitments actually can shape the strategic environment as deep engagement presupposes. But it is far from conclusive. Not all analysts endorse the theories we discussed in chapter 5. These theories make strong assumptions that states generally act rationally and focus primarily on security. Allowing misperceptions, emotions, domestic politics, desire for status, or concern for honor into the picture might alter the verdict on the strategy’s net expected effects. And to model the strategy’s expected effects we had to simplify things by selecting two mechanisms— assurance and deterrence—and examining their effects independently, thus missing potentially powerful positive interactions between them.

This chapter moves beyond theory to examine patterns of evidence. If the theoretical arguments about the security effects of deep engagement are right, what sort of evidence should we see? Two major bodies of evidence are most important: general empirical findings concerning the strategy’s key mechanisms and regionally focused research.

General Patterns of Evidence

Three key questions about US security provision have received the most extensive analysis. First, do alliances such as those sustained by the United States actually deter war and increase security? Second, does such security provision actually hinder nuclear proliferation? And third, does limiting proliferation actually increase security?

Deterrence Effectiveness

The determinants of deterrence success and failure have attracted scores of quantitative and case study tests. Much of the case study work yields a cautionary finding: that deterrence is much harder in practice than in theory, because standard models assume away the complexities of human psychology and domestic politics that tend to make some states hard to deter and might cause deterrence policies to backfire.1 Many quantitative findings, meanwhile, are mutually contradictory or are clearly not relevant to extended deterrence. But some relevant results receive broad support:

• Alliances generally do have a deterrent effect. In a study spanning nearly two centuries, Johnson and Leeds found “support for the hypothesis that defensive alliances deter the initiation of disputes.” They conclude that “defensive alliances lower the probability of international conflict and are thus a good policy option for states seeking to maintain peace in the world.”2 Sechser and Fuhrmann similarly find that formal defense pacts with nuclear states have significant deterrence benefits.3

• The overall balance of military forces (including nuclear) between states does not appear to influence deterrence; the local balance of military forces in the specific theater in which deterrence is actually practiced, however, is key.4

• Forward-deployed troops enhance the deterrent effect of alliances with overseas allies.5

• Strong mutual interests and ties enhance deterrence.6

• Case studies strongly ratify the theoretical expectation that it is easier to defend a given status quo than to challenge it forcefully: compellence (sometimes termed “coercion” or “coercive diplomacy”) is extremely hard.7

The most important finding to emerge from this voluminous research is that alliances—especially with nuclear-armed allies like the United States— actually work in deterring conflict. This is all the more striking in view of the fact that what scholars call “selection bias” probably works against it. The United States is more inclined to offer—and protégés to seek—alliance relationships in settings where the probability of military conflicts is higher than average. The fact that alliances work to deter conflict in precisely the situations where deterrence is likely to be especially hard is noteworthy.

More specifically, these findings buttress the key theoretical implication that if the United States is interested in deterring military challenges to the status quo in key regions, relying only on latent military capabilities in the US homeland is likely to be far less effective than having an overseas military posture. Similarly, they lend support to the general proposition that a forward deterrence posture is strongly appealing to a status quo power, because defending a given status quo is far cheaper than overturning it, and, once a favorable status quo is successfully overturned, restoring the status quo ante can be expected to be fearsomely costly. Recognizing the significance of these findings clearly casts doubt on the “wait on the sidelines and decide whether to intervene later” approach that is so strongly favored by retrenchment proponents.

The Causes of Nuclear Proliferation

Matthew Kroenig highlights a number of reasons why US policymakers seek to limit the spread of nuclear weapons: “Fear that nuclear proliferation might deter [US leaders] from using military intervention to pursue their interests, reduce the effectiveness of their coercive diplomacy, trigger regional instability, undermine their alliance structures, dissipate their strategic attention, and set off further nuclear proliferation within their sphere of influence.”8 These are not the only reasons for concern about nuclear proliferation; also notable are the enhanced prospects of nuclear accidents and the greater risk of leakage of nuclear material to terrorists.9

Do deep engagement’s security ties serve to contain the spread of nuclear weapons? The literature on the causes of proliferation is massive and faces challenges as great as any in international relations. With few cases to study, severe challenges in gathering evidence about inevitably secretive nuclear programs, and a large number of factors in play on both the demand and the supply sides, findings are decidedly mixed.10 Alliance relationships are just one piece of this complex puzzle, one that is hard to isolate from all the other factors in play. And empirical studies face the same selection bias problem just discussed: Nuclear powers are more likely to offer security guarantees to states confronting a serious threat and thus facing above-average incentives to acquire nuclear weapons. Indeed, alliance guarantees might be offered to states actively considering the nuclear option precisely in order to try to forestall that decision. Like a strong drug given only to very sick patients, alliances thus may have a powerful effect even if they sometimes fail to work as hoped.

Bearing these challenges in mind, the most relevant findings that emerge from this literature are:

• The most recent statistical analysis of the precise question at issue concludes that “security guarantees significantly reduce proliferation proclivity among their recipients.”11 In addition, states with such guarantees are less likely to export sensitive nuclear material and technology to other nonnuclear states.12

• Case study research underscores that the complexity of motivations for acquiring nuclear weapons cannot be reduced to security: domestic politics, economic interests, and prestige all matter.13

• Multiple independently conceived and executed recent case studies nonetheless reveal that security alliances help explain numerous allied decisions not to proliferate even when security is not always the main driver of leaders’ interest in a nuclear program.14 As Nuno Monteiro and Alexandre Debs stress, “States whose security goals are subsumed by their sponsors’ own aims have never acquired the bomb. … This finding highlights the role of U.S.  security commitments in stymieing nuclear proliferation: U.S. protégés will only seek the bomb if they doubt U.S. protection of their core security goals.”15

• Multiple independently conceived and executed recent case research projects further unpack the conditions that decrease the likelihood of allied proliferation, centering on the credibility of the alliance commitment.16 In addition, in some cases of prevention failure, the alliances allow the patron to influence the ally’s nuclear program subsequently, decreasing further proliferation risks.17

• Security alliances lower the likelihood of proliferation cascades. To be sure, many predicted cascades did not occur.18 But security provision, mainly by the United States, is a key reason why. The most comprehensive statistical analysis finds that states are more likely to proliferate in response to neighbors when three conditions are met: (1) there is an intense security rivalry between the two countries; (2) the prospective proliferating state does not have a security guarantee from a nuclear-armed patron; and (3) the potential proliferator has the industrial and technical capacity to launch an indigenous nuclear program.19

In sum, as Monteiro and Debs note, “Despite grave concerns that more states would seek a nuclear deterrent to counter U.S. power preponderance,” in fact “the spread of nuclear weapons decelerated with the end of the Cold War in 1989.”20 Their research, as well as that of scores of scholars using multiple methods and representing many contrasting theoretical perspectives, shows that US security guarantees and the counter-proliferation policy deep engagement allows are a big part of the reason why.

The Costs of Nuclear Proliferation

General empirical findings thus lend support to the proposition that security alliances impede nuclear proliferation. But is this a net contributor to global security? Most practitioners and policy analysts would probably not even bring this up as a question and would automatically answer yes if it were raised. Yet a small but very prominent group of theorists within the academy reach a different answer: some of the same realist precepts that generate the theoretical prediction that retrenchment would increase demand for nuclear weapons also suggest that proliferation might increase security such that the net effect of retrenchment could be neutral. Most notably, “nuclear optimists” like Kenneth Waltz contend that deterrence essentially solves the security problem for all nuclear-armed states, largely eliminating the direct use of force among them.21 It follows that US retrenchment might generate an initial decrease in security followed by an increase as insecure states acquire nuclear capabilities, ultimately leaving no net effect on international security.

This perspective is countered by “nuclear pessimists” such as Scott Sagan. Reaching outside realism to organization theory and other bodies of social science research, they see major security downsides from new nuclear states. Copious research produced by Sagan and others casts doubt on the expectation that governments can be relied upon to create secure and controlled nuclear forces.22 The more nuclear states there are, the higher the probability that the organizational, psychological, and civil-military pathologies Sagan identifies will turn an episode like one of the numerous “near misses” he uncovers into actual nuclear use. As Campbell Craig warns, “One day a warning system will fail, or an official will panic, or a terrorist attack will be misconstrued, and the missiles will fly.”23

Looking beyond these kinds of factors, it is notable that powerful reasons to question the assessment of proliferation optimists also emerge even if one assumes, as they do, that states are rational and seek only to maximize their security. First, nuclear deterrence can only work by raising the risk of nuclear war. For deterrence to be credible, there has to be a nonzero chance of nuclear use.24 If nuclear use is impossible, deterrence cannot be credible. It follows that every nuclear deterrence relationship depends on some probability of nuclear use. The more such relationships there are, the greater the risk of nuclear war.i Proliferation therefore increases the chances of nuclear war even in a perfectly rationalist world. Proliferation optimists cannot logically deny that nuclear spread increases the risk of nuclear war. Their argument must be that the security gains of nuclear spread outweigh this enhanced risk.

Estimating that risk is not simply a matter of pondering the conditions under which leaders will choose to unleash nuclear war. Rather, as Schelling established, the question is whether states will run the risk of using nuclear weapons. Nuclear crisis bargaining is about a “competition in risk taking.”25 Kroenig counts some twenty cases in which states—including prominently the United States—ran real risks of nuclear war in order to prevail in crises.26 As Kroenig notes, “By asking whether states can be deterred or not … proliferation optimists are asking the wrong question. The right question to ask is: what risk of nuclear war is a specific state willing to run against a particular opponent in a given crisis?”27 The more nuclear-armed states there are, the more the opportunities for such risk-taking and the greater the probability of nuclear use.

It is also the case that for nuclear weapons to deter a given level of conflict, there must be a real probability of their use at that level of conflict. For nuclear weapons to deter conventional attack, they must be configured in such a way as to make their use credible in response to a conventional attack. Highly controlled and reliable assured-retaliation postures might well be credible in response to a conventional attack that threatens a state’s existence. But as newer research shows, the farther the issue in question is from a state’s existential security, the harder it is to make nuclear threats credible with the type of ideally stable nuclear posture whose existence proliferation optimism presupposes.28 If a state wishes, for example, to deter a conventionally stronger neighbor from seizing a disputed piece of territory, it may face great challenges fashioning a nuclear force that is credible. Following Schelling’s logic about the “threat that leaves something to chance,” it may face incentives to create a quasi-doomsday nuclear posture that virtually locks in escalation in response to its rival’s attempt to seize the territory conventionally.

Key here is that nuclear spread cannot be treated as binary:  “You have ‘em or you don’t.” States can choose the kind of nuclear postures they build. Some states may choose to build dangerous and vulnerable nuclear postures. And because they lack the money or the technological capacity or both, many states may not be able to create truly survivable forces (that is, forces that can survive a nuclear first strike by a rival power) even if they wanted to.

The links between nuclear possession and conflict are hard to assess empirically. Still, there are relevant findings that are probative for this debate:

• Nuclear weapons are most credible at deterring the kind of conflict— threats to a state’s core territorial security—that is least relevant to the actual security concerns of most states most of the time. Both quantitative and case study research validates the claim that territorial conquest is rarely an issue in armed conflicts in the present era. Yet states that are bullish on their prospects for territorial survival as sovereign units still have plenty of security concerns and also often find plenty of reasons to use force and plenty of ways to use force other than by conquering other states.29

• Robust, secure nuclear postures do not stop states from engaging in intense security competition. Though the United States and Soviet Union did not fight each other during the Cold War, their nuclear arsenals did not prevent them from engaging in one of history’s most costly rivalries, complete with intense arms racing and dangerous crises that raised the specter of nuclear war.

• Though they built massive arsenals, at various junctures the two superpowers adopted dangerously escalatory postures to attempt to deter various levels of conflict.30

• The mere possession of nuclear weapons does not deter conventional attack, as both India and Israel discovered.

• In both statistical and case study tests, Vipin Narang finds that the only nuclear posture that has any effect on conventional conflict initiation and escalation is a destabilizing “asymmetrical escalatory” force, a doomsday posture designed to create intense incentives for early use, such as that constructed by Pakistan in the 1990s.31

In short, nuclear spread is a Hobson’s choice: it will inevitably increase the chances of nuclear use, and it will either not deter conventional war or will do so only by raising the risks of nuclear war even more. Add to this the risk that states in the real world may not behave in ways consistent with the assumptions underlying proliferation optimism. That is, some subset of new nuclear-armed states may not be led by rational leaders, may not prove able to overcome organizational problems and resist the temptation to preempt before feared neighbors nuclearize, may not pursue security as the only major state preference, and may not be risk-averse. The scale of these risks rises as the world moves from nine to twenty, thirty, or forty nuclear states. In addition, many of the other dangers noted by analysts who are concerned about the destabilizing effects of nuclear proliferation—including the risk of accidents and the prospects that some new nuclear powers will not have truly survivable forces (making them susceptible to a first-strike attack and thus creating incentives for early first use)—are prone to go up as the number of nuclear powers grows. Moreover, the risk of unforeseen crisis dynamics that could spin out of control is also higher as the number of nuclear powers increases. Finally, add to these concerns the enhanced danger of nuclear leakage to dangerous, undeterrable nonstate actors, and a world with overall higher levels of security competition becomes yet more worrisome. And all of these concerns emerge independently of other reasons the United States is generally better off in a world with fewer nuclear states, notably increased US freedom of action.

#### Only sustained military primacy prevents great power war with Russia and China – cracks in the liberal world order make it try or die for flexible deterrence

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Robert Kagan, “The Twilight of the Liberal World Order,” Brookings Big Ideas for America edited by Michael O’Hanlon, Brookings Institution Press (2017): <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7864/j.ctt1kk66tr.31>

The liberal world order established in the aftermath of World War II may be coming to an end, challenged by forces both without and within. The external challenges come from the ambition of dissatisfied large and medium-size powers to overturn the existing strategic order dominated by the United States and its allies and partners. Their aim is to gain hegemony in their respective regions. China and Russia pose the greatest challenges to the world order because of their relative military, economic, and political power and their evident willingness to use it, which makes them significant players in world politics and, just as important, because the regions where they seek strategic hegemony—Asia and Europe—historically have been critical to global peace and stability. At a lesser but still significant level, Iran seeks regional hegemony in the Middle East and Persian Gulf, which if accomplished would have a strategic, economic, and political impact on the international system. North Korea seeks control of the Korean peninsula, which if accomplished would affect the stability and security of northeast Asia. Finally, at a much lower level of concern, there is the effort by ISIS and other radical Islamist groups to establish a new Islamic caliphate in the Middle East. If accomplished, that, too, would have effects on the global order.

However, it is the two great powers, China and Russia, that pose the greatest challenge to the relatively peaceful and prosperous international order created and sustained by the United States. If they were to accomplish their aims of establishing hegemony in their desired spheres of influence, the world would return to the condition it was in at the end of the 19th century, with competing great powers clashing over inevitably intersecting and overlapping spheres of interest. These were the unsettled, disordered conditions that produced the fertile ground for the two destructive world wars of the first half of the 20th century. The collapse of the British-dominated world order on the oceans, the disruption of the uneasy balance of power on the European continent due to the rise of a powerful unified Germany, combined with the rise of Japanese power in East Asia all contributed to a highly competitive international environment in which dissatisfied great powers took the opportunity to pursue their ambitions in the absence of any power or group of powers to unite in checking them. The result was an unprecedented global calamity. It has been the great accomplishment of the U.S.-led world order in the 70 years since the end of the Second World War that this kind of competition has been held in check and great power conflicts have been avoided.

The role of the United States, however, has been critical. Until recently, the dissatisfied great and medium-size powers have faced considerable and indeed almost insuperable obstacles in achieving their objectives. The chief obstacle has been the power and coherence of the order itself and of its principal promoter and defender. The American-led system of political and military alliances, especially in the two critical regions of Europe and East Asia, has presented China and Russia with what Dean Acheson once referred to as “situations of strength” in their regions that have required them to pursue their ambitions cautiously and in most respects to defer serious efforts to disrupt the international system. The system has served as a check on their ambitions in both positive and negative ways. They have been participants in and for the most part beneficiaries of the open international economic system the United States created and helped sustain and, so long as that system was functioning, have had more to gain by playing in it than by challenging and overturning it. The same cannot be said of the political and strategic aspects of the order, both of which have worked to their detriment. The growth and vibrancy of democratic government in the two decades following the collapse of Soviet communism has posed a continual threat to the ability of rulers in Beijing and Moscow to maintain control, and since the end of the Cold War they have regarded every advance of democratic institutions, including especially the geographical advance close to their borders, as an existential threat—and with reason. The continual threat to the basis of their rule posed by the U.S.-supported order has made them hostile both to the order and to the United States. However, it has also been a source of weakness and vulnerability. Chinese rulers in particular have had to worry about what an unsuccessful confrontation with the United States might do to their sources of legitimacy at home. And although Vladimir Putin has to some extent used a calculated foreign adventurism to maintain his hold on domestic power, he has taken a more cautious approach when met with determined U.S. and European opposition, as in the case of Ukraine, and pushed forward, as in Syria, only when invited to do so by U.S. and Western passivity. Autocratic rulers in a liberal democratic world have had to be careful.

The greatest check on Chinese and Russian ambitions, however, has come from the combined military power of the United States and its allies in Europe and Asia. China, although increasingly powerful itself, has had to contemplate facing the combined military strength of the world’s superpower and some very formidable regional powers linked by alliance or common strategic interest, including Japan, India, and South Korea, as well as smaller but still potent nations like Vietnam and Australia. Russia has had to face the United States and its NATO allies. When united, these military powers present a daunting challenge to a revisionist power that can call on no allies of its own for assistance. Even were the Chinese to score an early victory in a conflict, they would have to contend over time with the combined industrial productive capacities of some of the world’s richest and most technologically advanced nations. A weaker Russia would face an even greater challenge.

Faced with these obstacles, the two great powers, as well as the lesser dissatisfied powers, have had to hope for or if possible engineer a weakening of the U.S.-supported world order from within. This could come about either by separating the United States from its allies, raising doubts about the U.S. commitment to defend its allies militarily in the event of a conflict, or by various means wooing American allies out from within the liberal world order’s strategic structure. For most of the past decade, the reaction of American allies to greater aggressiveness on the part of China and Russia in their respective regions, and to Iran in the Middle East, has been to seek more reassurance from the United States. Russian actions in Georgia, Ukraine, and Syria; Chinese actions in the East and South China seas; Iranian actions in Syria, Iraq, and along the littoral of the Persian Gulf—all have led to calls by American allies and partners for a greater commitment. In this respect, the system has worked as it was supposed to. What the political scientist William Wohlforth once described as the inherent stability of the unipolar order reflected this dynamic—as dissatisfied regional powers sought to challenge the status quo, their alarmed neighbors turned to the distant American superpower to contain their ambitions.

The system has depended, however, on will, capacity, and coherence at the heart of the liberal world order. The United States had to be willing and able to play its part as the principal guarantor of the order, especially in the military and strategic realm. The order’s ideological and economic core order—the democracies of Europe and East Asia and the Pacific—had to remain relatively healthy and relatively confident. In such circumstances, the combined political, economic, and military power of the liberal world would be too great to be seriously challenged by the great powers, much less by the smaller dissatisfied powers.

In recent years, however, the liberal order has begun to weaken and fracture at the core. As a result of many related factors—difficult economic conditions, the recrudescence of nationalism and tribalism, weak and uncertain political leadership and unresponsive mainstream political parties, a new era of communications that seems to strengthen rather than weaken tribalism—there has emerged a crisis of confidence in what might be called the liberal enlightenment project. That project tended to elevate universal principles of individual rights and common humanity over ethnic, racial, religious, national, or tribal differences. It looked to a growing economic interdependence to create common interests across boundaries and the establishment of international institutions to smooth differences and fa cilitate cooperation among nations. Instead, the past decade has seen the rise of tribalism and nationalism; an increasing focus on the “other” in all societies; and a loss of confidence in government, in the capitalist system, and in democracy. We have been witnessing something like the opposite of the “end of history” but have returned to history with a vengeance, rediscovering all the darker aspects of the human soul. That includes, for many, the perennial human yearning for a strong leader to provide firm guidance in a time of seeming breakdown and incoherence.

This crisis of the enlightenment project may have been inevitable. It may indeed have been cyclical, due to inherent flaws in both capitalism and democracy, which periodically have been exposed and have raised doubts about both—as happened, for instance, throughout the West in the 1930s. Now, as then, moreover, this crisis of confidence in liberalism coincides with a breakdown of the strategic order. In this case, however, the key variable has not been the United States as the outside power and its willingness, or not, to step in and save or remake an order lost by other powers. Rather it is the United States’ own willingness to continue upholding the order that it created and which depends entirely on American power.

That willingness has been in doubt for some time. Increasingly in the quarter-century after the end of the Cold War, Americans have been wondering why they bear such an unusual and outsized responsibility for preserving global order when their own interests are not always apparently served and when, indeed, the United States seems to be making sacrifices while others benefit. The reasons why the United States took on this abnormal role after the calamitous two world wars of the 20th century have been largely forgotten. As a consequence, the American public’s patience with the difficulties and costs inherent in playing such a role has worn thin. Thus, whereas previous unsuccessful wars, in Korea in 1950 and Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s, and previous economic downturns, such as in the mid- to late 1970s, did not have the effect of turning Americans against global involvement, the unsuccessful wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the financial crisis of 2007–09 have had that effect. President Obama pursued an ambivalent approach to global involvement, but the main thrust of his approach was retrenchment. His actions and statements were a critique of previous American strategy and reinforced a national mood favoring a much less active role in the world and much narrower definition of American interests.

With the election of Donald Trump, a majority of Americans have sig naled their unwillingness to continue upholding the world order. Trump was not the only candidate in 2016 to run on a platform suggesting a much narrower definition of American interests and a lessening of the burdens of American global leadership. “America First” is not just an empty phrase but a fairly coherent philosophy with a long lineage and many adherents in the American academy. It calls for viewing American interests through a narrow lens. It suggests no longer supporting an international alliance structure, no longer seeking to deny great powers their spheres of influence and regional hegemony, no longer attempting to uphold liberal norms in the international system, and no longer sacrificing short-term interests—in trade for instance—in the longer-term interest of preserving an open economic order.

Coming as it does at a time of growing great power competition, this new approach in American foreign policy is likely to hasten a return to the instability and clashes of previous eras. These external challenges to the liberal world order and the continuing weakness and fracturing of the liberal world from within are likely to feed on each other. The weakness of the liberal core and the abdication by the United States of its global responsibilities will encourage more aggressive revisionism by the dissatisfied powers, which may in turn exacerbate the sense of weakness and helplessness and the loss of confidence of the liberal world, which will in turn increase the sense on the part of the great power autocracies that this is their opportunity to reorder the world to conform to their interests.

History suggests that this is a downward spiral from which it will be difficult to recover absent a major conflict. It was in the 1920s, not the 1930s, that the most important and ultimately fatal decisions were made by the liberal powers. Above all, it was the American decision to remove itself from a position of global responsibility, to reject strategic involvement to preserve the peace in Europe, and neglect its naval strength in the Pacific to check the rise of Japan. The “return to normalcy” of the 1920 U.S. election seemed safe and innocent at the time, but the essentially selfish policies pursued by the world’s strongest power in the following decade helped set the stage for the calamities of the 1930s. By the time the crises began to erupt in that decade, it was already too late to avoid paying the high price of global conflict.

One thing for the new administration to keep in mind: History tells us that revisionist great powers are not easy to satisfy short of complete capitulation. Their sphere of influence is never quite large enough to satisfy their pride or their expanding need for security. The “satiated” power that Bismarck spoke of is rare—even his Germany, in the end, could not be satiated. And of course, rising great powers always express some historical grievance. Every people, except perhaps for the fortunate Americans, have reason for resentment at ancient injustices, nurse grudges against old adversaries, seek to return to a glorious past that was stolen from them by military or political defeat. The world’s supply of grievances is inexhaustible.

These grievances, however, are rarely solved by minor border changes. Japan, the aggrieved “have-not” nation of the 1930s, did not satisfy itself by swallowing Manchuria in 1931. Germany, the aggrieved victim of Versailles, did not satisfy itself by bringing the Germans of the Sudetenland back into the fold. And, of course, Russia’s historical sphere of influence does not end in Ukraine. It begins in Ukraine. It extends to the Baltics, to the Balkans, and to heart of Central Europe. The tragic irony is that, in the process of carving out these spheres of influence, the ambitious rising powers invariably create the very threats they use to justify their actions. The cycle only ends if and when the great powers that make up the existing power structure, in today’s case, the United States, decide they have had enough. We know those moments as major power wars.

The new administration seems to be fixated almost entirely on the threat of radical Islam and may not believe its main problem is going to be great power confrontation. In fact, it is going to have to confront both sets of challenges. The first, addressing the threat of terrorism, is comparatively manageable. It is the second, managing great power competition and confrontation, that has historically proved the most difficult and also the most costly when handled badly.

The best way to avoid great power clashes is to make the U.S. position clear from the outset. That position should be that the United States welcomes competition of a certain kind. Great powers compete across multiple planes—economic, ideological, and political, as well as military. Competition in most spheres is necessary and even healthy. Within the liberal order, China can compete economically and successfully with the United States; Russia can thrive in the international economic order upheld by the liberal powers, even if it is not itself liberal.

But security competition is different. The security situation undergirds everything else. It remains true today as it has since the Second World War that only the United States has the capacity and the unique geographical advantages to provide global security. There is no stable balance of power in Europe or Asia without the United States. And while we can talk about soft power and smart power, they have been and always will be of limited value when confronting raw military power. Despite all of the loose talk of American decline, it is in the military realm where U.S. advantages remain clearest. Even in other great powers’ backyards, the United States retains the capacity, along with its powerful allies, to deter challenges to the security order. But without a U.S. willingness to use military power to establish balance in far-flung regions of the world, the system will buckle under the unrestrained military competition of regional powers.

If history is any guide, the next four years are the critical inflection point. The rest of the world will take its cue from the early actions of the new administration. If the next president governs as he ran, which is to say if he pursues a course designed to secure only America’s narrow interests; focuses chiefly on international terrorism—the least of the challenges to the present world order; accommodates the ambitions of the great powers; ceases to regard international economic policy in terms of global order but only in terms of America’s bottom line narrowly construed; and generally ceases to place a high priority on reassuring allies and partners in the world’s principal strategic theaters—then the collapse of the world order, with all that entails, may not be far off.

#### Sustaining primacy is key to manage inevitable Chinese and Russian decline and prevents conflict spirals

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Hal Brands, “Danger: Falling Powers,” *The American Interest*, October 24, 2018, <http://halbrands.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Danger-Falling-Powers.pdf>.

Now imagine an alternative scenario. A revisionist power—perhaps an authoritarian power—has been gaining influence and ratcheting its ambitions upward. Its leaders have cultivated intense nationalism as a pillar of their domestic legitimacy; they have promised the populace that past insults will be avenged and sacrifices will be rewarded with geopolitical greatness and global prestige. Yet then the country’s potential peaks, either because it has reached its natural limit or because of some unforeseen development, and the balance of power starts to shift in unfavorable ways. It becomes clear to the country’s leadership that it may not be able to accomplish the goals it has set and fulfill the promises it has made, and that the situation will only further worsen with time. A roll of the iron dice now seems more attractive: It may be the only chance the nation has to claim geopolitical spoils before it is too late. In this scenario, it is not rising power that makes the revisionist state so dangerous, but the temptation to act before decline sets in. In this sense, the dynamic bears a resemblance to the famous Davies J-Curve theory of revolution, wherein a populace is held to be more inclined to revolt not when it is maximally oppressed but rather when raised expectations are shown to be in vain.

Obviously, rational analysis does not always prevail in world politics. Rising states can become intoxicated with their own strength; they may simply get tired of waiting to attain the status they desire; or some domestic pressure may impel leaders to act dangerously. But revisionists whose power has begun to decline, or who have hit a rogue bump in the road, may not feel that they even have the option of waiting.

Consider again the outbreak of World War I. From a long-term perspective, Germany may have been a rising and increasingly confident power prior to the war, but Berlin’s decision-making in 1914 took place against the more immediate backdrop of deep pessimism caused by the fear of impending decline. In the east, Germany was menaced by the growth of Russian military power and the approaching completion of an improved railroad network that would dramatically shorten Russia’s mobilization timetable. In the west, changes in French conscription laws were rapidly enhancing the military manpower of another rival.

The result, in Berlin, was mounting apprehension that Germany’s ability to fight a two-front war—the cornerstone of its military strategy—was about to collapse, and that its geopolitical aspirations were about to be crushed in a Franco-Russian-British vise. If that happened, internal frictions might become unmanageable: Nationalism and geopolitical ambition might no longer be able to dampen the shocks caused by intensifying conflicts between rival social and political groups. This is why Germany ran such enormous risks in the July 1914 crisis—by pushing Austria-Hungary to take an uncompromising position against Serbia after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, by promising to back the Dual Monarchy come what may, by implementing the Schlieffen Plan for a knock-out blow against France despite the danger that this would bring Britain into the war. Chief of General Staff Helmuth von Moltke acknowledged the danger of a “war which will annihilate the civilization of almost the whole of Europe for decades to come,” but he and his colleagues pushed forward on grounds that Germany’s dreams of greatness would become hopeless illusions if not realized soon.

Similar motives were at work in World War II. Hitler’s Germany had the most radical designs of any revisionist power in history, and it is inconceivable that Hitler would not have used Germany’s revived economic and military might to precipitate a major conflict at some point. Yet Hitler’s calculations about when and how to do so—namely, by invading Poland in 1939—were strongly influenced by fears of imminent decline.

Due to rapid rearmament, the Germany economy was overheating by 1938-39, creating concerns that Berlin’s relative economic power would soon fade absent additional conquests. Just as importantly, German officials believed that their early rearmament and the absorption of resources from Austria and Czechoslovakia had given them a critical military advantage over other European powers, but that this advantage would fade as those countries—and the United States—began mobilizing. It had become necessary “to begin immediately,” Hitler explained to Mussolini to following year, “even at the risk of thereby precipitating the war intended by the Western powers.” In the same vein, the sense that the future would only be worse—that Germany had reached the apex of its power, that it must act boldly while it still could—underpinned the decision to invade the Soviet Union in June 1941. As Timothy Snyder has argued, Hitler believed that Germany had only a finite window to seize and colonize Soviet lands—thereby solving the Third Reich’s food supply problems and making it strategically invulnerable—before ongoing British resistance and America’s feared entry into the war began to undermine Berlin’s position.

Japan, too, was likely influenced by calculations of impending decline. The Japanese empire had been steadily expanding between 1931 and 1940, advancing toward dominance in the Asia-Pacific. But what ultimately provoked the Japanese to strike at America was the realization that the possibilities for attaining that dominance were fading. American rearmament, symbolized by the Two-Ocean Navy Act of 1940, was bound to vitiate Japanese military advantages. “Anyone who has seen the auto factories in Detroit and the oil fields in Texas knows that Japan lacks the national power for a naval race with America,” warned Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku. Likewise, the U.S. oil embargo of 1941 had the unintended effect of convincing Japanese leaders that they had to move quickly before they lost the economic wherewithal to wage war. Imperial Japan, like Nazi Germany, was an aggressive power with enormous ambitions; but its penchant for aggression grew strongest when it started to fear those aspirations might not be realized.

This history has implications for understanding great-power rivalry today. Both Russia and China have broadened their geopolitical horizons in recent years; both are often thought of as rising or resurgent powers. Yet both Russia and China face the prospect—whether immediate or more distant—that their relative strength may ebb, a phenomenon that could make these countries more aggressive rather than less.

The specter of decline surely haunts Vladimir Putin. Russia has compiled an impressive record of expansion over the past decade; it has achieved a significant military overmatch vis-à-vis NATO on the alliance’s eastern flank; it has attained a degree of global influence greater than that enjoyed by any government in Moscow since the 1980s. Yet Putin cannot be confident about Russia’s long-term trajectory.

After all, Russia’s economic revival from the early 2000s onward was largely a function of high energy prices; the collapse of those prices after 2014 revealed the long-term weakness of an economy that is probably destined—absent another sustained period of high energy prices—to stagnate over time. Russia is already losing ground against its rivals: Its inflation-adjusted GDP declined from 2014 through 2017, while that of the United States increased by over $1 trillion. And although Russia’s demographic trajectory is no longer as catastrophic as it once was, population growth will be anemic at best and negative at worst in coming decades. These trends, combined with the impact of Western economic sanctions, are beginning to upset Putin’s plans for continued military modernization: Kremlin defense spending declined, perhaps by as much as 20 percent, from 2017 to 2018, as Russia also began to cut spending on key social programs and pensions. Finally, fear of political instability is omnipresent for Russian leaders, who must deal with separatist forces in the North Caucasus as well as dissent provoked by their own repression and policy incompetence.

Putin surely understands that these challenges imperil his goals of reasserting Russian dominance within the near abroad and playing a pivotal role in a more multipolar world—which is precisely what makes his statecraft so dangerous. Putin has already established a reputation as a risk-taker who uses bold strokes to compensate for Russia’s limited resource base. His method is to know what he wants and to catch stronger adversaries napping. (That tendency has only become more pronounced in recent years as Russia’s economic prosperity has faded and Putin’s domestic popularity has begun to wane.) He has argued that Russia requires authoritarian rule to be influential abroad; he has promised the Russian populace that the hardships it has endured will be rewarded by greater global stature. “Enormous sacrifices and privations on the part of our people,” he has declared, are the cost of “occupying a major place in world affairs.” If Putin perceives that he has only limited time to deliver on these promises, if he senses that the opportunity to redress his longstanding grievances against the West is slipping away, the effect may be to encourage still greater risk-taking.

Russian risk-taking could take varied forms: more aggressive behavior in a crisis with NATO in the Baltic or Black Sea regions, perhaps aimed at discrediting NATO’s Article 5 guarantee; a more confrontational posture with respect to America and its partners in Syria or another Middle Eastern hotspot; intensified Russian efforts to disrupt U.S. and European electoral processes; more damaging cyberattacks on critical Western infrastructure; efforts to stir up additional “frozen conflicts” in the former Soviet space; a stronger propensity for escalation—perhaps involving limited use of nuclear weapons—should conflict between Moscow and Washington break out. Whatever the specifics, Washington could find itself facing a competitor with a “now-or-never” mentality—always a dangerous mindset for an authoritarian, revisionist state to have.

By contrast, the Chinese leadership still seems to have a “time is on our side” mindset. Even as Beijing’s energy and assertiveness have surged, Chinese leaders have proven less risk-acceptant than their Russian counterparts. They have remained satisfied to advance China’s aims through small, incremental steps—such as island-building and coercion in the South China Sea—rather than dramatic, aggressive lunges. Yet even Chinese leaders cannot be confident that the country’s upward trajectory will continue unbroken for very much longer.

In a geopolitical sense, Chinese officials must worry about whether the country’s window is opening or closing with respect to issues like Taiwan. For while China has greater military capability than ever before to pursue reunification through forcible means, Taiwanese support for peaceful unification is at rock-bottom levels, the development of a distinctive Taiwanese national identify becomes more unmistakable every year, and the political pendulum in Taipei is clearly swinging away toward greater resistance to Chinese pressure.

There are also warning lights flashing—perhaps flashing in the distance, but flashing nonetheless—when it comes to the fundamentals of Chinese power. Economic growth has been broadly declining for at least a decade (although it may have ticked upward slightly last year), according to official government estimates that are almost certainly inflated. China suffers from astronomic debt levels and has seen dizzying volatility in its stock market, both of which may be precursors to bigger economic troubles ahead. The demographic problems China confronts are even more severe than Russia’s: The rapid aging of the population will strain social spending, inhibit growth, and confront Chinese leaders with sharper guns-versus-butter trade-offs.

Beneath the façade of stability imposed by increasingly repressive governance, moreover, dissatisfaction with a corrupt and autocratic elite is increasing: Chinese officials stopped publicly reporting the number of “mass incidents” in 2005, but the frequency of such incidents is widely believed to be rising. If the drastic domestic security measures taken in areas such as Xinjiang and Tibet are any indication, major sections of the country seem to be seething with discontent. Add in the fact that China’s behavior is stirring greater fears not just in Washington but throughout the Asia-Pacific and beyond, and Beijing may soon find itself dealing with greater geopolitical pushback, including the development of military capabilities designed specifically to neutralize the leverage provided by China’s own build-up. As unlikely as it may seem right now, it is entirely possible that sometime in the next decade or two, Chinese leaders may have to face a future that is not so bright and shining as seems the case now.

When this happens, will Beijing become more or less aggressive on the global stage? The answer may well be “more.” Xi Jinping and other Chinese leaders have been promising that the nation is on the verge of achieving national rejuvenation, that it can now take center stage in world affairs. The regime has assiduously stoked Chinese nationalism; it has staked out inflexible positions on maritime disputes and other issues; it has even begun to issue soft deadlines for reunification with Taiwan. It has done so on the assumption that the continued growth of national power will enable Beijing to make good on its pledges and back up its demands.

If that assumption does not hold, if the “Chinese Dream” begins to elude its dreamers, Chinese leaders may be tempted to take more dramatic steps rather than admitting that they cannot deliver. In these circumstances, an attempt to retake Taiwan by force or coercion, to teach Japan a lesson in the East China Sea, to break Vietnamese or Filipino resistance in the South China Sea, or to rupture America’s alliance system in the Asia-Pacific would still be highly dangerous. But these initiatives might come to seem more attractive than simply remaining passive while Beijing’s relative power fades.

Robert Kaplan has put it aptly: If a confident China has been pursuing a “methodical, well-developed” strategy of revisionism, an insecure China could shift to “daring, reactive, and impulsive behavior.” Limiting the damage done to U.S. interests by a rising China will be a test of epic dimensions for American policymakers. But the moment of peak danger in the relationship may actually come when China starts to fade from its own wishful trajectory.

All this poses a genuine dilemma for U.S. policymakers, who must contain the ambitions of today’s revisionist powers without encouraging desperate behavior that might lead to war. One way of addressing this dilemma would be simply to take steps that ease American rivals’ perceptions of insecurity and decline—by conceding them larger spheres of influence that might satisfy their ambitions, or by declining to build military capabilities or strengthen alliances that might undercut those rivals’ positions and thereby exacerbate their fears. Yet the downside of this approach is obvious: It would require Washington to sacrifice some key interests and forego some of the strengths needed to sustain them. The United States might decrease the danger that a declining challenger would behave rashly, but only by exposing itself to other perils.

What will be required instead is a combination of careful prudence with great strength and resolve. U.S. leaders must not gratuitously antagonize U.S. rivals or put them in situations where they fear they must use their power before they lose it. This means staying away from efforts to overthrow or seriously destabilize the Russian and Chinese regimes (although perhaps not from more measured efforts to raise the costs of authoritarianism within those countries). It means avoiding acts, such as supporting a Taiwanese declaration of independence or excluding Russia from the SWIFT payments system—that would foster a “little to lose” mentality in Moscow or Beijing. Additionally, when Washington must issue explicit warnings—about Beijing’s behavior in the South China Sea, or about Russia’s meddling in U.S. political processes—it should do so privately, to minimize the reputational cost that American competitors must pay by backing down. As Dwight Eisenhower said during another great-power competition, America should carefully consider “how much we should poke at the animal through the bars of the cage.” Such caution is especially important when the animal is already frightened.

Yet the counterpart to prudence must be unmistakable military strength and geopolitical resolve. The challenge in dealing with declining revisionists is that their calculations of risk and reward may shift suddenly, and in potentially explosive ways: Actions that seemed unattractive or unthinkable before become more appealing as the perceived costs of inaction rise. The imperative, therefore, is to manifest a level of power and commitment sufficient that even a more risk-acceptant rival will understand that a geopolitical gamble is highly unlikely to pay off. This requires restoring the military supremacy necessary to defeat Russian or Chinese gambits in the Baltic, the Western Pacific, and elsewhere, and cultivating—across the entire array of U.S. foreign policy decisions—a reputation for credibility in upholding American commitments against revisionist challenges. The better the record the United States compiles in standing up to Chinese and Russian probing behavior in the near-term, the less likely the leadership of those states will be to think that more dramatic action will succeed at some point down the road.

A balance of firmness and caution is always difficult to strike, but it is never impossible. After all, there have been instances in which America has successfully managed the eclipse of a dangerous revisionist power. The Soviet Union might have tried to escape the dilemmas of terminal decline in the 1980s by pursuing a more aggressive policy, but it didn’t. It opted not to do so in part because the Reagan and Bush Administrations offered assurances that they were not seeking the destruction of the Soviet state (which happened anyway, mostly for other reasons) and that they would not publicly humiliate Soviet leaders. Yet the Soviets also chose restraint because America and its allies had amassed, throughout the Cold War and during the 1980s in particular, sufficient power and credibility such that more aggressive Kremlin policies would not be rewarded.

Given the degree of disruption China and Russia are posing today, managing the decline of ambitious revisionist powers is the sort of problem American strategists might love to have. Yet doing so effectively will be a major geopolitical challenge in its own right, if things roll that way. It will demand, once again, a mixture of flexibility and strength.

#### For them to win an impact turn, they need to defend and robustly define their alternative to US primacy—the LIO is the best possible system

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Robert Kagan, “The World America Made—and Trump Wants to Unmake,” POLITICO Magazine, September 28, 2018, <https://politi.co/2zB3qCg>.

So, yes, the liberal order has been flawed, with its share of failure and hypocrisy. Liberal goals have sometimes been pursued by illiberal means. Power, coercion and violence have played a big part. The order has been the product of American hegemony and it has also served to reinforce that hegemony. But to note these facts is hardly to condemn the order. No order of any kind can exist without some element of hegemony. The Roman order was based on the hegemony of Rome; the British order of the 18th and 19th centuries was based on the hegemony of the Royal Navy; such order as existed briefly in Europe after the defeat of Napoleon—the so-called Concert of Europe—rested on the collective hegemony of the four victorious great powers. The idea of a peaceful, stable multipolar world where no power or powers enjoy predominance is a dream that exists only in the minds of one-world idealists and international relations theorists.

The same is true of those who would condemn the liberal world order because of the persistence of violence, coercion, hypocrisy, selfishness, stupidity and all the other evils and foibles endemic to human nature. Perhaps in the confines of academia it is possible to imagine a system of international relations where our deeply flawed humanness is removed from the equation. But in the real world, even the best and most moral of international arrangements are going to have their dark, immoral aspects.

The question is, as always, compared to what? Patrick Porter, the author of a widely discussed critique of the liberal world order, acknowledges that “if there was to be a superpower emerging from the rubble of world war in midcentury, we should be grateful it was the United States, given the totalitarian alternatives on offer. Under America’s aegis, there were islands of liberty where prosperous markets and democracies grew.” Indeed, that would seem to be the key point. At any given time there are only so many alternatives, and usually the choice is between the bad and the worse.

Are the alternatives on offer so much better now? Graham Allison, dismissing any return to the “imagined past” when the United States shaped an international liberal order, proposes that we instead make the world “safe for diversity” and accommodate ourselves to “the reality that other countries have contrary views about governance and seek to establish their own international orders governed by their own rules.” Others, such as Peter Beinart, similarly argue that we should accommodate Russian and Chinese demands for their own spheres of interest, even if that entails the sacrifice of sovereign peoples such as Ukrainians and Taiwanese. This wonderfully diverse world would presumably be run partly by Xi Jinping, partly by Vladimir Putin, and partly, too, by the Ayatollah Khamenei and by Kim Jong Un, who would also like to establish orders governed by their own rules. We have not enjoyed such diversity since the world was run partly by Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini.

The idea that this is the solution to our problems is laughable. Porter points out American policy has led to “multiplying foreign conflicts” and put the United States “on a collision course with rivals.” Setting aside the fact that multiplying foreign conflicts and collisions between rivals is the natural state of international relations in any era, it is hard for any student of history to imagine that these problems would lessen if only we returned to the competitive multipolar world of the 19th and early 20th centuries. To suggest that there could be a world with no collisions and no foreign conflicts, if only the United States would pursue an intelligent policy, is the very opposite of realism.

Strikingly absent from all these critiques of the liberal world order, too, is any suggestion of an alternative approach. The critiques end with lists of questions that need to be answered. Allison calls for a “surge of strategic thinking.” Others call for “new thinking” about “difficult trade-offs.” Some critics even complain that so long as people continue to talk about a U.S.-dominated liberal order, it will be “impossible for us to construct a reasonable alternative for the future.”

The most the critiques will offer are suggestions that sound more like attitudes than policies. They throw around words like “realism,” “restraint” and “retrenchment.” Allison proposes that the United States “limit its efforts to ensuring sufficient order abroad.” Beinart comes closest to offering an alternative, but he clearly has not yet thought it through fully. He wants to grant other powers their spheres of interest, for instance, but he mentions only Russia and China. Does this mean Russia should be granted full sway in, say, Ukraine, the Balkans, the Baltics and the Caucuses? Should China be able to impose its will on the Philippines and Vietnam?

And what of the other great powers? Does Japan get its own sphere of interest? Does India? Do Germany, France and Britain? They all had their spheres a century ago, and of course it was the clashes over those inevitably overlapping spheres that led to all the great wars. Is Beinart suggesting we should return to that past?

Of course, we may be moving toward that world, anyway. That is the implication of Trump’s “America First” foreign policy philosophy, his attacks on “globalism” and his recent suggestion that all nations look out strictly for themselves. Trump’s speech at the U.N. was an invitation to global anarchy, a struggle of all against all. His boasting about American power put the world on notice that the United States was turning from supporter of a liberal order to rogue superpower. This breakdown may be our future, but it seems odd to choose that course as a deliberate strategy, as Allison and others seem to do. Little wonder that they don’t wish to spell out the details of their alternative but prefer to carp at the inevitable failures and imperfections of the liberal world we have. As John Hay once remarked, “Our good friends are wiser when they abuse us for what we do, than when they try to say what ought to be done.”

No honest person would deny that the liberal world order has been flawed and will continue to be flawed in the future. The League of Nations was also flawed, as was Woodrow Wilson’s vision of collective security. Yet the world would have been better had the United States joined in upholding it, given the genuine alternative. The enduring truth about the liberal world order is that, like Churchill’s comment about democracy, it is the worst system—except for all the others.

#### The past 70 years prove deterrence solves war, but nuclear flexibility is key to combat a laundry list of threats.

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Keith B. Payne, President of the National Institute for Public Policy and adjunct professor at Georgetown University, “Nuclear deterrence in a new age,” Comparative Strategy, 2018. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01495933.2018.1419708?needAccess=true>

Yet, over the past decade, US adversaries and potential adversaries have moved in a wholly different direction, emphasizing the roles of nuclear weapons and expanding their arsenals. For example, Moscow clearly feels that it must correct an unacceptable loss of position supposedly imposed on it by the West following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Unsurprisingly, Moscow is pursuing Great Power competition aggressively, with a revanchist agenda backed by coercive nuclear threats. Its explicit nuclear threats to the West surpass even those of the Soviet Union during the Cold War, and its nuclear programs, according to Gen. Valery Gerasimov, the chief of the Russian General Staff, already have resulted in the modernization of three-fourths of Russia’s “ground, air and sea strategic nuclear forces.”4

In addition, during the Cold War and the decades immediately thereafter, the United States devoted immense time and treasure into the negotiation of, and compliance with arms control treaties and agreements. Now, however, Russia engages in continuing, willful noncompliance with many, perhaps most of its arms control commitments, most notably the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF),5 and China avoids transparency and arms control in favor of strategic ambiguity.

Chinese leaders feel that they must overturn a “century of humiliation,” and, in doing so are provoking US allies severely as Beijing seeks to overturn the existing order in Asia. Its illegal expansionism and rapidly growing military capabilities, nuclear and non-nuclear, pose a direct threat to US allies and interests.

These Russian and Chinese goals and worldviews are important to US considerations of deterrence strategies because cognitive studies that were not available in the 1960 s or 1970 s indicate that decision makers typically are willing to accept greater risks to recover that which they perceive to be rightfully theirs, but are denied.6 Western deterrence goals to preserve an international order which these Great Powers now seek to overturn will be particularly challenging as they seek to recover what they believe to be rightfully theirs, but now is denied them by Western opposition. Russia’s illegitimate occupation of Crimea and China’s illegal expansion into the East and South China Seas certainly appear to reflect this dynamic.

North Korea’s extreme nuclear threats and long-range means of delivery now pose a clear and present danger to the United States and allies. At this point, North Korea may be merely months away from the capability to launch nuclear armed missiles at US cities.7 It is imperative that the United States effectively deter this eccentric rogue power.

Iran seeks hegemony in the Middle East and threatens US allies and friends in the process. Iranian leaders correspondingly express extreme hostility toward us and our allies—most recently labeling the United States Iran’s “number one” enemy.8 Despite the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), apparently, Iran could acquire nuclear capabilities quickly if it decides to do so, and it continues to pursue robust missile programs, including the development of long-range missiles. Protecting US allies and interests in the region may become an increasingly challenging goal given Iran’s goals and potential capabilities.

While terrorist organizations continue to threaten us and our allies, we must now recognize the reality of both Great Power and Rogue aggressive nuclear threats and possible employment. This reality is a far cry from the hope and even expectation of the past two decades that such concerns belonged to the past, never to return.9 Over the past two decades, this belief—that with the passing of the Cold War, interstate nuclear threats were largely gone and US nuclear requirements greatly eased—has been at the heart of virtually every argument against US efforts to modernize aging, “legacy” US nuclear forces and the aged US nuclear scientific and industrial infrastructure. To realists, this belief was an obvious illusion. But it was peddled by a professional anti-nuclear lobby and embraced by those captured by the hubris and feel-good emotion of it all.

Despite the now manifest fact that significant interstate nuclear threats are again a prominent characteristic of the international environment, the claim continues to be repeated that because the Cold War is over, US nuclear deterrence requirements are minimal. For example:

Thankfully those days are over. The Soviet Union disappeared 25 years ago. Current Russian belligerence, although worrisome, does not constitute a renewed Cold War … Our submarines alone give us an assured deterrence … The United States does not need to arm its bombers with a new generation of nuclear-armed cruise missiles … Similarly, the United States should cancel plans to replace its ground-launched ICBMs. …10

The 20th Century Cold War is over; that is self-evident. But the claim that US nuclear requirements thus are minimal, and correspondingly that, “our submarines alone give us an assured deterrence,” is a highly-speculative non sequitur presented as if a known, self-evident fact. It is, instead, an outdated, imprudent basis for US nuclear policy—a subject area that demands the greatest prudence.

Indeed, the contemporary nuclear threat environment poses more diverse and severe challenge to US deterrence strategy than were operative during the Cold War, with greater uncertainties about the future. No one, regardless of their position or experience, can claim with any credibility to know that some relatively modest set of US nuclear capabilities provides “an assured deterrence” vis-à-vis a broad spectrum of known and now-unknown opponents and contingencies, particularly for the many future decades in which US nuclear deterrence capabilities are expected to function.

The number and character of states and terrorist organizations that may join the array of adversaries and potential adversaries is uncertain. But new adversaries and nuclear threats undoubtedly will emerge over the multi-decade lifetimes of the fledgling US nuclear programs initiated by the Obama Administration to replace the aging US nuclear triad of strategic bombers, sea-based and land-based missiles.

Deterring a diverse array of recognized adversaries and potential adversaries is complicated by their widely divergent worldviews, values, goals, priorities, risk tolerances, determination, and perceptions of US credibility. Deterring future adversaries not yet recognized is, by definition, a challenge for which we must prepare without knowing the precise dimensions of the threats they will pose or the requirements for deterrence.

During the Cold War, the number of deterrence variables was much more limited, and during the immediate post-Cold War era the need for nuclear deterrence supposedly was coming to an end. Now, however, the spectrum of potential opponents and conflict scenarios ranges from the relatively familiar to the largely unfamiliar; the stakes at risk now differ widely; our ability to communicate credible deterrence threats now is less certain; and, our ability to predict when and how deterrence will function increasingly is stretched.

These realities drive the US need to be able to tailor deterrence strategies across an expanding spectrum of opponents and threat contexts, nuclear and non-nuclear. Russia, for example, now emphasizes the role of nuclear coercion and the value of limited nuclear first-use as a tool of statecraft, and to backstop its non-nuclear military expansion. Its notions of “escalate-to-de-escalate” essentially envision nuclear weapons as instruments of coercion to defeat the West’s will and capability to respond in strength to Russian expansionism. Moscow appears to expect that its nuclear threats, or limited first-use if necessary, will compel Western capitulation in crises or conflict.11 Effective deterrence now requires that the West dispel such destabilizing Russian expectations.

In addition, with the ultimate goal of unifying the Korean Peninsula under its rule, North Korea is expanding its nuclear capabilities and often issues coercive nuclear threats. From the 1990 s to the mid2000 s, North Korea used its nuclear program to extort diplomatic concessions, economic assistance, and food aid from us and our allies. Secretary of Defense James Mattis has stated that North Korea now has the capability to strike, “everywhere in the world, basically.”12 With an emerging capability to threaten the United States with nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), the prospect is for even greater demands and coercive nuclear threats by the “shakedown state.”13

Effective deterrence now demands much greater attention to the deterrence requirements posed by diverse adversaries and contexts, and the force flexibility needed to adapt our deterrence strategies and capabilities accordingly. In particular, we must understand how to deter Great Powers and nucleararmed Rogues from exploiting limited nuclear threats and/or escalation for coercive purposes in support of their respective goals to change established orders and boarders in Europe, Asia, and prospectively the Middle East. To do so, we must first understand and address the reasons why some now perceive the freedom to engage in repeated nuclear threats against us, our allies and friends.

Why, for example, might Moscow perceive potential success in a nuclear strategy that includes its escalation to limited nuclear first use. What “gaps” does Moscow perceive in Western deterrence strategies, and how can those perceptions be corrected?14 The same questions must be answered for all adversaries that follow a similar script, now and in the future.

In this new environment, the range of possibilities and uncertainties has expanded regarding plausible answers to the enduring deterrence questions posed by Aaron and Kahn: whom must we deter, from what action, by threatening what response, in what circumstances, in the face of what counterthreats?

Implications for US deterrence strategies and capabilities

The basic nature of deterrence endures. We do not require a new theory of deterrence, but rather we must pursue the hard work of understanding how to apply deterrence effectively in dramatically new and different circumstances. To wit, we must understand how to deter a more diverse set of adversaries and potential adversaries, from a wider array of specific actions, in a similarly wider array of plausible circumstances, while also hedging against the unknown and unexpected.

Several points may be made now in this regard. First, the set of adversaries and potential adversaries, their goals and capabilities, are far from fixed or familiar, and they will shift over time. So too, the range of US deterrence goals and the nuclear requirements needed to support those goals, now and into the future, can never be considered fixed. Instead, we can be certain our deterrence goals and requirements too will shift over time with the changing threat environment.

Consequently, the existing US policy of “no new” nuclear capabilities, which might have been compatible with an era in which nuclear deterrence requirements were expected to continue fading, is ill-suited to contemporary realities. The United States must be able to adapt its nuclear deterrence strategies and related capabilities to shifting threats; “new” nuclear capabilities may very well be needed and the United States must be able to field those capabilities as necessary to deter.

Second, Clausewitz’ emphasis on the extreme value of “prudence” in defensive war applies equally to deterrence in this new strategic environment.15 It simply is prudent to recognize the need for the US capacity to adapt and tailor US deterrence strategies and capabilities as rapidly as possible across a wide spectrum of plausible threat and conflict conditions—some that are now recognized, others that are not now apparent, but surely will emerge. Prudence calls for highly-flexible and resilient US deterrence strategies and capabilities, nuclear and non-nuclear, to deter the much broader spectrum of known and plausible threats and contingencies of this new post-Cold War era. The resilience and flexibility of our deterrence strategies and forces, including nuclear, is essential to our capacity to tailor US deterrence strategies and capabilities to diverse and shifting adversaries, threats, and contexts.

To be sure, since the early years of the Cold War, successive presidents have demanded more flexible deterrence strategies and nuclear forces. The sense behind that demand is ever more apparent with the need for deterrence strategies and forces that must be tailored to an expanding number of potential adversaries and threat scenarios—and prospectively to threats now unknown.

Third, the great value of the US nuclear triad is the resilience and flexibility inherent in the diversity of the triad’s platforms and weapons. That value is not fading, as was claimed often during the immediate post-Cold War years. It is increasing, as has the urgency of the fledgling programs underway to replace all three legs of the US triad reaching the ends of their already-extended service lives.16 The nuclear infrastructure enabling US nuclear capabilities has suffered decades of very limited investment, and its recapitalization now demands comparable urgency.

Fourth, effective US deterrence now requires that the United States work to deny Moscow’s apparent confidence that it can defeat US and NATO deterrence strategy via threats of nuclear escalation, or actual nuclear first-use in crisis or conflict.

To address the “gap” in the US deterrence strategy as perceived by Moscow presupposes that we can identify the reasons why Moscow believes it has the freedom to threaten nuclear escalation or actually engage in limited nuclear escalation. This is a difficult intelligence challenge because it requires getting inside the minds of senior Russian civilian and military leaders to understand what they think and why, not simply their forces and operations. Nevertheless, on the basis of open Russian writings, it is reasonable to suggest that the reasons underlying Russia’s perceptions of nuclear license include Moscow’s perceptions of advantages in both will and theater nuclear force numbers and options.

Consequently, NATO must work to close Moscow’s disdain for NATO’s will and cohesion. Efforts to do so may be seen in the recent public statement by NATO General Secretary, Jens Stoltenberg: “We are sending a very clear message: NATO is here, NATO is strong and NATO is united.”17 NATO activities that reinforce that message by demonstrating alliance cohesion and military capability are likely to be critical.

If the “gap” includes Moscow’s perception of advantage stemming from Russia’s much greater theater nuclear capabilities and options, then the United States must determine the most efficient way to close that perceived “gap.” The easy response that undoubtedly will be preferred by many in Washington is to assert condescendingly that Moscow simply should not be so primitive in its thinking as to believe that greater theater nuclear numbers and options bestow an exploitable advantage. That easy, scolding response, however, may well not convince Moscow leaders of the error in their thinking.

Closing that possible gap almost certainly will not necessitate mimicking the extraordinary Russian theater nuclear arsenal, but it will likely demand an expansion of Western nuclear options with a focus on their credibility in Russian perception. Getting this right will be one of the most important deterrence challenges of the coming decade for the United States and NATO. Parallel efforts in Asia in support of Asian allies also will likely be critical.

Fifth, for decades the US has been devoted to the process of nuclear arms control. Most discussions of deterrence and nuclear forces must pay homage to the goal of negotiated nuclear reductions lest they seem unsophisticated. Unsurprisingly, there are calls now for further arms control efforts to solve the deterrence challenges that have been created intentionally, indeed eagerly, by foes, including the mounting North Korean nuclear threat and the great theater nuclear force asymmetry in Russia’s favor.18

Arms control can, in principle, contribute to US security by establishing mutual restraints on forces and threatening behavior. However, to be helpful, arms control agreements must be prudent, implemented mutually, and enforced if there is non-compliance. Agreements with negotiating partners who are very likely to violate those agreements, such as Russia and North Korea, carry the serious potential to harm US and allied security rather then help. Unenforced, even well-negotiated agreements are likely to offer only a feel-good illusion of security.

In short, expecting arms control with foes and potential foes to solve the US security problems they have purposefully created is naïve in the absence of: 1) serious US enforcement efforts and mechanisms; and, 2) the types of incentive that make agreements and compliance the opponent’s preferred choice, i.e., to gain relief from feared US capabilities. We learned this lesson with the INF Treaty. As then-Secretary of State George Schultz has stated: “If the West did not deploy Pershing II and cruise missiles, there would be no incentive for the Soviets to negotiate seriously for nuclear reductions,” and, “strength was recognized as crucial to diplomacy.”19

For over a decade now, however, the United States has often expected nuclear arms control returns without the necessary investment to warrant Russian interest. The reality that “strength” is necessary for diplomacy was replaced by the idealistic expectation that US restraint would be mimicked by others because that is what others should do. The result of this US lapse into idealism is contemporary Russian disdain for US arms control enthusiasm, as reflected in the statement by then-Russian Presidential Chief of Staff, Sergei Ivanov: “When I hear our American partners say: ‘Let’s reduce something else,’ I would like to say to them: ‘Excuse me, but what we have is relatively new.’ They [the U.S.] have not conducted any upgrades for a long time. They still use Trident [missiles.]”20 The lessons of the past should once again inform US arms control expectations and actions in this new era of intense Great Power competition.

Finally, the roles for US ballistic missile defense (BMD) will take on considerably greater importance in this new era. Given the proliferation of nuclear weapons and means of long-range delivery to countries such as North Korea and potentially Iran, the value of US defensive forces capable of defeating the missile attacks of rogue states, now and in the future, is of paramount importance. US defenses may also be extremely valuable to protect against any accidental or unauthorized missile launches. This is a capability that is growing in importance as missile proliferation continues and if, as has been reported, some established nuclear powers consider a policy of launching their nuclear forces “immediately upon detecting an incoming attack.”21 US defensive capabilities may also be valuable to promote deterrence stability by degrading the confidence any potential adversary might have in the coercive or strategic value of limited nuclear first use.

Conclusion

The international threat environment is in the midst of a significant transition from the immediate postCold War period to an era that is much more challenging. During the initial decades following the Cold War, many Western leaders anticipated a “new world order” in which nuclear weapons would play an ever-declining role because nuclear threats had, supposedly, become a thing of the past. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US security focus was on regional conflicts and countering terrorism, missions for which nuclear weapons seemed to have little or no role. Correspondingly, the question of nuclear deterrence and the US forces and infrastructure required for nuclear deterrence was not a high priority; indeed, to the extent that US policy focused nuclear weapons, it was largely on reducing their salience and numbers as milestones toward their elimination.

However, the expected “new world order” never arrived, and potential foes never embraced the US goal of reducing the salience and number of nuclear weapons as milestones toward nuclear disarmament. Indeed, over the past decade and more, they have instead moved in wholly contrary directions in support of their efforts to change established orders in Europe, Asia, and prospectively the Middle East. Consequently, the new security environment of the 21st Century is characterized by: intensified Great Power competition; the renewed prominence of nuclear threats against the West by Great Powers and rogues; and, profound uncertainties about the future. There is little or no apparent evidence of movement in fundamentally more benign directions.

Given these harsh realities, the basic nature of deterrence endures, but the character of US deterrence strategies must adapt to a new era. This demands a departure from many of the nuclear policy directions that emerged, on a bipartisan basis, over the past two decades in the expectation of an increasingly benign future. In short, despite serious efforts to leave nuclear deterrence, forces and thinking in the dustbin of history, the United States must once again confront the world as it is and invest in the thinking, nuclear capabilities and infrastructure critical to the deterrence or defeat of strategic attacks, nuclear and non-nuclear.

#### Second, platform misuse—that enables a host of bad practices—undermines cyber security

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(Maurice, “Here Are All the Reasons It’s a Bad Idea to Let a Few Tech Companies Monopolize Our Data,” <https://hbr.org/2018/03/here-are-all-the-reasons-its-a-bad-idea-to-let-a-few-tech-companies-monopolize-our-data>)

So, the divergence in antitrust enforcement may reflect differences over these data-opolies’ perceived harms. Ordinarily the harm from monopolies are higher prices, less output, or reduced quality. It superficially appears that data-opolies pose little, if any risk, of these harms. Unlike some pharmaceuticals, data-opolies do not charge consumers exorbitant prices. Most of Google’s and Facebook’s consumer products are ostensibly “free.” The data-opolies’ scale can also mean higher quality products. The more people use a particular search engine, the more the search engine’s algorithm can learn users’ preferences, the more relevant the search results will likely be, which in turn will likely attract others to the search engine, and the positive feedback continues. As Robert Bork argued, there “is no coherent case for monopolization because a search engine, like Google, is free to consumers and they can switch to an alternative search engine with a click.” How Data-opolies Harm But higher prices are not the only way for powerful companies to harm their consumers or the rest of society. Upon closer examination, data-opolies can pose at least eight potential harms. Lower-quality products with less privacy. Companies, antitrust authorities increasingly recognize, can compete on privacy and protecting data. But without competition, data-opolies face less pressure. They can depress privacy protection below competitive levels and collect personal data above competitive levels. The collection of too much personal data can be the equivalent of charging an excessive price. Data-opolies can also fail to disclose what data they collect and how they will use the data. They face little competitive pressure to change their opaque privacy policies. Even if a data-opoly improves its privacy statement, so what? The current notice-and-consent regime is meaningless when there are no viable competitive alternatives and the bargaining power is so unequal. Surveillance and security risks. In a monopolized market, personal data is concentrated in a few firms. Consumers have limited outside options that offer better privacy protection. This raises additional risks, including: Government capture. The fewer the number of firms controlling the personal data, the greater the potential risk that a government will “capture” the firm. Companies need things from government; governments often want access to data. When there are only a few firms, this can increase the likelihood of companies secretly cooperating with the government to provide access to data. China, for example, relies on its data-opolies to better monitor its population. Covert surveillance. Even if the government cannot capture a data-opoly, its rich data-trove increases a government’s incentive to circumvent the data-opoly’s privacy protections to tap into the personal data. Even if the government can’t strike a deal to access the data directly, it may be able to do so covertly. Implications of a data policy violation/security breach. Data-opolies have greater incentives to prevent a breach than do typical firms. But with more personal data concentrated in fewer companies, hackers, marketers, political consultants, among others, have even greater incentives to find ways to circumvent or breach the dominant firm’s security measures. The concentration of data means that if one of them is breached, the harm done could be orders of magnitude greater than with a normal company. While consumers may be outraged, a dominant firm has less reason to worry of consumers’ switching to rivals. Wealth transfer to data-opolies. Even when their products and services are ostensibly “free,” data-opolies can extract significant wealth in several ways that they otherwise couldn’t in a competitive market: First, data-opolies can extract wealth by getting personal data without having to pay for the data’s fair market value. The personal data collected may be worth far more than the cost of providing the “free” service. The fact that the service is “free” does not mean we are fairly compensated for our data. Thus, data-opolies have a strong economic incentive to maintain the status quo, in which users, as the MIT Technology Review put it, “have little idea how much personal data they have provided, how it is used, and what it is worth.” If the public knew, and if they had viable alternatives, they might hold out for compensation. Second, something similar can happen but with the content users create. Data-opolies can extract wealth by getting creative content from users for free. In a competitive market, users could conceivably demand compensation not only for their data but also their contributions to YouTube and Facebook. With no viable alternatives, they cannot. Third, data-opolies can extract wealth from sellers upstream. One example is when data-opolies scrape valuable content from photographers, authors, musicians, and other websites and post it on their own platform. In this case, the wealth of the data-opolies comes at the expense of other businesses in their value chain. Fourth, data-opolies can extract our wealth indirectly, when their higher advertising fees are passed along in the prices for the advertised goods and services. If the data-opolies faced more competitors for their advertising services, ads could cost even less — and therefore so might the products being advertised. Finally, data-opolies can extract wealth from both sellers upstream and consumers downstream by facilitating or engaging in “behavioral discrimination,” a form of price discrimination based on past behavior — like, say, your internet browsing. They can use the personal data to get people to buy things they did not necessarily want at the highest price they are willing to pay. As data-opolies expand their platforms to digital personal assistants, the Internet of Things, and smart technologies, the concern is that their data advantage will increase their competitive advantage and market power. As a result, the data-opolies’ monopoly profits will likely increase, at our expense. Loss of trust. Market economies rely on trust. For online markets to deliver their benefits, people must trust firms and their use of the personal data. But as technology evolves and more personal data is collected, we are increasingly aware that a few powerful firms are using our personal information for their own benefit, not ours. When data-opolies degrade privacy protections below competitive levels, some consumers will choose not “to share their data, to limit their data sharing with companies, or even to lie when providing information,” as the UK’s Competition and Markets Authority put it. Consumers may forgo the data-opolies’ services, which they otherwise would have used if privacy competition were robust. This loss would represent what economists call a deadweight welfare loss. In other words, as distrust increases, society overall becomes worse off. Significant costs on third parties. Additionally, data-opolies that control a key platform, like a mobile phone operating system, can cheaply exclude rivals by: steering users and advertisers to their own products and services to the detriment of rival sellers on the platform (and contrary to consumers’ wishes) degrading an independent app’s functionality reducing traffic to an independent app by making it harder to find on its search engine or app store Data-opolies can also impose costs on companies seeking to protect our privacy interests. My book with Ariel Ezrachi, Virtual Competition, discusses, for example, Google’s kicking the privacy app Disconnect out of its Android app store. Less innovation in markets dominated by data-opolies. Data-opolies can chill innovation with a weapon that earlier monopolies lacked. Allen Grunes and I call it the “now-casting radar.” Our book Big Data and Competition Policy explores how some platforms have a relative advantage in accessing and analyzing data to discern consumer trends well before others. Data-opolies can use their relative advantage to see what products or services are becoming more popular. With their now-casting radar, data-opolies can acquire or squelch these nascent competitive threats. Social and moral concerns. Historically, antitrust has also been concerned with how monopolies can hinder individual autonomy. Data-opolies can also hurt individual autonomy. To start with, they can direct (and limit) opportunities for startups that subsist on their super-platform. This includes third-party sellers that rely on Amazon’s platform to reach consumers, newspapers and journalists that depend on Facebook and Google to reach younger readers, and, as the European Commission’s Google Shopping Case explores, companies that depend on traffic from Google’s search engine. But the autonomy concerns go beyond the constellation of app developers, sellers, journalists, musicians, writers, photographers, and artists dependent on the data-opoly to reach users. Every individual’s autonomy is at stake. In January, the hedge fund Jana Partners joined the California State Teachers’ Retirement pension fund to demand that Apple do more to address the effects of its devices on children. As The Economist noted, “You know you are in trouble if a Wall Street firm is lecturing you about morality.” The concern is that the data-opolies’ products are purposefully addictive, and thereby eroding individuals’ ability to make free choices. There is an interesting counterargument that’s worth noting, based on the interplay between monopoly power and competition. On the one hand, in monopolized markets, consumers have fewer competitive options. So, arguably, there is less need to addict them. On the other hand, data-opolies, like Facebook and Google, even without significant rivals, can increase profits by increasing our engagement with their products. So, data-opolies can have an incentive to exploit behavioral biases and imperfect willpower to addict users — whether watching YouTube videos or posting on Instagram. Political concerns. Economic power often translates into political power. Unlike earlier monopolies, data-opolies, given how they interact with individuals, possess a more powerful tool: namely, the ability to affect the public debate and our perception of right and wrong. Many people now receive their news from social media platforms. But the news isn’t just passively transmitted. Data-opolies can affect how we feel and think. Facebook, for example, in an “emotional contagion” study, manipulated 689,003 users’ emotions by altering their news feed. Other risks of this sort include: Bias. In filtering the information we receive based on our preferences, data-opolies can reduce the viewpoints we receive, thereby leading to “echo chambers” and “filter bubbles.” Censorship. Data-opolies, through their platform, can control or block content that users receive, and enforce governmental censorship of political or religious information. Manipulation. Data-opolies can promote stories that further their particular business or political interests, instead of their relevance or quality. Limiting the Power of Data-opolies Upon closer examination, data-opolies can actually be more dangerous than traditional monopolies. They can affect not only our wallets but our privacy, autonomy, democracy, and well-being. Markets dominated by these data-opolies will not necessarily self-correct. Network effects, high switching costs for consumers (given the lack of data portability and user rights over their data), and weak privacy protection help data-opolies maintain their dominance. Luckily, global antitrust enforcement can help. The Reagan administration, in espousing the then-popular Chicago School of economics beliefs, discounted concerns over monopolies. The Supreme Court, relying on faulty economic reasoning, surmised that charging monopoly prices was “an important element of the free market system.” With the rise of a progressive, anti-monopoly New Brandeis School, the pendulum is swinging the other way. Given the emergence of data-opolies, this is a welcomed change.

#### Platform monopoly ensures any breach cascades, collapses society

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1. Risk of data breaches. A security breach of any of the digital monopolies could result in Exabytes of users’ most vulnerable information being publicly exposed (7). Besides the risk of irreparable damage to people’s reputation, private lives, and identity (as in, e.g., the “Ashley Madison” case (8)), such a breach could result in unprecedented damage to our economy (as in, e.g., the “Sony Pictures” case (9)) and our political standing (as in, e.g., “Wikileaks Cablegate” (10)). Importantly, a security collapse of that nature might only be the start of a series of follow-up breaches. A hack of Google’s Gmail, for example, could allow the perpetrators to obtain a user’s bank account password through the “forgot password” functionality, and ultimately lead to a collapse of businesses and industries (e.g. banking, taxation, weapon silos, etc.). Compared to what was deemed a “too big to fail” state when a handful of banks collapsed in 2008, such a crisis could be unparalleled. Although the digital monopolies employ talented security teams to prevent such hacks, the public has no guarantee that a skillfully deployed attack (e.g., by another nation-state, powerful underground organization, or simply a disgruntled employee) would not be successful. Even with the best efforts of the digital monopolies—which often heavily depend on the priorities of high-ranking leaders in the organization—societies should hence operate under the assumption that the data held by the digital monopolies could be leaked at any point in time.

#### Ensures cyberattacks go nuclear

Sagan and Weiner ’21 – Stanford Professors [Scott D.; Caroline S.G. Monroe professor of political science and senior fellow at the Center for International Security and the Freeman Spogli Institute at Stanford University; Allen S.; senior lecturer in law and director of the program in international and comparative law at Stanford Law School; 7-9-2021; "The U.S. says it can answer cyberattacks with nuclear weapons. That’s lunacy."; The Washington Post; https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2021/07/09/cyberattack-ransomware-nuclear-war/; accessed 8-15-2021]

Over the July 4 weekend, the Russian-based cybercriminal organization REvil claimed credit for hacking into as many as 1,500 companies in what has been called the largest ransomware attack to date. In May, another cybercriminal group, DarkSide, also apparently located mainly in Russia, shut down most of the operations of Colonial Pipeline, which supplies nearly half the diesel, gasoline and other fuels used on the East Coast — setting off a round of panic buying that ended only when the company handed over a ransom. These incidents were bad enough. But imagine a much worse cyberattack, one that not only disabled pipelines but turned off the power at hundreds of U.S. hospitals, wreaked havoc on air-traffic-control systems and shut down the electrical grid in major cities in the dead of winter. The grisly cost might be counted not just in lost dollars but in the deaths of many thousands of people.

Under current U.S. nuclear doctrine, developed during the Trump administration, the president would be given the military option to launch nuclear weapons at Russia, China or North Korea if that country was determined to be behind such an attack.

That’s because in 2018, the Trump administration expanded the role of nuclear weapons by declaring for the first time that the United States would consider nuclear retaliation in the case of “significant non-nuclear strategic attacks,” including “attacks on the U.S., allied, or partner civilian population or infrastructure.” The same principle could also be used to justify a nuclear response to a devastating biological weapons strike.

But our analysis suggests that using nuclear weapons in response to biological or cyberattacks would be illegal under international law in virtually all circumstances. Threatening an illegal nuclear response weakens deterrence because the threat lacks inherent credibility. Perversely, this policy could also wind up committing a president to a nuclear attack if deterrence fails. While the American public would indeed be likely to want vengeance after a destructive enemy assault, the law of armed conflict requires that some military options be taken off the table. Nuclear retaliation for “significant non-nuclear strategic attacks” is one of them.

The Biden administration is now conducting its own review of the U.S. nuclear posture. The 2018 Trump change is an urgent candidate for reevaluation, but people have generally ignored it up to now. As officials work on this process, they have the chance to take full account of what could be called the “nuclear law revolution” — a growing recognition that international-law restrictions on warfare, and especially those that protect civilians, apply even to nuclear war.

#### Thus the plan: The United States federal government should remove plaintiffs’ heightened burden of proof in platform markets.

#### Removing Amex’s special rule for platforms solves – leads to a strong rule of reason approach

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(Erik, “Platform Antitrust,” 44 J. Corp. L. 713)

That is no longer the case, however, as the Supreme Court recently confronted platform commerce head-on in AmEx 111.13 In June of 2018, the Court issued its first decision on how antitrust's rule of reason 14 is to be applied in cases involving platform defendants. 15 It was superficially a question of how to define the "relevant market" for purposes of an antitrust adjudication. 1 6 In particular, the question was whether the market definition must include both groups of users, which would require a plaintiff to prove a net injury to competition across both user groups-not just to win on the merits, but simply to carry its initial burden. The Supreme Court held that it does. 17

Most of the important complexities arising under two-sided competition center on the juxtaposition of countervailing effects-that is, pro and anticompetitive effects-arising within the separate sides of the market. In fact, even outside the platform context, such a juxtaposition of plausible effects is very common in antitrust disputes. And the rule of reason ordinarily divides the burdens of establishing them; it bifurcates them into separate stages, delaying the need for potential balancing or "netting out" of the effects (which is notoriously difficult) until the final stage of the adjudication. By evaluating the effects carefully and independently, a court is better equipped to determine whether such balancing is genuinely necessary; and, if so, the court is at least in a better position to compare the relevant effects. However, the Court's AmEx III decision largely abandoned this burdenshifting framework, effectively collapsing the entire rule of reason analysis-and all of its intermediate inquiries-into the plaintiffs initial burden.

Whether or not one agrees with its holding, the AmEx III decision is inarguably a watershed moment for platform antitrust. Against this backdrop, this Article considers how antitrust ought to accommodate the distinctive features of platforms and platform competition. It focuses principally on conduct evaluated under the rule of reason, 18 with emphasis on vertical restraints and unilateral conduct. 19 The analysis is organized as follows: I begin by providing an overview of the distinctive features of platforms and platform competition, as reflected within the platform economics literature. Part III then explains how such factors may bear on the analysis of various restrictive practices that are already familiar within antitrust, but whose effects may become more or less concerning when undertaken by two-sided defendants. In Part IV, I address the economic effects of an important category of restraints that are unique to platform markets. Finally, Part V turns to the broad question of law that was at issue in AmEx III.

One of the important competitive dynamics arising in platform markets is known as "steering." 21 This refers to any efforts aimed at inducing users to opt for one platform over another. The restraint at issue in AmEx IIIwas an example of this: it prohibits its merchants from offering AmEx cardholders a better price at checkout if they agree to switch to an alternative card (e.g. Visa), since competing cards generally charge lower network usage fees to merchants. 22 But, more generally, steering restraints take many different forms, and arise in many platform markets. 3 In general, steering strategies are usually procompetitive, as they typically act as a vehicle for price competition among rival platforms. Restraints on steering should therefore be regarded as a potential source of serious antitrust concerns. However, as discussed in detail in Part III, many research articles suggest that such restraints may be necessary to maintain adequate participation, and thus regard their welfare effects as highly ambiguous. 24 The AmEx III opinion cites these commentaries copiously. Importantly, however, these arguments stem primarily from economic models involving a platform monopolist, with the operative restraint merely precluding efforts to steer users toward a nonpla'fform alternative (e.g. toward cash rather than using a monopolist's payment card platform). 25 But this is not a good representation of how such restraints usually operate in real-world commerce. In practice, most of the relevant restraints seek to prevent steering toward competing platforms, rather than a nonplatform alternative that lacks the same transactional efficiencies.

As I argue below, when a restraint merely prevents steering toward competing platforms, there is substantially less reason to presume that it might be justified for reasons relating to the market's two-sidedness. Instead, the more likely result is simply that it prevents users from switching to rival platforms that would provide them with better jointvalue. That would suggest the restraint does not enhance the market-wide volume of trade. Rather, at best, it merely reallocates transactions among platforms, albeit in a way that leaves transacting parties with diminished welfare on average. At worst, it affirmatively reduces the overall volume of trade by undermining price competition generally. This can occur for two reasons. First, the restraint may extinguish rival platforms' incentive to make competitive price offerings, as it may prevent transacting parties from switching to the competitor's platform in response to its price cut. Second, the restraint may induce sellers who transact over the platform to set higher retail prices for their own wares, which injures all consumers, whether or not they take advantage of the platform's transaction service.

The question of law addressed in AmEx III is extremely broad in scope, as it bears on the application of antitrust law to all kinds of restrictive practices that might be undertaken by transaction platforms. As noted above, while facially a holding about market definition, the Supreme Court's decision is in fact a major alteration of the rule of reason's burden shifting framework. The Court's analysis was guided principally by a number of antitrust academics that focus most of their attention on a simple point-in effect that "both sides matter," and that it would be inappropriate to focus on one side myopically. 26 While correct, this point was actually never in dispute. Even the district court, whose market definition was formally limited to the merchant side of the market, 27 expressly emphasized the importance of accounting for the market's two-sidedness. 28 Indeed, its analysis gives substantial attention to cardholders, and it even concluded that they were likely injured in addition to merchants. 2 9 Despite this, the AmEx III majority chastised the district court's approach as "looking at only one side of the platform in isolation."' 30

It is indeed true that a platform's conduct may have countervailing effects within the two sides, and that this requires courts to take the market's two-sidedness into account. 31 But it does not follow that the appropriate way to deal with this is to require a plaintiff to "net out" all such considerations merely in order to support its prima facie case-before the defendant has substantiated its asserted efficiency defense. This approach is also a substantial deviation from precedent. Most difficult cases evaluated under the rule of reason involve potential countervailing pro- and anticompetitive effects. 32 And the courts developed a multi-stage burden shifting framework precisely to deal with this difficulty. By construction, this framework contemplates that a plaintiff can carry its initial burden without having shown that the defendant's conduct is definitively anticompetitive on the whole; that is why it is merely the first stage among several.

Far from providing any necessary reform, the AmEx III decision merely developed a "law of the horse": a needless construction of new legal principles when the old ones would do just fine (and likely much better).33 It is true that platform economics has important implications for antitrust policy and practice; this Article gives substantial attention to that fact. But such considerations can already be accounted for-both more practicably and more reliably-within the rule of reason's existing structure. To that end, a much better approach would be to maintain careful consideration of platform economics throughout the established burden shifting framework, which is designed to work through complex cases in incremental steps and to cast light on countervailing effects through an efficient allocation of burdens.

#### This is the least intrusive mechanism—it only punishes bad practices and allows innovative conduct to continue

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(Herbert, “Antitrust and Platform Monopoly,” 130 Yale L.J. 1952)

A common complaint about antitrust is that it is costly and slow. While both observations ring true, the social cost of fact-intensive decision making is much less than that of making incorrect decisions that can affect millions of consumers, employees, and other constituents. Antitrust is a litigation-driven enterprise that requires decisionmakers to focus on the specific practices and assets before them. Unlike legislative regulation, antitrust does not group classes of industries together for common treatment, but that also means it is less susceptible to regulatory capture.

Nevertheless, antitrust can be subject to interest-group biases. Consumer welfare is a public good. Consumers are numerous, heterogenous, and for the most part, poorly organized. By contrast, firms who profit from underenforcement are much fewer and more unitary in their goals. Individually, the stakes firms have in the preservation of monopoly are far higher than the individual gains that accrue from competition, even though consumers’ aggregate gains are much larger, particularly when those of labor are included.435

Antitrust today suffers from an antienforcement bias that is scientifically obsolete and produces too many false negatives. This will hopefully pass as courts become more familiar with the economics of digital platforms and networks. Decisions such as Amex in the Supreme Court and Qualcomm in the Ninth Circuit indicate that development still has far to go. The rule of reason in particular has become much too burdensome for plaintiffs. Antitrust policy would perform better if plaintiffs had a lighter burden in establishing a prima facie case, with a heavier answering burden on defendants, who typically have better control of the relevant facts.436

Antitrust’s fact-specific, individual approach to intervention is usually superior to regulation. A few problems, such as management of consumer information, cut across all markets and regulation can be effective. Most other failures are specific to the firm, however. Calls for categorical treatment often amount to regulation by another name. It is easy to speak universally about these markets as winner-take-all, as having high barriers to entry, or as unnecessarily harmful to competitors or consumers. An example is broad statements of the nature that the big digital platforms must be broken up. These overly generalized conclusions frustrate rather than further reasonable competitive analysis. Platforms differ from one another by almost as wide a range as firms differ in general.

Market-power inquiries in cases involving platforms do produce some unique factual issues. When market power is assessed by conventional marketshare methods, a single relevant market should be defined with reference to one side. Effects on the other side must be considered to the extent that they strengthen or weaken any inference to be drawn from market shares. Direct economic measures will usually produce better results, although effects on the other side of two-sided platforms must be considered even when power is measured directly. Finally, the threat of competitive harm in networked markets can occur at lower market shares than the level required in conventional markets.

Antitrust’s fact-specific approach is also essential for the construction of appropriate remedies. The goal of a remedy should be consistent with the output-expanding goals of the antitrust laws themselves. Simple injunctions should always be considered. Often they can correct discrete problems while doing little to no damage to the efficiency and integrity of the firm or the market in which it operates. In addition, results are typically easier to predict.

As the long history of antitrust shows, breaking apart assets can be dangerous because it threatens losses of beneficial economies of scale or scope. Other approaches with more promise include the restructuring of management rather than assets, or else mandated interoperability or pooling. Restructuring management can enable firms to function more competitively by treating their internal decision making as a market that is itself reachable under the antitrust laws. In appropriate cases, interoperability can expand the range of beneficial network effects while doing no harm to the firm’s internal efficiencies.

Competition problems in digital platforms present some novel challenges, but most are within reach of antitrust law’s capacity to handle them. The courts and other antitrust policy makers should treat digital platforms for what they are—firms that have unique features, but not so unique that we must abandon what we know about competition in high-technology, product-differentiated markets.

## 2AC

### K

#### It’s key to a nuanced critical stance – none of the claims in the 1ac are an indelible commitment to certain logics and the alt encourages refutation for its own sake

**Austin et al.**, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, **‘19**

(Jonathan Luke, Rocco Bellanova, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, Mareile Kaufmann, University of Oslo, Norway, “Doing and mediating critique: An invitation to practice Companionship,” Security Dialogue, 2019, Vol. 50(1) 3–19)

The **‘symmetry’ principle** has been the most common way of dealing with controversies and the **opposed critical capacities** they contain. This sociological principle declares that **all propositions** made in the world (i.e. knowledge claims, practices) about a specific state of affairs should ***initially*** be held **equally relevant** for a researcher. In this view, no particular knowledge claim or practice should be **discarded** from the scope of the analysis just because they have been socially abandoned, proved scientifically untenable, or because we **ethically** or **politically** disagree with them. The view was developed most prominently within the sociology of critical capacity and science and technology studies (Bijker, 1995), where it was operationalized as a means of analytically, ethically, and **ontologically ‘flattening’** the reading of any given situation to avoid the **a priori privileging** of any particular claim or phenomena. This flattening occurs under the analytical intuition that multiple perspectives and disagreements are crucially important to understanding social life.

This is a controversial viewpoint. For many, such an ‘equality of positioning’ is often taken to be ‘a denial of responsibility and critical inquiry’ (Haraway, 1991b: 191). More recently, it has been argued that the symmetrical approach has major political consequences. It appears, for example, that such an embrace of symmetry can unnecessarily offer credence to populist, racist, or misogynistic political viewpoints (Fuller, 2016). Likewise, the concept risks being ‘weaponized’ so as to demote or promote specific forms of expertise in ways that benefit particular political or economic interests (Collins et al., 2017). However, what is often **forgotten** when the symmetry principle is translated **into critical security studies** is that a symmetrical approach is part of a social scientific **research design**, and **not a necessary result** of research itself (Callon and Latour, 1992). Symmetrical research designs provide a **baseline** on which to begin studying **complex social phenomena**: understanding how political or social asymmetries come about requires **tracing** them from the point of their emergence as well as their continuous reinforcement. Accordingly, this principle **does not deny** that actors are different from each other, in **diverse positions** and with different resources, nor does it deny that controversies themselves **are not politically neutral**. It merely states that understanding (or indeed supporting) such **normative**, **ethical**, or **political** asymmetries requires that we first and foremost **develop a fuller descriptive understanding** of how they emerge and are solidified. To put it in the language of this article’s argument: the companions that critique engages with will **inevitably differ** in their commitments, and this disagreement must be fully considered. But this does not mean – **in the final analysis** – that the critic cannot **adjudicate between their claims** but, rather, that each of these companions is given an **initial equality of weighting**, and it is recognized that **none can be ignored** if an adequate critical position-taking **is ever to take place**.

#### Consequentialism is the only coherent framework for evaluation –you can’t determine if the alt is ethical without assessing the implications of adopting that approach to the world

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(Jeffrey, Ends, Means and Politics, Dissent, Vol 49, Iss. 2, Spring)

As writers such as Niccolo Machiavelli, Max Weber, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Hannah Arendt have taught, an unyielding concern with moral goodness undercuts political responsibility. The concern may be morally laudable, reflecting a kind of personal integrity, but it suffers from three fatal flaws: (1) It fails to see that the purity of one’s intention does not ensure the achievement of what one intends. Abjuring violence or refusing to make common cause with morally compromised parties may seem like the right thing; but if such tactics entail impotence, then it is hard to view them as serving any moral good beyond the clean conscience of their supporters; (2) it fails to see that in a world of real violence and injustice, moral purity is not simply a form of powerlessness; it is often a form of complicity in injustice. This is why, from the standpoint of politics--as opposed to religion--pacifism is always a potentially immoral stand. In categorically repudiating violence, it refuses in principle to oppose certain violent injustices with any effect; and (3) it fails to see that politics is as much about unintended consequences as it is about intentions; it is the effects of action, rather than the motives of action, that is most significant. Just as the alignment with “good” may engender impotence, it is often the pursuit of “good” that generates evil. This is the lesson of communism in the twentieth century: it is not enough that one’s goals be sincere or idealistic; it is equally important, always, to ask about the effects of pursuing these goals and to judge these effects in pragmatic and historically contextualized ways. Moral absolutism inhibits this judgment. It alienates those who are not true believers. It promotes arrogance. And it undermines political effectiveness.

#### Extinction is a categorically distinct phenomenon that outweighs other considerations

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(Anthony, Stefanie Fishel is Assistant Professor, Department of Gender and Race Studies at the University of Alabama, Audra Mitchell is CIGI Chair in Global Governance and Ethics at the Balsillie School of International Affairs, Simon Dalby is CIGI Chair in the Political Economy of Climate Change at the Balsillie School of International Affairs, and, Daniel J. Levine is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Alabama, “Planet Politics: Manifesto from the End of IR,” Millennium: Journal of International Studies 1–25)

8. Global ethics must respond to mass extinction. In late 2014, the Worldwide Fund for Nature reported a startling statistic: according to their global study, 52% of species had gone extinct between 1970 and 2010.60 This is not news: for three decades, conservation biologists have been warning of a ‘sixth mass extinction’, which, by definition, could eliminate more than three quarters of currently existing life forms in just a few centuries.61 In other words, it could threaten the practical possibility of the survival of earthly life. Mass extinction is not simply extinction (or death) writ large: it is a qualitatively different phenomena that demands its own ethical categories. It cannot be grasped by aggregating species extinctions, let alone the deaths of individual organisms. Not only does it erase diverse, irreplaceable life forms, their unique histories and open-ended possibilities, but it threatens the ontological conditions of Earthly life.

IR is one of few disciplines that is explicitly devoted to the pursuit of survival, yet it has almost nothing to say in the face of a possible mass extinction event.62 It utterly lacks the conceptual and ethical frameworks necessary to foster diverse, meaningful responses to this phenomenon. As mentioned above, Cold-War era concepts such as ‘nuclear winter’ and ‘omnicide’ gesture towards harms massive in their scale and moral horror. However, they are asymptotic: they imagine nightmares of a severely denuded planet, yet they do not contemplate the comprehensive negation that a mass extinction event entails. In contemporary IR discourses, where it appears at all, extinction is treated as a problem of scientific management and biopolitical control aimed at securing existing human lifestyles.63 Once again, this approach fails to recognise the reality of extinction, which is a matter of being and nonbeing, not one of life and death processes.

Confronting the enormity of a possible mass extinction event requires a total overhaul of human perceptions of what is at stake in the disruption of the conditions of Earthly life. The question of what is ‘lost’ in extinction has, since the inception of the concept of ‘conservation’, been addressed in terms of financial cost and economic liabilities.64 Beyond reducing life to forms to capital, currencies and financial instruments, the dominant neoliberal political economy of conservation imposes a homogenising, Western secular worldview on a planetary phenomenon. Yet the enormity, complexity, and scale of mass extinction is so huge that humans need to draw on every possible resource in order to find ways of responding. This means that they need to mobilise multiple worldviews and lifeways – including those emerging from indigenous and marginalised cosmologies. Above all, it is crucial and urgent to realise that extinction is a matter of global ethics. It is not simply an issue of management or security, or even of particular visions of the good life. Instead, it is about staking a claim as to the goodness of life itself. If it does not fit within the existing parameters of global ethics, then it is these boundaries that need to change.

9. An Earth-worldly politics. Humans are worldly – that is, we are fundamentally worldforming and embedded in multiple worlds that traverse the Earth. However, the Earth is not ‘our’ world, as the grand theories of IR, and some accounts of the Anthropocene have it – an object and possession to be appropriated, circumnavigated, instrumentalised and englobed.65 Rather, it is a complex of worlds that we share, co-constitute, create, destroy and inhabit with countless other life forms and beings.

The formation of the Anthropocene reflects a particular type of worlding, one in which the Earth is treated as raw material for the creation of a world tailored to human needs. Heidegger famously framed ‘earth’ and ‘world’ as two countervailing, conflicting forces that constrain and shape one another. We contend that existing political, economic and social conditions have pushed human worlding so far to one extreme that it has become almost entirely detached from the conditions of the Earth. Planet Politics calls, instead, for a mode of worlding that is responsive to, and grounded in, the Earth. One of these ways of being Earth-worldly is to embrace the condition of being entangled. We can interpret this term in the way that Heidegger66 did, as the condition of being mired in everyday human concerns, worries, and anxiety, to prolong existence. But, in contrast, we can and should reframe it as authors like Karen Barad67 and Donna Haraway68 have done. To them and many others, ‘entanglement’ is a radical, indeed fundamental condition of being-with, or, as Jean-Luc Nancy puts it, ‘being singular plural’.69 This means that no being is truly autonomous or separate, whether at the scale of international politics or of quantum physics. World itself is singular plural: what humans tend to refer to as ‘the’ world is actually a multiplicity of worlds at various scales that intersect, overlap, conflict, emerge as they surge across the Earth. World emerges from the poetics of existence, the collision of energy and matter, the tumult of agencies, the fusion and diffusion of bonds.

Worlds erupt from, and consist in, the intersection of diverse forms of being – material and intangible, organic and inorganic, ‘living’ and ‘nonliving’. Because of the tumultuousness of the Earth with which they are entangled, ‘worlds’ are not static, rigid or permanent. They are permeable and fluid. They can be created, modified – and, of course, destroyed. Concepts of violence, harm and (in)security that focus only on humans ignore at their peril the destruction and severance of worlds,70 which undermines the conditions of plurality that enables life on Earth to thrive.

#### That’s especially key because pursuit of primacy is inevitable

**Preble 16**

Christopher Preble is the vice president for defense and foreign-policy studies at the Cato Institute, The National Interest, December 21, 2016, “Will Donald Trump Really Bring an End to America's Global Leadership?”, http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-skeptics/will-donald-trump-really-bring-end-americas-global-18815?page=show

On the other hand, perhaps American global leadership will persist? After all, **the gap between what the public wants and what the elites are giving them is decades old**, and we’ve sustained it before. **The people who surround Trump may figure out a way to continue the status quo**. Cato’s Ben Friedman argues that Trump will be hawkish. Ben and my former colleague Justin Logan contend that **primacy** (aka liberal hegemony or deep engagement) **has**, well, **hegemonic control over foreign-policy discourse among DC elites**. Academics debate the flaws and misconceptions of primacy all the time, but **many in the foreign-policy establishment seem blissfully unaware of this academic debate, often even ignoring the scholars in the academy who agree with them.**

#### Nuclear deterrence is good – imposes finitude on the international system necessary for ethical negotiation

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(Tom, “The ethics of neorealism: Waltz and the time of international life,” European Journal of

International Relations, Vol. 25(1) 229–249)

To argue against the desirability of universal ethical ideals is, essentially, to recognize the

importance of finitude for thinking about international ethics. Waltz’s neorealist conception of international anarchy and of the desire of states to survive therein offers one way

of affirming this notion of international ethics. This is not to say, however, that international anarchy in Waltz’s theory should be seen as a perfect ideal that all politics and

ethics must aspire to maintain. In order for my deconstructive approach to the ethics of neorealism to make any sense, the international must also be seen as something finite

and deconstructible, rather than as an end in itself.

To think of the finitude of the international, we do not have to look for something that

‘transcends’ or comes ‘after’ the international, like a world government or cosmopolitan

community.18 We only have to focus on the principles that, according to Waltz, are meant

to keep the international order alive: the structure of anarchy and states’ desire to survive.

While these are mutually dependent, they also point to a situation in which the struggle

to stay alive might threaten the system in which this struggle takes place. To illustrate

this point, consider the issue of nuclear deterrence, which Waltz controversially saw as a

possible method of creating a more peaceful international order (see Waltz, 1990b). For

Waltz, only if nuclear catastrophe remains a real possibility will states need to actively

deter the nuclear threat.19 Thus, nuclear deterrence ‘works’ only if nuclear war remains a

constant possibility, hence only insofar as the problem of nuclear war is not permanently

resolved (Waltz, 1990b: 743–744). What creates the possibility of nuclear war constitutes, in this sense, the conditions of international security and peace.

What makes the prospect of nuclear war different from other wars is, of course, the

planetary scale on which its effects are likely to be felt. As such, it poses a threat not only

to individual states, but also to the entire system of states. On this point, there is another

parallel to be drawn between Waltz and Derrida, for whom apocalyptic discourses on

nuclear war are interesting because they highlight ‘the absolute effacement of any possible trace’ (Derrida, 1984c: 28). Hence, these discourses raise the stakes of survival

even further by pointing to the finitude of everything that lives, as well as to all those

attempts at keeping the apocalypse at bay, deferring it through deterrence and so on

(Derrida, 1984d: 29).

Understood as a global threat to the entire international order, nuclear war highlights

the temporal horizon of the whole neorealist project as conceived by Waltz. This is the

horizon of the horizon, or the structure of the structure, which gives meaning to the

‘international’ as a finite as opposed to infinite category shaping the behaviour of states.

Rather than simply reaffirming a static world-view, which perpetually reproduces itself

in a circular fashion, Waltz puts forward a notion of the international that is both finite

and mortal. The international continues to live on in this sense, but only on the condition

that it is exposed to the threat of coming to an end.

Other examples of how the international system may come to an end relate to the increased impact of global capital and global warming. While these are often depicted as typical examples of transnational phenomena, they nevertheless emanate from a system in which states are free to make sovereign decisions, for example, on how to deregulate the emissions of pollutants and financial markets. Individual states are thus free to actively contribute to setting in motion processes that might put an end to the system that conditions their survival. In this way, there is a self-destructive potential built into the system, which threatens to make it collapse from within and on its own terms (see also Frost, 2009: 163–168).

Conclusion

The ethics of neorealism, as argued in this article, stems from the mutual interaction of the two core themes of Waltz’s theory: the structure of anarchy and states’ desire to survive. Together, they affirm Derrida’s notion of the violent opening of ethics: the opening to a future that makes new life possible while exposing everything that lives to finitude and the threat of erasure. Ethics and violence are, thus, inextricably interlinked, which means that any attempt to immunize the former from the latter is untenable. Before any moral obligations, and before any normative commitments, the ethics of neorealism addresses the more fundamental problem of what it means for states to live and be free in a system that guarantees nothing. In this way, Waltzian neorealism articulates the basic conditions of international life, which all attempts to theorize international ethics, either by remaining ‘within’ the international system or by arguing in favour of its transcendence, must come to terms with.

One of the main challenges that springs from my reading of the ethics of neorealism relates to how universal ethical ideals not only become impossible to achieve in the practical sense, but are also fundamentally undesirable. They are undesirable because the desire to fulfil them undermines the conditions that make international life possible in the first place. On this basis, a whole range of attempts to theorize the meaning and implications of international ethics, which in various ways hold on to the notion of ethical ideals beyond the violence of inter-state relations within an anarchic structure, become untenable. This even includes classical realism and the thought of Morgenthau, whose sharp distinction between ethical desirability and political possibility dissolves in light of the neorealist ethics presented in this article. According to this notion of ethics, then, the desirable cannot be placed beyond political possibility since it essentially is political possibility: the possibility of whatever happens in the interaction among states in the structure of anarchy.

As was pointed out in the penultimate section of this article, there is also a temporal horizon of neorealism. This horizon is best illustrated by the threat of nuclear war and highlights the possible end of the entire international political system. The threat of nuclear war demonstrates why this system, just like the state, ought to be seen as a finite as opposed to infinite category. Stressing the finitude of the system means that there is no metaphysical truth, moral or otherwise, to which it either can or should conform. It also means that there is always space, and time, for an ongoing ethical-political negotiation. While the latter might very well include efforts to produce a ‘lesser violence’, its main force is that of a perpetual coming of the future. As long as this future is allowed to play out, there is, I believe, reason to be optimistic: optimistic not about the possible fulfilment of universal ethical ideals, but about the future itself, and whatever it holds for international life.

#### China is revisionist—Empirics, internal doctrines and proximity guarantees China’s revisionist and a challenge for the U.S. – our threat isn’t constructed

Choi 18

Ji Young Choi, Associate professor in the Department of Politics and Government and affiliated professor in the International Studies Program and East Asian Studies Program at Ohio Wesleyan University. “Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on the Rise of China: Long Cycles, Power Transitions, and China's Ascent,” Asian Perspective, Vol. 42, Issue 1, January-March 2018, pages 61-84.

I have explored in light of historical and theoretical perspectives whether China is a candidate to become a global hegemonic power. The next question I will address is whether the ascent of China will lead to a hegemonic war or not. As mentioned previously, historical and theoretical lessons reveal that a rising great power tends to challenge a system leader when the former's economic and other major capabilities come too close to those of the latter and the former is dissatisfied with the latter's leadership and the international rules it created. This means that the rise of China could produce intense hegemonic competition and even a global hegemonic war. The preventive motivation by an old declining power can cause a major war with a newly emerging power when it is combined with other variables (Levy 1987). While a preventive war by a system leader is historically rare, a newly emerging yet even relatively weak rising power at times challenges a much more powerful system leader, as in the case of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 (Schweller 1999). A historical lesson is that "incomplete catch-ups are inherently conflict-prone" (Thompson 2006, 19). This implies that even though it falls short of surpassing the system leader, the rise of a new great power can produce significant instability in the interstate system when it develops into a revisionist power. Moreover, the United States and China are deeply involved in major security issues in East Asia (including the North Korean nuclear crisis, the Taiwan issue, and the South China Sea disputes), and we cannot rule out the possibility that one of these regional conflicts will develop into a much bigger global war in which the two superpowers are entangled. According to Allison (2017), who studied sixteen historical cases in which a rising power confronted an existing power, a war between the United States and China is not unavoidable, but escaping it will require enormous efforts by both sides. Some Chinese scholars (Jia 2009; Wang and Zhu 2015), who emphasize the transformation of China's domestic politics and the pragmatism of Beijing's diplomacy, have a more or less optimistic view of the future of US-China relations. Yet my reading of the situation is that since 2009 there has been an increasing gap between this optimistic view and what has really happened. It is premature to conclude that China is a revisionist state, but in what follows I will suggest some important signs that show China has revisionist aims at least in the Asia Pacific and could develop into a revisionist power in the future.

Beijing has concentrated on economic modernization since the start of pro-market reforms in the late 1970s and made efforts to keep a low profile in international security issues for several decades. It followed Deng Xiaoping's doctrine: "hide one's capabilities, bide one's time, and seek the right opportunity." Since 2003, China's motto has been "Peaceful Rise" or "Peaceful Development," and Chinese leadership has emphasized that the rise of China would not threaten any other countries. Recently, however, Beijing has adopted increasingly assertive or even aggressive foreign policies in international security affairs. In particular, China has been adamant about territorial issues in the East and South China Seas and is increasingly considered as a severe threat by other nations in the Asia Pacific region. Since 2009, for example, Beijing has increased naval activities on a large scale in the area of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea. In 2010, Beijing announced that just like Tibet and Taiwan, the South China Sea is considered a core national interest. We can identify drastic rhetorical changes as well. In 2010, China's foreign minister publicly stated, "China is a big country . . . and other countries are small countries and that is just a fact" (Economist 2012). In October 2013, Chinese leader Xi Jinping also used the words "struggle and achieve results," emphasizing the importance of China's territorial integrity (Waldron 2014, 166-167). Furthermore, China has constructed man-made islands in the South China Sea to seek "de facto control over the resource-rich waters and islets" claimed as well by its neighboring countries (Los Angeles Times 2015). As of now, China's strategy is to delay a direct military conflict with the United States as long as possible and use its economic and political prowess to pressure smaller neighbors to give up their territorial claims (Doran 2012). These new developments and rhetorical signals reflect significant changes in China's foreign policies and signify that China's peaceful rise seems to be over.

A rising great power's consistent and determined policies to increase military buildups can be read as one of the significant signs of the rising power's dissatisfaction with the existing order and its willingness to do battle if it is really necessary. In the words of Rapkin and Thompson (2003, 318), "arms buildups and arms races . . . reflect substantial dissatisfaction on the part of the challenger and an attempt to accelerate the pace of military catchup and the development of a relative power advantage." Werner and Kugler (1996) also posit that if an emerging challenger's military expenditures are increasing faster than those of a system leader, parity can be very dangerous to the international political order. China's GDP is currently around 60 percent of that of the United States, so parity has not been reached yet. China's military budget, however, has grown enormously for the past two decades (double-digit growth nearly every year), which is creating concerns among neighboring nations and a system leader, the United States. In addition to its air force, China's strengthening navy or sea power has been one of the main goals in its military modernization program. Beijing has invested large financial resources in constructing new naval vessels, submarines, and aircraft carriers (Economist 2012). Furthermore, in its new defense white paper in 2015, Beijing made clear a vision to expand the global role for its military, particularly its naval force, to protect its overseas economic and strategic interests (Tiezzi 2015).

Sea power has special importance for an emerging great power. As Mahan (1987 [1890]) explained cogently in one of his classic books on naval strategy, Great Britain was able to emerge as a new hegemonic power because of the superiority of its naval capacity and technology and its effective control of main international sealanes. Naval power has a special significance for China, a newly emerging power, as well as for both economic and strategic reasons. First, its economy's rapid growth requires external expansion to ensure raw materials and the foreign markets to sell its products. Therefore, naval power becomes crucial in protecting its overseas business interests and activities. Second, securing major sea-lanes becomes increasingly important as they will be crucial lifelines for the supply of energy, raw materials, and other essential goods should China become involved in a hegemonic war or any other major military conflict (Friedberg 2011). In light of this, it is understandable why China is so stubborn over territorial issues in the South China and East China Seas. In fact, history tells us that many rising powers invested in sea power to expand their global influence, and indeed all the global hegemons including Great Britain and the United States were predominant naval powers.

Another important aspect is that Beijing is beginning to voice its dissatisfaction with the existing international economic order and take actions that could potentially change this order. The Chinese economy has overall benefited from the post-World War II international liberal order, but the Bretton Woods institutions like the IMF and the World Bank have been dominated by the United States and its allies and China does not have much power or voice in these institutions. Both institutions are based in Washington, DC, and the United States has enjoyed the largest voting shares with its veto power. Along with other emerging economies, China has called for significant reforms, especially in the governing system of the IMF, but reform plans to give more power to China and other emerging economies have been delayed by the opposition of the US Congress (Choi 2013). In response to this, Beijing recently took the initiative to create new international financial institutions including the AIIB. At this moment, it is premature to say that these new institutions would be able to replace the Bretton Woods institutions. Nonetheless, this new development can be read as a starting point for significant changes in global economic and financial governance that has been dominated by the United States since the end of World War II (Subacchi 2015).

#### Security in this context is good—Their theory purposefully denies objective threats for the sake of analytic clarity – examining whether threats are real and whether our security responses are ethical is the only effective middle ground

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Rita Floyd, “Introduction” in The Morality of Security, Cambridge Core, April 2019, pp 10-12, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108667814>.

Securitization has been heavily debated in the scholarly community. Among other things much discussion has focused on the issue of whether securitization is satisfied simply by audience acceptance of the securitizing move, or whether it has to involve extraordinary measures (Balzacq, Le´onard and Ruzicka, 2015). All securitization scholars accept, however, that security threats are socially and politically constructed, or in other words that: ‘Security issues are made security issues by acts of securitization’ (Buzan et al., 1998: 204). This has allowed scholars to recognize what Jef Huysmans calls ‘the political force of security’ whereby ‘[s]ecurity is a practice not of responding to enemies and fear but of creating them’ (2014: 3). An exclusive focus on the constructedness of security means, however, that securitization scholars tend to ignore whether or not the threats that inform securitization are real or otherwise. And as Thierry Balzacq argues, this has had the disadvantage of securitization scholars overlooking the fact that securitizing moves that refer to ‘brute threats’ are more likely to succeed because, ‘to win an audience, security statements must, usually, be related to an external reality’ (2011b: 13). Balzacq’s observation is important in the context of this book as it goes some way towards paving the way for the inclusion of objective existential threats into securitization analysis. As I will argue in this book, real threats are important for the purposes of just securitization theory as only these may constitute a just reason19 for securitization.

The Copenhagen School’s refusal to ‘peek behind [threat construction] to decide whether it is really a threat’ (Buzan et al., 1998: 204) and the just war tradition’s insistence on real threats as just causes, appear to suggest insurmountable differences at the meta-theoretical level between the two theories. Importantly, however, the Copenhagen School’s unwillingness to, as they put it, ‘peek behind’ threat construction, does not stem from a denial that real threats exist (after all Wæver (2011: 472) recognizes that ‘lots of real threats exist’),20 but from the belief that the study of threat construction is ultimately more fruitful than pondering the presence of real threats (Buzan and Hansen, 2009: 213; Buzan et al., 1998: 204). Beyond this, the decision not to try and examine whether security threats refer to real threats is also – at least in part – driven by a strong normative conviction. Thus by focusing on the political force of security as opposed to whether or not threats are real, Wæver and the Copenhagen School highlight the fact that securitization is/was not inevitable; things could have been treated in a different way (for example, perceived threats could have been criminalized or simply politicized). This enables scholars following this logic to highlight that securitizing actors bear responsibility for framing things in this way. Wæver calls this ‘the politics of responsibility’ (2011: 472), which he explains as follows: ‘The securitization approach points to the inherently political nature of any designation of security issues and thus it puts an ethical question at the feet of analysts, decisionmakers and activists alike: why do you call this a security issue? What are the implications of doing this – or of not doing it?’ (Wæver 1999 cited in Wæver, 2011: 468; emphasis added).

The significance of the fact that securitization is a political choice cannot be overstated; however, it is also the case that decision-makers are likely to consider securitization the right political choice when they believe that they are in fact dealing with a real threat. In other words, the possibility of framing the issue differently will not be tempting if they believe that there is a real threat. Given that the Copenhagen School and their followers cannot tell them anything about the actual objective existence of the threat, the framework seems of limited persuasiveness here; it is simply the securitizing actor’s belief against the scholar’s argument that things could and perhaps should be different. Indeed the Copenhagen School recognizes ‘our inability to counter securitization (say, of immigrants) with an argument that this is not really a security problem or that the environment is a bigger security problem’ as the securitization approach’s ‘main disadvantage’ (Buzan et al., 1998: 206). I propose that if the ethical goal of securitization analysis is that securitizing actors take responsibility for their actions, then a better strategy is to begin by (helping them in) judging the objective existence of a threat, because unless there is a real threat, securitization is most definitely the wrong political and ethical choice. Importantly, however, as I argue in this book, the existence of a real threat does not automatically necessitate securitization (indeed this remains a political choice), neither does it – by itself – render it morally permissible; the presence of real threats is rather one important requirement for securitization to be justified. In other words, just securitization is informed by the idea that securitizing actors are not only responsible for choosing to securitize, they ought to be responsible for securitizing in an ethical manner. In my view, the fact that the original variant of securitization theory excludes objective existential threats not on ontological, but at least partially on normative grounds means that a variant of securitization theory that includes real threats is at least permissible, provided, of course, that a theoretical framework that shows how we can know that threats are real is delivered. In this book, such a framework is set out in Chapter 2. 21

[FOOTNOTE 21 BEGINS

1 Some scholars may object to the possibility of combining insights of opposed theories on the grounds of inconsistency – for example, critical security studies, with its postmodern roots, with insights gained from analytical, moral and political philosophy. Interestingly, Wæver has faced similar charges of inconsistency for combining elements that ordinarily don’t go together (notably, Wæver refers to himself as a poststructural realist). To these critics Wæver offers this persuasive riposte: ‘This criticism presupposes that these larger groups are internally consistent and mutually isolated. On the contrary, we all know numerous examples of internally consistent theories that draw on several traditions – and many more examples of theories that stay within their “box” and yet are horribly inconsistent. Therefore, investigations of the internal consistency and productivity of research traditions should focus on distinct theories, not loose collections hereof’ (Wæver, 2015:124). Generally speaking, I am critical of the tendency to confuse theory with ideology, and thus disallowing and discounting anything outside of one’s perceived and tightly regulated theoretical remit. In the past in IR such thinking has led to bad scholarship; thankfully now scholars are working to dispel artificially imposed dichotomies, such as that on the relationship between causation and discourse (Kurki, 2008).

FOOTNOTE 21 ENDS]

#### Chinese influence turns all AFF impacts – replicates every harm of imperialist expansion – they cannot win that Western influence is worse

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Linus, with Astrid H. M. Nordin, International Studies Review (2020) 22, 507–525. https://watermark.silverchair.com/viz023.pdf?token=AQECAHi208BE49Ooan9kkhW\_Ercy7Dm3ZL\_9Cf3qfKAc485ysgAAAp0wggKZBgkqhkiG9w0BBwagggKKMIIChgIBADCCAn8GCSqGSIb3DQEHATAeBglghkgBZQMEAS4wEQQMGd0SwMLngLZCIDJuAgEQgIICUHEiXM7IxbN8RR3msRM65fTfA8GZ3rN9LUsR4-F2f\_-Kja0KtVKojOPojOI7HWWgZX5gNtMbGe-rFPeXuRn79jnZ\_pcC59VxNeC6OBrvISJGqNws2L-J8mFL30ObDqRExoy4IQM2PQ8s0\_GUOSWjUXm5sXwb1ulj7287Q8e8tJUsBB0VrxdNTn4jifzzEodBfGuzt1zgI6iehQ5CelUoCve51rG8HuO-i7BaLS5XiJvFTIoAmUYAqVEhTXDko6BKsLOPMUyd5HQcxC-2Sd3xCNY-PQTdX4Xj1axYGIETDE65RPL6syl6oPXqOUDhO-gvrZC4H7zALH4Y1L2CKNGfTcj1Y4Y\_4VfOV1E-GmCJ3QC\_pFpI5hXiRqt6bih1X8lNSGQ2Gkdjgw5dFKXviehBbB3EeKtaPkbU25P2JSCp5FseU7d-UlgeCMr7ga0gaz5U\_Y-3sOEytDM7g-IwgZCoba0fClanu4Xhs7aSdvO1R3sk0hnRN6iVklfG7NokT3huDaTykID3C2bk4dkEaFd9565GMnA-gw7AtPOKu0aRKOJpcxoy4E6EqXs4wayQp5O9q-6JEBZZUNp53OMLsDo7u\_Unxg5ZqZifGUxds8RdiSsmq6IPVOxZWFmrPLsVZsXF8AzJ4zu6d1EVTFNZpHmbzFdKJjFqMvbfkpuZnPH3hecVlOY4Fwlg93W\_Qx3oiNdA4rGrixq2KA7yG0nciChNxFeOtXI6esYFIuOOl7N-Yd3wLS4zGeabCJs3gXbwyAmWoV2wvqRREtfzvqJmOuZAk7Y

In sum, the harmony discourse epitomizes China’s current attempt to exercise soft power. It relies on representational force and the dichotomization of a positive Chinese self and negative Western and Japanese others. This discursive logic forces domestic and international audiences to empathize and identify with harmonious China and against its disharmonious others. At the same time, there are already indications that such a harmony discourse in China is not necessarily benign but intertwines with hierarchal rule and calls to battle diversity.

Advocating Hierarchy through “Harmony”: The Case of the West

The first other to China’s “harmonious” self is thus the West. The dominant Chinese discourse on harmony, however, rarely recognizes that Western thought has its roots in Ancient Greece, which also strongly emphasized harmony as a virtue. A Euro- pean tradition of thinking about harmony can be traced from ancient philosophers such as Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle to Enlightenment thinkers such as Immanuel Kant, Gottfried Leibniz, Friedrich Hegel, Charles Fourier, and Robert Owen, as well as to more modern harmony advocates such as Wilhelm Weitling.

The infusion of harmony in the purported Greek roots of “Western civilization” can be exemplified by the ancient thinker who is often depicted as the Western equivalent to Confucius: Plato. Despite significant differences between their wider ideas, Plato’s account of harmony has striking and significant commonalities with that of Confucius. Both emphasized that social harmony could only be achieved if all parts of society fulfilled their proper roles and submitted to hierarchical rule. To Plato, moreover, a society was harmonious and just when its three classes of people (rulers, soldiers, and workers) did their own proper work in a unified hierarchical structure, and soldiers were ready to enforce rulers’ rule with violence when nec- essary (Plato 1987, 433a). Like Confucius, Plato believed that only elites, who had reached wisdom through education, could properly understand harmony (Smith 2010, 36). Beyond the handful of roles that he thought were useful to social order, Plato shared Confucius’ evaluation that “multiplicity leads to the bad and the ugly” (Cai 1999, 331). Moreover, like Confucius, he thought that correct understanding needed to be enforced through censorship (Plato 1987, 401a–b, 398a).

This cursory overview of the similarities between Platonic and Confucian thought shows that both the presence of thinking about harmony and its elaboration might be less uniquely Chinese than some Chinese commentators would have us believe. Moreover, thinking about harmony coincided with violent wars in both Ancient China and Ancient Greece. This suggests that in neither context was thinking about harmony a guarantee of peaceful and harmonious interactions.

Highlighting these ancient similarities is not to say that with modernity, a har- mony discourse disappeared from the Western tradition. Previous research has shown that recent European history abounds with talk about harmony. Moreover, such discourses of harmony have legitimized and enabled a range of activities, from mildly homogenizing nationalism to the military expansionism of Nazi Germany. In interwar Scandinavia, for example, harmony (harmoni) appears as part of “idyllizing and harmony-seeking nationalism,” expressed in wholesome physical activity in na- ture (Nielsen 1997, 68). Such a notion of harmony was also a significant ingredient in German fascist quests for the “genuine,” as exemplified first by harmony with na- ture and later by harmony with the racialized “Volk” itself (Mosse 2004, 147). Hitler used the rhetoric of “harmony” (Harmonie) to motivate his state based on racial segregation and hierarchy. In Mein Kampf, he wrote that “a certain harmony must be present” between mind and body (Hitler 1992, 370). In contrast to the harmo- niously beautiful Aryans, any apparent “harmony” among Jews was considered fake and said to vanish in the absence of a common enemy or threat (Hitler 1992, 274). This dichotomization of those who embodied proper harmony and those who did not legitimized and enabled extreme violence against those who fell on the wrong side of the divide. Moreover, audiences were attracted, or perhaps coerced, to the cause by having to decide whether they sided with the harmonizers or with those who were deemed in need of harmonization.

The discursive deployment of harmony is also evident in the wake of European colonialism, although it is a matter of debate whether it is a direct legacy of it. In Indonesia, for example, “nationalist idioms of harmony” resonate with local ef- forts to build harmony between Christian and Muslim communities (Acciaioli 2001, 107). Such efforts, however, have contributed to increased communal tensions by failing to recognize the heterogeneity of local settlements and insisting that a sin- gle people’s custom must be sovereign in each territory. Disputes between indi- genes and migrants have erupted into violence in many parts of the archipelago (Acciaioli 2001, 104, 107–8). Moreover, during Colombia’s nineteenth-century wars of independence, racial equality was declared in law in accordance with a “nation- alist mythology of racial harmony” (Lasso 2007, 9). However, the elite were able to maintain informal patterns of discrimination by impeding the formation of racially based political associations. In fact, the language of harmony helped to keep the disenfranchised “in their place” by recasting the expression of racial grievances as a mark of unpatriotic divisiveness, criminalized by elites who claimed that racial har- mony had already been achieved (Lasso 2007, 13, see also chapter 3). Similarly, the Catholic Church’s notion of “class harmony” legitimized inequality between classes as “natural” in twentieth-century Argentina. In this way, working class and social- ist notions of class struggle were suppressed. In the Argentinian case, a discourse of harmony was a precursor to illiberal, authoritarian, militarist, and quasi-fascist nationalist conservatism (Rock 1987, 286–87).

In sum, a harmony discourse is not unique to Chinese history of thought but also central to the cradle and development of Western traditions. To both Plato and Confucius, it was the duty of elites to elaborate ideas of harmony and the duty of those deemed inferior to submit to and obey the elites. The next steps in such logic, understood in this article as the exercise of soft power, are to label the disobe- dient disharmonious and in need of harmonization and to coercively enforce com- pliance by using the hard power of physical violence. This dichotomization makes audiences align with the harmonizers in word and deed or else be deemed also in need of violent harmonization. The section suggests that the soft power of harmony is potentially, although not necessarily, deeply authoritarian.

Justifying Militarism through “Harmony”: The Case of Japan

As seen above, Japan—particularly in its prewar and wartime incarnations—is the second other in relation to which China’s “harmonious” self is constructed. The Japan case echoes and reinforces the points made above about the West, and Japanese harmony discourses bear an uncanny resemblance to their contemporary Chinese equivalents.

During Japan’s wars in the 1930s and 1940s, the importance of harmony was established most definitively in the 1937 Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan (Kokutai no hongi). By 1945, the Bureau of Educational Reform—the entity in Japan’s Ministry of Education charged with thought control—had disseminated ap- proximately 2 million copies of the moral education textbook. The book’s aim was to “cultivate and awaken national sentiment and consciousness” (Hall 1949, 11). In his introduction to the English translation, Robert King Hall (1949, 8) characterizes Kokutai no hongi as “a literary expression of ideas . . . sincerely held by a very great majority of the Japanese.”

In brief, Kokutai no hongi set forth the official state doctrine on Japan’s civilization and international relations, as well as the mythology and belief systems on which they were based. The central notion was that Japan was “a nation united in harmony as a single large family” under the benign rule of a divine emperor. Moreover, the book dichotomously differentiated this Japanese “spirit of harmony” from Western individualism and egoism (Kokutai no hongi 1949 [1937], 93).

One chapter in Kokutai no hongi was devoted specifically to the concept of har- mony, which is deemed Japan’s “fundamental way” (Kokutai no hongi 1949 [1937], 93). Analogous to contemporary Chinese discourses, Kokutai no hongi singled out Japan as “a unique nation built on the harmony of all things” (Cross 2009, 84). At the same time—and in striking similarity to the Chinese notion of “harmo- nious society”—harmony was not merely a fact but also a goal. Only by secur- ing Japan’s essence could the nation be rejuvenated and overcome “old abuses,” “feudal fetters,” and the “ideological and social evils” that had allegedly been im- ported through foreign learning since the nineteenth century (Kokutai no hongi 1949 [1937], 51–52).

On the one hand, the book stressed harmony between races, much like the propa- ganda that was used to motivate Japanese imperialism in the guise of “Pan-Asianism” and the construction of a Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere (Dai-to ̄a-kyo ̄eiken) (Hotta 2007). In this vein, foreign ministry spokesman Kawai Tatsuo stated in 1938, “The objective of Japanese expansion is . . . the realization of harmony and con- cord among the nations of East Asia and their common happiness and prosperity” (quoted in Culver 2013, 121). On the other hand, Kokutai no hongi reproduced the idea that social harmony could exist only if people played their natural and pre- determined social roles to uphold a hierarchical social order with the emperor at the apex (Kokutai no hongi 1949 [1937], 97–100). Many contemporary Japanese be- gan to envision a similar kind of harmony at the international level—or “harmony with the world” (Zumoto 1927, 14). Different actors probably meant rather differ- ent things in their advocacy of harmony (Goto-Jones 2005, 95), but as Japanese expansionism progressed, the favored recipe for building a harmonious world was increasingly to unify various parts of East Asia hierarchically under Japanese leader- ship. As William Swan (1996, 146) notes, this was intended to produce an “organi- cally functioning entity that would harmoniously follow the political and economic leadership of Japan.”

These grandiose and rather idealistic aims notwithstanding, the obvious flipside of the coin was the use of physical violence. Although Japanese rhetoric was meant to make audiences empathize and identify with the idea that harmonious Japan had the right to supremacy, the use of violence and military instruments of statecraft were frequently seen as justified to diminish resistance and secure the harmony sought. Kokutai no hongi clearly states: “War . . . is not . . . intended for destruction, overpowering, or subjugation of others . . . [but] for the bringing about of great harmony, that is, peace” (Kokutai no hongi 1949 [1937], 95). Accordingly, those who challenged Japan’s harmonious cause risked being deemed disharmonious and in need of violent harmonization.

Although current identity discourses in Japan tend to differentiate the peaceful- ness of postwar Japan from the belligerency of its wartime incarnation (Hagström and Hanssen 2016; Hagström and Isaksson 2019), harmony has remained a central concept in the country. Japan’s identity discourse par excellence in the postwar pe- riod, the so-called Nihonjinron (or “theory about the Japanese”), is a case in point (Befu 2001, 22). However, Miyoshi and Harootunian (1993, 4) note that a kind of “gangsterism structurally enacts the rule of unity and conformity” in most segments of Japanese society. It does this through what we now recognize as the exercise of soft power, or the rhetorical force of dichotomizing the harmonious from the disharmonious: “One either accepts what he or she is told or becomes ostracized” (Miyoshi and Harootunian 1993, 4; see also Befu 2001, 19). Hirata and Warschauer (2014, 5) indicate that the quest for harmony can “cause harm” through the pro- duction of fear of and hostility toward those deemed disharmonious (Hirata and Warschauer 2014, 7–10).

Much as in the case of China, harmony is also emphasized in Japan’s official soft power campaigns (Heng 2010; Bukh 2014). These campaigns have in turn been crit- icized for their resemblance to the cultural politics of Japan’s interwar period—for essentializing Japanese culture and disregarding the ways in which cultures inter- mingle (Shimizu 2014, 696). Moreover, Daisuke Akimoto (2012) argues that the Abe government’s notion of “proactive pacifism” gives Japan a mandate to “har- monize” nonpeaceful countries. Although he does not advocate the use of mili- tary instruments, the gist of proactive pacifism is exactly that “our peace” must be safeguarded from “their belligerency”—if necessary with the help of military force (Hagström and Hanssen 2016).

In sum, Japanese wartime violence was legitimized and enabled in part through a harmony discourse that implied that war and occupation with harmonious con- sequences was possible and in the best interest of all “liberated” Asian nations. Decades before it was popularized, what is now termed soft power can thus be seen as having operated in discourses that portrayed it as harmonious Japan’s destiny to harmonize less harmonious others (cf. Akami 2014). Despite contemporary Japan’s efforts to make a clean break with this particular past, discourses on harmony con- tinue to enforce conformity there—in the final analysis through the use of physical violence.

The Soft Power of Harmony: Dangers and Possibilities

We have shown that the self/other dichotomization and representational force at play in historical harmony discourses in the West and Japan served to legitimize and enable a range of physically violent practices. Our examples indicate that such harmonization can enable and legitimize violence in different ways. The other to be harmonized can refer to various groups and actors that are deemed disharmonious: (a) for being inferior and therefore disturbing the harmonious self—for example, minorities; (b) for not clearly empathizing and identifying with the self who em- bodies harmony or for resisting that self—for example, political dissenters; and (c) for propagating alternative, distinctly disharmonious versions of world order—for example, external threats. The self then is related to the other differently, and uses force against the other for different reasons.

This section argues that much like the Western and Japanese cases, the harmony discourse that is part of Chinese soft-power campaigns and epitomizes China’s ex- ercise of soft power can also legitimize and enable hierarchical sociopolitical struc- tures, war, empire, and physical conquest, through the above ways of enabling and legitimizing violence. In other words, the exercise of soft power is likely to enable the use of hard power in the case of China too, and has already begun to do so do- mestically. Does the exercise of soft power inevitably legitimize and enable the use of hard power? The section ends by suggesting that soft power could be reconceptu- alized with the help of other Chinese interpretations of harmony in a way that may be helpful in severing the connection with hard power.

#### Blanket opposition to U.S. military force sanctions atrocities – their critique is a conceptual shortcut that forces us to draw dangerous conclusions about war. The solution is pragmatic examination of ethical responses to particular conflicts—turns their Parmar evidence

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Michael Walzer, “A Foreign Policy for the Left,” *Dissent*, Spring 2014, <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/a-foreign-policy-for-the-left>.

There are other examples of leftist support for the use of force—even by capitalist countries like the United States. Some Marxist militants argue that any war fought by a capitalist country is, by definition, an imperialist war. But the war in Korea, which was fought by an alliance of capitalist countries, was supported by most people on the American and European democratic left. A war against aggression, approved by the UN, could plausibly be called a just war. Nonetheless, there was left opposition: Michael Harrington (as a Catholic Worker) and David Dellinger (with the War Resisters League) marched against the war; I. F. Stone called it unjust, bravely and (I think) wrongly. The future editors of Dissent (breaking with many of their fellow Shachtmanites) supported the war, no doubt critically, which was the right way to do it.

In his history of the American left, Michael Kazin writes that ever since Woodrow Wilson’s administration, “liberals had ardently promoted wars to preserve and advance democracy. The conflict over Vietnam put an end to that tradition for decades to come.” But by the 1990s, a more minimalist liberal and left defense of war had emerged—heralded by the Black Book on Bosnia produced by the editors of the New Republic in 1995 and given full intellectual legitimacy by Samantha Power’s A Problem from Hell in 2002. The aim of what was called “humanitarian intervention” was not to promote democracy but to stop mass murder, rape, and ethnic cleansing.

NATO’s Kosovo war of 1999, driven in part by the Srebrenica massacre, was a near-left war: the Labour Party was in power in Britain, the Socialists in France, a coalition of Social Democrats and Greens in Germany, and the Democratic Left in Italy. The Clinton administration was a weak version of this left politics, but it provided the leadership essential to the war effort. Military intervention in Kosovo was opposed by people on the farther left, who could not credit its humanitarian motive. I remember being told by a “reconstructed” communist at the Gramsci Institute in Turin, Italy in March 1999 that NATO “must be” aiming to seize control of the Black Sea from the Russians. There was no other explanation for the “imperialist” war.

The more persuasive far left critique came later: that left interventionism in Kosovo made the war in Iraq easier to plan and defend. But that can’t be an argument against the use of force for urgent humanitarian reasons. It is rather an argument for making distinctions, which is always necessary in politics. The Iraq War was not a humanitarian intervention; it was (according to one of its justifications) a war to overthrow a brutal dictator and promote democracy. There were left arguments and precedents for a war of that sort, as I’ve already suggested, but there was also a very strong left argument against it—an argument made, perhaps for the first time, by the Socialist Party in 1917: “Democracy can never be imposed upon any country by a foreign power by force of arms.”

The Labour Party’s David Miliband was right when he said in 2008 that during the previous decades “the neoconservative movement seemed more certain about spreading democracy around the world” than the left did. The left, he argued, was “conflicted between the desirability of the goal and its qualms about the use of military means.” The qualms are reasonable when it comes to democracy promotion, but not, I think, when it comes to stopping a massacre. The campaign for intervention in Darfur, not the invasion of Iraq, was the closest continuation of the near-left’s Kosovo war.

5. National Liberation

Left internationalists don’t only argue about whether “we” should use force, but also about whether other people should do so. With regard to imperial powers, the answer is generally negative, which is generally right. Wars of national liberation, by contrast, are almost always supported, which, again, is almost always right. It is hard to remember, but in the 1940s the Zionist struggle for a Jewish state in Palestine was enthusiastically supported by most American and even most European leftists. W.E.B. Du Bois, for example, argued in 1944 for a post-imperial Middle East where the Jewish people would be able “to achieve its own national liberation in its own way and in line with its own culture and traditions.” Leftists also supported the partition of Palestine, when the UN voted for it in 1947—this was the first version of the “two-state solution.” For different reasons, British imperialists and Trotskyists everywhere were hostile to the idea.

But the best case with which to think about national liberation is the Algerian war for independence, where the struggle was led by the National Liberation Front (FLN), a secular left political movement whose militants had defeated other liberation movements, mostly by killing their members. The FLN’s war was just, but it was fought in murderous ways, which many French leftists defended—though these same people rightly condemned the murderous ways of the French oppressors. The oppressed, not for the first or last time, were awarded a right to be murderous. This is a typical leftist award, though I believe that it cannot be justified.

Consider Jean-Paul Sartre’s defense of FLN terrorism: “To shoot down a European is to kill two birds with one stone, to destroy an oppressor and the man he oppresses at the same time: there remains a dead man and a free man.” As I argued in Just and Unjust Wars, the claim that it takes one dead European to produce one free Algerian is ominous. There weren’t enough Europeans in Algeria in the late 1950s; more would have had to be brought over if the Algerians were to liberate themselves by Sartrean means. Needless to say, Sartre himself did not volunteer to be the bird that gets killed so that the other can be reborn. Arguments of this sort suggest a manipulative view of morality, which is fairly common among right-wing “realists” but clearly has its left-wing version.

6. Shortcuts

Arguments about the use of force for humanitarian or liberationist purposes are complicated; they require close attention to local circumstance and particular histories. We have to think hard about the relation of means to ends. All this is difficult, and doing it right will produce judgments that seem, though they are not, radically inconsistent—like supporting Algerian independence but rejecting FLN terrorism. So ideological shortcuts have been worked out to make the judgments easier, shortcuts that are popular among many leftists and that require a left critique.

I have already alluded to one common shortcut, which is to support oppressed men and women, whatever they do. The difficulty is that the phrase “the oppressed” does not name an actual agent politically engaged in the world. The agents we encounter are organizations and movements that claim to be acting on behalf of the oppressed. Sometimes that claim is justified, but sometimes it isn’t; sometimes these groups are simply a new elite, the future oppressors of the oppressed. What is going on is a replacement at the top, not an uprising from below. Solidarity with oppressed men and women requires us to figure out what these people really want and need and then to look critically at the groups that claim to be acting in their name: Are they representative? Are they responsive? But there is no shortcut for doing that; it takes hard work and intellectual honesty.

The second shortcut, perhaps even more popular than the first, is to stand up always against “imperialism”—or, a shortcut inside the shortcut, always to oppose American policies abroad. Anti-Americanism is a common left politics, which, again, sometimes gets things right, and sometimes doesn’t. I believe that it got things right in Vietnam in 1967; it mostly got things right from the beginning of the twentieth century to the end in Central and South America; it got Iran right in 1953 (when leftists criticized the anti-Mossadegh coup), and Iraq in 2003; it gets NAFTA right, and the IMF, too. But that’s still not enough to make it a reliable shortcut. Remember that the defeat of Nazism and Stalinism, the two most brutal political regimes in world history, was in significant ways American work. This was work that many people on the left supported, as we should have.

In 1967 Dwight Macdonald wrote to Mary McCarthy that the American war in Vietnam proved “that despite all the good things about our internal political-social-cultural life, we have become an imperialist power, and one that, partly because of these domestic virtues, is a most inept one.” We have continued to be inept: in December 2005, with 100,000 American soldiers in Iraq, we organized an election—and our man came in third. This is a result, I think, without precedent in imperial history. Macdonald’s understanding of U.S. imperialism reflects a political intelligence and a moral balance that is mostly missing in contemporary anti-American writing.

The anti-American shortcut sometimes produces a short-circuited politics—as in the Syrian case where leftist writers predicted terrible consequences if the Americans intervened on the side of the anti-Assad forces. The predictions have come true even though the United States didn’t intervene, but once it was clear that the awfulness was not America’s fault, many leftists simply lost interest—except for an ongoing but not very effective engagement on behalf of the war’s victims.

Who was responsible for the ongoing war, for the killing, the terror, and the refugee crisis; what social forces were involved; what should we (on the left) make of them and how should we respond to them? This kind of analysis, standard in left critiques of imperialism, has mostly been missing. One reason for its absence is that it offers no opportunity to criticize America; a second reason is that it would require a close reading and sharp critique of Islamist politics.

Another much-used shortcut (though it doesn’t work in the Syrian case) is to oppose everything Israel does and to blame it for much that it hasn’t done, since it is the “lackey” of American imperialism or, alternatively, the dominant force in shaping American foreign policy. The policies of the current Israeli government require radical criticism—the occupation, the settlements, the refusal to suppress Jewish hooliganism on the West Bank. Nonetheless, the anti-Israel shortcut is an example, to paraphrase August Bebel, of the leftism of fools.

The last shortcut is simply to support every government that calls itself leftist or anti-imperialist and sets itself against American interests. This is different from the old Stalinist shortcut: support the Soviet Union whatever it does because it is the first proletarian dictatorship and the first workers’ paradise. That kind of politics is, I think, definitively finished, though it had a brief afterlife, focused on China and then, with very few believers, on Albania and North Korea. The more recent version celebrates Maximal Leaders like Nasser, Castro, or Hugo Chávez—along with occasional short-lived infatuations, as in the case of Michel Foucault and the future Ayatollah Khomeini. Leftist enthusiasm for populist dictatorships is one of our sad stories, which ends when resources run out, the failure to build the economy is suddenly apparent, and the military takes over. But often the Maximal Leader is a military man himself, and the repressive role of the army simply becomes more obvious over time. In Latin America today, the better left is represented by socialists and social democrats who reject demagogic populism and struggle to produce economic growth, greater equality, and a stronger welfare state—and who attract less enthusiasm from American leftists than they deserve.

7. The Politics of Pretending

Most leftists are idealists, and so we tend to idealize other people and to imagine that the world is more hospitable to our ideas than it actually is. At the same time, we know better; so I call this the politics of pretending. Consider the response of many leftists to the al Qaeda attack of 9/11. They argued that the United States should call the attack a crime and look to the UN and the International Criminal Court to deal with the criminals. That was the “Dial 911” response to 9/11 (it has been repeated again and again in response to later terrorist attacks), and it would have made sense if we lived in a world that was actually run by the UN and the ICC. But, as I argued in Dissent at the time, there was no one answering the phone at 911. Self-help isn’t, indeed, the only effective and justified response to criminal attacks; different forms of mutual assistance and collective security are possible, and the left should take a forward position in exploring them. But self-help has to be part of the story, given the world we live in, and it isn’t a good idea to pretend otherwise.

Another example: some leftists who opposed the Kosovo intervention argued that it didn’t have what every legal and justified use of force requires: UN authorization. Indeed, it didn’t. The UN Security Council is incapable, almost all the time, of acting in a timely way. Think of the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia to shut down the killing fields; or the Indian invasion of East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, to end the terror there; or the Tanzanian invasion of Uganda to overthrow the murderous regime of Idi Amin. None of these had or could have gotten UN approval. Many leftists opposed each of these interventions, pretending that the UN was already what leftists want it to be, an effective political agent. It isn’t that, and so the unilateral use of force is often, as Jürgen Habermas said of the Kosovo case, “illegal but morally necessary.”

The best and last example of leftist pretending is the insistence on the reasonableness of people who give no sign of being reasonable. Paul Berman writes of the large numbers of French socialists who supported the Munich Agreement that “they gazed across the Rhine and simply refused to believe that millions of upstanding Germans had enlisted in a political movement whose animating principles were paranoid conspiracy theories [and] blood-curdling hatreds. . . .” In the same spirit, many leftists were eager to describe the Chinese communists as “agrarian reformers.” And many today have been quick to grant the legitimacy of Islamist opposition to American bases in Saudi Arabia, say, or to the existence of Israel—and to ignore the demand for a shari’a state and the radical subordination of women. I am fairly sure that most of the people involved in all these cases knew, deep down, that they were pretending.

## 1AR

### Case

#### Autonomous weapons already used for drones – recent exercises prove

Nast 21, Condé Nast, xx-xx-xxxx, "The Pentagon Inches Toward Letting AI Control Weapons," Wired, https://www.wired.com/story/pentagon-inches-toward-letting-ai-control-weapons/

LAST AUGUST, SEVERAL dozen military drones and tanklike robots took to the skies and roads 40 miles south of Seattle. Their mission: Find terrorists suspected of hiding among several buildings.

So many robots were involved in the operation that no human operator could keep a close eye on all of them. So they were given instructions to find—and eliminate—enemy combatants when necessary.

The mission was just an exercise, organized by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, a blue-sky research division of the Pentagon; the robots were armed with nothing more lethal than radio transmitters designed to simulate interactions with both friendly and enemy robots.

**The drill was one of several** conducted last summer to **test how artificial intelligence could help expand the use of automation** in military systems, including in scenarios that are too complex and fast-moving for humans to make every critical decision. The demonstrations also reflect a subtle shift in the Pentagon’s thinking about autonomous weapons, as it becomes clearer that machines can outperform humans at parsing complex situations or operating at high speed.

General John Murray of the US Army Futures Command told an audience at the US Military Academy last month that swarms of robots will force military planners, policymakers, and society to think about whether a person should make every decision about using lethal force in new autonomous systems. Murray asked: “Is it within a human's ability to pick out which ones have to be engaged” and then make 100 individual decisions? “Is it even necessary to have a human in the loop?” he added.

Other comments from military commanders suggest interest in giving autonomous weapons systems more agency. At a conference on AI in the Air Force last week, Michael Kanaan, director of operations for the Air Force Artificial Intelligence Accelerator at MIT and a leading voice on AI within the US military, said thinking is evolving. He says AI should perform more identifying and distinguishing potential targets while humans make high-level decisions. “I think that's where we're going,” Kanaan says.

“Is it even necessary to have a human in the loop?”

GENERAL JOHN MURRAY, US ARMY FUTURES COMMAND

At the same event, Lieutenant General Clinton Hinote, deputy chief of staff for strategy, integration, and requirements at the Pentagon, says that whether a person can be removed from the loop of a lethal autonomous system is “one of the most interesting debates that is coming, [and] has not been settled yet.”

A report this month from the National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence (NSCAI), an advisory group created by Congress, recommended, among other things, that the US resist calls for an international ban on the development of autonomous weapons.

Timothy Chung, the Darpa program manager in charge of the swarming project, says last summer’s exercises were designed to explore when a human drone operator should, and should not, make decisions for the autonomous systems. For example, when faced with attacks on several fronts, human control can sometimes get in the way of a mission, because people are unable to react quickly enough. “Actually, the systems can do better from not having someone intervene,” Chung says.

The drones and the wheeled robots, each about the size of a large backpack, were given an overall objective, then tapped AI algorithms to devise a plan to achieve it. Some of them surrounded buildings while others carried out surveillance sweeps. A few were destroyed by simulated explosives; some identified beacons representing enemy combatants and chose to attack.

The US and other nations have used autonomy in weapons systems for decades. Some missiles can, for instance, autonomously identify and attack enemies within a given area. But rapid advances in AI algorithms will change how the military uses such systems. Off-the-shelf AI code capable of controlling robots and identifying landmarks and targets, often with high reliability, will make it possible to deploy more systems in a wider range of situations.

### K

#### Tech and inevitable adaptation prevent apocalyptic collapse – reject their pessimistic fear mongering

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Ronald. March 12. “Climate Change Problems Will Be Solved Through Economic Growth” <https://reason.com/blog/2018/03/12/climate-change-problems-will-be-solved-t>

"It is, I promise, worse than you think," David Wallace-Wells wrote in an infamously apocalyptic 2017 New York Magazine article. "Indeed, absent a significant adjustment to how billions of humans conduct their lives, parts of the Earth will likely become close to uninhabitable, and other parts horrifically inhospitable, as soon as the end of this century."

The "it" is man-made climate change. Temperatures will become scalding, crops will wither, and rising seas will inundate coastal cities, Wallace-Wells warns. But toward the end of his screed, he somewhat dismissively observes that "by and large, the scientists have an enormous confidence in the ingenuity of humans....Now we've found a way to engineer our own doomsday, and surely we will find a way to engineer our way out of it, one way or another."

Over at Scientific American, John Horgan considers some eco-modernist views on how humanity will indeed go about engineering our way out of the problems that climate change may pose. In an essay called "Should We Chill Out About Global Warming?," Horgan reports the more dynamic and positive analyses of two eco-modernist thinkers, Harvard psychologist Steven Pinker and science journalist Will Boisvert.

In an essay for The Breakthrough Journal, Pinker notes that such optimism "is commonly dismissed as the 'faith that technology will save us.' In fact, it is a skepticism that the status quo will doom us—that knowledge and behavior will remain frozen in their current state for perpetuity. Indeed, a naive faith in stasis has repeatedly led to prophecies of environmental doomsdays that never happened." In his new book, Enlightenment Now, Pinker points out that "as the world gets richer and more tech-savvy, it dematerializes, decarbonizes, and densifies, sparing land and species." Economic growth and technological progress are the solutions not only to climate change but to most of the problems that bedevil humanity.

Boisvert, meanwhile, tackles and rebuts the apocalyptic prophecies made by eco-pessimists like Wallace-Wells, specifically with regard to food production and availabilty, water supplies, heat waves, and rising seas.

"No, this isn't a denialist screed," Boisvert writes. "Human greenhouse emissions will warm the planet, raise the seas and derange the weather, and the resulting heat, flood and drought will be cataclysmic. Cataclysmic—but not apocalyptic. While the climate upheaval will be large, the consequences for human well-being will be small. Looked at in the broader context of economic development, climate change will barely slow our progress in the effort to raise living standards."

Boisvert proceeds to show how a series of technologies—drought-resistant crops, cheap desalination, widespread adoption of air-conditioning, modern construction techniques—will ameliorate and overcome the problems caused by rising temperatures. He is entirely correct when he notes, "The most inexorable feature of climate-change modeling isn't the advance of the sea but the steady economic growth that will make life better despite global warming."

Horgan, Pinker, and Boisvert are all essentially endorsing what I have called "the progress solution" to climate change. As I wrote in 2009, "It is surely not unreasonable to argue that if one wants to help future generations deal with climate change, the best policies would be those that encourage rapid economic growth. This would endow future generations with the wealth and superior technologies that could be used to handle whatever comes at them including climate change." Six years later I added that that "richer is more climate-friendly, especially for developing countries. Why? Because faster growth means higher incomes, which correlate with lower population growth. Greater wealth also means higher agricultural productivity, freeing up land for forests to grow as well as speedier progress toward developing and deploying cheaper non–fossil fuel energy technologies. These trends can act synergistically to ameliorate man-made climate change."

Horgan concludes, "Greens fear that optimism will foster complacency and hence undermine activism. But I find the essays of Pinker and Boisvert inspiring, not enervating....These days, despair is a bigger problem than optimism." Counseling despair has always been wrong when human ingenuity is left free to solve problems, and that will prove to be the case with climate change as well.

#### Prefer the most recent ev that accounts for AI, soil sequestration, and battery absorption – each of those CAN work but only sustained investment will make them viable in time to meet Paris benchmarks

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(Katie Lebling, 1-15-2020, "2020 Could Be the Year Carbon Removal Takes Off," World Resources Institute, https://www.wri.org/blog/2020/01/2020-could-be-year-carbon-removal-takes)

Global greenhouse gas emissions are on track to rise once again to their highest level in history. Our time is shrinking to reduce climate-warming emissions enough to limit global temperature rise to 1.5-2 degrees Celsius (2.7-3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) and avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

As the urgency of decisive climate action grows, so too has interest in removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. What was seen just a year ago as a “radical fix” is now increasingly recognized as a necessary tool to address the climate crisis, alongside rapid reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Recent advances in policy, technology, and on-the-ground projects show that the field of carbon removal, including both nature-based approaches and cutting-edge carbon capture technologies, is quickly heating up.

MARKED

But how do we translate that momentum into decisive action in 2020?

Aiming for Net Zero

Countries, states and companies around the world are setting net-zero targets—committing both to deep decarbonization and to scaling carbon removal to offset any emissions that may be too difficult to eliminate. Sixteen countries have now adopted net-zero targets: Bhutan, Costa Rica, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, France, Iceland, Japan, the Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Uruguay. Last month, European Union leaders agreed to slash the bloc’s emissions to net-zero by 2050. Subnational jurisdictions including California, Hawaii, and New York have also committed to achieving net-zero emissions, along with hundreds of private companies. Dozens of other countries are in discussions to create net-zero targets, while many more states and businesses are considering targets of their own. Many countries are also developing long-term climate strategies and enhanced climate commitments under the Paris Agreement this year. The push for net-zero emissions is poised to gain momentum in 2020 and could accelerate investment in carbon removal.

Sparking Innovation

Delivering carbon removal at the scale needed will require sustained technological innovation. Direct air capture – which uses chemical reactions and energy to capture ambient carbon dioxide and concentrate it for storage or use – has seen multiple recent advances. Researchers at MIT developed a novel approach to separate carbon dioxide from the air: basically a specialized battery that absorbs carbon dioxide from ambient air as it charges and releases concentrated carbon dioxide as it discharges. In Switzerland, researchers developed a porous material that can capture carbon dioxide from ambient air at commercially attractive levels. Both these innovations could dramatically reduce the thermal energy needed for direct air capture. Meanwhile, a third innovation uses artificial intelligence to optimize concentrated solar power plants, generating clean, high-intensity heat that could be used for direct air capture as well as many industrial processes. Carbon dioxide captured through direct air capture can be stored underground or used in applications like production of concrete to reduce its carbon footprint or potentially even make it negative.

As a promising sign of continued innovation, U.S. House and Senate appropriators provided the first dedicated funding—$60 million—for carbon removal technology development at the Department of Energy, as recommended by the National Academies of Sciences. This is an important step forward, upon which Congress can build in years to come to scale up the most promising technologies and decrease the cost of carbon removal.

Federal policymakers have also been sparking innovation under our feet—in the soil that grows our food. The 2018 Farm Bill included a new federal grant program for on-farm innovation, which just awarded nearly $14 million to demonstration projects that will provide environmental, financial, and social data on the impacts of soil health practices like planting cover crops. Some of these practices can remove carbon from the atmosphere and sequester it in agricultural soils—but demonstration projects around the U.S. will be invaluable in determining exactly where and in what circumstances soil health practices can be net carbon-negative, which recent research suggests is harder to achieve than previously thought. Innovation in the private sector, where multiple start-up carbon markets for agricultural soils are testing new ways to measure changes in soil carbon, may also help researchers better define the links between soil health and carbon removal.

Driving Change

In January 2019, the California Air Resources Board revised their Low Carbon Fuel Standard to allow crediting for direct air capture plants. Acknowledging the global nature of climate change, this California credit is available to plants located anywhere in the world. Carbon Engineering, a direct air capture company, and Occidental Petroleum, an oil company, have since announced they will build what will be the world’s largest direct air capture plant, which would be eligible for the credit. Elsewhere, an online payment processing company, Stripe, committed at least $1 million annually to advance emerging carbon removal technologies. More companies will need to step up and invest in carbon removal—in addition to ambitiously reducing emissions—to demonstrate market demand for these technologies in 2020.

Nature-based carbon removal has also made headlines around the globe. The people of Ethiopia set a world record in July by planting over 350 million trees in 12 hours as part of Prime Minister Aiby Ahmed’s Green Legacy campaign. In India’s most populous state, Uttar Pradesh, a government-led campaign against climate change prompted citizens to plant 220 million trees in a single day in August. Combined, these efforts could remove 10 million tons of carbon dioxide per year from the atmosphere, based on IPCC data — equivalent to taking 2.2 million cars off the road.

As commitments to accelerate tree planting even further are stacking up from governments and private campaigns alike, trees could remove even more carbon from the atmosphere in 2020 and beyond, but only if global deforestation and other causes of tree mortality don’t rise in lockstep with reforestation. To achieve real progress, policymakers must pursue tree-planting campaigns as part of a broader strategy to curb deforestation and make forests and communities more resilient to future climate change.

Building Momentum

The conversation around carbon removal has intensified. But to stay on track to meet the Paris Agreement targets, public and private action to meet net zero targets needs to accelerate in 2020 and beyond, as laid out in recent landmark reports. Meeting these targets will require sustained. Many investment in carbon removal of the necessary technological solutions will take a decade or more before they can be deployed at scale and won’t be ready before mid-century without steeply increasing investment. Natural solutions are ready for deployment now but will require significant financial support to scale up. Will 2020 be the year that policymakers and private sector leaders step up to the plate and make the investments needed for carbon removal to truly take off?