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Paul J. Saunders **Obama's No Realist**

David A. Bell **Hobsbawm's Elitism**

Tim Montgomerie **Britain's Tea Party**

Fixing Fragile States
Dennis Blair, Ronald Neumann and Eric Olson

KISSINGER'S VISION

How to Restore World Order

by Jacob Heilbrunn

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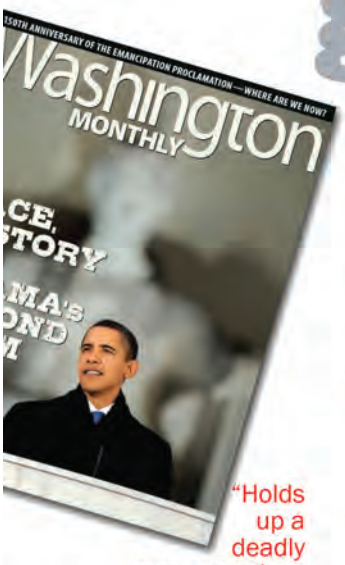

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Number 133 • September/October 2014

The Realist

Articles

THE NATIONAL INTEREST

Reviews & Essays

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The Wanderer

By Paul J. Saunders

Is President Barack Obama a foreign-policy realist? For most of his time in office, both his supporters and his detractors have said that he is—and until very recently, Obama did not dispute it. On the contrary, the White House often aggressively cultivated the image of the president as a steely-eyed pragmatist judiciously making tough calls on both international and domestic policy. Nevertheless, in his May commencement speech at West Point, Obama finally distanced himself from this, saying that "according to self-described realists, conflicts in Syria or Ukraine or the Central African Republic are not ours to solve" and that this view is inadequate to "the demands of this moment."

If we take President Obama at his word that he is not a realist—and there are good reasons to do so—his administration's long flirtation with foreign-policy realism and especially with the Left's "progressive realists" raises two important questions. First, why were the president and his advisers comfortable with longtime and widely held perceptions that he was a realist? Second, what changed their minds?

Answering these questions with any certainty would require a front-row seat in the White House Emergency Public Relations Bunker that one can too easily imagine the administration building immediately beneath the Situation Room for its most important decision making. Still, it is not difficult to see how the image of foreign-policy realism could appeal to the president and his communications team—it has provided superficial intellectual and political legitimacy to Obama's frequently expressed desire to concentrate on "nation building at home." It likewise helped the administration to justify avoiding undue involvement in complex and time-consuming international problems, especially those inherited from former president George W. Bush, whose legacy the White House has publicly repudiated but quietly continued in many respects.

Want to get out of Iraq? Pivot to Asia instead—it's more strategically important. Need to withdraw from Afghanistan? We've done all we can there. Hope to stay out of further wars in the Middle East? Negotiate with Iran and use Congress as an excuse to stay out of Syria. Americans frustrated with Bush's expensive choices were understandably tempted.

In the end, however, the White House public-relations operation was too clever by half. The administration could not really explain why it was prepared to use force in Libya but not Syria, especially after President Bashar al-Assad appeared to cross Obama's "red line" by using chemical weapons. More recently, Obama's carefully built reputation for caution became a growing liability after his oratorically strong but factually weak response to

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Realism is much more than pragmatism; confusing the two is one of the most fundamental and enduring errors in America's foreign-policy debates.

Russia's annexation of Crimea. Iraq's sudden vulnerability to the militant group branding itself the Islamic State—and the administration's struggle to respond—made matters worse by simultaneously calling into question the abrupt U.S. withdrawal in 2011 and the bizarre policy of undermining stability on one side of the Iraq-Syria border while trying to preserve it on the other. The president and his team needed to come up with a new rationale for his policies that would sound reasonable, explain when his administration would use force and when it wouldn't, and rebut interventionist criticism of his purportedly "realist" approach. Hence the West Point speech, with its dismissiveness toward "self-described realists" and its contorted attempt to establish retroactively useful criteria for using military and other foreign-policy tools.

But did the Obama administration actually ever pursue a realist foreign policy? This question is more complicated, because it requires a definition of realism, but also easier, because unlike its motives (and with the exception of classified programs), the administration's actions have been open and visible to all.

The principal reason that Obama's critics and defenders considered him a realist for so long has been his administration's generally pragmatic policies. But realism is much more than pragmatism; confusing the two is one of the most fundamental and enduring errors in America's foreign-policy debates. Realism is pragmatism rooted in awareness of international anarchy, infused with a deep understanding of American power and in service of a strategy based on American national interests. Obama is not a realist because his policies typically start and stop with the pragmatic and even the opportunistic. He appears to have excessive faith in international norms, little real appreciation of power's uses and limits, and minimal interest in foreign policy, much less American international strategy.

Obama's repeated efforts to contrast the twenty-first century with the nineteenth century highlight his inordinate attachment to rules and norms in an environment of international anarchy where there is no supreme enforcement authority (and he is unwilling to seize the role of judge, jury and executioner for the United States, as many neoconservatives seek). International rules and norms have indeed evolved over the last two centuries, but have not advanced in a linear and progressive manner—far from it. In a fundamentally anarchic system, rules and norms are meaningful only to the extent that they are widely observed by key players. They are therefore inherently fragile and subject to constant interpretation and reinterpretation. They are not "laws" and can only shape state behavior, not regulate or restrict it. (The United States itself has been unwilling to accept such limits.)

At the same time, global rules and norms are in flux. America, the European Union, some components of the UN bureaucracy and progressive NGOs have attempted to redefine them, weakening state sovereignty and legitimizing force to right perceived wrongs. It is naive to expect others—especially dissatisfied major powers like

Even as Obama describes the limits of force, he seems to overestimate his personal rhetorical and persuasive power.

China and Russia—to observe international rules and norms that we ourselves consider inadequate and are attempting to modify. This is a particularly daring assumption when we ourselves often try to change rules and norms through action and precedent rather than negotiation and consensus.

It's also naive to think that once some major powers question rules and norms, others will not seek to modify them too—and in ways more suitable to their interests than to ours, whether in the South China Sea or in Crimea. Moreover, from the viewpoint of Beijing and Moscow, Washington often appears to go well beyond what its interlocutors believe has been agreed upon in international talks, as in Libya and in the former Yugoslavia's successive conflicts. For them, the United States is violating the same international law it purports to uphold. Because rules and norms are inherently subjective and open to contending interpretations, these perspectives matter—and arguments about what is "legal" go nowhere. The fact that the U.S. Senate has not ratified agreements like the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea or the Rome Statute, which established the International Criminal Court, does not strengthen Washington's hand.

Most perversely, however, the rules and norms that existed at the end of the Cold War—the ones that the Obama administration, the Bush administration and the Clinton administration have been trying to change—contributed enormously to America's power, leadership and capabilities in defending its vital national interests. This was, after all, the system through which the United States won the Cold War. So trying to change the way the world works actually risks destabilizing an international system that is fundamentally to America's advantage in managing rivals and adversaries. Realists understand all of this. Obama doesn't.

Obama's statements about American power have been even more telling. After Iraq and Afghanistan, it is understandable that Obama—and other Americans—worry about the limits of power. But the president has gone well beyond this, renouncing military power to an extent unprecedented among post–World War II U.S. presidents. Perhaps most telling was his shocking statement in Brussels that Russia could not be "deterred from further escalation by military force"—a dramatic abandonment of a foundational principle of American foreign policy for seven decades.

More recently, Obama said, "Very rarely have I seen the exercise of military power providing a definitive answer." But an answer to what? Military power will indeed very rarely be a definitive answer to nation building, but it is often quite sufficient in determining which nation owns what—as Ukrainians have painfully learned. (And, as they say, possession is nine-tenths of the law.) Coupled with credible troop movements, a stronger position on Ukraine could have created sufficient uncertainty for Russian president Vladimir Putin to moderate his conduct after his annexation of Crimea. Declaring Moscow's conduct "unacceptable" and then tying our own hands in responding piles weakness on top

of overreach; it is far more dangerous than either weakness or overreach alone and can encourage other challenges.

Even as Obama describes the limits of force, he seems to overestimate his personal rhetorical and persuasive power. How else could Obama think that declaring that "the time has come for President Assad to step aside," without actually doing anything, would remove Syria's brutal leader from office? Or that his declarations that Russia's annexation of Crimea is "unacceptable" will produce real results? This is either outsized self-confidence or remarkable disinterest in the consequences of regularly failing to live up to one's own explicit and implicit commitments. Neither has any place in a realist foreign policy.

The Obama administration's lack of any clearly defined international strategy is in some ways the strongest argument against its supposed realism. Obama may often look for pragmatic approaches to individual foreign-policy issues, but in the absence of an overarching strategy, his pragmatism in isolated cases doesn't build toward any larger objectives. At the same time, Obama's pragmatism is politically driven at its core, often placing domestic struggles and standing ahead of foreign-policy outcomes. This distorts the decision-making process and produces policies that may sound pragmatic but are actually unlikely to succeed and thus largely unprincipled. His mutually contradictory policies on opposite sides of the Iraq-Syria border are one example; his approaches to China and Russia, which risk simultaneous and thus doubly dangerous confrontations with each, are another. The latter could have profound consequences for America.

To be clear, most realists agree that "nation building at home" is important to the prosperity that creates the foundation for America's global power. But "nation building at home" is a goal, not a strategy, and it requires a foreign-policy strategy founded on engagement and leadership to succeed. Moreover, for all his criticism of "self-described realists" who don't want to get too involved in other people's problems, Obama himself is the one who is doing as little as is (politically) possible in international affairs. Obama's response

to security challenges usually appears intended to do enough to avoid severe domestic criticism while simultaneously avoiding doing so much that it becomes a distraction. Hence the surge in Afghanistan before the withdrawal, the "leading from behind" in Libya, modest support for Syria's opposition, ineffective sanctions against Russia as a substitute for a real policy and a bare-minimum response in Iraq. The administration has tried to clothe all of these policies in realistic-sounding rhetoric, but in fact there was little realism involved because there is no serious strategy.

The president's heavy reliance on drone strikes in combating terrorists—though attacks in Pakistan have slowed—is a clear demonstration and a direct result of his administration's excessive political pragmatism that could come back to haunt the United States after Obama leaves the White House, if not sooner. Drone strikes have understandable appeal: when handled well, they can kill America's enemies without putting troops on the ground or pilots in the air and with limited civilian casualties when compared to some other options. Yet, as a recent high-profile nonpartisan task force from Washington's Stimson Center compellingly set out, widespread drone attacks also raise big strategic issues, including the risks of blowback among foreign populations, unintentional norm-setting for others possessing drones, a "slippery slope" to broader conflict and the lack of any clear standard for success. (On the last point, it should be obvious by now that Vietnam-style "body counts" tell us little. Another modern-day analogue, the number of Iraqi troops trained by the U.S. military, has evidently had very little to do with security and stability in Iraq.) Absent a well-defined strategic framework, narrowly focused pragmatism often leads to incrementalism, precisely as it has in the administration's use of drones—and, for that matter, in its responses to Moscow's involvement in eastern Ukraine. This is not realism.

What would a realist foreign-policy strategy look like? It would start with the recognition that maintaining America's international leadership—without incurring costs that neither our political system nor our economy can sustain—is the best way to protect U.S. national interests. This is a core difference between realists and isolationists, who generally see global leadership as too expensive to last and want to conserve America's resources to the maximum extent. However, realists also know the difference between genuine leadership and the pseudoleadership of exceptionalist rhetoric, which seeks to proclaim leadership rather than earning it. This distinguishes realists from many neoconservatives, who often assume that other governments and peoples will support us when we act—or that it doesn't matter if they don't—because America is exceptional. The policies they advocate often squander leadership, lives, money and other resources in vain.

In looking at the world, realists emphasize that relationships among the world's key powers are a central factor in determining

Obama may look for pragmatic approaches to individual foreign-policy issues, but in the absence of an overarching strategy, his pragmatism doesn't build toward any larger objectives.

the number, extent and impact of international conflicts—something that can have serious consequences for U.S. national security in an age of failed states and terrorism. Wars between and within states can start for many reasons, but relations among major powers play a critical role in determining whether they escalate, expand or end. This, in turn, powerfully influences whether they create and sustain the lawlessness that terror groups seek, as well as how many innocent people are killed, maimed or displaced. Anyone looking for security, stability and peace should therefore start with ties between key states.

In addition to this, because America is the principal beneficiary of the international system that it has taken the lead in constructing, Washington should be highly motivated to maintain it. This has two components. The first is preserving relationships with U.S. allies, whose ongoing support and friendship are extremely important both at the systemic level and in implementing specific policies. The second is managing contacts with countries that are not its allies, most notably China and Russia, whose active opposition can do the most damage to the international order and to particular U.S. interests. This includes avoiding a China-Russia alignment, which is the greatest possible threat to the current world order and to America's leadership of it. Being strong, firm and reliable in upholding our commitments and realistic in appraising others' interests and objectives contributes to both of these goals. On the last point, realists know that successfully managing rivals requires both incentives and penalties, and that relying strictly on our ability to impose costs makes conflict more likely, not less—especially when we preemptively disavow force.

Within this framework, a realist foreign-policy strategy would give the greatest priority to threats to America's survival, prosperity and way of life. This means preventing the use of nuclear or biological weapons against the United States, maintaining stable global financial and trading systems (including trade in energy and other key resources), ensuring the survival of U.S. allies, and avoiding the emergence of hostile major powers or collapsed states on our borders. The United States has many other important aims, but should not pursue them at the demonstrable expense of these truly vital interests or of an international system favorable to America. U.S. leaders must also establish priorities among significant but lesser interests.

The Obama administration has avoided short-term foreign-policy catastrophes, but has also made very costly mistakes. The consequences are less immediately visible than the Bush administration's wars, but may prove more damaging over time—particularly with respect to China and Russia—by accelerating dangerous changes in the international system that encourage challenges to U.S. leadership and to the world order the United States and its allies built in the aftermath of World War II. This, in turn, threatens America's long-term prosperity and increases the likelihood of serious confrontations and even wars. That isn't realism—it's a disaster in the making. □

Fixing Fragile States

By Dennis Blair, Ronald Neumann and Eric Olson

Since the 9/11 attacks, the United States has waged major postwar reconstruction campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan and similar but smaller programs in other countries that harbor Al Qaeda affiliates. Continued complex political, economic and military operations will be needed for many years to deal with the continuing threat from Al Qaeda and its associated organizations, much of it stemming from fragile states with weak institutions, high rates of poverty and deep ethnic, religious or tribal divisions. Despite thirteen years of experience—and innumerable opportunities to learn lessons from both successes and mistakes—there have been few significant changes in our cumbersome, inefficient and ineffective approach to interagency operations in the field.

We believe the time has come to look to a new, more effective operational model. For fragile states in which Al Qaeda is present, the United States should develop, select and support with strong staff a new type of ambassador with more authority to plan and direct complex operations across department and agency lines, and who will be accountable for their success or failure. We need to develop the plans to protect American interests and strengthen these countries out in the field, where local realities are understood, before Washington agencies bring their inside-the-Beltway perspectives to bear. Congress and the executive branch need to authorize field leaders to shift resources across agency lines to meet new threats. It is, in short, a time for change—change that upends our complacent and antiquated approach toward foreign societies and cultures.

The 9/11 attacks offered us a painful reminder of an old verity, which is that fragile states unable to enforce their laws and control their territory are the progenitors of potent threats that can be carried out simply and effectively. Such states provide safe havens from which Al Qaeda and its affiliates plan and launch terror attacks against the United States and other countries. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) operates in Yemen; Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb operates across Algeria, Mali and other neighboring countries; and Al Shabab operates in Somalia. Civil war in Syria, spreading violence in Iraq and continued turmoil in Africa will most likely open new havens for similar groups.

Until now, the American response to the threat from fragile states has had three major components: First, we have greatly strengthened the control of our own borders. Second, American intelligence and military forces, particularly the CIA and the

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U.S. Special Operations Command, have taken the fight to Al Qaeda. Third, the United States, along with other countries and international organizations, has increased economic and civil assistance to many fragile states using existing programs and authorities.

How much have these approaches achieved? The American-led reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan have been prolonged and massive, but cannot be considered successful.

A dysfunctional system of authorities and procedures hampered effectiveness. Plans were made in Washington by committees of the representatives of different departments and agencies; individual departments and agencies sent instructions to their representatives in the field; and the allocations of resources to country programs were based in large part on individual departmental and agency priorities and available funding, not on overall national priorities. Each of the departments maintained direct authority over its field personnel and resources. Short-term staffing was endemic and cooperation in the field was voluntary, with neither the ambassador nor any official in Washington below the president authorized to resolve disputes or set overall priorities. Budget resources for a particular program could not be shifted smoothly to others when local conditions changed, and congressional oversight was split among committees that oversaw only individual aspects of the overall program in a country.

Even when the president, the National Security Council and an energetic interagency process in Washington were fully engaged—as they were in later years in Iraq and Afghanistan—the results have not matched the commitment of resources. Numerous accounts by journalists and memoirs of participants have documented the interdepartmental frictions, inefficient bureaucratic compromises and delayed decisions that have hampered progress. The authors of this article know personally most of those involved in leading the long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. They are to a person—whether military officers or civilian officials—diligent and dedicated patriots. They have often worked across departmental lines to integrate security, governance and economic-assistance programs to achieve real successes. However, when officials and officers in the field did not get along, the deficiencies of the system allowed their disputes to bring in-country progress to a halt. What is needed is an overall system that will make cooperation and integration the norm, not the exception.

Yemen and Libya provide smaller-scale but more contemporary illustrations of the shortcomings of today's approaches. Although American officials have gained more experience, the authorities and procedures have not changed.

Yemen is the home base for AQAP, generally considered the most dangerous franchise of Al Qaeda. The speeches of American officials paint a picture of a comprehensive, balanced set of U.S. government programs not only to attack AQAP, but also to assist the current Yemeni government with both political and economic development. In congressional testimony in November 2013, for example, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Arabian Peninsula Barbara Leaf emphasized American "support for Yemen's historic transition and continued bilateral security cooperation." She mentioned the $39 million that the United States had provided to support the national reconciliation process, U.S. encouragement of economic reform, its support for restructuring the Yemeni armed forces, and its participation in a weekly meeting among outside countries and international organizations to

Fragile states unable to enforce their laws and control their territory are the progenitors of potent threats that can be carried out simply and effectively.

"compare notes, compare approaches, and coordinate tightly." She said nothing of the American military and intelligence attacks on AQAP fighters, yet these actions are the most costly U.S. programs dealing with Yemen, and they feature prominently in Yemeni popular opinion.

Even in this friendly hearing, however, the shortcomings of American and international programs were made clear. Congressman Ted Deutch noted, "U.S. assistance to Yemen totaled $256 million for Fiscal Year 2013, but these funds come from 17 different accounts, all with very different objectives." He asked a fundamental question that went unanswered: "What exactly is our long-term strategy for Yemen?"

The view on the ground in Yemen is considerably darker. Two weeks before Leaf's testimony, an op-ed in the *Yemen Post* under the headline "Law of the Jungle in Yemen" stated:

> People have lost hope in the National Dialogue. . . . Billions of US dollars are still looted in the poverty stricken Yemen with not one corrupt senior official prosecuted. . . . Laws are only practiced against the weak and helpless. . . . An internal war is ongoing in the north of Yemen. . . . Al-Qaeda is regrouping and seeking to become a power once again . . . Safety and security in Yemen is nowhere to be seen. Government authority and presence over many parts of the country is limited, and where they are present they are almost useless.

U.S. policy in Yemen has been cobbled together in Washington through the typical interagency process. Because congressional funding for counterterrorist programs, both military and intelligence, is still flowing relatively freely, they are the largest American programs in Yemen. According to press reporting, there are two independent task forces—one military, one CIA—operating drones over Yemen, and U.S. security assistance to the Yemeni armed forces is focused on the creation of small, well-trained counterterrorist forces. The Saudis and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states have promised over $3 billion in economic support to Yemen. American economic assistance to Yemen is a small fraction of this amount; thus, the American plan must leverage the greater GCC contribution. The overall picture in Yemen, then, is one of unbalanced, uncoordinated and suboptimal U.S. and international programs based on no coherent plan.

Libya is another excellent illustration of an American assistance program that is not meeting the needs of the country. American commitment of financial resources to assist Libya has been modest: the State Department estimates about $240 million since the beginning of operations to oust Muammar el-Qaddafi in 2011. Far more money was spent by the United States on the NATO air operations that pushed Qaddafi out of power. American assistance to Libya has been spread across different government programs, depending on the other bills for those programs in the rest of the world. With few resources at their command, the country team needed an integrated plan to make the actions they could take effective, to set priorities and

to leverage the actions of other countries. Yet the various American agencies working in Libya, as usual, cooperated as best they could, under no integrated plan, with little experienced leadership either in Tripoli or Washington. As crises occurred and conditions deteriorated, responses were improvised.

Like Iraq in 2003, Libya was coming out of a long and brutal dictatorship. Rebuilding the country would require extraordinary actions by the Libyans themselves and by outside countries like the United States that had helped bring down Qaddafi and had a stake in a favorable outcome. International security-support programs, including those by the United States, have been notably weak. Any doubt about the conditions on the ground ended when Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens was murdered in Benghazi in September 2012, the first U.S. ambassador to die in the line of duty since 1979. Yet it was over another year later that the United States and several other European countries began belatedly to take actions to strengthen the army and police. NATO began a program to train about twenty thousand Libyan soldiers. The program is not scheduled to be completed for many more months, and the result will be trained soldiers who perform their duties with mostly inadequate medical, communications and logistical support.

Yet this belated program to strengthen basic security in Libya still is not part of an overall plan to help Libya become a competent, functioning state. According to two experts at the Atlantic Council and the European Council on Foreign Relations, respectively:

> The current western agenda for Libya lacks a political strategy and is focused almost exclusively on the training of the Libyan army. If experience elsewhere is an indication, it will take between 5 and 15 years for that to conclude. The same experience tells us that "strengthening the central government" is an insufficient goal if the country is to become stable and under the rule of law.

Meanwhile, the official U.S. activities in Libya, as described by the current U.S. ambassador, Deborah K. Jones, are directed toward "a broad process encompassing a National Dialogue, constitutional development, and governance capacity-building to increase public confidence." In American pronouncements, there is little sense of priorities, combined programs, milestones or urgency.

The embassies of the United States and its international partners in these fragile countries must do more than just be supportive of individual areas needing improvement. Their approach has to be selective, hands-on, tailored, flexible and integrated.

Selective: Resources are limited, and the approach needs to be sustained over an extended period of time. It should be applied only to the handful of countries in which the threat is high and host government capacity is low.

Hands-on: The United States and other international partners cannot simply transfer money to government departments in fragile states, as it will likely be stolen or misused. Instead, they must take an active role in building competent local government organizations that can use increased resources effectively. American and other international operators cannot train local organizations to be replicas of their Western equivalents, or models of counterparts in other countries; conditions are too different. Likewise, they cannot simply fly in for a two-week stint and then head home; there will be no follow-through. Experienced, carefully selected and trained officials who can influence host

The American-led reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan have been prolonged and massive, but cannot be considered successful.

officials and build local capacity without causing resentment are essential.

Tailored: Sometimes existing security or law-enforcement organizations or judicial systems can be strengthened; other times they must be created. Sometimes putting the national finances of a country in order will unleash economic growth; other times training and economic support in a particular region of the country are vital. Sometimes training and assisting central government officials is important; other times it is competent provincial officials that are essential for success. The key to a tailored approach is for the American representatives in a country to have the authority and responsibility both for planning and for carrying out the plan.

Flexible: Requirements are always dynamic in fragile states. Plans need to be revised quickly in response to events on the ground; money and personnel need to be shifted quickly to meet new problems and to take advantage of new opportunities.

Integrated: Integration depends on setting a common set of priorities across all programs. Once security forces stabilize a city or region, improved governance and economic opportunity must follow immediately, or the security gains will be wasted. Integration depends on realistic sequencing of different programs. Unless the judiciary and prison systems are improved along with police forces, criminals will be released or tortured after their arrest. Policemen can be trained or retrained in weeks and prison systems can be improved quickly, yet training a core of judges and lawyers takes years. There must be practical interim plans that will ensure progress.

Finally, current operations to capture or kill hardcore Al Qaeda members need to continue, without stirring up local resentment that will make it more difficult to make the necessary longer-term improvements. However, these operations need to be consolidated and integrated into an overall plan in each country.

There is duplication, overlap and sometimes competition between the traditional military operations of the Department of Defense and the covert paramilitary operations of the CIA against Al Qaeda. To fully understand the issue, it's important to be clear about the significant difference between clandestine and covert operations. A "clandestine" operation is one that is secret, and no government official is to talk about it. Clandestine operations are routinely conducted by the Department of Defense, and on occasion by other U.S. government agencies. A "covert" operation is one in which the involvement of the U.S. government is to be kept secret, to the point of official denial. The CIA has generally conducted covert operations, and an executive order gives this preference, but the basic legislation authorizes them to be conducted by other departments or agencies as directed by the president.

Although geopolitical conditions have changed fundamentally since the Cold War, when covert operations were originally authorized, there has been no serious consideration of updating the authorities for covert action. The 9/11 Commission's recommendation to assign paramilitary

operations to the Department of Defense was not adopted either by Congress or by two successive administrations. The result has been continued complicated, duplicative and costly operations against Al Qaeda. It has only been experienced, dedicated and mission-focused operators

in the field that have permitted the current system to work, and their successes have obscured the need for clarity and simplification. This recommendation should be seriously revisited based on our experiences of the last decade.

Two types of armed operations against Al Qaeda are the most important: raids and armed drone strikes. For raids—the helicopter raid that killed Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad is the best known—all the operational skills are in the Department of Defense, mostly within components of the Special Operations Command. Yet, there are often questions and disputes about whether they should be conducted as clandestine traditional military operations commanded by the secretary of defense under Title 10, or covert intelligence operations controlled by the director of the CIA under Title 50.

In reality, the president has the legal authority to order these operations under either title, using either organization. In 2011, the president decided to authorize the Abbottabad raid, entirely conducted by Department of Defense personnel, as a Title 50 covert action, under the control of the director of the CIA. It was a "clandestine military operation" conducted under authorities that were designated for "covert action." There was never any reason or intention to deny the role of the U.S. government—the primary rationale for covert action—once the operation commenced and inevitably became public. To the contrary, government officials were running for the microphones as soon as the helicopters returned from Pakistani

airspace. Fortunately, experienced military commanders made all the tactical decisions, and the raid was a success. Had anything gone wrong—the loss of a helicopter and the capture of its crew by Pakistan, or a dispute between CIA officers and special-operations officers during the raid, with each group appealing to its own chain of command—the results could have been quite different.

For armed attacks by drones, the CIA and the Department of Defense have set up duplicate organizations, each authorized by separate legislation. There are reasons for the current arrangements. The bottom line, however, is that it is the Department of Defense that is established, trained and authorized to kill enemy combatants. For reasons of competence, accountability and effectiveness, the armed drone campaign should be assigned to the secretary of defense, with the entire intelligence community, including the CIA, playing an essential role in identifying, prioritizing and tracking the targets.

A new model for interagency operations in fragile states would be strongest and longest lasting if it were established by legislation. However, much can be done by executive order, policy and practice.

The foundational process change should be to assign the task of developing a comprehensive plan for a fragile state to the team on the ground in that state, rather than to an interagency group in Washington. It is axiomatic in both business and military planning that a plan ought to be drafted by those responsible for carrying it out. Only in American interagency planning is it done by a committee at headquarters, then passed to the field for implementation. Washington's plans are subject to pressures that often make them unrealistic and unsuitable for conditions in the field. An in-country planning team is much more likely to deliver a plan that is balanced between the short and the long term, that includes the most effective applications of the capabilities of the different departments and that realistically matches the needs on the ground. During interagency review in Washington, there will be plenty of opportunity for adding other considerations and good ideas.

However, for an embassy to submit a good plan takes a uniquely qualified and experienced ambassador with a dedicated, competent supporting interagency staff, in addition to the usual country team, comprising the representatives from the various departments and agencies.

Foreign Service officers spend most of their careers in staff positions, responsible for observing, reporting, negotiating, and making policy recommendations that are heavily weighted toward the short term and tactical. Their career pattern develops a high level of expertise, observational and writing skills, and diplomatic abilities. The leader of American in-country operations in a fragile state needs high-order managerial and leadership skills for complex program execution as well as a deep knowledge of the capabilities and limitations of other American organizations, especially military and intelligence. Some Foreign Service officers who became ambassadors have developed these skills. James Jeffrey, Ryan Crocker and Anne Patterson are among several in the recent past. However, although such training has been recommended, the Foreign Service is not geared toward producing such skills broadly. A qualification-and-selection process is needed for ambassadors to places like Yemen, Libya, Pakistan, Mali, Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq to identify candidates with the experience, knowledge and stature to direct an integrated, multiagency task force.

The current manning of embassies does not include a central staff to

The foundational process change should be to assign the task of developing a plan for a fragile state to the team on the ground in that state, rather than to an interagency group in Washington.

support an ambassador in designing and implementing a country plan. What is needed is a small, separate staff of perhaps a dozen experienced officers, drawn from different agencies, to help the ambassador formulate the plan, and then to monitor its execution to determine if it is achieving its objectives and recommend adjustments as circumstances on the ground change. While maintaining strong links back to their parent organizations for advice, support and guidance, these staff officers would primarily serve the ambassador in developing and coordinating his or her plans. Such help is beginning to be available from the State Department's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, but this falls short of an integrated interagency effort.

Within the overall integrated plan in a fragile state, the ambassador should recommend the military and intelligence actions to be taken directly against Al Qaeda personnel and units. The country plan must establish the priority and scope of these activities within the overall mission of strengthening security. It needs to define the areas in which the raids and drone strikes will be conducted and the intensity of the campaign. The overall objective is to capture or kill more enemies than are created. The ambassador should recommend whether these actions be taken as military activities under Title 10 or intelligence activities under Title 50. With special-operations forces and CIA planners as part of his team, the ambassador is in the best position to recommend both the actions themselves and the most appropriate authorities under which to conduct them. During the course of the campaign, the ambassador needs the authority to approve direct actions—drone strikes as well as raids and conventional military strikes—to ensure that they are integrated into the overall plan.

When the ambassador has formulated an integrated plan for the country, incorporating diplomatic, economic, intelligence, military and other aspects, including milestones that the plan will achieve on specified dates, it should be sent to Washington for interagency comment and for the allocation of resources—people and money. The Office of Management and Budget should participate at all levels of interagency review to ensure that budget plans are realistic. Ultimately, a resourced, comprehensive plan for a fragile state should be approved by the president.

Virtually every fragile state both affects and is affected by its neighbors. Tribal, ethnic and religious influences cross national boundaries; borders are often porous; pressuring groups in one country pushes them into others. The cooperation of neighboring states is thus essential to success within fragile states. To ensure that these factors are considered to obtain regional buy-in, each country plan should be sent to neighboring embassies (in the case of the State Department and other agencies without regional organizations) and to regional and global combatant commands (in the case of the Department of Defense) for review and comment.

No plan survives first contact with the enemy; success in the implementation of a

Once budgets have been allocated to U.S. programs to strengthen a fragile state, an ambassador should be able to shift them, within realistic thresholds, as needs and opportunities develop.

plan depends on flexibility and adaptation. Yet currently those carrying out military, economic, diplomatic and other programs in fragile states have very little authority or capability to react. A change in one aspect of a plan will always cause changes in other aspects, yet because authorities in the American national-security system pass directly from departments and agencies to representatives in the field, it is very difficult to gain approval for necessary adjustments. Congressional oversight, based on jurisdiction over appropriated budgets, further hinders flexibility. Economic-development programs depend on successful security operations, yet there is no authority in a country that can direct adjustments when setbacks in one area require changes in another. No financial or personnel reserves are available to cover unexpected problems or to take advantage of surprise opportunities—the budget incentive is "use it or lose it," whether or not a program is effective, or whether or not the money could be used more effectively elsewhere. Again, dedicated, hardworking officers and officials cooperate with each other as best they can, but the current system does not support flexibility.

The solution is to give the ambassador both the responsibility for overall progress on the plan and directive authority over the programs in country within the limits of the plan that was approved. Once budgets have been allocated to U.S. programs to strengthen a fragile state, an ambassador should be able to shift them, within realistic thresholds, as needs and opportunities develop.

These reforms will go a long way toward improving American support for fragile states and dealing with Al Qaeda groups that find refuge in them. However, additional improvements are needed.

It is only the Department of Defense that has either the authority or the tradition of assigning personnel to difficult overseas postings, whether they volunteer or not. All other agencies rely on volunteers. The result has been chronic shortchanging of the nonmilitary billets in fragile states—short assignments for officers, or the use of contractors. Authority must be granted to department and agency heads to assign their personnel as needed to support the national interest. Without this change, American campaigns in these countries will be unbalanced and heavily influenced by military considerations, since it is the military personnel who show up.

Although the Department of Defense has the authority to send personnel overseas as needed, some key skills for assisting fragile states have deteriorated within the military services in recent years. In the past, there were experienced civil engineers, utility company officials, local government administrators and transportation officials in the Army and Marine Corps Reserve. They had the skills and experience to help establish competent organizations to provide basic infrastructure in fragile states. The civil-affairs personnel in military reserve units are more junior and much less experienced now. The contractors and individually mobilized reservists that are now used to assist struggling government

organizations in fragile states are inadequate for the importance and difficulty of the need. The Reserve Components of the Army and Marine Corps must reestablish strong civilian-affairs components.

Successive secretaries of state in recent administrations have made strong attempts to improve the numbers and qualifications of civilian officials sent to fragile states. Continued emphasis is needed, as the State Department still has difficulty filling even established billets in Afghanistan, language skills do not meet existing requirements in fragile states, and there are too many short-term assignments of personnel to jobs that require sustained interaction with local officials to build trust. The State Department must continue to develop a cadre of officers who can be effective in the tough tasks of strengthening fragile states.

In virtually every fragile state, some of the weakest institutions are the police, courts and prisons. The U.S. government has very little capacity to help strengthen them. The Department of Justice has only a limited training-and-advisory capacity similar to that in the Department of Defense or the Department of State, and generally requires outside funding to mount training programs. Other countries have some capacity, but retired state and local police officers, private contractors, or volunteer judges and prison officials man the American assistance programs. In Afghanistan, the mission of police training was assigned to the Department of Defense, despite the fundamental differences between the military and law-enforcement missions. We need to develop a cadre of advisers and trainers for police, courts and prisons, and a means to supplement the cadre with qualified and supervised private volunteers.

Finally, Congress will need to establish new oversight procedures for an integrated country strategy, rather than the disjointed current system in which generals testify in front of one committee, ambassadors in front of another, and no executive-branch official below the president has the responsibility for overall success or failure to strengthen a fragile state in which the United States has important interests.

Countries with weak governments, high levels of poverty, and internal ethnic, religious and tribal tensions that provide sanctuaries for Al Qaeda or its affiliates will remain a perennial source of instability and threats for America and its allies. Most of the discussion of the challenges of dealing with fragile states has been dominated by abstract debates over vital American interests, fears of long-term commitments, sterile arguments over military versus civil components, disagreements over deadlines and often ill-informed applications of the perceived lessons of the U.S. experience in one country to another. This is unfortunate. What has been missing from the discussion is an understanding of the very segmented, rigid and inefficient system under which the United States attempts to help these countries stabilize their governments and societies and control outside terrorist groups. The current system guarantees that the resources—people and dollars—that are allocated to these countries do not produce the results they could and should. The United States should likely provide more funding for its programs in countries like Yemen, Libya and Mali. However, what is even more important is for the Obama administration and Congress to improve the basic system for organizing and conducting these programs. The improvements in authorities and procedures that we recommend here will go a long way toward making America safer with a very small expenditure of additional resources. It's time to replace decades of failure with a new approach that protects American security by transforming fragile states into genuinely secure ones. □

The Eternal Collapse of Russia

By Paul Starobin

Russia, it is often said, is a country that is barely able to stumble out of bed and put on matching socks in the morning. In the lead-up to the Winter Olympics in Sochi and continuing during the Games, the U.S. media declared open season on the nation. Americans were told that Russia is a country just about bereft of functioning elevators or toilets. Or even a national food, "except perhaps bad sushi." Its people "hardly know who they are anymore" and its essence is defined by copyright infringement and "all-encompassing corruption." All in all, Russia is "a country that's falling apart," as a *New Republic* cover story in February put it.

It's a hardy theme. It's also a completely bogus one. But that hasn't stopped the media from reviving it again and again.

Thirteen years ago, for example, the *Atlantic* published a cover story, "Russia Is Finished," on "the unstoppable descent of a once great power into social catastrophe" and ultimately "obscurity." That was a particularly bad year to predict Russia's demise, as an economic revival was starting to take hold. And these days, Russia is proving itself to be anything but "finished" as a geopolitical actor, with its aggressive seizure of Crimea and its arming of pro-Russia separatists in eastern Ukraine—who appear to be responsible for the July shooting down of a Malaysia Airlines passenger jet as it flew over rebel-held territory. Nor is Russia's determined and so far successful backing of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, and its nascent alliance with China based on a historic energy pact, suggestive of a nation that is no longer a consequential player on the world stage. Russia remains a risk-taking nation—and as questionable, even reckless, as its gambles may be, as in its support for the rebels in eastern Ukraine, this is not the behavior of a country destined for insignificance. And while there is a great deal that is second-rate about Russia, from its sagging transportation infrastructure to its shoddy health-care system, such blemishes, common to many nations, including the United States, are hardly evidence of a fatal malaise.

The interesting question, then, is what lies behind this unbalanced mindset—what might be called the "Russia Is Doomed" syndrome. What is the source of such stubbornly exaggerated thinking—and why is Russia chronically misdiagnosed in this fashion?

It feels right, as a first line of exploration, to call in Dr. Freud. Maybe the strange idea that "the drama is coming to a close," as the *Atlantic* piece prematurely declared of Russian history, is actually a wish of the collective Western subconscious—the silent urge of the id. The Freudian recesses can subtly affect our

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political desires, after all, and our twenty-first-century nervousness about Russia can be traced to long-standing European anxieties about despotic Russia as a kind of repository of the primitive in the human condition—dangerously and infuriatingly resistant to higher and hard-won European values. In his popular and bigoted early nineteenth-century travelogue, the French aristocrat Marquis de Custine said that in Russia "the veneer of European civilization was too thin to be credible." His dyspeptic view of Russia has lived on ever since.

Russia was indeed less developed than Europe—according to standards of modernity such as science, technology and industry—but there was a self-serving element of power politics as well as cultural hauteur behind such disparagements. It is no surprise that the notion of Russia and Russians as representing an Other—as in, apart from "us Westerners"—was strikingly prevalent in nineteenth-century Victorian England. That was the time of the Great Game—the competition between Britain and Russia for influence and spoils in a swath of Asia stretching from the Indian subcontinent to the Black Sea.

The Crimean War of the 1850s, pitting both the French and the British against the Russians, sparked an especially intense British animus against a marauding Russian bear, pitted against the regal British lion, as the political cartoonists of the day had it. (Or a meek lion, as some illustrators sketched the scene. In one such cartoon, a massive bear, a Russian soldier's cap on its head, sits atop a prostrate Persian cat, a lion looking on helplessly in the background.) Negative images of Russia seeped into British literature. George Stoker wrote an anti-Russian travelogue, *With the Unspeakables,* drawn from the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–1878. That book, in turn, may have supplied an impetus for his older brother, Bram, who later wrote of a pair of fantastical novels, *Dracula* and *The Lady of the Shroud,* that can be read as conjuring an "Eastern" or Slavic threat to England. In the end, of course, Count Dracula has his throat slashed and is stabbed dead in the heart.

Granted, the British Empire was a promiscuous slanderer of its motley rivals—consider the aspersions regularly cast toward the French. Still, British feelings toward Russia were notably raw. The historian J. H. Gleason, in his 1950 book *The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain,* characterized the nineteenth-century English public's "antipathy toward Russia" as the "most pronounced and enduring element in the national outlook on the world abroad." The sentiment, Gleason concluded, was concocted by a manipulative, imperial-minded elite—and was off base, anyway, since Britain's foreign policy was actually "more provocative than Russia's" in this period. Others concur. "The world champion imperialists of modern history, the British, were in a permanent state of hysteria about the chimera of Russia advancing over the Himalayas to India," Martin Malia observed in his 1999 book *Russia under Western Eyes*.

Nevertheless, British pigeonholing of Russia endured even among the most sophisticated of observers. Thus John Maynard Keynes, after a trip to Bolshevik Russia in 1925, wondered whether the "mood of oppression" there might be "the fruit of some beastliness in the Russian nature."

British attitudes, inevitably, migrated across the Atlantic to America. Continental America, of course, was thousands of miles away from continental Russia, although Russian colonizers managed at one point to establish a settlement at Fort Ross in northern California in the early nineteenth century. The perceived threat, though, was less about territory and more about the foreignness and sheer unsavoriness of Russian ways. "No human be-

ings, black, yellow or white, could be quite as untruthful, as insincere, as arrogant—in short, as untrustworthy in every way—as the Russians," President Theodore Roosevelt wrote in 1905, as the Russo-Japanese war was drawing to a close. By contrast, the Japanese were "a wonderful and civilized people," he said. (Roosevelt won the Nobel Peace Prize the following year for his efforts to negotiate an end to hostilities between the Russians and Japanese.)

America's foremost Russia hand, George F. Kennan, it is true, had a very strong, even mystical, attraction to Russia. "There was some mysterious affinity which I could not explain even to myself," he wrote in his memoirs. But Kennan stands out as an idiosyncratic exception amongst the American political class. That became evident during the Cold War, when blunderbuss denouncements of the Russians were a rote element of the national discourse—with the Russians always seen as the active agent behind the Soviet Union, even though its ruler, until his death in 1953, was a native Georgian, Joseph Stalin (born Dzhugashvili). Vilifications of the Russians came from across the political spectrum. Even J. Robert Oppenheimer—nuclear physicist, admirer of Igor Stravinsky's *Requiem Canticles,* global traveler, student of the Bhagavad Gita in the original Sanskrit, director of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton—harbored the crudest of prejudices. "We are coping with a barbarous, backward people who are hardly loyal to their rulers," he said in 1951, the echoes of Keynes and Marquis de Custine resounding in the distance.

Americans had plenty of encouragement in seeing themselves as the white hats in a Manichean struggle against the wild Russians. In his famous prophecy that America and Russia were destined to divide up the globe, set forth in the conclusion of the first volume of *Democracy in America,* published in the mid-1830s, Alexis de Toc-

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queville made clear where his sympathies lay. Glossing over the rough treatment of Native Americans by musket-bearing European settlers, he insisted that "the conquests of the American" are "gained by the ploughshare; those of the Russian by the sword." What's more, the "Anglo-American," as Tocqueville described the incomers to America, "gives free scope to the unguided strength and common sense of the people; the Russian centers all the authority of society in a single arm."

And yet Tocqueville's assumption—that a democratic society like America would prove inherently less warlike than an autocratic society like Russia—while plausible on its face, represented as much as anything a hope that the future belonged to the democratic peoples of the world. Thus, Russia's assigned role as a potential wrecker of this happy vision was made possible by John Locke, Thomas Jefferson and others with liberal ideas that had made only the tiniest of sprouts in the stinting Russian soil. Overlooked—Tocqueville's gift of foresight was remarkable but not without limitations—was the fascist menace to come from within the very heart of Europe.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991—the expiration, if not of Russia itself, then at least of an enormous Moscow-directed utopian project, nearly three-quarters of a century long in the tooth—afforded a respite in such feelings about Russia. It's always easier to be kind to the feeble: Russians were said to recover their humanity and decency precisely when their national power was at a historic ebb. As NATO expanded eastward, eventually to include the former Soviet Baltic republics on Russia's border, there was even a weird idealization of the mostly compliant Boris Yeltsin as an avuncular, ruddy-cheeked, American-style democrat (with a touch of the ward boss about him). Not even Yeltsin's war to subdue the breakaway province of Chechnya—which ended in at best a draw for him—ended the romance.

The mist dried from the Western eye with the ascent of the strongman Putin—viewed, not without reason, as a sort of composite throwback to the autocrats of the Soviet and czarist past. Feelings of revulsion reentered the discourse. "The Russians, on whom I have wasted far too much of my life, are drink-sodden barbarians who occasionally puke up a genius," Ralph Peters, a retired army lieutenant colonel and commentator, declared in 2008 at an American Enterprise Institute forum on Putin's invasion of Georgia. Unlike Yeltsin, Putin, however cynically, embraced "old" Russian traditions like Orthodoxy, and he baldly affirmed that Russia had its own special character and destiny and was not to be a "second edition" of America or Britain. As a KGB officer he had been stationed in Dresden, and he bridled at ingrained Western preconceptions of Russians as "a little bit savage still," as if "they just climbed down from the trees," as he remarked to a group of American journalists back in 2007.

And now, a century and a half after the Crimean War, the conflict that arose there this year serves as a reminder of the durability of American and European derision for Russia, seen as "a gas station masquerading as a country," in the words of Senator John

The history of Europe, it sometimes seems, is a prolonged case of pots calling kettles black.

McCain. "Russia is an anti-Western power with a different, darker vision of global politics," Anne Applebaum, an author and journalist who is married to Poland's foreign minister, Radoslaw Sikorski, wrote in *Slate.* (The headline: "Russia Will Never Be Like Us.") The seemingly everlasting British tradition of Russophobia is nowadays embodied by an editor at the *Economist,* Edward Lucas, a former Moscow bureau chief for that magazine who, in a *Daily Mail* column back in May, labored to draw scary parallels between Hitler and Putin in their respective "expansionist" ambitions. While Putin's actions no doubt fall far short of Hitler's atrocities, "the Austrian corporal and the German-speaking ex-spy do share troubling similarities," Lucas said. "History may not repeat itself. But, as Mark Twain once said, it often rhymes." And in an imagined letter sent by Machiavelli to Putin, crafted by Josef Joffe, publisher-editor of the German weekly *Die Zeit,* Russia's leader is scolded, "You have just reaffirmed a historic Russian habit: You would rather be the great spoiler and outsider." Surely Europe, though, as Joffe must be keenly aware, has seen a great many spoilers in its periodic lettings of blood and gore. The history of Europe, it sometimes seems, is a prolonged case of pots calling kettles black.

It is tempting to conclude on this note, punctuated with the wry observation by the Russian philosopher Nicolas Berdyaev that "the Russians have a disturbing effect upon the peoples of the West." So they do. But the story has another and maybe even more curious facet. For it is also the case that a prime source of negative stereotypes about Russia—and of a seeming desire for a wiping away of "traditional" Russia—comes from within the bosom of Mother Russia herself.

The truth is, Russia often has been maddening to a certain strata of educated Russians (and by Russians I mean not just ethnic Russians, strictly speaking, but all peoples native to or attaching themselves to Russia). A recurrent motif, just as in the West, is Russia's inherent and seemingly inescapable backwardness, as captured in Gogol's supposed quip that Russia has just two problems—*duraki i dorogi* (fools and roads). Lenin, born Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov in the Russian heartland, was a standout student of Greek and Latin who came to see old-style Russian institutions and beliefs—czarist autocracy, the land-bound wooden-hut peasantry, icon-worshipping Orthodoxy—as so retrograde as to be beyond the scope of reform. The solution was demolition. Lenin castigated "that really Russian man, the Great-Russian chauvinist" as "in substance a rascal and a tyrant." And his utopian dream, of course, was for Russia to fade away into a transnational amalgamation of the global proletariat.

This, then, is the tortured dynamic—the tension between a Russian intelligentsia with a liberal, radical or revolutionary critique of the country and a populace and a political elite generally accepting of Russian traditions and at times embracing them with fervor. And the criticism tends not to stop at the leader of the moment—in the current instance, Putin, who often does seem to be heartless and cynical, as

in his efforts to dodge any responsibility for the downing of the Malaysia Airlines plane—but rather to include the Russian people themselves. In 2002, with Putin embarked on post-Soviet Russia's second war in Chechnya, and with the public rallying in support, the Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya wrote in the *Los Angeles Times* that

> it is common knowledge that the Russian people are irrational by nature. The majority of them do not require candidates running for offices to provide clear-cut economic programs. In fact, the people are even slightly irritated, as opinion polls show, when a candidate is too intelligent—or at least more intelligent than the mass. At the same time, Russian people love macho—they love brutality, demonstrations of strong-handed policies and tough moves made for show.

Politkovskaya was certainly not wrong to discern a thuggish element in Putin's Russia—she herself was murdered in Moscow in 2006, on the day, suspiciously, of Putin's birthday. (Gangsters in Russia have a habit of making "presents," solicited or not, on the name day of their "bosses.") Still, what stand out are the sweeping and unsustainable generalizations—the idea that Russians are "irrational by nature" doesn't square, for example, with a society that produced world-class scientists from Mikhail Lomonosov in the eighteenth century to Andrei Sakharov in the twentieth. Such declarations amount to a form of masochistic self-flagellation—and seem to hold Russians themselves as collectively culpable for producing malevolent leaders.

Nevertheless, such critics are influential in the West—and have found a welcome in leading U.S. publications. "Russians have told so many lies about themselves they hardly know who they are anymore," Masha Gessen, a Russian American born in Soviet Moscow and currently living in the United States, began an essay last year

in the *New York Review of Books*. "These days," she continued, Putin

> talks gibberish about Russia having a "cultural code," which he seems to imagine is some sort of a spy code for the spirit. They should have started with food. There is no common Russian equivalent for the saying "you are what you eat," but it is no accident that Russians have hardly any idea of distinctively Russian food.

The overstatements are easy enough to correct. In my own experience living in and traveling around Russia, I have had no trouble finding Russians with a secure sense of identity. Once I asked a friend in Moscow, a young history professor, if he could point to some essence of Russia. He immediately suggested the ancient Orthodox church known as Pokrova, situated at the confluence of the Nerl and Klyazma Rivers near the medieval capital city of Vladimir. Viewed from afar, the church seems to be floating on a pool of water, the clouds reflected on the surface. A religious symbol, yes—but also, my friend stressed, a symbol of Russia's deep immersion in nature. Nor have I had difficulty finding food that Russians (including my own Russian Uzbek wife) assured me was characteristically Russian, such as the cold soup, *okroshka,* typically made of sour cream, vinegar, potatoes, cucumbers, eggs and dill, which is a summertime favorite in southwestern Russia in particular. (And yes, it is also enjoyed in Ukraine, large parts of which, for most of its history, have been part of a greater Russia.)

It is perhaps an exaggeration to say that the impulse of Putin's critics inside Russia—some, not all, of them—to deny Russia its Russianness is simply a species of loathing, since such critics do have an ideal of what their Russia should be: a model that amounts to making Russia more like Europe and America. This alternate ideal leads to the current spectacle in which Russia is beaten over the head for its regressive stand on matters like gay rights—an issue that is at the cutting edge of civil-liberties activism in America and Europe but not of any particular resonance in Russia outside of progressive enclaves in places like Moscow. In the West, the Pussy Riot episode made celebrity dissidents of the feminist punk band jailed by Russian authorities for hooliganism for their stunt in Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Savior two years ago when the group prayed, "Virgin Mary, Mother of God, banish Putin." Masha Gessen enshrined the affair in her recent book, *Words Will Break Cement,* to a laudatory review by Anne Applebaum in the *Washington Post.* But in Russia, an opinion poll found that only 5 percent of Russians believed Pussy Riot deserved "no punishment" and nearly 50 percent supported either mandatory labor or a large fine.

In this vein, the lectures directed at Russia on what it ought to be rival and possibly even exceed the instructions that today's China also regularly gets from the West on how to better itself. Russia needs to "sort out some of its psychological issues," including "paranoid projection," an "inferiority complex" and "delayed adolescence," Julia Ioffe, the *New Republic*'s leading writer on Russia, counseled this February. (The headline for the piece was "The Russians Think I'm a Russophobe? They're Right.") A Moscow-born Russian American, Ioffe was also the author of the cover story on how Russia is "falling apart."

It might be relevant that Ioffe, as some who take umbrage at her barbs are apt to sneer, is Jewish (which in certain Russian nationalistic circles can be taken to mean decidedly not Russian). Masha Gessen, too, is Jewish, and there is plenty in the Russian experience—the word "pogrom" is of Russian origin—for any Jewish person to despise and fear. (I'm Jewish myself,

Russia isn't going anywhere. Critics tend to exaggerate its ailments or fail to place them in proper context.

with ancestors from Russian lands.) Gessen also is a lesbian. But while not being an ethnic Russian may help to dispose one toward criticism of Putin's Russia—and being a lesbian all the more so—such things don't quite account for the passion displayed in reprimands of the country. The active ingredient in such chastisements seems to have, as much as anything else, an aesthetic component. Russia, it is clear, is not to everyone's taste.

But a nation is not a piece of art that one can choose simply not to hang on the wall, never to have to look at. The reason that the "Russia Is Doomed" strain of criticism matters is that this perspective is grounded in unreality. Russia isn't going anywhere. Critics tend to exaggerate its ailments or fail to place them in proper context. Consider corruption. Systematic corruption, from the bottom to the top of society, is indeed pervasive in Russia—and this has been a condition of post-Soviet Russia going back to the corrupt deals struck in the 1990s between the Kremlin and a rising generation of oligarchs. But corruption also is endemic in nepotistic (and yet fast-growing) one-party China, and in democratic India. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, in the Gilded Age of the "robber barons," America, too, was a swamp of malfeasance, as the rich and powerful bent government to their will. There is no reason to think corruption will harm Russia more than it does other societies.

As for Russia being little more than a "gas station," in McCain's words, the country's vast oil and gas resources are without question current-day Russia's prize economic asset. Russia is the world's top natural-gas exporter and possesses the planet's largest proven gas reserves. But energy is much more to Russia than just a source of cash: the Kremlin is adeptly using its fossil-fuel treasure to accomplish geopolitical objectives, as in the recent megadeal to ship natural gas by pipeline to China. Beijing and Moscow may never be close friends, but energy gives them a practical reason to work together. Meanwhile, the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal*, a persistent critic of Putin's Russia, has pleaded for the United States to use its own energy reserves as a "strategic asset" to help Europe reduce its current reliance on Russian gas. Such an appeal underscores the reality that Russia's petroprowess is apt to endure well into the twenty-first century.

What about Russia's grim demographic profile? The analyst Nicholas Eberstadt at the American Enterprise Institute labeled Russia "The Dying Bear" in a 2011 essay in *Foreign Affairs.* "The country's population has been shrinking, its mortality levels are nothing short of catastrophic, and its human resources appear to be dangerously eroding," he wrote. Critics of that piece pointed out that Russia in 2010 actually had a lower mortality rate than in 2000. And this progress has continued. In a *Wall Street Journal* piece earlier this year, Eberstadt conceded:

> Russia's post-Soviet population decline has halted. Thanks to immigration chiefly from the "near abroad" of former Soviet states, a

rebound in births from their 1999 nadir and a drift downward of the death rate, Russia's total population today is officially estimated to be nearly a million higher than five years ago. For the first time in the post-Soviet era, Russia saw more births than deaths last year.

It seems the ursine creature is not, after all, dying.

In any case, our taste for a country—favorable or unfavorable—shouldn't dictate our foreign policy, which is properly shaped by a cool calculation of our national interest. On these terms, America is right to resist Russia if Putin seems truly bent on bullying his way to a redrawn map of Europe, but also right to try to keep working with Russia on matters of mutual concern such as Islamic militancy. And that same calculation will hold when Putin, as must happen eventually, exits the Kremlin, willingly or unwillingly, whether replaced by a new autocrat or a more democratic figure. Today's heightened tension between the United States and Russia, conceivably the first chapter of a new cold war, with Europe as ambivalent as ever about its role, underscores that Russia is likely to remain one of America's most vexing and formidable diplomatic challenges for a long time to come.

So the future of the presentation of Russia as a hodgepodge of unflattering stereotypes seems bright. The naive liberal notion that the world has a teleological disposition toward a progressive end—if only holdouts like Russia would get with the program—is deeply entrenched. Headlines datelined in Russia—on corrupt oligarchs, or on control-freak KGB-generation political operators—will continue to nourish sweeping criticism of Russians, from their leaders on down, as primitive and psychologically ill. Probably no other nation is so easy (or so safe) to caricature.

And the "Russia Is Doomed" syndrome is bound to survive because Russia, alas, still matters. The object of such concentrated anxiety over the centuries, far from heading down a path to obscurity, remains a global force and impossible to ignore. So the worries will live on, too, as will the sublimated wish to efface Russia. But perhaps the good news for the critics is precisely that Russia is not about to go away. They will have plenty of grist for their mill for decades to come. □

Britain's Tea Party

By Tim Montgomerie

Nigel Paul Farage was a member of the Conservative Party when Margaret Thatcher was its leader. Today, he still looks and sounds a lot like an old-fashioned British Conservative. He wears pin-striped suits during the working week and bright red or yellow trousers on weekends—as many upper-class fashion criminals inexplicably do. He was educated at Dulwich College, a fee-paying private school where he enjoyed cricket and rugby and joined the army cadets.

The son of a stockbroker named Guy Oscar Justus Farage, Nigel (incidentally, a very Tory name) skipped university and went directly into the City of London, where he made his mark as a commodities trader. Since 1999, he has been a member of the European Parliament. He is married to a German, Kirsten Mehr, whom he employs as his secretary, quite legally, with taxpayers' money. And he is the leader of Britain's fastest-growing political party, the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). His larger-than-life, straight-talking personality is central to UKIP's success, but, perversely, he is succeeding by attacking nearly everything he once embodied.

He laments Thatcherism's impact on Britain's working classes, for example. He criticizes the Tories and the nation's main newspapers for being dominated by privately educated "toffs." He grumbles that Britain is led by career politicians, even though he is now a fourth-term member of the European Parliament. He complains about how British industry employs so many foreigners, even though he employs one—his wife—as his personal aide. His party succeeds by pitting itself against London—the city where Nigel Farage made his money and where he was educated. And London is where the explanation of Britain's complicated UKIP phenomenon must begin.

London is the British economy's greatest success story. It is currently living through its second great age. It dominates the United Kingdom in a way that no American city comes close to doing in the United States. It is not just Britain's political capital like Washington. Or its financial capital like New York. Or its cultural capital like Los Angeles. It is all of these things and more.

Roughly ten million people live in the Greater London Urban Area. People commute from all over Britain and from many parts of Europe to what is now the world's third most productive city. Some dub London the sixth-biggest city in France due to the number of French expatriates living in Britain's capital, many of who are fleeing François Hollande's confiscatory taxes. London accounts for less than one-sixth of Britain's population, but it contributes a quarter of its tax revenues.

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The properties found in Elmbridge—a London suburb home to 130,000 people—are worth an estimated £31 billion. That's more than the value of all of the houses in Greater Glasgow—home to over one million Scots.

The strength of London's economy is all the more remarkable because just seven years ago it was hit by the financial equivalent of a tsunami. London's banks were at the center of the global crash. Today, the financial companies headquartered in the Square Mile and in the Docklands are powering the city's resurgence, contributing to a $71 billion surplus in financial services for the whole UK economy. London is an outstanding example of a wider global trend where great cities such as Istanbul, Shanghai and Mumbai enjoy supercharged growth as they act as magnets for talented, inventive people—from their own countries and from abroad.

But guess what? London is the one part of Britain that UKIP cannot reach. In the May elections to the European Parliament, UKIP topped the poll. It beat Labour, Her Majesty's official party of opposition, into second place and the ruling Conservatives into third. UKIP did very well in most parts of England, winning 35 percent of electors in the East, for example, and 32 percent in the South West. But in London it could only muster 17 percent of the vote.

Asked to explain why UKIP had done so well across most of the country but relatively poorly in the nation's capital, Suzanne Evans, one of the party's principal spokespeople, may have revealed more than she intended. Londoners, she explained, are more "educated, cultured and young" than the rest of Britain. Twitter and social media seized on her candor and quickly presented the average UKIP supporter as stupid, backwards and, well, a little past it. Nigel Farage will not have minded. He feeds on the metropolitan establishment's contempt for his party. He deploys the victimhood tactics long used by the Left. Where the Left augmented its support by championing victims of sexism, racism and homophobia, Farage builds his base by suggesting that native, patriotic Britons are victims of an establishment that has surrendered the nation to immigrants, rule by Brussels and self-serving political elites.

Although the British media sometimes present UKIP as the party that hates London—its immigration, cultural diversity and youth—it would be more accurate to say that UKIP is the antiglobalization party and London encapsulates the open, free-trading nature of the twenty-first-century economy. Farage is the champion of those people and communities who feel ill served by globalization. People who don't like immigration. Who don't like "wars for oil," as the argument goes, or other overseas interventions. And, just as importantly, people who feel that their traditional views on family life and national identity are under attack from the liberal values that politicians like David Cameron, Bill Clinton, Barack Obama and Tony Blair all seem to share. Many traditionalist Tories were shocked, for example, when Cameron, the Conservative leader, introduced legislation that ultimately succeeded in legalizing same-sex marriage. While UKIP is definitely an economic phenomenon, it also has important cultural ingredients.

In different times, a political gap may not have existed for Britain's equivalent of the Tea Party to emerge, but a constellation of political events has come together to give UKIP its great opportunity. The Conservative Party has been led by David Cameron, a man who does not know the price of milk, to quote one of his own rather disloyal MPs. While the charge may

be unfair to Cameron, Britain's prime minister since 2010, there can be no doubting that he has struggled to connect with poorer Britons. Meanwhile, Labour's leader, Ed Miliband, also has difficulty reaching the victims of globalization.

This is, perhaps, more surprising, as the working classes have historically been his party's backbone. But Miliband struggles to close the growing gap between the green, socially liberal elites that lead left-wing parties across the world and the more patriotic, socially conservative voters that politicians such as Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher and Australia's John Howard successfully cultivated. And providing the third ingredient of UKIP's happy constellation is Britain's third party, the Liberal Democrats. The Lib Dems traditionally have been the nation's party of protest, but under Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg's leadership they entered into a coalition government with David Cameron. They can no longer be the party of protest. Even more than the Tories, they are the object of protest.

UKIP, which received just 3 percent of the vote in Britain's last general election, now picks up anything between 10 and 20 percent in wildly fluctuating opinion polls. In the most recent European Parliament elections, which use proportional representation, it won 28 percent. At the next UK general election, fought under the first-past-the-post system, most experts think it will struggle to win many—if any—seats, but that does not mean it won't influence the result. Although it is siphoning off votes from all parties, it is winning the lion's share of its support from the Conservative Party. It is also winning Labour voters whom the Tories need to win a majority and who might have been attracted to a Conservative leader who was more earthy than Cameron. For the first time since the Second World War, the Right in British politics is divided. A strong UKIP result could put Labour and Ed Miliband into 10 Downing Street.

If Labour is elected, Britain will not get the referendum on membership in the European Union that David Cameron has promised for 2017 if he is reelected. A strong UKIP performance, dividing the Right, might therefore delay or even prevent the goal for which Nigel Farage's party was first formed: An independent Britain. Sovereign. Free. And outside the European Union. Let us travel back to 1993, the year in which UKIP was founded.

UKIP emerged at a time when Euroskepticism was beginning to march in British politics. Margaret Thatcher had been ousted as Tory leader and prime minister just three years earlier. She had won three general elections for her party and is still widely regarded as one of the country's greatest leaders. But she had become unpopular with many big beasts inside her own party because of her growing antipathy toward the European project.

Once an enthusiast for Britain's membership in what was originally called the European Economic Community, Thatcher had turned against what she had come to see as an emerging superstate. She had wanted to be part of a free-trade area with other European nations. That was what the British people had signed up for when they had been asked to vote to either ratify or reject membership in a 1975 referendum. But Europe had become something very different by the end of the 1980s. It had a parliament, a court and a bureaucracy in Brussels that was always greedy for new powers. Although there was a common market across Europe, it was not a particularly free market. Brussels had become a super-regulator, wrapping industry after industry in red tape. That red tape suited big businesses with big compliance

Farage builds his base by suggesting that native, patriotic Britons are victims of an establishment that has surrendered the nation to immigrants, rule by Brussels and self-serving political elites.

departments, but it was damaging to small, upstart businesses. Thatcher was particularly suspicious of the single-currency project—and rightly so. If some of Europe's utopian politicians had heeded her warnings, the euro zone's southern nations might not be enduring youth unemployment rates of 50 percent today.

The facts in the European debate are hotly disputed, but some estimates suggest that three-quarters of all laws affecting the United Kingdom originate from within the European Union, as this deeply political enterprise is now called. 40 percent is probably a more accurate estimate. Whatever the true number, it is still a huge proportion and a proportion that the British people never envisaged when they were asked for their consent in 1975.

Thatcher made her political mission clear in a landmark speech in 1988, delivered in the Belgian city of Bruges. "We have not," she thundered, "successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain, only to see them reimposed at a European level." She did not just object to Europe taking a socialist turn. She hated the very idea of what she called "a European superstate exercising a new dominance from Brussels." The leader who had fought the unions and the Soviet Union during her early years in power had new enemies in her sights: the big state and a big, antidemocratic European project.

When Europhiles ousted her in November 1990, exploiting unpopularity caused by an economic recession and a controversial tax reform, they hoped to end her attempts to lead the Conservative Party in a Euroskeptic direction. But the successful "regicide" against Thatcher was far from the end of the matter. It was only the beginning. For all of the last twenty-five years, a battle has raged inside the Conservative Party as to what kind of relationship Britain should have with the rest of Europe. In opposing further European integration or even supporting exit from the EU, many Conservatives believe that they are following the orders that Thatcher issued in 1988. Many other skeptics decided, however, that the establishment factions within the Conservative Party that toppled Margaret Thatcher would never allow the Tories to lead Britain out of Europe. Many of those skeptics joined UKIP and to this day believe that the Conservative Party can never be trusted to ensure that Britain becomes an independent, self-governing nation again.

Although Europe may be the issue that motivated its earliest supporters, it does not directly explain why UKIP finished first in this May's European Parliament elections. The secret of UKIP's growing success is that Nigel Farage has broadened his party's message. It no longer talks just about Europe. At the end of a TV debate with Nick Clegg, Farage invited viewers to "come and join the people's army." He continued: "Let's topple the establishment who led us to this mess." By "this mess" he means the global recession, foreign interventions, political corruption and, most of all, large-scale immigration.

The British electorate never endorsed large-scale immigration at any general

If UKIP is to become a permanent force in British politics, it will need to decide how to resolve the conflict between its libertarian and traditionalist tendencies.

election, but during Tony Blair's time at 10 Downing Street a net three million people—equivalent to 5 percent of the population—entered Britain. And despite the current Conservative-led government's promises to bring numbers under control, net immigration into Britain is still proceeding at a historically unprecedented level of two hundred thousand people per year. Immigration experts predict seventy million people will be living and building upon Britain's green and pleasant lands by 2030.

Many argue that immigration has brought significant benefits to Britain. London is enjoying its second great age, for example, because of the energetic and highly skilled people from many parts of the world who are working in its creative sector and its financial and information-technology industries. Many of the great brains working in Britain's universities and teaching hospitals are also immigrants. But there have been significant downsides to immigration as well. Housing prices are rising to record levels, especially in the southeastern parts of England—making ownership unaffordable for many local and young people. Immigration may also partly explain the depressed nature of the wages of lower-skilled people. British employers have little incentive to cooperate with the government's welfare-to-work programs so long as foreign workers, motivated to cross continents in search for work and therefore certainly motivated to turn up for work at 5 a.m., are ready and available to take the jobs they create.

But whatever the arguments for and against immigration there is one stubborn fact that immigration advocates cannot escape: the British people have never voted for large-scale immigration of the kind that has occurred. Any political party that promised immigration of two or three hundred thousand people per year would not do well at elections. Three-quarters of British voters want net immigration reduced to lower levels. Immigration control was what the Conservative Party vowed to deliver before the last election. While David Cameron and his home secretary, Theresa May, have succeeded in reducing immigration, they have not come close to meeting their promised target. This failure is the number-one policy factor driving UKIP's progress.

Immigration is in fact the perfect issue for UKIP. First, there is the policy substance: voters disapprove of large numbers of people entering Britain, pushing up housing prices and "stealing our jobs." Second, there is the antiestablishment dimension: all of the three major political parties have promised to control immigration but once in power were proven to have "lied," claims Farage. And third, there is the European dimension. So long as Britain is a member of the EU, it does not have control of its borders. Free movement of labor is an integral component of the European single market—negotiated, ironically, by Thatcher herself. Just as any Briton is free to live and work in any other part of the EU, so any Bulgarian, Romanian or Pole is free to come to live and work in the United Kingdom. Any potential limits on immigration into Britain from outside of the EU can

be overwhelmed by immigration from inside the EU—especially from its poorer, recession-struck member states. As the only party promising to take Britain out of the EU, UKIP is therefore the only party with a credible policy to control immigration.

Over time, UKIP has devoted more and more of its campaigning efforts to opposing immigration. Sometimes, however, this has led UKIP to appear as anti-immigrant as much as anti-immigration. Although a majority of ethnic-minority Britons as well as white Britons oppose large-scale immigration, UKIP's sometimes strident emphasis on the issue helps to explain why it is such a white party. 14 percent of Britons come from ethnic minorities, yet a recent collage of hundreds of UKIP members, produced by the party itself, contained not one nonwhite face.

UKIP also opposes gay marriage, wants the foreign-aid budget slashed and takes an even tougher line on welfare payments to the poor than the governing Conservatives. The overall impression that has been created is that UKIP supporters don't much like modern Britain or people that they do not know. It is in danger of becoming a very traditionalist, even reactionary party. That was not its original intention. UKIP still describes itself as a libertarian party, and in supporting smokers' rights and opposing state surveillance, for example, it retains some freedom-loving beliefs.

If UKIP is to become a permanent force in British politics, it will need to decide how to resolve this conflict between its libertarian and traditionalist tendencies. If it moves in a libertarian direction, it might alienate the older, more conservative voters that form its current bedrock of support. If it does not become a little more open-minded and reach some of Britain's "educated, cultured and young" voters, it will struggle to make the parliamentary breakthroughs necessary to really change British politics and secure its founding goal: exit from the European Union.

Whatever future UKIP might carve out for itself, it has already posed huge questions for the mainstream parties. For twenty or more years, much of British politics has become far removed from the concerns of large numbers of voters. Often using campaigning techniques imported from America, the established parties have become adept at targeting swing voters in swing parliamentary seats. As a result, only a few million, largely middle-income voters decide Britain's government. Half of British parliamentary seats haven't changed hands since 1970. Nearly one-third have remained in the same party's control since 1945. Without America's system of primary elections, most British MPs think they have a seat for life. This has led many of them to become indifferent to their constituents' concerns. It is a recipe for political stultification. It is certainly a breeding ground for disenfranchisement. The people who need politics most—the people struggling to make ends meet, who run out of money at the start rather than the end of months—are most shut out from the electoral system. UKIP has given them a voice.

Establishment politicians on both sides of the Atlantic can choose to see Britain's UKIP—or America's Tea Party, for that matter—as irritants. They can paint them as extremists. They can attempt to defeat them. And it is certainly true that both movements have weaknesses. But the establishments also have their weaknesses. Too many influential Republican politicians grew too close to special interests on Wall Street and to the big-business lobbyists of Washington's K Street. They came to embody a crony rather than a competitive form of capitalism—let alone

a Main Street capitalism rooted in local communities. The result was the Mitt Romney candidacy and the devastating finding that among those who said that whether a candidate "cares about people like me" was a top concern for them, a full 81 percent voted for Barack Obama rather than the Republican nominee.

The British Tories have a similar problem. All of the influential Tories live in London. They imbibe its prosperity, its multiculturalism, its skyline full of cranes, its sexual liberalism and its internationalism. But London—for all of its qualities—is only part of Britain. There is another Britain, one that lacks the capital city's cultural spring and where wages are depressed, where working hours are long and where globalization can be more of a problem than a blessing. Too many Conservatives give the impression that they do not really understand this Britain. Senior Tories talk about "middle-class families" who can no longer afford private education or who face extra taxation on their £2 million homes. They are out of touch. They do not seem to realize that only about one in twenty Britons send their children to fee-paying schools or that a £2 million home is far beyond the earning potential of most Britons.

Every Conservative MP should be given a business card with just one thing written upon it: £28,600. £28,600 is the average UK salary. Many earn much less, of course. Until every Tory MP understands what it is like to try to pay for a home, a holiday, a petrol tank and a supermarket trolley full of groceries for the family with that kind of money, they should not be in politics. They certainly won't beat UKIP. Because for everything UKIP says about immigration, gay marriage and Europe, it is the ale-drinking, cigarette-smoking Nigel Farage's attack on the remoteness of the political class that has made UKIP the most talked-about party in British politics today. □

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Limited War Is Back

By Jakub Grygiel and A. Wess Mitchell

Europe needs to rearm and defend itself to cope with a new military threat. The American security umbrella—in both its conventional and nuclear forms—is no longer adequate, particularly on NATO's vulnerable eastern flanks. Indeed, the extended deterrent provided by the United States to its most exposed allies may not be well suited to inhibiting attacks similar to Russia's recent incursion into Ukraine, which displayed all the hallmarks of the newly popular limited conventional wars—brief and decisive, violent and yet very restrained. The purpose of such conflicts is to achieve a quick fait accompli in a geographically circumscribed area through limited force—in this case, paramilitary means followed by Russian regular forces. It is difficult to deter such a threat through the promise of retaliation, which by its very nature must occur after the facts on the ground have already been changed. A threat of retaliation is simply less credible when the enemy has achieved his objective through a low-intensity action. What are needed instead are strong local military capabilities—a preclusive defense—that increase the costs of that limited attack. Europe must start to defend its border rather than indulge in the belief that the traditional formula for deterrence, based on retaliation and the extended deterrent provided by the United States, will suffice. It won't.

Whereas limited warfare went out of fashion in the West after Vietnam, Russia regards it as a central part of its military doctrine. It has practiced it in Georgia, Crimea and eastern Ukraine, and presumably rehearses it elsewhere. It is therefore imperative to study anew the challenges presented by such a form of sanguinary behavior. "Limited wars" have several distinctive features. First, they are characterized by self-imposed restraint in the political objective sought and the level of force used. The aggressor could escalate the confrontation, but chooses not to. The purpose of limiting the use of force is to avoid some reaction that would undermine the political objective sought in the conventional assault. In the case of today's Russia, the purpose is to extend influence and control westward without eliciting a strong response from NATO and the United States. Moscow recognizes the clear military superiority of its main rivals and consequently desires to avoid a pitched confrontation that it would lose. Hence, its use of force is calibrated to be sufficient to conquer pieces of Ukraine but not so large and violent that it would prompt a unified political, economic and military reaction from the West.

Russia is as clear regarding what it wants to avoid as it is concerning what it wants

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to achieve. Moscow's objectives are limited: a small and quick territorial grab rather than a massive invasion (at least for now). There is no drive to the capital (Kiev, in this instance) or attempt at full conquest but instead a speedy push inside the neighboring state followed by a sudden, self-imposed stop. It is a "jab and pause" style of war fighting meant to achieve a swift and limited fait accompli. A rapid conquest of Crimea or parts of eastern Ukraine is followed by a pause and apparent openness to seek a mutually acceptable negotiated settlement. But the limited objective has already been achieved, and the quick suspension of violence is a sign of the satisfaction of the original goal.

A limited war is also characterized by limited means. The aggressor state carefully tailors its methods to the goal it wants to achieve—and the reaction it wants to avoid. Minimal violence is employed. The potential for escalation is made clear but held in reserve. In the case of the Crimean invasion, the Russian operation started anonymously with unmarked troops (dubbed "little green men" by Ukrainians), an indication that Moscow was uncertain about how local Ukrainian forces would react. In the event of determined opposition, Russia maintained the option of either escalating with larger forces or, should Western powers come to Ukraine's aid militarily, halting the operations of the unmarked troops.

The aggressor, in fact, constantly has to weigh the value of the limited objective against the risk of the rivals' response. The higher the value of the objective, the more risk it is willing to accept. In Ukraine, it is plausible that Moscow's desire to avoid a military clash with NATO members (including in the form of Western-armed and -trained Ukrainian forces) is greater than its desire to occupy Crimea. Russian military might is impressive when compared to that of its neighbors, but Moscow cannot sustain a prolonged conflict with Western-supported forces and certainly cannot do so against NATO member states. But the risk of a Western military response was and remains negligible, and Russia achieved its objective in Crimea with ease.

Two main challenges present themselves when crafting a response to a limited war waged by a rival. First, it is politically difficult to answer a restrained military attack. As the Crimea case illustrates, Western policy makers face significant hurdles when attempting to mobilize public opinion in support of a stiff diplomatic—much less military—response to low-scale aggression. Moreover, the tentative nature and high speed of the initial attack complicate the formation of a responding coalition, whose potential members are naturally divided as to the most appropriate answer to that limited push. The sign of a successful limited war is the absence of a strong concerted response, the reaction that the attack wanted to avoid in the first place. Russia's self-imposed restraint in Crimea gave Moscow the advantage it sought.

The second difficulty is that when faced with a limited attack, the targeted country cannot trade space for time. The objective pursued by the attacking party is limited, most often geographically. The conquest of a small, carefully delimited piece of real estate is the goal of the aggressor, and if the defending country abandons that territory in the hope of buying time to develop a response, it ipso facto allows the enemy to achieve its objective. Consequently, defense in depth—the practice of initially yielding territory and then counterattacking—is useless in such a case. Russia does not appear interested in conducting a military conquest of Ukraine in its entirety, and seems for now to be satisfied with only Crimea

Europe needs to rearm and defend itself to cope with a new military threat. The American security umbrella—in both its conventional and nuclear forms—is no longer adequate.

and perhaps parts of eastern Ukraine, if it can hold them. In this scenario, defense in depth would simply give the aggressor what he wants, one bite at a time, as the Ukrainians quickly discovered. Whatever the reasoning behind Kiev's initial decision not to defend its outer territories, this approach allowed Moscow to achieve its early objectives virtually cost-free—a hard lesson that prompted Kiev to switch tactics and transfer forces eastward.

These difficulties indicate that the sine qua non of a successful response to an offensive strategy based on limited war is the fielding of effective local forces capable of withstanding the initial attack. There is no alternative to local defense organized by the targeted country. Of course, it is unlikely that a country much weaker than the attacking power, as in the case of Ukraine or any other neighboring country to Russia, can defend itself alone. Local defenses only serve as a complement to—not a replacement for—extended deterrence. Without local defensive capabilities, extended deterrence is fragile, in particular in a limited offensive war; without an extended deterrent, local defense by small states facing more powerful neighbors is sacrificial.

Shifting the strategic emphasis to local defense achieves three things. First, it increases the costs of military aggression: the more difficult it is for the revisionist state to achieve the political objective sought by the limited-war format, the more force the aggressor will have to employ and the higher the risk of a stronger response by external forces. This defeats the very purpose of limited war—low-cost, low-risk revision—from the outset. The role of local defense is to force the aggressor to escalate the level of violence, which adds both military and political costs.

Second, in the event that the aggressor does attack, an effective local defense buys time for the target state, increasing the likelihood that external reinforcements will arrive before the offensive has succeeded. In a limited-war scenario, space cannot be traded for time, but time can be bought by local defensive actions. The longer it takes for the aggressor to achieve its limited territorial objectives, the greater the opportunity for external military aid to buttress the targeted country.

Third, local defensive forces permit the conflict to remain limited, an outcome that is in the interest of all parties. As William Kaufmann wrote in 1956, "To the extent, therefore, that a conflict starts with local forces clashing over local issues, to that extent will the chances of limiting it be improved." This, paradoxically, increases the likelihood of external support for the targeted party. The security patron of a targeted small country has no interest in, and very little ability to generate domestic support for, a large-scale conflict in defense of a distant ally. If the extended deterrent is predicated on a massive military response, it is less credible in the event of a limited attack.

This is why Europeans—especially those on the eastern frontier facing a revisionist Russia—need to take their own defense seriously. The extended deterrence provided by the United States will not suffice to prevent a limited-war scenario, even in the case of a NATO member. It is plausible, in

fact, to imagine a repeat of the Crimea grab in one of the Baltic states: a lighting strike with minuscule territorial objectives pursued with limited conventional means, followed by an abrupt stop to the offensive. The larger goal of such a strike, like in the Crimean case, would be to prove that the international arrangements underwriting the targeted country's security are a house of cards. The political shadow of influence creating the incentive to defend the allied country. The loss of American soldiers to an initial attack by the enemy would, so the argument goes, create powerful pressures for Washington to respond. As French general Ferdinand Foch reportedly said when asked before World War I how many British troops would be needed for the security of France, "Give me one, and I will make sure he gets killed on the first day of the

that would follow such a demonstration of power would be preferable to an outright conquest for many reasons.

The forward positioning of U.S. troops is useful for shoring up the effectiveness of American extended deterrence in the region and should be done immediately. But that step alone will not deter Russia. The deterrent aspect of this forward posture is that it puts U.S. assets and manpower in a vulnerable position—creating a so-called tripwire—thus showing commitment and war." Or, as Thomas Schelling put it in more recent times, the purpose of placing thousands of American troops on our allies' territory is so that "bluntly, they can die." But what if they do not die? What if they're never even involved because the attack is so limited—a "jab and pause" like that in Crimea—that it does not come near American forces? If the aggressor establishes a quick fait accompli, then the U.S. forces would have to be used not to defend an ally's territory, but rather to *attack* an

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enemy that has already achieved its territorial goal and, in all likelihood, has ceased military operations. As Henry Kissinger put it, "Once the aggressor is in possession of his prize . . . the psychological burden shifts in his favor. The defender must now assume the risk of the first move. The aggressor can confine himself to outwaiting his opponent."

There is no substitute for local forces that possess the ability to protect their own borders, even if it means merely increasing the costs of aggression without hope of winning the conflict unaided. But this will require a change from NATO's current approach to defense. As implied above, it will mean a conscious move away from the exclusive emphasis on extended deterrence that has dominated alliance strategy for decades. This approach made sense when the threat facing NATO was above the threshold of formal war, and in the immediate post–Cold War period, when the threat was negligible. But in today's landscape, given the weak state of defenses along NATO's eastern borders, overreliance on extended deterrence would confront NATO with the same problem now facing Ukraine, but on a wider scale. Without the ability to defend against a limited attack in its initial stages, NATO would be forced to rely on defense-in-depth techniques that would trade space for time. This is the concern that many Central and Eastern European states have—that they would have to absorb the loss of territory while awaiting relief forces that, for political or military reasons, might never come. In a best-case scenario, such an event would render an alliance in NATO's divided political state a dead letter. In a worst-case scenario, it would turn frontline NATO members like Poland and the Baltic states into a war zone. And it also may simply let Russia achieve its limited territorial objectives, but with powerful political aftereffects. Russia does not want to march through the Fulda Gap; it simply wants to test and, if attainable at low risk, to tear down the U.S.-built and -supported European security system.

NATO needs a different defense strategy—one that retains the best features of American military protection against unlimited war but also places greater importance on ensuring the ability of frontline states to defend themselves during the critical, early phases of a Russian limited-war attack. Without abandoning extended deterrence based on retaliation, this strategy would shift the emphasis to deterrence based on preclusive defense. While similar in the sense that both seek to prevent war by changing the strategic calculation of aggression, retaliation and preclusion are different in important ways. Where the former discourages aggressive behavior by instilling fear of retaliation, the latter discourages it by removing or reducing the gain that the opponent would have achieved from aggression. Using the analogy of a schoolyard bully, deterrence is the fear of a teacher's paddle; preclusion is equipping the weaker students with sets of brass knuckles. Preclusion works not because the opponent thinks it will lose a conflict outright—the Russians can still overcome individual frontline NATO states no matter how much they bulk up their forces—but instead because it will take more time and effort to win than the object is worth. Preclusion reinforces the effectiveness of American extended deterrence because it signals to the attacker that the target can survive long enough for the resources of its larger patron to be brought into play.

The point of the Russian "jab and pause" strategy is to make NATO's members choose between the unsavory options of responding militarily to an already-achieved land grab (risking escalating the overall conflict) and inaction (and the resulting po-

litical self-nullification). Preclusive defense evens the odds by forcing Russia to choose between the defeat or stalling of its limited "jab," and the adoption of a higher threshold of military violence that it is unlikely to be able to sustain. Either way, it redefines the contest in ways that allow NATO's advantages to come into play and exposes Russian disadvantages. It prevents Russia from being able to achieve the all-important psychological advantage of the strategic-offense-cum-tactical-defense that it has used in Ukraine—the "draw[ing] of an opponent into an 'unbalanced' advance" that the military strategist Basil Liddell Hart identified as the most crucial determinant of success in warfare.

For preclusive defense to work, Europeans will have to get serious about defending themselves. In particular, the frontline states of Central and Eastern Europe will have to develop a capacity—and mindset—for self-defense that they currently do not possess. One recent study by the Center for European Policy Analysis found that Russian military power outstrips the defenses of Central and Eastern European states in all dimensions by a wide margin—in land power by a factor of three to one, in airpower by four to one and in overall defense spending by ten to one. One positive side effect of the Ukraine crisis has been to increase the willingness of these states to invest in their own defense. As the recent behavior of America's East Asian allies has shown, the return of traditional geopolitical competition has a way of awakening strategic seriousness—and reducing free riding on the United States—among vulnerable states. There are already some signs of this trend in NATO, as European defense establishments appear to be shifting emphasis to territorial defense. Poland and Estonia are already relatively big military spenders; in the period since the invasion of Ukraine, neighboring states Latvia, Lithuania, the Czech Republic and Romania have all implemented or promised significant increases, and other regional allies are considering similar options.

As the behavior of some U.S. allies during the Cold War (and in Central Europe today) has shown, it is not a foregone conclusion that all frontline states' free riding will decrease or that local defense will become a priority on its own—even within the context of a growing threat of limited war on or near their territory. These changes are particularly unlikely if Russia maintains its low-intensity approach to the Ukraine conflict, staggers the pace of territorial acquisition in other parts of the post-Soviet space, and continues its subversive campaign inside Central and Eastern European political systems.

If European states are to respond to Russia's reintroduction of limited war by embracing the concept of local defense individually, much less adopting a preclusive-defense strategy as an alliance, they will need strong encouragement from the United States. While Washington cannot force NATO to respond to the new environment, there are things it can do to make this adaptation more likely.

To begin with, America should provide a clearer statement of its own strategy that places its requests for its allies to do more in local defense within the context of U.S. intentions and resources. At present, the widespread perception is that America is simply making it up as it goes along, trying to hold together the U.S.-led global system on an ad hoc basis with the same tools that it used in the past, except with occasional adjustments in geographic emphasis. The flat-footedness of the U.S. response to the invasion of Crimea, after years of asserting the strategic imperative of shifting attention to Asia, only deepened this impression. In such a context, and amid cuts into the

Whereas limited warfare went out of fashion in the West after Vietnam, Russia regards it as a central part of its military doctrine.

muscle tissue of America's own capabilities, requesting allies to spend more looks dangerously close to outsourcing responsibility for problems we ourselves cannot afford (and do not wish) to confront. Such an approach creates the opposite of incentives for local defense—it fuels a suspicion that "America is leaving" and that, rather than risking a hopeless defense on their own, vulnerable states would be better off avoiding actions that might antagonize the nearby aggressor (Russia). The perception of American disengagement, and thus of a weaker extended deterrent, will not stimulate exposed allies to engage in more serious efforts at local defense.

These impressions and tendencies can ultimately only be countered by having and implementing a workable strategy. NATO's Strategic Concept has ceased to carry the credibility for playing such a role. Washington can begin to address this problem by producing an umbrella concept that outlines the seriousness of new threats like limited war, states its resolve for countering them, and explains how U.S. and allied capabilities could plausibly be employed in tandem to ensure continued stability. Allies need to understand, in unambiguous terms, that while we may be cutting back, we also have a strategy for reshaping the U.S. military at a doctrinal and technological level that sustains stability in their region. It needs to be clear to them that the success of this strategy requires local defense on their part. An implicit bargain would include U.S. investments in upper-tier capabilities like naval, air and nuclear assets paired with local investments in conventional land power sufficiently robust to create local "no-go" zones until U.S. forces arrive. Such a bargain would need to be buttressed by the physical presence of American assets and manpower—small garrisons at the frontier to show U.S. commitment and make the use of its more mobile and lethal power credible.

Most importantly, the United States needs to figure out how to create the right incentives for allies to invest in local defense. It is one thing to tell states to do more for their own defense, as recent U.S. secretaries of defense have done again and again, and another to give them real incentives to create robust indigenous militaries and avoid free riding. It's not enough for states to be exposed to a threat, as advocates of "offshore balancing" have long argued; they must also know that they have a reasonable chance of success in pursuing the option of resistance. If NATO is going to persist in its current split into two tiers of the serious and the unserious, we might as well stack the incentives to make the former behavior profitable—and be explicit about it. Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty should remain the life insurance of a NATO country's security relationship with the United States—a safety net in the event of a catastrophic, full-scale assault on a member of the alliance. But, as we observed, Article 5, and the American extended deterrent that underpins it, is less credible and effective when dealing with a quick and limited incursion. Hence, the United States should devise a "matching" strategy—a kind of geopolitical 401(k): for those allies that spend a certain amount on

Using the analogy of a schoolyard bully, deterrence is the fear of a teacher's paddle; preclusion is equipping the weaker students with sets of brass knuckles.

local defense, we will "match" their efforts in the form of commitments or agreements *over and above* our commitment to extended deterrence under Article 5. This could be broadened at an alliance level, if member politics allow, to create a new clause in which the alliance's four largest economies agree to match the defense contributions of its four most geopolitically exposed members (e.g., Poland and the Baltic states) on some basis, whether through defense subsidies, technology sharing, access to sensitive weapons or troop contributions.

The "matching" approach increases the risk for those states that decide not to shore up their defenses. But, unlike a U.S. retrenchment that abandons allies to a more dangerous scenario, it also establishes clear rewards for those who decide to contribute in a meaningful way to their own security. An increased risk alone may tilt some frontier states toward the revisionist neighbor, Russia; the possibility of a reward restores the balance and gives a clear alternative to the local leaders. Further steps could include the offer of rebated surplus U.S. military equipment (artillery, tanks and fighters) to eastern NATO members, the creation of light frontier forces to give the Baltic states time to mobilize in the event of a crisis, and—over time—the creation of Swiss-style self-defense doctrines among exposed allies that would deter Russian aggression by driving up the costs of conflict at the local level.

Ultimately, the war in Ukraine demonstrates that NATO must find an effective way to deal with the revived threat of limited war. The West faces similar tactics from China in the South China Sea. Whatever form it takes, the key is to shift the focus from extended deterrence as a solution to all the alliance's security needs to a preclusive-defense mind-set that raises the costs of limited war, mainly by incentivizing increased investments in local defense. Such an approach would prioritize the strategic resilience and survivability of NATO's frontline states as the ultimate determinant of the alliance's survival. It would explicitly seek to alleviate these states' reemerging security dilemmas by both their own and other members' contributions in the full spirit of the North Atlantic Treaty while shifting intra-NATO requirements to match a profoundly altered threat landscape. Doing so would help to support the creation of a new defense posture that, while difficult to imagine in its details now, is indispensable for ensuring the relevance and survival of NATO in a new and in many ways more dangerous era. □

Europe's Peripheral Vision

By Milton Ezrati

It's too soon to pop the champagne corks. Europe, mired in gloom for years, still faces many high hurdles to resolve its crisis. Nonetheless, there are some auguries of prosperity that might invite a stockpiling of party hats and noisemakers. In December 2013, Ireland successfully emerged from its bailout, and Portugal followed this May. This verifiable progress represented a first for members of Europe's struggling periphery. But this news should only lift spirits so high. If these financial gains make anything clear, it is the need now to go beyond budget control to more fundamental and structural economic reform. Ireland's finance minister, Michael Noonan, summed up the situation well, characterizing his nation's emergence from the bailout as a "milestone," not the "end of the road." To secure their economic and financial future, Ireland, Portugal, the rest of Europe's periphery and France (which increasingly resembles the periphery) will have to reform long-standing labor, product and tax practices, and even industrial structures, to promote rather than impede organic growth. These nations must do nothing less than reshape the political-economic models under which they have operated for decades.

Such structural reform has huge significance. Success or failure on this front will effectively determine power relationships throughout the euro zone and the European Union. German dominance, even hegemony, will expand if France and the nations of Europe's beleaguered periphery fail to enact fundamental economic reform. Without it, they will remain economically weak, financially fragile, dependent on Germany and subject to its lead. With effective reform, however, France and the periphery have a chance to regain economic vitality and shed the need for German support. These are the options. Ironically, all the initiative lies with the weaker countries. Germany is bound to the union. It will have to play the hand France and Europe's periphery deal it. They will determine whether Berlin gains dominance or whether Europe can restore its former balance.

For all that remains to be done, Dublin, Lisbon and Brussels are entitled to some rejoicing. In 2009, Ireland and Portugal were insolvent. Each country's ongoing budget deficit ran at more than 10 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP). They had to pay double-digit interest rates to borrow on global capital markets, an expense that intensified their financial strains. The official bailout lifeline, €85 billion for Ireland and €78 billion for Portugal, bought time for needed budget reform. It also enforced it. Unlike in the ad hoc arrangements made for Greece, Europe was much better organized when it moved

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on to Ireland and Portugal. Germany and other stronger nations pooled their resources in what they called the European Stability Mechanism, which then, in concert with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Central Bank (ECB), supported the bailouts. This troika, as it is called, offered subsidized financing in a series of tranches, each conditioned on certain budget and deficit milestones. And the process can claim success. Now, Ireland expects deficits at 4.7 percent of GDP in 2014 and Portugal at 4.0 percent. The improvement has allowed both governments to return to capital markets, where investors have shown considerable interest in their bonds, allowing them to borrow at significantly reduced interest rates.

Gratifying as this success is on one level, it has undeniably come at a terrible cost. The budget austerity demanded by the troika has driven both Ireland and Portugal into deep recessions, especially coming, as the bailout demands did, while these economies were still reeling from the 2008–2009 financial crisis. Unemployment in Portugal remains a heartbreaking 14.3 percent of the workforce. In Ireland, unemployment, having peaked at 15 percent of the workforce in 2012, has improved to about 11.6 percent, but more from mass emigration than economic gains. Worse, ongoing austerity threatens to keep these economies in recession or stagnation at best. Indeed, continued austerity runs the risk of creating a vicious cycle in which the budget restraint so depresses the economy that, despite the best efforts of the authorities, slow growth and additional demands for social services enlarge budget deficits, eliciting more austerity that causes more recession, more budget problems and so on in a downward spiral.

What makes matters even worse is that there is little room for fiscal latitude. Even now, as these countries emerge from troika controls, Ireland and Portugal know that promoting growth and employment through expansive fiscal policies, as France has suggested on occasion, is out of the question. Though they have regained control over their ongoing budget situations, they cannot so easily shed the legacy of past profligacy. Because this legacy has created suspicion among investors and left capital markets with a huge overhang of their debt, the slightest hint of a turn away from austerity now would panic investors. The same constraint applies throughout Europe's periphery, France included. Any attempts to use expansive policies would quickly cool investor interest, drive up these nations' borrowing costs and prompt credit-rating agencies to downgrade their national bonds (as they have already done with France's), raising borrowing costs still more. Finding it increasingly difficult to borrow at reasonable rates, these countries would have to return to austerity or they would quickly find themselves back in a fiscal-financial crisis of the sort from which they have just begun to emerge.

Confronted with such constraints, the countries of Europe's periphery must either accept the unpalatable option of ongoing recession or find some other way to promote growth. This is where fundamental reform comes in. At other times in other nations, efforts to improve economic ef-

ficiency, flexibility, innovation and competitiveness have promoted growth and employment even under strict budget controls. The ability to return to well-grounded growth and financial health has both its own obvious appeal and the added attraction of freeing these nations from their present dependence on Germany. Still, such structural reform will face high political hurdles. Many powerful groups in these countries have vested interests in the old policies and practices and will inevitably resist the necessary changes. Established businesses, many of which receive subsidies or otherwise dominate the status quo, will fight any effort to promote competition or efficiency. Union officials will resist labor-market reform for fear that it would detract from their power and influence. Government bureaucracies will fight the need to change their presumptions and biases.

If such reform faces resistance, these nations certainly do not lack for guidance on what they need to do. In fact, Germany's own experience offers one proven blueprint for economic revitalization. Just over ten years ago, Germany, too, had an unsustainable political-economic model. Its industry was inflexible, becoming less productive and competitive. Employment policy discouraged work. Unemployment, not surprisingly, had risen toward 12 percent of the workforce. The *Economist* fairly called Germany "the sick man of Europe" in 1999. In response, Peter Hartz, personnel director of the Volkswagen Group, offered a series of bold proposals in 2003. To his immense credit, then chancellor Gerhard Schröder embraced them and, against all the recidivist inclinations of his own party, launched a series of successful reforms that have come to be called the Hartz Reforms or, as Schröder preferred to call them, "Agenda 2010."

These changes, first and foremost, aimed to encourage hiring by making it easier to fire excess or incompetent employees. Previously, the time and expense needed to terminate an employment contract had made German businesses reluctant to hire even promising employees. In a similar vein, Schröder's reforms liberalized rules on part-time and temporary employment. To put labor resources at the disposal of a revitalizing economy, his policies sought to encourage work by cutting taxes and emphasizing the training of young workers and the retraining of displaced workers. He reduced the attractions of welfare and unemployment by consolidating the two benefits into a basic living standard, widening the range of jobs considered acceptable by the authorities and shortening the time people could collect unemployment from three years to one year, or eighteen months for those over fifty-five.

The reforms took time to have an effect. In the interim, Schröder lost the chancellorship to Angela Merkel in 2005. Now, with the Hartz Reforms widely acknowledged to have revitalized Germany's economy, Merkel is enjoying the payoff. Today, Germany, unlike much of Europe, is growing. Even in the midst of this crisis, its economy expanded in real terms by 4.0 percent in 2010 and 3.3 percent in 2011. The weight of Europe's crisis slowed growth to 0.7 percent in 2012 and 0.4 percent in 2013, but there is still widespread confidence in the fundamental strength of the German economy as a result of the reforms. German unemployment stands at 6.5 percent of the workforce, less than half Europe's average and its lowest rate since reunification in 1990. Youth unemployment, a scourge throughout most of the rest of the Continent, stands at a twenty-year low in Germany. The difference is especially evident among older workers as well. Some 60 percent of Germans between fifty-five and sixty-four work today, well up from 40 percent in 2003. Meanwhile, Germany's

budget is balanced and its debt is falling, both absolutely and as a percentage of GDP.

Swedish, Finnish and Danish experiences should bolster confidence in the power of such structural change. Having followed Berlin's lead, all these countries have shown better economic performance and stronger national finances than France and Europe's periphery. Between 2009 and 2013, these three Scandinavian countries grew in real terms at annual rates of 3.0, 1.0 and 0.6 percent, respectively, hardly a powerful performance by longer-term historical standards but vastly better than the outright declines registered in Spain, Italy and France, for example. What's more, the Scandinavian countries' growth, by raising tax revenues and curtailing demands for social services, has put their public finances on a much firmer footing. They have reduced their budget deficits, in most cases to within the EU's acceptable parameter of 3 percent of GDP, and so they have kept their outstanding debt burdens lower relative to GDP than elsewhere.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) provides another authoritative source of reform guidance. Drawing on the experience of all its members, both inside Europe and outside it, the OECD has developed a thorough review of the structural reforms that, in its own words, have a proven ability to "enhance long-run productivity and growth performance." The organization's research, presented in a series of studies under the title *Going for Growth,* professes to tell nations not just "where to go" but also "how to get there."

The wealth of analysis and recommendations in the OECD's book-sized reports go beyond the scope of an article like this. In summary, it is fair to say that much of its work resembles the Hartz Reforms. On labor-market policies, for instance, the OECD would encourage hiring by making firing easier and less costly. Similarly, the OECD identifies great potential gains from efforts to reduce the cost of labor by cutting payroll taxes and by decentralizing wage bargaining, especially moving from national contracts to company-by-company negotiations. Less a part of Germany's reform but identified by the OECD as significant are efforts to increase competition within domestic markets by, for instance, removing internal protections for inefficient, established firms and sweeping away regulations that impede entry by new competitors. Pointing to successful reforms made in Norway, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands, the OECD also recommends a simpler tax code that reduces statutory rates and makes up the revenue difference by sweeping away subsidies and applying taxes more broadly throughout each nation's individual and business populations.

Still another reform blueprint emerges from the efforts of Italy's former prime minister, Mario Monti. He was well aware that every nation in the OECD's study that adopted such reforms grew faster and achieved lower rates of unemployment and a better fiscal balance than those that failed to reform. He was even more acutely aware of the need for an alternative way to promote growth while Europe's periphery remained unable to give up budget austerity. Structural reforms, he made clear, were the only option for Italy and for Europe's periphery in general. Though diplomacy no doubt prevented him from promoting such reforms explicitly as a way to shed dependence on Germany and so avoid German dominance, he surely must have thought about it.

Monti set out a reform agenda for Italy in 2011. Though he never drew the parallel explicitly, it looked remarkably like the Hartz Reforms. He began with an effort to liberalize Italian labor markets, making

them more flexible by easing rules on hiring and firing, allowing wage negotiations to proceed company by company instead of on a national level and giving management more freedom to set work schedules. He also looked to alter unemployment compensation in order to encourage displaced workers to seek training and return to the workforce. Though such labor-reform efforts have failed in Italy's past, Monti was able to use the exigencies of Europe's crisis to move the government to action. The progress he made, though far from complete, was remarkable, especially given the powerful interests vested in those old labor rules. The last two times Italy tried to relax its restrictive labor laws, in 1999 and again in 2002, the Red Brigades paramilitary organization murdered the leading lights of reform. This time, not even all the unions opposed the changes.

Monti had to leave his efforts incomplete, however, because, for reasons unrelated to reform, his coalition collapsed and Italy had to call new elections in 2012. Monti, never a politician, could not prevail. Yet while he was making his biggest push in 2011 and early 2012, these sorts of reforms did gain adherents elsewhere in Europe's beleaguered periphery. Spain, Portugal and even Greece pushed similar changes. Clearly, the fiscal-financial crisis served as a considerable lever with which to move entrenched opposition aside. The OECD analysts behind the *Going for Growth* series noted a marked uptick in interest during that time, especially from Spain and Portugal. But lately, enthusiasm about such progrowth reform has ebbed, no doubt because the intensity of the crisis has also ebbed, though no government to this point has substantively unwound its former reforms.

France would seem to be an exception. Though the intensity of the crisis has dissipated there, too, Paris faces an alternative source of pressure. All three major credit-rating agencies have downgraded France's

It is increasingly obvious that the EU never directly served the people of Europe. It has always only worked through the separate member nations.

standing. Since the agencies have encouraged structural change as a remedy for France's troubles, Paris, unlike the others, has felt obliged at the very least to increase its conversation on the subject. Paris began to talk up reform last spring and even implemented rule changes at the time that at least gestured at the available reform models. In 2014, President François Hollande has again talked of reform in what he called a probusiness agenda. Acknowledging that Paris cannot redistribute if there is no wealth, he vowed to remove the burdens on business. As per much of the reform advice, he promised in particular to slash payroll taxes and wasteful government spending.

So far, however, French efforts have been more apparent than real. Admittedly, Paris has made it marginally easier to hire and fire and has made unemployment compensation less attractive, but it has done little to help displaced workers gain additional skills for new jobs. It talks about reducing the cost of labor, but, last spring, rather than lighten overall employment tax burdens, Paris merely shifted them from direct payroll taxes to the value-added tax. And Paris has only offered selective tax relief. More recent statements promised more earnest efforts to cut taxes and pay for the lost revenue with spending cuts, but those statements notably lacked specifics. Nor has Paris done much to promote competition. Instead of encouraging efficiency by easing barriers to entry into French industry, Paris so far has left all its old regulations, subsidies and special accommodations in place. Its substitute is a scheme of subsidized financing for firms in what it calls the "sectors of the future." Hardly the "competition" the OECD and the rating agencies have recommended, this is an extension of government control and government subsidies for its favorites. Meanwhile, the present government has raised individual taxes and reversed many of the small reforms of its predecessor.

The way it looks right now, France and Europe's periphery will fail to embrace structural reform sufficiently. Unless they accelerate their efforts, they, stuck as they are with their budget constraints, will face ongoing recession or at best economic stagnation. They will consequently remain dependent on Germany and so increasingly be subject to Berlin's influence. Perhaps if the euro zone were really a single coherent whole, as its elite so earnestly claims, weakness in the periphery would not lead so directly to rising German power. In such a world, financial and economic burdens would be more diffused and ambiguous, making it easier to argue that the burdens, wherever they fell, served the union's general needs. But as it is, Europe is not yet such a coherent whole. Burdens and requests for help are associated with nations. And the citizens of those nations doing the lifting will naturally demand compensation in one way or another for bearing those burdens. Such demands will manifest themselves in claims for greater control and leadership.

This crucial difference between elite dreams and reality became painfully clear in an otherwise insignificant incident late last year. A group of smaller German banks,

It is cheaper for Germany to support the periphery than it would be to support itself were the periphery to fail.

called *Sparkassen*, complained to the ECB about its monetary policy. The decision to hold interest rates low, the banks argued, helps Europe's periphery at the expense of German savers. What they said is true, of course. The deeply indebted periphery benefits from low rates, as Germany's earnest savers suffer low returns on their assets. German media picked up the story and, knowing the popularity of the message, broadcast it widely. What most highlighted the contradictions in Europe's reality was the way the ECB's president, Mario Draghi, responded. Instead of dealing with the *Sparkassen*'s argument, he chided them for their "nationalistic undertone," insisting that the members of the ECB Governing Council are "not German, neither French nor Spaniards nor Italian" but instead "are Europeans," and the ECB is "acting for the euro zone as a whole." By clumsily pretending that these burdens and benefits did not fall along national lines, Draghi only managed to emphasize how few "Europeans" there really are, at least as he uses the term, and how many Germans and Spaniards remain, one to carry the burden to help the other.

This is just the latest illustration of how this fiscal-financial crisis has forced Europe's national reality repeatedly to break through the illusions of elite opinion. Before the crisis, it was easy to pretend that Brussels or the ECB spoke for a coherent whole of "Europeans." But as the crisis developed and burdens and needs clearly fell along national lines, it became increasingly obvious that the EU never directly served the people of Europe. It has always only worked through the separate member nations. The best it has ever been able to do is to ask the governments of its stronger members to accept disadvantages for the sake of the union, which they do only to the extent that it suits their longer-term national interests. In this crisis, that has effectively meant German support for the weaker nations of Europe's periphery. As the burdens of the crisis have intensified, those asked to do the carrying, the Germans, have increasingly pushed their national government to demand something in return for their cooperation and sacrifice. As long as France and the periphery continue to need German help, those demands will continue to grow.

It might seem that Germany could relieve the strain simply by walking away from the union. But it has stayed—and will stay—despite the burdens, less out of loyalty to Europe (though doubtless there is some of that) and more because Berlin sees more cost in leaving than in staying. Both the political leadership in Berlin and financial leadership in Frankfurt know how severely a dissolution of the union or the common currency would impinge upon Germany. Given the amount of the periphery's debt held by German banks, such an event could actually threaten the country's entire financial system. According to recent reports, German banks hold €300 billion in Spanish, Greek, Portuguese, Italian and Irish obligations. A loss of half this magnitude would so curtail liquidity and credit in the German economy that it would drive it into a deep recession, causing much more

harm than even a much larger burden of rescues and bailouts. Clearly, it is cheaper for Germany to support the periphery than it would be to support itself were the periphery to fail.

Germany's leaders can also see how the country gains economically from the common currency. If Germany were alone, its relative success would by now have pushed the price of its deutsche mark up to levels that would make it difficult for its industry to compete globally. Tied to the euro, however, with its weaker members, the currency in which German producers trade is hardly likely to rise as far as an independent deutsche mark would, sparing them those competitive disadvantages. Further, the euro offers German industry special advantages within the euro zone. Because Germany joined the euro when the deutsche mark was cheap relative to German economic fundamentals, the common currency has effectively enshrined a competitive pricing edge for German producers across the entire zone, especially compared to producers in Europe's periphery nations, which joined the euro when their respective currencies were stronger. OECD data show that these currency differences initially gave German producers a 6 percent pricing advantage over their Greek, Spanish and Irish competitors, an edge that has actually expanded during the hard times of the crisis to between 15 and 25 percent. On this basis, Germany might well owe the periphery support.

But if national interests will hold Germany in the union, Berlin will still demand compensation for the support it provides. It is already making such demands. Chancellor Angela Merkel has proceeded diplomatically and respectfully, but nevertheless Berlin increasingly has taken control. A recent check to Merkel's proposal for more centralized control of the euro zone's economic policies was noteworthy mostly because such resistance to German prescriptions has become so rare. Otherwise, Berlin has dictated the rules for the use of the zone's stabilization fund. It has insisted on German-style bank supervision before it will allow European (meaning German) funds to help troubled financial institutions in Spain and elsewhere in Europe's periphery. It has blocked the issue of pan-European bonds, insisting, before even considering them, on ways to guard German wealth. One Brussels bureaucrat summarized the situation for the *Economist* by saying that when the Germans change their position, "the kaleidoscope shifts as other countries line up behind them." Now, elements in Germany are trying to influence ECB policy. Merkel has had to make many of these demands on behalf of her constituents even while playing the good European. She will have to continue in this way as she pursues further European diplomacy. It is the only way she can get Germany to cooperate, though it is an open question whether she will try to influence the ECB.

In theory, the whole union could come unwrapped. But it's an implausible outcome. The European Union may not be back yet as a healthy economic player. But it's also not going away. If real reforms are implemented—always a big if—then before too long it may be time to take the champagne and party hats out of storage. □

The New Interventionism

By David C. Hendrickson

When he ran for president in 2008, Barack Obama promised a new era of restraint in U.S. foreign policy. And in some respects, he has indeed been more restrained than his predecessor. But those looking for a reconsideration of America's universalist ambitions have been disappointed by Obama's record. Where it has mattered, there has been no retreat from the revolutionary ends to which George W. Bush committed the United States in his second inaugural address in 2005. Thus Obama (after much agonizing) threw in his lot with those seeking to overthrow Libya's Muammar el-Qaddafi by force. Thus Obama called for Bashar al-Assad to leave, encouraged "allied" efforts to overthrow him and made negotiations to end the civil war in Syria dependent on his departure. And thus the Obama administration (with the president himself curiously in the shade) played a key role in supporting the Maidan's overthrow of Ukraine's elected president, Viktor Yanukovych.

Liberal interventionists, neoconservatives and State Department officials insist that it is America's duty to support those making revolution in other countries. The United States has often been attracted to that policy since the Reagan administration, though it was only under the younger Bush that it reached full flower. While the public rightly grimaces over the consequences, there is little appreciation by the elites of how unprecedented these doctrines are, both in international law and in the American diplomatic tradition. Given the ill consequences following the breakage of states across the Middle East and now in Ukraine, the time is ripe for reconsidering these newfangled views. As a method of promoting liberty, the strategy of overthrow is deeply counterproductive. The old American lexicon taught that anarchy bred tyranny, whereas the new school teaches that the revolutionary destruction of the old order will produce democracy. The new interventionism has also thrown out the old rulebook for dealing with civil war, substituting a set of policies that in practice provides Western powers with unlimited discretion to intervene in civil conflicts throughout the world.

In the legal order birthed by World War II and the United Nations, the right of external intervention was sharply circumscribed; preventive war, in any normal definition of the term, was made illegal. A right of humanitarian intervention might be inferred from the vast discretion given to the Security Council by the UN Charter, but no one thought of inferring that until many years had passed. It contradicted the dominant emphasis in the charter on state

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sovereignty. The right of self-determination in the charter put the colonial powers on notice that their imperial rule was coming to an end, but states were not deemed to have forfeited their right to put down internal revolts. On the contrary, the state was seen as an indispensable source of order.

When circumstances subsequently arose that seemed to call for humanitarian intervention—as with Bangladesh, Cambodia and Uganda—the intervening states (India, Vietnam and Tanzania) invariably appealed to their right of national self-defense, not humanity, in justifying their military movements across borders. That was because they thought the humanitarian claim would not cut it in the international community, not because they had poor legal advice. Their actions did not cause a change in norms; that came later, with the end of the Cold War and the widespread call that the "sole superpower" should not hesitate to respond, by military force if necessary, to acts that shocked the conscience of mankind. The traditional prohibition against intervention that was consecrated in 1919 and reaffirmed in 1945 was then greatly relaxed, if not entirely abandoned. A whole host of interventions were subsequently pursued or proposed in the next twenty-five years that took, amid the plenitude of justifications offered, the most convenient route to the sea.

The grandest departure from the legalist paradigm took the form of the Bush Doctrine, with its warrant for preventive war and democracy by jackboot. A large portion of the world rejected Bush's doctrine, but they did not get a voice in the matter, much less a veto. The United States did what it wanted.

A second hole in the legalist paradigm arose from a revived doctrine of humanitarian intervention, now called the "responsibility to protect" (R2P), which asserted a duty to intervene to rescue populations imperiled by gross humanitarian abuses. This view, as it is presented by the R2P myrmidons, is happily cleansed of all special national interests in theory, but deeply bound up with them in practice. Obama is more inclined to this idea than he is to preventive war; in America, R2P has its home on the left and is strongly urged upon him by voices within his own administration. But R2P, since it authorizes uses of force in anticipation of atrocities, as in Libya, has a strongly preventive rationale as well. In the authoritative version of R2P, endorsed by the UN General Assembly and Security Council, external action still depends upon Security Council approval, but that restraint is not accepted in American opinion.

Of course, many of these expansions in what is considered a just war have been contested at home and abroad. The American public is especially opposed to interventions that are purely humanitarian in character; it wants (but has never really gotten) a demonstration of the national interests at stake. In official circles, however, most of these criteria for intervention are seen as legitimate, even if exercised on a pick-and-choose basis, and with greater or lesser degrees of enthusiasm in any particular instance.

The sovereign state still remains the foundation of the international legal order, but there have been so many exceptions and provisos to its customary protections as to leave ample room for intervention whenever states wish to do so. At least, that is true of the West. A much stricter set of rules in practice binds the non-Western powers. Such are the advantages of hegemony.

It is the conjunction of the right of revolution and the presumptive duty of external support for imperiled populations that needs special attention. The interplay between the two is an important

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phenomenon in its own right, as these doctrines—so potent together—are often considered separately. The interplay between the two is often ignored, but undoubtedly the expectation of external support has recently played a critical role in triggering rebellion.

To understand this issue properly, we need to go back to some long-standing debates in the tradition of reflection on just war, that sphere of thought dedicated to determining when the use of force is just or unjust. The thought of Hugo Grotius, the putative founder of modern international law, is the most profitable place to begin. During the Thirty Years' War, in his *Rights of War and Peace*, Grotius formulated what to our ears must seem to be a surprising doctrine. Grotius made one of the first great statements of the principle of humanitarian intervention, but he simultaneously forbade a population to rebel. The suffering masses had to sit out oppression lest they invite anarchy, it appeared from his curious reasoning, but foreign princes might intervene to succor those selfsame masses when found in awful distress. You might think he had it backwards, and the weight of subsequent opinion would agree. Eighteenth-century publicists reversed the Grotian resolution—they gave greater latitude to the right of revolution, less to external intervention.

Two things are notable about this history: everybody saw the questions as related, and nobody justified both together. The reason, evidently, is that allowing both the right of rebellion and the duty of external intervention would imperil domestic and international order. What could possibly be the rule of limitation if everything could suffice for war?

Grotius opened the door to humanitarian intervention, but he denied the popular right of resistance to an oppressive ruler. In an age of religious warfare and widespread slaughter, his reasons had weight. Grotius was not actually as strict on the question of internal rebellion as his hostile critics, like Rousseau, have alleged; he carved out several important exceptions to his seemingly blanket prohibition against rebellion, such as when a king breaks a contract with his people, which were probably intended to justify the Dutch Revolt against Spain. But Grotius did look with horror on the anarchy that would arise in contests over sovereignty, and he was not alone in that conviction. He was followed by Hobbes, who erected a whole system around the same sentiment. Hersch Lauterpacht, the distinguished jurist and legal scholar, noted:

> This frowning upon rebellion and the favouring of authority were in accordance with what were considered to be the essential needs of the times. The horrors of civil war were foremost in the minds of political thinkers. There was not, in this respect, much difference between Hobbes and Bacon on the one side, and Hooker, Gentilis, and Bodin on the other. They discussed in detail the right of resistance; they all rejected it. So, perhaps with less justification, did Pufendorf. At a time of general uncertainty and of loosening of traditional ties of society, national and international, order was looked upon as the paramount dictate of reason.

That view changed in the eighteenth century. Grotius came under much criticism. Locke recognized a right of revolution, as did, of course, the American Founders. Even those who located sovereignty in the people, however, cabined the right of revolution by restricting it to situations in which rebellion amounted to a sort of absolute necessity, which is how the American revolutionaries of 1776 portrayed their own struggle. They sought not to overthrow the existing order but to preserve their ancient liberties. Once independence was declared, they sought membership within the society of states, not defiance of its strictures. The American appeal to "thirteen solemn and sacred Compacts" and to a liberty founded "upon immutable statutes and tutelary laws" made their revolution fundamentally different from that of France. The French Revolution smashed the icons of legitimacy and blew away the past. The subsequent spiral of hostility between revolution and counterrevolution sparked a twenty-five-year war.

In the aftermath of the French Revolution, the revolutionary idea fell into disrepute. The thinking world did not relish the demons that revolutionary change had unleashed in France. One American, Edward Everett, summarized in 1834 the attitude of the generation that survived the frenzied wars of the revolution:

> The atrocious, the unexampled, the ungodly abuses of the reign of terror have made the very name of the French Revolution hateful to mankind. The blood chills, the flesh creeps, the hair stands on end, at the recital of its horrors; and no slight degree of the odium they occasion is unavoidably reflected on all who had any agency in bringing it on. The subsequent events in Europe have also involved the French Revolution in a deep political unpopularity. It is unpopular in Great Britain, in the rest of Europe, in America, in France itself.

Everett, the quintessential voice of New England Whiggery, went on to declare that the French Revolution was inevitable given the iniquities of the old regime. Still, in this era of disenchantment, observers looked askance at violent revolution as any sort of model of reform and enlightenment, even in republican America.

Europe's "springtime of nations" in 1848 elicited a tremendous gush of approval in the United States—President James K. Polk commended Germany for seeking to emulate America's experiment in federal union. When spring turned to fall and reaction set in, Americans were horrified. What to do? The vast majority displayed no inclination to intervene with force, but even those who scorned an entirely isolationist policy were careful, as in the days of old, to consider the right of revolution together with the question of foreign involvement. In a paper prepared with some like-minded fellows, Abraham Lincoln took a fairly advanced view of the matter, affirming in ringing tones the rights of the subject nationalities of Europe to overthrow their rulers but also insisting that "it is the duty of our government to neither foment, nor assist, such revolutions in other governments." Toward the actions of the Russian government in Hungary, in their brutal suppression of that nation's bid for independence from Austria, Lincoln took the view later adopted by John Stuart Mill: Russian actions were illegitimate and gave rise to a right (but not really a duty) of counterintervention.

Lincoln declined to depart from America's own "cherished principles of nonintervention" in this case, but he pointed to the logic that would subsequently be adopted when the noninterventionist disposition was ultimately overturned in

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the twentieth century. In essence, that was to see aggression as a fundamental threat to the legal order and to posit the necessity of counterintervention if the legal order was to be salvaged from certain ruin. But Lincoln's thinking on this question also displayed a conservative bias toward order. He conceded to the Southern states, for example, the natural right of revolution under unbearable oppression, but also denied that secession from the government could be a legal remedy under the Constitution.

Like the older writers on the law of nations, Lincoln was aware of the potentially incendiary character of revolution. He laid down a strict duty of nonintervention on the part of outside powers. He was emphatic that outsiders were not to foment revolutions elsewhere. In this respect, Lincoln followed Jefferson and the widespread American consensus on these points. That consensus differed radically from the liberationist doctrines that France proclaimed in 1792 in a universal war to sweep despotism from Europe.

The conception that Lincoln held in the mid-nineteenth century is not the one the United States holds now. On the contrary, today the United States has fomented and assisted—indeed, often played a starring role in—a fair number of such revolutions. It has learned that to make omelets, you must break eggs. From a self-consciously conservative power in the early years of the Cold War, dedicated to containment as a middle path between rollback and surrender, the United States has fully emerged as a revolutionary power in the twenty-first century. No sooner were Iraq and Afghanistan put on the back burner than Libya, Syria and Ukraine flared up, and in each case the United States supported the side that wanted to overturn an existing government by violent means.

One feature of this giddy revolutionary fever is especially remarkable. A large part of the identity of the West in the twentieth century consisted of its justified aversion to the consequences of revolution, as they played out in Russia (1917), China (1949) and Iran (1979). All these venues featured plenty of hair-raising episodes that made the prospect of revolution as big a downer for the Cold War generation as it had been for Everett. During most of the Cold War, America was concerned with shoring up despotic allies, not throwing them out, and in its own mind it was often seeking balance with, rather than domination of, the Soviet adversary. Partly due to the memory of revolution's rocky road, it supported order without a guilty conscience.

The experience of 1989 had the effect of pushing these traditional images of revolution into the shade, awakening the idea that what was coming to be called "peaceful revolution" would make further inroads just about everywhere. What had formerly connoted the seizure of power in anarchic conditions, producing totalitarianism, was now suddenly symbolized by enormous but peaceful crowds collectively discovering the sheer force of "people power" against autocrats. Because the Russians surrendered their empire in the West with hardly a shot, because Ferdinand Marcos fell to a jubilant

crowd, because F. W. de Klerk relented, it came to be the expectation that revolution would be peaceful. 1989 ensured that we would make it our mission to support it.

Certainly, violent methods have sometimes brought about good results in human affairs. In the abstract, it would be difficult to completely disavow a right of revolution, but we also need to be aware that, concretely, revolution can mean a human disaster so immense that nothing good can possibly come out of it. The breakages of the state in Iraq, Libya and Syria are all testaments to that danger. They have loosed anarchy upon the world.

Even with a reluctant public mood, the United States remains a genuine revolutionary force, preaching a commitment to "democratic revolution" that in theory celebrates peace but in practice consists of lighting fires that it doesn't know how to put out. The conjunction of its two legitimating doctrines—nearly unprecedented in international history and repudiated by the most eminent jurists in the Western tradition—has had an incendiary effect on the international system.

Such hyperactivity, under such a revolutionary spell, is dangerous to American security, because it keeps us in blood rivalry with nations and terrorists across the globe. It is also hypocritical, because it endorses methods of political change—by huge mobs or armed rebels—that we would never sanction at home. The *Wall Street Journal* will cheer a million-man march in Ukraine but would have you arrested for littering if you dropped a gum wrapper in Zuccotti Park. The U.S. and Western preference for unruly crowds overturning constitutional procedures is strictly for export, not for home consumption.

There are precedents for a reconsideration of the doctrines examined here. Notes historian Richard Tuck, summarizing the sober outlook of the writers who came after the religious wars: "Scared by what their continent had done to itself in the name of humanitarian intervention—for we must remember that this was how the Wars of Religion and the Thirty Years War appeared to their participants," they became yet more restrictive in the latitude they gave to external intervention. Tuck calls that new outlook isolationism, but it might as well be known as prudence. Contemplating the mangled bodies and deranged minds produced by war, especially civil war, many thinkers continued to affirm that the maintenance of civil order was a paramount dictate of reason. It is by no means obvious that they were wrong. □

A Tale of Two AUMFs

By Robert Golan-Vilella

In June, the jihadist organization now calling itself the Islamic State staged a stunning series of operations to capture large swathes of territory in northern Iraq. In the span of just a few days, the militants seized Mosul and Tikrit and continued marching south. Some observers feared that the Iraqi state itself might collapse completely.

Washington quickly scrambled to try to reverse these gains and bolster the Iraqi government. It sent multiple teams of military advisers to Iraq and positioned more intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance units in the area. The Department of Defense also announced that it was considering conducting air strikes against the Islamic State in order to break the group's momentum.

Among those in the U.S. government who must have been scrambling in the aftermath of this advance were the Obama administration's lawyers. In a strange turn of events, there were in fact three separate legal rationales that could have potentially served as the basis for using military force in Iraq. The first was the president's power as commander in chief under Article II of the Constitution. The second was the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) passed in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. And the third was the 2002 AUMF that authorized the Iraq War—a war that President Barack Obama had already declared over years before.

At a meeting with congressional leaders in mid-June, Obama reportedly told those present that he did not believe the military options that he was considering required any further congressional authorization. Several senior congressional figures of both parties—including Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and John Thune, the GOP's third-ranking senator—all suggested publicly that they agreed with this assessment. Jack Goldsmith, a Harvard law professor and former head of the Office of Legal Counsel, likewise argued that same month that "the 2002 Iraq AUMF almost certainly authorizes the president to use force today in Iraq."

The two AUMFs and the conflicts they underwrote have played an outsized role in the past thirteen years of American foreign policy. Yet both pieces of legislation have also evolved in deeply problematic ways since their passage. One has served as the basis for a conflict surrounded by such a degree of secrecy that many basic facts concerning its scope remain unknown. The other, passed to authorize a war that many Americans would come to think was over, lapsed into disuse and was overlooked by all but a few—but still stayed on the books, with the potential to provide the legal grounds for a future, renewed war in Iraq. Together they tell a story of dangerous drift.

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The 2001 AUMF was passed by both houses of Congress with only a single "no" vote between them on September 14, and signed into law by President George W. Bush on September 18. Its central clause gives the president the power to

> use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.

Today, the legislation is understood to authorize force against the Taliban, Al Qaeda and their "associated forces." It has been used as the legal basis for the war in Afghanistan, the continued detention of prisoners at Guantánamo Bay, and the targeted-killing campaign that the United States has conducted in Pakistan, Yemen and elsewhere.

The Obama administration's public statements on the scope of the 2001 AUMF have often been vague, but they suggest that its interpretation of the law is quite expansive. At a May 16, 2013, hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator John McCain asked Robert Taylor, the acting general counsel of the Department of Defense, whether the AUMF could "be read to authorize lethal force against al Qaeda's associated forces in additional countries where they are now present, such as Somalia, Libya, and Syria." Taylor replied, "On the domestic law side, yes." At the same hearing, Senator Lindsey Graham asked if the president had the authority to "put boots on the ground" in Yemen or the Congo, and Michael Sheehan, the assistant secretary of defense for special operations and low-intensity conflict, answered, "Yes, sir." Sheehan later attempted to revise this answer, saying, "When I said that he did have the authority to put boots on the ground in Yemen or in the Congo, I was not necessarily referring to that under the AUMF." But he never stated explicitly that the AUMF would *not* provide the president with that authority, or clarified what the alternative source of authority would be.

Adding to the confusion is the fact that the administration has refused to tell the public the names of the groups that it considers to be covered under the 2001 AUMF. A Pentagon spokesman explained the rationale for this in July 2013, telling *ProPublica* that "because elements that might be considered 'associated forces' can build credibility by being listed as such by the United States, we have classified the list. We cannot afford to inflate these organizations that rely on violent extremist ideology to strengthen their ranks." As a result, the U.S. government is in the bizarre situation of considering itself to be at war with a series of organizations while at the same time refusing to tell its own citizens exactly who those enemies are.

The story of the Iraq AUMF is more straightforward. After its passage in October 2002, it served as the legal basis for a disastrous war in which the United States overthrew Saddam Hussein's regime

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in early 2003, and then spent nearly nine years attempting to build a new Iraqi state and defend it against insurgents. American military troops completed their withdrawal from Iraq in December 2011. Obama, who had previously touted his early opposition to the war while running for president and campaigned on a promise to end it, declared the war over that same month. However, the Iraq AUMF itself was never actually repealed. And so the 2002 legislation was still in effect when the Islamic State began its march across northern Iraq this summer. As a result, when Washington found itself weighing the use of military force to try to stop this advance, the law was left as an option for the Obama administration to use in order to save it from having to go back to Congress for a new authorization.

There have been long-running attempts to repeal or modify both of the AUMFs. In the case of the Iraq War, that effort began in late 2011 as U.S. troops were finishing their drawdown and leaving the country. Then, Senator Rand Paul introduced an amendment to the annual National Defense Authorization Act that would have repealed the Iraq AUMF. The Senate rejected his amendment by a vote of sixty-seven to thirty.

Earlier this year, Paul renewed this effort, introducing a new bill to repeal the law along with Democratic senators Ron Wyden and Kirsten Gillibrand. This time, however, he also had the support of the White House. "The Administration supports the repeal of the Iraq AUMF since it is no longer used for any U.S. Government activities," said National Security Council spokeswoman Caitlin Hayden. Yet Paul's bill never received a vote in the Senate. In the House, as the White House was weighing the possibility of conducting air strikes against the Islamic State this June, Representative Barbara Lee (who had previously cast the lone "no" vote against the 2001 AUMF) led a push to ward off this possibility by cutting off all funding in support of the Iraq AUMF—but she too was unsuccessful.

The debate over the 2001 AUMF has been much more sustained. This should not be particularly surprising. Unlike the Iraq AUMF—which, as Hayden said, has not been used as the basis for any military activities since the end of 2011—the 2001 AUMF continues to be used extensively, from Afghanistan to Yemen to Guantánamo Bay. It is thus a natural target for criticism from those who disapprove of many of the actions the United States is taking in the "war on terror." The *New York Times* editorial board warned in March 2013 that the authorization was becoming "the basis for a perpetual, ever-expanding war that undermined the traditional constraints on government power." Accordingly, the board recommended that the law be repealed upon the completion of the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan. In the House, Representative Adam Schiff has introduced legislation in each of the last two years that would have done just this. However, both times it has been voted down.

What's perhaps most interesting is that even many observers who favor waging a continued "war on terror" are unhappy with

the current state of the 2001 AUMF. Like the critics, they see that the conflict has evolved significantly over the course of the past thirteen years, and that the enemy that the United States is fighting today is quite different from the one it faced in 2001. The most obvious difference is that while "core" Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan has seen its capabilities substantially weakened as a result of America's military campaign, at the same time numerous other terrorist groups have emerged in other countries. Along with the Islamic State, these include Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Al Shabab, Ansar al-Sharia and Al Nusra Front. There are wide variations between all of these groups both in their capabilities and in how connected they are to the original "core" of Al Qaeda. What this means, some say, is that whether or not an organization is an "associated force" of Al Qaeda has ceased to be the best metric in evaluating whether America might need or want to take military action against it. Thus, they argue for rewriting the AUMF to take account of these changes. This might involve specifically listing new groups, or delegating to the executive branch the authority to target certain groups or individuals based on a set of criteria to be determined.

To this point, however, neither group of critics has been successful. At an event earlier this year at the New America Foundation, the Brookings Institution's Benjamin Wittes explained why. "Everybody hates living under the AUMF," he said. But, he added, the status quo is also "everybody's second-worst option." Human-rights groups worry about the 2001 AUMF being made more permanent, Wittes said, while hawks worry about it being repealed or limited. The White House has expressed a vocal commitment to narrowing and ultimately repealing the AUMF, as Obama outlined in a May 2013 speech at the National Defense University. At the same time, the administration is currently using the AUMF for a whole host of military activities that it perceives as necessary in order to protect American security. The result is an uneasy standoff where almost everybody sees significant flaws in the status quo but simultaneously worries about it being made even worse.

Today, both AUMFs remain intact. Both have survived multiple challenges and seem unlikely to be repealed anytime soon. The Obama administration has announced that its "combat mission" in Afghanistan will come to a close by the end of this year. It will leave roughly ten thousand troops in Afghanistan in 2015 and about half that in 2016. However, it has also strongly suggested that the "armed conflict" against the Taliban and Al Qaeda under the 2001 AUMF will not end with this withdrawal. The Department of Defense's general counsel, Stephen Preston, told the House Armed Services Committee this June that he was "not aware of any determination as yet, that with the cessation of the current combat mission at the end of this year that the armed conflicts are determined to be over."

But even if nothing is likely to change in the immediate future, it's worth asking: What should we want to see happen? What would be the ideal outcome to work toward, if the current political obstacles can be overcome?

For the 2002 Iraq AUMF, the answer is clear: it should be repealed. It should have been repealed in December 2011 when U.S. troops finished their withdrawal. It's not a healthy practice for the government to end its involvement in a war but leave the legal authorization for that war in place. The United States may decide that it is wise to use military force in Iraq again at a level that requires an AUMF from Congress.

But the order to use military force then shouldn't be based on a decade-old legal authorization for a fundamentally different war. The decision should be made by the current Congress based on the merits of the case at the time. Washington may not have conducted air strikes in Iraq this June—but the argument that it could use the 2002 AUMF to do so was apparently persuasive to some legal experts and various members of Congress. Since this law has no temporal limitation, it's entirely possible that a similar series of events could recur, making it an attractive option for a future president to use to bypass the existing Congress. An outright repeal would eliminate this possibility.

Repealing the 2002 AUMF wouldn't guarantee that the United States would never employ force in Iraq in the future without congressional approval. President Obama (or one of his successors) might choose to act under his Article II powers as commander in chief—and depending on the circumstances, he might be justified in doing so. When it comes to the Iraq AUMF, however, the bottom line is simple: Either the legislation will be used again or it will not. If it is not, it is therefore superfluous and repealing it would have no consequences. But if it is, this would represent a damaging outcome that ought to be prevented.

Likewise, Congress should also revisit the 2001 AUMF—but first, and just as importantly, the executive branch should answer some very basic questions about it. The administration's secrecy regarding some elemental facts about this war has made it much more difficult to have an informed public debate on how we ought to proceed. Here are the two most prominent examples:

First, there is very little clarity on the question of which of the actions that the United States has been taking in the "war on terror" require an AUMF in order to be done legally, and which could continue without an AUMF on the basis of the president's Article II powers. At a

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hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on May 21, 2014, Senator Tim Kaine raised precisely this issue. He asked the executive-branch witnesses what the effect of repealing the 2001 AUMF would be on America's ability to do three specific things: to hold prisoners at Guantánamo Bay; to keep military troops in Afghanistan beyond 2014; and to use the Department of Defense to conduct counterterrorist operations against Al Qaeda. The witnesses did not give clear answers to any of these questions. Rather, they suggested that all of these practices could potentially be affected by the absence of an AUMF, but did not say for sure that any of them would be or to what extent. The administration ought to clarify its interpretation of what it would be allowed to do under Article II. Without this knowledge, it is impossible for Congress or the public to assess with any degree of accuracy what the actual impact of any legislative modifications to the AUMF would be.

Second, the administration should abandon its secrecy on the question of whom we are at war with and publicly name the organizations that it considers to be covered under the 2001 AUMF as "associated forces." Its official rationale for why it must keep this list classified—that such groups would be made more dangerous if it listed them publicly—is completely unpersuasive. For one thing, the administration has already stated that AQAP is among the organizations on the list, which suggests that it was not worried that acknowledging this fact would "inflate" AQAP's standing and make the group more threatening to the United States. Furthermore, as Jack Goldsmith has pointed out, the government's argument ignores the cost of keeping the list classified—namely, the damage it does to the U.S. system of democratic accountability. In Goldsmith's words, it ignores the public's interest "in knowing against whom, and where, U.S. military forces are engaged in war in its name"—knowledge which "is minimally necessary for the American people to assess the quality, prudence, and necessity of our military efforts."

Greater clarity from the administration, particularly concerning its interpretation of Article II, would make it easier for Congress to decide what path to take on the AUMF. But Congress should revisit the AUMF even if this information is not forthcoming. In doing so, it should keep in mind the fact that in 2001, Congress initially conceived of the AUMF as a relatively narrow grant of power. Indeed, it specifically did not adopt the proposed language of the George W. Bush administration, which would have given the president the authority to "deter and preempt any future acts of terrorism or aggression against the United States." This was the right choice then, and it's the right way for Congress to think about the law now. The AUMF shouldn't be seen as a blanket authorization to combat all terrorist organizations and individuals, anywhere in the world they might be.

If Congress revises the 2001 AUMF, therefore, it ought to name the groups that the United States is fighting. It should move away from the existing AUMF's

reference to the events of September 11 and instead focus on those groups that it believes to represent the greatest danger today. The most important criterion for determining which organizations qualify should be whether they are believed to have the capability and intention to launch attacks against the American homeland or, to a lesser degree, U.S. diplomatic and military assets abroad. Based on the intelligence community's public statements, AQAP would be the most obvious candidate for such an authorization right now. Congress might also wish to include others, depending on whether or not the intelligence supports such an assessment. But this approach decidedly should not encompass terrorist groups whose ambitions are primarily localized. And if and when we reach the point in the future where no organizations meet this standard, then it will be time for the 2001 AUMF to be retired as well.

Some might be tempted to ask: How much does all of this matter? Won't the executive branch still do whatever it sees as necessary in order to combat terrorism independent of what the law says, and then come up with some legal justification to support it? Speaking at the New America Foundation, the Council on Foreign Relations' Micah Zenko made a version of this argument when he said:

> The words that the president—any president—point to to justify using military force don't constrain him or her. And if the [2001] AUMF is rewritten or not rewritten, it will not make much operational difference in when any president decides to use military force or not. The capabilities exist in great abundance. These are broadly endorsed and supported by the American people. Over 70 percent of Americans in every poll support all sorts of drone strikes no matter how you define the scope of targeting. Appetite in Congress for changing this is next to nothing; oversight of a lot of these sorts of operations is quite minimal. Every president wants maximum authority and minimum oversight, as does this one, as will all future ones. . . . On the current track, there is a path dependency to this perpetual war.

There's a lot of truth to this. Zenko nonetheless supports the repeal of the 2001 AUMF, writing elsewhere that it "must be pursued as it at least brings a rhetorical end to the post-9/11 counterterrorism framework." But he correctly warns that the impact of its repeal is likely to be limited. The factors that have led the United States to conduct the "war on terror" in the way it has—among them technological changes and sustained public support—will not disappear even if the AUMF does.

Still, there are at least two additional reasons why increased congressional attention to both AUMFs would be a positive development. First, it would be a good thing from a rule-of-law perspective. No matter what your personal opinion is on the current conflict we are waging, you shouldn't want to see the executive branch pushing ever more strained interpretations of the law in order to make what it's doing cohere with words written over a decade ago. And you shouldn't want to see the U.S. government fall into the habit of declaring wars over but keeping their legal authorizing documents on the books, with the potential to be used by a future president for an unknown future conflict. Even if Congress just replaced the 2001 AUMF with one that more clearly authorized everything the executive branch is currently doing, this would be a positive step simply because it's a healthier procedure for a constitutional democracy to follow.

Second, a robust debate over both AUMFs would work to create *political* constraints for the president in addition to legal ones.

As many others have observed, the most significant barriers to a president's ability to wage war are political rather than legal. Recall what happened last year when Obama proposed conducting military strikes against Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria following Assad's use of chemical weapons. Obama said in a speech that he believed he possessed "the authority to carry out this military action without specific congressional authorization." Nevertheless, he stressed, he was also "the President of the world's oldest constitutional democracy," and as such he decided to seek the approval of Congress. This decision was surely not inspired by a philosophical stance, but rather by the political constraints under which Obama was operating. These circumstances included the British House of Commons' rejection of war and the fact that the prospect of intervention appeared to be quite unpopular with the American public. Thus, Obama decided to take the decision to Congress in order to ensure that another branch of government would be politically accountable for the result that ensued. When Congress appeared poised to reject Obama's request, he seized upon a diplomatic plan proffered by Russia to provide for the removal of Assad's chemical weapons.

This was an example of a president acting under real political constraints. In contrast, when it comes to the 2001 and Iraq AUMFs, the executive branch has generally been able to operate without constraints. Congress has made this easier by leaving the Iraq AUMF in place and by remaining largely indifferent to the administration's broad, vague claims about what the 2001 AUMF allows it to do. It is a textbook example of what former senator Jim Webb called the legislative branch's "abdication" of its role in defense and foreign-policy matters in a cover story in *The National Interest* last year. The trend that Webb identified is decades in the making. It is not going to be reversed overnight. But a serious reckoning by Congress with what has happened to the legislation it passed would be as good a place as any to start. □

Kissinger's Counsel

By Jacob Heilbrunn

Henry Kissinger, *World Order* (New York: Penguin, 2014), 432 pp., $36.00.

When Henry Kissinger celebrated his ninetieth birthday in Manhattan's St. Regis Hotel in June 2013, he attracted an audience of notables, including Bill and Hillary Clinton, John Kerry, Valery Giscard D'Estaing, Donald Rumsfeld, James Baker and George Shultz. Kerry called Kissinger America's "indispensable statesman," but it was John McCain who, as the *Daily Beast* reported, electrified the room with his remarks. McCain, who was brutally tortured in what was sardonically known as the Hanoi Hilton, earned widespread respect for courageously refusing to accept an early release from his Vietnamese captors after his father had been promoted to commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

At the party, McCain recounted for the first time the specific circumstances of that refusal. He explained that when Kissinger traveled to Hanoi to conclude the agreement ending the war in 1973, the Vietnamese offered to send McCain home with him. Kissinger declined. McCain said:

> He knew my early release would be seen as favoritism to my father and a violation of our code of conduct. By rejecting this last attempt to suborn a dereliction of duty, Henry saved my reputation, my honor, my life, really. . . . So, I salute my friend and benefactor, Henry Kissinger, the classical realist who did so much to make the world safer for his country's interests, and by so doing safer for the ideals that are its pride and purpose.

It was a poignant moment. On one side was a scion of one of America's preeminent military families who went on to become a senator championing a hawkish foreign policy that precisely reflects the neoconservative wing of the GOP. On the other was a Jewish refugee who had personally witnessed the descent of his homeland into ideological fanaticism and fled it with his parents to embark upon a new life in the United States, where he became a premier exponent of realist thought in foreign policy and a world-famous statesman. Both were bound together by events that forged a bond between them that was deeper than any differences they may have about America's role abroad.

The comity they displayed at the birthday gala is especially striking in the context of the contemporary Republican Party, where the principles that Kissinger has espoused over the past seven decades have not simply been abandoned. Again and again, they have been denounced as antithetical to American values. And this denunciation has come from both the left and the right.

Though Kissinger has come under attack from liberal circles—among the more no-

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table assaults are Seymour Hersh's *The Price of Power*, Christopher Hitchens's *The Trial of Henry Kissinger* and, most recently, Gary J. Bass's *The Blood Telegram*—he has also regularly incurred the ire of conservatives.

Throughout the 1970s, he was steadily denounced as deaf to human-rights concerns on the one hand, and as an appeaser on the other.

Perhaps the virulence of the attacks should not have come entirely as a surprise, since Kissinger did not emerge from the conservative wing of the GOP. Instead, he emerged from the ranks of the American establishment. Indeed, Kissinger was a Rockefeller Republican who first earned fame in the 1950s as a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, where he published a study on nuclear weapons and Europe. He was also a professor of government at Harvard and a consultant to John F. Kennedy's national-security adviser, McGeorge Bundy. Then, in 1968, Richard Nixon tapped Kissinger to become his national-security adviser. Kissinger added the post of secretary of state in 1973, a position that he retained after Gerald Ford became president, though he had to relinquish his post as national-security adviser.

Throughout, Kissinger attempted to apply the theoretical principles of classical realism to achieve what he saw as a global equilibrium of power. Together with Nixon, he promoted détente with the Soviet Union, established relations with China, ended the Vietnam War, and pursued shut-

Kissinger argues that the central challenge of the twenty-first century is to construct a new international order at a time of mounting extremism, advancing technology and armed conflict.

tle diplomacy to end the 1973 Yom Kippur War between Israel and the Arabs. In essence, Kissinger outmaneuvered the Soviets in both China and the Middle East. Kissinger's aim was not to launch a crusade against the Soviet Union, but to formulate a creative response to promote a balance of power in the mold of the Congress of Vienna, which secured the peace for much of nineteenth-century Europe before the big bang of World War I, when a rising Wilhelmine Germany embarked on a reckless bid to relegate the British Empire to the second tier of world powers.

In response, the neoconservatives, who had been staunch Democrats, united with the Right in decrying Kissinger as pursuing a policy of appeasement and surrender. Senator Henry M. "Scoop" Jackson and his aide Richard Perle steadily worked to stymie the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks that Nixon and Kissinger pursued with the Soviet Union and helped author the 1974 Jackson-Vanik amendment, which tied most-favored-nation status to the right of Soviet Jews and others to emigrate. (In his memoir *Years of Renewal*, Kissinger would single out neocon leaders Norman Podhoretz and Irving Kristol for criticism: "Tactics bored them; they discerned no worthy goals for American foreign policy short of total victory. Their historical memory did not include the battles they had refused to join or the domestic traumas to which they had so often contributed from the radical left side of the barricades.")

At the same time, Ronald Reagan, during his 1976 primary run against Gerald Ford, denounced Kissinger as aiming for "second best" against the Soviet Union. Kissinger responded by issuing a ten-page State Department document titled "The Reagan Speech and the Facts" and by calling Reagan's remarks a "contemptible, irresponsible invention."

As president, Reagan split the difference between Kissingerian realism and a crusading foreign policy. He was cautious about the direct use of military force abroad, relying upon aiding insurgent forces in Nicaragua, Afghanistan and elsewhere to take the battle to Moscow. He temporized during the imposition of martial law in Poland in 1981, causing *Commentary* editor Norman Podhoretz to accuse him of "appeasement by any other name." By the end of his term, Reagan, prompted by his fear of nuclear war and the rise of a more conciliatory Soviet leader in the form of Mikhail Gorbachev, signed more sweeping arms-control treaties than Nixon and Kissinger had ever envisioned.

The George H. W. Bush administration represented a reversion, more or less, to the doctrines of Nixon and Kissinger. Bush himself was an alumnus of the Nixon administration, as was his national-security adviser, Brent Scowcroft. Secretary of State James Baker incurred the wrath of the neocons for his opposition to Israel's construction of settlements. And as the Soviet Union imploded, the administration deliberately avoided adopting a triumphalist tone.

But triumphalism quickly became the order of the day as conservatives claimed that Reagan, and Reagan alone, had not only prognosticated the collapse of the Soviet Union, but also brought it about. By

1996, William Kristol and Robert Kagan were declaring in *Foreign Affairs* that it was high time to return to what they termed a "neo-Reaganite foreign policy."

The results were on display in the debacle that the George W. Bush administration created in the Middle East. The GOP has not really moved on from this disaster. For much of Barack Obama's presidency, it has mostly refused to reexamine what went wrong in Iraq. Senator Ted Cruz, Governor Rick Perry and Senator Marco Rubio are all decrying what they describe as the appeasement-minded policies of President Obama and calling for a return to what they see as the principles exemplified by Reagan. Today, a debate has belatedly begun to emerge as Senator Rand Paul challenges the presuppositions of the neocons, as he did in a speech at a dinner at the Center for the National Interest in January 2014, where the audience included Kissinger and Scowcroft. Paul said that "our foreign policy and national security policy are too belligerent" and that "negotiation can improve our world." But no potential candidate has sketched out a fully coherent and persuasive program of renewal.

In his new book, *World Order*, Kissinger does just that. It demonstrates why he remains such a courted adviser to American presidents and foreign leaders alike. Written with his characteristic lucidity and incisiveness, it offers a grand tour of the rise of the West. Kissinger does not provide a laundry list of policies. Instead, he offers a meditation and a mode of thinking about events that is starkly at variance with much contemporary foreign-policy discourse. Diplomatic history has largely fallen into desuetude in the American academy, but Kissinger expertly mines the past to draw parallels between it and the present. Kissinger returns to his central concern of the difficulty of establishing an equilibrium among the great powers. He has been preoccupied with this problem since his first book, *A World Restored*, in which he examined the efforts of Metternich and Castlereagh to create a stable Europe in the nineteenth century. It is remarkable how consistent his thought has remained over the decades. He argues that the central challenge of the twenty-first century is to construct a new international order at a time of mounting ideological extremism, advancing technology and armed conflict.

Kissinger begins by returning to the tension in Europe between the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 and the French Revolution. He next turns to Islam and the Middle East. He follows his scrutiny of the Ottoman Empire and Islam with a study of China's rise and its implications for its neighbors. But his most extended thoughts are reserved for what he sees as America's ambivalence about its status as a superpower. He traces the rise of the United States from Theodore Roosevelt down to today, discussing his own tenure in the Nixon administration to explore the unresolved tensions in U.S. foreign policy between isolationist and crusading instincts. Throughout, he aims to reconcile American universalist aspirations with the stark reality of competing powers intent on protecting and projecting their own visions and concepts of order.

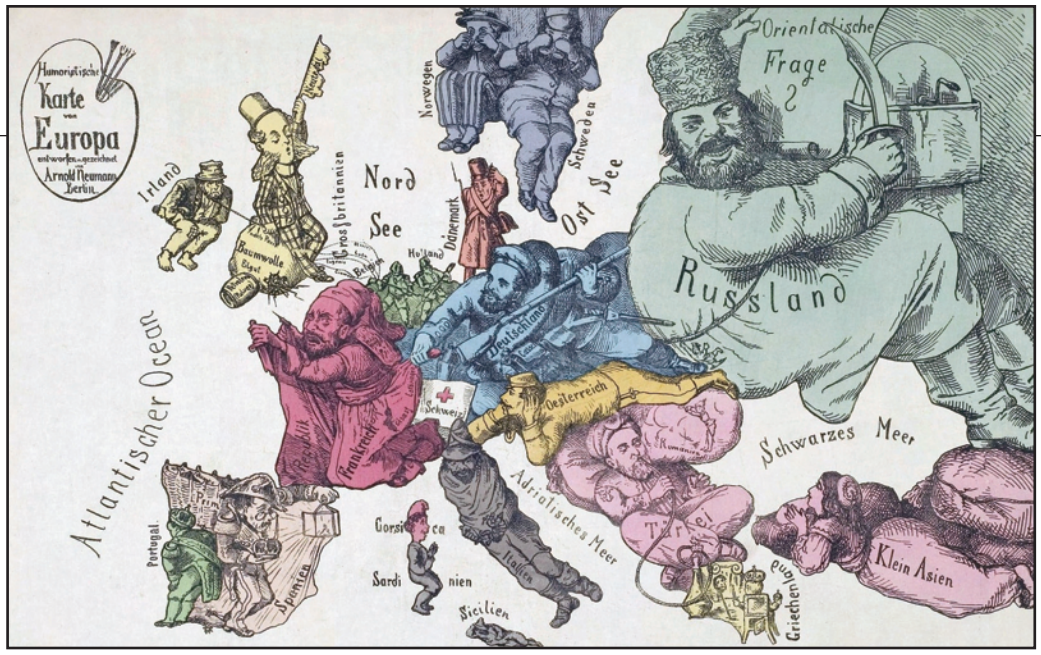
The seventeenth-century representatives of the warring European states employed pious phrases about a "peace for Christendom," but their true aim was to create stability through balancing rivalries.

Nowhere was the concept of order more fragile than in Europe for much of its history. As Kissinger observes, in contrast to China and the Islamic world, where political contests were conducted to control an established order, Europe never enjoyed a single, fixed identity. It was always a geographic expression. The closest it came to unity was in 800, when Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne as *Imperator Romanorum*. But the Carolingian Empire succumbed to its fissiparous tendencies almost as soon as it had been formally established. Charlemagne never made a serious attempt to rule the Eastern Roman Empire. Nor did he recapture Spain. The Habsburg Empire tried to re-create the idea of European identity, but its monarchs were never really more than Europe's leading landlords. Charles V was thus unable to vindicate the universality of the Catholic Church. Bowing to reality, he signed the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, which recognized Protestantism by sanctioning the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*, or "whose realm, his religion"—a principle that essentially amounted to a premodern version of spheres of influence. To be sure, the name Holy Roman Empire lingered on for centuries. Its formal existence prompted Voltaire to quip that it was "neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire."

For all his emphasis on structural factors, Kissinger does not scant the importance of individuals in history. He points, for example, to Cardinal Richelieu as a statesman whose fundamental insight was that the state should be the basic unit of international relations. Its lodestar should be the national interest—not a ruler's family interests or the demands of a universal religion. In essence, Richelieu commandeered the state as an instrument of high policy. His motto was: "The state has no immortality, its salvation is now or never."

Richelieu's insistence on the centrality of the state was codified at the Peace of Westphalia, which terminated the Thirty Years' War and which occupies a good deal of Kissinger's thinking about international relations. Kissinger makes many illuminating points about Westphalia and emphasizes that the peace it established continues to have profound implications for the present. Though the seventeenth-century representatives of the warring European states employed pious phrases about a "peace for Christendom," their true aim was to create stability through balancing rivalries. The Thirty Years' War may have started as a battle of Catholics against Protestants, but Kissinger aptly remarks that it rapidly devolved into a "free-for-all" of constantly shifting alliances. The treaty's most profound innovation was to affirm that the state, not a dynasty or empire, was the basic structure of European order. All were granted equal treatment in protocol, from new powers such as Sweden and the Dutch Republic to older, more established ones such as France and Austria. Kissinger underscores that this set the basis for the international order that exists down to this day:

> The Westphalian concept took multiplicity as its starting point and drew a variety of multiple



societies, each accepted as a reality, into a common search for order. By the mid-twentieth century, this international system was in place on every continent; it remains the scaffolding of international order such as it now exists.

The Peace of Westphalia may be attacked as a system of cynical power manipulation, Kissinger writes, but it actually represented something else—the attempt to ward off dominance of a single country by establishing a balance of power.

It was even flexible enough to allow for the integration of rising powers. Consider Prussia. An army in search of a state, Prussia was something of a Johnny-come-lately on the European scene. It was Frederick the Great who established the House of Hohenzollern as a great power during the Seven Years' War. Despite being abused by his capricious father—Lord Macaulay wrote, "Oliver Twist in the parish workhouse, Smike at Dotheboys Hall, were petted children when compared with this wretched heir apparent of a crown"—he surprised his contemporaries by transcending his early woes to become the archetypal benevolent despot, establishing Prussia as a European power without attempting to dominate the Continent. Westphalia, in other words, worked.

The most potent early challenge to the Westphalian system came from revolutionary France. The revolution of 1789 morphed into a militant ideological persuasion, a crusading international movement that demonized its adversaries. The French revolutionaries scorned the notion that an international order with clearly demarcated limits of state action should have any purchase. In 1792, the members of the National Convention passed a decree stating that France "will accord fraternity and assistance to all peoples who shall wish to recover their liberty," an idea that may sound harm-

Image: Wikimedia Commons/Paul K. CC BY 2.0.

less enough but soon led to a series of wars. The revolution, writes Kissinger,

> demonstrated how internal changes within societies are able to shake the international equilibrium more profoundly than aggression from abroad—a lesson that would be driven home by the upheavals of the twentieth century, many of which drew explicitly on the concepts first advanced by the French revolution.

Order was restored at the 1815 Congress of Vienna. But there another messianic vision emerged. Czar Alexander I was convinced that he could usher in a new world order—a "Holy Alliance" of princes that forswore sordid national interests and sought to create a new international brotherhood. He espoused a great melting pot of nations: "There no longer exists an English policy, a French, Russian, Prussian, or Austrian policy; there is now only one common policy which, for the welfare of all, ought to be adopted in common by all states and all peoples."

Alexander's eupeptic sentiments prompt Kissinger to deliver the sternest rebuke he can offer, which is that they represented a "Wilsonian conception of the nature of world order, albeit on behalf of principles dramatically the opposite of the Wilsonian vision." In the end, the Congress created three institutions to establish peace: a Quadruple Alliance consisting of Britain, Prussia, Austria and Russia; a Holy Alliance to neutralize domestic threats to the legitimacy of the monarchies; and a Concert of Europe, which provided for regular diplomatic conferences among the heads of governments.

Nationalism, the revolutions of 1848, the Crimean War and the unification of Germany ensured that the arrangements forged by Europe's magnificoes in 1815 did not last. Kissinger perceptively notes that the shift from Metternich, who was focused on preserving the principle of legitimacy, to Bismarck, who was intent on amassing power, acutely displays the breakdown of the European order. Both are often viewed as conservatives, but Bismarck is probably best viewed as a radical conservative, at least in his formative incarnation. Unlike Metternich, Bismarck sought to demonstrate that conservatism could be annealed to nationalism. But Bismarck was aware of Germany's limits. He may have created an empire, but he did not seek to displace the British Empire or to humiliate France. After the unification of Germany, his main object was to preserve the peace, which he did. His epigones in the Wilhelmstrasse, by contrast, did not.

After World War II, the division of Europe into two hostile camps meant that the western half largely sought to subsume its identity, partly by identifying with the United States, at least when it came to its military defense, as well as by aiming for economic unity within its bloc. With the end of the Cold War, Europe has striven to define a separate, independent identity. Kissinger worries that the Continent's pursuit of soft power may have become an end in itself, thereby creating an imbalance of power at a moment when other regions of the globe are pursuing hard power. He suggests that Europe finds itself uneasily suspended between a past it seeks to over-

come and a future that it has yet to define. But even as it searches for a new order, Europe, he concludes, has evolved into a society united by the laudable ambition to sequester moral absolutes from political endeavors.

The contrast with the United States, we are told, could hardly be starker. America fused distrust of established institutions with a crusading spirit. For Thomas Jefferson, America was an "empire of liberty." It was, he wrote, "acting under obligations not confined to the limits of our own society." The first president to assign America a role as a world power was Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt sketched out a vision of America as the guardian of the global balance of power and, by extension, the international peace. In Kissinger's view, "This was an astonishingly ambitious vision for a country that had heretofore viewed its isolation as its defining characteristic and that had conceived of its navy as primarily an instrument of coastal defense." Kissinger makes clear his admiration for Roosevelt. He believes that had Roosevelt been president during World War I, the conflict would have been terminated much more quickly. A negotiated peace would have left Germany defeated but indebted to American restraint. But it was Woodrow Wilson, of course, who gave full flower to the proselytizing persuasion. Rather than seeking to restore a balance of power, Wilson wanted to "make the world safe for democracy"—a goal that was as laudable as it was impractical. Speaking at West Point in 1916, Wilson told the graduating class, "It was as if in the Providence of God, a continent had been kept unused and waiting for a peaceful people who loved liberty and the rights of men more than they loved anything else, to come and set up an unselfish commonwealth."

For all its idealism, however, America bumped up against rather different views of world order. Communism and the Third World directly challenged the American gospel. Kissinger raises several questions that he believes confronted Washington: Was American foreign policy a tidy story with a beginning and an end that leads to final victories? Is there an ultimate destination? Or is it really a tale of managing constant challenges? It will come as no surprise to those familiar with his record and writings that Kissinger markedly inclines toward the latter view.

It was for this approach to international relations that he came under such fire in the 1970s. But the notion, widely disseminated by his ideological foes, that Kissinger, far from trying to buttress U.S. power, was trying to manage its decline is something of a fiction. Actually, he was attempting to address a daunting new reality, which was that the tumult of the 1970s meant that the United States required breathing space as it extricated itself from Vietnam and confronted a newly emboldened Soviet Union, not to mention a Western Europe, led by the Federal Republic of Germany, that was intent on rapprochement with Moscow.

When it comes to his discussion of this era and his own accomplishments, Kissinger is not reticent about expressing his

Kissinger aims to reconcile American universalist aspirations with the stark reality of competing powers intent on protecting and projecting their own visions and concepts of order.

admiration for Richard Nixon. Nixon's solitary nature meant that he had read widely, a trait that Kissinger avers made him the best-prepared incoming president since TR on foreign policy. Nixon and Kissinger also evinced a theoretical unanimity in their approach toward foreign affairs that is quite rare. Kissinger reminds us that in 1971, Nixon told the editors of *Time* that it would be desirable to have an interlocking set of ambitions among the great powers: "I think it will be a safer world and a better world if we have a strong, healthy United States, Europe, Soviet Union, China, Japan, each balancing the other, not playing one against the other, an even balance."

This sentiment did not represent a maleficent doctrine antithetical to the American credo. On the contrary, it constituted a form of moralism—relations based on mutual dignity and respect, forgoing the attempt to derive advantage from temporary circumstances in favor of an enduring peace. As Kissinger notes in reflecting upon Reagan's record as president, neither pure power nor pure idealism can suffice. Kissinger calls for "a concept of order that transcends the perspective and ideals of any one region or nation. At this moment in history, this would be a modernization of the Westphalian system informed by contemporary realities."

Whether this will actually occur is, of course, questionable. When it comes to the GOP itself, as Robert D. Kaplan noted of Kissinger in the *Atlantic* last year, "The degree to which Republicans can recover his sensibility in foreign policy will help determine their own prospects for regaining power." Kissinger himself never returned to high office after Ford's defeat in 1976. He was too controversial a figure inside both political parties. But no other modern secretary of state has come close to matching his influence and fame.

His latest contribution amounts to a guide for the perplexed, a manifesto for reordering America's approach to the rest of the globe. No doubt Russia, China and Iran may strike out on courses that seek to overturn the kind of Westphalian principles lauded by Kissinger. But as a means of apprehending international affairs—and of maintaining the delicate balance between power and idealism—Kissinger's precepts are surely more valuable than ever. It is no accident that after the debacles of the past decade, Kissinger's realism is starting to make something of a comeback. Now that the doctrines championed by his neocon detractors have largely come into disrepute, at least among the American public, realism is starting to receive more of a hearing.

Perhaps the return of realism should not altogether be surprising. In a sense, it has never gone away. For the tenets that Kissinger has studied and pursued amply merit the term classical, as they are timeless. Kissinger's vision could help to shape a more tranquil era than the one that has emerged so far. He himself ends his work on a note of humility, observing that in his youth he was "brash enough" to believe he could pronounce on "The Meaning of History." "I now know that history's meaning," he writes, "is a matter to be discovered, not declared." It would be a pity if his counsel went unheeded. □

Bourgeois Hobsbawm

By David A. Bell

Eric Hobsbawm, *Fractured Times: Culture and Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: The New Press, 2014), 336 pp., $27.95.

In a famous exchange in 1994, Michael Ignatieff asked Eric Hobsbawm whether the vast human costs inflicted by Stalin on the Soviet Union could possibly be justified. Hobsbawm replied, "Probably not. . . . because it turns out that the Soviet Union was not the beginning of the world revolution. Had it been, I'm not sure." Do you mean, Ignatieff pressed him, that "had the radiant tomorrow actually been created, the loss of fifteen, twenty million people might have been justified?" Hobsbawm answered, "Yes."

Two years after Hobsbawm's death at the age of ninety-five, his lifelong, unapologetic Communism remains for many the most important thing about him. To his critics on the right, it discredits him, pure and simple. On the left, even some commentators who took more admirable stances on Communist tyrannies treat his steadfast commitment to the USSR as, to quote Perry Anderson, "evidence of an exceptional integrity and strength of character." They refer with something approaching reverence to the justification he formulated in his 2002 autobiography, *Interesting Times*: "Emotionally, as one converted as a teenager in the Berlin of 1932, I belonged to the generation tied by an almost unbreakable umbilical cord to hope of the world revolution, and of its original home, the October Revolution."

But in what ways did Hobsbawm's politics really shape the voluminous writings that made him one of the most famous historians of the past century? Certainly, the dynamic and destructive energies of capitalism constitute the central theme of his most famous work: the grand quartet of general histories that proceed from *The Age of Revolution, 1789–1848* to *The Age of Extremes, 1914–1991*. Without whitewashing Stalin's crimes, the last of these nonetheless argued that the Soviet example led directly to the West's adoption of Keynesian economics and the welfare state. Yet the books offered anything but a rigidly Marxist interpretation, and generally eschewed sharply polemical language. It is doubtful that a true Stalinist ideologue could have been saluted at his death (admittedly, by the *Guardian*) as "arguably Britain's most respected historian of any kind," or received the title of "Companion of Honour" from Queen Elizabeth II in 1998. Niall Ferguson (hardly an ideological soulmate) called him a "truly great historian." Among the members of the left-wing student group called the Cambridge Apostles, it was Kim Philby, not Eric

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Fractured Times is something of a mixed bag, with forgettable book reviews and superficial lectures jostling for space with several trenchant and beautifully written essays.

Hobsbawm, who actually went to work for Stalin, and lived out his final decades in lonely, crapulous Moscow exile.

Hobsbawm's posthumous book of essays, *Fractured Times*, gives considerable insight into the factors other than Communist politics that shaped his outlook—and that shaped it more strongly. Like most such collections it is something of a mixed bag, with forgettable book reviews and superficial lectures jostling for space with several trenchant and beautifully written essays. At first glance it also seems to be detached from the main themes of Hobsbawm's historical work—namely, capitalism, revolution, war and the "primitive rebels" against the social order whom he examined in his 1959 book of that title (the book that first brought him real fame). *Fractured Times* deals mostly with high culture in the twentieth century, in an unapologetically elitist tone. But it is precisely this subject matter and this tone that reveal something often overlooked about Eric Hobsbawm. For all his commitment to international Communism, he was also profoundly, if paradoxically, bourgeois, and in a distinctly Jewish way.

Hobsbawm's upbringing was certainly that of a bourgeois Jew. His father came from a Jewish trade background in the East End of London; his mother was the daughter of a Jewish Viennese jeweler. Born in Alexandria in 1917, Eric spent his childhood in Vienna and then, from 1931, after the death of his parents, with an aunt and uncle in Berlin. Although English was the language of his homes, his larger middle-class milieu was characterized by a deep reverence for German high culture: Goethe and Schiller, Mozart and Beethoven. In Berlin, amid the misery of the Depression and the turmoil accompanying the collapse of the Weimar Republic, the teenage Hobsbawm was swept into street politics. He later compared the intense experience of "participation in a mass demonstration at a time of great public exaltation" to sex. But after Hitler's seizure of power the family relocated to London, where Hobsbawm finished his secondary education at that most middle-class of British institutions, the grammar school, and spent his spare hours reading Romantic poetry and listening to jazz, along with selling Communist Party pamphlets. From there, it was off to Cambridge, and his exceptionally long and productive intellectual career.

Politics, in fact, shaped this career less than many of Hobsbawm's obituaries suggested. His membership in the British Communist Party and on the editorial board of the party's main organ *Marxism Today* may have kept him from a glittering Cambridge professorship, and made travel to the United States difficult, but his position at Birkbeck College, University of London hardly amounted to Siberian exile. Nor did he do much of the actual street-level work—leafleting, picketing, organizing—of ordinary Communist militants (he famously chastised fellow left-wing historian and peace activist E. P. Thompson for neglecting historical scholarship in favor of political organizing). Like most intellectuals who had come of

age in the thirties, Hobsbawm also had trouble taking the political and cultural upheavals of the sixties seriously. Rather than making common cause with the British New Left, he talked about the impending death of socialism and supported the New Labour movement eventually headed by Tony Blair. He proudly boasted that he had never worn blue jeans, and once attributed the success of rock and roll to "infantilism." His own musical passion remained jazz, which for many years he reviewed with great flair, under the pseudonym Francis Newton, for the *New Statesman*.

The essays in *Fractured Times* that deal with Hobsbawm's formative bourgeois Jewish milieu do so not just with insight, but also with respect. They take as a starting point the intense identification that middle-class European Jews of the late nineteenth century felt with their countries' high cultures: French, Russian, Hungarian and especially German. Throughout Central Europe, Jews seeking emancipation from the "self-segregation" of the shtetl (it was not, of course, entirely the Jews' own choice) found in German culture a path toward professional and social distinction. Embracing it, Hobsbawm notes, also proved the most effective way of separating themselves, in their own eyes as well as those of their gentile neighbors, from the uneducated, religious, Yiddish-speaking Jewish masses to the east. Hobsbawm also makes, quite keenly, another point: "The passion of emancipated Jews for the national languages and cultures of their gentile countries was all the more intense, because in so many cases they were not

joining, as it were, long-established clubs but clubs of which they could see themselves almost as founder members." What we now see as German high culture, at least in philosophy, literature and the visual arts (Kant, Goethe, etc.), took shape in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, just as German Jews were first gaining civil rights and prominent positions in gentile society. In the great multilingual stew of Austria-Hungary, the Jewish passion for everything German was unrivaled (although in Hungary itself, some Jews did prefer the local vernacular). Hobsbawm offers as an example (twice!) the heavily Jewish town of Brody, in Galicia, once Austro-Hungarian, and subsequently Polish, Soviet and Ukrainian. In the nineteenth century, its principal languages were Yiddish and Ukrainian, but the Jewish town fathers nonetheless insisted that its schools adopt German as their language of instruction.

In these essays, Hobsbawm dwells on past Jewish achievements with something approaching ethnic pride. He enumerates Jewish Nobel Prize winners, and gives long lists of Jews who dominated their respective fields ("Heine, Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Ricardo, Marx, Disraeli. . . . Modigliani, Pascin, Marcoussis, Chagall, Soutine, Epstein, Lipchitz, Lissitzky, Zadkine"). He speaks of the "enormous oilfield of [Jewish] talent . . . waiting to be tapped by the most admirable of all human movements, the Enlightenment." And this refugee from Hitler says of German culture: "Only those who have experienced the force, the grandeur and the beauty of that culture, which made the Bulgarian Jew Elias Canetti write in the middle of the Second World War that 'the language of my intellect will remain German,' can fully realise what its loss meant." It is no wonder that Hobsbawm was a devotee of Joseph Roth, the Jewish novelist who composed that piercing elegy for the German-speaking Habsburg Empire, *Radetzky March*.

Hobsbawm also perceptively notes that in many cases, Jews did not simply embrace high culture, but also ended up giving it a distinctly Jewish flavor. In Vienna, where the Jewish population soared from less than four thousand in 1848 to 175,000 in 1914, Jews played an outsized role in shaping middle-class institutions, artistic genres and forms of humor (the same, it might be noted, was true of Budapest and, later, New York). By the twentieth century, Jewish writers and artists were weaving more and more recognizably Jewish themes into their work. Hobsbawm muses that when it comes to Jewish cultural creativity, "a certain degree of uneasiness in the relationship between them and non-Jews has proved historically useful," pointing out that the end of the nineteenth century—the years of the Dreyfus Affair in France and the anti-Semitic Mayor Kurt Lueger in Vienna—was in fact a time of "maximum stimulus for Jewish talent."

In none of these essays does Hobsbawm let drop even a hint of contempt for the bourgeois settings in which the cultural developments in question took place. Unlike, say, Karl Marx, he does not poke beneath the surface of Enlightenment philosophy in search of a rancidly selfish

"bourgeois ideology." And unlike the cultural radicals of the sixties, he does not reject high culture as the suffocating exhalations of a dead, white, male Establishment. Quite the contrary. He speaks of the Enlightenment with pure admiration, and at the end of the book laments the retreat of its values, "faced with the anti-universal powers of 'blood and soil' and the radical-reactionary tendencies developing in all world religions."

The chapters that deal with twentieth-century culture feel very similar in tone. Indeed, while Hobsbawm has characteristically smart things to say along the way, these essays also voice exasperation with cultural experimentation that sometimes verges on the curmudgeonly. Hobsbawm regrets the fact that so little contemporary classical music and opera reaches popular audiences, leaving performers to live on dead repertoires. "Overwhelmingly, operatic production . . . consists of attempts to freshen up eminent graves by putting different sets of flowers on them." Contemporary sculpture, he says, has a "miserable existence," while the break with pictorial representation a hundred years ago put avant-garde painting "on the way to nowhere." Indeed, Hobsbawm speaks of the "historic failure" of pictorial art in the twentieth century. As for philosophy, he writes, a little cringe-inducingly, that its practitioners can no longer compete with "Bono or Eno," or the "universal noise of Facebook." An essay simply titled "The Avant-Garde Fails," originally published in 1998, states, "Disney's animations, however inferior to the austere beauty of Mondrian, were both more revolutionary than oil-painting, and better at passing on their message."

These assessments may be defensible, but Hobsbawm, at least here, doesn't really try to defend them. Rather, he simply pronounces, and therefore sounds too much like an indignant middle-aged museumgoer circa 1950 expostulating about the dots and drips of abstract expressionism. At least he does not try to assign blame for the "failures," and makes sensible if unoriginal points about the way the invention of mechanical reproduction changed representational art. As early as 1850, he notes, critics were warning of the threat posed by photography to lithography and portraiture. But he leaves readers with the strong sense that he would have felt much more comfortable in the long-vanished cultural world of German-speaking Central Europe.

These ex cathedra judgments will hardly surprise longtime readers of Hobsbawm. One collection of his lectures bore the title *Behind the Times: The Decline and Fall of the Twentieth-Century Avant Gardes*. Much of what he says in *Fractured Times* he also said there, and in his autobiography. His four-part world history brims with sharp, confident pronouncements on all manner of artistic and literary endeavors. But this new collection underlines Hobsbawm's belief in the essential autonomy of these endeavors. Politics and economics, in his view, can powerfully affect the arts—he considers periods of political anxiety and economic crisis particularly

Like most intellectuals who had come of age in the thirties, Hobsbawm had trouble taking the political and cultural upheavals of the sixties seriously.

useful for spurring creativity. Technology can do so as well. But in no way can works be read primarily as reflections of their social and economic origins. For Hobsbawm, the difference between a bourgeois work of art and a proletarian one matters less than the difference between a good work of art and a bad one. In this, he not only indicates his own good sense, but also echoes the stance taken by the late nineteenth-century bourgeoisie, which embraced the idea of "art for art's sake" and believed that raising children in the properly "cultivated" manner meant equipping them with the ability to make proper critical distinctions.

In the preface to *Fractured Times*, Hobsbawm relates its essays to the larger themes of his historical work, and formulates the following thesis. "The logic of both capitalist development and bourgeois civilisation itself," he writes, "were bound to destroy its foundation, a society and institutions run by a progressive elite minority." Technological innovation, mass politics and above all the rise of "mass consumption" made it impossible for the educated bourgeoisie to dictate taste to the rest of the population, or even to preserve their own cultural practices and institutions. In a world of mass entertainment, swept by constant technological innovation and the ceaseless pursuit of the new, artistic and literary production could no longer consist primarily of adding a steady stream of fresh, critically approved works to a stable canon. The traditional forms themselves—orchestral music, opera, framed painting—waned, and the cultural initiative passed to the producers of film, television and rock music. Symphony halls closed while Hollywood grew fat.

It is a compelling thesis, one that jibes well with the story Hobsbawm told in his histories about the power of capitalism to make and unmake societies: to hasten revolution, transform living conditions, beget empires and finally lead the world into the massively destructive "age of extremes." But it does not cast capitalist development as the "structure" that determines the actual content of culture. And so it allows him, at least in part, to rescue the ideals that governed the bourgeois Jewish *mitteleuropäisch* world of his childhood from the cynical condescension of posterity. Hobsbawm freely admits the socially elitist nature of this world. He notes that on the eve of World War I, in Britain, France and Germany, only a tiny percentage of the population attended university. Total enrollment in higher education, out of a combined population of 150 million, barely reached 150,000. If pressed, Hobsbawm would certainly have conceded that even among these educated thousands, many came closer to the satirical figure known as the *Spießbürger* (the Philistine petty bourgeois) than to an embodiment of proper *Kultur*. He ends the preface with a frail paean to the "century of common men and women" which followed, and which produced new, original, hybrid art forms (jazz?), and he quotes the familiar mocking lines of "Prufrock" on the limits of bourgeois culture: "In the room the women come and go, / Talking of Michelangelo."

For Hobsbawm, the difference between a bourgeois work of art and a proletarian one matters less than the difference between a good work of art and a bad one.

But in the end he cannot hide his fear that mass culture has fundamentally corrupted the arts, while the essays themselves, as noted, breathe with more than a little nostalgia for a world in which people did, at least, talk about Michelangelo.

As a historian, Hobsbawm's great strength was always as a synthesizer. He was not an "archive hound" who lived to track down new facts amid the dusty cartons of a provincial public-records office. Nor was he a theorist who cogitated in thick, jargon-filled prose about the ideological structures underpinning historical change. He relied heavily on the work of other historians, and his writing was enviably lucid, witty and accessible. He was in fact a master of this style of history, which has long flourished in Britain, but also has something in common with the entertaining works (Stefan Zweig's and Emil Ludwig's, for instance) that appealed to the history-reading public of prewar Central Europe. For these reasons, while fellow historians generally speak of Hobsbawm with great respect, they do not actually cite him very often. There was never a real "Hobsbawm School," and a generation from now, his works are unlikely to find a wide readership.

Yet Hobsbawm's theses about capitalism and culture, however impressionistically sketched out, remain worthy of attention. In some ways, interestingly, they recall a far more self-consciously theoretical, far more difficult work by the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, initially published in 1962 and entitled, in English translation, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Habermas, born just twelve years after Hobsbawm, was then a Marxist of sorts, although an eclectic one. This work tells the story of how the commercial capitalism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, thanks to the premium that merchants placed on timely and accurate news, spurred the development of new forms of public communication. Newspapers were born, and, along with them, new spaces to discuss the news, such as coffee houses, literary salons and lending libraries. New forms of public discussion followed, in which contributors participated as equals and placed few if any topics outside the reach of rational critique. From such forms of discussion and such spaces—the "bourgeois public sphere"—arose a spirit of critique and contestation that eventually expressed itself in revolutionary action. The vision of the public sphere as rational and free was always, Habermas recognized, more an ideal than a reality. Only educated men of a certain social class could actually participate, and a spirit of rational exchange did not always predominate. But however imperfect, it did exist—for a time. It could not, however, survive the further development of capitalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As voracious new business interests came to dominate newspaper publishing, and to dictate the content of publications, the older forms of free discussion were corrupted beyond recognition. Habermas's book, while much debated, remains an intriguing, powerful and much-read account of the birth of the modern age.

Habermas's story has quite a bit in common with Hobsbawm's, despite their differences in emphasis, chronology and style. Each of these two *Marxisant* thinkers hoped to trace the way capitalist development, at one stage of history, helped to generate certain identifiably bourgeois ideals. Both then saw these ideals undermined by the further progress of capitalism. But both showed a surprising appreciation for the initial ideals—the "public sphere" for one, and the reverence for a tolerant, high-minded high culture for the other. In fact, both scholars took these ideals seriously enough to use them as yardsticks against which to measure the flaws of the modern age.

Somewhat ironically, given Hobsbawm's vocal Communist politics, it is this side of his work, rather than his Marxism, that now does the most to keep it readable and relevant. The political tyrannies to which he professed loyalty have collapsed so completely that even the ideals they proclaimed can no longer function seriously as yardsticks against which to measure anything. The hope of a world revolution springing from the source of the October Revolution has joined its original exponent, Leon Trotsky, in the place he himself named the "ash heap of history." But the impulse that drove the doomed Jews of Central Europe to define their new, emancipated status by their veneration for high-minded, beautiful poetry and painting, novels and plays, symphonies and operas—surely that is something for which we should all continue to feel more than a little nostalgia. □

Rebels Who Had a Cause

By Barry Gewen

Elzbieta Matynia, ed., *An Uncanny Era: Conversations Between Václav Havel & Adam Michnik* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 264 pp., $25.00.

Adam Michnik, *The Trouble with History: Morality, Revolution, and Counterrevolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 208 pp., $25.00.

What happens to revolutionaries after the revolution? If the revolution fails, the answer is easy: they end up in exile, in prison or dead. But what if the uprising succeeds? Then the answer is more complicated. Successful rebels scatter across the political landscape, with former brothers-in-arms often becoming fierce enemies—professional radicals on one side, upholders of the new status quo on the other.

In one of the fascinating exchanges included in a collection of letters, interviews and essays called *An Uncanny Era: Conversations Between Václav Havel & Adam Michnik*, two of the preeminent heroes of the upheavals that destroyed the Soviet empire and brought the Cold War to an end

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survey the fates of their colleagues among the dissidents. Some returned to their normal careers because protest had been only a temporary disruption in the course of their lives. Others chose more public avenues, plunging into politics full-time. Havel and Michnik, of course, both went on to hold positions of great distinction—Havel as president of Czechoslovakia and then, after his country's breakup, of the Czech Republic; Michnik as editor-in-chief of the influential Warsaw daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Still others, however, turned bitter, disillusioned. A few, bereft of hope and their dreams shattered, went mad.

Post-Communist Eastern Europe, with its Hieronymus Bosch panorama of greed, corruption, hedonism and cynicism, gave the former revolutionaries much to be disillusioned about. Was this the freedom they had sacrificed so much to attain? Did it amount to nothing more than *enrichissez vous*? "We changed the human rights charter into a credit card," Michnik writes. Both Havel (until his death in 2011) and Michnik struggled to maintain their bearings in a low, dishonest time, and *An Uncanny Era*, together with a companion volume of essays by Michnik entitled *The Trouble with History*, can be read as a plea to keep the revolutionary faith, to uphold the idealism that motivated the battle against Communism—even if it's not clear what idealism means in a postideological age.

What's more, since Havel and Michnik believe that the intellectual and spiritual shortcomings they perceive extend far beyond their own societies, they see themselves as prophets of a kind, addressing not only Eastern Europeans at sea in an era of predatory capitalism and toxic nationalism, but also readers throughout the West, all standing before an abyss of corrosive cynicism. As the always-hopeful Havel told Michnik:

> That means that we would take upon ourselves a bigger responsibility and in some sense we will become a source of inspiration for the wealthy West. This could happen if we were able well ahead of time to notice the dangers lurking in the contemporary world and to articulate them in the right way thanks to the specific experience of Communism and our entire history.

For Havel and Michnik, that history began in the 1960s—in a double sense. Both were products of the worldwide sixties cultural explosion of hippies, student rebellions, and rock and roll; rock music had a key role in instigating the revolt against Soviet domination, and when Havel took up residence in the presidential palace, he played host to Frank Zappa and the Rolling Stones. But they were "1968-ers" in a political sense as well, deeply affected when Soviet power crushed the Prague Spring of Alexander Dubcek's reformist government that year, killing the promise of "socialism with a human face." The lesson Moscow's tanks taught disaffected students was that changing Communism from within was never going to happen, but neither would it be brought down by insurrectionist, anti-Communist violence. Between those two poles, Eastern Europe's dissident movement was born.

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A decade after the abortive Prague Spring, eight young oppositionists—four from Poland, four from Czechoslovakia—trekked up the mountains bordering the two countries to meet, drink vodka and exchange ideas. Out of that encounter came promises of cooperation, Havel's hugely important essay "The Power of the Powerless," and the beginnings of a thirty-year friendship between Havel and Michnik. What followed, too, was increased repression by the authorities—wiretaps, personal harassment, interrogations, house arrests and years of imprisonment. There were so few protesters at first that the sacrifices seemed, to use Michnik's word, "ridiculous." What chances did the dissidents have against the mighty Soviet machine? Along with the physical suffering, they endured the torments of a terrible loneliness.

In a cautious yet ultimately bitter essay in *The Trouble with History*, Michnik writes that even natural allies like the West German chancellor Willy Brandt, who might have been expected to support the cause of human rights, abandoned them for the sake of his *Ostpolitik*. Michnik recognizes the difficulty of determining just when an understandable desire for rapprochement in international affairs mutates into a policy of appeasement. Haunting questions of history keep reemerging through these two books. Did Czechoslovakia's president Edvard Benes have any choice but to yield to Hitler's *force majeure* at Munich? Was General Wojciech Jaruzelski right to declare martial law in Poland in 1981 to avert a Soviet invasion? Havel says he developed more sympathy for Benes after he became president and had to deal with the dilemmas of governance. Michnik writes that the issue for those leaders of small powers was whether to "go up in flames, or to capitulate in order to survive." It's a problem as old as Thucydides. Nonetheless, West Germany was not exactly a small power, and in Brandt's case, Michnik says disapprovingly, "Geopolitics drove out morality."

In the face of the brute realities of power politics, all the isolated dissidents had was their idealism. But sometimes hopeless causes win. Sometimes idealism stops tanks. Even as late as 1988, Michnik says, only "some possessed village idiot" would have predicted that within a few years the Soviet Union would implode, Communism would die, and Poland and Czechoslovakia would be free to end censorship, hold democratic elections and join NATO. "So—after all that—when somebody tells me that this glass is half-empty, then I reply that he has probably never had a beer in his life."

Yet what precisely was the idealism that drove the Havels and Michniks? What enabled them to live all those years like Sisyphus, pushing their boulder up the mountain without hope? That wasn't entirely clear, not even to them. They knew they were against Communism and Soviet domination, but it was much harder for them to articulate what they were for. Moreover, to build as broad a movement as possible, it was best to remain vague. So they spoke with "a polyphonic voice," with no illusions about constructing the perfect society out of the post-Communist rubble; as Michnik put it, "Our revolution was a

revolution without a utopia." "Solidarity was forced on us," Havel says, "by our common enemy." Michnik observes that Havel himself had "reservations" even about parliamentary democracy, seeing it as a possible transitional phase to some other, more undefined end.

Having experienced the long lines and perennial shortages of the Soviet system, of one thing they were sure: they knew they wanted no part of a centralized economy. "The fact that everything should be privately owned and that there is a law of supply and demand is for me obvious," Havel says. He took pleasure in the fact that greengrocers, the kind of people he wrote about in "The Power of the Powerless," could now own their own shops and set their own prices. At the same time, he didn't think free markets were the answer to every problem; they were "not a religion," and Havel was no libertarian. Michnik puts his own spin on the question. Eastern Europeans would be wise, he says, to reject the "cult" of the ruthless market for "a market with a human face." When it came to economics—as was true in other matters—the two men agreed that they were neither on the left nor the right.

Both of these fundamentally moderate men were compelled to revolution by the circumstances of their time, and they were troubled by what they saw as the rush from one extreme to the other—from a creaky, state-regulated system to an economic free-for-all, and from a meek acquiescence in an oppressive left-wing tyranny to a fanatical anti-Communism intent on extirpating all traces of the Soviet past. Senator Joseph McCarthy, Michnik reports, had become a hero to some of his countrymen, who chose to ignore the many different kinds of people who had been caught in the Soviet web. "Should the writer who supported the communist power in its early years, but later became a symbol of resistance to the dictatorship and a moral authority, be counted as a traitor or included in the pantheon of national heroes?" It was necessary to recognize degrees of culpability; in the bad old days, one often did what one had to do in order to survive. "All sorts of things happened," Michnik writes.

Likewise, Havel says that "the people who to a greater or lesser degree cocreated the regime, and those who silently tolerated it, but also all of us who unconsciously got accustomed to it, we are all in it together." Just about everyone was guilty in some way or another. Indeed, such widespread collaboration (if it can be called that) made many Eastern Europeans reluctant to acknowledge the heroism of the dissidents. They inspire distaste, Havel says, because they are "the living pangs of conscience." (In much the same way, it has been said that the Germans will never forgive the Jews for Auschwitz.) In any case, to get over the past, to move forward, forgiveness was just as important as justice. Havel speaks of the need to "find the appropriate balance," though he recognizes that doing so wouldn't be easy in the current climate.

The problem was that the end of Communism had created an ideological vacuum, and a "coarse and primitive nationalism" was rushing to fill

it, in Michnik's words. Xenophobia, anti-Semitism and ethnic intolerance were on the rise. Talk about racial purity and the need for a strong leader was back. In 2007, Michnik observed, "We should look at the practices of Putin to understand the nature of the threats to democracy in the countries of post-Communist Europe." Prophetically, Havel said in 2008 that Moscow "glances at neighboring states as though it doesn't know exactly where Russia begins and where it ends."

For Havel, what was required in our "uncanny" post-Communist era was a new global awareness. "In my opinion the most important division is between people who care only for their garden and those who are interested in what's beyond their fence." That is, he remained an idealist to the day he died, urging people to be better than they thought they were, though his enemies were no longer as easily defined as the Red Army and the secret police. Now they tended to be abstractions—selfishness, intolerance, the darker impulses of the human soul. The solution he reached for (such as it was) consisted of a change in mentality itself, a deepening of spirituality that he called an "existential revolution," almost a worldwide moral reformation. One senses in him a genuinely religious temperament, even if he never turned to organized religion. Michnik, who knew him as well as anybody, says that Havel was in essence a "*homo religiosus*," though, to be sure, there was no more heterodox religiosus. "I accept the Gospel of Jesus," Havel said in a summation of his theology, "as a challenge to go my own way."

Michnik's feet have been planted more firmly on the ground—no doubt because

Havel remained an idealist to the day he died, urging people to be better than they thought they were, though his enemies were no longer as easily defined as the Red Army and the secret police.

he isn't an artistic visionary like Havel. Not that there isn't room for spirituality in his thinking: he speaks of the need for "metaphysics" in any civilized society. But he seeks no grand moral reawakening. Rather, his calls are for the more humble virtues: compromise, dialogue, mutual understanding and pluralism. He opposes vengeance, fanaticism in any form and all dogmatic certainties—in politics, economics, religion and philosophy. He celebrates contingency and ambiguity. His is the idealism of moderation.

In *An Uncanny Era*, his hero is Havel, who "was afraid of all closed ideologies," and when asked about his political orientation, he responds, "Havelian." But *The Trouble with History* has a different, more surprising hero—the nineteenth-century writer Marie-Henri Beyle, better known by the pen name Stendhal. Michnik sees his own age—and ours—as a mirror image of Stendhal's Restoration France, when cynicism and careerism prevailed, and politics had deteriorated into little more than a struggle for power and money. "Let us look at things through Stendhal's eyes," Michnik writes. "Instead of democracy, money ruled; instead of a great idea, money; instead of quality and taste of life, money; instead of dignity, honor, and solidarity, money." Meanwhile, the forces of repression were swooping down to eradicate all freethinking, individuality and moderation.

Michnik understands that so-called realists will accuse him of "empty moralizing." (They are the ones who have never had a glass of beer in their lives.) But they have a point. What does Michnik propose to put in place of power and money? Still, it has to be said that conditions in Eastern Europe are making voices like Michnik's more urgent than ever. He is someone to be praised and prized. As uncertainties grow on Poland's eastern border, fear and paranoia will surely grow with them, with Vladimir Putin's own belligerent nationalism matched by the very same tendencies in Russia's neighbors. Calls for a strong leader to root out and eliminate the nation's enemies will only grow louder. Moderation will be the first victim, pluralism the second.

The "most dangerous" of the arguments used by Communist Poland to legitimize the evils of the regime, Michnik reminds readers, was playing on the fear that Germany was only waiting to repeat history and pounce again. Those same arguments can now be employed looking east, with the same malignant result. At the present time, everything points to a rise in nationalist hysteria on Russia's borders, and if the Poles needed any additional push in that direction, there is always the fact that Russia's 2009 war games culminated in the nuking of Warsaw. It's not a good time for the Adam Michniks. Moderates need all the help they can get. As a former dissident, however, Michnik can at least say that he's been through this before, and worse, and though he tends to be more pessimistic than his idol Havel, he has endured enough to have earned his own strain of optimism, however ironic it may be. "In Poland," he says, "everything is possible: even change for the better." □

Perlstein's Bridge to Nowhere

By Geoffrey Kabaservice

Rick Perlstein, *The Invisible Bridge: The Fall of Nixon and the Rise of Reagan* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 880 pp., $37.50.

On a sweltering Monday in August 1976, delegates began to arrive at the Kemper Arena in Kansas City, Missouri, for the start of the Republican National Convention. Unlike today's tightly scripted party conventions, which have become little more than four-day infomercials, the outcome of this convention was in serious doubt. The presumptive nominee was President Gerald Ford, who had assumed the office only after the resignations of Spiro Agnew and Richard M. Nixon. His challenger was Ronald Reagan, the conservative former governor of California, who could seize the presidential nomination by winning over a comparative handful of uncommitted delegates. It was a moment of high and historic drama. As Rick Perlstein relates, when the delegates arrived at the arena, they were to be greeted by "what was supposed to be a stirring sight": a fifty-foot, 1,500-pound inflated elephant soaring overhead. Unfortunately, in "classic 1970s fashion," the beast's stomach had been accidentally punctured by its rigging and it now wallowed limply in the parking lot.

The American public imagination has long preferred to overlook the 1970s, seeing it mainly as a regrettable decade marked in hindsight by embarrassments that were both national (Watergate, stagflation, the oil crisis) and personal (disco, leisure suits, bell-bottom pants, quaaludes, ridiculous hairstyles). Many historians, however, recently have proclaimed its importance as the period in which the conservative movement gained strength, giving rise to neoconservatism as well as the religious Right, and culminating in 1980 with the election of the most conservative president since Calvin Coolidge. Now Rick Perlstein has added to that historical literature with *The Invisible Bridge*, his retelling of the period between Nixon's 1972 reelection and Reagan's challenge to Ford in 1976.

Perlstein is a talented but erratic writer. Emerging from a background in journalism that included a stint at *Lingua Franca*, he entered the ranks of best-selling historians with *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* and *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America*. In all of his books, Perlstein has attempted to chronicle the rise of modern conservatism through a biographical focus on its emblematic leaders. He also seeks to convey the feel and flavor of the period through a sprawling

Geoffrey Kabaservice is the author, most recently, of *Rule and Ruin: The Downfall of Moderation and the Destruction of the Republican Party, from Eisenhower to the Tea Party* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

mass of incident and detail. Unfortunately, all of this history is filtered through a New Journalism writing style that is more annoying than stimulating.

The New Journalism that came into being in the 1960s and 1970s with the work of writers like Tom Wolfe, Hunter S. Thompson and Joan Didion was an attempt to expand the possibilities of journalism by borrowing some of the techniques of novelists. Perlstein partakes of this tradition principally through his hyperactive prose style. He deploys peppy phrases—helicopters "*swoffed*," pundits become "chin-stroking *penseurs*," hotels "were putting on the dog"—and makes frequent resort to italics, capital letters, one-sentence paragraphs, mantra-like repetition, sentence fragments, grammatical solecisms, odd mashups of tense and other writerly pirouettes. He continually inserts himself into the narrative with sarcastic asides that make reading the book akin to watching an episode of the cult television show *Mystery Science Theater 3000*, in which the movie onscreen is drowned out by its wisecracking spectators.

Perlstein's spastic writing detracts from the historical material he presents, which can be captivating. The period from 1973 to 1976 was one in which "America suffered more wounds to its ideal of itself than at just about any other time in its history." These included the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam and the subsequent collapse of its South Vietnamese ally, the shocking revelations of Watergate, congressional investigations into unsavory intelligence operations, and the economic privation produced by the Arab oil embargo and stagflation—not to mention the afflictions of crime, terrorism and urban decay.

Perlstein tells a tale of a divided and unhappy society through vignettes about the return of prisoners of war from Vietnam, demonstrations against skyrocketing food prices, the Watergate hearings, Patricia Hearst's kidnapping and participation in the crimes of the Symbionese Liberation Army, and growing public interest in UFOs and the occult. He describes the success of morally bleak films (like *Death Wish* and *The Parallax View*) and blockbusters (like *The Exorcist* and *Jaws*), along with scares over acid rain and killer bees. He also covers the rise of self-righteous "Watergate baby" Democrats as well as conservative antibusing protests in South Boston and antitextbook protests in West Virginia.

This is hardly a comprehensive history; it barely touches on the music, art, fashion and literature of the period, or phenomena such as the founding of Microsoft and Apple, immigration, deindustrialization, a growing assertion of ethnic identity and the rise of supply-side economics. But even for people who know the history of this period fairly well (or who lived through it), the book contains lots of surprises. Who knew that the first message passed through "tap code" by Vietnam POWs was "Joan Baez sucks," or that one of Nixon's advisers suggested that Americans compensate for higher meat prices by dining on offal? Would an eBay search turn up a "Watergate Scandal" card game ("No one wins,

there are just losers")? Did a *Washington Post* columnist seriously propose that an appropriate response to the energy crisis would be to impose a speed limit on car racing at the Indianapolis 500? Did theaters showing *The Exorcist* really keep kitty litter on hand to soak up audience vomit? Did daredevil Evel Knievel make his ill-fated jump attempt over the Snake River Canyon on the same day that Ford pardoned Nixon?

But the narrative suffers from Perlstein's desire to squeeze the era into a procrustean analytical framework. He posits that the stresses of the mid-1970s split American society into two tribes. One was the "suspicious circles," made up of those who felt that realism and a higher patriotism now required Americans to "question authority," overturn outdated morality, come to grips with the world's complexity, and accept uncomfortable truths about the dark aspects of America's history and the fallibility of its leaders. The other was made up of those who continued to believe that America was "God's chosen nation" and who nostalgically yearned for heroes, simplicity, comforting myths and a return to national innocence.

Perlstein leaves little doubt that he's on the side of the "suspicious circles." The Watergate controversy, he tells us, was "a battle over the meaning of America," pitting rule-of-law idealists against the majority of Americans, who apparently wanted to suspend the First Amendment to end disruptive protests and "who believed, with Richard Nixon, that our neighbors might be our enemies, and our

Perlstein's suspicion-versus-innocence framework is too muddled and historically inapt to hold any real contemporary resonance.

enemies might destroy us." Those in the "suspicious circles," conversely, felt "that all that turbulence in the 1960s and '70s had given the nation a chance to finally reflect critically on its power, to shed its arrogance, to become a more humble and better citizen of the world—to *grow up*." Perlstein laments that the reactionary innocents won the battle, as now even Democrats like Barack Obama praise America as "the greatest nation on earth" and an exception to history. "What does it mean to *truly* believe in America?" Perlstein asks rhetorically. "To wave a flag? Or to struggle toward a more searching alternative to the shallowness of the flag-wavers—to criticize, to interrogate, to analyze, to *dissent*?"

For all Perlstein's desire to spur debate, however, his suspicion-versus-innocence framework is too muddled and historically inapt to hold any real contemporary resonance. The reader's own suspicion grows that Perlstein's motive is not so much to explore the 1970s in all their complexity as to expose the villains who forced America into its alleged contemporary cult of optimism and willful blindness to national faults—and, unsurprisingly, he finds nearly all these moustache-twirlers on the conservative side.

But even a casual viewer of Fox News will know that today's conservatives are simultaneously critics and boosters of America, fearful of its big government and deeply suspicious of its politics and culture while in the same breath maintaining that it is still the envy of the world. Liberals, too, mix censure and approval in their views of the country and its history. Americans of all political stripes are, in Perlstein's terms, both innocents and skeptics in various measures. Their views of government and American institutions are informed by a complicated blend of partisanship, the performance of those institutions, personal experience, media exposure and historical events such as the attacks of September 11, 2001. Americans in decades past held equally complicated and sometimes contradictory views. Any attempt to treat them as political naïfs, as Perlstein does, reveals what historian E. P. Thompson termed "the enormous condescension of posterity."

This ideological agenda makes Perlstein an unreliable narrator—incapable, for example, of attempting any objective evaluation of a complicated historical figure like Richard Nixon. Perlstein is content to present Nixon, largely through the lens of Watergate, as a black-hearted conservative malefactor and two-dimensional doer of dastardly deeds. But this is a tired and indeed anachronistic interpretation that serious historians haven't held for decades. Any fair historical accounting of Nixon's presidency also has to consider his achievements in statecraft, his progressive record on issues from the environment to the arts to Southern school desegregation, and his masterful ability to balance different factions of the Republican Party.

Perlstein offhandedly notes that Nixon had "proposed programs of such dubiously conservative provenance as wage and price controls, a guaranteed minimum income, and the federal Environmental Protection Agency," yet also had been expert at

Few of the right-wing impulses of the 1970s cohered into a unified movement, and conservatism likely would have had limited national impact if not for the singular figure of Reagan.

"damping the ideological passions of his party's right wing." How did he maintain that balance? (And can someone let John Boehner in on the secret?) Perlstein also refers in passing to the "delirious" welcome Nixon received from millions of Egyptians on a visit to Cairo in 1974, after which he went on to almost as rapturous a reception in Jerusalem. Why was that, and doesn't it seem a bit strange in view of America's current unpopularity in the region? And isn't it odd that Nixon, the realpolitik exponent of a foreign policy rooted in pragmatic recognition of the relative decline of American power, should be presented as an enabler of national innocence?

Perlstein's real focus, however, is on his main villain, Ronald Reagan, whose biography unfolds in flashbacks through the first half of the book. Perlstein brings considerable verve and originality to the oft-told tale of Reagan's midwestern boyhood and college years, his radio and movie career, and his job as a pitchman for General Electric. His digressions through Reagan's cultural influences (including Frank Merriwell novels and the Golden Age of Sports) and mentors (such as Hollywood's Lew Wasserman and GE's Lemuel Boulware) are fascinating.

But Perlstein's portrait of Reagan is deeply unflattering. Reagan comes across as a near-lifelong fantasist: "An athlete of the imagination, a master at turning complexity and confusion and doubt into simplicity and stout-hearted certainty." Perlstein implies that Reagan lied about virtually every aspect of his life, consciously molding his past, his physical presentation and his persona in order to come across as a hero and leader to other people. (Not, of course, that Perlstein believes his subject was a truly principled hero, as he infers that Reagan was willing, as head of the Screen Actors Guild, to countenance corrupt insider deals for Wasserman and then to shave his political convictions to meet the business needs of Boulware's GE.) As a politician, Reagan used his appeal to make his blithe optimism and innocence into America's unofficial cult. Reagan promulgated "the belief that America could do no wrong. Or, to put it another way, that if America did it, it was by definition *not* wrong." Reagan's black-and-white moral certainties helped to put an end to the budding American Enlightenment of the 1960s and 1970s, "encouraging citizens to think like children, waiting for a man on horseback to rescue them: a tragedy."

The book's curious title comes from some cynical advice Nikita Khrushchev once gave Nixon: "If the people believe there's an imaginary river out there, you don't tell them there's no river there. You build an imaginary bridge over the imaginary river." The core of Reagan's appeal, in Perlstein's view, was that he used his considerable political gifts to allow people to forget the traumas of the 1970s and recover their cherished myth of America as a blessed and exceptional nation.

Perlstein's assessment of Reagan as a human being is ungenerous at best. He does make some perceptive points about Reagan's preternatural awareness of the camera—

the book's stunning cover photo of him campaigning in his Illinois hometown, arms outstretched and poised dramatically on the bumpers of two cars, is ample testimony to that—and ably dissects Reagan's rhetoric. But he has almost nothing to say about Reagan as a practitioner of politics. This lacuna is highlighted by Perlstein's bizarre decision to devote no more than a few pages to Reagan's eight years as governor of California, or more than a few paragraphs to his seminal 1966 election.

The result is that Perlstein fails to grapple with what made Reagan a successful conservative politician in a liberal state, who would use his broad appeal first to come close to toppling Ford in 1976 and then to win the presidency outright in 1980. Perlstein equates Reagan's early 1960s conservatism with the paranoia of the John Birch Society, but makes little effort to figure out why Reagan was able to campaign as a big-tent Republican or govern as a pragmatist. Perlstein claims that Reagan's goal was to purify the GOP by kicking out all who did not subscribe to rigid conservative principles, when in fact Reagan opposed this sort of ideological cleansing. Reagan told California's conservative activists in 1967 that they had an obligation "not to further divide but to lead the way to unity. It is not your duty, responsibility or privilege to tear down or attempt to destroy others in the tent." He warned that "a narrow sectarian party" would soon disappear "in a blaze of glorious defeat." The conservatives would have booed anyone else off the stage for offering this diagnosis, but they obeyed Reagan.

It's still a mystery why a governor who passed the largest tax increase in his state's history, signed the nation's most liberal abortion bill and no-fault divorce law, and supported gun control and pioneering environmental legislation could have remained a hero to the conservative movement. It would never happen nowadays, but Reagan somehow threaded the needle. It's not enough to say, as Perlstein does, that Reagan was merely opportunistic or sought to blame his actions on the liberals in the California legislature, who were "furtive and diabolical in ways unsullied innocents could not comprehend."

Perlstein loosely ties Reagan's ascent to that of the New Right, a populist and antiestablishment political movement he outlines without defining and which he views as an entirely pernicious development in American history. He dolefully relates the growth of conservative evangelical churches, the creation of political action committees, the rise of activist organizations like the Heritage Foundation and the American Legislative Exchange Council to supplement existing outfits like the American Conservative Union (ACU) and Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), and protests against busing and abortion and the Equal Rights Amendment. Ironically, however, Perlstein buys into conservatives' triumphant accounts, written after Reagan's 1980 presidential election, of the movement's irresistible rise, internal harmony and exquisite coordination. In fact, few of the right-wing impulses of the 1970s cohered into a unified movement, and con-

Perlstein ultimately is purveying a shallow and tendentious version of history that will only convince the already converted: those who believe in the innate baseness of conservatives.

servatism likely would have had limited national impact if not for the singular figure of Reagan.

Take, for example, the perspective of William Rusher, publisher of *National Review* and an important and well-respected liaison between the Old and New Right. In June 1975, he complained that he found it impossible to make contact with the leaders or institutions of the social conservatives:

> Does anybody speak for these people? Is there anybody I can sit down and have a drink with, who has the slightest influence over them and their actions? We traditional or economic conservatives are, as you know, organized up to the eye teeth: in ACU, YAF, etc. But where on earth are the social conservatives?[1]

Nor were all of these developments working in Reagan's favor in the mid-1970s. The incipient religious Right, for example, was drawn to Jimmy Carter in 1976 rather than to anyone on the Republican side. (Rusher thought Carter's nomination "makes it likely . . . that the Democratic Party itself will turn out to be the vehicle of the anti-Establishment conservative-populist trend."[2]) The conservative movement was hardly unified around Reagan, as many preferred younger or harder-edged potential candidates like John Ashbrook, James Buckley, Phil Crane and George Wallace. A lot of conservatives who supported Reagan's challenge to Ford did so out of a sense of resignation; as Ashbrook put it, "Ron has always looked for easy answers and yet, he is the only one conservative at the present time who has national visibility."[3] And Reagan secured the presidency in 1980, despite his role in torpedoing Ford's 1976 candidacy, precisely because he was the one conservative leader who was able to win over a majority of the GOP's moderates.

For a writer who insists that respect for complexity is a moral virtue, Perlstein proffers a surprisingly simplistic analysis. Part of this stems from a lack of original archival research. *Before the Storm* was a splendidly researched book, but in this one he relies mainly upon newspaper clippings available online. Perlstein's analysis is also weakened by his bogus dichotomy of sophisticates versus innocents and his insistence that American society was completely bifurcated into hostile opposing camps, an assertion that was no truer in the 1970s than it is now.

Other shortcomings in Perlstein's analysis stem from the defects of his New Journalism style and his penchant for overstatement. It may be that Spiro Agnew was "that pathetic man a heartbeat away from the presidency," or that "no one trusted much of anything" in the 1970s, or that the 1970s were "suspicious times. Or maybe not. America couldn't decide."

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[1] William A. Rusher to James Gavin, June 3, 1975. William F. Buckley Jr. Papers (Yale University) 34:5.

[2] William A. Rusher to Jameson G. Campaigne Jr., May 10, 1976. William A. Rusher Papers (Library of Congress) 18:6.

[3] John Ashbrook to Michael Djordjevich, March 21, 1975. Rusher Papers 26:3.

These and a dozen other overgeneralizations may be true—but as they say in the writers' workshops, "Show, don't tell."

And while New Journalism–influenced historians can borrow from the techniques of fiction, they have no business at all inventing history, as Perlstein does by giving us the thoughts of an imaginary audience at a Reagan speech on the Panama Canal:

> His listeners remembered those shameful images of the evacuation of Saigon, that line of bodies snaking up the ladder to that shack atop the CIA station chief's home. God's chosen nation, with its tail between its legs. They remembered those Panamanian riots from 1964, and now Panama was being rewarded for rioting—just like those ungrateful Negroes in those Northern cities they had left behind to retire in Florida; they had rioted, and then got more civil rights bills and social programs. . . . And now Jerry Ford was ready to let it happen again.

Dwight Macdonald famously excoriated New Journalism as "parajournalism," which he defined as "a bastard form, having it both ways, exploiting the factual authority of journalism and the atmospheric license of fiction." In passages like the one above, Perlstein doesn't just come close to parahistory—he embraces it.

There's also a basic inconsistency in Perlstein casting nostalgia as a vice, given that his main strength as an author is precisely his ability to spin nostalgic, detailed, you-are-there narratives of events such as the 1976 Republican National Convention. Readers who make it through all eight hundred pages of *The Invisible Bridge* most likely will enjoy immersing themselves in the 1970s and, even more, being able to put the book down and leave that troubled decade.

But Perlstein ultimately is purveying a shallow and tendentious version of history that will only convince the already converted: those who believe in the innate baseness of conservatives. He is not writing what his publisher boasts "is becoming the classic series of books about the rise of modern conservatism in America" in order to investigate and understand but rather to mock and condemn. This is history that sets out to expose the limitations of conservatives but ends up exposing the limitations of the author. Anyone seeking a definitive history of the transition from Nixon to Reagan should look elsewhere. □

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