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## Beware Collusion of China, Russia

By Leslie H. Gelb and  
Dimitri K. Simes

Visiting Moscow during his first international trip as China's new president in March, Xi Jinping told his counterpart, Vladimir Putin, that Beijing and Moscow should "resolutely support each other in efforts to protect national sovereignty, security and development interests." He also promised to "closely coordinate in international regional affairs." Putin reciprocated by saying that "the strategic partnership between us is of great importance on both a bilateral and global scale." While the two leaders' summit rhetoric may have outpaced reality in some areas, Americans should carefully assess the Chinese-Russian relationship, its implications for the United States and our options in responding.

The Putin-Xi summit received little attention in official Washington circles or the media, and this oversight could be costly. Today Moscow and Beijing have

room for maneuver and a foundation for mutual cooperation that could damage American interests.

Specifically, the two nations could opt for one of two possible new courses. One would be to pursue an informal alliance to counter U.S. power, which they see as threatening their vital interests. This path might prove difficult, given competing interests that have burdened relations between Russia and China in the past. Still, stranger things have happened in history between two nations that confront similar challenges. But there is a second possibility. They could play a game of triangular diplomacy similar to the Nixon/Kissinger strategy of the 1970s. In this scenario, Moscow and Beijing could dangle the prospect of a potential alliance or ad hoc cooperative arrangement with the other to gain leverage over Washington and put the United States at a bargaining and power disadvantage.

So far, Russian-Chinese ties appear in large part to be an unintended consequence of American policies aimed at other objectives. Thinking about unintended consequences in foreign policy has never come easily to U.S. policy makers, particularly since the end of the Cold War, when the pursuit of democratic and humanitarian triumphalism has virtually become a form of political correctness among both Republicans and Democrats. Though the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan eventually produced a modest degree of soul-searching, the excitement of the Arab Spring—and the external pressure of the interventionist impulses of Britain and France in particular in Libya and Syria—

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seems to have cut short this much-needed introspection about what works and what doesn't in U.S. foreign policy.

It is ironic that some European countries that are unable to pursue minimally sound economic policies, or to effectively integrate exploding immigrant populations, have developed the irresistible temptation to promote Europe as a model for the rest of the world—if, of course, the United States supplies the muscle. Taking into account their own history, it is especially curious that these Europeans should not recognize the increasingly apparent reemergence globally of traditional power politics at the expense of their social-engineering vision of peace through democracy.

In fact, the future in many ways now resembles the past, with competing power centers and clashing values. As historian Christopher Clark writes in his magisterial work on the origins of World War I, “Since the end of the Cold War, a system of global bipolar stability has made way for a more complex and unpredictable array of forces, including declining empires and rising powers—a state of affairs that invites comparison with the Europe of 1914.” While his stark comparison may seem excessive, there is reason for concern that the current multipolar confusion could once again evolve into two loose alliances or ad hoc alignments increasingly at odds with one another.

America's conventional wisdom virtually dismisses the possibility of a global realignment set in motion by China and Russia, which feel threatened by American and

European policies and by having to function in the world's Western-made system. And, whatever the likelihood of a lasting alliance between the two based on their particular strategic interests and values, even a temporary tactical arrangement could have a huge and lasting impact on global politics. Remember the short-lived Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which in less than two years had dramatic consequences for the world on the eve of World War II. Hardly anyone in London or Paris could conceive of such a diplomatic development.

True enough, much stands in the way of a genuine Chinese-Russian alliance: a history of mutual mistrust; the combination of China's sense of superiority and Russia's imperial nostalgia; China's declining need for Russian technology, including military hardware; Russia's wariness of substantial Chinese investment in Siberia's energy development; and the fact that in the long run, China and Russia alike need more from the United States and the European Union than from each other.

Nevertheless, Chinese and Russian leaders will measure these very important differences against fundamental interests that Beijing and Moscow have in common. First and foremost, both face challenges to the very legitimacy of their rule as well as serious challenges from restless ethnic and religious minorities. Accordingly, they are highly sensitive to outside influence in their political systems. And make no mistake, what U.S. and European politicians consider noble efforts to promote freedom and democracy look like hostile efforts at regime change to Chinese and Russian leaders.



Foreign guidance on governance to countries with different histories, traditions and circumstances is rarely welcomed, particularly by proud major powers.

Second, despite the fact that Russia's leaders played a critical part in destroying the Soviet Union, the West generally has treated Russia as heir to the USSR's policies and objectives. Thus did NATO expand to incorporate not only the former Warsaw Pact but also the three Baltic states. And it has declared its intent to admit Ukraine and Georgia. More broadly, in almost every dispute between Russia and other former Soviet states, even with the authoritarian and repressive Belarus, the United States and the European Union have sided with Moscow's opponents. This creates an impression that the West's top priorities, long after the Cold War, include not merely containing Russia but also transforming it.

Similarly, the United States has supported China's neighbors in nearly all disputes with that country, including territorial disputes. This is not only the case with respect to traditional U.S. allies, such as Japan and the Philippines, but also with Vietnam, which is no more democratic than China and represents a painful episode in American history. The Obama administration's pivot, while weak on substance, has contributed to China's narrative of encirclement. From an American standpoint, these moves make sense, and many Asian nations welcome the pivot. But Beijing predictably sees it as a threat. Thus, it isn't surprising that during President Barack Obama's recent



two-day summit with Xi Jinping at Rancho Mirage, California, the Chinese leader kept the atmospherics positive but evaded any concessions on major issues currently separating the two countries.

China and Russia want to break out of what appears to many in both countries as a new “dual containment” policy, and they also wish to reshape a global political and economic system they see as created by and for the United States and the West to their own benefit. Russian and Chinese leaders instantly see their nations disadvantaged when they hear that they should be “responsible stakeholders” in supporting decisions made in Washington and Brussels, when they see the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund operating largely as instruments of Western policy, and when they experience the United States and the European Union regularly orchestrating the international financial system to advance their own interests. More important, all this stimulates a desire to reshape the global rules to accommodate their power and their aspirations. A number of emerging regional powers seem to share these sentiments.

*Make no mistake, what U.S. and European politicians consider noble efforts to promote freedom and democracy look like hostile efforts at regime change to Chinese and Russian leaders.*

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No wonder leading Russian commentator Andranik Migranyan asks rhetorically whether, notwithstanding many common Russian and U.S. interests, there might be “a greater convergence in Russian and Chinese interests on the matter of containing Washington’s arrogant and unilateral foreign policy that attempts to dominate the world.”

Similar concerns are seen in Beijing and Moscow when the United States pushes them on hot-button issues such as Syria, Iran and North Korea. Certainly, pushing is the right course for Washington. The United States needs their help on these matters, and China and Russia do have their own worries about these countries. But those worries are not necessarily equal to America’s, and they have other important priorities to consider. Accordingly, they don’t feel comfortable being yoked to American interests, especially when they don’t see much effort by Washington to engage in genuine give-and-take or to significantly accommodate their interests in these troubled lands.

Many in Washington seem to believe that notwithstanding the frustrations and ambitions of Chinese and Russian decision makers, they inevitably will wish to avoid rocking the boat in their relations with the United States and the European Union. The European Union is China’s number-one trading partner, while the United States is number two—and Russia comes in at number nine. Likewise, the European Union is Russia’s top trade partner, with China a distant second. The United States is number four on Russia’s list, after Ukraine.

China and Russia also have a huge stake in the stability of the euro and particularly the dollar, since a large share of their central-bank reserves is held in these currencies. And China’s holdings of U.S. debt give Beijing a big interest in America’s fiscal solvency.

Despite these close economic ties, however, history demonstrates that economic interdependence only goes so far in preventing international conflict. Indeed, U.S.-Japanese economic interdependence actually contributed to tensions before World War II. Likewise, before World War I, Britain and Germany were each other’s top trading partners. Russia and Germany were economically intertwined before they went to war against each other in 1914—and also before Germany’s invasion of the USSR in June 1941. The decisions to go to war in these cases clearly demonstrate that economic interests may be quickly subordinated to national-security concerns and domestic political priorities when disagreements reach the boiling point.

This is why it is a mistake to assume that Washington or Brussels can essentially continue to set the global agenda and decide upon international actions. China and Russia alike agree with the United States and the European Union that it would be better to see Iran and North Korea without nuclear weapons and to avoid Taliban rule in Afghanistan. From Moscow’s perspective as well as Beijing’s, however, these mutual interests are secondary when set against their efforts to retain influence in Central Asia or East Asia and particularly their desire for stability at home.

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Looking to the future, we cannot know the precise consequences of a Sino-Russian alliance if one should emerge. Among other factors, the results would depend on the durability of the arrangement, the strength of the conflicting interests pushing Beijing and Moscow apart, and the magnitude of the pressure from the United States and its allies pushing them closer together. Nevertheless, the Cold War was not so long ago that Americans cannot envision a polarized world, with increasing diplomatic stalemate or worse.

Regarding Iran, imagine if China and Russia offered Tehran security guarantees or promised to rebuild its nuclear infrastructure after a U.S. or Israeli attack. In Syria, we already see the results of having Russia on the other side and China sitting on the fence. Or imagine Chinese support for guerrillas in the Philippines or Kremlin encouragement of Russian-speaking minorities in Latvia and Estonia. If U.S. relations with Russia and China sour, these nightmares can't be excluded.

Russia and particularly China already are steadily increasing and modernizing their military capabilities. For now, Washington is responding with caution to avoid the appearance of overreacting. But picture what might happen if those militaries continue to grow and maneuver worldwide, especially in cooperation with each other. It isn't that war would become likely between the West and these other superpowers. But tensions and conflicts could grow; hot spots could further fester, à la Syria. Great-power animosities would seriously complicate international efforts

at crisis management. This all would make international life that much more uncomfortable, if not also dangerous. It certainly would create a specter of miscalculation, escalatory pressure and sense of crisis. And there would be nasty consequences for U.S. prospects for prosperity.

A world of a Sino-Russian alliance or even triangular diplomatic games is certainly not inevitable. But it is a risk the West must be much more aware of. Moreover, making it less likely does not require surrender or appeasement. The United States, Europe, Japan, South Korea, and numerous other allies and friends around the world have enough power and leverage to discourage leaders in Beijing or Moscow who might set aside their own conflicts and seek to disadvantage the United States and the West. But a tough-minded yet prudent American foreign policy based on the world as it actually is would realistically evaluate the interests of other powers and take them into account in order to reduce the risk of provoking a counterbalancing global coalition. Thus, U.S. foreign policy should pay more attention to the benefits of working with Russia and China and taking into account their fundamental interests. Obviously, U.S. leaders must stand their ground on matters of national concern. But more cooperation with Russia and China should be on their minds. Such cooperation is not a reward for good behavior. It's the best and perhaps the only way to defuse crises and reduce international stalemate; it is also a fundamental U.S. national interest. □

# *Wasting the Golden Hour in America's Iraq Meltdown*

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*By James C. Clad*

**I**n late April 2003, I rode in an open car down Baghdad's wide-open airport highway. U.S. Army and Marine units had seized the city just two weeks before, at the end of a short invasion. I had come to Iraq for a few months, detailed to the White House from another agency, and I was heading that morning to Basra, the southern city occupied by the British Army.

At the airport, I climbed into a C-130, an old model of the transport workhorse with just a few tiny windows. We were heading for a first official visit to the British zone, traveling with the retired U.S. Army general Jay Garner, the three-star commanding the occupation authority called the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA). When taking the job, Garner expected that his ad hoc occupation entity, and its anodyne acronym, would disappear in three months or less, leaving the Iraqis to rule themselves.

It was not to be. As a dazzling dawn broke over Mesopotamia, Garner already had become the invasion's first political casualty, the terms of his engagement rewritten back in Washington, changed from "rapid departure" to "indefinite stay." From my marginal place, I saw Garner working hard at what needed doing, predicated on our need to get out of Iraq

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**James C. Clad** was deputy assistant secretary of defense for Asia-Pacific security affairs from 2007 to 2009. He now advises the Center for Naval Analyses in Arlington, Virginia.

almost as quickly as we had arrived.

Settling into the airplane's canvas seats, his staff fussed over briefing books. Our eyesight was dim as the outside glare yielded abruptly to the plane's darkness. When our eyes adjusted, we saw boxes and equipment secured on the rollway between seats placed parallel to the fuselage. The old plane lifted into the sky; quite soon, tactics like tight takeoffs or the release of missile-distracting flares would become routine, as fears grew of ground-to-air attacks. For the moment, though, the country lay prone, unsure of our next moves, and we felt no fear of new attacks. The day before, I had walked around the old city, even meandering through the ancient book market.

Inside the plane, just in front of me, more shapes became discernible in the gloom. Astonished, I saw tiny lights blinking; they were from intravenous pumps and vital-sign monitors attached to heavily medicated soldiers strapped to stretchers. The war had ended two weeks earlier, yet here were new casualties. I looked around: C-130 noise levels famously doom all but short, shouted conversation. If you try to speak, you must also use pantomime; mouthing "WATER" also requires hand gestures mimicking the act of drinking. I remember thinking, "What word and gesture can alert others on the plane to these lives ebbing away unnoticed in front of us?" I locked eyes on a staffer sitting on the other side of the prone figures. He saw it too.

As the plane flew south, I realized that

*On that dawn flight to Basra, we might—had we been paying attention—have sensed the urgency of the brief moment in which we still held the initiative.*

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these sedated soldiers were badly wounded, their faces locked in unreachable repose. These first postinvasion casualties gave me an almost-visceral jolt, a mute warning of dangers to come and a sign of the risks and vulnerabilities that always surface when conquerors presume too much from victory. I had been a war correspondent in Asia and had also covered the 1980s Iran-Iraq war, but this was my first time in Iraq. I didn't know much. But I knew these casualties were tied to a very short fuse in this country. Here we sat, victors in a sullen nation, only nominally in charge of a society debased by wars and sadism.

On that dawn flight to Basra, we might—had we been paying attention—have sensed the urgency of the brief moment in which we still held the initiative. Even then, in the first dawn of our uninvited tenure, the monitor lights had turned amber. Even in the first exuberance of conquest, that moment and many others should have given cause for pause.

Then we arrived in Basra, center of the British occupation zone. The visit's agenda—lines of authority, intended occupation outcomes, the usual fuss and feathers—dominated staff meetings over the next two days. Not long afterward, street ambushes and IEDs would increase, as would the risk of simply walking the streets. All that lay a few weeks away, but some in ORHA and the U.S. military could see that we were already losing the "Golden Hour," a term taken from trauma-response medicine but, in politics, connoting the brief slot of time in which the gods of

favorable fortune may still be summoned. As James Stephenson chronicled, this term was widely used from the beginning of the occupation. I think we lost that moment only a few weeks after taking the country. Sands from the Golden Hourglass started emptying from the moment we arrived, even before our most egregious missteps (sweeping de-Baathification, abolishing the Iraqi Army, marginalizing the Sunnis—actions that the prevailing consensus today, a decade on, now sees as irreparable blunders). Back then, with an awful dictatorship eliminated and the air suffused with freedom, the occupier's task seemed possible. Daunting, but possible. But what we did from the get-go made it otherwise.

Recently published or broadcast ten-year Remembrances of the 2003 Iraq invasion rarely touch on the victory itself, as if history has become indifferent to the short, swift defeat inflicted on Saddam's regime. So much of the war's messy aftermath lies in the same demoralization that enabled the quick victory, as much of Iraq's military chose to stand aside from the path of our invasion, expecting not to be marginalized as the *quid pro quo*. Our initial appearance of invincibility couldn't overawe them indefinitely.

But there's another story: few if any preconditions for a successful occupation of *any* duration existed in Iraq. Those that did we eliminated in rapid order.

Specifically, we failed: to understand that large parts of the Iraqi armed forces did not feel beaten; to realize that we had days, not months, to establish a tough,

firm authority—a shortcoming that went far beyond our tolerating the initially unrestrained, but highly publicized, looting; to keep the distraction of venal émigrés, carpetbaggers, contractors, NGOs and aid agencies to a minimum; to listen to ideas about occupation policy from our three major foreign allies, Australia, Britain and Japan; to give *genuine* plenipotentiary authority to the occupation chief, in order to reduce backbiting and disarray; to understand the basic precepts of Political Economy 101 (i.e., to “follow the money” and “co-opt the locals”); and to throw aside government oversight and auditing rules and maximize fast initial spending for immediate impact, leaving oversight and auditing until later. On this last point, small constraints had big impact; for example, life-insurance policies would only be honored if occupation staff traveled in convoys organized by security personnel,



a good way to get killed. So people stayed inside the compound and didn't get out.

In 1964, General Douglas MacArthur published his book, *Reminiscences*, describing his agenda for occupying Japan

in 1945. He wrote that the country “had become the world’s great laboratory for an experiment in the liberation of a people from totalitarian military rule and for the liberalization of government from within.” He went on to say that his policies there were to

destroy the military power. Punish war criminals. Build the structure of representative government. Modernize the constitution. Hold free elections. Enfranchise the women. Release the political prisoners. Liberate the farmers. Establish a free labor movement. Encourage a free economy. Abolish police oppression. Develop a free and responsible press. Liberalize education. Decentralize the political power.

MacArthur never hesitated to tout his leadership skills, but his ambitious checklist had a chance of success only because Japan was so “completely destroyed by the war,”

as the general put it. The utter destructiveness of the Allied victory over Germany also enabled an assertive and intrusive occupation there. In both countries, the incoming occupation structure demanded and won immediate authority.

The legacy of these successful occupations is a fixed mental template about occupation practice, which in 2003 exerted a strong grip on neoconservative and Wilsonian enthusiasts keen to transform Iraq. As with Nazis or Shinto militarists, Iraq’s Baathist structure and functionaries would be eliminated. Yet the postinvasion

occupation found little in Iraq analogous to Germany’s or Japan’s absolute defeat. Iraq and Iraqis did not lie supine at the conqueror’s feet. The underappreciated psychological operations (PSYOPS) by the

U.S. Central Command had sent a basic message to the Iraqis—"If you don't fight us, we will look after you." This reached Iraqi officers in many ways—via mobile phones, radio and even in air-dropped paper leaflets the size of dollar bills.

"All this," as Republican Guard Corps commander Raad al-Hamdani told me, "was nothing less than a battlefield promise for us, a matter of honor." This was the general who, during the invasion, launched the only serious Iraqi counterattack, on the night of April 2. I had cause to remember his words: in mid-May 2003, I walked among Iraqi officers milling near the ORHA palace and found them quite unable to believe we had decided to disband the preexisting military. Much criticism has been aimed at that decision, but the operative part for the Iraqis—their sense of a betrayal of a "battlefield promise"—holds true even today. Several years later, I saw how deeply felt that "betrayal" had become when working through back channels to peel disbanded officers away from Al Qaeda—a movement these same officers had ruthlessly suppressed in preinvasion Iraq.

The *demeanor* of our occupation also foreshortened the Golden Hour. The de-Baathification order in May 2003 led a long queue of MacArthur-like edicts. The British and other coalition countries had little input into these actions. An aide to the British counterpart of Jerry Bremer, administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), describes as "a very close-run thing" a diversionary effort by the British to head off an edict legitimizing capital punishment. Others privatized state-owned businesses and liberalized commerce. Worthy? Maybe. Workable? No.

Washington's lack of consensus about the war affected occupation conduct and assertiveness. Contemporary reportage and more recent retrospectives miss the impact

of incessant second-guessing and snide back-channeling on occupation conduct. Well briefed by factional favorites in Washington, Iraqi politicians coming into ORHA already knew the weak points—that Garner would be replaced, that a decision to remain in Iraq indefinitely was in the cards.

In the first month, before the decision to stay on indefinitely became irrevocable, the closest allies in Iraq—Australia, Britain and Japan—failed to present the Bush administration with a set of common views. Senior representatives from these countries preferred a less ambitious, shorter occupation. Though President George W. Bush could be stubborn, he listened carefully to trusted allies. But each country chose a bilateral agenda instead, losing a chance to insist jointly on a shorter occupation. Early on, the British offered to send a large number of royal paratroopers to Baghdad; when I told this to Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz in June, he almost had a seizure. He suspected it was a case of military jealousy: "You mind your town; we'll mind ours." An American officer familiar with this never-publicized offer said Britain had acted because of Washington's decision not to deploy the First Cavalry Division to Iraq. "The Brits recognized we didn't have enough troops on the ground at the center of gravity of Iraq," says Paul Hughes, then a colonel with ORHA. The British proposal would have put 1,300 or more vitally needed, street-smart soldiers into a Baghdad wracked by looting and lawlessness.

Remorseless media attention amplified policy tussles and telegraphed indecisiveness to the Iraqis. ORHA's media-management section, to which I was briefly detailed, spent most of its time cultivating major American media despite urgent "messaging" needs for the Iraqi people. The State Department's Margaret Tutwiler arrived

to try to beat some sense into ORHA's messaging. Her approach: the more outlets, the better. The British, by contrast, permitted only one newspaper—their newspaper. They closed down all AM-radio outlets except their own, even dynamiting at least ten AM-radio broadcast towers around Basra. A UK major tasked with controlling media explained: “One message. *Our* message.” When ORHA's first road convoy left Kuwait for Baghdad, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's assistant gave those assembled the message that they would be out of Iraq in ninety days.

Well-known missteps occurring afterward simply deepened the hole into which we had dug ourselves after victory. The defeated Iraqis had sufficient eyesight to see—in favoritism shown to Ahmad Chalabi or in the returning émigrés demanding reinstatement of lands seized thirty years earlier—the skewed priorities of a stumbling occupation.

**T**hat's the macro picture. At the individual level some seized the initiative. Britain's Simon Elvy, senior adviser at the Iraqi Ministry of Planning, and American Eugene Stakhiv (in the same role in Iraq's irrigation-and-water ministry) showed authority and skill. Elvy told me he had felt uncomfortable with the rigid, top-down de-Baathification order, which targeted the top three “layers” and “levels” of Baathists.

At his ministry, Elvy assembled senior staff and simply asked for names on paper of all “the fearful people here.” He then ran the most frequently cited names past a group of people not mentioned at all in the first cut. In this way, Elvy smoked out the secret police who would otherwise have eluded the “levels and layers” law but couldn't escape peer identification as being “fearful.” Elvy sacked them and the place resumed functioning.

Stakhiv used a similar approach within

a much bigger structure, employing some personal flourishes. At his first meeting, he asked the Iraqi bureaucrats who was in charge. All the more prominent political figures had fled; most of those remaining had, necessarily, become Baathists during their engineering and hydrologist careers. Gene knew he needed their technical skills. They had begun a technical meeting when “one director-level guy put up his hand and said he wouldn't obey my orders because Iraq ‘had become a democracy’ with Saddam's departure.” There are many ways to show authority; Gene chose one to which the Iraqis could readily relate. He pulled a little Beretta revolver out of his holster and placed it on the table. “Any more democracy talk today?” he asked.

“This was no time for consensus building,” he later told me. “We all knew what the priorities were, and we all had to pitch in and get the job done—the beginning of the irrigation season was only a month away.”

Stakhiv was senior in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and managed to retain crucial technical staff, backing up this bravado by traveling unescorted with tribal sheikhs to the Shatt al-Arab, where policies going back to the British period (1918–1958) had drained the marshes, a policy imposed with rigor by Saddam after 1991 to deny Shia insurgents a sanctuary. Seeking waivers from de-Baathification strictures, Stakhiv bombarded the CPA with memos, one of which concluded with a plea to “not throw out the babies with the Baath-water.”

Others in ORHA also showed flair: Andrew Erdmann served as an adviser to the education ministry and drove over to a volatile University of Baghdad campus, where anxious students and professors needed a show of authority and purpose. Don Eberly, a political appointee at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), became an adviser to the ministry





of youth and sport, formerly run tightly by one of Saddam's sons. Eberly organized a spread of soccer matches all around the city, defusing tensions and igniting optimism in the occupation.

Others showed refreshing indifference to bureaucratic rule books. The Office of Transition Initiatives, a part of USAID, sent tough and experienced contractors into "Saddam City" (now "Sadr City"), where they cleaned streets and collected rubbish in that vast slum. And Civil Affairs officers attached to battalion headquarters set up in each of Baghdad's fifteen districts showed a similar initiative. I spent a day with one such command in mid-April: the lieutenant colonel in command showed amazing resourcefulness. Not least, Japan's senior representative to ORHA, a rugby-playing diplomat named Katsuhiko Oku, ignored protocol and drove around Baghdad in a thin-skinned Toyota with his younger colleague Masamori Inoue, writing checks on the spot to repair electricity substations, shopping centers and water systems. In one aside, Jay Garner compared this can-do behavior to that of fiscally minded bureaucrats from Washington, already in Baghdad and already demanding full receipts for paltry sums needed in the immediate postinvasion situation. Each of these men exemplified the First Rule of

Occupation Practice: show authority and leadership.

Despite early televised "kinetics" showing Baghdad being slammed by precision munitions, Iraqi exhaustion resulted mostly from the impact of 1990s-era sanctions on civilian morale and health. Iraq's hospitals, bridges, roads, railway improvements, and port and storage facilities had risen after the 1970s oil boom, but spending ended just as Saddam began the war against neighboring Iran in 1980, three times the size of Iraq in territory and population. The enormity of this war still escapes Americans.

Consider the gaping hole left by the up to 1.5 million Iraqis and Iranians killed during the 1980s. This Big Death of recent history punched a huge hole in the country's demographics, one still felt today. In many ways, it is still *that* war, and not the one-sided American blitzkrieg in 2003, that hangs over today's Iraq.

I thought about post-Civil War literary clichés in the United States about the town spinster or village widow following the loss of 5 percent of American males during that war. In April, when I visited a U.S.-educated Iraqi engineer at his home, I noticed middle-aged women hovering in the shadows at the rear of his house. They

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were a never-to-be-married sister and a dead brother's widow. "Think about France in the 1920s, where the population pyramid's male side was also savagely indented by the First World War," he said. "That's us, now."

Later that month, in Kirkuk, I admired a quick completion of a receiving facility for refined products from Turkey. The Sunni Arab engineers were in no mood to be humored. "If you hadn't bombed the bridge from the refinery to the storage tanks, we wouldn't have to spend money to truck in Turkish kerosene and bribe the *peshmerga* [the Kurdish militia]." They were just getting warmed up. "You think we are like those effeminate sissies [the exact Arabic word was more direct] from the Gulf, who grow their fingernails long to show they don't do manual work?" I caught the full blast now: "We are Iraqis! We know how to do things!"

Iraq's infrastructure in that April had emerged relatively unscathed. The rapid U.S. advance explained this, in part, but it also happened by design. A British general in the joint U.S.-British command structure, Albert Whitley, "saved" the Iraqi railways by removing them from the target lists. When I saw Whitley at the newly reopened British embassy's first reception in early May, he reluctantly acknowledged that he'd "played a role." His staff went further, calling him, for real or in jest, a "self-confessed 'train spotter.'" "What was I supposed to do?" he asked over a gin and tonic. "They were going to destroy the Iraqi railways."

Reconstruction meant money. The occupation promised a better life, which

meant repairs, new construction and a rapid resurgence of prosperity remembered from the 1970s. The many OMB and inspector-general reports since 2003 have focused on waste and mismanagement in U.S. contracting, but attention given to these factors misses a major occupation error—the failure to use Iraqi technical proficiency. We needed them, including their eyes and ears: local technicians would prevent sabotage. Iraqi contractors waited for a call that never came.

"Following the money" usually means intelligence agencies greasing the skids. Reporting from Afghanistan about cash subsidies in Kabul reveals a familiar story. But the smart money in Iraq cared little for suitcases full of cash. We needed to be conversant and friendly with Iraqi business families, a different matter from buying off a warlord here or a general there. It meant making journeys such as a trip I made to the lobby of London's Dorchester Hotel, opposite Hyde Park, where I met the cunning, elderly nephew of a 1950s Iraqi finance minister. This man, who likes to be called Abu Mohamad, described how he and other traders kept Iraq's currency stable until the invasion. Abu Mohamad and his peers are as essential to Iraq as were the Fugger family of Augsburg and other bankers to Renaissance princes.

**I**n February of the invasion year, I joined a newly formed Office of Global Communications at the White House, created after 9/11 to address the "Why Do They Hate Us?" question. I went to Qatar in the same month to work on the public-affairs

side of U.S. Central Command preinvasion preparations.

When Baghdad fell, I went to Kuwait tasked with a vague brief to help “stand up” a new and independent Iraqi media. The White House detail lasted until early June, but I returned to Iraq in various guises in later months and years. The initial plan for a new Iraqi media involved closing regime outlets and channeling funds toward what one American adviser hoped would become the “*Wall Street Journal* of Iraq.” This paper, *Al-Sabah*, made its appearance before the risks of collaboration with the occupation had become too high.

What we needed then was a reliable daily broadsheet. We also needed at least a month’s suppression of publications or radio programming that were adding confusion and inciting opposition. We needed, here also, to show authority. Iraqis expected it. Bremer’s two-page May 7, 2003, presidential letter of appointment gave him full plenipotentiary powers, but that was not how the occupation behaved. A well-intentioned policy permitting an “anything goes” media in Baghdad created unrest and delegitimized the occupation. No number of newly arrived public-affairs reservists could fix that fundamental defect. We spent time each day in damage-control mode reacting to yesterday’s mischief.

One April evening, ORHA staffer Paul Hughes and I lay spread-eagled on the roof of the riverside palace, chosen as ORHA headquarters. We watched, in high vertical procession, flare after red flare hovering over a distant highway, signaling U.S. Army units moving around the city, different colors indicating the convoy’s composition.

We discussed how most officers of the Iraqi Army and Special Republican Guard were coming into the city in good order and awaiting further instructions. This is what Raad al-Hamdani had meant, though he

had followed orders to defend the regime and hadn’t “stood aside.” While the U.S. Third Army destroyed his Medina Division, most other units had survived. Conscripts had disappeared after the war, but the officer corps remained intact.

“The intent of Raad’s comment is accurate,” Hughes said years later, after he had served on the Iraq Study Group, created in 2006 to reassess the war and make recommendations for changing U.S. policy toward Iraq. “The Iraqi military fully thought they would be part of the solution.”

Between the battlefield success of PSYOPS and the decision to cast aside the existing military lay a major disconnect. We had the skills, then, to weed out the psychopathic ideologues using informers and “smart” occupation practices—like those used by Simon Elvy. But American legalism and a false equivalency between Iraq and the experience of the defeated Axis powers nearly sixty years earlier gave us instead a one-size-fits-all decision.

A former under secretary of defense in the 1990s, Walter Slocombe, had taken the ORHA senior advisory position for the Iraqi defense ministry, but he was the very last “adviser” to arrive in Baghdad. When he did, one of his aides told me: “We are committing a colossal blunder. If we disperse the Iraqi officer corps, we will let loose literally thousands of men, all with weapons training and combat experience, men not beholden to us in any way.” Returning from his first visit to Iraq in June, Wolfowitz called me about this subject. I had raised the issue of the Iraqi Army’s disbandment when seeing him in the Pentagon just before he went to Baghdad. “It’s too late to change it now,” he reported on his return.

The recent ten-year retrospectives on the war have revisited familiar charge sheets: all casus belli fabricated; no WMD; no postinvasion plans worthy of the name;



and giving carte blanche to lowlife looters to steal office furniture, national antiquities and girls on the street. And then the crowning ineptitude: disbanding the army and evicting all Baathists. Retrospectives see the war as a type of kinetic midwifery, a one-sided and spasmodic prelude to “what came next.” The “strategic error” cited by Brent Scowcroft, national-security adviser to the realist Bush, George H. W. Bush, haunts us still—namely, the invasion’s tilting of strategic advantage toward Iran, just as our abrupt unseating of the Taliban had done eighteen months earlier.

A long line of cautionary advice, from Xenophon or Machiavelli to many shelves of U.S. military after-action reports, shows the same conclusion: conquerors of restless lands have tightly rationed time limits within which they must show authority, replace or neutralize enemy elites, and tilt history in favorable ways. Then they must leave. On every marble lintel over all our armed-services academies, the following words should be chiseled: get the hell out of wherever you’ve landed, and get out fast.

America’s occupation experience mostly rests on short-duration expeditionary wars or punitive actions, each with a different

tempo. In these ostensibly short-duration conflicts, the task differs from conquest. In these events, we make our point and get out. Today we fancy ourselves distant from the eighteenth- or nineteenth-century strutting of imperial powers, never hesitant to teach the natives a lesson or give them a whiff of grapeshot. Our own nineteenth-century expeditionary annals show many obscure forays in “lesson teaching,” in places such as the Barbary Coast,

Sumatra and Samoa. But we also sent a light force (just seven thousand troops) to seize Mexico City in 1847 and occupy it just long enough to force a peace treaty on the Mexicans. In the Spanish-American War, we seized more land and embroiled ourselves in occupation and counterinsurgency. Occupation is much tougher than lesson teaching but, in both cases, the Golden Hour ticks away, a severely constrained window of time, a “moment” lasting an hour or a month, offering a brief chance to overwhelm, overawe and then call it quits on our terms.

Films and books about the American experience in Iraq usually portray a type of sullen death-dealing competence by lethal twenty-somethings. The films treat the place as mere backdrop, in much the same way the video gamers use “terrorist settings” as a stage to blow away opponents. Iraq as a place—actual, cultural, strategic—still eludes basic understanding. The sense of history even deserted the British in this last invasion, but in earlier times they had absorbed it in good measure. I remember American officials at a preinvasion meeting in Washington belittling the British role in Iraq after 1914 on the notion that they had

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“failed” because their tenure in Iraq lasted “only” forty years.

So why has the American public shown so little interest in the invasion’s aftermath? Perhaps it’s because the Iraqis haven’t been supine. They reluctantly welcomed our removal of a regime whose level of violence and torture still astounds; in buildings near ORHA’s old monarchical palace headquarters, our teams came across DVDs recording torture scenes for the amusement of Saddam’s sons. A mother and child being fed to lions. Rapes. Snuff films.

Thus, one might want to consider the good that we also did. I remember a naval reserve officer, Sandy Hodgkinson, who went out each morning in April 2003, looking for the mass graves filled with the former regime’s victims. She found them soon enough. Day after day, she traveled under minimal escort to wretched locations where local people, hushed and sad yet frantic with a strange type of traumatized hope, pointed out mounds where people had been killed and bulldozed into trenches. As ORHA’s weeks lengthened, more atrocity graves came to notice. Documented with initial forensic work, the graves revealed in abundance a justification for war that the WMD canard failed to provide.

Here’s the point: crudely put, these exhumations could have bestowed upon the invasion an exculpatory rationale, an ample charge sheet justifying (for certain audiences) the type of “humanitarian intervention” doctrines popular among hand-wringing think tanks during the Bill Clinton era. But after just a few days, mass graves ceased to be good copy.

The advantage slipped from our grasp. Meanwhile, we were giving a cold shoulder to Al Jazeera, even though it had—then—a strong grip on opinion in what is known as the Arab street.

Neither retrospective nor early reportage comes close to an interesting complaint I heard from the ORHA military chaplain as staff on off-duty hours were watching escapist action films screened on the blank palace wall. “We are not a curious people,” said the chaplain. I’ve thought a bit about this in the intervening years. Whatever the arrogance of European imperialism, there were periods when that continent also took an interest in places that were being explored, mapped or invaded by Europeans.

Consider Alexander in Persia, Napoleon in Egypt or the British in Asia. In just a three-year occupation of Java in the early nineteenth century, the governor wrote a two-volume encyclopedia about the place. What set these conquests apart from other depredations, aside from blood and the overwhelming of subject territories? I think the answer is “curiosity.”

Back in World War I, the British Indian Army took four years to get from Basra to Baghdad. Mishandling the aftermath led to a revolt in 1920–1922. But an abiding reality of that experience, apparent in the writings of T. E. Lawrence, Gertrude Bell and others influencing British policy, was an insatiable curiosity about the place. Earlier European archaeological discoveries, in Nineveh and Ur before the First World War, had become common knowledge. Even if we call this “Orientalism” and

steeply discount it for abundant European condescension, the British in Mesopotamia, like the French in Egypt a century before, at least realized they had shot their way into a very deep place. The British knew Iraq held claim to the world's earliest literature, the earliest crop-rotation schemes and organized city-states. After a week's diet of Hollywood sitcom films and other escapist fare, the chaplain sought to locate BBC or National Geographic documentary films about Arabia and about Iraq's history and archaeology.

But the chaplain, to put it gently, was out of sync with staff preferences. In the same week, Garner commented about ORHA staff spending time "sending e-mails to each other, instead of getting out and learning something about the place we've just taken over."

So, there it is. By sharply imposing our authority, by delimiting our time on the ground and by working Iraqi opportunism to our advantage, we had a chance to make a go of it. The ten-year retrospectives appearing in March would have had much sport with whatever problems our invasion had spawned, with all the usual shortcomings and omissions that always open up between the perfect and the passable. But there would not have been the sense of a monumental blunder hanging over subsequent years.

In Iraq, the Golden Hour dissipated very quickly: Garner heard the figurative clock ticking loudly during his brief tenure, but others, more naive, assumed we had both the will and capability to apply a transformational agenda at our leisure. Besides, couldn't the Iraqis see that we *meant* well?

In the end, we had far less time than we thought—though, like every story about nightmare guests, that didn't prevent us from staying on and on, each new month seeing the enmity against us deepen and

our own missteps multiply. Xenophon, Herodotus, Thucydides and others devoted a lot of time to thinking about blunders big and small that, once committed, could not be undone. Shakespeare and Machiavelli also pondered what we might call, taking liberties, "occupation best practices." And passages in the classical Indian work *Arthashastra*, often compared to Machiavelli's *The Prince*, describe how every misstep costs a conqueror *time*. In politics, as in sailing across the Chesapeake Bay, course correction requires ever more strenuous efforts to regain the true course.

Like the big clock ticking in *High Noon*, time's rapid passage hung over the brief ORHA experience. Garner's instincts for a quick departure collided with bigger ideas about an Islamic Reformation. As the Russians say, there's nothing as dangerous as a Big Idea. The notion that we can impose democracy by bayonet is one of these, a very persistent weed in our garden. With the neocons and humanitarians, it became last decade's prime example of that mischief for which, several centuries ago, the French coined the perfect phrase: "Treachery of the intellectuals."

Now the bombardiers are at it again, finding new reasons to rain death on recalcitrant regimes—meaning, of course, other human beings—and expend the lives of youth from our deindustrialized valleys and rust-belt states. One lesson looms large: the harder a place, the shorter the Golden Hour. No supine or subject people squirmed under our boot in Iraq. None do in Afghanistan. Acting as if we were overlords, we quickly showed our ignorance of Iraqi history and culture. Our invasion excised a tyranny of quite unbelievable sadism, replacing it with mere incompetence and a vacuum of authority that neither we nor the Iraqis could fill. Nor have they done so in the ten years since we shot our way into town.

Each time we blunder into an intractable situation in which those responsible opt to dig yet deeper—for reasons of personal prestige or “national honor,” pouring yet more good money after bad—we opt for another settled truth. Well, we sure won’t be doing *that* again, will we?



And yet we probably will. America and its closer allies—the Australians, British and now, perhaps again, the Canadians—are expeditionary countries. In the 1991 Gulf War, we nailed down our prestige and power for a decade, demonstrating competence and, when we ceased destroying the Iraqi Army, a type of wisdom in the form of statecraft and restraint. Yet we have no shortage of zealots for intervention in Washington, despite the Iraqi invasion’s mixed outcome. There’s always a good reason, as seen by one lobby or another, to send our armed services out for another expeditionary adventure. Today,

Senator John McCain and many others seem tireless in their advocacy of using force abroad.

I remember Iraqis complaining about American naïveté. “*Weyn Abu Naji?*” they asked. Literally, this phrase meant, “Where is Naji’s father?” but in practice, it meant, “Where are the British?” Then they would always say how “clever” Abu Naji was. The implication was clear: by comparison, the Americans were clueless. There was ample evidence of “cluelessness” on everyone’s part that April, but I do remember episodes of U.S. occupation practice in which we seemed to come off second best.

Permanent conquest carries its own bloody rule book, but we have mostly—not always—shied away from absolute dispossession, though as noted the lands acquired in the Mexican and Philippine wars do show a certain side of us. Singapore’s longtime prime minister Lee Kuan Yew once remarked that the “world of states shares many characteristics of the world of beasts.” Even so, let’s be careful about the places we shoot our way into and the ways we do it. I have never managed to get out of my mind the memory of those prone bodies, wounded soldiers in unreachable repose strapped down in a C-130 cargo plane ten years ago. Like the proverbial coal-mine canaries, their injuries seemed to signal that the Golden Hour was ending. If only we had known. □

# *U.S., China and Thucydides*

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*By Robert B. Zoellick*

Last year, during his visit to the United States, Chinese president Xi Jinping introduced the idea of a “new type of great-power relationship.” In March of this year, in apparent response, President Obama’s national-security adviser, Tom Donilon, suggested an interest in building “a new model of relations between an existing power and an emerging one.” This June, the two presidents met in California to explore whether their strategic outlooks can be reconciled.

I suspect that President Xi’s concept reflects the senior leadership’s study of history. At last year’s meeting of the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue, former president Hu Jintao stated, “We should prove that the traditional belief that big powers are bound to enter into conflict is wrong, and [instead] seek new ways of developing relations between major countries in the era of economic globalization.”

In the United States, professors Graham Allison and Joseph Nye at Harvard have referred to this challenge as “the

Thucydides trap”: in explaining the cause of the great Peloponnesian War of the fifth century BC, Thucydides pointed to the rise of Athens and the fear it inspired in Sparta. In the centuries since, scholars have pondered how power shifts have led to competitive tensions, which sometimes have been managed and sometimes led to conflict.

This essay will pose a question: What might be the *substance* of a new type of great-power relationship between China and the United States?

Kevin Rudd, former prime minister and foreign minister of Australia, has also taken up this topic in a series of thoughtful speeches. His approach points to the need for reinforcing dialogues and cooperative efforts.

I will complement Rudd’s observations by suggesting specific policies that could forge this new type of relationship. I will focus particularly on economic and security issues, as well as on impediments that China and the United States need to address.

In 2005, I suggested that the United States should encourage China to become a “responsible stakeholder” in the international system that had provided a supportive context for China’s extraordinary modernization and economic rise. Deng Xiaoping had shrewdly recognized that China’s opening could capitalize on the existing international system of trade, investment, technology, growth and

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security. Through the hard work of China's people, Deng was proven correct.

Yet the international system of the late twentieth century has to evolve with new times. Responsibilities for preserving and extending systemic interests—and adapting to new challenges—need to be considered as part of great powers' national interests. The United States, China and others will not be able to adapt to an evolving system successfully, however, if they do not share a basic commitment to that international system.

Some observers believe that China has acted like a “reluctant stakeholder,” especially when it comes to translating common interests into complementary policies. In speculating why, they have asked: Is China still debating or adapting to its role? Or, as some voices in China suggest, does China want a new system? If so, what would it look like? Does China want to add different ideological content to international relations—which would represent a shift from past Chinese policy?

These uncertainties have prompted another important query: Have Chinese critics of the current international system considered the costs of, and others' reactions to, new Chinese aims? Not surprisingly, these questions are arising most prominently in the Asia-Pacific region.

Therefore, in considering a possible new type of great-power relationship, we need a serious, in-depth exchange about whether China and the United States share common systemic interests—as well as about specific policies. Interdependence, by itself, will not overcome twenty-first-century problems and threats. We need to consider how economics and security interconnect in today's foreign policy.

**C**hina's astounding economic success—growing on average 10 percent a year for thirty years—has propelled it to become

the second-largest economy in the world, the second-largest trader of goods and services, and the second-largest recipient of foreign direct investment.

But the United States still accounts for about 22 percent of global GDP. Although productivity gains are harder to achieve as advanced economies move to the technological frontier, recent American innovations in energy, software and business models reveal a developed economy that retains an unusual capability to adapt and revitalize itself. In contrast to most other advanced economies—and even many developing ones—the U.S. demographic outlook is modestly positive. U.S. integration with its North American partners also offers good prospects.

Yet a host of global structural shifts, in particular the rapid rise of developing economies, along with the stumbling global revival from the Great Recession, necessitate more changes for China, the United States and the world.

China's developmental challenges are described well in last year's “China 2030” report prepared by the Development Research Center of the State Council along with other Chinese ministries and an international team from the World Bank Group.

The researchers sought to address the basic problem of how China could avoid the so-called middle-income trap—the tendency for productivity and growth to slow after developing economies reach middle-income levels. Our Chinese colleagues wisely recognized that straight-line growth projections rarely come to pass.

Consider this problem in historical perspective: when the World Bank reviewed the performance of 101 economies that the Bank categorized as middle income in 1960, it discovered that by 2008—almost fifty years later—only thirteen had made it to high income. And one was Greece!



China has relied heavily on investment in fixed assets, principally by the government, and on export-led growth. China will need to adapt to global structural shifts: now that developing economies account for half of global output—and indeed about two-thirds of global growth over the past five years—China can no longer base its growth model principally on sales to developed economies.

China needs to change its growth model to rely on greater domestic demand and consumption—as well as on a greater role for the private sector. Investment in human capital will be of increasing importance, as will the encouragement of the innovative spirit of China’s talented people. This shift could also enable more Chinese to benefit from their decades of diligence; in doing so, increased consumption might ease social tensions as well.

The “China 2030” report outlined a pathway to a new growth model that would include: completing the transition to markets for land, labor, enterprises and financing; moving to an open innovation system, so as to enable China to move up the value chain; offering equal opportunity and basic social protections to all Chinese; restructuring fiscal systems to match accountability for revenues and expenditures at various levels of government; cleaning up the environment

and pricing resources for scarcity; and considering the international implications of China’s structural shifts.

I do not expect China’s new leaders to act through any kind of “Big Bang” reform. I do think they—and provincial leaders—will pursue pragmatic experimentation. Prime Minister Li Keqiang has pointed to urbanization as the portal through which China can pursue connected change, combining issues of labor, land,

enterprises, education and other services, consumption, living standards, new infrastructure, housing, sustainability, financing and governance.

Just recognizing the need for change represents a big step forward. In contrast, more than twenty years ago I watched Japan’s political and bureaucratic system resist the need for a new growth model. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe now must pursue bold steps to rectify Japan’s resistance to change.

Yet China’s next reform push will be difficult. The Chinese leadership will need to balance a near-term growth strategy, relying principally on the current economic structure, with the need to change that structure for future growth.

**A** new type of great-power relationship would anticipate the economic and even institutional changes that lie ahead. China and the United States should identify mutual interests in supporting structural reform and “rebalancing” in both countries.

Consider what a search for a new, cooperative economic approach might entail:

- For example, to boost productivity, create jobs, expand entrepreneurial opportunities and increase consumption, China needs to open

competition in the services sector. The Chinese private sector should expand its role. In addition, U.S. and other foreign businesses and investors can bring know-how, technologies and global connections to support an expanded Chinese services sector. This cooperation can help alleviate trade imbalances and frictions while promoting mutual interests.

- China's innovation agenda needs to combine education, technologies, venture capital, network effects, and better intellectual-property-rights protection and enforcement; again, U.S. participation could assist while benefiting the United States and others, too.

- Stronger but flexible social safety nets in China could draw from international experience with insurance, savings and delivery of service models. The United States, in turn, needs to address the costs, financing and incentives of its older and much more expensive safety nets.

- China's food needs—and water conservation—could be assisted by U.S. and foreign products, technologies and systems, including those focused on stronger food safety and quality. More open markets should expand complementary trans-Pacific agribusiness efforts while also boosting living standards.

- There are mutual opportunities in the energy and environmental sectors—including lower-carbon sources, alternative technologies and systems, and experience for clean air, water, biodiversity and land use.

- All these adaptations need to be supported by deeper, more diverse and more liquid markets for savings, credit and investment—while ensuring safety, soundness and effective crisis management. China needs to shift from being a nation of savers with minimal returns to becoming a nation of investors who play a role in China's private-sector development.

- Finally, China, the United States and others need better frameworks to encourage cross investment while managing national security and other sensitivities.

In a sense, China's twenty-first-century leaders can look to the logic of Deng Xiaoping and Zhu Rongji: employ the markets, rules, competition, opportunities and standards of the international economy to foster China's structural reforms and advancement.

The United States also needs structural reforms—especially in pension and health-care systems, tax reform, public-private partnerships for infrastructure, and education connected to skills and jobs. U.S. entitlement programs now cost every man, woman and child in America \$7,400 each year—more than China's income per person.

China and the United States each have good, self-interested reasons to pursue structural reforms and global rebalancing. Yet cooperation can boost mutual prospects and the likelihood of success. Moreover, the effectiveness of Chinese and U.S. reforms will boost global economic conditions and enhance the likelihood of structural reforms elsewhere.

My sense is that the U.S.-Chinese economic dialogues—whether under the headings of “strategic,” joint commercial, G-20, APEC, WTO or other forums—have become too stilted, defensive and unimaginative.

China's new growth agenda and America's recovery offer an opportunity. Both parties need to explore win-win connections. Not all ideas will prove workable. But a new type of relationship could seek creative openings and solutions.

Moreover, as two major economic powers, developed and developing, the United States and China need to consider how their cooperation can catalyze improved regional and global systems.

*The current dialogue has taken up important topics, but too briefly, too infrequently and with limited engagement at the highest levels, where strategic decisions are likely to be made.*

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For example, moves to open up China's service sector—which are in China's own interest—could be deployed to boost the service-sector liberalization negotiations in the World Trade Organization. The WTO Information Technology Agreement (ITA) in the 1990s proved to be a great boon to global sourcing, supply chains, logistics systems, innovation and consumers. WTO members are now discussing a second ITA to update the old product list and add services. China and the United States should be driving this effort. There are other opportunities, too, from trade-facilitation measures to rules for more open government procurement. Pressures will increase to clarify the rules of fair competition for state-owned enterprises. A few years ago, sovereign wealth funds demonstrated that steps toward increasing transparency and encouraging best practices could counter anxieties while improving performance.

The United States and China also need to be discussing the future international monetary system. That system has to adjust to both global shifts and the consequences of today's extraordinary monetary policies. The world needs to be on watch for the risk of competitive currency devaluation. As China internationalizes the renminbi and moves toward an open capital account, a new era of great-power relations will require the major economies to manage the evolution toward a system of multiple reserve currencies.

China and the United States have experience and perspectives on development that could assist other countries—whether through natural-resource development, agriculture, expanded manufacturing and

supply chains, service-sector development, infrastructure or investment. China and the United States should have common interests in inclusive growth, good governance, transparency and anticorruption, trade and avoiding boom-and-bust cycles. This new era could foster cooperation with multilateral institutions and private-sector networks.

Environmental topics need to be explored, too—from biodiversity and wildlife conservation to low-carbon development.

Indeed, if the United States and China are at odds on topics that require cooperation across national borders, the international system is unlikely to act effectively; conversely, if China and the United States can cooperate, even if just step by step, others are likely to join.

The economic agenda for a new type of great-power relationship could be extensive. Of course, there will be sensitivities and differences to manage, but the expanded network of economic ties—governmental, private, transnational and multilateral—can be a source of problem-solving ideas, creativity and even some cushion to absorb differences.

**O**n security issues, however, whether bilateral or multilateral, China and the United States do not have such a network. This gap can be traced in part to a structural difference. In China, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) reports to the Central Military Commission, a party institution with only one or two civilians. Thus, China's senior foreign-policy officials, up

to the level of state councilor, usually aren't able to intervene on security topics until after the PLA has acted and sometimes only after damage to China's foreign relations has already occurred.

China does not have a national-security-council system to integrate security, foreign, defense, and even economic and political considerations. As a result, there is no institutional Chinese counterpart for what would elsewhere be described as "pol-mil" discussions (for political-military).

At times, China and the United States have had military-to-military exchanges, but these are not at the appropriate levels. And China turns the discussions off and on to register displeasure, inhibiting the in-depth exchanges and the trust that need to be forged. Moreover, a new type of great-power security relationship necessitates more than discussions among militaries.

Some Chinese officials and scholars recognize the need for a fuller integration of Chinese views on security and foreign-policy topics. The Chinese system might, for example, look to a member of the Politburo Standing Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to pull together defense, foreign-policy, security and economic topics, drawing together the PLA, officials of the government and the Communist Party. Or the CCP leadership might rely on subcommittees.

However structured, a political-military discussion between China and the United States could supplement a renewed strategic dialogue. The current dialogue has taken up important topics, but too briefly, too infrequently and with limited engagement at the highest levels, where strategic decisions are likely to be made.

The most effective Sino-American strategic exchanges—Kissinger-Zhou, Brzezinski-Deng—have been small and involved many hours of conversation to develop a deeper understanding of

worldviews, interests and conceptual frameworks.

A true high-level strategic discussion, including pol-mil dimensions, should foster a dialogue on historical perspectives, geographical considerations, economic dimensions, technological shifts, political constraints, perceptions of changing conditions, national interests and a search for mutual interests. It should also assist China and the United States to manage differences.

In such a dialogue, the United States should offer a clearer explanation why U.S. policies are not based on a "containment" strategy, as some Chinese seem to think. The United States should also explain its strategic concept of relations with China and why "hedging" policies by the United States and others are a reasonable reaction to worrisome Chinese behavior.

Importantly, the United States and China have mutual interests that they should at least understand and perhaps foster together.

For example, these interests might include:

- Freedom of the seas and maritime security, which are important for China's international economic interests, regional stability and U.S. linkages, as a maritime and Pacific power, with Eurasia.
- Open skies and access to outer space, so as to facilitate movement of people, goods and information—which are important to our economies and security.
- Access to reasonably priced energy sources, including the development, transit and safe use of resources. This interest is served by security stability in the Persian Gulf, multiple energy sources and pipelines, sea-lane security, technological development and energy efficiency.
- Development of other resources, in conjunction with social and environmental safeguards,

while managing disputes over territories and ownership.

- Establishing a sense of security for other partners in the Asia-Pacific region, so as to avoid destabilizing and potentially threatening military competition or miscalculation.
- Nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially to states or terrorists that will endanger regional and global peace and stability.
- Countering violent Islamic radical movements while encouraging Islamic leaders who seek peaceful development with respect for religious beliefs.

The identification of interests should be complemented by a sharing of assessments of threats to these interests and also perspectives on how to deal with the threats.

Yet these mutual interests—and even deep economic interdependence—could be overwhelmed by a failure to deal with differences in the Asia-Pacific region. The challenge for U.S. and Chinese leaders is to use global cooperation as an incentive to reduce regional friction, rather than to permit regional tensions to undermine global cooperation.

China has an interest in the security of its coastal approaches and in gaining influence in the western Pacific. The United States has a network of alliance and partner countries that value the stability and economic security provided by America's presence. These alliance ties are important to America's regional and global standing, which has reassured others. Therefore, China's relations with some neighbors, including Japan, cannot be separated from U.S. relations with China or U.S. relations with its allies. At the same time, these U.S. partners—like the United States itself—value their economic, political and cultural ties to China.

Today, China's Asian allies are few, poor, unreliable and often isolated, while America's allies are prosperous and expanding. If China's assertion of influence is interpreted as a threat to others, China will inevitably evoke a counterreaction. To avoid creating its own encirclement, China has an interest in building ties with U.S. allies and friends, not in increasing their fears. The United States and China together have an interest in fostering regional integration, within a global system, without threats that weaken confidence or escalate tensions.

It seems that the countries of Southeast Asia recognize the mutual benefits of economic integration within a safe security framework. Yet the differences over resource development are spilling over into fears about maritime security. None of the parties has an interest in escalation of anxieties or conflict. They share an interest in negotiated, cooperative solutions.

Northeast Asia, however, poses serious dangers. North Korea, with a failed economy and uncertain leadership, has used threats and nuclear weapons to demand assistance while mobilizing an isolated garrison state. Its international trade in dangerous weapons and illegal activities create havoc elsewhere.

North Korea has rejected the 1953 armistice. It has used military force against South Korea twice in recent years, killing people and risking escalation that could slip out of control. North Korea has threatened preemptive strikes against South Korea and the United States, while endangering Japan and testing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles that it could use to implement these threats.

China traditionally has believed North Korea offers a security "buffer." But this is outdated logic. An invasion of China is not conceivable. But conflict precipitated by North Korea is increasingly conceivable, and it certainly wouldn't be in China's interest.

When Dai Bingguo, a longtime leading

Chinese diplomat, and I had strategic discussions in 2005–2006, I suggested that the United States would be content if North Korea became like China. How, I asked, could China object to that? Moreover, I pointed out that if the Koreans ever united—however the process came about—China would then have an interest in the United States retaining a security alliance with Korea. This alliance would reassure Koreans, who throughout history have seen their peninsula serve as a route for the militaries of much bigger neighbors. If a unified Korea inherited a nuclear weapon, the U.S. alliance with Korea could be instrumental in persuading it to abandon that weapon. A nuclear Korea would leave Japan as the only Northeast Asian country without nuclear weapons, a situation that would worry the Japanese.

Moreover, I told Dai Bingguo that it was my expectation, contrary to Chinese speculation, that a U.S. alliance with a unified Korea would be backed by air and naval assets in the South, not large land forces, and certainly not troops on the Yalu. In contrast, if the U.S. alliance with Korea ended, Japan might eventually be concerned about being the sole Asian host to U.S. bases and forces.

That was years ago. Chinese and U.S. strategists need to be having these discussions about security in Northeast Asia now—to head off dangers today and prepare for a safer tomorrow.

I suspect, for example, that one reason behind China's reluctance to press North Korea to end its hostile acts and begin reforms is a concern about being able to manage the process of change in North Korea. Perhaps South Korea and the United States—and others in the region—can discuss the possibilities for change with China. While China may wish to avoid considering this prospect, the reality is that a threatening North Korea will prompt

responses by others that conflict with China's preferences for regional security.

Yet all these substantive proposals for a new type of great-power relationship are likely to be stillborn unless China and the United States remove a corrosive that is eating away at our trust and ties: cybersecurity.

Cybersecurity anxieties take different forms, which compound a rising risk of confrontation. One dimension is espionage. A second is commercial espionage, which U.S. and other sources believe is rampant, extremely costly and destructive. A third is sabotage. And a fourth is the question of cyberwarfare—and whether and how we should apply such principles of war as hot pursuit, collateral damage, proportionality and unacceptable damage to conflict in cyberspace.

Decades ago, with the advent of nuclear weapons, security strategists developed doctrines and theories to manage risks of mass destruction. I don't know whether cybersecurity lends itself to similar discussions. I do know that it is vital that the great powers of the twenty-first century



discuss how they might deal with these issues, which could undermine President Xi Jinping's suggested response to history's lessons.

There is a debate in the United States about whether China's concept of "international relations" can ever accept a system based on rules that support an integrative approach. Some—including Henry Kissinger—believe that China's view of itself as the "Middle Kingdom" only allows for tributary relationships.

Different perspectives among American policy makers and experts may reflect, in part, variations in experiences on economic and security issues. Economic-policy makers observed how Deng Xiaoping employed the international economic system as an enabler of dramatic internal reforms; Zhu Rongji went further, using China's WTO accession to import international economic rules and relationships. Similarly, China's economic relations and actions over the past five years of economic crisis have been generally cooperative. In my time at the World Bank Group, I also saw China's support for—and willingness to adapt to—multilateral development institutions and issues prompted by China's economic rise.

The experience with security topics raises more doubts, perhaps leading to the difference in perceptions about China's concepts of international relations in the twenty-first century.

**T**he idea of a new type of great-power relationship does not answer these questions. But it offers us an opportunity to explore various answers.

It is not only China that brings a special historical experience to this task.

The United States, although it is the established power, is not a status quo power. Many international observers are confused by this American quality. Commentators ask why the United States, the world's most

powerful country, doesn't simply want to preserve the existing order.

One symbol of America's global engagement is the one-dollar bill. Look at the back of that bill, and you will see a picture of the Great Seal of the United States, in place since the approval of the U.S. Congress in 1782. It includes a Virgilian motto: "Novus ordo seclorum," or "new order of the ages." As my professor of diplomatic history pointed out long ago, much of American history is about whether this new order is supposed to be geographically limited to the just-created United States—or broadly applicable.

In addition to security and power—and freedom to trade and dollar diplomacy—American foreign policy has at times sought to promote the principles of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment that were embodied in America's revolution. Today, those principles are reflected in discussions about human rights and freedoms. But those are also topics that China is debating under such rubrics as good governance, limits on arbitrary governmental action and the rule of law.

The challenge of crafting this new type of great-power relationship is intriguing. It involves much more than a new balance of power. China is a rising power but one guided by many traditional views. The United States is an established power but one comfortable with change. Both the United States and China are highly successful economically and deeply interconnected with many other countries and regions. Their relations will affect many other nations and regions.

My hope is that these ideas and concepts might assist these two powerful and vibrant countries to avoid the Thucydides trap as they explore a new type of great-power relationship. This could be an exciting venture, with much at stake—for China, the United States and the world. □



# *Europe: Strategic Drifter*

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*By Jakub Grygiel*

**T**he European Union's unfolding crisis tends to be seen as purely economic in nature and consequence. The EU is a common market, with a common currency adopted by most of its members and with fiscal problems of one kind or another facing almost all of its capitals. Most analyses of the euro crisis focus, therefore, on the economic and financial impact of whatever "euro exit" may occur or of a European fiscal centralization. In the worst case, they project a full-fledged breakup of the common currency and perhaps even the EU itself. Not much can be added to this sea of analysis except a pinch of skepticism: nobody really knows the full economic impact, positive or negative, of such potential developments. In fact, not even European leaders seem to have a clear idea of how to mitigate the economic and political morass of the Continent. While it is certain that the EU of the future will be different, it isn't clear just how.

If we look at the current situation of the EU from a security perspective, however, it becomes much more difficult to foresee any long-term positive outcome. That's because the euro troubles of today will have powerful negative effects on the security of

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the region, resulting in challenges that will preoccupy Europeans as well as Americans in the years to come.

Certainly, this does not mean that the postwar European project, backed by American power, will wither away. There is little likelihood of deadly intra-European conflicts of the kind that bedeviled the Continent in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Europe, in this sense, is and will continue to be at peace. Moreover, European powers historically tended to export their conflicts abroad, often fighting each other in distant theaters (North America, Africa or Asia) before resorting to direct confrontation on the Continent. Thus, tensions in Europe often translated into instability abroad. But today's European states have little ability to project power. Long gone is the nineteenth-century Europe of expanding, ambitious imperial powers. One result is that within Europe there are no serious territorial conflicts, no need or desire to expand, and no revolutionary or revisionist forces on the horizon. Even in a (highly unlikely) worst-case scenario—a complete breakup of the European Union accompanied by a collapse of its economies—it is difficult to foresee a return to the bloody interactions of past centuries. In a nutshell, there are reasons to maintain a healthy optimism about the future of Europe as a continent internally at peace.

But any such optimism is grounded in the reality of persistent and possibly

accelerating European decline. Europe is drifting from crisis to crisis, unable to address structural problems at either the national or the EU level. Consequently, it is focused on fiscal limits, “austerity” packages, labor-market rigidities, regulations and questions regarding the legitimacy of existing institutions. Introspection and self-centeredness can breed peace but not necessarily long-term security. It is a peace of weakness, and weakness breeds challenge.

The European Union is a strategic drifter, unclear about its world role, unable to articulate a purpose and divided in its perception of external threats. This invites exploitation by other powers (Russia and China in particular) eager to reestablish their own standing in the world or to chip away at U.S. security and interests. The Continent thus faces questions about its long-term stability amid the prospect of new conventional threats. More dynamic and aggressive powers—Russia, Iran and China—are unlikely to leave a weak and divided Europe alone.

All this is reflected in four developing realities that are symptoms of the ongoing, gradual and worrisome shift in the geopolitical position of Europe and in the relationship between Europe and the United States. These are:

(1) the foreign policies of many EU member states increasingly are driven more by domestic economic concerns than by cold, geopolitical assessment of external threats;

(2) other EU members, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, are concerned with their territorial security, bringing discussions of conventional deterrence back into vogue;

(3) the EU’s fundamental weakness, rather than any strategic conviction, likely will lead Europe to oppose U.S. foreign policy, especially in the eastern Mediterranean and

the Middle East; and

(4) the United States will have few and feeble capabilities to shore up Europe because the root of the problem is not security, an area in which the United States retains considerable leverage, but rather internal economic malaise stemming from a misconceived political plan of EU unification. Moreover, while America’s benevolent power played a crucial role in fostering post-World War II European harmony, EU integration is an indigenous process far less conducive to U.S. influence.

These four developments, which are linked and self-reinforcing, are rooted in deeper problems and unresolved differences that are gaining force as a result of the economic crisis. They are widely seen, wrongly, as tangential or even irrelevant to the future of Europe and its economic struggles. That’s because the faith in a new political reality—one created by the EU and characterized by the fortuitous absence of any serious security threat—remains powerful throughout the Continent. Still, while the transformative power of the EU on international politics and security remains limited, it must be said that these four developments are trends, not outcomes. They point to the emergence of a worrisome new geopolitical reality—but one that has not yet fully materialized. It also is not fully recognized, and that renders it all the more ominous.

**T**he EU’s member states do not agree on the nature of external threats. This is not new, of course. Estonia and Poland traditionally have had little in common with, for example, France or Italy. The EU has no power to change geographic realities; events in Moscow or Tunisia cannot be controlled by Europe and affect various European states very differently. Tunisian or Libyan refugees landing on Sicilian beaches do not produce prominent headlines in

Great Britain, while the potential placement of Russian Iskander medium-range ballistic missiles in Kaliningrad is not deemed to be a problem in Athens. Until recently, however, such disagreements remained largely theoretical and did not translate into clearly divergent actions. For example, Paris and Rome may have had a higher tolerance for Vladimir Putin's ambitions than Warsaw or Riga. In some cases, particularly on issues of energy and Georgia, views were not just divergent but in serious conflict. But there was a certain unspoken understanding that Europeans could disagree vehemently on such matters without undermining each other's security.

Now, however, such divergent views are leading to divergent actions, and this can undermine the concept of European unity, as well as EU security itself. This is not based on any dispassionate analysis of the nature of external threats but rather on domestic concerns about unemployment and deficits that drive foreign-policy decisions. Consider the case of France's 2011 sale to Russia of *Mistral*-class ships capable of carrying helicopters and amphibious vehicles. Paris ignored heated opposition to this sale from leaders of Central and Eastern European nations. The final agreement, envisaging the sale of two *Mistrals* and the further construction in Russia of two more, was a watershed event because it indicated it can be permissible for a European state to transfer high-tech military platforms to a nation deemed threatening by other Europeans. Because this transfer undermined an already-tenuous belief in European solidarity, for Russia this was a political victory more than a simple



improvement of military capabilities. The message was: watch out, Georgia and Estonia (and other states along the eastern frontier), because France will not protect you. In France, meanwhile, the decision seemed to have been driven by domestic politics and economic considerations—namely, the desire to keep a shipyard working and thus avoid thousands of layoffs that would have hampered an already-dire economic situation and a tenuous political climate. By adding the latest technologies and communications systems to the *Mistral* hulls, France signaled its openness to further business deals geared toward modernizing the Russian military.

Putin's plans to increase Russian defense spending by roughly 25 percent in 2013 are certainly appealing to the world's defense contractors. Russia has the money and political will—but not the industrial and technological infrastructure—to modernize its military. So the *Mistral* case can be explained, to some degree, as a market story of supply meeting demand. But looking at the deal merely through an economic prism misses some of the long-term military and political ramifications of the sale. At the same time that France was providing

*A weak Europe could remain safe if Russia turns more democratic and if the revolts in North Africa and the eastern Mediterranean become contained. Of course, these are big and rosy assumptions.*

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amphibious-assault ships to Moscow, Germany was signing an agreement to build a combat-training center for the Russian army. An analysis of the agreement by a Polish think tank states:

The centre is to enable comprehensive training—both with the use of 3D simulators and in training ground conditions—for an expanded tactical formation (brigade), including an exercise engagement between two brigades. This will be the first facility of this kind in the Russian army (very few Western armies have similar training centres) and will change fundamentally the way and the nature of the training of the Russian ground forces as well as the air forces and airborne forces which co-operate with them. The centre will enable the Russian army to shorten and improve the security of the training process, to evaluate more precisely the level achieved by the trained units and to substantially cut expenses.

This training center, expected to be fully functional by 2014, is larger than anything that the Bundeswehr has, and it will also be used by German soldiers in cooperation with the Russians. However one looks at this, the German-built center inevitably will enhance the fighting capabilities of the Russian army, increasing the risks to neighboring countries such as Georgia and Ukraine, as well as to the most exposed eastern NATO members, notably Poland and the Baltic states. But such assessments of the security impact of a transfer of German know-how to Moscow didn't seem to play a role in Germany's decision-making process, which seemed to focus instead on the

economic benefits and the potential for future deals. Russia has money to spend, while Germany seeks profits and needs jobs.

Such examples lay bare some European nations' disregard for the security concerns, perceived or real, of other European countries. It is not necessary to ascribe malicious intent here. France and Germany were acting simply on the basis of a preference for financial profits and domestic employment, choosing to ignore the impact of their actions on the long-term security of the Continent.

**T**he most immediate impact of such business deals is that the European eastern frontier becomes more vulnerable. A more effective, modernized Russian army potentially threatens not only countries such as Georgia and Ukraine, which do not possess NATO security guarantees and are within what Russia considers its sphere of influence, but also NATO members such as the Baltic states and Poland. Consequently, these European states are focusing analytically and militarily on their territorial security, a development that is at odds with the belief, widespread throughout the EU, that the region has entered a postmodern era of peace—or at least nonviolent, negotiable conflicts.

No doubt this resurgence of territorial fear has been spurred in part by Putin's persistent tough-guy rhetoric harkening back to the days of Russian empire. The 2008 war in Georgia, aggressive Russian military exercises adjacent to the Baltic states and Poland, and growing

authoritarianism in Moscow are seen by some, correctly in my view, as evidence of a bellicose and revisionist Russia. Furthermore, the apparent American disengagement from Europe in favor of Asia and the Middle East, accompanied by a poorly thought-out “reset” with Russia, generated further fears of a weakening strategic assurance to the most vulnerable NATO members. To be sure, the preoccupation with territorial security along Europe’s eastern frontier has multiple causes. But the lack of European unity on security concerns, and the German and French contributions to the modernization of the Russian army in particular, are especially troublesome because they undermine the persistent attempts to build up a unified EU security and defense structure. Europeans have limited control over Moscow’s ambitions of regional influence or Washington’s geostrategic preferences. But they had the potential to translate the enormous economic and political successes of the postwar era, and particularly the post–Cold War period, into a strong security regime. European rhetoric notwithstanding, Europeans seem to lack the political will to do so.

As a result, some European states are arming themselves and pursuing their own defensive objectives with increased vigor and decisiveness. Poland, for instance, has purchased Norwegian antiship missiles for coastal defense, clearly in a move to deter potential Russian maritime forays. Furthermore, over the past year, Warsaw has made it clear that it plans to build a missile-defense system that would protect it against short- and medium-range ballistic missiles, as well as against aircraft and cruise missiles. (This is separate from the proposed American missile-defense system that would have been hosted by Poland and geared to intercept long-range missiles from the Middle East and North

Africa.) In an August 2012 interview, Polish president Bronislaw Komorowski argued that “Poland must have this element of defense,” implying that the country cannot rely on European efforts and certainly not on the vagaries of U.S. electoral politics for protection against short- and medium-range missiles. The system would shield Poland from Russian missiles (the Iskander) that Moscow is planning to deploy in the Kaliningrad district.

Finland is another EU member that is aggressively developing strong conventional capabilities to deter Russia. Recently, for example, it has purchased U.S. air-to-surface missiles (the AGM-158 JASSM) that no other NATO country so far possesses. The rationale behind the purchase is straightforward: Finland cannot count on Europe to guarantee its security. As a Finnish analyst put it, the U.S.-Finnish deal

suggests that clear-eyed realism drives Finnish security policy thinking: that Finland knows that it is still the United States that serves as the European bulwark (and provider of guarantees) against potential external aggression; and, that NATO is a necessary but not sufficient component for broader European defence, mainly because most European states have ignored their own defence for too long.

If most of Europe is not willing to spend money to defend itself, and if it thinks it can gain by arming Russia, then the frontier states have little choice but to arm themselves. Behind these decisions there is a consistent effort to think through the various possible security scenarios and to consider the most effective way to deter a Russian conventional attack. Indeed, discussions on conventional deterrence, a topic that many Europeans consider antiquated, are lively in Central Europe. The premise is that war of a large, industrial scale is unlikely, but that the possibility of a

small-scale, limited-aims assault by Russia is certainly not zero. The question then arises as to how to defend oneself from such an attack. The answer: to buy time by increasing costs to the assaulting army and by denying it the benefit of a quick *fait accompli*. The only way to do so is by acquiring sufficient denial capabilities (such as antiship missiles or theater missile defenses) that would impose unbearable costs on the Russian advance and give sufficient time for NATO consultative mechanisms and plans to work.

Conventional deterrence, especially when facing the possibility of a quick attack with limited objectives, is inherently difficult to achieve. The fact that this is a topic of lively conversation on Europe's eastern and northern flanks is in itself worrisome because it indicates that the

**W**Weak allies are unreliable allies. The United States might well ponder this reality as it contemplates its ongoing relationship with Europe. The persistent EU financial crisis will continue to weaken Europe militarily as well as economically. This won't necessarily have a major impact on the wider geopolitical situation. A weak Europe could remain safe if Russia turns more democratic and if the revolts in North Africa and the eastern Mediterranean become contained or end up stabilizing the region. Of course, these are big and rosy assumptions. But even if we accept them, Europe's weakness ought to worry the United States.

That's because Europe's weakness will almost inevitably become a hindrance to the United States. A weak Europe will be unlikely to support the United States and its interests in the Middle East and Asia. At



territorial security of some of these states is perceived to be at risk. The bottom line is that a renewed interest in conventional deterrence and recent military acquisitions are symptoms of the recognition that the crisis in Europe is having a negative impact on the willingness and ability of both EU and NATO members to provide adequate defenses to the Continent.

the core of this statement, which is based on murmurs that can be heard in Europe, lies the argument that weakness, and the accompanying sense of insecurity, creates powerful incentives to avoid confrontation with potentially hostile powers. Whether the threat comes from Russia, Iran, Syria or even faraway China, a weak Europe is likely to ignore it or accommodate the countries

*Europe's problems are not caused merely by a mistaken policy or two. This is a deep crisis caused by a missing sense of purpose and an abandonment of Europe's distinct history and culture.*

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posing the threat. Some European states, as mentioned above, seem bent on balancing the assertive power, but overall in Europe the trend seems to be characterized by a lack of political will to do so. The foreign policy that arises out of the recognition of weakness does not generally move to assert power. Moreover, it may result in less support for Europe's traditional security patron, the United States.

Indeed, a weak Europe may fear the United States more than Iran or China. An assertive America, capable and willing to protect its interests in the Middle East, may decide, for example, that a preventive war with Iran is preferable to a nuclear Iran bent on dominating the region. For some in Europe, such a scenario is worse than letting Iran continue on its path to develop nuclear capabilities. Europe's inability to deal with the potential spillover effects of a U.S. strike on Iran—for example, Hezbollah-organized attacks in the Mediterranean, medium-range Iranian missiles launched toward Europe or oil-market disruption—creates a powerful incentive for its nations to oppose an assertive American foreign policy and to accommodate a nuclear Iran. To be sure, there are good reasons for anyone to be ambivalent about a U.S. or Israeli strike on Iranian nuclear facilities. There are also, however, good reasons to be fearful of a nuclear Iran, whose leadership consistently spews anti-Western venom and sponsors terrorism. But for a declining Europe, the greater threat is the United States (and possibly Israel), not Iran, because Europe's assessment of the world is informed most

prominently by its own limitations.

Thus, U.S. global interests, particularly in the Middle East and Asia, will not be well served by a weak Europe. It is not simply a matter of not having the material support of European allies in military contingencies (as in Afghanistan) or diplomatic backing in important negotiations. Rather, the risk is that some of our traditional European allies may actually work at cross-purposes with the United States, not sharing U.S. threat assessments because they will not have the tools to join in. As François Heisbourg observes, a “potential danger flows from the interactions between, on the one hand, a Europe in relative decline, and on the other the rising capabilities, dynamic policies and great-power aspirations of emerging states.”

**W**hat can the United States do in light of this situation? Not even the worst-case scenario would resemble the immediate postwar years in Europe. There is no likelihood of Soviet armored divisions occupying half of the Continent, Communist insurgencies in European countries, or abysmal poverty, famine and material devastation. But the problem is that, unlike after World War II, the United States has a limited strategic quiver. This is due in part to America's own fiscal problems. There is no deep reservoir of economic power that Washington can direct to shore up an economically stagnating Europe. There also is a limited power of persuasion in telling Europeans to fix their fiscal profligacy when Washington runs its own trillion-dollar deficits. Finally and most importantly, even assuming the United

States could help the EU economically, that would not solve the Continent's underlying political, social and cultural malaise.

It would also be counterproductive for Washington officials to align themselves completely with either of the views that fall under the rubrics of "EU at all costs" or "Euroskepticism." The current administration of President Barack Obama appears to tilt toward the progressive vision of the EU. It consequently opposes attempts to renegotiate or resist the centralizing efforts of Brussels. Such a position is likely to damage U.S. authority. Europeans in general, and Britain in particular, are divided on the European Union. By aligning with the official Brussels line, which objects to national referenda on the EU such as the one proposed by British prime minister David Cameron, the United States may gain applause in the offices of EU bureaucrats. But such views are ignored or ridiculed elsewhere. This is a delicate internal debate, and Washington gains nothing by siding with the "EU: full steam ahead" view.

The United States has a comparative advantage in its power-projection capabilities, an important tool of influence. It can and should, therefore, maintain its varied methods of providing strategic assurance: its "visible assurance" with the presence of U.S. military forces and assets, rhetorical assurance with greater attention paid to Europe, continued commitment to NATO's Article 5 (declaring that an attack on one member is an attack on all), defensive contingency plans, greater willingness to help Europeans in arming themselves and so on. But this will not suffice to strengthen Europe. The American provision of security is necessary but insufficient. After all, the United States has done this for the past several decades, and Europe nonetheless has descended into economic stagnation and political morass. In other words, the U.S. security umbrella may enable European

decisions that could reverse the Continent's current decline, but it cannot generate such decisions.

That's because Europe's problems are not caused merely by a mistaken policy or two. This is a deep crisis caused by, among other things, a missing sense of purpose and an abandonment of Europe's distinct history and culture. The United States can try to persuade EU leaders to pursue different policies and even enable such changes of direction by guaranteeing Europe's security from external threats. But that isn't likely to make much of a difference.

Here lies the conundrum: On the one hand, as George Weigel has written, "A United States indifferent to the fate of Europe is a United States indifferent to its roots." One could add that this also implies an indifference to America's own security. On the other hand, the United States has only limited means of improving Europe's geopolitical condition. In the end, Europe's mess and decline pose a policy problem that requires civilizational solutions. The fiscal crisis can be measured; the political inefficiency can be described; the tax rates can be adjusted upward or downward; policies can be tinkered with. But Europe's underlying sense of a *raison d'être* can be restored only by a slow regeneration of its foundations based on history, religion and culture. The etymology of the word "culture" (from Latin) refers to "the things to cultivate," implying that there are certain things that transcend individuals, that are to be cherished for the future, that provide reasons to work and sacrifice—in essence, to live. Europe is missing these things now, and thus it is becoming little more than a civilizational cult, placing the individual above all else. The task at hand, therefore, is much larger and far more difficult than one can glimpse from reading the news. It may be too large and too difficult for Europe—or America—to handle. □



# *Beyond the Russian Reset*

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*By Samuel Charap*

**W**ith the recent downturn in U.S.-Russian relations, observers in both Washington and Moscow have remarked upon the cyclical nature of this key bilateral relationship. As Fyodor Lukyanov, a leading Russian commentator, noted in late 2012, “If we look at the relationship since 1991, it’s the same cycle all the time, between kind words and inspiration and deep crisis. Yeltsin, Clinton, Bush, Putin, Obama, it’s the same pattern.” Indeed, the phases of high hopes and expectations in the years 1991–1994, 2000–2003 and 2009–2011—followed by deep disappointment in the intervening and subsequent years—do seem to represent a cyclical pattern.

But viewing U.S.-Russian relations in terms of cycles or patterns is misleading. It implies that the relationship is governed by immutable forces beyond the control of policy makers—like the laws of physics or the business cycle. But the problems in U.S.-Russian relations are man-made, and therefore their resolution lies in the hands of the respective political establishments in Washington and Moscow. That is not to say it would be easy to fix them, or that such a fix is likely anytime soon. In fact, the

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opposite seems true. However, since agency, not structure, is the key determinant, policy makers bear the responsibility for improving this state of affairs and have it within their power to do so.

To understand better the reasons for the ebbs and flows in bilateral relations, it’s important to recognize the peculiar way in which both sides assess them. Officials and nongovernmental observers in both countries measure the relationship between the two countries by looking at the “deliverables” it produces. In other words, when the two sides are forging new agreements or resolving global challenges, their relationship is seen to be improving. When they are not concluding new bilateral deals and differ on significant global issues, the relationship is perceived as deteriorating.

The “reset” period (2009–2011), so dubbed following Vice President Joe Biden’s invocation of this metaphor at the Munich Security Conference in February 2009, is a case in point. Those years saw major deliverables produced at an impressive pace. The key agreements signed in that period include: the landmark New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START); the so-called 123 agreement on civil nuclear cooperation; agreements on Afghanistan transit, including the rail-based Northern Distribution Network and an overflight arrangement that as of January 2013 allowed for more than 2,500 flights across Russian air space carrying more than 460,000 U.S. military personnel; an

amendment to the Plutonium Management and Disposition Agreement, providing for the safe disposal of enough weapons-grade plutonium for seventeen thousand nuclear warheads; close cooperation in the effort to rein in Iran's nuclear ambitions, including unprecedentedly comprehensive UN Security Council sanctions and work toward a diplomatic solution; Russia's cancellation of its contract with Iran for the S-300 surface-to-air missile systems, which, if delivered, would have been highly destabilizing; Russian WTO membership, eighteen years after it initiated its bid, in large part due to significant progress on bilateral trade issues; and an agreement on visas that makes it easier for Americans and Russians to visit and do business in each other's countries. Cooperation increased across a wide range of issues addressed by the nearly twenty working groups of the Bilateral Presidential Commission, which was created in mid-2009, including on counterterrorism (such as joint exercises simulating a hijacked plane over the Bering Strait), global health, energy efficiency and counternarcotics measures. Outside those institutionalized channels, deliverables also came in the form of Russian helicopters for both the Afghan National Army and for peacekeeping in Sudan; the positive outcome of the NATO-Russia Council's summit at Lisbon in 2010; and the first joint Antarctic inspections.

Many of these deliverables were critically important for both U.S. and Russian national security. Indeed, that was probably the most productive period of cooperation between the two countries in the history of their post-Soviet relationship. But the use of deliverables as a gauge of bilateral ties betrays the underlying fragility of the relationship itself. When the two capitals are not focused on deliverables, more fundamental problems in the relationship rise to the surface.

The most corrosive of these is the reality that elements within both countries' national-security establishments continue to view each other as adversaries, almost twenty-five years after the Cold War ended. These attitudes are most overtly manifest in the persistence of "mutually assured destruction" (MAD) as the paradigm that defines the nuclear relationship. The notion that only guaranteed retaliation prevents one side from threatening the other's interests seems like an absurd anachronism in a world where the bipolar standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union is a distant memory. But the worst-case-scenario assumptions it creates remain a persistent part of today's security dialogue. Take the current dispute over missile defense. If we strip away all the coded rhetoric, Russia essentially is asking for guarantees that it can effectively annihilate the United States even after Washington attempts to take out Russia's entire nuclear arsenal. U.S. officials issue repeated reassurances to Moscow that it could still destroy the United States even if Washington tried to neutralize Russia's hundreds of deployed strategic nuclear weapons through a "bolt from the blue" disarming first strike. The mere existence of this kind of dialogue speaks volumes about mutual suspicion of intentions.

Without deliverables, both sides turn their attention to the yawning gap between Washington's expectations about Russia's post-Soviet political development and Russian realities that have not conformed to those expectations. Many key U.S. partners have far worse human-rights records and not even the modicum of democratic procedure that exists in Russia today—Saudi Arabia and China being just two examples. However, due to a combination of Russia's own international commitments made in the 1990s and American

and European expectations created by the “transition” paradigm that posited a smooth shift from Soviet Communism to market democracy, Russia’s democratic shortcomings have a far greater impact on its relations with the United States. The commitments primarily stem from Russia’s membership in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, a grouping that grew out of the Helsinki accords, and the Council of Europe, a regional human-rights body. Both created additional obligations regarding, and intensified oversight of, human rights and democracy in Russia.

In the absence of major new deliverables, the U.S.-Russian rivalry in post-Soviet Eurasia also comes to the fore. Some U.S. discomfort with Russia’s relationships in its neighborhood is certainly warranted. Since 1991, Russia often has acted with a heavy hand. But it was clear by the end of the 1990s that Washington’s nightmare scenario—Russia rolling back the sovereignty of the newly independent states and forming a new anti-Western bloc—was not going to materialize. Today, the U.S. objective of “bolstering sovereignty” in Russia’s “near abroad” devolves at times into balancing games and outright paranoia about any degree of Russian influence in the region. And Washington often seems to operate on the assumption that, if nations in the region cooperate with Moscow, the result inevitably will be the imposition of decisions on Russia’s neighbors against their will. Many in Moscow believe Washington lends its support to “anti-Russian” politicians in order to limit Russian influence. In other words, Moscow sees the specter of containment when Washington

thinks it is simply backing freely elected leaders.

The reset, despite all the deliverables outlined above, did not address these fundamental flaws in the relationship. In retrospect, that period was remarkable in



that it demonstrated that the U.S.-Russian relationship can produce a large number of mutually beneficial agreements even without any serious reconciliation effort.

But it is important to note what brought about the uptick in deliverables in 2009–2011. The term used here and elsewhere to describe the U.S.-Russian relationship in that period—the reset—is really more accurately a description of what the Obama administration did upon taking office: it significantly changed U.S. policy toward Russia. The George W. Bush administration’s Russia policy, especially in the second term, reflected a lack of interest in bilateral cooperation on the international-security issues central to the relationship, particularly arms control. During that period, the United States also tried to influence Russian policies by linking unrelated issues. For example, after the August 2008 war in Georgia, the

administration pulled the 123 agreement out of the congressional review process. Also, the Bush administration, or elements within it, pursued policies seemingly designed to antagonize Russia gratuitously. The geopolitical gamesmanship following the “color revolutions” in Georgia and Ukraine that culminated in the NATO Bucharest Summit Declaration is probably the most significant case in point. That document, a product of direct negotiations among heads of state, declared unequivocally that Ukraine and Georgia “will become” NATO members. It’s easy to see how Moscow read that as reflecting NATO’s intent to impose membership on Russia’s neighbors, regardless of their preparedness for membership or their populations’ support for it.

Upon taking office, the Obama administration promptly reversed these trends. The new president’s “Prague agenda” of nuclear nonproliferation and arms control, as well as his determination to pursue a multilateral solution to the Iranian nuclear problem, generated significantly more engagement among senior decision makers of the two countries. The Obama team also eschewed linkages of unrelated issues, which were judged to have been counterproductive based on Bush’s track record. In the case of the linkage between Georgia and the 123 agreement noted above, the outcome was no movement on Russia’s actions in Georgia and no U.S.-Russian civilian nuclear cooperation. So the administration resolved that it would not let disagreements over one set of issues preclude cooperation on other issues. But senior officials also made clear they would not bargain away unrelated issues merely for the sake of cooperation with Russia. Obama continued to articulate America’s interest in Russia’s democratic development, and he supported Russian civil society even as his government worked with Russian

officials on key international-security issues. The administration also, headlines to the contrary notwithstanding, did not let engagement with Russia affect relations with U.S. allies or other partners in Europe and Eurasia.

Finally, the Obama team was not interested in playing “great games” or pursuing policies that were gratuitously confrontational toward Russia. Regarding the U.S. military facility at Kyrgyzstan’s Manas airport, which is used as a stopping-off point for U.S. soldiers and matériel on their way to Afghanistan, the administration sought Russian buy-in, rather than treating the arrangements as an exclusively bilateral issue with the Kyrgyzstanis. Previously, this had led Moscow to suspect that the United States intended to either stay there forever or to use Manas as part of an anti-Russia encirclement strategy. Michael McFaul, who became U.S. ambassador to Moscow in late 2011 after serving as senior director for Russia on the National Security Council staff following Obama’s inauguration, recalled in an April 2011 speech that, during Obama’s first meeting with Russian president Dmitri Medvedev, Obama made clear he did not care to engage in great-power rivalry:

He said, “Help me understand, President Medvedev, why you want us to leave Manas, because what are our soldiers doing? They are flying into Afghanistan after a short amount of time in Kyrgyzstan and they are fighting people that if we weren’t fighting them you would have to be fighting them.”

The paradox of the “post-reset” period is that the main factor that allowed for all the deliverables of the reset—the Obama administration’s course correction—remained unchanged while the relationship itself deteriorated. Instead, other factors

*Elements within both countries' national-security establishments continue to view each other as adversaries, almost twenty-five years after the Cold War ended.*

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were to blame. First, the flood of deliverables slowed to a trickle. Given how many of them were achieved in the first few years of the reset, that pace could not be sustained. The agreements of that period were anything but low-hanging fruit, despite some critics' claims. Many of the most significant ones resulted from months of hard work, and nearly all of them seemed impossible in 2008. Still, they were "lower hanging" than the issues on which the two sides are seeking agreement today, particularly missile defense and Syria.

Clearly, Vladimir Putin's return to the presidency has had a negative impact on the relationship as well. Immediately following his inauguration in May 2012, Putin did not take deliberate steps to worsen the relationship. But he demonstrated no interest in investing in it. Indeed, he signaled in a number of ways, most noticeably with his no-show at the Camp David G-8 meeting that month, that relations with the United States were not a foreign-policy priority. Putin's actions to slam shut the opening in Russian public life that had emerged in recent years also dragged down the relationship. It is simply more complicated for any U.S. administration to do business with Russia under these circumstances.

Although his relationship with President George W. Bush, especially after 9/11, demonstrates that he is not ideologically opposed to U.S.-Russian cooperation, Putin is clearly fed up with certain aspects of U.S. foreign policy, such as what he perceives as meddling in Russian domestic politics and a U.S. habit of toppling sitting

governments that disagree with it. And he has signaled his frustration to Washington in no uncertain terms, through recent actions such as the ban on U.S. adoptions of Russian children in retaliation for the Magnitsky legislation enacted by the U.S. Congress late last year. He further worsened the atmosphere in bilateral relations by imposing additional restrictions on Americans working in Russian NGOs and through his apparent sanctioning of government-affiliated mouthpieces' and media outlets' virulent anti-Americanism.

Putin's actions have called into question one of the central tenets of the Obama administration's reset: that working on multiple agreements, increasing the number of contacts and broadening the relationship (including through the Bilateral Presidential Commission) would allow the two countries to make progress on the long-standing disagreements outlined above. As McFaul stated in a speech at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in December 2010, "The trick is to be able to have a longer horizon so that every move . . . is not seen as zero-sum, but you can play a win-win over the long haul. . . . And you know, we're just midstream in what I hope to be a long game, in terms of this particular policy." But this hope for a long game has been dashed in recent months.

So why did the long laundry list of reset-era deliverables fail to create conditions for addressing the underlying problems in the relationship? The most important reason is also the explanation for Putin's turn to anti-Americanism. Over the past twelve to eighteen months, the foundational pillar



of the political system Putin constructed—consistently high levels of popular support for the leadership—began to crumble. Some astute analysts, particularly Mikhail Dmitriev and his colleagues at the Center for Strategic Research, saw the trend in focus groups as early as two years ago, but the problem only became visible when Putin announced that he had decided to run for the presidency again in what Russians dubbed a *rokirovka* or “castling move” on September 24, 2011. That decision, which marked the complete personalization of Russian politics, delegitimized both the presidency and political institutions more broadly in the eyes of Russia’s most creative and talented citizens, particularly the urban middle class. Putin lost these voters, many of whom had supported him because of the prosperity associated with his tenure. But these Russians think of themselves as Europeans, not subjects of a personalistic kleptocracy, and the *rokirovka* seemed to be leading to precisely that.

Instead of boosting stability, which seems to have been the intent, the *rokirovka* transformed the so-called Putin majority—a coalition comprised of economically dynamic, middle-class Russians along with two more conservative social groups,

beneficiaries of the state (such as government employees and pensioners) and rural heartland voters—into a much more reactionary, paternalistic Putin plurality. This shift in domestic political alignments changed the calculus of the Russian leadership; it now felt compelled to employ anti-Americanism in order to mobilize this narrower support base.

This antagonism toward the United States also is used to create a siege mentality in the public discourse, allowing the government to label its political opponents as traitors. This trope of the “enemy at the gates” was used extensively in 2007–2008, at another low point in U.S.-Russian relations, and it is now being used again. In short, as a result of its increasingly contested domestic political environment, the Russian leadership often sees the bilateral relationship as a tool of domestic politics rather than an end in itself or even a means of addressing Russia’s global challenges. At those moments, the reset period’s track record of cooperation does not affect the decision-making equation.

**B**ut it was not just a change in the Russian leadership’s calculus that prevented the joint work on reset-era deliverables from transforming the relationship. In both countries, a small number of individuals—largely concentrated in a handful of executive-branch departments—were responsible for producing those deliverables. Their numbers were dwarfed by those on both sides not involved in the reset and who therefore did not become stakeholders in its success or develop trust in the opposite side. In the United States, these nons-

takeholders include members of Congress who pushed to link the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act of 2012 to the legislation granting Russia permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) status in the lame-duck session of the last Congress. The United States was forced to grant PNTR status to Russia following its WTO membership to avoid violating WTO rules and thus harming U.S. businesses. Magnitsky was a young lawyer who died in pretrial detention in a Moscow prison in November 2009 after uncovering what was purported to be a massive fraud perpetrated by police and tax officials. His tragic death has already had serious implications for the development of the rule of law in Russia. The members of Congress who pursued this linkage had good reason to be concerned. But the Magnitsky legislation, which sanctions Russian officials involved in his death and other human-rights abuses, has not had the desired impact on either the Magnitsky case or the rule of law in Russia.

Those legislators who pushed for this outcome were unmoved by arguments that the bilateral relationship would suffer as a result of their actions. The administration's comment on the proposed law, according to a copy obtained by *Foreign Policy*, cautioned:

Senior Russian government officials have warned us that they will respond asymmetrical-ly if this legislation passes. Their argument is that we cannot expect them to be our partner in supporting sanctions against countries like Iran, North Korea, and Libya, and sanction them at the same time. Russian officials have said that other areas of bilateral cooperation, including on transit to Afghanistan, could be jeopardized if this legislation passes.

Yet despite this clear warning, the inclusion of this act in the PNTR bill received nearly unanimous support in both chambers. The

lesson is clear: foreign-policy makers of the two governments do not operate in a vacuum. In both countries, actors and groups with little at stake in the U.S.-Russian relationship are capable of doing it serious harm.

But policy makers on both sides are not without tools for addressing this situation. They can create opportunities for interaction between key groups such as legislators. They also can develop wider sets of constituencies in the relationship by facilitating increased bilateral investment and trade. Greater economic ties have the potential to create powerful private-sector stakeholders for the relationship.

The issue of sequencing may represent the most important policy lesson from the failure to convert reset deliverables into a transformed relationship. The Obama administration, believing cooperation would create the right conditions to address long-standing disagreements, assumed those disagreements could be contained until the time was right. Now it is clear that this assumption was false. Breaking the man-made ups and downs in U.S.-Russian relations will require engaging simultaneously with the underlying problems along with work on the deliverables. Otherwise, once the pace of deliverables slows, the fundamental problems will wreak havoc on the relationship. Think of U.S.-Russian relations as rather like a car driving up a steep incline with busted brakes. As soon as it runs out of gasoline (the deliverables), the car will go crashing down that incline. It isn't enough merely to fill the car with gas. The basic problem of the brakes must be addressed.

But addressing the underlying problems in the U.S.-Russian relationship will be much more difficult than installing new brakes on a car. There are no obvious off-the-shelf solutions to the three major

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Putin did not take deliberate steps to worsen the relationship.  
But he demonstrated no interest in investing in it.*

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problems discussed above: adversarial impulses in the security establishments of both countries; disputes about Russia's domestic politics; and conflict in post-Soviet Eurasia. And, given many other pressing priorities, such a reconciliation process is unlikely to be undertaken by senior policy makers anytime soon. But both Moscow and Washington could take immediate steps to mitigate these problems or set in motion processes that might actually resolve them in the future.

While completely eliminating adversarial sentiment in the security establishments is not a short-term project, Russian and U.S. political leaders can initiate steps toward that long-term goal. For example, both sides, and particularly the Russians, could signal publicly and privately that the excesses of "special services," such as the harassment of Ambassador McFaul in Moscow, are unacceptable. In addition, senior decision makers, particularly defense-policy makers, could begin to sit down together and think seriously about a new framework for the nuclear relationship that will provide for their respective countries' security needs without sticking to the outdated MAD logic. Indeed, the talks' explicit goal should be to develop a road map aimed at overcoming the MAD logic. The steps need not come as a negotiated treaty, but rather as unilateral, coordinated moves toward a shared goal.

Disputes over Russian domestic politics could be mitigated or even eliminated, of course, were Russia's political system to become more open and free. But even under the current conditions, policy makers

on both sides could manage this problem much better than they have in recent years. U.S. policy makers could move beyond the pervasive Washington myth that engagement with the Russian government implies an endorsement of the Kremlin's limits on domestic freedom and empowers a regime irreconcilably hostile to such freedom. While far from fully democratic, Russia is not a one-party dictatorship, and political contestation is a fact of life. The choice is not between capitulation and all-out confrontation. The policy imperative is to foster Russian domestic trends leading toward a more open political system while subtly counteracting those that might take it in the other direction. Russian policy makers, meanwhile, gain little from petulant bouts of "whataboutism"—responding to U.S. statements on human rights in Russia with laundry lists of purported American shortcomings.

Washington and Moscow can also do more to address conflictual approaches regarding post-Soviet Eurasia. Rather than seeking national advantage, the two countries should strive for mutually acceptable results. And such efforts should be geared toward the creation of "win-win-win" outcomes for the United States, Russia and the countries of post-Soviet Eurasia. To reach that goal, Moscow and Washington can change the way they do business in the region in several ways. First, they could provide significantly enhanced transparency concerning their policies and activities in the region. Second, Moscow and Washington should begin regular working-level consultations on regional



issues. Third, both governments should dial down their public rhetoric about the region by several notches and instead seek ways to signal positive-sum intentions. Most important, officials should reject the notion of “irreconcilable differences” between Moscow and Washington in post-Soviet Eurasia and make this position clear to officials of the states of the region.

**D**espite the recent downturn, bilateral ties are still a far cry from their near-hostile state in 2008, following the August conflict in Georgia. According to accounts that first appeared in Ronald Asmus’s 2010 book *A Little War That Shook the World: Georgia, Russia, and the Future of the West*, the U.S. National Security Council’s “principals committee”—which includes the president, vice president and other senior national-security officials—considered the use of military force to prevent Russia from continuing its assault on Georgia. Officials discussed (but ultimately rejected) the option of bombing the tunnel used by Russia to move troops into South Ossetia, as well as other “surgical strikes.” The fact that officials at the highest levels of decision making in the U.S. government even discussed military action against the world’s only other nuclear superpower is profoundly disturbing.

Such a development seems divorced from the realities of today’s U.S.-Russian relationship, which featured seventeen joint bilateral military exercises last year. And there is little likelihood of a return to the tensions of 2008 in Obama’s second term. Key international

priorities of the Obama team require Russian cooperation. These include the sensitive negotiations between the so-called P5+1 (the United States, Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany) with Iran over the Islamic Republic’s nuclear program, as well as stabilization in Afghanistan as the U.S.-led International Security Assistance Force approaches its 2014 departure. Also, at their June 2012 meeting during the Los Cabos, Mexico, G-20 summit, both Obama and Putin committed their governments to focusing on boosting investment and trade, an issue that represents a clear win-win.

For the Obama administration, advancing the president’s Prague agenda remains a priority, so we should expect a U.S. proposal on one or more of the three categories of nuclear weapons identified by the president in his letter to the Senate following New START ratification: deployed strategic weapons, nondeployed strategic weapons and nonstrategic nuclear weapons. Press reports in recent weeks suggest the president is close to approving a key nuclear-policy-review document that would



unlock the possibility for future reductions. The Russians have long made clear that a resolution to the missile-defense dispute is a sine qua non for further reductions. But even if the sides can find a solution to the missile-defense dilemma, the next bilateral arms-control deal could be significantly harder to negotiate than New START, which was by no means easy. (The two nations' leaders reportedly had to resolve several issues themselves in direct talks.) The expiration of START I on December 5, 2009, and with it the end of mutual verification and the crucial confidence it builds, provided a powerful incentive for both sides to reach a deal. With New START's verification regime now being implemented, the Russians have been lukewarm at best about another bilateral deal in the short term. Such a deal is not unimaginable. After all, going from the New START limit of 1,550 deployed strategic warheads to around 1,100, which is one of the reported options being considered in Washington, would not require a major change in doctrines. But the climate of anti-Americanism and the imminent serial production of two new strategic missiles (the military-industrial complex remains a powerful lobby in Russia) create strong disincentives for Russian officials to engage. Still, the Prague agenda is not only about reductions, and on the nonproliferation front, signs seem positive that a successor to the Nunn-Lugar cooperative threat-reduction program will be agreed upon before its expiration this year.

But one should be wary of any list of shared interests in an analysis of U.S.-Russian relations. Even when both governments openly declare commonality of goals on an issue, results can be elusive. The most vivid case in point is the U.S.-Russian Strategic Framework Declaration, also known as the Sochi Declaration, signed by Presidents Putin and Bush in

April 2008. That document described a long agenda of issues on which the two countries' interests converge. It also declared in striking language that both countries had definitively recognized that bilateral disagreements were far outweighed by common interests. The first paragraph declared:

We reject the zero-sum thinking of the Cold War when "what was good for Russia was bad for America" and vice versa. Rather, we are dedicated to working together and with other nations to address the global challenges of the 21st century, moving the U.S.-Russia relationship from one of strategic competition to strategic partnership. We intend to cooperate as partners to promote security, and to jointly counter the threats to peace we face, including international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We are determined to build a lasting peace, both on a bilateral basis and in international fora, recognizing our shared responsibility to the people of our countries and the global community of nations to remain steadfast and united in pursuit of international security, and a peaceful, free world. Where we have differences, we will work to resolve them in a spirit of mutual respect.

Some critics of the Obama administration have pointed to that document to make the case that the reset was nothing new. But that argument turns the real lesson of the Sochi Declaration on its head. The fact that only four months after it was signed the United States contemplated an attack on Russian forces in Georgia demonstrates that the document amounted to mere words on paper. The Obama administration's reset produced much more than words. But until policy makers address the underlying problems in the relationship—until brakes are installed on that car—we will continue to see downswings like the one we have today. □

# Demystifying Iron Dome

By Peter Dombrowski, Catherine Kelleher and Eric Auner

**B**arack Obama encountered an unprecedented welcome when he visited Israel in March. He was greeted at the airport not just by the usual dignitaries but also by a hot new weapon—Israel’s Iron Dome missile-defense system against short-range rockets. A battery was stationed only a few footsteps from Air Force One, so the president could walk over and congratulate his hosts on their successful use of the antimissile weapon during Israel’s Operation Pillar of Defense in November 2012.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) launched Operation Pillar of Defense on November 14 in response to increasing rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip as well as other actions by militant Palestinians. The seven-day operation involved Israeli air strikes against Hamas targets in Gaza, but there was no ground invasion such as the one launched in 2008–2009, called Operation Cast Lead. The IDF had four Iron Dome batteries in operation prior to Pillar of Defense and deployed a more advanced fifth battery during the operation. According to the IDF, the system, developed by Israel with joint U.S. and Israeli funding over the past

decade or so, provided a sense of security to many Israelis by preventing injury, loss of life and property damage. Reports indicate that some Israelis even ignored air-raid sirens, remaining exposed in the hopes of photographing an Iron Dome interception.

Iron Dome’s scorecard will need closer scrutiny as more technical and verified evidence becomes available, but there is ample justification for praise and expectations of continued operational success. According to the IDF, some 1,500 rockets were fired on Israel during the course of Operation Pillar of Defense. Reports indicate about a third of these rockets (five hundred or so) targeted population centers; of those, 84 percent (over four hundred) were successfully intercepted by Iron Dome (though some technical experts have suggested that the actual success rate was probably significantly lower). Whatever the actual number of intercepts, enthusiasts in both the United States and Israel have viewed this as a breakthrough in the long-debated issue of missile defense. Some have argued that Iron Dome shows the way toward achieving Ronald Reagan’s transformative 1980s vision of strategic defense, a world where ballistic missiles are “impotent and obsolete.”

Moreover, American experts and political leaders have argued for years that a new, global missile age is emerging, in which a widening array of more numerous and capable short-range rockets, cruise missiles,

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*Some Israelis even ignored air-raid sirens, remaining exposed in the hopes of photographing an Iron Dome interception.*

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and intermediate- and long-range ballistic missiles will pose stark challenges for even the most advanced militaries. Israel faces ongoing attacks from relatively unsophisticated and inaccurate rockets today; tomorrow it may face Syrian Scuds (currently being used against rebel groups within the country) or a range of Iranian ballistic missiles. Armed conventionally or not, China, Pakistan, North Korea and, more discreetly, a few other states are developing missiles and marketing them internationally. Despite multilateral efforts to control the spread of missiles—including the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Proliferation Security Initiative and the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation—few expect this Pandora’s box to be shut.

Iron Dome is certainly one response to this new missile age, but much of the recent commentary on the subject overestimates the importance of recent Israeli successes. Iron Dome does represent a significant new capability that may have a positive effect on regional-security dynamics in the Middle East and perhaps beyond. Such quick-response programs developed in the United States and elsewhere can contribute to the defense of key population centers and critical infrastructure against limited attacks, and that in turn can bolster psychological resilience. Furthermore, the U.S.-Israeli effort may pave the way for greater missile-defense collaboration among like-minded nations facing similar threats.

But many thorny strategic and operational issues remain. Despite its utility in meeting Israel’s unique security

challenges, Iron Dome is not a game changer, nor does it validate—at least not yet—Reagan’s vision of a global strategic-defense capability. Despite a growing (but incomplete) consensus on the need for some level of missile defense, the vision of “impotent and obsolete” ballistic missiles remains firmly out of reach for the foreseeable future.

Whatever its ultimate strategic significance, the Iron Dome technology has served to reinvigorate the American debate on the utility of missile defense. Until recently, the relatively quiet and scholarly tone surrounding U.S. missile policy has contrasted sharply with the public cries and critiques that characterized what we have labeled the “three waves” of emotional debate regarding missile defense over the past four decades. These include the debates in the 1960s over deployment of what became the limited Safeguard system; Reagan’s space-based concept of the 1980s; and George W. Bush’s plan for a ground-based system purportedly designed to protect the United States and parts of Europe from an Iranian attack. Ever since the Obama administration’s introduction of the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) in 2009, there have been at most ritual acknowledgements of the “requirement” for missile defense—as in the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty preamble and elsewhere. Further, in the United States and elsewhere there has been only relatively low-level expert debate, even in the face of a National Academy of Sciences report that posited significant problems with current programs.

This essay will assess Iron Dome's potential impact on U.S. and international efforts to deploy multitiered national, regional and global missile-defense systems. We will look at the antimissile system's history and construct a preliminary baseline evaluation of its performance last fall. Finally, we will consider the strategic implications of Iron Dome and how it or similar systems might contribute to U.S. and Israeli missile-defense efforts.

**I**sraeli efforts to develop a missile shield go back three decades and are intertwined with the Jewish state's close collaboration with the United States. The two countries signed a memorandum of understanding in 1986 to develop missile defense and to facilitate Israeli participation in Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). Missile defense became even more salient for Israeli leaders after Iraq fired conventionally armed Scud missiles at Israel during the Gulf War of 1991. In that episode, hastily deployed Patriot missiles helped limit civilian terror and, while their operational effects were significantly oversold in the initial reports, may have thwarted some Scuds as well. Since then, Israel and the United States have cooperated on several missile-defense programs, including joint technology development, industrial cooperation, and a program of testing and exercises in addition to shared funding, which continues to this day. Further, a sophisticated U.S. radar system in the Negev desert presently represents the only permanent U.S. ground presence in Israel.

Israel's current missile-defense goal is to construct a layered defense against ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, rockets and other air threats. Hostile or potentially hostile states surrounding Israel have emphasized rockets and missiles in their force planning over traditional war-fighting platforms and capabilities. The air forces of hostile

neighbors in particular are in many cases increasingly obsolete, due in part to Western technology-denial efforts. In both the 2006 and 2008–2009 conflicts, Israel's enemies attempted to rain rockets on Israel, forcing the IDF to initiate complicated, costly and politically problematic ground operations. Israel's aim was to destroy missiles and launchers used against the country and to take out safe havens available for enemy missile operations.

Far more than the United States, Israel sees its adversaries' air and missile capabilities (including conventionally armed ballistic missiles) as part of a continuous spectrum of threats to its population and forces. The basic Israeli concept is to deploy active and passive defenses as well as offensive capabilities against known and perceived threats, as was recently seen when Israel attacked targets in Syria to prevent the transfer of Iranian Fateh-110 missiles to Hezbollah. Moreover, some analysts believe that Israeli intelligence agencies will undertake phase-zero (i.e., precombat) operations against rocket and missile manufacturers, their potential launch sites and associated personnel. Active defense, as understood in Israel, involves a multitiered matrix of systems that to date are in a variety of stages of development, deployment and readiness.

Iron Dome, representing the lowest-tier system, is intended to intercept relatively unsophisticated rockets. It was designed by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Ltd., a private Israeli defense firm with very close ties to the IDF that builds high-tech defense systems for air, land, sea and space. It uses the explosive-tipped Tamir interceptor to destroy rockets at a range of four to seventy kilometers. Iron Dome relies on a widely publicized capability to almost instantly discriminate between rockets targeted against populated areas and those that will drop in uninhabited



areas; thus, it seeks to intercept only the threatening rockets. According to Israeli missile expert Uzi Rubin, former head of the Israel Missile Defense Organization, this ability to discriminate contributed to an estimated exchange ratio of one interceptor fired for every three rockets fired at Israel during Operation Pillar of Defense. But perhaps its greatest technological success is its ability to detect, track, aim and explode ordinance in a very limited time window, which is particularly difficult within the short distances that characterize Israeli combat space.

An Iron Dome battery includes an ELM-2084 S-Band phased-array radar, fire-control center and typically three launchers capable of carrying twenty Tamir interceptors. The Tamir is three meters long and uses a proximity-fused explosive warhead to destroy rockets in midair. Israeli media have reported that shrapnel resulting from Iron Dome has damaged property, but there has been no in-depth public analysis of the danger posed to civilians by interception-generated shrapnel. Each battery costs approximately \$50 million, while interceptors cost approximately \$50,000 each. Statements from Israeli officials indicate that Israel may need up to thirteen batteries to provide full coverage to threatened areas.

But Israel's primary missile interceptor is the Arrow system, developed by the state-owned Israel Aerospace Industries in collaboration with Boeing. It includes interceptors, radars, battle management and fire-control capabilities. The Arrow 2, which carries a fragmentation warhead, is currently in service, while the longer-range Arrow 3 is under development. Arrow 3, a two-stage, solid-propellant, hit-to-kill interceptor, has not yet

completed a successful intercept test, but the Congressional Research Service says it may be deployed by 2014.

Another system called David's Sling (sometimes known as Magic Wand) is designed to strengthen the middle tier of the Israeli defense against shorter-range ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and heavy rockets. A project of Rafael and Raytheon, David's Sling completed its first successful intercept test (conducted jointly by Israel and the United States) in November 2012. Israel may deploy the system as early as next year.

**T**he United States has not sought to make use of Israeli missile-defense systems, including those it funded and/or developed jointly. Even before Operation Pillar of Defense, some in the U.S. Congress called for the United States to coproduce the system or use it to protect U.S. deployed forces. In November, Reuters quoted an unnamed Israeli official as saying coproduction is not an option "right now." Members of the U.S. House Armed Services Committee expressed concerns in 2012 that the United States is not benefiting as fully as it should from Israel and suggested that future U.S. funding be conditional on U.S. access to Iron Dome technologies.

Obama's redirection of American missile-defense programs in 2009 toward regional

*Iron Dome relies on a capability to discriminate between rockets aimed at populated areas and those that will drop in uninhabited areas; thus, it seeks to intercept only the threatening rockets.*

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defense partnerships offers a path of understanding on the nature and extent of U.S. interest in defensive systems, as well as about the potential impact of Iron Dome and its related systems. Obama's policies represent what we call the "fourth wave" of U.S. efforts to protect against nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles, long an aspiration among U.S. military planners and politicians, particularly among congressional Republicans. Wave I began when the United States first contemplated the Sentinel program in the 1960s and ultimately installed Safeguard, its first operational missile-defense system, in the mid-1970s following years of heated discussion on the strategic and technological merits. Perhaps the highest political endorsement came during Wave II with Reagan's 1983 SDI speech envisioning a system, primarily space-based, that would render the use of nuclear-tipped missiles anywhere and at any stage of launch to be ineffective, if not futile. U.S. missile-defense ambitions were scaled down following the end of the Cold War, with the George H. W. Bush and Clinton administrations advocating a more limited defense of the nation against long-range missiles. However, Japan and the United States did decide in the mid-1990s to develop bilateral arrangements for a theater-level defense system in order to address Japan's increasing sense of vulnerability to a North Korean attack.

The George W. Bush administration moved decisively toward what we see as Wave III, reinvigorating the idea of a "national" missile defense. This represented

a substantial shift from the SDI, and the beginning of a new, albeit rough, consensus about the purpose of missile defenses in the twenty-first century. The administration moved forward with the Ground-Based Midcourse Defense system based in Alaska and California, withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with Russia and announced plans to create a third national missile-defense site overseas, with deployed interceptors in Poland and a radar site in the Czech Republic. The system was declared to be capable of protecting the U.S. homeland, and parts of Europe, from a potential nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) threat from Iran.

In reconfiguring the George W. Bush plan in 2009, the Obama administration launched Wave IV. While retaining, and in 2013 modestly expanding, the two existing "national" missile-defense sites, it is pursuing multilayered regional missile shields based largely on the seaborne Aegis air- and missile-defense system in Europe and Asia to supplement and integrate with the older, relatively successful, shorter-range Patriot and Terminal High Altitude Area Defense systems. The most developed and widely discussed of these is the EPAA, intended to be linked to a coordinated air- and missile-defense system within NATO. Also included in the plan are regional systems with new or additional radars in Japan, the Asia-Pacific area and the Persian Gulf.

Notably, U.S. policy makers have not clarified Israel's role in this region-by-region approach. On the U.S. Missile Defense Agency's website, Israel is listed as a

cooperative partner in the Middle East (but not in Europe or the Asia-Pacific), even though the United States has announced no specific plans for data sharing, technology transfers or joint command-and-control efforts among the various Middle East partners, which include Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Nevertheless, the United States continues to fund Israeli missile-defense efforts.

U.S.-Israeli cooperation may serve as a model for how the United States will pursue missile-defense relationships with other allies. Indeed, missile defense likely will become an increasingly important tool for reassuring key allies and building alliances. The United States provided approximately \$70 million for Iron Dome in 2012, partly to reassure Israelis facing increasing rocket attacks. This number rose to \$211 million in 2013, and the U.S. Missile Defense Agency requested \$220 million for 2014. Similarly, when Turkey recently felt threatened by missiles from neighboring Syria, the United States, Germany and the Netherlands provided Patriot batteries as a sign of NATO solidarity. It remains to be seen whether the United States will pursue a more robust suite of activities with new partners, such as joint testing, technology development, and software and data sharing.

Obama's approach shares substantial continuities with that of his predecessor. Both focused primarily on the threat of small numbers of relatively unsophisticated missiles from outlier regimes such as Iran and North Korea, and both forwent efforts to intercept large numbers of more sophisticated Russian or Chinese ICBMs. The Obama administration also continued and expanded the cooperative efforts and multinational exercises (such as the Nimble Titan series) of its predecessor, including with Israel. U.S. policy makers and the public now largely see missile defense as

a key element of U.S. strategy, and thus remain committed to significant investment in research and development.

Iron Dome's effect on Israel's security situation and the goal of a lasting Middle East peace remains an open question. Iron Dome may render Israel less vulnerable to short-range rockets as weapons of terror and coercion, but it could also spur Israel's enemies to increase their offensive forces to counter Israel's defensive systems, including Iron Dome.

In any case, Iron Dome is likely to have a significant effect on Israeli behavior. Like any state, it must respond to its citizens' desire for protection. In the absence of defenses, it must rely on offensive action—including operations such as the 2008–2009 Operation Cast Lead—to demonstrate resolve against rocket attacks. A shield against such rockets could provide leeway for Israeli leaders to seek alternate means of handling conflicts, perhaps even including expanded efforts to seek diplomatic solutions. On the other hand, if Israelis feel secure behind their defensive shield, they may not feel any need to engage in talks that would require concessions.

Meanwhile, Israel's opponents might change their own tactics in an effort to overwhelm or outflank the defensive capability represented by Iron Dome. The Arabic-language media saw Iron Dome differently from the image highlighted in the Israeli or Western media. Writers in mainstream Arabic-language outlets saw little change in the resolve of "resistance groups" to paralyze Israeli society and economic life while demonstrating an ability to resist even in the face of Israeli counterforce operations. Further, some interpreted the lack of an Israeli ground incursion as successful Hamas deterrence of Israeli forces. If these accounts significantly influence or accurately reflect the Palestinian leadership's thinking, they cast



doubt on Iron Dome's potential impact on the behavior of Israel's adversaries. Most tellingly, a strong majority of Palestinians interviewed in several polls saw the lack of an Israeli ground invasion (in contrast to 2008–2009) as a victory for Hamas and a way of paralyzing normal Israeli life while furthering Palestinian goals.

**I**ron Dome's success fueled media reports that other states facing threats on their borders were interested in purchasing the system, perhaps including South Korea and India, which share a history of arms sales and technology exchanges with Israel. Early accounts focused on licensing, production and defense barter in which Iron Dome would be only part of the calculus. A few accounts suggested that unspecified European countries might buy Iron Dome batteries to protect forces deployed in Afghanistan. This seems unlikely, given that the Western commitment to Afghanistan is winding down and European governments are facing severe fiscal pressures. But, even before Iron Dome's successes in late 2012, other militaries may have considered importing the Israeli system. Singapore, the city-state with a small geographic area to defend, was seen as one such possibility, although this speculation, like that involving South Korea and India, likely was stimulated in part by long-standing defense-industry relations between the parties.

The biggest marketing prize for Rafael and the Israeli government is the United States. If the U.S. Army were to purchase Iron Dome batteries, it would provide not only revenues but also, perhaps more importantly, a tighter bonding of the two nations' security planning. American missile-defense experts had indeed pushed for U.S. adoption of the system prior to Iron Dome's recent successes. Raytheon reportedly signed an agreement for joint marketing efforts. Yet, unless Congress pushes the matter firmly, Iron Dome isn't likely to become part of the American inventory. American experts initially were reluctant to support Iron Dome because they thought a laser-based system was

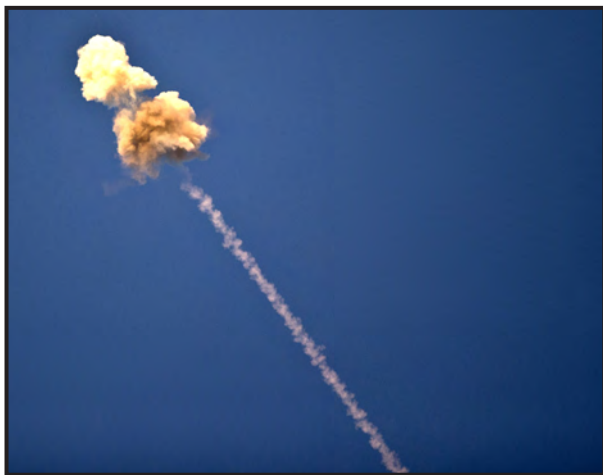
more promising for shooting down incoming rockets and artillery rounds, and some still do. American firms are developing systems similar to Iron Dome, but unlike Iron Dome these have not yet moved out of the development phase to field-testing, let alone combat use. Moreover, Iron Dome has fairly limited applicability; its value would be confined largely to enhanced point defense of American overseas bases, key allied infrastructure

or population centers, or large, relatively immobile concentrations of American troops.

Thus, Iron Dome isn't likely to be exported extensively. For one thing, it works best in a threat environment like that of



Israel and its particular geography. Israel faces a unique mix of threats, especially to its population centers, in a geographically constrained space. Hostile groups are able to fire large numbers of unsophisticated rockets at close range and then melt back into a civilian population, making



retaliation difficult and enhancing the value of active defenses.

Second, the system is relatively expensive, although this has been contested by government and industry officials, as well as some outside analysts. Experts estimate that Iron Dome interceptors cost between \$30,000 and \$100,000 apiece, while the primitive incoming mortars and rockets may cost less than \$100 and longer-range rockets may go for only a few thousand dollars. Then there is the question of how many Tamirs are fired to engage one incoming missile—a matter of both shot doctrine and practical experience. Finally, the cost of Iron Dome as a system depends on how many batteries are required for full, or at least sufficient, coverage of a threatened area. For a large country such as India, for instance, the cost of obtaining sufficient batteries to protect its

full expanse would likely be prohibitive. Even in a relatively small country such as Israel, full coverage may prove unaffordable, especially against the larger rocket arsenals of Hezbollah. Currently, Israel fields five Iron Dome batteries, one of which was recently deployed to the country's northern areas, with more batteries in the works. But any full cost accounting is elusive because, as with American missile-defense programs, it is difficult to prorate the supporting military programs (sensors, satellites, communication, logistical infrastructure and even human-intelligence programs) necessary for Iron Dome to be effective, or to distinguish those endeavors from their original missions or contributions to other weapons systems. Given the recent successes, all of this may be moot, at least in Israel.

What politician wants to tell his constituency that he will not support a wonder weapon that demonstrably protects civilians against a well-known and fearsome threat?

Regardless of actual costs per missile, per engagement, by conflict or any other Iron Dome calculation, any government will need to assess the relative cost of defense systems according to its own strategic and domestic political contexts. Israel faces what most of its citizens perceive as an existential threat. Three times in the last decade barrages of short-range rockets have rained on Israeli territory, and single or double shots at random intervals are common. Thus, Israel has very good domestic political reasons to bear the expenses of Iron Dome indefinitely, especially if U.S. financial support continues. For other countries, including the United States, which face less challenging or immediate

threats, other comparable short-range counterrocket, artillery and mortar defense systems may be sufficient. These would include the U.S. Navy's Phalanx system and counterbattery systems.

Thus, Iron Dome may be best perceived as a niche capability with a very unfavorable price ratio—something most governments wouldn't likely view as worthwhile. Even Israel, after all, received substantial financial assistance from the United States in order to produce all its missile-defense systems in the current quantities. Without access to such assistance, fewer countries than some commentators have assumed are likely to view the technology as attractive on a cost-benefit basis.

The third barrier, and perhaps the largest, is that Iron Dome is a complex "system of systems" in which all elements must work in concert in order to make interceptions possible in a short time window. For Israel, this means a crucial need is access to cueing by the U.S. early-warning system, almost certainly not available to many other potential clients.

Finally, Israel may be reluctant to share all of Iron Dome's technologies, software and processes. Major aspects of how the system functions are not publicly known—for example, the full role of the human operator in making an intercept decision. Even coproduction or licensing agreements carry risks. Would potential purchasers guard technical innovations and operational procedures as jealously as Rafael and its various subcontractors? With life-and-death stakes for Israeli citizens, officials would need to vet carefully who acquired, much less built, the system and its components.

On the more positive side, Iron Dome was developed quickly, and designers managed to circumvent major impediments in the Israeli military-acquisition system. As Israel gains experience producing the

system, costs may come down to the point where exports become more feasible. Furthermore, discrete aspects of the system—for instance, the software that allows the system to quickly discriminate between threatening and nonthreatening rockets—may generate commercial opportunities for Israeli defense firms.

Leaving aside export-market considerations and operational issues, the impact of Iron Dome may be more subtle and long lasting than many people have realized. Reports of Grad and Fajr-5 missiles being shot out of the sky made news everywhere, whatever the final technical analysis may prove. Major news outlets, both print and online, prominently featured praise by Israeli officials and world leaders such as UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon. This attention came at a critical time for national-security issues in the United States and elsewhere. At the macro level, defense spending is declining in most Western countries, forcing policy makers and military leaders to take hard looks at which capabilities are essential and which are not.

At the same time, the Obama administration plans to pursue the steady growth of its multitiered "phased adaptive approaches," consisting of successive stages of incremental and ultimately integrated improvements to U.S. and allied missile-defense radars in Europe, the Persian Gulf and Northeast Asia. Most important, well-publicized reports about the growing threat of missiles from Iran, Syria and elsewhere add to the worries of national-security planners around the world. For nonspecialists, advocates of missile defense in general and politicians seeking ways to appear strong on defense, Iron Dome is nearly irresistible, an example of a program that works and thereby demonstrates the feasibility of future systems to defend all civilians. Yet, as we have seen, Iron Dome does not exactly fit that bill and may suffer

the pains of media hype, just as Patriot underwent after the initial analysis during the 1991 Gulf War.

**T**he appeal of Iron Dome for Israeli policy makers and citizens is not hard to understand. After all, living with constant external threats—be it from invasion, suicide bombers or small, unguided rockets—is debilitating for a society and its citizens. Iron Dome has demonstrably reduced, at least in the short term, the threat of Hamas rockets. As one well-known Israeli journalist recounts from her personal experience:

We, the residents of southern Israel who live within a 40 kilometer radius of Gaza, were encouraged to build safe rooms in our house, seek support if we were feeling nervous and otherwise learn to adjust to a situation where we were in ultimate waiting mode—waiting for the next alarm, the next school closure, the next “episode” when an occasional missile or two might fall nearby.

And oddly enough, like good lab rats, we did just that. We learned to drive with our car windows open so that we could hear sirens while on the open road. We taught our children how to fall asleep again once they were moved into the safe room in the middle of the night. We developed a whole slew of coping mechanisms that range from “dressing for missiles”—no heels or straight skirts allowed—to black humor, acknowledging the absurdity of living in this kind of situation. A child wakes up from a crash of thunder last winter screaming, “missiles,” and we get to make jokes about how children of the Negev are more familiar with the sound of falling Grad missiles than actual rain. We became old war heroes, exchanging stories of close calls from the missiles of 2009 versus those of 2010 and 11.

But as time has gone on, our resistance has worn away.

The last line captures a fundamental ambivalence toward missile defense and, more generally, the political and strategic dynamics that place citizens at the mercy of both Iron Dome and the attacks it protects against. Does Iron Dome contribute to the existential security of the Israeli state and its citizens or is it a technological Band-Aid? The protection offered by Iron Dome and systems like it may, in the end, allow political and military leaders to avoid making the difficult political choices necessary to find longer-term solutions to the underlying conflict. And how does living in the shadow of missile interceptions wear on the body politic?

The enthusiasm of American and external experts for Iron Dome is less explicable, given the underlying realities of this defensive system explored above. There are only a handful of places in the world where Iron Dome-like systems could perform with anything like the efficiency we have seen in the Israeli case. Other comparable systems have been proposed in the past, remain in development or even have already been fielded. However dramatic its short-run results, Iron Dome is not really new or unprecedented. But it is operational, and this might be enough for those with financial stakes in demonstrating that such weapons work and that people in many countries should spend tax dollars against the horrifying, if remote, chance of attacks by short-range missiles. This argument gets stronger when Iron Dome expansion is envisioned less as a means of population protection than as point defense for valuable and vulnerable military installations or critical infrastructure. Rafael and potential licensees will make fine profits on sales motivated by such calculations.

A more critical measure of missile-defense ideology must be added to the explanatory mix, however, to understand

*Scholars, analysts and decision makers should recognize that Iron Dome is a limited system with limited applicability to a relatively small number of unique circumstances.*

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the enthusiasm of neoconservative writer Max Boot, Kentucky senator Rand Paul and other cheerleaders for Iron Dome or any form of missile defense that promises to protect Israel, the United States, U.S. East Asian allies and other countries from the missiles that adversaries might field. Iron Dome's clear successes in the recent conflict, then, are simply more fodder for missile-defense enthusiasts. At a time when the Obama administration's regional missile-defense plans are promising to spread modestly capable missile defenses against limited threats to the eastern Mediterranean, Persian Gulf and Northeast Asia, critics of the administration demand still more. Members of the U.S. House of Representatives are focused less on regional arrangements than on a return to a robust national system. The wishes of these critics were partially fulfilled when Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel recently announced the deployment of additional ground-based interceptors to Alaska. Some demand an East Coast site for ground-based missile defense, regardless of whether the West Coast sites in California and Alaska are well

tested and operationally effective. Moreover, American allies and potential partners in regional missile defense ask for subsidies, technology transfers and support for their own ailing defense-industry firms that might contribute to joint missile-defense efforts.

The recent demonstration of Iron Dome's promise was a boon for missile-defense proponents across the globe, as it raised a quiescent issue to the top of the security agenda at a time when military- and political-establishment figures were looking for an impetus to push the issue. But scholars, analysts and decision makers should recognize that Iron Dome is a limited system with limited applicability to a relatively small number of unique circumstances. It no more validates Reagan's vision than it makes a serious contribution to the larger game of preventing intermediate- and long-range attacks from those few states armed or potentially armed with such weapons. It is just another conventional weapon among many and not a magic bullet, unfortunately, for the Israelis or anyone else. □

# *When Camelot Went to Japan*

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*By Jennifer Lind*

**T**he United States has security partnerships with numerous countries whose people detest America. The United States and Pakistan wrangled for seven months over a U.S. apology for the NATO air strikes that killed twenty-four Pakistani soldiers in 2011. The accompanying protests that roiled Islamabad, Karachi and other cities are a staple of the two countries' fraught relationship. Similarly, American relations with Afghanistan repeatedly descended into turmoil last year as Afghans expressed outrage at Koran burnings by U.S. personnel through riots and killings. "Green on blue" attacks—Afghan killings of U.S. soldiers—plague the alliance. In many Islamic countries, polls reflect little warmth toward Americans.

Washington's strategy of aligning with governments, rather than peoples, blew up in Egypt and could blow up in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Yemen. America's alliances in the Middle East and Persian Gulf are fraught with distrust, dislike and frequent crisis. Is there any hope for them?

Turns out, there is. Fifty years ago, a different alliance was rocked by crisis and heading toward demise. Like many contemporary U.S. alliances, it had been created as a marriage of convenience between Washington and a narrow segment of elites, and it was viewed with distrust by the peoples of both countries. Yet a

half century later, that pairing is one of the strongest security partnerships in the world—the alliance between the United States and Japan.

But in 1960, thousands of Japanese people poured into the streets of Tokyo to protest their country's relationship with the United States. This shocked leaders on both sides of the Pacific, who realized that they had to take action or their partnership would die. Japanese officials crafted initiatives designed to build support for the alliance among the Japanese public. These included plans for the first U.S. presidential visit to Japan. In America, the incoming John F. Kennedy administration—fearing it could lose the linchpin of its strategy in the Pacific—supported the idea. It also made an unconventional (and in retrospect, deeply consequential) choice in its ambassador to Tokyo—Harvard professor Edwin O. Reischauer. In advance of his Japan trip, Kennedy sent his brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, to Tokyo. The president was assassinated before he could make the trip, but Robert Kennedy's visit, and the networks and institutions it created, helped knit the U.S. and Japanese societies closer together. Two countries once dismissed as impossible allies forged, through careful and persistent diplomacy, a durable and warm relationship.

**I**n the late 1950s, prior to Kennedy's election, Japan's people, flushed with national pride about their country's extraordinary

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economic miracle, increasingly resented the U.S.-Japanese relationship. The two countries remained in the roles of conqueror and conquered. The U.S.-Japanese security treaty allowed the Americans to project force from Japan at will, and even empowered the U.S. military to subdue internal unrest. Furthermore, the Japanese, intensely protective of their nascent democracy, recoiled at Washington's support for Japan's anti-Communist stalwarts—Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) leaders such as the hawkish prime minister Nobusuke Kishi, who had been a member of Japan's wartime cabinet and was widely perceived as disturbingly nostalgic for the imperial era.

The Japanese also fumed over the continued U.S. administration of Okinawa, where America had seized land for military bases and a neocolonial paradise of compounds and manicured golf courses. As the Cold War intensified, the Japanese worried that those bases would draw them into a nuclear war with the Soviet Union or China. Then, in the thick of the 1960 debate over renewing the U.S.-Japanese security treaty, the Soviets shot down Francis Gary Powers's U-2 spy plane, and Moscow and Beijing bellowed threats against countries allowing U.S. air bases on their territory. As scholar Kanichi Fukuda wrote at the time, suddenly "the new security pact [became] a matter of grave concern to the man in the street."

Kishi was only able to pass treaty ratification by ramming it through the Japanese Diet after forcibly removing opposition politicians from the building. His citizens, already suspicious toward his leadership, roared at this betrayal of their young democracy. Demonstrators filled Tokyo's streets and strained against the Diet's gates. The following month, when a U.S. official arrived to plan a forthcoming visit by President Dwight Eisenhower, protestors surrounded his car and forced

his evacuation by helicopter. Eisenhower's visit—set to be the first by a U.S. president to Japan—was cancelled out of concerns for his safety. Americans suddenly realized that their alliance with Japan, called by one Japanese leader an "unsinkable aircraft carrier" floating off of the coast of the USSR, was foundering.

Dumbfounded American leaders gaped at the newspaper headlines and TV footage of their angry ally. What the hell was happening in Japan? Harvard's Reischauer provided an answer in the pages of *Foreign Affairs*. "Never since the end of the war," wrote the historian in the magazine's October 1960 issue, "has the gap in understanding between Americans and Japanese been wider." In his article, titled "The Broken Dialogue with Japan," Reischauer lambasted the U.S. "occupation mentality" and urged the United States to change its attitudes and policies to avoid losing the alliance. He said most demonstrators "wanted the treaty killed and the present military link with the United States, together with the existing American bases in Japan, either eliminated at once or else ended in stages." He cautioned that the issue of American control of Okinawa could someday break the alliance.

An interested reader of Reischauer's diagnosis was John Kennedy, who upon becoming president tapped the scholar to be ambassador to Japan. Reischauer had no diplomatic experience, but he had been born in Japan, spoke the language and was a renowned expert on the country. Besides, he had an accomplished Japanese wife. Upon arriving in Japan, Edwin and Haru Reischauer immediately became a media sensation. The ambassador proclaimed his aim to allay the "serious misapprehensions, suspicions, and lingering popular prejudices" between the two peoples.

The Reischauers transformed what had been an isolated and imperious U.S.

embassy. The ambassador recruited staff who understood the language and culture, promoting language training among embassy staff and families. The previous ambassador, Douglas MacArthur II, had not encouraged Japanese language study: “MacArthur was of the old school,” remembers Ernest Young, Reischauer’s special assistant. “There was French, and everything else meant going native. He thought that it was better not to know the local language.”



The Reischauers also fostered lectures and talks in coffee klatches and meals in which U.S. expatriates—businessmen and their families, military officers and wives, journalists and intellectuals—were educated about Japan. He wanted to show Japan as a nation “with a history and culture worthy of respect and study.” Reischauer cultivated relations with the U.S. military through repeated visits to Okinawa.

The “Reischauer line,” as it came to be known, advanced the idea of an “equal partnership.” The ambassador sought to convince the Japanese that Americans were not reckless militarists but rather prudent global players responding to dangerous threats; he sought to convince the Americans that Japan was an important ally deserving of respect and an equal voice. A true partnership, Reischauer believed, meant eliminating the vestiges of occupation, which meant returning Okinawa (and other seized Ryukyu Islands) to Japan. Reischauer criticized the U.S. high commissioner in Okinawa, Lieutenant General Paul Caraway, as running a “military dictatorship,” saying he was “doing everything to infuriate the local population and therefore exacerbate the situation without realizing the terrible mistakes he was making.” Okinawa was run, agreed Ernest Young, “like a colony.”

Caraway and others in United States Forces Japan viewed control over Okinawa as essential for U.S. power projection in the Pacific. But Reischauer argued that the best way to maintain a presence in Okinawa would be to return it to Japan. “Sooner or later,” he wrote, the Japanese “would get excited over Okinawa as an irredenta and this might ruin the whole Japanese-American relationship.” In recent Japanese elections, the Socialists had campaigned aggressively on this issue. As Young later explained, “If we were interested in keeping the LDP in power in Japan, we had to do something about Okinawa.”

But, as the security-treaty crisis showed, the future of the U.S.-Japanese alliance depended not only on the LDP but also on the support of the Japanese people. As George Packard (Reischauer’s assistant and later his biographer) wrote, the security-treaty crisis showed that “this support could not be taken for granted; it had to be earned.” Ties between the two peoples had



*Americans suddenly realized that their alliance with Japan, called by one Japanese leader an “unsinkable aircraft carrier” floating off of the coast of the USSR, was foundering.*

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to be established in order to convince the Japanese that this was a relationship not of domination but of partnership and respect.

As Reischauer sought to repair the frayed relationship, momentum grew for a U.S. presidential visit to Japan. Gunji Hosono, an elderly professor whom John F. Kennedy had befriended in 1951 while touring Japan, held meetings with the president, Reischauer and Robert Kennedy to discuss the possibility. Hosono had tracked down the captain of the Japanese destroyer *Amagiri*, which had sunk John Kennedy’s PT-109 boat in the Solomon Sea in 1943. Kennedy, who led his crew to rescue and saved an injured man, won a Purple Heart and the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for his heroism. When Kennedy ran for the U.S. Senate in 1952, Hosono arranged for the *Amagiri*’s captain, Kohei Hanami, to write a letter to Kennedy (much publicized during the campaign), in which he conveyed his “profound respect to your daring and courageous action in this battle.” The Kennedys invited Hosono to attend Kennedy’s presidential inauguration as an honored guest, along with his daughter, Haruko. Hosono presented the president with a ceremonial scroll bearing the signatures of the *Amagiri*’s crew.

No sitting U.S. president had yet visited Japan, although Ulysses S. Grant had gone after leaving office. As noted, Eisenhower’s scheduled visit had been aborted in the chaos of the security-treaty crisis. Kennedy was smarting from some foreign-policy setbacks—most notably the 1961 Bay of Pigs fiasco—and wanted a diplomatic triumph. He envisioned a historic

presidential visit to Japan during the 1964 reelection campaign. At its center would be a mesmerizing, human-interest reunion in Japan between the crews of PT-109 and the *Amagiri*, once enemies, now reconciled.

To test the waters, the president dispatched his most trusted adviser—Robert Kennedy. In Japan, Reischauer helped create an unofficial group to host the attorney general. Members of the “RK committee” included several relatively young, pro-American Japanese business and government leaders, among them the dynamic young LDP politician (and future prime minister) Yasuhiro Nakasone. Members of the RK committee worried that Japanese youth were being bewitched by Communism. Reischauer agreed that the “growing gap” between Americans and young Japanese people—the people who would be the future of the relationship—was a “truly frightening phenomenon.” They agreed that a visit from John Kennedy could help turn the tide—that Camelot could do some powerful bewitching of its own. First with Robert, then with Jack, the RK committee would show the Japanese a new, young and vigorous United States.

**O**n February 6, 1962, as Robert Kennedy’s motorcade drove through Tokyo’s streets toward a public appearance at Waseda University, reports were coming in from the CIA to expect trouble. Confering across the jump seats of the car, the attorney general, Ambassador Reischauer and their aides discussed CIA warnings that Marxist student groups intended to disrupt the event. Memories flashed to 1960,

when the thousands of protestors swarming Tokyo's streets led President Eisenhower to cancel his visit. But despite their apprehension, as Reischauer later commented, "We decided at the last minute that it would look bad to back out." The car slowed as it pulled in front of Okuma Auditorium, and a crowd of over five thousand students surged around it.

The students that greeted Robert and Ethel Kennedy turned out to be friendly. As Robert and Ethel pushed their way through the throng toward the auditorium, students laughed, cheered and stretched out their hands to touch them. But inside "the story was different," as Kennedy recalled later.

Built to hold 1,500 people, Okuma Auditorium writhed with more than four thousand students. While many cheered the attorney general's entrance, others jeered and booed. When Kennedy began to speak, Marxist students shouted and stomped their feet. One, Yuzo Tachiya, was particularly agitated. A leader in student government, he had distributed thirty thousand fliers that day to summon the crowd that now packed the auditorium. He had met with two professors who talked with him about how they were going to chair and translate the event. Tachiya watched, upset, as Kennedy substituted his own translator, "ignored the debate format set by his hosts," and simply began speaking. The young man shouted from the audience that this was not right, that Kennedy should follow the format established by the professors who were hosting the event.

But when the Americans looked into the sea of black-uniformed students beneath the stage, what they saw, in the words of Kennedy's assistant John Seigenthaler Sr., was "a skinny little Japanese boy" who was "tense, shouting, shouting, shouting, screaming at the top of his lungs." If I ignore him, the attorney general thought, maybe he'll be quiet. So he kept talking:

The great advantage of the system under which we live—you and I—is that we can exchange views and exchange ideas in a frank manner, with both of us benefiting. . . . under a democracy we have a right to say what we think and we have the right to disagree. So if we can proceed in an orderly fashion, with you asking questions and me answering them, I am confident I will gain and that perhaps also you will understand a little better the positions of my country and its people.

But Tachiya was still shouting, and "bedlam was spreading." Kennedy recalled, "The Communists were yelling 'Kennedy, go home.' The anti-Communists were yelling back, and the others were yelling for everyone to keep quiet. I could see I wasn't going to make any progress." So Kennedy stopped talking. He acknowledged the heckler: "There is a gentleman down in the front," he said, "who evidently disagrees with me. If he will ask a single question, I will try to give an answer. That is the democratic way and the way we should proceed. He is asking a question and he is entitled to courtesy."

Kennedy extended his hand toward Tachiya, who grabbed it. The attorney general pulled him up onto the stage. "Bob treated him with great friendliness," remembers Seigenthaler: putting his hand on his shoulder, telling him, "You go first." He was "so cool," marveled Ernest Young, "so cool."

As the United States attorney general politely held the microphone for him, Tachiya blasted through the issues detailed on a leaflet his organization had prepared—the return of Okinawa; Article 9 of the Japanese constitution (which prohibits war making by the state) and the need for Japanese neutrality; the U.S. government's treatment of the American Communist Party; the effect of a potential nuclear war on humanity; the CIA's involvement in

the Bay of Pigs; and America's fledgling involvement in Vietnam. "His face," the attorney general observed, "was taut and tense and filled with contempt." Kennedy listened patiently, and finally Tachiya stopped talking. As Kennedy began to speak, the microphone went dead. Pandemonium broke out in the auditorium.

**R**obert Kennedy, as Anthony Lewis of the *New York Times* once wrote, "rejected the politics of grins and blandness." During the Japan visit planning, the attorney general had vetoed the normal round of receptions and photo ops. ("Nothing of any substance ever happens at a state dinner," he said.) He wanted to meet ordinary Japanese in their daily lives. "You get him in touch with the people," Seigenthaler told the RK committee. "He wants to meet the people." During his visit, Kennedy debated Socialist political leaders, toured farms and factories, played football with Japanese children, walked through elementary schools, talked to university students, met with women's groups, and watched sumo and judo demonstrations. He declined an offer to participate in the latter, sending in a replacement. ("I got thrown on my butt," groused Seigenthaler.) One night in a bar in Ginza, Kennedy sampled sake and chatted with customers at the counter. He led some of the other Americans present in what he remembered as "a very off-key rendition" of "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling."

Ethel Kennedy, for her part, delighted the Japanese with a formidable mix of star power and approachability. "Call me Ethel!" she demurred when greeted with deep bows and formality. She talked about her daily life with her

many children and their routines at their Virginia home, Hickory Hill. "Ethel loved people," recalled Susie Wilson, a journalist and friend accompanying her on the trip. "She chatted with any and all of them, and they responded to her genuineness, and her concern for them and their cares."

These efforts to get to know the people of Japan marked a new approach in alliance policy. The two societies had been kept separate, and U.S. diplomacy had focused on the military-strategic sphere at the expense of other spheres—particularly the cultural one. Disturbed at this trend, Reischauer had created at the U.S. embassy the position of cultural minister, bureaucratically equivalent to the political and economic ministers. "Money spent on diplomatic and cultural activities," he lamented, "is proportionately far more productive than that spent on military programs but is always the first to be cut,



*After Robert Kennedy's visit, the RK committee grew into a number of activities and institutions designed to foster an alliance between peoples rather than governments.*

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even though the sums are inconsequential compared to military budgets.”

During Kennedy's visit, the RK committee told him that the Soviet Union was skillfully waging a “cultural offensive” in Japan, while the United States was neglecting this realm. America's cultural missions, the RK committee members told the attorney general, were inadequate, ill suited for Japanese audiences and ineffectual. “The importance of this issue,” Kennedy commented, “was brought home to me again and again throughout our trip.”

**B**ack onstage in Okuma Auditorium, confusion reigned. This is a fiasco, thought Reischauer, watching students heaving chairs at one another. Realizing something had to be done, he rose and held up his hands to the audience. To his surprise, the crowd looked up at him and quieted. In his fluent Japanese, he asked the students to remain calm. Meanwhile, someone located a bullhorn and handed it to Kennedy. The attorney general began earnestly:

We in America believe that we should have divergencies of views. We believe that everyone has the right to express himself. We believe that young people have the right to speak out and give their views and ideas. We believe that opposition is important. It's only through a discussion of issues and questions that my country can determine in what direction it should go.

Kennedy remonstrated, “This is not true in many other countries . . .

would it be possible for somebody in a Communist country to get up and oppose the government of that country?” He told the crowd, “I am visiting Japan to learn and find out from young people such as yourselves what your views are as far as Japan is concerned and as far as the future of the world is concerned.” After his remarks Kennedy took questions from the audience, and people responded positively. Susie Wilson commented, “He told them, ‘Come up here, and let me hear your concerns.’ It was the very essence of democracy.”

As the event was winding down, a student, the school cheerleader, shouted from the back of the auditorium his apologies for the treatment of the attorney general and his desire to make amends. Bounding onstage, he led the audience in a thundering rendition of the Waseda school song, “Miyako No Seihoku.” The group's interpreter hastily scratched out a transliteration; Ethel, Reischauer, Seigenthaler and the rest of the entourage crowded around the attorney general and sang along exuberantly. Brandon Grove, a U.S. diplomat, recalled, “Each verse ended in shouts of ‘Waseda! Waseda! Waseda!’ and there's where we excelled.”

The cheerleader, energetically gesticulating as he led the song, inadvertently punched Ethel Kennedy in the stomach, leading her to double over and stumble over a chair. Ethel immediately stood up and grinned as if nothing had happened. “She came from a huge family with plenty of touch football,” recalled

Susie Wilson. “I don’t think it affected her at all.”

Fifty years later, reminiscing about the visit to Waseda, John Seigenthaler volunteered to sing its school song. He proudly sang multiple verses of scratchy, Nashville-accented Japanese. “That song,” he said, “turned the event into a stunning victory.” Anthony Lewis, covering the trip for the *New York Times*, recalled later that, although he’d been ill the night of the Waseda event, he’d had to learn the song because the group took to performing it at receptions and other events on the trip. (Lewis, too, offered up several bars of “Waseda! Waseda! Waseda!”)

Robert and Ethel would sing the song again at another Waseda event, when they returned to the university in 1964. Over the years, the family serenaded startled guests with the song at Hickory Hill. And in 1968, on the campaign trail in San Francisco, a giddy and exhausted trio of Kennedy, Ethel and Seigenthaler belted out “Miyako No Seihoku” while driving toward the airport, en route to the probable Democratic presidential nomination and an assassin’s bullet.

On their TV sets that evening, the Japanese watched what Reischauer called “one of the most dramatic live TV programs in history.” Though the auditorium’s microphones were dead, Kennedy could see that the TV microphones had remained on, so he knew he was speaking to the entire nation. The Japanese watched their young people heckling an invited, globally renowned dignitary and saw him respond with composure and respect. The scene was mortifying: legendary as attentive hosts, the Japanese had failed spectacularly. Kennedy later said he was surprised at the impact of the incident; Reischauer agreed, noting, “At the time, we did not realize what a tremendous victory we had just had.” The rest of the visit was a triumph.

Kennedy’s visit, coupled with the efforts of Reischauer and other committed leaders on both sides, heralded a new era in U.S.-Japanese relations. Reischauer had bonded with the attorney general, which gave him a direct line to the president—something that would prove invaluable in the ambassador’s struggles with the military. “When Caraway started attacking Reischauer,” Ernest Young noted, “the ambassador could resort to this backchannel through Bobby. He used it to save himself from political assassination from the Department of the Army.” In April 1962, President Kennedy announced for the first time that Okinawa would eventually be returned to Japan, implemented several reforms giving the Okinawan people greater autonomy and bolstered social programs on the neglected island. Although Kennedy’s assassination delayed the return, his policy ultimately was achieved ten years later.

After Robert Kennedy’s visit, the RK committee grew into a number of activities and institutions designed to foster an alliance between peoples rather than governments. It created a forum for bilateral dialogue called the Shimoda Conferences, named after that Japanese seaside town. At the initial meeting in 1967, more than seventy Japanese and American politicians, industrialists and academics discussed bilateral relations. Several American participants remarked that they had been shocked at the “passion” among their Japanese counterparts on the issue of Okinawa, which had received little attention in the United States.

Additionally, President Kennedy and Hayato Ikeda had at their 1961 summit initiated cabinet-level exchanges in the realms of the economy, scientific cooperation, and cultural and educational exchange. The delegation on the economy, chaired by Secretary of State Dean Rusk, met for the first time in Hakone, a town famous for its hot springs; the latter became

formalized as the U.S.-Japan Conference on Culture and Educational Interchange (CULCON). CULCON aimed to broaden U.S.-Japanese relations beyond the political and military realms. Participants in its 1962 meeting (among them composer Aaron Copland) agreed on the need for language education and urged the creation of exchanges among artists, sculptors, writers and musicians. CULCON continues today.

Over the years, interlocutors became colleagues; colleagues became friends. The conferences were frequent, the beer cold, the conversations frank. U.S. and LDP alliance managers grew comfortable with one another—too comfortable. Forgetting that the LDP might not be in power forever, the Americans neglected to invite the Japanese opposition to the hot springs too. Former State Department official Richard Armitage lamented the American failure to “spread our network enough.” Observes George Packard, “The dirty little secret was that the United States got used to dealing with the LDP all of those years. The White House, the State Department—no one had developed any ties with any of the political opposition in Japan.” Packard adds, “This is something Reischauer would have abhorred.”

In 2009, Japanese voters upended fifty years of conservative rule, tossed the LDP out of office and installed the opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). The DPJ had no experience governing and little expertise in foreign affairs. Its new prime minister, Yukio Hatoyama, had declared during his campaign that he wanted to create “a more equal alliance” with the United States and, ominously, “equidistance” between Washington and Beijing. Hatoyama withdrew Japanese participation in naval operations supporting the United States in the Indian Ocean, began cozying up to Beijing with talk of an “East Asian community,” and opened an investigation into shady agreements in

the 1950s and 1960s between the LDP and Washington regarding the stationing of nuclear weapons.

The DPJ’s ascent discombobulated the U.S.-Japanese relationship. As U.S. alliance managers tried to figure out the post-LDP world, they had no one to call. All they had were their friends in Japan’s bureaucracy whom they’d cultivated over decades of delegations, dialogues and beer-soaked retreats. But their friends were on the outside too. Viewed by the distrustful DPJ as LDP minions, the bureaucrats had been benched by the Hatoyama government.

Unease turned to crisis when Hatoyama announced plans to scrap an agreement about restructuring U.S. bases on Okinawa. The deal, fourteen years in the making, was viewed by alliance managers as essential for maintaining the U.S.-Japanese security partnership. A key element of the agreement was the relocation of U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma because of the threat of accidents to the densely populated Ginowan city in which it sat. The plan was to relocate the base in Okinawa to Camp Schwab, near Nago City. But Hatoyama declared he wanted to move the Marines off Okinawa altogether.

Horrified alliance managers on both sides scrambled to repair the damage. As East Asia was rocked by crisis—shrill Chinese diplomacy in a 2010 standoff over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands and North Korean attacks against South Korea—the DPJ was forced rapidly up its foreign-policy learning curve. The DPJ reined in the movement to distance Japan from the United States. It ushered Hatoyama out as if he were an uncle clutching a scotch and braying inappropriate remarks at a wedding. A new DPJ prime minister, Naoto Kan, smoothly took up the microphone: ladies and gentlemen, please excuse the disruption and return to your dessert. The Futenma deal was back on track.

Thus, the crisis in the alliance eased, and subsequent events only made the Japanese people more receptive to arguments about the need for a strong U.S.-Japanese alliance (and for the Futenma relocation to go forward). After the 2011 tsunami and nuclear disaster, the Japanese public witnessed an American outpouring of sympathy, aid and emergency assistance. And the following year, as Japan's leaders and people watched Chinese mobs burn and loot Japanese businesses amid expressions of genocidal rhetoric, Japanese fears of China soared. Japanese politicians now compete to outdo one another as the toughest on China and the ablest manager of U.S.-Japanese relations.

But relocating Futenma still remains a thorny business. Hatoyama's support for ejecting the U.S. Marines buoyed the hopes of the Okinawan antibase movement: ebullient Okinawans subsequently elected antibase mayors and a governor. Many Okinawans want the base gone—not relocated. In this new political setting, Tokyo will find it more and more difficult to relocate Futenma; it will likely require increasingly heavy-handed behavior by the center toward its resentful periphery.

Perhaps alliance managers can restructure U.S. forces in Okinawa in ways that the local population will accept. Perhaps the U.S. military can communicate better with the islanders and more effectively train U.S. soldiers so as to avoid the kind of incidents that have harmed Okinawans and aggravated relations in the past. In other words, perhaps (as Reischauer would encourage), Okinawans can be "brought in" to the alliance. Already, many locals have been brought in, because over the years

marriages have connected U.S. servicemen and local families, and many livelihoods on Okinawa depend on the bases.

An alternative view, however, is that perhaps no amount of community relations (which, indeed, the U.S. military has already extensively pursued) can address the fundamental dilemma of Okinawa. A half



century ago, Tokyo and Washington shook hands on a deal in which the United States would defend Japan, allowing it to enjoy a light defense burden and superpower protection, and Japan would provide bases for the U.S. military, giving a distant power a strategically located "unsinkable aircraft carrier." Okinawa's bases dwell at the center of this deal. Perhaps there is no amount of finessing that can both preserve the alliance and satisfy Okinawans.

Similarly, perhaps there is a limit to the United States' ability to create warm relationships with some of its contemporary allies in the Middle East, where anti-American sentiment is strong. Nevertheless, the case of the U.S.-Japanese alliance offers lessons as Washington seeks to maintain and improve its crisis-prone relationships in the Middle East, where Washington retains some unfortunate diplomatic habits.

In his book *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*, Rajiv Chandrasekaran chronicles how personnel for the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in Iraq were chosen not for their professional expertise or regional knowledge but instead for their loyalty to the George W. Bush administration. Once in Iraq they fortified themselves away from the local population. In an eerie echo of the U.S. occupation of Japan, Chandrasekaran writes of the CPA diplomats: “Many of them spent their days cloistered in the Green Zone, a walled-off enclave in central Baghdad with towering palms, posh villas, well-stocked bars and resort-size swimming pools.”

The already-problematic U.S. tendency to build high walls around its diplomats will be exacerbated in the era after the Benghazi attacks in Libya. As tragically highlighted by the murder of U.S. ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and other officials in Libya, U.S. diplomats face threats that are real and dire. Even in the comparatively low-threat Japan of the 1960s, it is important to note, Edwin Reischauer encountered a knife-wielding Japanese man in the embassy and suffered a terrible stabbing; he survived.

But, as the U.S.-Japanese experience shows, relations will suffer if diplomats’ encounters with an ally’s people are confined to glimpses through the window of a speeding limousine. Reischauer, Robert Kennedy and their Japanese partners transformed U.S.-Japanese relations by reaching out to the public. The United States has a powerful story to tell about religious tolerance, respect for diversity and governance by law. It needs to tell that

story—even if it is shouted offstage in its first attempts.

The U.S.-Japanese case also shows that greater dialogue with an ally’s public—assisted by area experts such as Reischauer—can help American policy makers hear and understand the issues that are important to allies and thus help them identify vital accommodations that can sustain these relationships. Reischauer’s knowledge of Japan and his deep contact with its people, as well as the subsequent Hakone conversations among U.S. and Japanese leaders about Okinawa, paved the way for the return of Okinawa to Japanese sovereignty—and averted what could have been an alliance-killing crisis between the two countries. In postinvasion Iraq, Chandrasekaran comments, while Iraqis were thrilled to be liberated and were eager to create a new country, “The CPA, in my view, squandered that goodwill by failing to bring the necessary resources to bear to rebuild Iraq and by not listening to what the Iraqis wanted—or needed—in terms of a postwar government.”

Edwin Reischauer saw the rehabilitation of the U.S.-Japanese alliance as critically important in itself. But he also viewed it as a model for relations “across cultural and racial lines for the whole world.” He argued that the United States and Japan enjoyed “the closest relations that have ever been developed between a Western country and a major nation of non-Western cultural background.” It’s worth pondering how the lessons of the rescue of the U.S.-Japanese alliance might be usefully applied elsewhere, even if the prospects for a similar transformation may at first appear dim. □





## The Fallacy of Human Freedom

By Robert W. Merry

**John Gray**, *The Silence of Animals: On Progress and Other Modern Myths* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013), 288 pp., \$26.00.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau famously lamented, “Man is born to be free—and is everywhere in chains!” To which Alexander Herzen, a nineteenth-century Russian journalist and thinker, replied, in a dialogue he concocted between a believer in human freedom and a skeptic, “Fish are born to fly—but everywhere they swim!” In Herzen’s dialogue, the skeptic offers plenty of evidence for his theory that fish are born to fly: fish skeletons, after all, show extremities with the potential to develop into legs and wings; and there are of course so-called flying fish, which proves a capacity to fly in certain circumstances. Having presented his evidence, the skeptic asks the believer why he doesn’t demand from Rousseau a similar justification for his statement that man must be free, given that he seems to be always in chains. “Why,” he asks, “does everything else exist as it ought to exist, whereas with man, it is the opposite?”

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This intriguing exchange was pulled from Herzen’s writings by John Gray, the acclaimed British philosopher and academic, in his latest book, *The Silence of Animals: On Progress and Other Modern Myths*. As the title suggests, Gray doesn’t hold with that dialogue’s earnest believer in freedom—though he has nothing against freedom. He casts his lot with the skeptic because he doesn’t believe freedom represents the culmination of mankind’s earthly journey. “The overthrow of the ancien régime in France, the Tsars in Russia, the Shah of Iran, Saddam in Iraq and Mubarak in Egypt may have produced benefits for many people,” writes Gray, “but increased freedom was not among them. Mass killing, attacks on minorities, torture on a larger scale, another kind of tyranny, often more cruel than the one that was overthrown—these have been the results. To think of humans as freedom-loving, you must be ready to view nearly all of history as a mistake.”

Such thinking puts Gray severely at odds with the predominant sentiment of modern Western man—indeed, essentially with the foundation of Western thought since at least the French Encyclopedists of the mid-eighteenth century, who paved the way for the transformation of France between 1715 and 1789. These romantics—Diderot, Baron d’Holbach, Helvétius and Voltaire, among others—harbored ultimate confidence that reason would triumph over prejudice, that knowledge would prevail over ignorance, that “progress” would lift mankind to ever-higher levels of consciousness and purity. In short, they

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foresaw an ongoing transformation of human nature for the good.

The noted British historian J. B. Bury (1861–1927) captured the power of this intellectual development when he wrote, “This doctrine of the possibility of indefinitely moulding the characters of men by laws and institutions . . . laid a foundation on which the theory of the perfectibility of humanity could be raised. It marked, therefore, an important stage in the development of the doctrine of Progress.”

We must pause here over this doctrine of progress. It may be the most powerful idea ever conceived in Western thought—emphasizing *Western* thought because the idea has had little resonance in other cultures or civilizations. It is the thesis that mankind has advanced slowly but inexorably over the centuries from a state of cultural backwardness, blindness and folly to ever more elevated stages of enlightenment and civilization—and that this human progression will continue indefinitely into the future. “No single idea,” wrote the American intellectual Robert Nisbet in 1980, “has been more important than, perhaps as important as, the idea of progress in Western civilization.” The U.S. historian Charles A. Beard once wrote that the emergence of the progress idea constituted “a discovery as important as the human mind has ever made, with implications for mankind that almost transcend imagination.” And Bury, who wrote a book on the subject, called it “the great transforming conception, which enables history to define her scope.”

Gray rejects it utterly. In doing so, he rejects all of modern liberal humanism. “The evidence of science and history,” he writes, “is that humans are only ever partly and intermittently rational, but for modern humanists the solution is simple: human beings must in future be more reasonable. These enthusiasts for reason have not noticed that the idea that humans may one day be more rational requires a greater leap of faith than anything in religion.” In an earlier work, *Straw Dogs: Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals*, he was more blunt: “Outside of science, progress is simply a myth.”

Gray’s rejection of progress has powerful implications, and his book is an attempt to grapple with many of them. We shall grapple with them as well here, but first a look at Gray himself is in order. He was born into a working-class family in 1948 in South Shields, England, and studied at Oxford. He gravitated early to an academic life, teaching eventually at Oxford and the London School of Economics. He retired from the LSE in 2008 after a long career there. Gray has produced more than twenty books demonstrating an expansive intellectual range, a penchant for controversy, acuity of analysis and a certain political clairvoyance.

He rejected, for example, Francis Fukuyama’s heralded “End of History” thesis—that Western liberal democracy represents the final form of human governance—when it appeared in this magazine in 1989. History, it turned out, lingered long enough to prove Gray right



and Fukuyama wrong. Similarly, Gray's 1998 book, *False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism*, predicted that the global economic system, then lauded as a powerful new reality, would fracture under its own weight. The reviews were almost universally negative—until Russia defaulted on its debt, “and the phones started ringing,” as he recalled in a recent interview with writer John Preston. When many Western thinkers viewed post-Soviet Russia as inevitably moving toward Western-style democracy, Gray rejected that notion based on seventy years of Bolshevism and Russia's pre-Soviet history. Again, events proved him correct.

Though often stark in his opinions, Gray is not an ideologue. He has shifted his views of contemporary politics in response to unfolding events and developments. As a young man, he was a Labour Party stalwart but gravitated to Margaret Thatcher's politics after he concluded, in the late 1970s, that Labour had succumbed to “absurdist leftism.” In the late 1980s, disenchanted with the “hubristic triumphalism” of the Tories, he returned to Labour. But he resolutely opposed the Iraq invasion led by America's George W. Bush and Britain's Tony Blair, and today he pronounces himself to be a steadfast Euroskeptic.

Though for decades his reputation was

confined largely to intellectual circles, Gray's public profile rose significantly with the 2002 publication of *Straw Dogs*, which sold impressively and brought him much wider acclaim than he had known before. The book was a concerted and extensive assault on the idea of progress and its philosophical offspring, secular humanism. *The Silence of Animals* is in many ways a sequel, plowing much the same philosophical ground but expanding the cultivation into contiguous territory mostly related to how mankind—and individual humans—might successfully grapple with the loss of both metaphysical religion of yesteryear and today's secular humanism. The fundamentals of Gray's critique of progress are firmly established in both books and can be enumerated in summary.

First, the idea of progress is merely a secular religion, and not a particularly meaningful one at that. “Today,” writes Gray in *Straw Dogs*, “liberal humanism has the pervasive power that was once possessed by revealed religion. Humanists like to think they have a rational view of the world; but their core belief in progress is a superstition, further from the truth about the human animal than any of the world's religions.”

Second, the underlying problem with this humanist impulse is that it is based

*Progress is the idea that mankind has advanced slowly but inexorably from a state of cultural backwardness, blindness and folly to ever more elevated stages of enlightenment. Gray rejects it utterly.*

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upon an entirely false view of human nature—which, contrary to the humanist insistence that it is malleable, is immutable and impervious to environmental forces. Indeed, it is the only constant in politics and history. Of course, progress in scientific inquiry and in resulting human comfort is a fact of life, worth recognition and applause. But it does not change the nature of man, any more than it changes the nature of dogs or birds. “Technical progress,” writes Gray, again in *Straw Dogs*, “leaves only one problem unsolved: the frailty of human nature. Unfortunately that problem is insoluble.”

That’s because, third, the underlying nature of humans is bred into the species, just as the traits of all other animals are. The most basic trait is the instinct for survival, which is placed on hold when humans are able to live under a veneer of civilization. But it is never far from the surface. In *The Silence of Animals*, Gray discusses the writings of Curzio Malaparte, a man of letters and action who found himself in Naples in 1944, shortly after the liberation. There he witnessed a struggle for life that was gruesome and searing. “It is a humiliating, horrible thing, a shameful necessity, a fight for life,” wrote Malaparte. “Only for life. Only to save one’s skin.” Gray elaborates:

Observing the struggle for life in the city, Malaparte watched as civilization gave way. The people the inhabitants had imagined themselves to be—shaped, however imperfectly, by ideas of right and wrong—disappeared. What were left were hungry animals, ready to do anything to

go on living; but not animals of the kind that innocently kill and die in forests and jungles. Lacking a self-image of the sort humans cherish, other animals are content to be what they are. For human beings the struggle for survival is a struggle against themselves.

When civilization is stripped away, the raw animal emerges. “Darwin showed that humans are like other animals,” writes Gray in *Straw Dogs*, expressing in this instance only a partial truth. Humans are different in a crucial respect, captured by Gray himself when he notes that *Homo sapiens* inevitably struggle with themselves when forced to fight for survival. No other species does that, just as no other species has such a range of spirit, from nobility to degradation, or such a need to ponder the moral implications as it fluctuates from one to the other. But, whatever human nature is—with all of its capacity for folly, capriciousness and evil as well as virtue, magnanimity and high-mindedness—it is embedded in the species through evolution and not subject to manipulation by man-made institutions.

Fourth, the power of the progress idea stems in part from the fact that it derives from a fundamental Christian doctrine—the idea of providence, of redemption. Gray notes in *The Silence of Animals* that no other civilization conceived any such phenomenon as the end of time, a concept given to the world by Jesus and St. Paul. Classical thinking, as well as the thinking of the ancient Egyptians and later of Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, Shintoism and early Judaism, saw humanity

as reflecting the rest of the natural world—essentially unchanging but subject to cycles of improvement and deterioration, rather like the seasons.

“By creating the expectation of a radical alteration in human affairs,” writes Gray, “Christianity . . . founded the modern world.” But the modern world retained a powerful philosophical outlook from the classical world—the Socratic faith in reason, the idea that truth will make us free; or, as Gray puts it, the “myth that human beings can use their minds to lift themselves out of the natural world.” Thus did a fundamental change emerge in what was hoped of the future. And, as the power of Christian faith ebbed, along with its idea of providence, the idea of progress, tied to the Socratic myth, emerged to fill the gap. “Many transmutations were needed before the Christian story could renew itself as the myth of progress,” Gray explains. “But from being a succession of cycles like the seasons, history came to be seen as a story of redemption and salvation, and in modern times salvation became identified with the increase of knowledge and power.”

Thus, it isn’t surprising that today’s Western man should cling so tenaciously to his faith in progress as a secular version of redemption. As Gray writes, “Among contemporary atheists, disbelief in progress is a type of blasphemy. Pointing to the flaws of the human animal has become an act of sacrilege.” In one of his more brutal passages, he adds:

Humanists believe that humanity improves along with the growth of knowledge, but the

belief that the increase of knowledge goes with advances in civilization is an act of faith. They see the realization of human potential as the goal of history, when rational inquiry shows history to have no goal. They exalt nature, while insisting that humankind—an accident of nature—can overcome the natural limits that shape the lives of other animals. Plainly absurd, this nonsense gives meaning to the lives of people who believe they have left all myths behind.

**I**n *The Silence of Animals*, Gray explores all this through the works of various writers and thinkers. In the process, he employs history and literature to puncture the conceits of those who cling to the progress idea and the humanist view of human nature. Those conceits, it turns out, are easily punctured when subjected to Gray’s withering scrutiny.

Gray pulls from the past Stefan Zweig (1881–1942) and Joseph Roth (1894–1939), noted Austrian authors and journalists, both of Jewish origin, who wrote extensively about what Austria had been like under the Hapsburg crown. As Zweig described it in his memoir, *The World of Yesterday*, the vast Hapsburg Empire seemed to be a tower of permanence, where “nothing would change in the well-regulated order.” Zweig added, “No one thought of wars, of revolutions, or revolts. All that was radical, all violence, seemed impossible in an age of reason.” In Roth’s novella, *The Emperor’s Tomb* (1938), he describes the tidy uniformity of Austrian life. All provincial railway stations looked alike—small and painted yellow. The porter was the same everywhere, clothed

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in the same blue uniform. He saluted each incoming and outgoing train as “a kind of military blessing.” People knew where they stood in society and accepted it.

This little world was utterly destroyed with the fall of the Hapsburgs after World War I, and many heralded the departure of this obsolete system of royalist governance. After all, the polyglot empire was not a modern state, even during its final sixty years or so when Franz Joseph finally embraced new technology such as railroads and telegraphic communication. But the old system lacked some of the “ancient evils,” as Gray puts it, that more modern states later revived in pursuit of what they anticipated as a better world. Torture had been abolished under the Hapsburgs. Bigotry and hatred, while evident in society, were kept in check by an authoritarian monarchy that didn’t have to respond to mass movements spawned in the name of self-government. “Only with the struggle for national self-determination,” writes Gray, “did it come to be believed that every human being had to belong to a group defined in opposition to others.”

As Roth wrote in his short story “The Emperor’s Bust”:

All those people who had never been other than Austrians, in Tarnopol, in Sarajevo, in Vienna, in Brunn, in Prague, in Czernowitz, in Oderburg, in Troppau, never anything other than Austrians, they now began, in compliance with the “order of the day,” to call themselves part of the Polish, the Czech, the Ukrainian, the German, the Romanian, the Slovenian, the Croatian “nation”—and so on and so forth.

Roth could see that the declining devices of empire were being replaced “by modern emblems of blood and soil,” as Gray puts it. Thus, Roth’s progressive, future-gazing outlook soon gave way to a kind of reactionary nostalgia. Gray explains:

Along with the formation of nations there was the “problem of national minorities.” Ethnic cleansing—the forcible expulsion and migration of these minorities—was an integral part of building democracy in central and eastern Europe. Progressive thinkers viewed this process as a stage on the way to universal self-determination. Roth had no such illusions. He knew the end-result could only be mass murder. Writing to Zweig in 1933, he warned: “We are drifting towards great catastrophes . . . it all leads to a new war. I won’t bet a penny on our lives. They have established a reign of barbarity.”

Both Roth and Zweig died before they could see the full magnitude of this barbarity. But, whatever one may think of the Hapsburg Empire and what came after, it is difficult to see that train of events as representing human progress. Rather, it more accurately is seen as just another episode, among multitudes, of the haphazard human struggle upon the earth.

And yet the myth of progress is so powerful in part because it gives meaning to modern Westerners struggling, in an irreligious era, to place themselves in a philosophical framework larger than just themselves. That is the lesson of Joseph Conrad’s *An Outpost of Progress* (1896), discussed by Gray as a reflection of man’s

need to fight off despair and gloom. The story centers on two Belgian traders, Kayerts and Carlier, sent by their company to a remote part of the Congo, where a native interpreter lures them into a slave-trading transaction. Though initially shocked to be involved in such an activity, they later think better of themselves after receiving the valuable elephant tusks put up as trade for human chattel, as well as after reading old newspapers extolling “Our Colonial Expansion” and “the merits of those who went about bringing light, faith and commerce to the dark places of the earth.”

But the steamer they were expecting doesn’t arrive, and their languid outpost existence is darkened by the threat of starvation. In a fight over a few lumps of sugar, Carlier is killed. In desperation, Kayerts decides to kill himself. He’s hanging from a gravesite cross when the steamer arrives shortly afterward. Conrad describes Kayerts’s disillusionment as he contemplates what he has done and his ultimate insignificance born of placing himself outside civilization: “His old thoughts, convictions, likes and dislikes, things he respected and things he abhorred, appeared in their true light at last! Appeared contemptible and childish, false and ridiculous.”

And yet he can’t quite give up his attachment to civilization or progress even as he ponders his predicament. “Progress was calling Kayerts from the river,” writes Conrad. “Progress and civilisation and



all the virtues. Society was calling to its accomplished child to come to be taken care of, to be instructed, to be judged, to be condemned; it called him to return from that rubbish heap from which he had wandered away, so that justice could be done”—justice administered by himself, in a final bow to the permanence of civilization and the myth of progress.

Gray notes that Conrad himself had traveled to the Congo in 1890 to take command of a river steamer. He arrived thinking he was a civilized human being but later thought differently: “Before the Congo, I was just a mere animal,” he wrote, referring to European humanity—which, as Gray notes, “caused the deaths of millions of human beings in the Congo.” Gray elaborates:

The idea that imperialism could be a force for human advance has long since fallen into disrepute. But the faith that was once attached to empire has not been renounced. Instead it has spread everywhere. Even those who nominally follow more traditional creeds rely on a belief in the future for their mental composure. History may be a succession of absurdities, tragedies and crimes; but—everyone insists—the future can still be better than anything in the

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past. To give up this hope would induce a state of despair like that which unhinged Kayerts.

This perception leads Gray to a long passage of praise for Sigmund Freud, who “reformulated one of the central insights of religion: humans are cracked vessels.” Freud, writes Gray, saw the obstacles to human fulfillment as not only external but also within the human psyche itself. Unlike earlier therapies and those that came after, however, Freud’s approach did not seek to heal the soul. As Gray explains, psychotherapy generally has viewed the normal conflicts of the mind as ailments in need of remedy. “For Freud, on the other hand,” writes Gray, “it is the hope of a life without conflict that ails us.” Most philosophies and religions have begun with the assumption that humans are sickly animals, and Freud didn’t depart from this perception. “Where he was original,” says Gray, “was in also accepting that the human sickness has no cure.” Thus, he advocated a life based on the acceptance of perpetual unrest, a prerequisite to human assertion against fate and avoidance of the inner turmoil that led to Kayerts’s suicide.

This insight emerges as the underlying thesis of Gray’s book. As he sums up, “Godless mysticism cannot escape the finality of tragedy, or make beauty eternal. It does not dissolve inner conflict into the false quietude of any oceanic calm. All it offers is mere being. There is no redemption from being human. But no redemption is needed.” In other words, we don’t need religion and we don’t need the idea of progress because we don’t need redemption,

either divine or temporal. We simply need to accept our fate, as they did in the classical age, before the Socratic faith in knowledge and the Christian concept of redemption combined to form the modern idea of progress and the belief in the infinite malleability of human nature.

**I**n the end, then, Gray’s message is largely for individual Westerners, adjudged by the author to be in need of a more stark and unblinking view of the realities of human existence. It’s a powerful message, and not without elements of profundity. And it is conveyed with eloquence of language and dignity of thought.

But this is a magazine about man as a political animal, about public policy and the ongoing drama of geopolitical force and competition. Thus, it would seem appropriate to seek to apply Gray’s view of progress and human nature to that external world. The idea of progress was a long time in gestation in Western thought, beginning perhaps with St. Augustine of Hippo, in the fifth century, who crystallized the concept of the unity of all mankind, a fundamental tenet of both Christian theology and the idea of progress. It drove Christianity toward its impulse of conversion and missionary zeal, which led later, in a more secular age, to impulses of humanitarianism and a desire to spread democracy around the world. And Gray is correct in suggesting that the theological idea of man’s immanent journey toward perfection and a golden age of happiness on earth would lead much later to utopian dreams, revolutionary prescriptions,



*“Technical progress,” writes Gray, “leaves only one problem unsolved: the frailty of human nature. Unfortunately that problem is insoluble.”*

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socialist formulas, racialist theories and democratic crusades.

But it wasn't until René Descartes (1596–1650) that Western thought began its turn toward humanism. He posited two fundamental axioms—the supremacy of reason and the invariability of the laws of nature. And he insisted his analytical methods were available to any ordinary seeker of truth willing to follow his rules of inquiry. No longer was knowledge the exclusive preserve of scholars, scientists, archivists and librarians. This was revolutionary—man declaring his independence in pursuit of knowledge and mastery of the universe. It unleashed a spree of intellectual ferment in Europe, and soon the Cartesian method was applied to new realms of thinking. The idea of progress took on a new, expanded outlook—humanism, the idea that man is the measure of all things. As J. B. Bury notes in his book *The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry into Its Growth and Origin* (1920), psychology, morals and the structure of society now riveted the attention of new thinkers bent on going beyond the larger “supra-human” inquiries (astronomy and physics, for example) that had preoccupied Bacon, Newton, Leibniz and even Descartes.

And that led inevitably to those eighteenth-century French Encyclopedists and the emergence of their intellectual offspring, Rousseau, who twisted the idea of progress into a call for the use of civic force on behalf of a culminating paradise on earth that Rousseau called a “reign of virtue.” Shortly thereafter, his adherents and

intellectual heirs pulled France into what became known as the Reign of Terror.

Much of the human folly catalogued by Gray in *The Silence of Animals* makes a mockery of the earnest idealism of those who later shaped and molded and proselytized humanist thinking into today's predominant Western civic philosophy. But other Western philosophers, particularly in the realm of Anglo-Saxon thought, viewed the idea of progress in much more limited terms. They rejected the idea that institutions could reshape mankind and usher in a golden era of peace and happiness. As Bury writes, “The general tendency of British thought was to see salvation in the stability of existing institutions, and to regard change with suspicion.” With John Locke, these thinkers restricted the proper role of government to the need to preserve order, protect life and property, and maintain conditions in which men might pursue their own legitimate aims. No zeal here to refashion human nature or remake society.

A leading light in this category of thinking was Edmund Burke (1729–1797), the British statesman and philosopher who, writing in his famous *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, characterized the bloody events of the Terror as “the sad but instructive monuments of rash and ignorant counsel in time of profound peace.” He saw them, in other words, as reflecting an abstractionist outlook that lacked any true understanding of human nature. The same skepticism toward the French model was shared by many of the Founding Fathers, who believed with Burke that human

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nature isn't malleable but rather potentially harmful to society. Hence, it needed to be checked. The central distinction between the American and French revolutions, in the view of conservative writer Russell Kirk, was that the Americans generally held a "biblical view of man and his bent toward sin," whereas the French opted for "an optimistic doctrine of human goodness." Thus, the American governing model emerged as a secular covenant "designed

emulate the Roman model as best they could." They divided government powers among men and institutions and created various checks and balances. Even the American presidency was modeled generally on the Roman consular imperium, and the American Senate bears similarities to the Roman version. Thus did the American Founders deviate from the French abstractionists and craft governmental structures to fit humankind as it actually



to restrain the human tendencies toward violence and fraud . . . [and] place checks upon will and appetite."

Most of the American Founders rejected the French philosophes in favor of the thought and history of the Roman Republic, where there was no idea of progress akin to the current Western version. "Two thousand years later," writes Kirk, "the reputation of the Roman constitution remained so high that the framers of the American constitution would

is—capable of great and noble acts, but also of slipping into vice and treachery when unchecked. That ultimately was the genius of the American system.

But, as the American success story unfolded, a new collection of Western intellectuals, theorists and utopians—including many Americans—continued to toy with the idea of progress. And an interesting development occurred. After centuries of intellectual effort aimed at developing the idea of progress as an



ongoing chain of improvement with no perceived end into the future, this new breed of “Progress as Power” thinkers began to declare their own visions as the final end point of this long progression.

Gray calls these intellectuals “ichthyophils,” which he defines as “devoted to their species as they think it ought to be, not as it actually is or as it truly wants to be.” He elaborates: “Ichthyophils come in many varieties—the Jacobin, Bolshevik and Maoist, terrorizing humankind in order to remake it on a new model; the neo-conservative, waging perpetual war as a means to universal democracy; liberal crusaders for human rights, who are convinced that all the world longs to become as they imagine themselves to be.” He includes also “the Romantics, who believe human individuality is everywhere repressed.”

Throughout American politics, as indeed throughout Western politics, a large proportion of major controversies ultimately are battles between the ichthyophils and the Burkeans, between the sensibility of the French Revolution and the sensibility of American Revolution, between adherents of the idea of progress and those skeptical of that potent concept. John Gray has provided a major service in probing with such clarity and acuity the impulses, thinking and aims of those on the ichthyophil side of that great divide. As he sums up, “Allowing the majority of humankind to imagine they are flying fish even as they pass their lives under the waves, liberal civilization rests on a dream.” □

## Redcoat Leaders Weren't All Dolts

*By William Anthony Hay*

**Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy**, *The Men Who Lost America: British Leadership, the American Revolution, and the Fate of the Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 480 pp., \$37.50.

**T**he victors in wars may write the history of those wars, as the cliché says, but history usually manages to delve into the perspectives, interests and exploits of the defeated as it pieces together, over time, a complete picture. A vast literature on the Napoleonic wars, the Civil War and both world wars includes such explorations of the defeated to explain how events unfolded and what factors drove them. But no similar body of literature has emerged to survey the British side of the American Revolution. British historians neglected a defeat that complicated the story of their country’s rise to imperial greatness, while Americans operated within the prejudices and assumptions of nineteenth-century patriotic writers. Later attempts to debunk their accounts rarely challenged the overarching—and

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overly deterministic—narrative of how the United States gained its independence.

Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy has set out to correct this oversight. He argues that the British perspective is “essential for making the war intelligible.” British actions, he notes, set the terms for American responses. Resistance to policy made in London drove the escalating tensions that led to open conflict in 1775. British military operations to recover authority over the rebellious colonies then determined how the Americans waged their war for independence. The conflict sprang from a larger dispute over the nature of sovereignty within the British-Atlantic world during the 1760s with origins reaching far beyond the thirteen mainland colonies. A struggle for American independence produced a global war after 1778. Clearly, British outlooks and actions shaped the conflict at every stage, so bringing them into the story provides a fuller understanding of a complex event.

Britain’s role in the American Revolution also connects with larger questions about policy and strategy. Partly a crisis of imperial overstretch, the war led to an almost-unprecedented projection of military power overseas. Neither Britain nor any other European power had deployed so large an army in the Americas. A larger proportion of the Royal Navy operated far beyond home waters than at any point in British naval history until the endgame of World War II. But in the 1770s, unlike 1945, Britain faced two naval rivals in Europe. The American resistance of regulars and partisans, along with limited local supplies, forced commanders to rely on

logistical support from the British Isles; this involved voyages of three to four months. The military effort included conventional operations to regain territory and defeat the Continental army as well as counterinsurgency efforts to suppress resistance. Domestic politics and financial concerns, however, precluded full mobilization until the war had escalated beyond America.

O’Shaughnessy uses the intertwined stories of key decision makers to explain how Britain lost a war that, on paper, it should have won. The resulting collective biography deftly captures an era along with the men who directed the struggle that defined their time. The big players included George III, America’s last king; his prime minister, Lord North; three generals; two admirals; and the ministers directing military and naval affairs from London. Thus does the book capture the war from numerous standpoints, exploring multiple factors guiding decisions and the many constraints and obstacles faced by British leaders. O’Shaughnessy argues that the British government persisted in believing it would win partly because its army never suffered any series of linear defeats.

He also shatters entrenched stereotypes of British officials as incompetent and hidebound men whose failings sprang from an antiquated and inflexible aristocratic culture. Rather than hapless figures doomed to lose, they were, says O’Shaughnessy, “capable men who fought a closely contested war” and suffered afterward from comparison to opponents lionized as giants. Preoccupation with their failings masks the

reality that the war's outcome remained in doubt right up to Britain's Yorktown defeat. It also diminishes the accomplishment of George Washington and other Americans in triumphing against tremendous odds. Greatness, after all, hardly lies in achieving the inevitable.

O'Shaughnessy shows British commanders as capable, often-innovative men who led ably. John Burgoyne, whose showmanship and drawing-room manner later made him "the popular stereotype of the men who lost America," forged a career on merit as a creative and daring officer. Distinguished service in the Seven Years' War won him a coveted assignment to raise a new cavalry regiment, which he later led

study their profession by keeping up with literature on military affairs and be able to perform any task required of their men. Burgoyne's professional ethos, sharpened by ambition, typified British officers of the day far more than his theatrical personal style.

William Howe and Henry Clinton, selected for their commands by George III over more senior generals, also owed their commands in America to merit rather than patronage or seniority. Like Burgoyne, Howe had extensive experience training soldiers; he had developed light-infantry tactics against the French in North America. Lord George Germain, who directed the war from London as colonial secretary, considered Howe unsurpassed



in a successful Portuguese campaign that brought further laurels. A 1766 pamphlet he wrote comparing European armies "showed his ability to think conceptually about warfare." He expected his officers to

in his understanding of past wars and his recognition of the need for irregular tactics in America. Clinton, who had served under some of the great commanders of the age, knew America well, as his father had been

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governor of New York. He also was one of the most assiduous readers in the British Army. Lord Cornwallis, another veteran of the Seven Years' War, had studied in a military academy at Turin before proving his merits in the field. These generals approached the conflict with considerable experience and an understanding of the challenges it posed.

Britain's political leaders also displayed more impressive qualities than their subsequent reputations have suggested. With a lively interest in science, literature and the arts, George III had a breadth of culture and inquisitiveness that characterized the Enlightenment. A firm sense of duty sharpened his attention to detail. Ministers designed policy, but O'Shaughnessy describes the king as restraining more extreme measures before the crisis broke out and acting as a voice of caution. The king also showed an informed understanding of military and naval affairs, and his sensitivity to Europe's diplomatic balance strengthened his grasp of the issues at stake in America. He articulated the case for war and the consequences of failure more cogently than his ministers.

Lord North, history's main scapegoat for Britain's eventual defeat, had stabilized domestic politics after becoming prime minister in 1770. An awkward, ungainly appearance made him an easy target for satire. Horace Walpole, North's contemporary in Parliament, quipped that the obese, nearsighted prime minister had the air of a blind trumpeter. But his mastery of public finance and ability to defend policy in parliamentary debate showed

him to be no joke. North faced aggressive questioning in the House of Commons at least three nights a week, on average, during the parliamentary session, and it took considerable talent to survive, let alone succeed, in such a rough-and-tumble environment. Germain and Lord Sandwich, who directed the Admiralty, also brought wide military and administrative experience to war management and proved effective in handling logistical problems.

**B**ut, if the men who lost America were neither incompetent nor inexperienced, where did they go wrong? An answer to that question requires that we go back to the origins of the American Revolution, which lie beyond O'Shaughnessy's book. Yet they shaped the problem his protagonists faced. With its sweeping victory in the Seven Years' War, which secured British supremacy in North America and removed the French from Canada, Britain now had both an opportunity and an imperative to reorganize the patchwork structure of colonial governance. But asserting parliamentary authority through tighter enforcement of laws governing trade and taxation generated friction with entrenched colonial interests. New questions about the meaning of liberty also drove Britain and its colonies apart. George III and his British subjects believed parliamentary sovereignty guaranteed ordered liberty and the rule of law, while colonists insisted the assemblies they elected had authority independent of Westminster. Allegiance to the crown, they insisted, did not mean subordination to Parliament. A host of differences on specific practical matters,

*The growing tension within Britain's Atlantic empire fit within a larger dynamic of conflict between central governments and distant provinces.*

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such as taxation, exacerbated the conflict over governmental structures.

Rather than strengthening British authority, imperial reform efforts made consensus more elusive. Spain, as British historian J. H. Elliott has pointed out, incited rebellions in its South American colonies during the same period through similar efforts to tighten control and more effectively mobilize resources. Austria's Joseph II faced revolt across the Hapsburg domains, particularly in Brabant and Flanders, when his reforms abrogated local privileges and undermined elites who clung to them. Thus, the growing tension within Britain's Atlantic empire fit within a larger dynamic of conflict between central governments and distant provinces.

Taxation sharpened the disputes on several levels. Servicing wartime debt and the costs of governing the empire demanded funds that strained Britain's existing system. The old tax on land burdened the elites who controlled Parliament, while consumption taxes sparked plebeian outrage. Both imposed a politically unacceptable cost that made the 1760s an especially turbulent decade in terms of domestic politics. A succession of short ministries could not pursue coherent policies, but they faced growing pressure to deflect opposition at home by making the colonies pay, which meant collecting existing taxes more efficiently and imposing new duties. Governments also sought to keep down expenses, particularly for the army and navy. The result provoked colonial resistance while reducing the government's ability to impose its will

by force. Preoccupation with domestic squabbles and imperial reform left Britain without European allies to hold France back through military pressure.

Order broke down in the thirteen North American colonies during the early 1770s as organized protests created alternative centers of authority beyond those sanctioned by the British crown. The British forces in the colonies, commanded by General Thomas Gage, operated under the control of civilian colonial officials. Gage spoke of dispersing Boston rioters like a Dublin mob, but he could not act until magistrates gave authorization. When organized resistance spread beyond port cities, it became harder to suppress with available troops. The 1773 Boston Tea Party marked a watershed, forcing British officials either to impose authority or acknowledge that they had lost it.

At this point, O'Shaughnessy writes, George III became actively involved with the growing American crisis and adopted a hard line. Believing that too much lenience had encouraged the colonists' defiance, the king embraced Gage's view that they would submit if British authorities took a resolute stance. Besides, a national mood of retribution emerged in Britain once the news of the Boston Tea Party arrived. North, who defined the question before Parliament as "whether we have or have not any authority in that country," introduced the Coercive Acts—known to Americans as the Intolerable Acts—to punish Boston.

Returning to Massachusetts as governor, with joint civil and military authority, Gage found rebellious colonists holding

the initiative. Pressing Americans to take sides, they compelled loyalists to flee or remain silent. In a letter to London authorities, Gage described a so-called provincial congress as seeming to “assume every power of a legal government.” He privately warned in

November 1774 that New England would fight rather than yield. Gage presciently noted that, while a large force might intimidate opponents and draw support, “a middling one will encourage resistance, and gain no friends.” He recommended a British force of twenty thousand to put down the rebellion. Told from London that force should be met with force, Gage moved to secure colonial military stores during the following spring. Fighting at Lexington and Concord turned simmering resistance into outright war. Gage proclaimed martial law and told London he now needed thirty-two thousand men to restore order.

Howe, Clinton and Burgoyne arrived in May 1775 to discover a deteriorating situation. The Battle of Bunker Hill, though a victory for the British, took a fearsome toll and showed that the colonists were more than a ragtag mob. Soon George Washington arrived to take command of colonial forces under the authority of the Continental Congress. Once news of Bunker Hill crossed the Atlantic, a British proclamation on August 23 formally



declared the colonies in rebellion.

Sandwich wrote in October that “the nation seems more unanimous against the Americans, than I ever remember them in any point of great national concern since I have known Parliament.” George III, who had refused

requests from the colonists to mediate their disputes with Parliament, embraced coercion with the backing of ministers and public opinion. The prevailing view was that the loss of the American colonies would be the first in a cascade of falling dominoes that would leave Britain a third-rate power like Sweden or the Dutch Republic. Caribbean islands dependent upon America for provisions would depart from necessity, taking vital revenue and markets, and Ireland also would soon fall. Only a determined effort to suppress the American revolt could avert catastrophe. Germain joined the government as colonial secretary in November 1775 to take bold, decisive measures required to end the revolt.

But these political leaders underestimated the military challenge before them. The fighting already had dispelled the illusion that British regulars could suppress American resistance with ease. Once Washington’s siege of Boston forced Howe to evacuate the city by sea, the British lost their only colonial foothold. Defeating the rebellion now involved the



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larger task of conquering America rather than holding territory and suppressing unrest. Germain realized the difficulties and thought it essential “to finish this rebellion in one campaign.” Britain lacked the means to support a protracted effort without disrupting its economy or risking security in Europe. North also feared higher taxes would turn the public against the government’s policy and fuel parliamentary opposition. A larger fleet risked provoking France and Spain into war, and Sandwich only received authorization to fully mobilize the navy in 1778. Britain fought its war in America with the forces on hand rather than those it needed.

**B**ritish generals understood that restoring the crown’s authority in America involved three related objectives. They had to defeat and disperse the Continental army; persuade the population to withdraw support—either active or passive—from the Continental Congress and its war effort; and compel American leaders to abandon their resistance. A decisive victory over Washington’s main force offered the quickest way to fulfill all three goals. Military and political leaders, convinced popular support for the revolution was thin, believed that only coercion by a determined minority kept its backers in power. Clinton thought it possible “to gain the hearts and subdue the minds of America” once the force behind that coercion was broken. Another officer captured the wider British view by distinguishing between loyal and disloyal Americans and urging British troops to “assist the good Americans to subdue the bad

ones.” Defeating Washington would end what had become a civil war and enable loyalists to help suppress remaining unrest.

O’Shaughnessy argues that politicians and generals tried to accomplish too much with too little, gambling on a quick victory through seaborne mobility and the skill of British regular troops and commanders. Germain organized the largest force any European power ever assembled for service in the Americas for Howe’s attack on New York. The British won successive victories in 1776, nearly capturing Washington at Brooklyn Heights and driving the Continental army across the Hudson River into New Jersey. Although Washington complained that “our affairs are in a very bad way,” he kept his army together and withdrew behind the Delaware. Despite tactical victories, Howe fell short of his strategic objective against the elusive Washington. He also found less support from loyalists than anticipated. Washington’s counterattack on overextended British lines in New Jersey in late December erased many of the previous campaign’s gains and salvaged the American cause.

Howe and his brother, navy admiral Richard Howe, sought to leverage military success into a negotiated return to allegiance even after the United States had declared independence on July 4. Both leaders avoided harsh measures that risked alienating the population, but their ambiguous strategy failed to strike a fatal blow or bring political dividends. William Howe found neither the loyalist support he needed to restore the crown’s

*When news of Yorktown reached London, North responded as if he had been shot. "O God! It is all over!" he exclaimed.*

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authority nor any willingness to discuss terms among representatives from the Continental Congress. North, who differed with his colleagues and the king in favoring concessions to end the conflict, also failed to find a middle ground between defeating the colonies and capitulating to them. He struggled to hold political support at home for the war Germain and Sandwich directed. North lacked the "despotic and commandeering temper" necessary to put the state in motion and focus efforts. Rather than imposing a consistent strategy to achieve the government's policy, ministers largely deferred to commanders in America without coordinating their efforts.

**T**he fact that Britain lacked the means to repeat a campaign on the scale of 1776 increased the pressure for a quick, decisive victory that would end the war on British terms. Germain had seen the opportunity for using armies in New York and Canada to separate New England from the other colonies. Coordinating operations given distance and communications of the day presented formidable difficulty, and Germain, partly by necessity, gave commanders discretion to follow their own plans. Howe used that discretion to mount a seaborne assault on Philadelphia rather than go up the Hudson Valley. Capturing the American capital, he believed, would inflict a major political setback and force Washington into a decisive battle with the potential to cripple the Continental army. But Howe's gamble upset Germain's plan and left Burgoyne's army in Canada without support from New York.

Burgoyne, notes O'Shaughnessy, "showed a respect for rebel fighting ability and appreciation of the problems posed by warfare in America." His plans called for the use of artillery to break up field entrenchments used by Americans for shelter, while mobility and flexibility would enable a quick movement down Lake Champlain and then over to the Hudson River. Though hampered by a lack of wagons and draft animals, Burgoyne achieved notable success in summer 1777 by capturing Ticonderoga. But then Burgoyne advanced beyond his supply line and any easy retreat avenue. Gambling his army on his ability to capture Albany, he ended up trapped and outnumbered at Saratoga, where he surrendered in early October. This decisive American victory soon brought France and later Spain into the war.

Meanwhile, Howe's tactical victories in Pennsylvania did little beyond extending the British position over wider territory since Washington's army withdrew south of Philadelphia. After another peace mission failed, Clinton replaced Howe, giving him orders to consolidate his forces in New York for defensive operations. With French intervention in 1778, Germain and Sandwich shifted resources to defend British interests in the West Indies, even at the risk of an attack on the British Isles. Sandwich had long been preoccupied with the threat from Britain's rivals in Europe, but North and others in the cabinet bet on winning in America before France intervened. Now the war in America turned into a contest for imperial survival fought largely elsewhere.

Clinton bitterly complained that he faced an impossible task with insufficient means. He had foreseen the events that led Burgoyne to disaster and pressed Howe to fight in New York rather than Pennsylvania. O'Shaughnessy describes him as providing "the most incisive accounts by a contemporary of the strategic shortcomings of the British war in America," but the embattled general's insights gave him little solace. Clinton also perceived problems in the British tendency to occupy territory but then withdraw, leaving behind disappointed loyalists now powerless to help the cause. He urged that ground taken be held and garrisoned as part of what later would be termed a counterinsurgency effort. Orders to release troops from his command for service elsewhere, however, nullified that strategy as well as any conventional offensive.

The British capture of Savannah presented a chance to test his approach. It demonstrated an American weakness in the South that Clinton exploited in early 1780 with his siege and capture of Charleston, along with seven American generals, more than 2,500 Continental army regulars, and artillery and supplies. It marked the greatest American defeat of the war. Pockets of loyalist support offered a chance to restore British authority in the Carolinas, particularly as regular American opposition in the region had been decimated, leaving only partisans who could be

suppressed through counterinsurgency efforts. The war seemed to have turned dramatically in Britain's favor.

Clinton left further operations in the South to Cornwallis, who had proved his ability in campaigns since 1776. He did not, however, leave Cornwallis a force large enough to garrison territory while conducting operations elsewhere. Nathanael Greene, sent by Washington to salvage the Continental army in the South, coordinated with partisans and maneuvered to avoid tactical defeats. Then Cornwallis made a fateful mistake. Rather than adopting a defensive posture to consolidate British control in South Carolina, he opted to go after Greene. O'Shaughnessy notes parallels between Burgoyne's march to Saratoga and Cornwallis's later move to Yorktown. Both generals disregarded orders, overextended their supply lines and suffered attack from enemy militias.

Although Cornwallis gave "a fair trial to the ardent wishes of government at home," he soon found loyalist support



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illusory. Pyrrhic victories diminished his force and left the British exposed in South Carolina. Admiral Thomas Graves likened the British Army's movements in America to "the passage of a ship through the sea whose track is soon lost." Cornwallis still appeared to be a formidable enemy when he invaded Virginia in spring 1781. But despite creating pandemonium there after an epic march through the Carolinas, he failed to gain traction. Clinton ordered him to establish a post on the Chesapeake with plans for shifting much of the army for a campaign elsewhere. Washington, however, marched French and American troops to Virginia just as the Royal Navy lost control of the sea. Yorktown became a trap rather than a refuge or escape, and Cornwallis surrendered his army on October 19, 1781. The fox, as O'Shaughnessy remarks, had caught the hound.

When news of Yorktown reached London, North responded as if he had been shot. "O God! It is all over!" he exclaimed. Germain and George III showed more fortitude. Although Yorktown decided the contest in America, the larger war remained far from over. Admiral George Rodney's victory in the Caribbean saved Britain's position in the West Indies, while Gibraltar withstood a Spanish attack. The feared erosion in Britain's global position stemming from defeat in the thirteen colonies never materialized.

**W**hat went wrong for Britain in North America? A large part of the problem, O'Shaughnessy demonstrates, was that its mission was an impossible task. Britain

never had the ground or naval forces needed to conquer and hold America. The navy could support army operations or blockade the colonies before 1778, but not both. The war's expansion only widened the gap between ends and means. Support from loyalists fell short of what both politicians and commanders expected. Loyalists, far from helping subdue the rebels in any serious way, left the British to carry the war's burden largely alone. The army had to defeat regular American forces while fighting persistent counterinsurgency efforts and drawing supplies across the Atlantic. Neither the British government nor its commanders managed to solve this problem of scale or reframe the challenge in a more manageable way, and not even the most impressive victories could shift the strategic balance.

O'Shaughnessy's focus on the men who lost America accentuates the larger failure to balance goals with resources or coordinate distant operations effectively. Comparing his story with the British experience in other conflicts underlines the point. Britain overcame weaknesses and leveraged strength when commanders and their political masters in London worked in tandem. They failed that test in the American war. Yet even though Britain lost in America, it held ground elsewhere and laid a foundation for recovery. Defeat did not reduce Britain to a third-rate power, and its revival in the 1780s positioned it for a more crucial strategic struggle against revolutionary and Napoleonic France. It seems that the lessons demonstrated by the men who lost America guided Britain in that later conflict and the age of empire that followed. □



# Energy Politics vs. the Earth

By *John M. Broder*

**Michael Levi**, *The Power Surge: Energy, Opportunity, and the Battle for America's Future* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 272 pp., \$27.95.

**A**round the corner on K Street, one of the half dozen designer salad places in my part of downtown Washington recently closed after about a year in business. “Coming soon,” the sign in the papered-over window reads, “Dunkin’ Donuts.” Hurried Washingtonians will soon be able to get their calorie fix for a tenth of the time and money spent. Maybe not so good for them in the long run, but John Maynard Keynes told us what happens in the long run.

This, in miniature, is the choice the United States faces on energy and climate change. Fossil fuels are convenient, cheap, plentiful and, in the long run, deadly. Renewable energy—from the sun and the soil, the wind and the waves—is comparatively expensive, hard to produce and healthy. Mankind has chosen the cheap and plentiful path for the past two hundred years, burning coal, oil and gas and spewing

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the trash into the atmosphere. In May, the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere surpassed four hundred parts per million, the highest level in three million years. The planet teeters on the cusp of calamity. Science says it’s time to switch to salads.

Michael Levi, one of the nation’s most prolific and quoted experts on energy and climate policy, argues in *The Power Surge* that despite the looming threat of climate change, a rapid and complete switch to renewable-energy sources is impossible in the current political and economic environment. He says the nation can—and must—exploit both fossil fuels and renewable-energy sources for the foreseeable future. The United States should aggressively pursue the parallel revolutions in oil and gas extraction and in clean-power production. Together, he says, they can assure a steady and secure flow of energy without grievous and permanent damage to the economy or the climate.

In a play on President Obama’s “all of the above” energy strategy, which pairs expanded domestic oil and gas development with government support for clean energy, Levi dubs his approach “most of the above.”

He frames the issue early in the book, saying that everything we knew about American energy is changing. Oil imports are falling for the first time in decades. Newly discovered reserves of natural gas have sent prices plummeting, with a host of sweeping effects, mostly good. Vehicle efficiency is rising rapidly, driving down oil consumption. Prices for wind, solar, geothermal and other alternative technologies are falling.



These should be welcome developments, but in the polarized politics of America today they have spawned bitter battles and costly lobbying campaigns. Coal producers, utilities and coal-state lawmakers accuse the Obama administration of waging a “war on coal.” Environmental groups attack oil and pipeline companies for poisoning the nation’s air and waters. Republicans dismiss government clean-energy incentive programs as industrial favoritism and crony capitalism. Local citizens are taking on natural-gas drillers over air pollution, contamination of groundwater and intrusive truck traffic. Wealthy coastal dwellers band together to block offshore wind installations. Wildlife enthusiasts protest desert solar farms for threatening rare lizard species. On climate, one is either an “alarmist” or a “denialist.”

“Across the nation,” Levi writes, “people are picking sides.”

This polarization on the linkages among energy, national security and the environment is hardly new. The battle lines were drawn in the early 1970s, with the advent of Earth Day, the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the “small is beautiful” movement and the shock of the 1973 oil embargo. President Richard Nixon set a goal of energy self-sufficiency by the end of the

decade through a combination of more domestic production, conservation measures and lavish federal funding of alternatives to fossil fuels—all parallel to the steps the Obama administration has been pursuing since early 2009.

Nixon’s strategy failed, and by the end of the 1970s the United States was importing more oil than in 1973.

Then as now, the conflict was only superficially about fossil fuels versus renewable energy, production versus conservation, the hard-energy path versus the soft-energy path. On this point, Levi cites Hans Landsberg, a twentieth-century economist at Resources for the Future, one of the earliest research organizations to delve deeply into issues of energy supply, national security and economic growth.

“It can be argued,” Landsberg wrote in 1980, “that energy was tailor-made to become the arena for the clash of opinions that, to be sure, are related to energy but for which energy is at best a proxy.” He posited the idea that the energy-policy debates of the 1970s actually reflected “a fierce, prolonged bout of soul-searching.”

And thus it remains today. Ask voters about the threat posed by climate change, and their views break along party lines. Inquire if the answer to energy shortages or high gasoline prices is more drilling or more conservation, and Democrats and Republicans present mirror images. Pose a question about government support for clean energy versus subsidies for traditional energy, and Republicans will

*Mankind has chosen the cheap and plentiful path  
for the past two hundred years, burning coal, oil  
and gas and spewing the trash into the atmosphere.*

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cry “Solyndra!” while Democrats shout “*Deepwater Horizon!*”

Levi, a senior fellow for energy and the environment at the Council on Foreign Relations and something of a polymath, attempts to bridge these divides. (He has advanced degrees in physics and war studies and has written widely on climate change, oil markets, nuclear proliferation and arms control.) His approach is anecdotal and analytic, generally thoughtful and, at times, frustrating. He often forces the two sides further toward the poles to position himself as the rational man in the middle. He repeatedly says that development of virtually all forms of energy is acceptable as long as it is done carefully, intelligently, with sufficient concern for the environment and so on. He is a bit promiscuous with the phrase “to be certain.” He is enthusiastic about the opportunities offered by the shale-gas boom, for example, but only as long as drilling is accompanied by adequate environmental safeguards. It is not always clear from the book what those protections entail—what level of fugitive methane emissions from gas wells is acceptable, for example, or how groundwater can be protected around drilling sites. He lays out the arguments for and against construction of the Keystone XL pipeline, which would carry about eight hundred thousand barrels of thick crude a day from Alberta to the Gulf Coast, but does not come down firmly on one side or the other. (Elsewhere he has essentially endorsed the project as beneficial for the American economy and only minimally risky to the environment.)

He takes to task the antagonists at the far ends of the fossil-renewable spectrum, who insist that the nation must choose a single energy path and pursue it relentlessly.

“This view is mistaken,” Levi writes. He goes on:

The world has changed fundamentally since the battle lines in the fight over American energy were first set. It is no doubt possible to push too hard on any particular energy source: to expand oil and gas production so blindly and rapidly that it entails massive environmental damage outweighing any economic, security, or (for natural gas) climate gains, or to push so quickly into new cars and trucks and alternative energy that the economic costs overwhelm any economic, security, or climate benefits. But the fact that there are wrong ways to pursue each energy source does not mean there aren't opportunities to gain from all of them. The United States can strengthen its economy, improve its national security, and confront climate change if it intelligently embraces the historic gains unfolding all across the energy landscape.

Levi focuses closely on two of the (mostly) positive developments in recent years—the explosion of natural-gas production brought by hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling, and the dramatic improvement in vehicle efficiency from weight reduction and refinements to the internal combustion engine, as well as hybrid and battery-electric technologies. Both developments, along with increased industrial efficiency and a decline in manufacturing stemming from the deep

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recession and slow recovery, have helped reduce greenhouse-gas emissions in the United States by roughly 10 percent from pre-recession levels. President Obama has pledged in international climate-change negotiations to cut U.S. emissions by 17 percent from 2005 levels by 2020.

The author visits Ohio to put faces to the fight over fracking for natural gas, introducing a farmer and a dairyman who disagree sharply over the financial and environmental impact of fracking. Levi is sympathetic to the opponents of drilling, but ultimately believes the benefits of the shale-gas revolution far outweigh the disadvantages. The substitution of natural gas for coal in power generation, for example, has led to a sharp drop in carbon emissions and reduced energy costs for manufacturers. Yet, always careful to temper his enthusiasm, Levi notes that natural gas is still a fossil fuel that produces significant carbon emissions and must someday be supplanted by zero-carbon sources if humanity is to avoid the direst consequences of climate change.

“Shale gas has the potential to deliver big (though not revolutionary) economic gains, promises to spare the United States dependence on overseas natural gas suppliers, and could be used to help reduce U.S. consumption of oil,” the ever-measured Levi concludes. “Whether the country will chart a course that protects communities and exploits the potential of abundant natural gas remains to be seen.”

Levi also takes a field trip to Detroit to chronicle the progress of American automakers in meeting the stringent new

corporate average fuel-economy targets negotiated with the Obama administration and states led by California. He visited a Ford test facility to drive the battery-powered Focus Electric, a lightweight zero-emissions vehicle that will help boost the company’s fleet mileage number. But Levi says what caught his eye was a Ford Mustang with a four-hundred-plus-horsepower V-8. He explores the forces at play in the global auto industry today, the fight over fuels and propulsion systems (gasoline or biofuels; electric, hybrid, clean diesel or advanced spark ignition), and the tension between government efficiency mandates and consumer choice. Electric cars, while seemingly solving the pollution problem, depend for their power on the source of the electricity they consume. Levi runs the numbers on the Focus Electric he drove. The electricity he consumed on his drive near Dearborn, Michigan, was produced almost exclusively from coal. He calculated that the total carbon-dioxide emissions for one hundred miles traveled in the Focus were only slightly higher than those produced by a Toyota Prius hybrid propelled mainly by gasoline. In other parts of the country less dependent on coal, however, a pure electric vehicle is substantially cleaner than even the most efficient hybrid.

But electric cars and even gas-electric hybrids affect U.S. oil consumption only at the margins. The big savings will come from conventional cars and trucks becoming lighter and more efficient, and from liquid fuels created from biomass, natural gas or even algae.



*A rapid and complete switch to renewable-energy sources is impossible in the current political and economic environment.*

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Levi writes:

The move toward more efficient vehicles is bringing benefits for the U.S. economy, the environment, and national security, even if sometimes overstated. . . . Fully taking advantage of the opportunity to cut U.S. oil consumption would require some support from government—we have seen that individual car buyers don't fully account for the national benefits of more efficient vehicles when they shop for a new ride—but markets will do a lot of the heavy lifting by themselves.

It is the role of markets that ultimately underpins the reporting and the conclusions of *The Power Surge*. In his final chapter, Levi surveys the landscape and concludes that while new sources of conventional and unconventional energy pose a historic opportunity for the United States, the biggest challenge—climate change—remains a problem without a clear solution.

Levi prescribes four broad rules to guide policy makers and private enterprises as they navigate the nation's energy future: build a diverse and resilient energy portfolio; focus on big gains; empower energy development of all kinds; and leverage domestic gains to make progress abroad.

It is the second of these imperatives—the quest for game-changing policies—that presents both the greatest opportunities and the most intractable obstacles. A broad and diverse energy portfolio will improve the nation's energy security and balance-of-payments accounts, but alone it will not solve the climate conundrum. International negotiations conducted under the United

Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will not keep atmospheric carbon-dioxide levels below 450 parts per million or temperature increases below 2 degrees Celsius. (Levi calls the attempt to negotiate a 193-nation climate treaty “quixotic” and says that what American diplomats should focus on is adding transparency to each nation's climate efforts and making it difficult to slide backwards.)

So what are the “big wins” Levi calls for and how realistic are they politically?

The accepted answer to the climate puzzle is to make dirty energy more expensive and clean energy cheaper. There are comprehensive ways to accomplish this—cap and trade, for one; another would be a carbon-pricing scheme such as a carbon-emissions tax. Both are foreclosed for now by political polarization in Congress and President Obama's evident reluctance to tackle the problem as he wrestles with guns, immigration, health-care implementation and his other second-term priorities.

A third possibility is broad government support for clean-energy research and development. This entails finding money to support an array of technologies that are near commercial development or have the potential to alter the energy landscape in the future, as the introduction of nitrogen-based fertilizers in the early twentieth century sparked a revolution in agricultural production. Levi endorses expanded federal financial backing for energy research, but notes that the issue has become entangled in politics. He cites the case of Solyndra, the solar-panel manufacturer that went



belly-up in 2011 after receiving more than \$500 million in federal loan guarantees. Levi says the politics of energy subsidies have become so poisoned that the only way to funnel substantial money to promising projects is through the Pentagon, the world's largest consumer of energy and one of the leaders in conservation and climate-change adaptation. He writes:

Energy technology enthusiasts regularly discuss the possibility of steering more defense money toward energy, on the grounds that military demand for fuels is enormous, and Pentagon R&D budgets are huge. Government spending on energy innovation is unlikely to become as central as past spending on defense, at least not anytime soon.

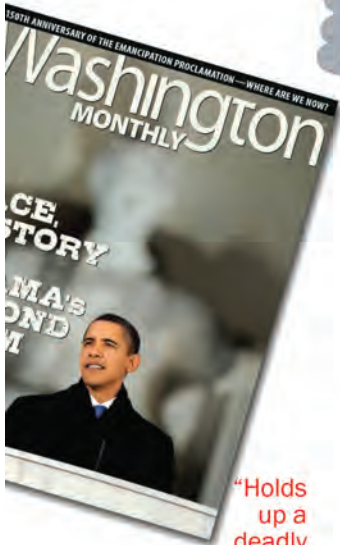
A last possibility, which has won bipartisan political support in the past and has at least the theoretical backing of the president, is a federal clean-energy standard, requiring that a set percentage of electricity generation be provided by renewable sources. Some thirty states already have such mandates, and a nationwide standard could drive up the cost of fossil energy and provide a consistent

market for alternatives. Such programs set overall targets but leave to individual states and their electricity providers the means of meeting them. Like cap and trade, some schemes allow utilities to trade credits to meet the standards. Unfortunately, such a project requires national legislation, which President Obama is not pushing and which Republicans and Democrats in Congress, even those who have supported it in the past, have no interest in pursuing now.

What is left, in place of the "big wins" Levi demands, are small steps that can win bipartisan support or that can be accomplished by executive order. Earlier this year Obama called for the creation of an Energy Security Trust, which would take \$200 million a year of oil and gas royalties on newly opened public lands and devote the money to development of cleaner cars and trucks. The administration and some lawmakers are pushing for stricter efficiency standards for household appliances and heating and cooling systems. (The White House Office of Management and Budget has blocked several such proposals from the Department of Energy as it recalculates the costs and benefits.) And the EPA recently finalized a new rule requiring refiners to produce cleaner-burning gasoline, which will remove the equivalent of several million cars' worth of health- and climate-altering pollutants from the skies.

These steps won't save the planet, and they won't end the energy proxy wars. But they represent at least modest progress until the inevitable upheavals in the climate and in American politics make possible the revolution that nature demands. □

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