



HOOVER DIGEST

RESEARCH + OPINION
ON PUBLIC POLICY

FALL 2019 NO. 4

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- » *Analyze the effects of government actions and public policies*
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Immediately after marrying her college sweetheart in 1899, Lou Henry Hoover (1874–1944) sailed with him to China. There Herbert and Lou Henry Hoover traveled around remote and sometimes dangerous lands on mining business. The future first lady learned Chinese during the Hoovers' sojourn there, and to date is the only presidential spouse to have learned an Asian language. This Qing dynasty vase, made in 1662–1722 during the Kangxi period, is among her collections kept at the Hoover Institution.



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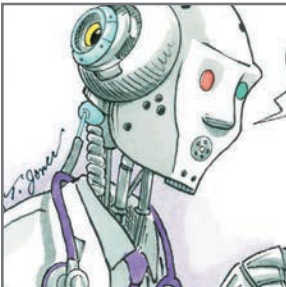
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How Policy Became War

Wars on poverty, on drugs, on terrorism: for decades the federal government has been declaring war—metaphorical, that is. The casualties? Compromise, reason, and the separation of powers.

By David Davenport and Gordon Lloyd

America is at war. As the longtime “world’s policeman,” engaged now for nearly two decades in a global war on terror, the United States is fighting wars literally all over the world. Global politics in the late twentieth century were characterized as a “cold war.” Even economic policies such as the imposition of tariffs on imported goods are understood as having launched a “trade war” among nations.

More surprising, however, is that we are also in a state of war at home. Presidents, most obviously beginning with Lyndon Johnson in the 1960s, have declared wars that continue to this day on a host of domestic problems: poverty, crime, drugs, and terror, to name a few. War’s close cousin, the national emergency, has also become a way of doing policy business in the

*David Davenport is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution. Gordon Lloyd is a professor of public policy at the School of Public Policy at Pepperdine University. Their latest book is **How Public Policy Became War** (Hoover Institution Press, 2019).*

United States. Few Americans realize that they currently live under twenty-eight states of national emergency, many declared decades ago.

Living in a constant state of domestic war and national emergency has dramatically changed the way public policy is made and conducted in America. In our view, this is neither accidental nor good. Presidents have discovered

that declaring wars and emergencies is a way of grasping greater executive power at the expense of Congress. Rather than engaging in long-term

War's close cousin, the national emergency, is now business as usual in Washington.

policy development and debate, presidents can take over a field of domestic policy essentially through speeches and declarations of domestic war. Such wars seemingly never end, since all the domestic wars, beginning with Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty in 1963, are still in effect.

The war metaphor itself is a powerful rhetorical tool that has shaped domestic policy. There are troops to muster, enemies to fight, and battles to win. There is little time and opportunity for policy deliberation because, after all, we are at war. In war, the president becomes commander in chief and domestic policies shift from the leadership of Congress to the White House. Few domestic problems are ever finally solved, so a war on this or that challenge becomes, in effect, a permanent framework for how to deal with issues such as poverty, crime, or drugs.

It is not too much to say that our leaders in Washington, DC, have fully embraced the war metaphor, so much so that *deliberation*—which the founders saw as the key to policy formation—has largely given way to action, emergency, and war. The damage this causes is real.

UNCONDITIONAL WAR

Of several lenses—economic, political, sociological—through which we could look at public policy since the Great Depression, the war metaphor has become pervasive and describes much of what has been going on. When we declare war on a domestic policy problem, all kinds of things—from the descriptive to the persuasive and ultimately the prescriptive—take place. The war metaphor is the strongest possible figure of speech because of its ability to marshal a following and focus a policy agenda.

One wonders whether a president would find constitutional authority for the declaration of a war on poverty or crime. When the Constitution was drafted, a war meant quite literally a war against foreign enemies, and the



I WANT YOU
TO JOIN THE
WAR ON POVERTY

power to make that formal declaration was granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8. The president, as commander in chief, was empowered to carry out the wars that Congress declared. One might debate whether, by analogy, the power to declare war on a domestic enemy should also be reserved to Congress, but presidents have simply asserted the power and, since initially it is largely a rhetorical device, such declarations have not been challenged. Ultimately, far more than rhetoric is committed to such wars, so the question of the role of Congress is one that needs more careful consideration.

First and foremost, a declaration of war on a domestic enemy has the effect of rallying the troops—both inside and outside the Beltway—into a focused attack on a policy problem. Franklin Roosevelt said in his first inaugural address that the American people wanted “action, and action now,”

There are troops to muster, enemies to fight, and battles to win. No time for sober deliberation!

to tackle the Great Depression, and through his powerful rhetoric, energized leadership, and far-reaching New Deal policies, he gave them just that. In his 1964 State of the Union message, Lyndon Johnson declared “an unconditional war on poverty.” This declaration of war kicked off the extensive legislative agenda of “the Great Society,” as Johnson called it, changing American economic and domestic policy to this day. Presidents from Richard Nixon on have sought to rally the American people and Congress into wars on crime and drugs. Jimmy Carter sought a similar outcome when he declared “the moral equivalent of war” on energy consumption, but with less effect.

As the war rhetoric becomes more elaborate, its effect moves from the motivational to the descriptive and even the prescriptive. At its most basic level, a declaration of war changes the conversation. No longer are lawmakers examining the policy nuances and choices presented by complex problems such as poverty or drugs; instead we are moving into immediate action and war. The question becomes not so much what we should do about it and more about how to amass the money and energy to do something.

The specifics of the war rhetoric, then, begin to shape the policy, not vice versa. Wars need enemies and weapons. Generals and czars must be commissioned to lead them. Battlefields are identified, tactics developed, and victory defined. All of this is in marked contrast with the kind of analytical and deliberative work that should attend the development of public policy. Indeed, there is a sense that there is little time or space for working up and debating policy alternatives because, after all, we are at war!



I WANT YOU

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WAR ON DRUGS

One of the trickiest elements of the war metaphor revolves around the question of who is the enemy. Terrorism, poverty, drug use, energy consumption, crime—these are all conditions or problems, not enemies in a personalized sense. Can you really declare a war on a condition? If you do, will it inevitably turn into a war against some people—drug dealers, criminals—and is there some danger that even victims of poverty or drug use may come to feel like enemies in the war?

Another important question is why presidents have employed the war metaphor in domestic policy in the first place. One reason for declaring war on domestic problems is consolidating greater power in the presidency itself. Under the Constitution, health and welfare (underpinnings of poverty),

crime, and the like are all matters of state and local control, not federal. Other than directing the work of administrative agencies, Congress retains

No one reviews or reorganizes these “wars,” much less phases them out or declares an end to hostilities.

jurisdiction over federal domestic policy, especially through its oversight and spending powers. By declaring war on a domestic problem, however, a president seizes not only the initiative but also the power to drive policy from the White House. Even when he needs approval from Congress, the president goes to the Hill with a declared war, not just a set of policy options. There is little doubt that power-savvy presidents such as Franklin Roosevelt, Lyndon Johnson, and Richard Nixon understood this very well.

NATION UNDER SIEGE

At first blush, one might think that declaring war on intransigent problems such as poverty or crime would be a good thing. As these domestic policy wars have evolved, however, five conclusions become relatively clear: (1) they do not generally solve the problem at hand; (2) they create roadblocks to better policy solutions; (3) they increase executive power at the expense of Congress; (4) their imagery is often negative and destructive; and (5) they never end. In a larger sense, these domestic policy wars also contribute to the contentious policy and culture wars that have plagued Washington in recent years.

A declaration of war on a domestic policy issue is flawed from the outset because it oversimplifies the problem, precluding further debate and the discovery of better solutions. To declare war is to state that, in effect, we understand the problem and we are prepared to do what it takes to



I WANT YOU
TO JOIN THE
MORAL EQUIVALENT
— OF WAR —

eradicate or solve it. Such a declaration necessarily oversimplifies the problem in order to focus and attack, which is the methodology of war. When a president takes a very complex problem—such as poverty, crime, drug use, terrorism, or energy—and suggests that we understand it and know how to eradicate it by declaring a war, the process of study, deliberation, and consideration of alternatives is essentially over. The very strengths of the war metaphor—action, speed, narrow focus—are enemies of deliberation and policy development.

In addition, such wars are never finally won, leaving the country in a perpetual state of war. Neither poverty, nor crime, nor drugs, nor terror, nor energy consumption have been defeated, so we fight on, adding fronts to the domestic policy wars as we go. Since most of these wars span several administrative departments and agencies, no one is tasked with reviewing or reorganizing these war policies, much less phasing them out or declaring an end to hostilities.

Furthermore, domestic wars have the harmful effect of shifting the balance of power between Congress and the executive branch. All of these domestic policy wars have been declared by presidents and not by Congress. If it is consulted at all, Congress is merely called upon to authorize spending more money for the wars, but even this step is organized and advanced by the president. Further, because there is no single budgetary line item for a war

on poverty or crime or terror, the actual costs of the war are buried in dozens of agency and program budgets, making it even more difficult for Congress

We've settled for an organizing idea—war—that's negative, destructive, and discouraging. We'd be better served by metaphors of hope.

to exercise its power of the purse and oversight. As a result, a domestic war becomes yet one more tool at a president's disposal to increase his power, to launch new initiatives, and to leave a legacy for posterity.

Finally, we note that war is a term of destruction, given to negative connotations of attacking and defeating enemies. If we are constantly at war, America becomes a nation under siege. Perhaps the initial idea of declaring war on a major problem such as poverty or crime has a moment of optimism, but that soon gives way to the destructive tactics and drawn-out nature of a war. In the war metaphor, we have settled for an organizing idea that is negative, destructive, and discouraging. We would be better served by metaphors of hope and optimism.

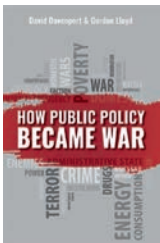
In a sense, the war metaphor has always been with us. The founders, neither naive nor utopian, realized that “faction”—the capacity to be war-like—was sown in the nature of man. As James Madison said in *Federalist* No. 10, we could do away with faction but only by doing away with liberty. We would not propose giving up liberty to avoid war.

Declaring war on a domestic policy issue is flawed from the start. It oversimplifies the problem and prevents the discovery of better solutions.

With these underlying dynamics and motivations toward war and emergency, it seems more realistic to manage the war metaphor rather than expect Washington to give it up entirely, and to put other metaphors and forces into play to help balance it.

Because faction is sown in the nature of man, the founders established all manner of filters that let the good things through and stop the bad. Filters cleanse, remove impurities, and interpose a medium between the people and their government. They are a mechanism to cool the passions of the people. Many of those filters have become clogged and no longer serve their purpose. Restoring and reactivating those filters is a key to managing and minimizing the war metaphor and returning to more positive and deliberative metaphors for public policy in America today. ■

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Is the Recovery Ending?

Slower job creation doesn't mean a recession is imminent. But policy makers can't assume growth will take care of itself.

By Edward P. Lazear

When unemployment dropped below 5 percent three years ago, some economists, including at the Federal Reserve, concluded that the labor market had topped out—that those still out of work would never get jobs. Three years and nearly eight million additional jobs later, it's clear they were wrong.

Only now has job creation begun slowing down—implying that labor-market slack is almost eliminated and the economy is getting close to the end of a long recovery. That doesn't imply that recession is imminent. It is possible to continue at full employment for long periods. At this point, the Fed's job is to prevent solid economic growth from becoming a steep post-peak decline.

How do we know we are close to the end of the recovery phase? Three statistics from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' employment summaries provide clues. As slack vanishes, job growth slows, the employment rate reaches full-employment levels, and wage growth steadies at rates consistent with productivity growth. All three have occurred.

Edward P. Lazear is the Morris Arnold and Nona Jean Cox Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, chair of Hoover's Conte Initiative on Immigration Reform, and the Davies Family Professor of Economics at Stanford University's Graduate School of Business.

In a stable full-employment economy, job creation must be sufficient to accommodate a growing population. The key to determining the number of needed new jobs is the employment rate—the proportion of the working-age population that is employed.

To calculate the number of jobs needed to maintain stability, take the monthly addition to the working-age population and multiply it by the employment rate that would prevail in a full-employment economy, which falls as the population ages and is currently around 60.5 percent. The working-age population is growing by about 156,000 a month. It is therefore necessary to create 95,000 jobs each month to keep employment rates stable at full employment.

May's new-jobs figure, 75,000, was a bit below that—but, because of monthly volatility, not statistically below. The three-month average of jobs added was 151,000—above the required 95,000 but well below the 2018 average of 223,000 a month. Job creation is slowing, as it must when full employment is reached.

The leveling of the employment rate is another sign of full employment. At its low in November 2010, the rate was 58.2 percent. It reached a high of 60.7 percent earlier this year, then fell back to 60.6 percent, where it has remained since March. Although that's lower than the prior peak (63.4 percent in December 2006), the aging of the workforce means that the rate is unlikely to get much above where it is now.

Wage growth rates also suggest that the recovery phase is near its end. Early in a recovery, wages are flat because there is abundant unemployed labor that can be hired back at prevailing wages. As the labor market tightens, employers must pay more to attract workers. In a stable full-employment economy, wages continue to rise, but only at rates consistent with increases in productivity. Wage

growth over the past twelve months was 3.1 percent, down slightly from a twelve-month high of 3.4 percent in February. Inflation was 1.8 percent over the past twelve months, and productivity growth has averaged 1.5 percent. Adding 1.8 percent to 1.5 percent implies that nominal wage growth should

At this point, the Fed's job is to prevent solid economic growth from turning into a steep post-peak decline.

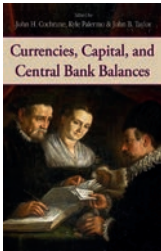
No law of economics says a recession soon follows the elimination of labor-market slack.

be 3.3 percent to keep pace with productivity, about where the United States has been since last October.

The employment and wage statistics suggest that the slack associated with the 2007–9 recession is all but eliminated. This conclusion, based on labor-market data, is consistent with other market indicators. An S&P 500 based forecast signals economic growth during the next four quarters of slightly below 2 percent, which is below the past two years' growth rate.

Historically, economic growth slows when a recovery ends. But no law of economics, either theoretical or empirical, says a recession soon follows the elimination of labor-market slack. Growth depends at least in part on government decisions. Policy makers and Fed officials should bear this in mind. Their job is to maintain growth and prevent a positive economic situation from turning into an unnecessary recession. ■

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Universal Income: How to Bust the Bank

This utopian scheme would create the mother of all welfare states.

By David R. Henderson

Andrew Yang, one of the many politicians contending for the 2020 Democratic nomination for president, advocates a universal basic income (UBI). Under his proposal, which he calls the “Freedom Dividend,” the US government would pay \$1,000 a month to every American adult. There are two major problems with a UBI. First, it would dramatically expand the size of the federal government and, thus, require more than a 70 percent increase in federal taxes. Second, it would dramatically reduce the incentive to work, not for people already on welfare but for millions and possibly tens of millions of people not currently on welfare.

Key points

- » A universal basic income would dramatically expand the federal government, with a corresponding dramatic rise in taxes.
- » A UBI would create more of a welfare culture than we have now.
- » Other government measures to help the poor rely on less government, not more.

David R. Henderson is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and an emeritus professor of economics at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California.

Even some free market economists, such as Duke University's Michael Munger, argue for a UBI that would replace the current welfare state. But assuming unrealistically that the existing means-tested welfare-state programs could be completely replaced, a UBI of \$12,000 or even of \$10,000 a year would require large increases in federal spending and large tax increases.

Consider the Yang proposal first. There are about 330 million people in the United States, of whom 13.4 percent are foreign-born. Yang proposes to give this subsidy to Americans, not American residents. So, let's bias the estimate

of cost in Yang's favor by assuming, contrary to reality, that none of these foreign-born people have become citizens. That leaves

The universal basic income would dramatically reduce the incentive to work for tens of millions of Americans.

286 million people. Let's bias it further in his favor by assuming that an adult is someone who is twenty-one or older. Approximately 74 percent of the US population is twenty-one or older. That makes 212 million people. The overall annual expenditure would be 212 million times \$12,000, which is \$2.544 trillion.

Put that number in perspective. US government spending in fiscal year 2019 will be about \$4.529 trillion. Therefore Yang's UBI would raise federal spending by 56 percent. US federal government revenues for fiscal year 2019 will be about \$3.438 trillion. To fund the UBI and not increase the federal budget deficit even further, the federal government would have to increase taxes 74 percent.

If Yang got his way, he would fund the UBI with a new consumption tax. Since consumption spending is approximately \$13 trillion annually, the tax rate required, if all consumption items were taxed, would be 19.6 percent. Basic economic reasoning says that that's an underestimate for two reasons. First, people would cut back on consumption somewhat in response to so stiff a tax, so to collect the needed revenues, the government would have to set the tax rate on consumption even higher than 19.6 percent. Second, because the tax would discourage production, as all taxes do, that would reduce the revenue generated by other taxes such as the federal income tax, the Social Security and Medicare taxes, and the corporate income tax. So, the feds would need to raise all those tax rates somewhat.



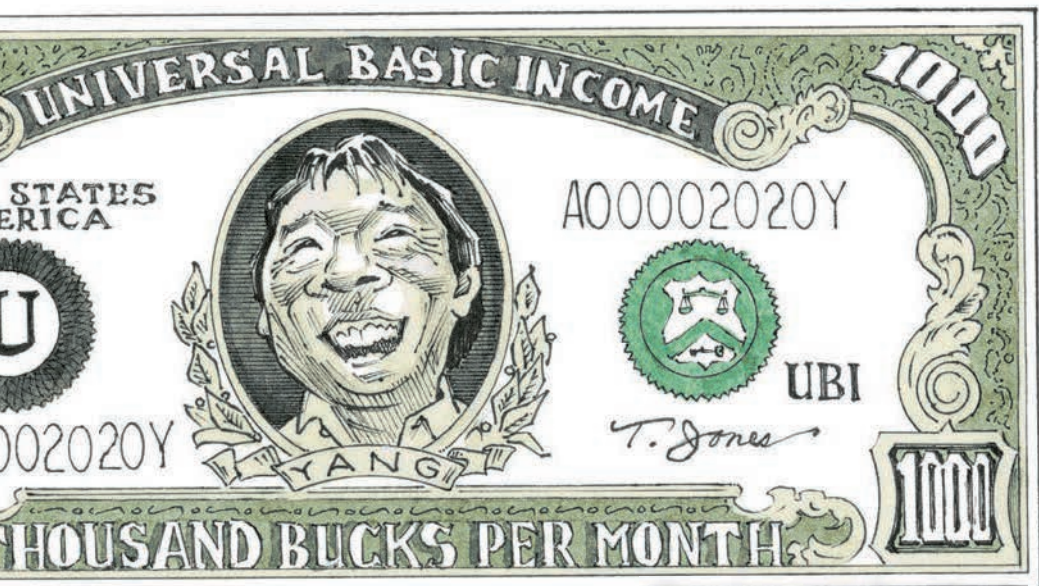
And remember that this would leave our huge federal budget deficit at its current \$1.092 trillion.

SOME LIBERTARIAN SUPPORT

That might be the end of the discussion if not for the fact that support for a UBI comes from an unexpected part of the political spectrum: the libertarian segment. Only a minority of libertarians believe in a UBI but that minority, by some estimates, is much larger than I would have expected. At the end of a 2017 debate on the UBI between George Mason University economist (and, I disclose, my co-blogger) Bryan Caplan and the Niskanen Center's Will Wilkinson, a hefty 29 percent of the hundreds of young libertarians in the audience still believed that the UBI is a good idea. That was down from 35 percent at the beginning.

The two most prominent libertarian supporters of a UBI are Matt Zwolinski, a libertarian philosophy professor at the University of San Diego, and the aforementioned economist Michael Munger.

Libertarians would cut the cost of the UBI substantially by eliminating a large number of means-tested welfare state programs. The big four are Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), food stamps, Medicaid, and housing subsidies. Zwolinski argues against the current welfare system by pointing, correctly, to the enormous implicit marginal tax rates paid by people who decide to get a job. Under our current system, making a certain



[Taylor Jones—for the Hoover Digest]

amount of money can cause a welfare recipient to lose more in government aid than she makes on the job. (I say “she” because the vast majority of adults receiving welfare benefits are women.) That aspect of the system causes many people on welfare not to work.

In a 2013 article, Zwolinski cited Cato Institute economist Michael Tanner’s calculation that federal, state, and local expenditures on 126 antipoverty programs in 2012 totaled \$952 billion. Zwolinski calculated that the average expenditure per poor person was a whopping \$20,610. He then asked, “Wouldn’t it be better just to write the poor a check?”

Maybe, but that’s not what’s at issue. Zwolinski cited these figures to make a case not just for writing the poor a check, but for writing *everyone* a check.

Want to help the poor? Eliminate most of the licensing requirements that make it costly for people to pursue hundreds of occupations.

nated, funding a \$10,000 UBI to every American adult would take another \$1.068 trillion in federal spending. In 2015, when I wrote, this would have required raising tax revenue by 45.7 percent. And to raise tax revenue by 45.7 percent would have required raising tax rates by more than 45.7 percent. Why? Because large increases in tax rates would substantially discourage work and production in general.

There is one way to avoid raising tax rates on everyone. That would be to adopt a proposal made by Charles Murray when he suggested a \$10,000 UBI in 2006. The federal government could guarantee all American adults \$10,000 and then phase out the \$10,000 as their income increases beyond a threshold. So, for example, anyone with other income of \$15,000 gets to keep the whole \$10,000 for a total of \$25,000. But as their other income increases beyond \$15,000, they lose some percent of this \$10,000. Say that percent is 25 percent, a number I have heard tossed around in informal discussions with libertarians who propose a UBI. That means that someone would have to make an extra \$40,000 beyond the \$15,000 before he loses all his federal subsidy.

Consider the implications for work effort for the whole society. Everyone making between \$15,000 and \$55,000 (\$40,000 plus \$15,000) in non-UBI income would receive some of the subsidy. But the median individual income of Americans is about \$40,000. So a majority of Americans would receive

And that’s a much more expensive proposition. Using Zwolinski’s numbers and updating to 2015, I showed that even if all means-tested welfare programs were elimi-

some subsidy. That means that the majority of Americans would face an implicit marginal tax rate from their loss of the subsidy of 25 percent. That might not sound bad at first, but remember that this is on top of their other marginal tax rates, including the federal income tax, the Social Security (FICA) and Medicare (HI) payroll taxes, and their state income taxes. So, a majority of Americans would give up about fifty cents of any additional dollar they make. Even this version of the UBI, therefore, would dramatically reduce the incentive to work for tens of millions of Americans.

BAD NEWS FOR THE WORK ETHIC

A UBI, moreover, would create more of a welfare culture than we have now. Imagine four young men meeting in college and figuring out that when they reach age twenty-one, they can each get \$10,000 a year from the federal government forever. There are a lot of places they could go in America and rent a three- or four-bedroom house for \$1,500 a month (\$18,000 a year), leaving \$22,000 a year to spend on food, cable, and various amenities. Would they want to stay out of the labor force forever? Probably most of them would not, but the UBI could easily postpone their becoming responsible adults for years.

Note the irony in the fact that some libertarians defend a universal basic income. They propose a large expansion of government that the majority of Americans think is too expensive and unfair.

We can argue about whether to tax people to help those who are poor through no fault of their own. I have in mind

It's not a matter of writing the poor a check, but of writing everyone a check. That's a much more expensive proposition.

children in poor families and disabled people, to name two groups that most Americans would probably favor subsidizing with taxpayer funds. But how can we justify handing \$10,000 or \$12,000 a year to people who are completely able-bodied?

Bryan Caplan, in the 2017 debate on a UBI, pointed out that his father, who is not at all libertarian, would have a real problem with a program that transferred funds to such people forever. He then chided his audience of libertarians that they should be at least as libertarian as his non-libertarian father.

A UBI is a very bad idea. What, then, should we do about the bad incentives under the current system?

Don't forget that a good reform, welfare reform, was done in the 1990s. There were two key elements of the welfare reform that Republicans in

Congress pushed, and President Clinton signed, in 1996. First, one cannot receive welfare funded by the federal government for more than two years in a row unless one works. Second, there is a five-year lifetime limit on receiving welfare. Thus the word “temporary” in the name of the program: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Those two provisions offset the disincentives caused by the pre-reform welfare state. It’s still true that while you are on welfare, you can literally make yourself worse off financially by getting a job that pays a fairly low wage. But if you are about to bump up against the two-years-in-a-row limit, or if you want to “bank” a few years of the five for when life gets tougher, you might well take that job. And that’s good, not bad.

There are other measures governments can take to help the poor and they involve less government, not more. One, which I wrote about earlier, is to eliminate virtually all the licensing requirements that now make it costly for people to practice in hundreds of occupations. That would truly help potentially millions of poor and near-poor people climb the ladder to economic success. ■

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Brave New Automated World

The digital revolution holds great promise for human well-being—if that revolution can be managed.

By Michael Spence

Western attitudes toward digital technology have soured in recent years, as once-celebrated innovations have begun to reveal their downsides. Like all technological revolutions, the digital one is a double-edged sword, offering substantial benefits alongside daunting challenges—and certainly not only in the West.

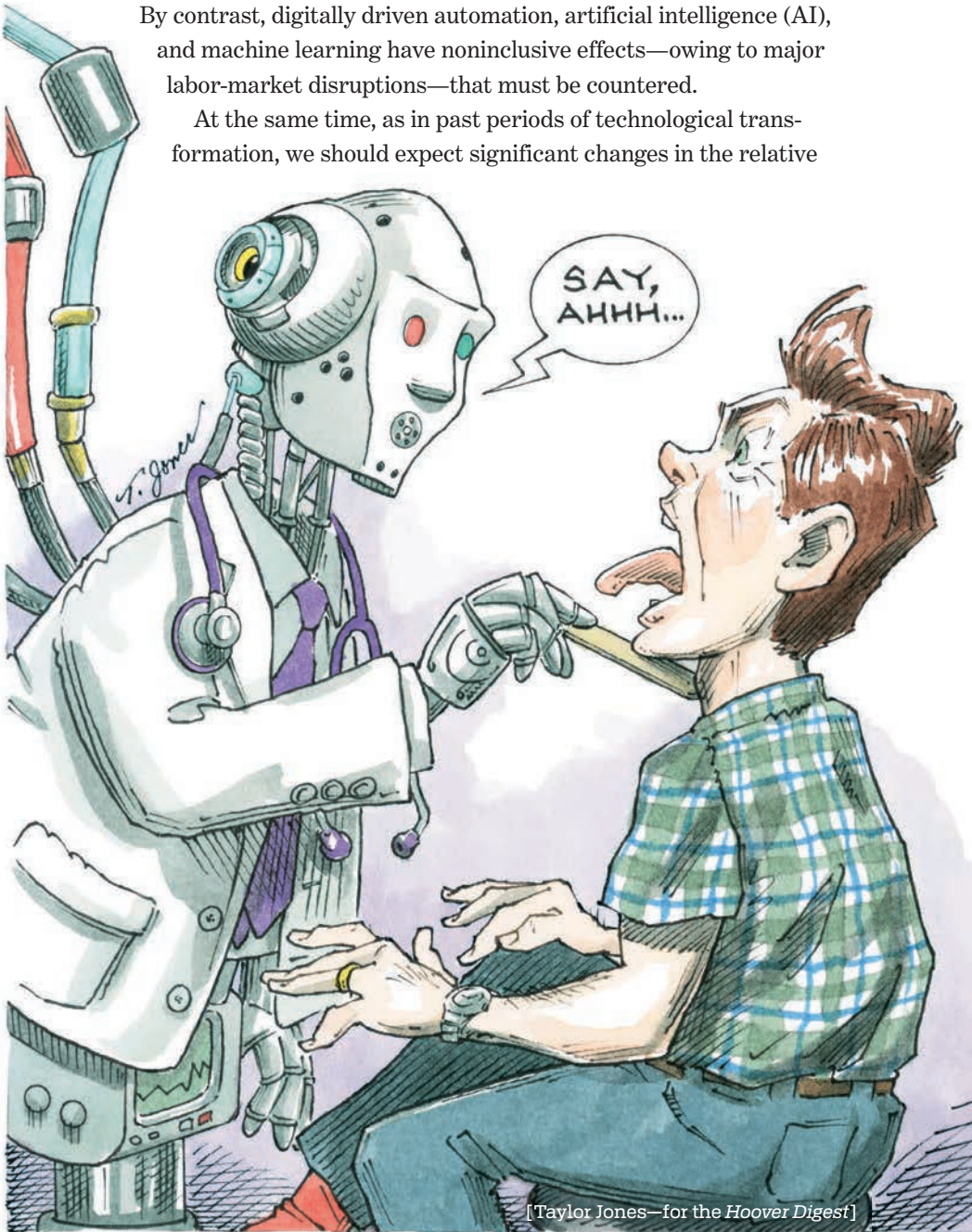
For example, studies show that e-commerce and digital finance in China have contributed to both the rate and the inclusiveness of economic growth. Very small businesses (with an average of three employees) that could not access conventional sources of credit can now get financing. They also can tap into expanded markets through various online platforms, many of which provide tools and data to boost productivity, improve product quality, and benefit from business training.

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In general, e-commerce platforms enhance financial and economic inclusion if they are open and geared toward broadening access to digital markets, rather than competing with their own users' product lines.

By contrast, digitally driven automation, artificial intelligence (AI), and machine learning have noninclusive effects—owing to major labor-market disruptions—that must be countered.

At the same time, as in past periods of technological transformation, we should expect significant changes in the relative



[Taylor Jones—for the *Hoover Digest*]

prices of goods, services, and assets as we advance into the digital age. In terms of jobs, the skills associated with creating or using the new technologies will increase in value, while those for which digital technologies represent a superior substitute will decline in value—sometimes absolutely. This transition to a new equilibrium will take time and impose costs on individual workers and industries. Governments will need to respond with new or expanded social services and regulations. But even in the best cases, the process will not be easy.

DANGEROUS DELAYS

Though automation is just one facet of the digital revolution, it represents a major challenge, particularly with respect to income distributions. But the longer the transition is delayed, the longer it will take to realize the new technologies' contributions to productivity and growth. Nowadays, one often hears commentators questioning why productivity is trending downward if we are in the middle of a digital revolution. Part of the answer is that there is a lag in the skills needed to embed the new technologies across sectors and within business models and supply chains.

A related problem applies to countries in the early stages of development, where labor-intensive process-oriented manufacturing and assembly has been indispensable to achieving sustained growth. Advances in robotics and automation are now eroding the developing world's traditional source of comparative advantage. To be sure, e-commerce platforms could serve as a partial alternative to manufacturing exports by accelerating the expansion of internal markets.

But the real prize is the global marketplace. Only if digital platforms could be extended to tap into global demand would they suggest an alternative growth model (pro-

vided that tariffs and regulatory barriers do not get in the way).

Another key component of the digital revolution is data, owing to its value when pooled, aggregated, and analyzed with the right tools. The rise of business models based on extracting this value has raised privacy concerns. A particularly sensitive case, for example, is health data, such as DNA and medical records, which have significant potential value for biomedical science, but which also could cause

It's certainly possible that a huge increase in computing power at negligible additional cost has yielded minimal consumer benefits . . . but it's highly unlikely.

serious harm if placed in the wrong hands. The challenge will be to devise a regulatory framework that ensures the privacy and security of personal data, while enabling business models that depend on its collection and use.

More broadly, today's technological advances have created a macroeconomic conundrum, insofar as growth and productivity trends appear to be heading in the wrong direction. Beyond the skills lag, one possible explanation—but certainly not the majority view—is that the digital “revolution” is not all that revolutionary. Another explanation is that digital technologies tend to have unusual (though not unique) cost structures, with high fixed costs giving way to zero-to-low marginal costs. Thus, when considered across a vast array of applications and geographic locations, the average costs of some key technologies are negligible. The highly valuable “free” services that we use have, in fact, been properly priced at their marginal cost.

Similarly, exponential improvements in the power and utility of digital products can also be achieved at minimal cost. Today's smartphones are

more powerful than the supercomputers of the mid-1980s and cost a fraction of the price. Now, it is certainly possible that a 10,000-fold increase in

Why is productivity slipping if we're in the middle of a digital revolution? Partly because of a lag in skills.

computing power at negligible additional cost over the past twenty years has yielded minimal consumer benefits, but it is highly unlikely.

More to the point, none of these gains is captured in national income accounts. That is not to suggest that we should scrap or revise GDP, but we do need to recognize its limitations. The problem with GDP is not that it is a poor measure of material well-being (setting aside distributional issues), but that it is incomplete. It does not include the increase in the scope of goods and services delivered at negative incremental cost, nor the nonmaterial side of individual well-being or social progress more generally.

BENEFITS YET UNKNOWN

Looking ahead, the same cost-structure dynamics promise to produce large increases in many areas of well-being. Most medical professionals will soon have digital assistants to offer diagnoses (particularly for certain cancers, diabetic retinopathy, and other chronic illnesses), perform noninvasive surgeries, or find pertinent published research. And many of these services will be available remotely to people around the world, including in poor or otherwise vulnerable communities. Likewise, technological improvements

with zero-to-low marginal costs could have a significant impact on sustainability, another key ingredient in long-term well-being.

Indeed, it is reasonable to expect that, over time, most of the benefits from digital technologies will fall outside the narrow dimension of quantifiable material welfare. This is not to dismiss or minimize the challenges that must be confronted in that domain, particularly with respect to inequality. But a wise approach to those problems would reflect the steady rebalancing of benefits, costs, risks, and vulnerabilities in the digital age. ■

The transition to a new equilibrium will take time and impose costs on individual workers and industries.

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“Free” Health Care Isn’t

How single-payer systems fail their patients.

By **Scott W. Atlas**

The discussion about health care reform has changed dramatically to one of single-payer, government-run care versus a patient-centered, competition-based, decentralized system. Let’s all first realize this: the near-silence about the Affordable Care Act (ACA), or ObamaCare, exposes a consensus acknowledgement that ObamaCare has failed.

In its first four years, ObamaCare insurance premiums for individuals doubled and for families increased 140 percent, even though deductibles increased substantially. Doctor networks accepting ObamaCare insurance continue to narrow; now, almost 75 percent of plans are highly restrictive. The ACA also encouraged a record pace of consolidation, including mergers of doctor practices and hospitals. This is harmful to everyone: prices are consistently higher when fewer hospitals compete for patients.

The Democrats’ new case for single payer is based on the allure of a simple concept: the government explicitly “guarantees” medical care. Other nations making that claim further insist that such health care is provided “free.”

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For instance, England’s National Health System Constitution explicitly states “you have the right to receive NHS services free of charge” despite taxing citizens about \$160 billion per year. Not surprising, independent estimates for single-payer health care for California alone come to about \$400 billion per year, more than double the state’s entire annual budget. Massive new taxes would be required.

But the opposition to single-payer care should not be focused solely on cost and new taxes. Advocates of single-payer health care for Americans overtly ignore glaring realities.

The first is that single-payer systems in countries with decades of experience are proven inferior to US health care in both access and quality. Single-payer systems have imposed massive waiting lists and unconscionable delays that are unheard of in the United States, as verified by numerous studies.

In England alone, a record-setting 4.2 million patients are on NHS waiting lists; in March 2017, 362,600 patients waited longer than four months for hospital treatment; and as of July 2018, more than 3,400 patients had been waiting more than one full year after receiving diagnosis and referral. In Canada, the 2017 median wait between seeing a doctor and first treatment was about five months.

In single-payer systems, even patients referred for “urgent treatment” wait months. In England’s NHS, more than 19 percent wait over two months after referral for their

first urgent cancer treatment; 17 percent wait more than four months for brain surgery. In Canada, the

median wait for neurosurgery after seeing the doctor is 32.9 weeks—about eight months. Canadians with heart disease wait 11.7 weeks for their first treatment. And if you need life-changing orthopedic surgery in Canada, like hip or knee replacement, you would wait a startling ten months.

Ironically, US media calls for reform were widespread when 2009 data showed time-to-appointment for Americans averaged 20.5 days for five common specialties. With the exception of orthopedist appointments for knee pain, those waits in all cases were for healthy checkups, by definition the lowest medical priority. Even for low-priority checkups, US wait times are far shorter than for seriously ill patients in countries with single-payer health care.

Consolidation harms everyone because prices go up when fewer hospitals and doctors compete for patients.

Single-payer systems also actively restrict access to the newest drugs, sometimes for years. Before ObamaCare, a *Health Affairs* study showed the US FDA had approved thirty-two of thirty-five new cancer drugs in 2000–11 while the European Medicines Agency had approved only twenty-six. All twenty-three approved by both were available to US patients first.

Two-thirds of novel drugs (twenty-nine of forty-five) were approved in the United States before any other country did so. Of all newly approved cancer drugs in the United States from 2009 to 2014, Britain, Australia, France, and Canada had approved only 30 to 60 percent of them by June 30, 2014.

Women in single-payer Canada waited far longer and had less access to novel contraceptive drugs, compared to American women, as reported in 2016. Nonetheless, in 2017, NHS England introduced a new “Budget Impact Test” to cap drug prices and further restrict drug availability, even though NHS cancer patients could be forced to wait years for life-saving drugs already available in the United States.

Why does this matter? Long waits for diagnosis, treatments, drugs, and technology have major consequences.

The argument that single-payer systems spend less on health care than the United States is true. But that comes with the cost of enduring explicit restrictions of receiving medical care, including severe waits for doctors and important medical procedures, restricted access to modern drugs, and limited availability of safer, more accurate diagnostic technology.

Sweden has increased its spending on private care 50 percent over the past decade and abolished the government monopoly over pharmacies.

It is no surprise that single-payer systems have worse outcomes from almost all serious diseases than the US system, including cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure,

stroke, and heart disease. The harmful health consequences of single-payer care—beyond pain, suffering, death, and permanent disability—also have tremendous costs to individuals in forgone wages and to the overall economy.

What has also been ignored, even perhaps intentionally hidden from Americans, is that single-payer systems all over the world now turn toward private health care to solve their failures. Sweden has increased its spending on private care 50 percent during the past decade and abolished its government’s monopoly over pharmacies.

In one year alone, the British government spent more than \$1 billion for care from private and other non-NHS providers, as reported by the *Financial*

Times. Governments with single-payer care all over the world—including Finland, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and Denmark—now spend taxpayer money on facilitating private care, sometimes even outside the country, if the waiting time is too long.

Policy should be based

on facts, not fantasy.

Government-centralized,

single-payer systems

hold down costs mainly

by strictly limiting the

availability of medical

care, drugs, and technol-

ogy, causing more patients to die and suffer. And remember: low- and middle-

income Americans will suffer the most if the US system turns to single payer,

because only they will be unable to circumvent that system.

Instead let's empower individuals and let doctors compete for patients.

This lowers the cost of medical care itself. That's the best way to bring high-

quality health care to everyone. ■

Independent estimates for single-payer health care for California alone come to about \$400 billion per year. That's more than twice the state's entire annual budget.

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Scrub This Fantasy

“Medicare for all” is a prescription for fresh inefficiencies and stratospheric costs. We couldn’t afford it—and we shouldn’t even want it.

By Charles Blahous

Many members of Congress and presidential candidates, including Senators Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, and Kamala Harris, have embraced “Medicare for all,” the catch-all phrase used to describe proposals that would replace our current blend of private and public health insurance with a single-payer system run by the federal government. Last spring provided two opportunities to learn more about the implications of these proposals, one a hearing of the House Rules Committee, the other a report issued by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). I was privileged to be a commenter on the draft CBO report as well as to testify at the committee hearing. Below are some of the key findings from the hearing and the report.

» *New federal costs under “Medicare for all” would be unprecedentedly large.*

I estimated in my testimony that new federal budget costs would be somewhere between \$32.6 trillion and \$38.8 trillion over the first ten years of Medicare for all. These large numbers represent just the additional federal

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costs above and beyond currently projected federal spending. Total federal costs over the first ten years would be much higher, somewhere between \$54.6 trillion and \$60.7 trillion. This increase in federal spending would be of such a magnitude that even doubling currently projected individual and corporate income taxes would be insufficient to finance it.

» ***We do not know how or whether the federal government could successfully finance its additional spending under Medicare for all.***

Multiple experts who testified at the hearing agreed that most of these new federal costs would arise from the federal government's taking on spending currently done by the private sector—for example, through private health insurance and individual payments out of pocket. Under Medicare for all the federal government would also assume health spending obligations currently financed by state and local governments. The fact that most of this spending is already being done by someone else does not, however, imply that the federal government could successfully finance it without causing significant damage to the US economy. Indeed, most of the taxes under discussion for financing such a proposal would leave Americans poorer on average, after the deadweight loss from such taxation is taken into account.

» ***The projected additional costs of Medicare expansion would exceed the potential savings from eliminating private health insurance administration.***

Many proponents hope that a single-payer system would allow health care to be provided more efficiently, by eliminating private health insurance administrative overhead and profit. However, my projections as well as others' have found that the additional costs of providing expanded and more generous health insurance would far exceed the savings from reducing insurance administrative costs. CBO's analysis is consistent with this calculation, and its text reinforces the point: "Evidence indicates that people use more care when their cost is lower, so little or no cost sharing in a single-payer system would tend to increase the use of services and lead to additional (national) health care spending, as well as more government spending."

Importantly, this additional spending wouldn't just be a matter of previously uninsured people finally receiving the care they need. Instead, previously insured individuals would also demand more services, irrespective of those services' quality, necessity, or efficacy. The net effect would be an introduction of new inefficiencies and added costs to our health care system, exceeding the savings that might be gained by eliminating private insurance administration.

» ***Current Medicare for all proposals would sharply cut payments to health providers while increasing health service demand, most likely***

causing supply shortages, and disrupting Americans' timely access to health care.

Neither my study nor my subsequent writings or testimony offer judgments of what health providers should be paid. The study simply notes that we do not know what will happen to the timeliness or quality of health services if we cut provider payments from current, higher private insurance payment rates down to Medicare payment rates, as current proposals stipulate.

The CBO report is more explicit that doing so would likely limit Americans' timely access to health care services (emphasis added):

Setting payment rates equal to Medicare FFS [fee for service] rates under a single-payer system would reduce the average payment rates most providers receive—often substantially. Such a reduction in provider payment rates would **probably reduce the amount of care supplied and could also reduce the quality of care**. Studies have found that increases in provider payment rates lead to a greater supply of medical care, whereas decreases in payment rates lead to a lower supply. . . .

In addition to the short-term effects discussed above, changes in provider payment rates under the single-payer system could have longer-term effects on the supply of providers. If the average provider payment rate under a single-payer system was significantly lower than it currently is, fewer people might decide to enter the medical profession in the future. **The number of hospitals and other health care facilities might also decline as a result of closures**, and there might be less investment in new and existing facilities. That decline could lead to a **shortage of providers, longer wait times, and changes in the quality of care**, especially if patient demand increased substantially because many previously uninsured people received coverage and if previously insured people received more generous benefits. How providers would respond to such changes in demand for their services is uncertain.

» ***The costs of Medicare for all would be borne most directly by health providers and those most in need of health services.***

An irony of the Rules Committee hearing was that it featured positive comments about Medicare for all from the perspectives of physicians and those facing severe and expensive health conditions. While there would be winners and losers under single-payer health care, some of the groups represented at

the hearing would be among those paying the largest and most direct costs. Under current proposals, health providers would pay the greatest price up front, for they would bear the brunt of payment cuts that have been proposed to contain the additional costs of expanded and more generous insurance coverage. The other group to feel the costs most severely, at least under the Medicare for all legislation as written, would be those in most dire need of health care services. This is because, as the CBO notes, the supply of health services would be reduced relative to demand, making the services less available in the aggregate and putting upward pressure on prices.

This would be particularly problematic for those with income limitations and urgent health needs, because Medicare for all would not target federal resources on those of modest income, nor on those facing severe health challenges. Instead it would provide first-dollar coverage of all Americans' health care services, from the most routine to the most urgent, from the least expensive to the most, and for the wealthiest patients as well as the poorest. By so doing, it would create much more competition for access to urgently needed health services.

It would be an elementary analytical mistake to compare the imperfect reality of our current health system to an idealized fantasy of perfectly functioning Medicare for all, in which everyone gets more care for less money. That is not how things would work. Instead of cost-saving improvements for everyone, there would be winners and losers. The winners would include state governments as well as those who currently pay for routine health expenses out of pocket under their plans' deductibles. The biggest losers under the introduced Medicare for all bills would be federal taxpayers, hospitals, doctors and nurses, and patients urgently needing swift access to care. ■

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How to Save Democracy

A surge of authoritarianism has overwhelmed the “freedom agenda.” Yet even as Russia rages and China seethes, America can, and must, stand up for democracy.

By Larry Diamond

For three decades beginning in the mid-1970s, the world experienced a remarkable expansion of democracy—the so-called third wave—with authoritarian regimes falling or reforming across the world. By 1993, a majority of states with populations over one million had become democracies. Levels of freedom, as measured by Freedom House, were steadily rising as well. In most years between 1991 and 2005, many more countries gained freedom than lost it.

Key points

- » The democratic slump is intensifying.
- » The decline of democracy will be reversed only if the United States again takes up the mantle of democracy promotion.
- » The growing assertiveness of two major authoritarian states is also setting back democracy.
- » The United States will need to reboot and greatly expand its public-diplomacy efforts.

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But around 2006, the forward momentum of democracy came to a halt. In every year since 2007, many more countries have seen their freedom decrease than have seen it increase, reversing the post-Cold War trend. The rule of law has taken a severe and sustained beating, particularly in Africa and the post-communist states; civil liberties and electoral rights have also been declining.

Adding to the problem, democracies have been expiring in big and strategically important countries. Russian president Vladimir Putin, for example, has long been using the power granted to him through elections to destroy democracy in Russia.

More recently, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has gone down a similar path. Elected

What went wrong? Democracy lost its leading proponent.

executives have been the principal agents of democratic destruction in some countries; in others, the military has. The generals seized control of the government in Egypt in 2013 and in Thailand in 2014, and they continue to wield de facto power in Myanmar and Pakistan. Across Africa, the trend has been for elected autocrats, such as President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya and President John Magufuli of Tanzania, to manipulate elections, subvert independent institutions, and harass critics and political opponents to ensure their continued grip on power.

More concerning still is the wave of illiberal populism that has been sweeping developed and developing countries alike, often in response to anxiety over immigration and growing cultural diversity. The harbinger of this trend was Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orbán, who has presided over the first death of a democracy in an EU member state. Similar trends are under way in Brazil, the Philippines, and Poland. Illiberal, xenophobic parties have been gaining political ground in such hallowed European liberal democracies as Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden; one such party made a serious bid for the presidency of France; and another captured a share of national power in Italy.

There are flickers of hope in places such as Ethiopia, Malaysia, and Nigeria, and democracy is hanging on against the odds in Tunisia and Ukraine. But overall, the trend is undeniably worrisome. Twelve years into the democratic slump, not only does it show no signs of ending, but it is gathering steam.

BROAD RETREAT

A quarter century ago, the spread of democracy seemed assured, and a major goal of US foreign policy was to hasten its advance—called

“democratic enlargement” in the 1990s and “democracy promotion” in the first decade of this century. What went wrong? In short, democracy lost its leading proponent. Disastrous US interventions in the Middle East soured Americans on the idea of democracy promotion, and a combination of fears about democratic decline in their own country and economic problems encouraged them to turn inward. Today, the United States is in the midst of

a broader retreat from global leadership, one that is ceding space to authoritarian powers such as China, which is surging to superpower status, and

Autocrats hear the message that US scrutiny is over and they can do as they please.

Russia, which is reviving its military might and geopolitical ambitions.

Ultimately, the decline of democracy will be reversed only if the United States again takes up the mantle of democracy promotion. To do so, it will have to compete much more vigorously against China and Russia to spread democratic ideas and values and counter authoritarian ones. But before that can happen, it has to repair its own broken democracy.

A temporary dip in the remarkable pace of global democratization was inevitable, but the democratic recession has been much deeper and more protracted than a simple bend in the curve. Something is fundamentally different about the world today.

The Iraq War was the initial turning point. Once it turned out that Saddam Hussein did not, in fact, possess weapons of mass destruction, the Bush administration’s “freedom agenda” became the only way to justify the war retrospectively. Whatever support for the intervention that existed among the American public melted away as Iraq descended into violence and chaos. If this was democracy promotion, most Americans wanted no part of it.

A series of other high-profile shocks reinforced the American public’s wariness. Elsewhere in the Middle East, President George W. Bush’s vow to stand behind people who stood up for freedom rang hollow. In Egypt, for example, the administration did nothing as its ally, President Hosni Mubarak, intensified political repression during and after the contested 2005 elections. In January 2006, the Palestinian Authority held democratic elections, partially in response to pressure from the United States, that resulted in an unexpected victory for the militant group Hamas. And then, during Barack Obama’s presidency, the so-called Arab Spring came and went, leaving behind only one democracy, in Tunisia, and a slew of reversals, crackdowns, and state implosions in the rest of the Middle East.

As a result of these blunders and setbacks, Americans lost enthusiasm for democracy promotion. In September 2001, 29 percent of Americans surveyed agreed that democracy promotion should be a top foreign policy priority, according to a poll by the Pew Research Center. That number fell to 18 percent in 2013 and 17 percent in 2018. According to a 2018 survey by Freedom House, the George W. Bush Institute, and the Penn Biden Center, seven in ten Americans still favored US efforts to promote democracy and human rights, but most Americans also expressed wariness of foreign interventions that might drain US resources, as those in Vietnam and Iraq did.

More important, Americans expressed preoccupation with the state of their own democracy, which two-thirds agreed was “getting weaker.” Those surveyed conveyed worry about problems in their society—with big money in politics, racism, and gridlock topping the list. In fact, half of those surveyed said they believed that the United States was in “real danger of becoming a nondemocratic, authoritarian country.”

Pessimism about the state of American democracy has been compounded by economic malaise. Americans were shaken by the 2008 financial crisis, which nearly plunged the world into a depression. And the American dream has taken a huge hit: only half the children born in the 1980s are earning more than their parents did at their age. Americans have been losing confidence in their own futures, their country’s future, and the ability of their political leaders to do anything about it.

It will be hard for the United States to promote democracy abroad while other countries—and its own citizens—are losing faith in the American model. The United States’ retreat from global leadership is feeding this skepticism in a self-reinforcing downward spiral.

GIVING UP THE LEAD

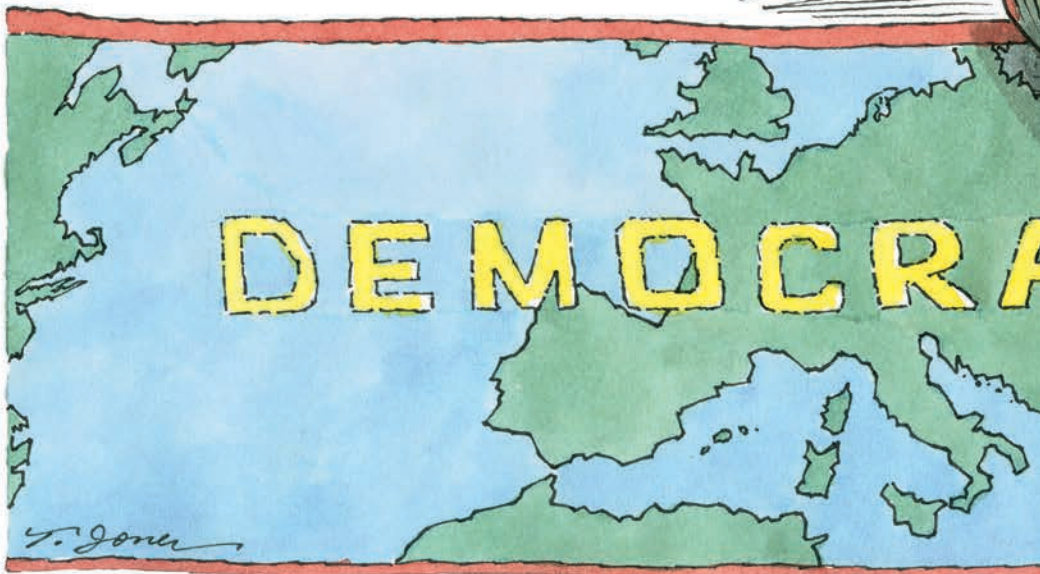
Promoting democracy has never been easy work. US presidents from John F. Kennedy to Ronald Reagan to Obama struggled to find the right balance between the lofty aims of promoting democracy and human rights and the harder imperatives of global statecraft. They all, on occasion, chose to pursue not just pragmatic but even warm relations with autocrats for the sake of securing markets, protecting allies, fighting terrorism, and controlling the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Often, presidents have backed the forces of freedom opportunistically.

Obama did not set out to topple Mubarak, but when the Egyptian people rose up, he chose to back them. Reagan did not foresee needing to abandon loyal US allies in the Philippines and South Korea, but events on the ground

left him no other good option. George H. W. Bush probably did not imagine that Reagan's prediction of the demise of Soviet communism would come true so quickly, but when it did, he expanded democracy and governance assistance programs to support and lock in the sweeping changes.

As the White House's rhetorical and symbolic emphasis on freedom and democracy has waxed and waned over the past four decades, nonprofits and government agencies, such as the National Endowment for Democracy, the US Agency for International Development, and the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, have taken over the detailed work of democracy assistance. The United States has devoted around \$2 billion a year over the last decade to programs promoting democracy abroad—a lot of money, but less than one-tenth of one percent of the total federal budget.

Although the US government should spend more on these efforts, the fundamental problem is not a question of resources. Instead, it is the disconnect between the United States' admirable efforts to assist democracy, on the one hand, and its diplomatic statements, state visits, and aid flows that often send the opposite message, on the other. Barely a year after he vowed in his second inaugural address to "end tyranny," George W. Bush welcomed to the White House Azerbaijan's corrupt, autocratic president, Ilham Aliyev, and uttered not a word of public disapproval about the nature of his rule. On a visit to Ethiopia in 2015, Obama twice called its government "democratically



elected,” even though the ruling coalition had held sham elections earlier that same year.

The trap of heaping praise on friendly autocrats while ignoring their abuses is hard to avoid, and all previous presidents have occasionally fallen into it. But most of them at least sought to find a balance, applying pressure when they felt they could and articulating a general principle of support for freedom.

That has changed since



[Taylor Jones—for the Hoover Digest]

the election of Donald Trump, who has embraced such dictators as Putin, the North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia, while treating European and other democratic allies with derision and contempt.

President Trump's disregard for democratic norms is contributing to a growing and dangerous sense of license among dictators worldwide. Autocrats hear the message that US scrutiny is over, and they can do what they please, so long as they do not directly cross the United States. Rodrigo Duterte, president of the Philippines, had surely taken this message to heart as he purged his country's chief justice, arrested his leading foe in the senate,

and intimidated journalists and other critics of his ostensible war on drugs, a murderous campaign that has caught both political rivals and

This is precisely the wrong moment for the United States to turn inward and close its doors to foreigners.

innocent people in its net. Freed from American pressure, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has launched a thorough, brutal crackdown on all forms of opposition and dissent in Egypt, leaving the country more repressive than it was at any time during Mubarak's twenty-nine years of rule. And Mohammed bin Salman has literally gotten away with murder: he faced almost no repercussions after evidence emerged that he had ordered the brutal assassination and dismemberment of the journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in October 2018.

The growing assertiveness of two major authoritarian states is also setting back democracy. In the past decade, Russia has rescued the regime of President Bashar al-Assad in Syria, conquered and annexed Crimea, and destabilized eastern Ukraine. China, meanwhile, has been investing extraordinary sums of money and diplomatic energy to project its power and influence around the world, both on land and at sea. A new era of global competition has dawned—not just between rival powers but also between rival ways of thinking about power.

To add to the threat, the competition between democratic governments and authoritarian ones is not symmetrical. China and Russia are seeking to penetrate the institutions of vulnerable countries and compromise them, not through the legitimate use of “soft power” (transparent methods to persuade, attract, and inspire actors abroad) but through “sharp power,” a term introduced by Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig of the National Endowment for Democracy. Sharp power involves the use of information warfare and

political penetration to limit free expression, distort the political environment, and erode the integrity of civic and political institutions in democratic societies.

REBOOTING DEMOCRACY

There is no technical fix for what ails democracy promotion. The problem is big and deep and has been long in the making. So must be the response. To begin with, American leaders must recognize that they are once again in a global contest of values and ideas. Both the Chinese Communist Party and the Kremlin are fighting cynically and vigorously. The Kremlin's central tactic is to destroy the very premise that there can be objective truth, not to mention universal values. If there is no objective truth, and no deeper moral value than power itself, then the biggest liar wins—and that is certainly Putin.

China's leadership is playing a longer game of penetrating democratic societies and slowly undermining them from within. It has at its disposal a broader range of methods and a far more lavish base of resources than Russia does—not least of which is a vast, interconnected bureaucracy of party, state, and formally nonstate actors.

Countering these malign authoritarian campaigns of disinformation, societal penetration, and ideological warfare will be critical for the defense of democracy. Democratic

governments must begin by educating their own citizens, as well as mass media, universities, think tanks, corporations, local governments, and diaspora communities,

about the danger posed by these authoritarian influence operations and the need for “constructive vigilance,” according to *China's Influence and American Interests*, a 2018 report by a group of China experts convened by the Hoover Institution and the Asia Society, which I co-edited with Orville Schell.

The response must avoid overreaction or ethnocentrism and seek to put forward democratic values as much as possible. But it must be vigilant in its awareness and scrutiny of China's and Russia's far-flung efforts to project their influence. Thus, democratic societies must insist on rigorous transparency in all institutional exchanges, grants, contracts, and other interactions with China and Russia. And democracies must demand greater reciprocity in their relations with these countries: for example, they cannot allow

If there's no objective truth, and no deeper moral value than power, then the biggest liar wins—and that is certainly Putin.

supposedly independent journalists and broadcast media from these authoritarian juggernauts unlimited access to their countries while their own journalists are severely restricted or denied visas and their cable news networks are completely shut out of China's and Russia's broadcast markets.

Beyond this, the United States must go back to being present in, and knowledgeable of, the countries on the front lines of the battles for hearts and minds. This means a dramatic ramping up of programs such as the Fulbright scholarships (which the Trump administration has repeatedly proposed cutting); the Boren fellowships, which support US students studying critical languages abroad; and other State Department programs that send Americans to live, work, lecture, perform, and study abroad. It must also go back to welcoming people from those countries to the United States—for example, by bringing many more journalists, policy specialists, civil society leaders, elected representatives, and government officials to the United States for partnerships and training programs. This is precisely the wrong moment for the United States to turn inward and close its doors to foreigners.

To confront the Chinese and Russian global propaganda machines, the United States will need to reboot and greatly expand its own public-diplomacy efforts. Washington must push back with information campaigns that reflect its values but are tailored to local contexts and can reach people quickly. At the same time, it must wage a longer struggle to spread the values, ideas, knowledge, and experiences of people living in free societies. It will need to use innovative methods to bypass Internet firewalls and infiltrate authoritarian settings. It must also create tools to help people in autocracies safely and discreetly circumvent Internet censorship and control.

What the United States needs now is not just a single program but an information agency staffed by a permanent, nimble, technologically innovative corps of information professionals—or, in the words of James Clapper, the former director of national intelligence, “a USIA on steroids.” The purpose of a revived USIA would not be to one-up China and Russia in the game of disinformation. Rather, it—along with the US Agency for Global Media, which oversees such independent US foreign broadcasting as the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty—would observe the dictum of the famed journalist Edward R. Murrow, who was director of the USIA under President John F. Kennedy: “Truth is the best propaganda and lies are the worst.” And the truth is that people would prefer to live in freedom.

The most effective way to counter Chinese and Russian propaganda is to report the truth about how the two gigantic countries are really governed. These facts and analyses must then be broadly and innovatively conveyed,

within China, Russia, and other closed societies, and also within more open societies that, as targets of Chinese and Russian propaganda efforts, are no longer receiving a full and true picture of the nature of those regimes.

Transparency can also play a role. The soft underbelly of all malign autocracies, including China and Russia, is their deep and incurable corruption. No state can truly control corruption without instituting the rule of law. But that would be unthinkable for both countries—because in China, it would mean subordinating the party to an independent judiciary, and because in Russia, the regime is an organized crime ring masquerading as a state. Yet leading democracies have some leverage because much of the staggering personal wealth generated by corruption pours into the banks, corporate structures, and real estate markets of the United States and Europe through legal loopholes that benefit only a privileged few. The United States, for its part, can legislate an end to these practices by simply requiring that all company and trust registrations and all real estate purchases in the United States report the true beneficial owners involved. It can also ban former US officials and members of Congress from lobbying for foreign governments and enhance the legal authority and resources of agencies such as the Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network to detect and prosecute money laundering.

Finally, if the United States is going to win the global battle for democracy, it has to start at home. People around the world must once again come to see the United States as a democracy worthy of emulation. That will not happen if Congress remains gridlocked, if American society is divided into warring political camps, if election campaigns continue to drown in “dark money,” if the two parties brazenly gerrymander electoral districts to maximum partisan advantage, and if one political party comes to be associated with unremitting efforts to suppress the vote of racial and ethnic minorities. ■

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Indispensable Free Speech

Free speech defends our other freedoms and offends would-be autocrats. It's time to revive this bedrock American principle.

By Peter Berkowitz

Many in the United States worry about the erosion of democratic norms. Too few, however, exhibit concern for the steady deterioration over the past half century of the essential democratic norm of free speech.

True, the United States remains an exceptional experiment in free and democratic self-government. Of all the Western-style liberal democracies, the nation “conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal”—as Lincoln put it in 1863 at Gettysburg—is grounded in the oldest written constitution, sustains the largest economy, enjoys the greatest diversity, possesses the largest capacity for

Key points

- » The First Amendment symbolizes an indissoluble connection to religious and political liberty.
- » Ideological litmus tests are strangling public discourse, both at home and abroad.
- » Neo-Marxists assert that by virtue of their grievances, they have acquired a monopoly on the truth.

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projecting force around the world, and shoulders the most extensive responsibility for preserving the freedom and openness of the international order. Yet the increasing hostility of influential segments of its population to free speech—not least, speech that affirms American exceptionalism—shows the United States to be in an unwelcome respect all too similar to fellow Western liberal democracies.

The growing scorn for free speech in the United States—on campuses, in Silicon Valley and Hollywood, and in human resource departments and on corporate boards of all sorts of commercial enterprises—is on a collision course with the US Constitution. Free speech is inscribed in the First Amendment, following religious freedom and followed by freedom of the press and “the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

Its position in the text of the First Amendment symbolizes free speech's indissoluble connection to religious and political liberty. One can neither worship (or decline to worship) God in accordance with one's conscience, nor persuade and be persuaded by fellow citizens, if government dictates orthodox opinions and punishes the departure from them. Indeed, the more authorities—whether formally through the exercise of government power, or informally through social intolerance—prescribe a single correct view and demonize others, the more citizens lose the ability to form responsible judgments and defend the many other freedoms that undergird human dignity and self-government.

PERMISSION TO SPEAK

In the mounting hostility toward free speech within its borders, the United States is not alone, argues Andrew A. Michta in *The American Interest*. “Democracies across the West are at an inflection point on free speech,” he contends in “The Rise of Unfreedom in the West,” “and it's not clear which way things will go on this issue in the next twenty or thirty years.”

The problem is manifold. “In some cases, ostensibly liberal governments have already made moves to police and suppress what they deem unacceptable speech; in others, rigid political binaries have threatened to crowd out traditions of free inquiry and debate,” Michta writes. “All too often, it seems not to matter what is said in an argument but rather who says it and how it was said.”

The dean of the College of International and Security Studies at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Michta grounds his dire diagnosis in concrete evidence. Barely a quarter of American adults



SPEAK UP: A man holds forth at “Speakers’ Corner,” a free speech area in London’s Hyde Park. The idea that lively give-and-take is the best route to public consensus is fading in many democratic states. [CGP Grey—Creative Commons]

“believe they have true freedom of speech.” Ninety percent of American universities censor speech or maintain policies that could authorize administrators to engage in censorship. In 2017, Germany enacted a law that obliges social media networks to be more “diligent in policing ‘hate speech’ on their platforms.” The next year, France adopted a similar law. A substantial plurality of British voters in 2018 believed that people do not feel free to express their opinions on “important issues.” And an annual report to the Council of

Europe concludes that press freedom in Europe is, in Michta's words, "more fragile today than at any time since the end of the Cold War."

In both American and European societies, according to Michta, the tyranny of public opinion not only dictates what one may not say but also decrees what one must affirm. In both societies, ideological litmus tests govern public discourse. The notion that lively give-and-take is the route to public consensus is fading.

Elite opinion in the West, Michta maintains, not only leans left but seeks to silence the right. For much of the academic, media, and political establishments, progressive opinions glow with righteousness while viciousness and ignorance indelibly stain conservative convictions.

Cultural and political elites besmirch caring for one's own nation as xenophobia. They fervently embrace globalization. They trumpet their commitment to save the planet while pressing for impossibly expensive and utterly unworkable environmental measures. They revile the popular desire to preserve traditional morality and the nation's inheritance even as they take for granted ordinary people's humanitarian conscience.

ILLIBERAL CONCEITS

The West's descent into unfreedom, argues Michta, stems from the aggressive promulgation of ideas at odds with liberty and limited government. In the 1960s, a critical mass of university professors used their tenured positions not merely to argue for but to institutionalize the belief that to achieve a just society it was necessary to sweep aside the fundamental principles and institutions of liberal democracy.

Over the past twenty years, the neo-Marxist students—and students of the students—of the Sixties generation have intensified attacks on free speech. Neo-Marxist thinking replaces the proletariat with a bevy of identity-based groups whose claim to authority arises from their success in portraying themselves as victims of bias and oppression which, they maintain, are deeply embedded within the West. Like Marx's proletariat—or those bourgeois intellectuals who Marx declared would break from their class and speak on the proletariat's behalf—the neo-Marxists assert that by virtue of their grievances, they have acquired a monopoly on the truth.

The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe thirty years ago and the dissolution of the Soviet Union that followed, argues Michta, "carried a hidden threat" that further damaged the West's commitment to free speech. The great victory of democracy and freedom in the Cold War over communist totalitarianism convinced Western elites that they were uniquely

suited to bring democracy and freedom, as they uniquely interpreted it, to the entire globe.

This conceit had perverse domestic ramifications. According to Michta, it “contained within it the seeds of arguably the greatest peril the West has

ever confronted: the ideological certitude—not just on the left—that we had cracked the code of the human condition and could get on with the work of perfecting both the individual and society.”

Free speech is relegated to the list of “incorrect phrases” that ought not be uttered because it belongs among the “impure thoughts.”

Ideological certitude hardened at the very moment that communism’s defeat deprived the West of “a living example” of the costs of social engineering on a mass scale. “And so at its moment of triumph,” writes Michta, “the West fell victim to a post-Enlightenment delusion of the perfectibility of man.”

That delusion fuels the self-consuming scorn that many intellectuals in the United States as well as in Europe direct at the principles of liberal democracy. At universities, America’s founding promise of individual freedom and equality under law is often treated as irredeemably tainted by racism and sexism, colonialism and imperialism. In some cases, free speech is placed on the list of “incorrect phrases” that ought not be uttered, because it belongs among the “impure thoughts” of which minds must be cleansed.

In light of long-term trends, those who care about the erosion of democratic norms in the United States—and who believe that that the United States can serve as a model to fellow liberal democracies—would do well to focus their energies on upholding the constitutional requirements of free speech, cultivating tolerance, and learning to benefit from a diversity of opinion. ■

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Laugh On

Free people know how—and why—to cut elites down to size.

By Bruce S. Thornton

At a recent Freedom Center event, I made some remarks on a panel about one-party rule and free speech. By chance, my comments about the role of comedy in reinforcing political freedom and equality were perfectly illustrated that evening by Milo Yiannopoulos's scathing impersonation of Representative Ilhan Omar. An identity-politics hustler, vulgar anti-Semite, and master of jihadist *taqiyya*, Omar represents the totalitarian virus that democratic comedy and free speech have for twenty-five hundred years been the vaccines.

Indeed, the idea of free speech was born in ancient Athens at the same time as political comedy. Both followed the world-transforming creation of political freedom and equality for the masses, including the poor. The masses were more diverse in their interests, mores, and education, compared to the more uniform aristocratic or oligarchic elite. For the mass of citizens to exercise its right to contribute to public deliberations over policy, then, they had to be free to openly speak their minds in their own ways and by their own standards. As Sophocles said, "Free men have free tongues."

This insight about free speech highlights the role that manners, decorum, civility, and politesse have always played in defining an elite, excluding the nonelite, and protecting elite power from challenges. Hence the ancient

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critics of democracy constantly sneered at the lack of intelligence and verbal sophistication of the poor and working-class citizens, which the critics cited as evidence for the folly of empowering them to advise and manage the state. As Plato's Socrates complained about deliberations in the Athenian assembly, "When the question is an affair of state, then everybody is free to have a say--tinker, cobbler, sailor, passenger; rich and poor, high and low--anyone

who likes gets up, and no one reproaches him" for his lack of knowledge.

Here we see the origins of the modern idea of technocracy: rule by elites who have the

For twenty-five hundred years, democratic comedy and free speech have been the vaccines for the totalitarian virus.

knowledge and techniques necessary for understanding human behavior and progressively guiding politics to some imagined utopia. Needless to say, such assumptions are diametrically opposed to political freedom, citizen autonomy, and self-rule. More dangerous, the notion of technocracy scants the universal human tendency to aggrandize and abuse power, justified by a perceived superiority of an elite. Minimizing the limits put on the free exercise of speech is one way to guard against this "encroaching nature" of power, and thus protect both political freedom and political equality.

LIVE, FROM ATHENS . . .

Another expression of free speech in Athens comprised theatrical comedies. Ancient comedic productions were literally political, since they were civic occasions managed and produced by citizens, who attended the plays in outdoor public theaters during religious festivals likewise managed by the polis. Since all classes and walks of life attended together, comedies were not limited by notions of style or decorum that necessarily are exclusive. They were egalitarian, the scatological and sexual humor reinforcing the notion of citizen equality based on universal human needs, passions, and weaknesses. No amount of wealth, political power, intelligence, or celebrity made anyone immune to the destructive effects of passion or chance. As the Spartan ambassadors said to the king of the Persians before whom they refused to bow and kiss the ground, "It is not the Greek way to prostrate oneself before another human being."

Comedy, besides publicly reinforcing the notion of political equality, also functioned as a tool for political accountability. For those politicians who puffed themselves up and preened about their status, being called out by

name on the comic stage and accused of every sexual perversion and vice exposed them to the humiliating laughter of their fellow citizens. In an intensely shame-based social system, such ridicule punctured the awe and unearned respect that elites seek to surround themselves with. And that communal laughter also strengthened the bonds of solidarity among the citizens.

This dynamic of free speech, political equality, accountability, and comedy is just as important in modern America as it was in ancient Athens. That's why the totalitarian left seeks to weaken the First Amendment, enforcing political correctness as a new form of public decorum that insidiously prods people to self-censorship and coerces apologies as a public sign of political inferiority and inequality. The success of politically correct surveillance and shaming also has made it harder for comedy to function as a mechanism for holding political leaders accountable. As a result, late-night comedy, *Saturday Night Live*, and most movies and television sitcoms are politically correct but not very funny.

Like Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, who said "there is no humor in Islam," the politically correct left fears the power of humiliation and ridicule that comes from satirizing and mocking their grandiose pretensions.

COARSE CORRECTION

This brings us to the creative-destructive power of Donald Trump. The postwar bipartisan establishment accepted the progressive professionalization of democratic politics into a technocracy, with politicians and federal bureaucrats now a "managerial elite" replete with a common mode of speaking and rules of decorum that they camouflaged as "democratic norms." Of course, these standards

reflected a narrow demographic defined by a similar education, socioeconomic status, and common cultural cargo. And to many crit-

Ridicule deflates the awe and unearned respect that elites crave. And communal laughter strengthens the bonds of citizen solidarity.

ics they suggested common interests, the main one being maintaining the "rules-based international order" that both at home and abroad had failed the economic and security interests of millions of forgotten Americans, even as it expanded elite power.

Trump exploded that consensus with his brash style, at times vulgar, and his street-fighter penchant for taking two eyes for an eye when injured. In doing so he roused millions of Americans who had become sick of being ignored

and talked down to by politicians of both parties, especially Republicans who should have known better but who mouthed the “racist” and “sexist” shibboleths of the identity-politics left. And Trump did this with the sort of coarse, in-your-face humor redolent of the obscene jokes of Aristophanes. Trump

empowered his followers by puncturing the Republican establishment’s pretensions to moral and intellectual superiority and their sense that they

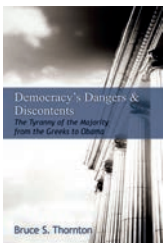
Manners, civility, and politesse actually help define the elite, exclude the nonelite, and protect elite power.

were entitled to rule. He ridiculed them into submission or irrelevance.

And he has done the same to the progressive wing of the establishment, his weapon not the comic stage but the Twitterverse and campaign rallies. He knows how to incite the left to ever-greater levels of shrill absurdity and pomposity, exposing their hypocrisies and unearned self-righteousness. Meanwhile, the president’s economic policies have done more to materially benefit ordinary “people of color” than have the Black Congressional Caucus and the NAACP put together.

Love Milo or hate him, he’s part of a tradition of political humor stretching back to the ancient Greeks. They understood that their novel invention of citizen rule and political freedom and equality required free speech and comedy to defend citizens against the corruption of politicians by holding them accountable to the ridicule and laughter of the citizens they are supposed to serve. With a Democratic Party corrupted by identity politics, eager to censor and silence, yearning for more coercive state power, and flirting with socialism—the most destructive economic, social, and political ideology in history—not to mention providing us in their zany pronouncements an endless supply of straight lines, we need more than ever the deflating power of laughter. ■

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Clarence Thomas Holds the Line

To the chagrin of populists and progressives alike, the Supreme Court justice displays an intelligent and insistent fidelity to the Constitution.

By Adam J. White

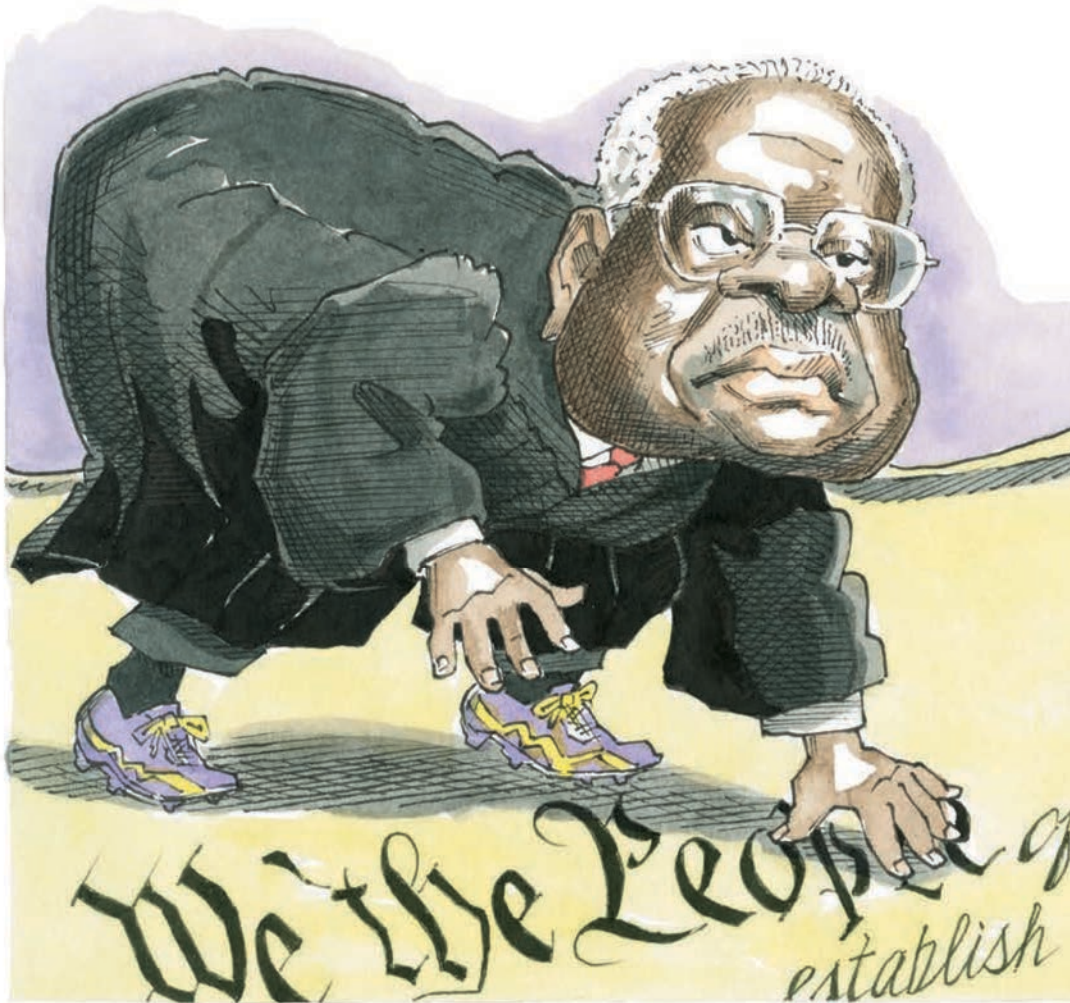
In nearly two and a half centuries of American constitutionalism, the words that are most difficult to understand yet crucial to our republic are found in Abraham Lincoln's First Inaugural Address. Reflecting upon the Supreme Court's infamous pro-slavery decision in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857), Lincoln observed that "the candid citizen must confess that if the policy of the government upon vital questions affecting the whole people is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, the instant they are made in ordinary litigation between parties in personal actions the people will have ceased to be their own rulers, having to that extent practically resigned their government into the hands of that eminent tribunal."

Here we find the fundamental paradox of American constitutionalism, which contains both republican self-government and the rule of law. The rule of law requires judicial power and independence. But republicanism requires that these powerful and independent judges be made the people's servants,

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not their masters. Lincoln venerated the Constitution, willing even to wage war against the Southern states to preserve it. But Lincoln rejected the suggestion that judges are our final arbiters in announcing the Constitution's meaning; that obligation fell to the people themselves, for the sake of both republican self-government and the rule of law.

Yet the people themselves can misjudge or misrepresent the Constitution just as badly as judges. So what is better for American constitutionalism in those eras when the people are wrong and the judges are right—a judicial supremacy that enforces the Constitution's original meaning at the cost of democratic self-rule, or a democratic supremacy by which the people refuse to resign their government "into the hands of that eminent tribunal" but at the cost of the Constitution's original meaning?



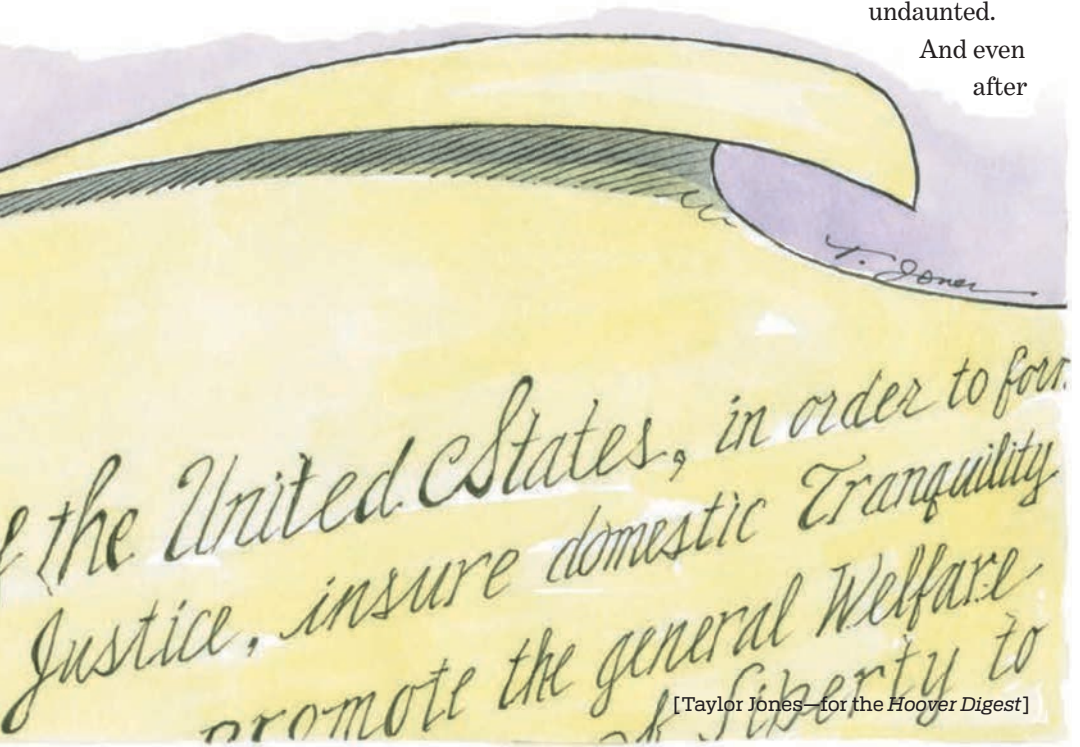
That is a bleak thought, indeed. It is far more pleasant to consider the scenario in which the people rally to protect the true Constitution against the anticonstitutional schemes of lesser politicians and judges. And that is why we are so lucky to live in the time of Justice Clarence Thomas, who personifies both populism and constitutional originalism.

A TRUE ORIGINAL

An impoverished child in Savannah, raised not by his troubled mother (let alone his absent father) but by heroic grandparents, Clarence Thomas would eventually be formed by elite institutions before rejecting elite conventional wisdom on matters of political and personal values. He studied law at Yale and served in Missouri state government and then the Reagan and Bush administrations, before being appointed to the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit and eventually the Supreme Court. And he won his appointment to the high court only by surviving an unprecedented attack based on dubious allegations of personal misconduct—an episode he rightly denounced as a “high-tech lynching.”

Thomas continues to face ceaseless and blistering assaults from critics, yet he remains undaunted.

And even after



[Taylor Jones—for the Hoover Digest]

nearly three decades on the Supreme Court, he shows no sign of slowing down. At a Supreme Court Historical Society event in June, he dismissed rumors of imminent retirement: “I have no idea where this stuff comes from,” the *New York Times* quoted him saying. If anything, Thomas is living his best life: “I really don’t have a lot of stress,” he told the audience. “I cause stress.”

Indeed he does.

In late May, when the court declined to review a lower-court decision in *Box v. Planned Parenthood*, which had

The rule of law requires judicial power and independence. But republicanism requires that these powerful, independent judges be the people’s servants.

negated Indiana’s bar against sex-, race-, or disability-selective abortions, Thomas wrote a separate opinion describing abortion as “an act rife with the potential for eugenic manipulation” and tying Planned Parenthood’s founder, Margaret Sanger, to the eugenics movement. Modern-day progressives were scandalized by the suggestion.

Each year, Thomas spends nine months writing works of principled constitutional originalism in judicial opinions, and then he spends his summer touring the country with his wife in a recreational vehicle, savoring America one truck stop at a time. He is a constitutionalist and a populist.

Myron Magnet celebrates both of those things in his new book, *Clarence Thomas and the Lost Constitution*. He celebrates the man by recounting Thomas’s inspiring personal story, drawing largely from Thomas’s 2007 autobiography (*My Grandfather’s Son*) and two landmark profiles written by Thomas’s friend Juan Williams. And he celebrates the justice’s efforts to formulate an originalist constitutional jurisprudence that would (if adopted by a majority of justices) correct the errors of a century that replaced the original Constitution with a “living” Constitution always malleable enough to suit progressives’ new political agendas.

A COMPLICATED CASE

Thomas deserves all of Magnet’s praise, but the past century’s political and jurisprudential history presents challenges that are not easily boiled down into a simple story of pro-constitutional populists versus anti-constitutional elites.

Throughout his book, Magnet traces much of what has gone wrong in American constitutionalism to Woodrow Wilson, who, as Magnet puts it, wanted the Supreme Court to “sit as a permanent constitutional convention, continually making and remaking the law, to adapt, in a kind of Darwinian

evolution, to changing circumstances.” Wilson deserves a fair share of blame for modern departures from the Constitution’s separation of powers—impatient with checks and balances, his pre-presidential academic writings called for a turn toward a less-restrained government. “The period of constitution-making is passed now,” he wrote in 1885. “We have reached a new territory in which we need new guides, the vast territory of administration.”

But it is a mistake to call Wilson’s program a judicial “constitutional convention.” Rather, Wilson—and the voters who elected him, and who would later elect FDR—counted on constitutional reforms to come first and foremost from legislators and executives. The early-twentieth-century Progressives mostly wanted for judges to simply stay out of the way of the people’s political reforms.

A half century later, a new generation on the left would turn from judicial self-restraint to judicial activism, announcing constitutional rights not found easily in the Constitution’s actual text and imposing them to negate democratically enacted laws. The latter is what we came to know as “legislating from the bench.” But Wilson’s and FDR’s progressive approaches, by contrast, legislated not from the bench but from the legislature and from the executive. Magnet should be blaming the people, not the judges.

When the Supreme Court finally turned in the 1960s and 1970s toward energetic announcement of new constitutional rights superseding federal and state policy makers, their decisions inspired generations of conservative judges and lawyers skeptical of judicial announcement of rights not clearly found in constitutional text. But eventually the conservative legal movement came to repeat the left’s

own evolution, by separating somewhat into two groups. One group, primarily libertarian, called on courts to recognize rights or impose

restrictions not found in the Constitution’s plain text (an approach known increasingly as “judicial engagement”), while the other called on courts to maintain a more self-restrained approach.

Thomas is the justice most closely identified with the more energetic approach. This was especially so after his solo opinion in *McDonald v. Chicago*, where he joined the majority in arguing that states and localities are bound by the Constitution’s right to keep and bear arms even as he invoked the Fourteenth Amendment’s “Privileges or Immunities” Clause as

Progressives have replaced the original Constitution with a “living” Constitution always malleable enough to suit their new political agendas.

the source of the constitutional right against the states and cities. Magnet declares this to be “Thomas’s magnum opus so far.” Thomas’s opinion might be the correct reading of the law, but until we are confident in that conclusion, we should approach it warily, precisely because the Fourteenth Amend-

Justice Thomas’s principled constitutionalism and comfortable populism make him a singular American statesman.

ment’s words provide little substance to guide and restrain judges. What specific rights are protected as “privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States”? That inquiry, undertaken by judges without clear textual guidelines, risks repeating the left’s experiment in legislating from the bench.

PERMANENT ARBITERS

Magnet is committed to textualism. Quoting Thomas in 1996, he stresses that “we as a nation adopted a written Constitution precisely because it has a fixed meaning that does not change.” But when it comes to finding the correct, timeless, and long-lost meaning of the powerful “Privileges or Immunities” Clause that would serve as a significant limit on elected leaders in the states, Magnet is putting supreme faith in conservative judges and justices.

And therein lies the irony of casting the larger narrative of this book as one of progressive elites versus the people. Early on, Magnet contrasts a tea party yearning for more “democratic self-government” with a left that “likes government by experts and elites.” He warns that the latter prefers to empower “well-educated administrators and justices from the Yale and

Woodrow Wilson deserves a fair share of blame for departures from the Constitution’s separation of powers.

Harvard law schools” to “augment, correct, and sometimes nullify those broad directives made democratically by an electorate teeming with benighted deplorables.” But conservatives and libertarians who put utmost faith in judges to announce and protect other rights not clearly stated in the Constitution run the risk of making the same mistake. After all, all of the court’s conservative justices are “well-educated . . . justices from the Yale and Harvard law schools.”

In the end, Magnet is right to worry that Americans (or at least Americans’ elected leaders) have ceded too much power to the parts of government

least directly accountable to the people themselves—namely, to administrative bureaucracies and to courts, both of which are staffed by particular types of experts, to govern primarily through the use of those particular types of expertise.

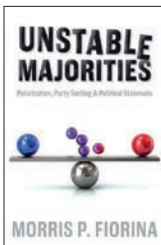
“As the founders often cautioned,” Magnet warns, “a self-governing republic doesn’t have a governing class.” But when he further notes that “part of America’s

current predicament is that it now has a permanent, unelected one, unanswerable to the people,” it is worth remembering that a federal judge’s tenure is even more permanent than a bureaucrat’s, and that a judge is even less answerable to the people than a regulator is. That is equally true for conservative and liberal judges.

In the end, as Magnet makes clear, Thomas’s principled constitutionalism and comfortable populism make him a genuinely singular American statesman. And for precisely that reason, we should hesitate before handing dispositive political power to judges, very few of whom are Justice Thomas. ■

Conservatives who put utmost faith in judges to announce and protect rights not clearly stated in the Constitution risk making the same mistake as the progressives.

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Integration Is No Panacea

Sixty-five years after the Supreme Court rejected “separate but equal” classrooms, segregation—formal segregation, at least—is gone. Yet our schools still struggle. Reform now depends more on excellence than on inclusion.

By Richard A. Epstein

The House Committee on Education and Labor held a hearing last April to address the state of education sixty-five years after *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) put an official end to legal segregation throughout the United States. When *Brown* came down, there was much uneasiness over whether that powerful assertion of judicial power could be justified by an appeal to what Professor Herbert Wechsler famously called the “neutral principles of constitutional law.” Those doubts have largely vanished, but litigation in *Brown* was only the opening chapter of a protracted struggle that, as political-science professor Gerald Rosenberg showed in *The Hollow Hope*, his historical study of *Brown*, ultimately required Congress and the executive to overcome massive resistance from many Southern states.

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By now, the original mission of *Brown*—formal desegregation—has unquestionably been achieved. There is also widespread agreement that while much progress has been made, much more work has to be done to increase educational opportunities for all. But this consensus on ends has not been matched by a consensus on means, as was evident in the prepared testimony before the House committee.

STRENGTH IN DISCIPLINE

Many of the Democratic speakers at the hearing argued that public education is still too segregated—if not by law, then in fact—and called for a more vigorous enforcement of legal efforts to advance integration. Representative Bobby Scott of Virginia set the stage with this blunt observation: “The federal government contributed to racial segregation and inequality, so the federal government must be part of the solution.” But what solution?

In his written statement, Professor John C. Brittain of the David A. Clarke School of Law in the University of the District of Columbia endorsed a proposal by Representative Marcia Fudge of Ohio that “would provide \$120 million in new competitive grants to districts to support voluntary local efforts to reduce school segregation.” Stanford professor Linda Darling-Hammond, president and CEO of the Learning Policy Institute in Palo Alto, argued that it was important to encourage more diversity in charter schools, which are often more segregated than public schools in the same communities. Daniel Losen, the director of a civil rights project at UCLA, advocated restoring “what was once a private right of action regarding use of the disparate-impact regulations under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.” Finally, Richard A. Carranza, chancellor of the New York City Department of Education, insisted that increased diversity in public schools offered the only way to “advance equity now.” Idealists, all.

There were, however, two dissenting testimonies of a more autobiographical nature that took a very different approach. Loisa Maritza White, a parent advocate, and a defender of school choice and charter schools, stressed the risk of bullying in public schools, a theme that was echoed by Dion Pierre, a research associate at the National Association of Scholars.

On the momentous choice between lofty aspirations and nitty-gritty concerns with discipline and security, I stand foursquare for the latter. Integration is not an end in itself; academic excellence and discipline are. Schools need a strong management structure that ties maintenance of school

discipline and security with academic performance, no matter who sits beside whom. These goals do not require higher spending on education. They require that available funds be put to better use.

Exhibit A for this proposition is the high performance of the Success Academy charter school system, whose enrollments are 56 percent black and 29

Minority parents, the strongest backers of charter schools, care more about education than about that fashionable buzzword, inclusion.

7 percent of their students are white, 3 percent are Asian, and 5 percent are multiracial.

How are results like these achieved? The first item to address is one the House hearing ignored: taking dead aim at public school unions whose monopoly power diverts resources from both discipline and excellence. Every legislature and public school board has a duty to act as a faithful trustee to its students. They are not empowered to provide rigid work rules and job protection for teachers, regardless of their competence and performance. The educational system cannot operate well if it is virtually impossible to reassign or sanction poor teachers or reward good ones. Charter schools are typically nonunion and thus able to provide better education at lower cost, which explains why public school unions take whatever political steps they can to block their formation and keep a captive student body. Minority parents as a group are the strongest backers of charter schools, because they know that a safe and disciplined environment makes for educational advancement. They care more about education than about that most-fashionable of buzzwords: inclusion.

The second great danger to educational advancement is the aggressive application of disparate-impact tests to prevent the re-emergence of invidi-

Integration was not an end in itself. Academic excellence and discipline are.

ous segregation. After *Brown*, there was a well-justified fear that those school districts committed to racial segregation would disguise their illicit preferences by using fake proxies to continue to subordinate minority students. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 allowed the use of statistical information to ferret out those rearguard

percent Hispanic. Overall, the students have a pass rate of 98 percent on state math tests and 91 percent on English language arts. The racial gap is largely closed, even though only

ous segregation. After *Brown*, there was a well-justified fear that those school districts committed

actions. That strategy is far from risk-free, for statistical tests often yield false positives, and now we don't have to run that risk. The official posture in the United States has everywhere shifted radically from 1954, when *Brown* was decided; from 1964, when the Civil Rights Act was passed; and even from 1971, when *Griggs v. Duke Power* adopted a disparate-impact test in employment. Today virtually every single state and local government is strongly committed to a bona fide diversity or affirmative action program. Surely individual acts of illegal discrimination persist, but there is virtually no concealed institutional racial discrimination for government officials and courts to uncover.

WRONG SOLUTIONS

The disparate-impact standard has undermined essential disciplinary norms needed to secure high-quality education. In January 2014, the Obama administration issued a guidance holding that any differential in the rate of punishment between black

and white students could amount to a form of racial discrimination. The guidance explained: “Even though incidents of school violence have decreased overall,

Schools can't operate well if it's virtually impossible to reassign or sanction poor teachers or reward good ones.

too many schools are still struggling to create positive, safe environments. Schools can improve safety by making sure that climates are welcoming and that responses to misbehavior are fair, nondiscriminatory and effective.” In fact, the massive overkill of the 2014 guidance undermined the educational objectives of *Brown* by making schools more dangerous environments.

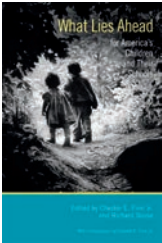
The Obama guidance endangered students and teachers by adopting the wrong definition of disparate impact. The Obama policy only compared discipline rates by the number of black and white students; it made no effort to correct for the rate of disciplinary infractions by race. Yet the evidence suggests that minority students commit on average more rule infractions than white students. The correct test for disparate impact sets punishment proportionate to the number of infractions, as measured by race. Each school district presents its own empirical issues.

The Obama administration policy resulted in lax enforcement of disciplinary norms against black students. The upshot has been increased physical violence in the classroom against students and teachers—violence that makes it impossible for any student, black or white, to learn. Accordingly,

President Trump's secretary of education, Betsy DeVos, was correct to rescind the Obama guidance last December.

In light of these observations, much of the House testimony should be faulted because of its inattention to matters of means. Integration as an abstract ideal yields few benefits. Only by concentrating on discipline as a precursor to academic excellence will it be possible to benefit schoolchildren of all races. ■

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Better Students and Better Jobs

A new survey shows that the jobs for which students are training simply aren't the jobs employers want to fill. How to fix this mismatch.

By Amber M. Northern and Michael J. Petrilli

Not long ago, the *New York Times* ran a revealing article titled “The Typical American Lives Only Eighteen Miles from Mom.”

Based on a comprehensive survey of older Americans, the authors reported that “over the last few decades, Americans have become less mobile, and most adults—especially those with less education or lower incomes—do not venture far from their hometowns.” In fact, “the median distance Americans live from their mother is eighteen miles, and only 20 percent live more than a couple of hours’ drive from their parents.”

Key points

- » Career and technical education (CTE) programs tend to connect students with jobs that are locally plentiful but low-paying.
- » Many fields that support a significant number of jobs aren't reflected in CTE course offerings.
- » Business, industry, and schools need to solve this problem together.

*Amber M. Northern is senior vice president for research at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute. Michael J. Petrilli is a visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution, executive editor of *Education Next*, and president of the Fordham Institute.*



THE RIGHT MIX: A high school student in rural Adrian, eastern Oregon, learns about welding. Researchers are trying to understand how schools offering career and vocational tech classes can do a better job of responding to the needs of business and industry. [Bureau of Land Management]

The implications drawn from that compelling statistic focused on child and elder care. But there's a big message for education, too: if young people aren't going far from home, then their hometowns need to do far better at readying them to succeed at local colleges and in careers. Which makes it more important than ever that high school career and technical education (CTE) programs mesh with real-world job opportunities in their own and nearby communities. Yet, to our knowledge, no study has empirically examined the extent to which that message has been heard—that is, the degree to which

CTE course-taking in high school aligns with the kinds of work available in local labor markets.

It's not because the field thinks that's unimportant. In fact, the recent reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act—the principal federal education program supporting CTE—expressly aims to “align workforce skills with labor market needs.” But it does little to define or operationalize such alignment. Likewise, a recent report by Exce- linEd admonishes states to phase out “dead end” CTE programs that “do not reflect labor market demand” and “develop new programs of study to address gaps in industry demand.”

But broad goals and exhortation won't get it done. And forging better connections is hard when you don't know what those gaps in industry demand look like.

So we set out to learn whether students in high school CTE programs are likely to take courses in in-demand or high-wage industries, both nationally and locally. Reliably answering those questions, however, meant connecting multiple dots. It required mapping the zillion different CTE courses offered in US high schools first to their associated “career clusters” then to real-world occupations, as categorized by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Those dots, to the best of our knowledge, had never been joined before—and we knew it wouldn't be easy. Fortunately, Cameron Sublett, associate professor of education at Pepperdine University, was undeterred. Having previously examined the link between high school CTE course-taking and postsecondary credentials, Sublett was keen to see whether that same course-taking might relate to local labor market demand. The Fordham Institute's uber-talented senior research and policy associate, David Griffith, agreed to co-write the report with him.

After much troubleshooting, Sublett succeeded in linking nationally representative data on CTE course-taking from the High School Longitudinal Study to employment

data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, making it possible to address these central research questions: To what

extent do national CTE course-taking patterns at the high school level reflect the current distribution of jobs across fields and industries? To what extent is CTE course-taking in high school linked to local employment and industry

Any job is better than no job for young people just getting started.

wages? And how do patterns of CTE course-taking differ by student race and gender?

The analysis yielded four key findings:

» Many fields that support a significant number of US jobs see little CTE course-taking in high school.

» In most fields, students take more CTE courses when there are more local jobs in those fields.

» Paradoxically, in most fields, students also take fewer CTE courses when local wages are higher. In other words, it appears that CTE is connecting students with jobs that are locally plentiful (per the previous takeaway) but relatively low-paying by industry standards.

» Although national CTE course-taking patterns differ significantly by race and gender, all student groups exhibit similar responses to local labor market demand.

In part, these results show that CTE programs need to do a better job of connecting students with higher-paying jobs. As recent research from the Brookings Institution and others finds, different sectors in the economy have vastly different opportunities for the kind of good jobs that allow people to make it into the middle class, especially in the absence of a college degree. But we also have a hard time finding fault with students taking CTE courses in industries that support more local jobs, even if they earn lower wages. Any job is better than no job for young people just getting started.

Regardless of how you view that tradeoff, we are not suggesting that high school CTE courses should bear the full burden of connecting students to the local job market—or even that today’s local job market should govern what kids study in preparation for tomorrow’s careers.

What we are suggesting—and what these results show—is that the country needs the local business, industrial, and secondary and postsecondary

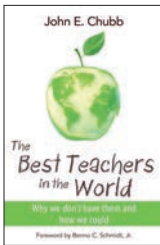
education sectors to join hands. At the top of their to-do list should be better integrating what is taught in high school CTE programs with the skills, knowledge, and positions

If young people are staying close to home, their hometowns need to do far better at preparing them for college and the workplace.

needed in local labor markets, both now and in the future—perhaps through more paid work apprenticeships and “sector strategies” that incorporate high school CTE into employer-driven partnerships that focus on regional, industry-specific needs.

In a handful of cities, such as Louisville and Nashville, industry and education leaders are already collaborating to make that vision a reality for their students. For the sake of all of the young Americans who will live no more than eighteen miles from mom, we hope that more communities follow in their footsteps. ■

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Polluters and Scapegoats

Banning plastic bags won't save the planet. Real progress will have to extend well beyond empty gestures.

By Bjorn Lomborg

In June, Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau announced a plan to reduce plastic pollution, including a ban on single-use plastics as early as 2021. This is laudable: plastics clog drains and cause floods, litter nature, and kill animals and birds. Of course, plastic also makes our lives better in myriad ways. In just four decades, plastic packaging has become ubiquitous because it keeps everything from cereals to juice fresher and reduces transportation losses, while one-use plastics in the medical sector have made syringes, pill bottles, and diagnostic equipment safer.

Going without disposable plastic entirely would leave us worse off, so we need to tackle the problems without losing all of the benefits.

The simplest action for consumers is to ensure that plastic is collected and used, so a grocery bag, for example, has a second life as a trash bag, and is then used for energy.

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But we need to be honest about how much consumers can achieve. As with other environmental issues, instead of tackling the big-picture problems to actually reduce the plastic load going into oceans, we focus on relatively minor changes involving consumers, meaning we only ever tinker at the margins.

More than twenty countries have taken the showy action of banning plastic bags, including even an Al-Qaeda-backed terrorist group that said plastic bags pose “a serious threat to the well-being of humans and animals alike.”

But even if every country banned plastic bags, it would not make much of a difference. Plastic bags make up less than 0.8 percent of the mass of plastic currently afloat on the world’s oceans.

Rather than trying to save the oceans with such bans in rich countries, we need to focus on tackling the inferior waste management and poor environmental policies in developing regions. Research from 2015 shows that less than 5 percent of land-based plastic waste going into the ocean comes from OECD countries, with half coming from just four countries: China, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. While China

already in 2008 banned thin plastic bags and put a tax on thicker ones, it

Going without disposable plastic entirely would leave us worse off.

is estimated to contribute more than 27 percent of all marine plastic pollution originating from land.

Moreover, banning plastic bags can have unexpected, inconvenient results. A new study shows California’s ban eliminates forty million pounds of plastic annually. However, many banned bags would have been reused for trash, so consumption of trash bags went up by twelve million pounds, reducing the benefit. It also increased consumption of paper bags by twice the saved amount of plastic: 83 million pounds. This will lead to much larger emissions of carbon dioxide.

When Kenya banned plastic bags, people predictably shifted to thicker bags made of synthetic fabric—which now may be banned. But Kenya had to relent and exempt plastics used to wrap fresh foods such as meat and other products.

We also need to consider the wider environmental impact of our bag choices. A 2018 study by the Danish Ministry of Environment and Food looked not just at plastic waste but also at climate-change damage, ozone depletion, human toxicity, and other indicators. It found you must reuse an organic cotton shopping bag twenty thousand times before it will have less environmental damage than a plastic bag.



BAN SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS.
THAT'LL FIX EVERYTHING!



If we use the same shopping bag every single time we go to the store, twice every week, it will still take 191 years before the overall environmental effect of using the cotton bag is less than if we had just used plastic. Even a simple paper bag requires forty-three reuses to be better for the environment—far beyond the point at which the bag will be fit for the purpose.

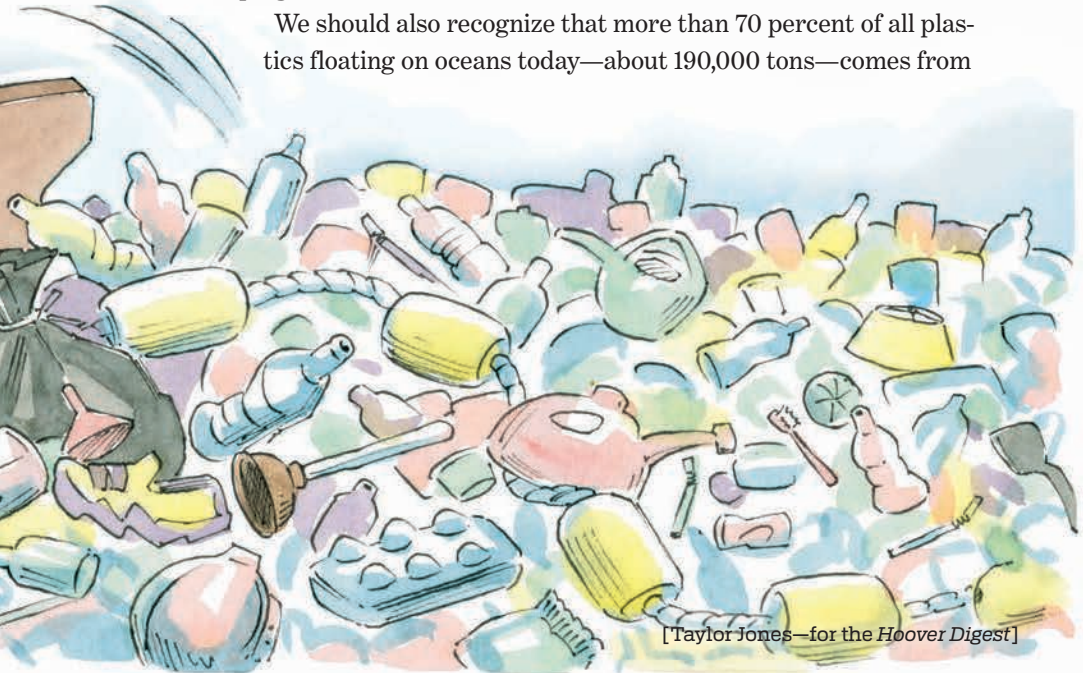
Instead of tackling the big-picture problem—actually reducing the plastic load going into oceans—we only ever tinker at the margins.

The study clearly shows that a simple plastic bag, reused as a trash bag, has the smallest environmental impact of any of the choices.

If we want to reduce the impact of plastic bags while still allowing for their efficient use, a tax seems like a much better idea. A 2002 levy in Ireland reduced plastic bag use from 328 bags a person per year to just 21.

And if we really want to make a meaningful impact on ocean plastics coming from land, we should focus on the biggest polluters such as China, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam, and emphasize the most effective ways to cut the plastic load, namely better waste management in the developing world.

We should also recognize that more than 70 percent of all plastics floating on oceans today—about 190,000 tons—comes from

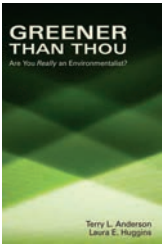


[Taylor Jones—for the Hoover Digest]

fisheries, with buoys and lines making up the majority. That tells us clearly that concerted action is needed to clean up the fishing industry.

If our goal is a cleaner ocean, we should by all means think about actions we can take as consumers in rich countries to reduce our use of unnecessary plastic bags. But we need to keep a sense of proportion and, if we're serious, focus on change where it's really needed. ■

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Continental Drift

Across Europe, political disruptors are elbowing aside the established parties. The disruptors' goals, when they can be discerned, are all over the map.

By Josef Joffe

In Europe, the ancien régime of the moderate right and left is falling prey to the disruptors—mainly right-wing populists, but also non-threatening environmentalists like the surging German Greens who appeal to the center. The decline and demise of parties is rare, especially in the Anglo world. In the early days of the Republic, Alexander Hamilton's Federalists gave way to Thomas Jefferson's Republican Party. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Whigs collapsed. Thereafter, the stage belonged to the GOP and the Democrats. In seventeenth-century Britain, the Whigs and Tories began to dominate. Eventually, the Whigs were pushed aside by Labour, which would alternate in power with the Conservatives throughout the twentieth century.

In postwar Europe's multiparty system, the kaleidoscope turned more quickly. But fundamentally, two blocs led the pack: the moderate left and the moderate right. This system is crumbling away before our eyes.

Take France, where the Socialists once propelled François Mitterrand and François Hollande into the Elysée Palace. At last count, they gathered 8 percent in the EU elections. In Germany, their Social Democratic brethren,

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who once shone forth with chancellors Willy Brandt, Helmut Schmidt, and Gerhard Schröder, are down to 13 percent in the most recent poll. The Italian Socialist Party was disbanded in 1994; previously they had placed men like Bettino Craxi and Giuliano Amato into the Palazzo Chigi, the seat of the



Italian government. The party left behind an ever-changing bunch of parties with “Socialist” in their names. Today, the populists of the right (Lega) and the left (45 Stars) rule.

To get a grip on the sorry state of social democracy, look at the map of Western Europe. As late as 2000, the map was virtually drenched in red, the traditional color of the left. Last year, only five of the EU-28 were governed by Democratic Socialists. Among the large countries, only Spain was inked in red.



[Taylor Jones—for the *Hoover Digest*]

A MOTLEY BUNCH

You would think that the moderate right would savor the decline of its rivals. Alas, the rot has also reached the likes of the German Christian Democrats, the French Republicans, and the British Tories. The German CDU/CSU had vaulted into power with Konrad Adenauer, Helmut Kohl, and Angela Merkel, who is in her fourth term. Kohl had sixteen years in the chancellor’s office, Adenauer thirteen (and captured an absolute majority in 1957). Now, their party is down to 24 percent in the most recent poll.

The French Republicans, the heirs of Charles de Gaulle, have seen their take in the 2017 national elections cut almost in half. The Tories, the party of Disraeli, Palmerston, Churchill, and Thatcher, are currently committing suicide over Brexit.

Meanwhile, Nigel Farage’s Brexit Party came in first in the EU parliamentary elections, leaving Tories and Labour in the dust. In the current YouGov poll, the Brexit Party is still number one.

The Tories get 18 percent. So hard have the mighty fallen.

The left’s losses, however, are not the right’s gains; they are losing together, which is a bizarre pattern. Who, then, is winning? The outsiders, a motley bunch. Marine Le Pen’s National Rally

raked in one-third of the votes cast in France's last presidential elections. The German AfD (Alternative für Deutschland) has come from nowhere and now stands at 14 percent in the polls. Nigel Farage's anti-European nationalists scored 30 percent in the EU elections. In Italy, Matteo Salvini of the right-wing Lega is well positioned to capture the Palazzo Chigi in the next national contest.

The right is on a roll, but so is the left—when it puts on rightish clothes, as it did in Denmark. The Danish Social Democrats came in first in the June

Two blocs once led the pack: the moderate left and the moderate right. This system is crumbling before our eyes.

elections with a harsh anti-immigrant—but generous social—policy. Label it “keep them out and make them pay!”

With its vote in the

Folketing, the Social Democrats had been instrumental in passing the “Jewelry Law.” It empowers the border police to search asylum seekers for valuables and cash that will finance their upkeep. A nice deterrent, if you can impose it.

The hardest hammer blow against the established party system is the cometlike rise of the German Greens—pro-immigration ecologists who are on the center-left side of the spectrum. At 27 percent in the polls, they have (theoretically) outstripped both the Christian and Social Democrats who have ruled Germany for seventy years, either together or with smaller parties. The current grand coalition no longer commands a majority in the surveys.

Having dropped their leftish orthodoxies, the Green saviors of the planet are virtually everybody's darling, drawing votes away from all parties this side of the extremes on the left and right. Rigid left-wing ideologues in the not-so-distant past, they have put their best foot forward. They appeal to excitable college students as well as to the urban bourgeoisie, to hipsters as well as to tech workers and start-up artists. Their traditional pacifism has paled along with their left-wing economic policies. They are even downplaying their nanny state ideas, such as prescribing a once-a-week “Veggie Day.” They are cool, yet with a friendly face and a modest demeanor.

Apropos of “face,” it helps if you don't look like Angela Merkel (dubbed “Mutti,” which is German for “mom.” It helps that the Greens' standard-bearer, Robert Habeck, looks like your ideal son-in-law who threatens nobody. It helps that these by-now nice, middle-aged folks are not at all like those Social Democratic apparatchiks who have dominated German politics for decades.

“If you could elect a chancellor directly,” the pollsters recently asked, “for whom would you vote?” Four out of ten opted for Habeck, only 21 percent for

Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, Merkel's heir-apparent as Christian Democratic chancellor candidate.

REARRANGED

So who will determine Europe's future? All we know for sure is that the established system is rupturing. The disruptors don't form a clear pattern. There is the liberal Emmanuel Macron, who has welded together his "Republic on the March" party ex nihilo. There is the Brexit Party that preaches Little England nationalism. There are Matteo Salvini's hard-right populists in Italy. In Denmark, the Social Democrats have scored with an anti-immigrant plus welfarist agenda. Farther to the east, nationalist authoritarians rule in Poland and Hungary. Yet in Germany, those kindly center-left Greens are on a roll with their "save the planet" message.

Is there a common denominator? If so, it is the mounting aversion to politics-as-usual, to the powers-that-be-no-longer. Add a dollop of isolationism and defensive nationalism triggered by apparently uncontrolled immigration in tandem with globalization. Or make it very simple and invoke sheer boredom with the politics and politicians of the status quo.

Is there revolution in the air? Europe is not living in 1789 or 1918 when revolutions spread across the continents. It is, by comparison, well-off and well-ordered. If anything, it resents too much change. But everywhere, the established party system is breaking up. Yet the bet is on rearrangement, not on revolt. ■

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Tiananmen Dreams

Throughout modern history, **China has defied the experts and their expectations. Now, as always, the Middle Kingdom will move at its own pace.**

By **Amy B. Zegart**

Thirty years ago, I watched the news from Beijing and started shredding my bedding. It was the night before my college graduation, I had been studying Chinese politics, and news had broken that college students just like us had been gunned down in Tiananmen Square after weeks of peaceful and exhilarating democracy protests—carried on international TV. In the iconic square where Mao Zedong had proclaimed the People’s Republic decades before, bespectacled students from China’s best universities had camped out, putting

Key points

- » Tiananmen Square is a reminder about just how much China has defied, and continues to defy, expert predictions.
- » China was once expected to go the way of the other “Asian tigers”—Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea—and become more democratic as it grew rich. That never happened.
- » In Beijing, where memories are long, China’s rise isn’t new. It’s a reversion to the way things used to be.

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up posters with slogans of freedom in Chinese and English. A “goddess of democracy” figure modeled after the Statue of Liberty embodied their hopes—and ours—for political liberation in China.

On my campus back then were just a handful of students majoring in East Asian studies. Learning of the brutal crackdown in Beijing, we somehow found one another, gathered our friends, and stayed up making hundreds of white armbands for classmates to wear at commencement the next day. Grappling with the cold realities of the “real world” we were about to enter, we didn’t know what else to do. So we tore sheets and cried for what might have been.

The June 4, 1989, massacre was a horrifying spectacle that the Chinese government has sought to erase from national memory ever since. But, thirty years later, contemplating what might have been is more important than ever. In hindsight,

Tiananmen Square serves as a continuing reminder about just how much China has defied, and continues to defy, the odds and predictions of experts. The fact is

When the democratic wave swept across the communist world in 1989–91, ending the Cold War and leading some to declare the “end of history,” it skipped China.

that generations of American policy makers, political scientists, and economists have gotten China wrong more often than they’ve gotten China right. In domestic politics, economic development, and foreign policy, China has charted a surprising path that flies in the face of professional prognostications, general theories about anything, and the experience of other nations.

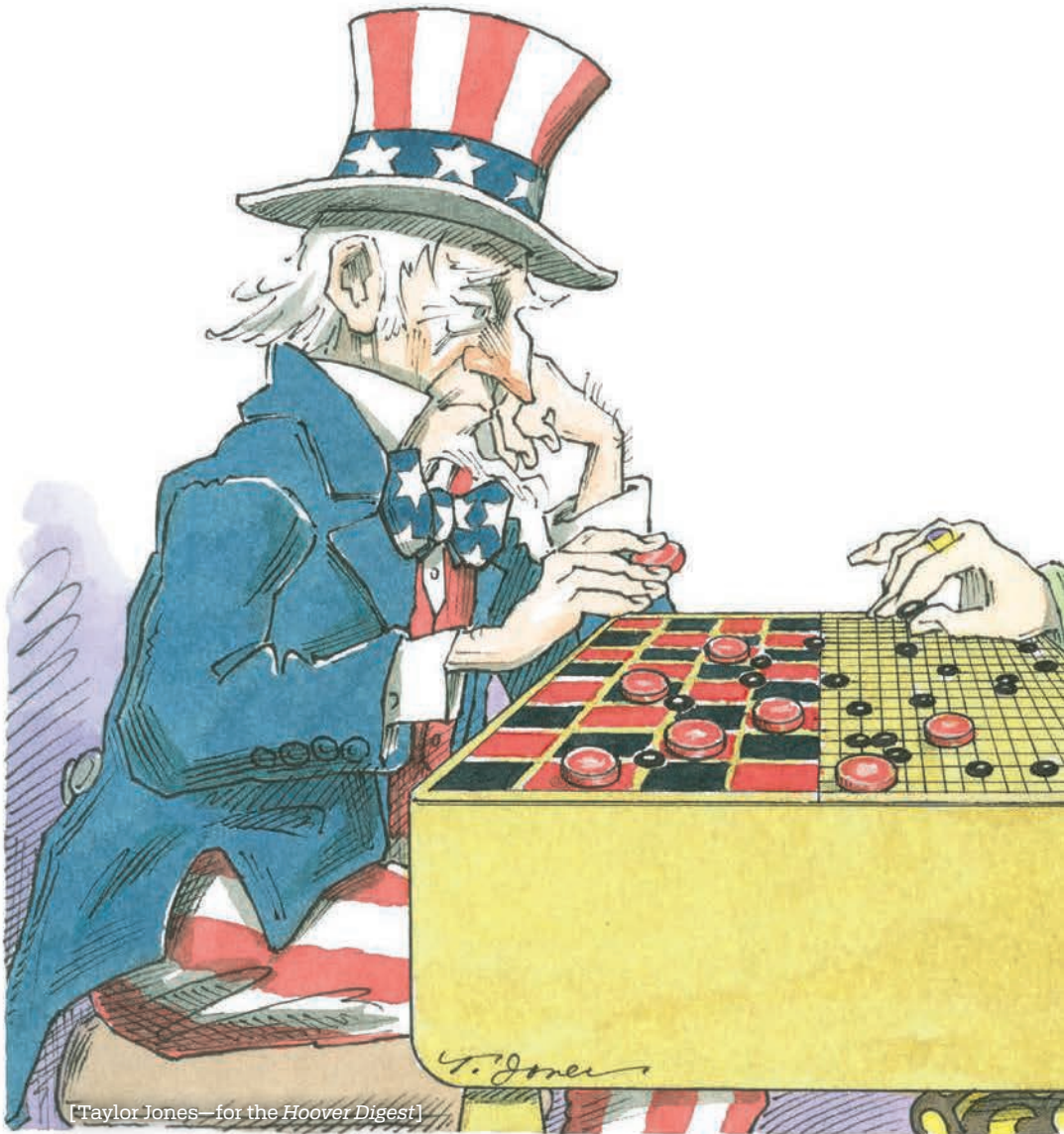
Today, as policy makers and commentators confidently assert that trade wars are easy to win or that hot wars with China are either impossible or inevitable, the experience of being proved wrong again and again should remind us that events will, more than likely, not turn out as predicted.

VIOLENT RECKONING

In the 1950s and ’60s, American policy toward China suffered because of the “monolithic communism” view that had captured US foreign-policy circles. Although we now know that China and the Soviet Union had very different communist models and national interests—and that their relationship was exceptionally troubled—successive administrations in the United States put China and the Soviet Union into the same enemy camp. Not until the Nixon administration did the United States began normalizing relations with China

in what would be one of the greatest diplomatic triumphs in American history. Had American leaders recognized and capitalized upon the Sino-Soviet split earlier, one wonders how history might have unfolded differently.

Economic assessments weren't any better. If you were an economist in the early years after World War II, the Nobel laureate Michael Spence has pointed out, you would have predicted that African nations were more likely to develop faster than China because they had greater natural-resource



[Taylor Jones—for the Hoover Digest]

wealth. And you would have been dead wrong. In 1960, the average GDP per capita in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was \$220, about twice the per capita GDP in both Nigeria and China. By 2017, China's GDP per capita had skyrocketed to nearly \$9,000—more than four times that of Nigeria and nineteen times greater than Congo's. Since the Chinese government embarked on its modernization program in 1978, Beijing has lifted more than 850 million people out of poverty and sustained the fastest economic growth in human history.

China's domestic political system has also defied predictions. Many declared that China would eventually go the way of the other "Asian tigers"—Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea—which became more democratic as they grew rich. That never happened. And when the democratic wave swept across the communist world from 1989 to 1991, ending the Cold War and leading some to declare the "end of history," it skipped China. With dizzying speed, the Berlin Wall fell, East and West Germany were reunified, the Soviet Union collapsed, the Iron Curtain tumbled, and all the former communist regimes of Eastern Europe were replaced by democratically



elected governments. The communist old guard was ousted just about everywhere except Beijing.

When China's moment of reckoning came, Communist Party leaders chose bullets, not ballots. And they made a long-shot, long-term Faustian deal to guarantee economic development in exchange for continued party control that has lasted ever since.

Since 1989, successive Democratic and Republican administrations have banked on the idea that integrating China into the World Trade Organization would turn China into a responsible stakeholder and make the Middle Kingdom more like Western capitalist democracies. Instead, China has used the liberal international order to secure its illiberal political system and create unfair trade advantages for its favored domestic corporations while engaging in intellectual-property theft so massive that, in 2012, General Keith Alexander, then the nation's top cyberwarrior and director of the National Security Agency, called it "the greatest transfer of wealth in history." This, from a man not known for overstating.

CHINA DEFINES ITSELF

Why have so many been so off about China for so long? In part it's because policy makers and academics alike look for patterns, not exceptions. We are trained to generalize across cases and use history as a guide to the future. But China has always been *sui generis*—an innovator in the ancient world that became a poverty-stricken nation in the modern one; a nation with a deep and proud imperial history ruled by a post-1949 communist leadership with an aversion to remembering it; a rural nation with some of the world's most sophisticated high-tech surveillance.

There is also a fundamental disconnect in how American and Chinese lead-

ers see time. For Americans, memories are short, attention is fleeting, and policy lurches from crisis to crisis. In Washington, passing a budget and keeping the lights on seem

Generations of US policy makers, political scientists, and economists have gotten China wrong more often than right.

more and more like heroic acts. In China, by contrast, memories are long, attention is enduring, and the government plans for the long haul. China's rise in artificial intelligence and other technologies has been in the works for years. Its military modernization started in the 1990s. Back then, a Chinese

admiral was asked how long before China would build its own aircraft carrier. He replied, “in the near future”—by which he meant sometime before 2050.

These different views of time hang over modern geopolitics. For American leaders, US global leadership is the way of things. For Chinese leaders, it is an aberration: China was

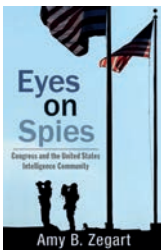
a great power until the Opium Wars in the 1840s ushered in a “century of humiliation” by the West. In Beijing, China’s rise

isn’t new. It’s a reversion to the way things used to be.

Donald Trump’s administration has turned the page, acknowledging that the United States and China are locked in a competitive struggle with some mutual interests and many conflicting ones. The administration’s fundamental China shift doesn’t get the attention or praise it deserves. Even so, getting US policy on China right won’t be easy. Our economies are tightly interconnected, our domestic politics are each highly charged, and our security interests are more and more at odds. A good China policy starts by recognizing that China’s rise is in many ways unique, and that general patterns and predictions may obscure more than they clarify. ■

China has used the liberal international order to secure its illiberal political system.

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Dire Strait

Taiwan must decide how to respond to military provocations from the mainland. America may have to decide, too.

By Michael R. Auslin

For the first time in twenty years, two Chinese fighter jets deliberately crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait last spring, making a ten-minute incursion that prompted a scramble of Taiwan's fighter jets to intercept them. The J-11s that crossed the line were only the latest intimidation from the mainland toward Taiwan. Last year, People's Liberation Army Air Force bombers and jets flew around the island, underscoring Beijing's ability to encircle Taiwan from the air in the case of hostilities. The incursion last spring came in the midst of discussions between Washington and Taipei over the potential sale of advanced F-16V fighters, a purchase Taiwan first pursued more than a decade ago, and just months after Chinese president Xi Jinping repeated his goal of reunifying Taiwan with the mainland.

Xi has increased the pressure on Taiwan since the election of current Taiwanese president Tsai Ing-wen in May 2016. Tsai is from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which has traditionally been more independence-minded than its opposition, the Kuomintang (KMT), which was founded by Sun Yat-sen and which ruled Taiwan continuously for fifty-five years after Chiang Kai-shek fled the mainland and relocated his government to the island. Tsai

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incurring Xi's wrath by denying a consensus exists between Beijing and Taipei on the "One China" policy—namely, that there is but one China, and that both China and Taiwan are part of that one China (Beijing goes farther, of course, and denies that Taiwan is anything other than a province of Communist-controlled China).

This ambiguous formulation has been used for decades by both capitals to maintain their position vis-à-vis the other, but in Beijing's eyes, Tsai threatens to take Taiwan

further down the road toward independence, even though she has reiterated support for the status quo.

Tsai has to respond to blatant incursions or risk looking weak and emboldening China.

The real sparks in the Taiwan Strait tinderbox came from Tsai's public announcement that she would order a "forceful expulsion" of any Chinese military jets that cross the de facto border of the median line. Tsai also ordered the military to "complete all tasks on war preparation." There is undoubtedly a range of options Tsai has that would fulfill her promise of forcibly expelling Chinese intruders, but she has also raised the stakes appreciably. Any inability to immediately counter Chinese air force incursions and prevent Beijing's jets from lingering in what Taiwan considers to be its airspace will undermine her credibility. If the Taiwanese air force simply shadows Chinese fighters or bombers, waiting for them to leave of their own accord, then Beijing will undoubtedly be emboldened to further poke at Taiwan's defenses. That could then cause an accident or miscalculation happening at hundreds of

miles an hour, thousands of feet above the ground.

Taiwan's frustration could boil over into an actual use of force, or Chinese pilots could also

Tsai announced that she would order a "forceful expulsion" of any Chinese military jets that cross the de facto border.

miscalculate in such an encounter, as happened in April 2001, when a hotshot Chinese fighter pilot collided with a US Navy surveillance plane over the South China Sea.

The result of a similar accident over the Taiwan Strait could be an armed clash, giving Beijing the excuse it needs to deal a blow to Taiwan's military and try to intimidate the country into some sort of agreement that curtailed its sovereignty. It would also present Washington with a grave choice:



CAUTION: Taiwan's president, Tsai Ing-wen, inspects sailors during a commissioning ceremony for two guided-missile frigates last November. In Beijing's eyes, Tsai threatens to take Taiwan further down the road toward independence, even though she has reiterated support for the status quo.

[Tyrone Siu—Reuters]

whether to risk an intervention against the world's second-most-powerful military or to have its credibility shredded by failing to support Taiwan after so many decades. (For those who really want to get into the policy-making weeds, consider what would happen if Taiwan fired the first shot or caused an accident that claimed Chinese life, and Beijing retaliated. Would a US president get involved, short of a clear offensive action against Taiwan by China?)

One way for the United States to avoid getting drawn in directly would be to fast-track the approval to sell Taiwan the F-16V fighters it wants. That would send a message that Washington would not shrink from supporting Taiwan, and it would give Taipei a greater ability to defend itself, which may give China some pause.

Tsai is on the horns of a dilemma fabricated solely by Beijing. She has to respond to such blatant acts as the premeditated crossing of the median line

or risk looking weak and emboldening China. Yet she may have promised too much. Simply asserting that Taiwan would continue to relentlessly respond to any incursions of its airspace, but would leave open how it responded in any given case, would make clear that Taipei is not backing down in the face of Beijing's provocations. She has to hope that China does not decide to throw off a few more sparks of its own into the Taiwan tinderbox. ■

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Islands in the Stream

A handful of small islands once formed a battleground in the Taiwan-China clash. Today those islands not only are at peace but represent a bridge of sorts between the two old adversaries.

By Hsiao-ting Lin

Seventy years ago, a battle between the Chinese Communists and the Chinese Nationalists occurred on the tiny, barren archipelago islands of Quemoy (a.k.a. Jinmen or Kinmen) off Southeast China. It would dramatically change the fate of China. Located only six miles from the mainland and a mere fifty-nine square miles in area, Quemoy controls the sea access in and out of Xiamen (Amoy), the second-largest city in Fujian province, and adjacent coastal areas.

The Chinese Communists, who had wiped out most of the Nationalist forces and triumphantly declared the founding of a new people's republic in Beijing, believed that Quemoy and other offshore islands along the Fujian coast such as Matsu had to be taken before a final assault on Taiwan was possible, and they expected to take Quemoy in three days from the beat-up and demoralized Nationalists. But the outcome was a disaster for the Communists; between October 25 and 27, 1949, more than nine thousand People's Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers were annihilated at the beachhead

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of Gunningtou on the northern side of Quemoy at the hands of the retreating Nationalist contingent.

For Chiang Kai-shek and his Nationalist regime, the victory provided a much-needed morale boost. For Mao Zedong, the failure to take Quemoy effectively halted the Communist advance toward Taiwan. After the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 and subsequent US defense commitments to Taiwan, the Communist plans to “liberate” Taiwan were put on hold, leading to the formation of a de facto Republic of China state on Taiwan separate from the de facto Communist state ruling the Chinese mainland. And Quemoy and Matsu remain today under Taiwan’s control.

WORLD WAR THREE?

After 1949, a dozen or so isles off the southeast Chinese coast remained in Nationalist hands. These offshore islands not only symbolized an unfinished Chinese civil war but also caused international strife at the height of the Cold War. Indeed, Quemoy and Matsu were once household names in America. In 1954 and again in 1958, the Nationalists and Communists engaged in huge artillery duels, raising tensions among Washington, Beijing, and Moscow as President Dwight D. Eisenhower and his secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, vowed to defend Taiwan from Chinese attack. Top brass in Washington more than once openly threatened Mao Zedong with the use of nuclear weapons.

Tensions resulting from the dispute over these small islands rose to such an extent that at one point people around the world feared that a shooting war between Taiwan and mainland China might escalate into a third world war, pitting the United

States against the Soviet Union. When John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon were running for president in 1960,

their disagreement about Quemoy and Matsu led to one of the most famous exchanges in their debates.

A historical irony is that in the summer of 1950, it was Chiang Kai-shek who first came up with the idea of jettisoning these offshore islands still within his grasp. On June 27, 1950, three days after the North Koreans launched a surprise attack against South Korea, President Harry Truman ordered the Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait to block a possible invasion of Taiwan, thereby giving Chiang and his precarious regime a new lease on life. Soon,

For Chiang Kai-shek and his Nationalist regime, the 1949 victory was a much-needed morale boost.



ON THE BEACH: Tourists explore anti-landing barricades along the Quemoy shores. A fierce battle in 1949 saw the forces of Chiang Kai-shek's Republic of China repel Communist invaders from the beaches. Soon after, Mao Zedong's plans to capture Taiwan were put on hold. The islands, however, were to figure in geopolitical strategy for years to come. [Tyrone Siu—Reuters]

large-scale military and economic aid would flow to Taiwan and, for a while, the idea of throwing Chiang's best troops into the Korean War was floated around the White House, the Pentagon, and General Douglas MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo. Chiang was seriously contemplating withdrawing from Quemoy and Matsu so as to free thirty-three thousand combat troops for Korea. To the generalissimo, using his forces on the Korean battleground would open a way for an all-out counteroffensive into Manchuria and, ultimately, the returning of his Nationalist regime to the Chinese mainland.

Chiang's idea, however, was vehemently opposed by a retired admiral named Charles M. Cooke, who had been in Taiwan since early 1950 as the generalissimo's personal adviser. Cooke, whose personal papers are among the Hoover Institution's archival treasures, decided that the move to abandon the islands not only would look weak to the Chinese Communists but would be a psychological blow to the entire free world. Although not wholly convinced, a usually peremptory Chiang followed the retired admiral's advice.

This was a decisive moment; had the proposed withdrawal from Quemoy and Matsu come to pass in the summer of 1950, it would have removed the principal focal point of the later US-China military crises in the strait.

Chiang had been pushing hard for a mutual security pact with Washington since the early 1950s, but the status of the offshore islands had prevented America from forging one. Although the US government thought excluding Quemoy and Matsu in such a treaty would impair Chiang's prestige, it also felt that their inclusion would entail a defense responsibility Washington was not as yet ready to assume.

In fall 1954, Mao unwittingly contributed to the conclusion of a bilateral defense treaty between Taiwan and the United States. Uncertain whether Taiwan would be included in the newly inaugurated South-East Asia Treaty Organization, Beijing attempted to forestall such a possibility, or at least try to keep the geographical scope of such protection to a minimum, by launching a massive shelling of Quemoy on September 3. The barrage gave Taipei a perfect excuse to push Washington toward the desired mutual security treaty. Chiang argued strongly that the "fluid situation" of the islands was caused by the absence

of a mutual aid pact; it was not a reason to *forgo* such a pact. Eisenhower was apparently con-

vinced. In the final months of 1954, as the Communist shelling around Quemoy continued, both Eisenhower and Dulles now viewed a security pact with Taiwan as a feasible way to rein in Chiang, who they believed should assume a more passive posture and accept a purely "defensive" treaty.

Quemoy and Matsu were household names in Cold War America.

SECRET CHANNELS

Numerous scholarly works have researched the strait crisis of 1958, but few if any have examined the delicate situation surrounding the secret Nationalist-Communist channels of communication, as well as how it played out in the geopolitics of the Cold War, especially between the United States and the Soviet Union.

On August 23, Mao again ordered the shelling of Quemoy. The ostensible reason was that China both wanted to express its support for the Arab struggle against "imperialist aggression" and hoped the bombardment would divert American attention from the Middle East. More likely, however, Mao wanted to instigate a conflict to serve the goal of domestic reform, the Great Leap Forward, which he had launched earlier that year. He also wanted to



HOLD STEADY: Retired American admiral Charles M. Cooke served as Chiang Kai-shek's personal adviser during the 1950s. Cooke, whose personal papers are housed at the Hoover Institution, talked the generalissimo out of abandoning the fortified islands, believing that such a move would make Taiwan look weak and harm morale around the free world. [US Naval History and Heritage Command]

test American resolve, waste US resources, and weaken US-Taiwan ties by triggering conflicting expectations and demonstrating Taiwan's total and embarrassing dependence on the United States.

In an effort to prevent US ships from approaching Quemoy, Beijing announced it had set its territorial waters at twelve nautical miles and declared that no foreign aircraft or vessels would be allowed to cross that boundary. Washington responded by re-emphasizing that the protection of Quemoy and Matsu related to the defense of Taiwan, which the United States was bound by treaty to protect. Meanwhile, Washington also indicated its willingness to resume the ambassadorial talks Mao had broken off in early 1958. Mao responded immediately, signaling an intention to sit down at the negotiating table with the Americans. Presumably under heavy pressure from the Kremlin, whose leaders were annoyed at not being informed of the shelling in advance and who were by no means willing to be dragged into a nuclear war over the islands, Mao and his close confidants began to revise their stance.

The policy shift over the crisis on the part of the Chinese Communists was directed not only toward the Americans but at the Nationalists. Beginning in mid-September, Beijing delivered a series of messages to Taipei via secret contacts in Hong Kong. The main points: if Chiang Kai-shek agreed to abandon his reliance on US military protection and the "self-conceit" that he had registered over his special relations with the Americans, then Beijing promised it would not attack Taiwan. Beijing also promised that, starting October 6, the Chinese army would halt the siege of Quemoy as long as the Seventh Fleet stopped escorting Nationalist ships.

More significant and intriguing, Mao said he concurred with Chiang that the Nationalists should continue to hold the offshore islands, arguing that top Communist leaders now harbored no intention of destroying Chiang's forces there. Instead, Beijing proposed the evacuation of Nationalist troops from Quemoy and Matsu so as to create "demilitarized zones" and transform the islands into free economic zones. Direct port-to-port shipping lines between Taiwan and the mainland then could be opened in the near future. If Taipei would agree to move forward with peace talks between the Nationalists and the Communists, Mao would welcome delegates from Taipei to join the US-China ambassadorial talks.

When Qiao Shi, a former chairman of the Chinese National People's Congress, was interviewed in 1994, he claimed that Chiang sent a message to Beijing via a secret envoy to the effect that if the People's Liberation Army did not stop its shelling, he would have "to do what the Americans



QUESTIONS OF IDENTITY: Taiwan's military commander on Matsu points out landmarks to Hoover Institution Deputy Director Eric Wakin (right). Residents of the Quemoy and Matsu islands still harbor a clear sense of identity as both Fujianese and part of the Republic of China. [Hoover Institution]

wanted”—withdraw from the islands—and, as a result, over time this move would threaten the indivisibility of China.

More archival evidence is needed before one can solve this historical puzzle. Nevertheless, one thing is certain: as Eisenhower began pressuring Chiang for a serious reconsideration of evacuating the islands, or at least for a reduction of the level of Nationalist troop strength on the islands, Beijing moved closer to the position of its Nationalist adversary. Seeing America's design of “trading Quemoy and Matsu for Taiwan and the Pescadores” as a dangerous formalization of the separation between Taiwan and China, Beijing was determined to leave the islands in Chiang's hands, thereby maintaining a gossamer but crucial mainland connection with Nationalist-ruled Taiwan and avoiding a de facto “two China” situation.

On October 20, 1958, Eisenhower sent Dulles to Taiwan to apply more pressure on Chiang over the islands. Mao then offered his archival yet another option: an immediate cross-strait agreement engineered to push back against US pressure. He ordered a restart of shelling on Quemoy to “scare” the

Americans and reinforce Chiang's bargaining position vis-à-vis Dulles, thus allowing Taipei to pursue more military and economic aid from Washington. Through a secret channel, Mao also reiterated his intention to allow the offshore islands to remain in Chiang's possession, and suggested that cross-strait bilateral meetings be held in Hong Kong without delay. To show that he was sincere, Mao sent a respected revolutionary, Zhang Shizhao, to Hong Kong to await the arrival of Chiang's envoy.

During the last week of October, Chiang thus seemed caught in a dilemma: undertake the political drama of a secret dialogue with the Chinese Communists or continue to endure a difficult relationship with his overbearing American patron. But if such a dilemma did exist, it was ephemeral; before leaving Taipei, Dulles bent Chiang to his will by having him publicly renounce the use of military means to restore Nationalist rule over the mainland. Their joint communiqué stated that "the principal means" for restoring freedom to the Chinese people on the mainland would be "implementation of Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles

of the People," and that "the foundation of this mission resides in the hearts and minds of the Chinese people and not in the use of force."

Beijing responded by

announcing the next day that the shelling would continue only on alternate days, thus permitting Chiang's forces to be resupplied and the islands to remain in Nationalist hands. The second offshore islands crisis thus came to an end.

The signing of the Chiang-Dulles communiqué reinforced the impression that Chiang had to comply with US wishes regarding the troubled islands and that he had no other recourse than to obey his American patrons. This may be true, but the 1958 crisis finally quieted down not only as a result of American pressure on Chiang to renounce his goal of recovering the mainland but also because of the attitude of the Chinese Communists, who decided that a continued Nationalist presence on the islands would best serve their interests.

Although a tacit consensus (keeping the islands in Chiang's hands so as to avoid a "two China" situation) did not wholly rule out cross-strait tensions in the years to come, it did marginalize the islands and prevent them from becoming a major source of potential military confrontation among

In 1954 and again in 1958, the Nationalists and Communists engaged in huge artillery duels. Top brass in Washington more than once openly threatened Mao with nuclear weapons.



ON THE HORIZON: Visitors point to the Chinese city of Xiamen, a short distance away from the Taiwan-held island of Lieyu. At its closest point, the island is only about three miles from the mainland. Trade and tourism have brought the islands increasingly close to Fujian province, creating tensions with Taiwan's government. [Tyrone Siu—Reuters]

Washington, Beijing, and Taipei. The subsequent scanty exchange of gunfire between the Nationalists and the Communists in the archipelago, as Americans observed, would serve only as a symbol of the continuing civil war.

TENTATIVE LINKS

As relations between Taipei and Beijing began to thaw in the 1990s, the islands were gradually transformed from battlefields to springboards for cross-strait interactions. Taiwan's military presence on the islands was substantially reduced, as America's Cold War presidents had wished. Direct port-to-port shipping lines between Fujian and Taiwan-controlled Quemoy and Matsu were opened in 2001, partially fulfilling Mao's peace overtures in 1958.

On the other hand, Taiwan's full democratization, signified at its first party rotation in 2000, also brought these small islands to a crossroads, visible in the complicated interplay among the locals, the government in Taipei, and

the Chinese mainland. While more and more people on Taiwan consider themselves Taiwanese, not Chinese, and assert a strong political identity separate from China, Quemoy and Matsu residents still harbor a clear sense of identity as both Fujianese and part of the Republic of China. Geographically more intimate with the mainland than to Taiwan, Quemoy and Matsu prosper as trade and tourism with China has blossomed. Despite decades on the military front lines, people on the offshore islands nowadays see the mainland not as a threat but as an opportunity.

In the summer of 2018, Quemoy started importing water from Fujian to ease its shortage, despite rising tensions across the strait. Local people also expressed a wish to import electricity and someday build a bridge between the islands and Xiamen. Even though officials in Taipei had asked the Quemoy county government to delay and downplay a ceremony to mark the new water supply, more than three thousand local officials and guests attended, embarrassing the administration of President Tsai Ing-wen. Matsu also saw much discussion about widening communications with the mainland.

After all these years, Taiwan's erstwhile Cold War islands and their historical legacy continue to complicate relations across the strait, albeit in an entirely different political context from those Cold War decades. ■

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Putting Tolerance to the Test

At its founding, India displayed a powerful affinity for Western values—equality, self-rule, dignity. But in the name of Hindu tradition, the country’s present rulers are flouting those values.

By Tunku Varadarajan

A paradox is playing out in India. The country is abandoning Western values at a time when it is closer strategically to the West, and to the United States in particular, than it has ever been.

By a thumping parliamentary majority, Indian voters returned to power last May an alliance led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Judging by the manner in which his Bharatiya Janata Party campaigned, Modi looks certain to undo many of the secular norms that have defined India since independence. Expect the BJP to govern India for the next five years in ways that are unabashedly Hindu, the religion of 80 percent of India’s population. This isn’t good news for the country’s Muslim and Christian minorities, or for the millions of Indians who don’t wish to be told what they should eat, wear, read, and watch by a religiously driven government.

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After gaining independence from Britain in 1947, India opted to embrace the political and legal system of its erstwhile Western overlord. It chose the Westminster model of elective democracy as well as the common law, in preference to any native or indigenous political and legal alternative. For seven decades, India has remained faithful to that system.

The Indian constitution draws from the unwritten British constitution, as well as from the constitutions of the United States, Ireland, Australia, and Canada. The French ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity were of particular consequence to

the drafters of India's

constitution, almost all of

whom were schooled in

Western political values.

***If Western values are stripped away,
India will be in uncharted territory.***

The chairman of the constitutional drafting committee, B. R. Ambedkar, was a Dalit—a man from the community formerly referred to as “untouchable.” He knew from personal experience that Indian values—primarily those embedded in orthodox Hinduism, whose most ancient legal text, the Manusmriti, ordains the caste system—had resulted in a social order in which men like him were reviled for centuries.

Ambedkar saw India's salvation in those rights that flowed from Western values—primarily equality and a recognition of the dignity of the individual. These came to be enshrined in the Indian constitution, and were intended to trump Hindu norms. India's constitution, remarkably, was a forthright rejection—by Indians—of ancient Indian values.

Independent India has offered, in many ways, the best deployment of Western political values outside the West. From its first day as a sovereign nation, India has affirmed that elections and the rule of law are the sole political currency in a land whose people had previously been British subjects even as they were denied British citizenship.

The demands made of the British by those who led India's freedom movement weren't outlandish. They asked that Indians be given in India the same rights that Britons were accorded in Britain: suffrage and self-rule. In the end, it was the irrefutability of those demands—allied to the nonviolent pursuit of them—that compelled the British to accede to India's independence.

The colonial Indian elite were formidable opponents precisely because they embraced everything that Western political philosophy had to offer on the subject of citizenship and self-governance. They certainly embraced the English language; and, quick to recognize the flaws in their own culture as well as the irrational and unscientific nature of many traditional Indian practices,

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COMMON CAUSE?: President Trump meets with Indian prime minister Narendra Modi at the G20 summit in Osaka last June. Modi, India's first openly pro-American head of government, has visited the United States three times in five years. [Shealah Craighead—UPI]

they embraced Western education as well. In the past five years, however, these values have come under fierce attack, as the BJP has shown a hostility to Western ideas, all in the name of reviving Hindu tradition.

Is the West losing India? This is where things get paradoxical, for India has never been more allied to the United States than it is now.

Modi is India's first openly pro-American head of government. He has visited the United States three times in five years, and he has badgered President Trump to visit India. He hobnobs with Mark Zuckerberg and Bill Gates, and, like Trump, he is in love with Twitter. A shared fear of China draws Modi's India and the United States together, as does a common cause against Islamist terrorism.

In the first forty years of its independence, India was ruled by the avowedly secular Congress Party, with its umbilical link to the Indian freedom struggle and its conscious adoption of Western values. The country was more pro-Soviet than any other genuine democracy. Its anti-Americanism was in part the result of Cold War arithmetic, but also of the cultural inclinations of

Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister, and Indira Gandhi, his daughter and political heir, whose high-minded contempt for capitalism would have dire results for the country's economy.

India has been moving ever closer to the United States even as its present government discards many of the secular values and protections that formed the bedrock of India's constitutional compact. Particularly alarming is the intolerance of practices

and behavior—whether sartorial, dietary, literary, cinematic, or confessional—that offend a vocal cadre of Hindu

activists operating under the aegis of the ruling party. Their aim is to undo those very Western values that have, in Indian constitutional guise, kept the country from collapsing into a state of disorder.

There is increasing suppression of speech, and an ugly relegation of religious minorities to a politically and socially subordinate status. Radical Hinduism has become brazen and unapologetic. In the most recent elections, the BJP fielded a candidate who stands accused of terrorism and who described the Hindu-chauvinist assassin of Mahatma Gandhi as a “patriot.” She is now a member of Parliament.

One can't say India is reverting to some sort of intolerant type, as might be said of Turkey under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Turkey has no consistent or wholehearted history of democracy. In their refashioning of India's political and civic norms, Modi and the BJP aren't reviving any traditional code of governance. India's political values since the first minute of its independence have essentially been Western values. If these are stripped away, India will be in uncharted territory—lost not only to the West, but to itself. ■

India's constitution, remarkably, was a forthright rejection—by Indians—of ancient Indian values.

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Building Democracy on Sand

Israel lacks a constitution—and any clear idea of where it is going. A new book takes up the unanswered questions of the Jewish state.

By Arye Carmon

The state of Israel—the young state of an ancient people—is in many ways the Jewish people’s first experience in bearing collective responsibility for political sovereignty. In their 3,500-year history, the Jewish people have no continuous, reinforced tradition of political accountability. Is Israeli society, now in its eighth decade, in danger of losing its solidarity and cohesion? Is the widening rift between its diverse segments creating a tangible threat to its long-term existence as a political entity? What is the source of legitimacy for the secular character of the democracy and what are the threats to the strength and stability of this legitimacy? What does the future hold for the Jewish and democratic state?

These questions and others they raised have been at the bedrock of my professional career, in particular during my years leading the Israel

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Democracy Institute (IDI). They have guided me through decades as a scholar and have led me to several basic assumptions that serve as the foundation for a “doctrine” through which to examine the circumstances that generated such questions—and to seek answers for them.

These are my seven assumptions:

» The Jewish people lack a solid and orderly tradition of responsibility for political sovereignty.

» The Jewish people have a history of dispersion and diaspora which is far different from the histories of territorial nations that have a background of sovereignty and territorial control.

» Political passivity is the most prominent characteristic of two thousand years of exile. This passivity resulted from the convergence of Jewish religion and nationhood since time immemorial.

» The Zionist revolution to liberate the Jewish people was a secular revolution.

» The fact that Jews stood on the sidelines of the secularization process that took place over centuries in Christian countries meant that the secular Zionist revolution—which aimed to transform the course of Jewish history—developed with an inherent deficit.

» This “Zionist deficit” was the result of a secularization process that was revolutionary rather than evolutionary.

» Within the secular Zionist revolution, a religious counterrevolution emerged and continues to gain strength, threatening the future of our democracy.

Since the founding of the state of Israel, particularly in recent decades, Israeli society and political culture have changed at an unprecedented pace. These changes have entailed far-reaching and dynamic developments, including changes in our normative foundations. They have brought demographic changes and have widened economic disparity between the haves and have-nots. Above all, Israel has undergone constant transformations in its political culture and conduct, which have been characterized by polarization and increasing extremism. In addition, political structures and governance capabilities have weakened—if not collapsed.

These dynamic changes are unique in comparison to other countries. For example, Israel’s population numbered about 3.3 million people at the time of the Yom Kippur War in 1973. When the war started, about 53 percent of Israeli Jews were immigrants and most of the others were children of immigrants—like me. By the middle of the second decade of the twenty-first century, the population had soared to over 8.5 million. This enormous



ON THE MOVE: Young men participate in the annual “flag march” during Jerusalem Day, which celebrates Israel’s 1967 victory. Scholar Arye Carmon says Israel has undergone constant transformations in its political culture and conduct, leading to polarization and increasing extremism. [Chloe Sharrock—Le Pictorium]

demographic change has had a major impact on the socioeconomic and cultural characteristics of Israel.

REVOLUTION, COUNTERREVOLUTION

After twenty-five years of observing the political processes in Israel, I contend that the collapse of political structures (mainly the political parties) and the weakening of others (such as the supreme court) are a direct consequence of two closely related factors: the lack of a tradition of responsibility for political sovereignty, and the *Zionist deficit*—a concept describing a significant ideological and practical shortcoming in the Jewish national liberation movement, which was essentially a secular revolutionary movement. This secular revolution continued for a few decades but was not powerful enough to prevent the rise of a religious counterrevolution.

These two factors account for the fragile foundation on which the institutions of our democracy were built. They have hindered the creation of more solid normative foundations and underline the vulnerability of the secular

underpinnings of Israeli democracy. On top of this, Israel is still engaged in a struggle for its physical survival in the face of external threats. Thus, the structural shoulders of Israeli democracy are fragile and vulnerable, considering the heavy loads they must carry. In fact, there is arguably no other nation in the world with such a complex load of issues on its public agenda. Each of these issues cries out for a stable and solid foundation.

Israel in the twenty-first century lacks the consensual underpinning—a social contract in one form or another—that is essential for integrating a nation into a sovereign collective. The consensual underpinnings of developed democracies are the glue that binds different groups in a sovereign collective and enables them to coexist, with each group maintaining its own beliefs. This is usually expressed in a written constitution that plays a key role in shaping the political culture of the sovereign-national collective.

For various reasons, Israel has ignored the need to define and establish the place of religion in public life. This has generated a deepening conflict of identities over time. Thus, we live in a state whose identity is defined as “Jewish and democratic,” but the question of who defines its Jewishness is the subject of profound disagreement. This is not a theoretical-ideological disagreement; this argument entails verbal and physical violence and bears the seeds of a *Kulturkampf*. The assaults on public spaces by those acting in the name of religion also reflect the institutionalized monopoly of Orthodoxy in defining the Jewishness of the state of Israel.

In recent years, the IDI’s Democracy Index has addressed the question of the balance between “Jewish” and “democratic” and how Israelis view this question. The answers are critical because they reflect the weight of particularistic values versus universal values in the identity of Israelis. In addition, in light of the Orthodox monopoly over the Jewish particularistic dimension, these answers provide an indication of how Israelis

will act when religious values clash with democratic values. In 2017, only 12 percent of religious respondents, compared to 61 percent of

Israel in the twenty-first century lacks the consensual underpinning essential for integrating a nation into a sovereign collective.

secular respondents, said the Jewish dimension is too strong. The data were similar in 2018: 8 percent of religious respondents, compared to 61 percent of secular respondents. On the other hand, in 2017, only 8 percent of secular respondents said that the democratic dimension is too strong and 9 percent

answered similarly in 2018, compared to 44 percent of religious respondents in 2017 and 46 percent in 2018. (Among Arab citizens of the state of Israel, in 2018, only 8 percent of the respondents said that the democratic dimension is too strong, compared to 80 percent who contended that the Jewish dimension is too strong.)

The particularistic characteristics of a nation are defined by the collective identity of the individuals and groups that comprise it. As Samuel Huntington notes, a nation is “a remembered community, a community with an imagined history, and it is defined by its historical memory of itself.” A nation cannot exist without a common national identity ingrained in the minds of its members as a shared memory of struggles, of victories and defeats, heroes and villains, enemies and wars.

The national liberation of the Jewish people from their past and from their dependence on a two-thousand-year-old religious tradition was a secular revolution.

According to these criteria, Huntington continues, the United States at the beginning of the nineteenth century cannot be defined as a nation because it lacked a national history and

had no national consciousness. The Civil War was the high price the United States paid to become a nation. The war gave birth to the American nation, whose characteristics were shaped in its wake. In the postwar years, American nationalism and patriotism were forged as Americans came to identify unconditionally with their country. Before the Civil War, Americans spoke of their country in the plural, as “these United States.” After the war, they used the singular: “the United States.” As President Woodrow Wilson noted in his Memorial Day address in 1915, the Civil War engendered something new: “a national consciousness.”

To what extent has national consciousness developed in Israel? Can it be said that Israelis share a common historical memory? One of the seminal achievements in establishing a shared national consciousness is, of course, the Hebrew language, which is a cornerstone of solidarity, an anchor for contending with the challenges of the particularistic elements in the collective identity. Still, questions like these express some of the challenges in molding Israeli society. The principal challenge in the particularistic dimension of Israeli identity is to define the role of religion in the national consciousness of Israelis. In Israeli life today, as in fact since the state’s inception, an Orthodox monopoly has held sway. Thus the main

challenge lies at the heart of the divide, at the focal point of the conflict of identities.

DURABLE CONTRADICTIONS

How can we resolve the contradictions between different views on the role of religion in defining the nation? Is it possible to accord legitimacy to multi-cultural, multi-identity definitions of Jewishness? The search for consensus in answering these questions is a necessary condition for achieving balance between the particularistic and the universal. This dual definition of Israeli identity should also shape the way non-Jews, predominantly Muslim Arabs, belong to Israeli society as citizens with equal rights.

Although Israel is in its eighth decade of independence, it has yet to define fruitful and effective formulas for coexistence between these two components of identity. On the contrary, the concept of “Jewish and democratic” is today the subject of profound disagreement. The discontent stemming from this dispute stirred feelings of despair and doubts about the justice of the Zionist idea, as well as disbelief in its intention to offer tools for advanced Jewish-democratic life in the modern world. And it is important to reiterate that because of the nature and pace of changes in Israeli society, the days of a Zionist majority in the state of Israel are numbered.

The Zionist vision drove the magnificent project of the Jewish people’s national liberation movement, which was unique in bringing a nation back from all

corners of the globe to reclaim its land. It was essentially a rebellion against the Jews’ *galut* (diaspora) ways of life and a rejection of the expectation for messianic redemption. The national liberation of the Jewish people from their past and from their dependence on its two-thousand-year-old religious tradition was a secular revolution. However, from the midst of this secular revolution, a religious counterrevolution developed, strengthened, and continues to grow.

The dialectic process that has empowered the religious counterrevolution raises questions about the vulnerability and weaknesses of the Zionist process from the outset. Those flaws have clear repercussions on the structures and normative underpinnings of our democracy and on what has prevented Israel from becoming a substantive, stable, and sustainable democracy.

The diasporic Jewish nation lived for two millennia as a national-religious organism. This is partly why there was no legacy of political sovereignty.

The Jewish collective did not undergo the same types of secularization processes that occurred in the predominantly Christian democracies from which the Jewish national liberation movement drew its inspiration. This is partly because the very evolution of the Jewish nation was so unlike that

of Christian nations.

The secularization that took place in Christian countries laid the foundation for their constitutional stability and

The religion-state relationship and the place of religion in public life were left undefined—and remain so to this day.

led to the emergence of a free-market economy and revolutionary scientific and cultural achievements. We cannot say the same about the history of the Jewish people. In our unique case, the diasporic Jewish nation lived for two millennia as a national-religious organism that had no sovereign framework. This is part of why there was no legacy of political sovereignty to guide early Zionists in the creation of a nation-state.

As a result, concepts like “state,” “statehood,” and “sovereignty” were never fully formed. This is why Israel’s democracy did not formulate or ratify a constitution.

Democracy is the only political system capable of sustaining the Jewish nation-state because it is the only one that defines the national collective as “sovereign.” As such, especially in a highly diverse society, the political process requires consensual underpinnings and a constant effort to foster compromise. This makes governance possible.

In Israel, the religion-state relationship and the place of religion in public life were left undefined and remain so to this very day. As in other developed democracies, religion is present in some public spheres in Israel. However, unlike in other countries, the following question is often asked in Israel: does religion pose a threat to the political system? At this stage, I have no unequivocal answer. The search for an answer entails an effort to characterize the fundamental components that should define Israel as a single collective that is both particularistic and universal, Jewish and democratic. “Jewish” and “democratic” are not mutually exclusive—though balancing the two is an essential and deeply challenging part of the formation of a multicultural Jewish identity.

A STRONGER FOUNDATION

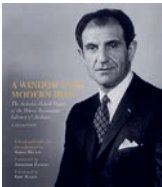
Democracy is an ongoing saga centered on navigating a vast array of ambiguous situations. It is a murky process, and any decision made by the citizens

in a democracy is ultimately, in one way or another, the result of reconciling a wide spectrum of outlooks and ideas. And although this process doesn't always lead to compromise, this recognition of differences fosters stability and is vital to democracies.

In the preface to *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*, Francis Fukuyama writes: “The rise of identity politics in modern liberal democracies is one of the chief threats that they face, and unless we can work our way back to more universal understanding of human dignity, we doom ourselves to continuing conflict.” In the Israeli context, I believe that the basis of agreement—the condition for achieving harmony—must come from a deeper clarification of the meaning of the words “Jewish” and “democratic” and especially a clarification of the balance between them.

In a world of many public spaces (including the dominant political one), which of them have room for God? The answers to these questions cannot be theoretical but must serve as a basis for social-cultural change. ■

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Clausewitz Goes East

In the Mideast, it's the power centers that matter—not territory, not capitals, but far-flung and complex alliances.

By Charles Hill

At a pivotal moment in Tolstoy's massive novel *War and Peace*—the battle of Borodino, with Napoleon's Grande Armée some eighty miles from Moscow—Carl von Clausewitz, then and now the foremost strategist of the study of war, suddenly canters onto the scene in a cameo appearance and is overheard to pronounce on the fighting: “*Der krieg muss im Raum verlegt werden. Der Ansicht kann ich nicht genug Preis geben.*” (In German in Tolstoy's Russian text: “War must be extended in space. I cannot put too much value on that.”)

Clausewitz, whose literary style is always somewhat sibylline, is referring here to his doctrine of “The Center of Gravity,” or *Schwerpunkt*, the point where the enemy's essential power is concentrated and which, if conquered by your own forces, will bring victory to your side and cause. There are four such center-of-gravity points: it is the task of a commander's

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grasp of strategy and statecraft to decide which of the four to concentrate upon. They are:

- The enemy's capital city;
- The enemy's army;
- The enemy's territory;
- The enemy's allies.

Here was Clausewitz being unusually clear and specific. As a template for analyzing and understanding a war, it has been usefully revealing. In *War and Peace*, coming into the story at Borodino, it brings a shock of recognition: Napoleon is doing everything wrong by doing everything at once. He is driving his Grande Armée toward Moscow to capture the enemy's capital. He is seeking to engage with and destroy the enemy's army when the Russian field marshal Kutuzov, following a strategy made famous by the Roman general Fabius Maximus Cunctator (the delayer), is luring the French emperor-general ever-deeper into the futile possession of Russian territory. As for the enemy's ally, it could have been France itself, but Napoleon's hubristic ambitions destroyed that stratagem.

The American Civil War can also be illuminated by this Clausewitzian angle of vision. Lincoln's conundrum was whether his generals should seize Richmond or aim to

destroy Lee's army; he chose the enemy's army. But the Union "march through Georgia" to take territory made the difference. This perspec-

In the Mideast, capital cities will not fall, rival militaries will not be smashed, and alliances are dispersed and subtle.

pective adds drama to Gettysburg, where Lee's decision—threatening to seize territory in the Union North—shocked the world. As for allies, it was the American minister in London, Charles Francis Adams, as recorded by his secretarial aide and son Henry Adams, that neutered the pro-Confederacy thinking of Great Britain's grandees.

What if Carl von Clausewitz today made his appearance on the sands of the Middle East? We can imagine him on an Arabian thoroughbred cantering up to a Saudi desert encampment out for some recreational falconry, or perhaps joining a confab at the Egyptian president's Sinai Resthouse, or joining some Israelis picnicking on the Golan Heights, or even kibitzing on the edges of a strategizing session with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as they count their take from their Iraqi and Syrian functionaries.

Clausewitz's gentle advice—one has to watch one's step in the Middle East—would be to forget the first three items on the Center of Gravity list: capital cities will not fall; rival militaries will not be smashed by “kinetic” operations; well then, territory? Yes, here and there, but hard to get and harder to keep. The Clausewitzian way would be under the heading of “allies”:



not allies in the traditional sense of world affairs, but as a series or pattern of outlying partnerships, dependencies, satellites, and religious or financial connections which when taken together and connected as “dots” on the map would add weight and power to your own center of gravity. This in a way may have been invented through the early Israeli concept of “facts on the ground.”

Through this lens, the actions of the few still-standing state regimes in the region may take on added meaning: Why Iran has set up a corridor of dots from the Afghan border to the Mediterranean to Shia militias in Iraq, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthi in Yemen, Hamas in Gaza. Why has Saudi Arabia had a hand in the current rebellion against the US- and UN-supported Tripoli government of Libya? The United Arab Emirates (a.k.a. “Little Sparta”) appears to be best at this game, using its impressive military as a



[Taylor Jones—for the *Hoover Digest*]

roving sales force. The answer may lie in neo-Clausewitzian efforts to deepen the region's various centers of gravity, with the UAE emerging as the intra-Islam counter to Iran.

To this "inside" reading of the Middle East must now be added the "outside" interpretation of Professor L. Carl Brown: that rival militaries of the region have been magnified in a unique way by its gravitational pull on the

world's big powers beyond the Arab-Islamic and Israeli polities. Brown described this force as it affected Britain, France, Russia, and the United States. To these can now

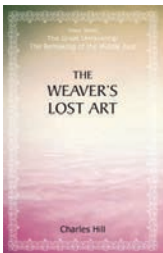
The diplomacy and dangers of the Mideast have been magnified by the region's gravitational pull on the world's big powers.

be added the People's Republic of China, each of these with its own Clausewitzian interpretations and interests.

What would be useful at this point would be a map designed to show the various key regimes and their "outside" interveners in terms of their interacting designs to enhance their respective centers of gravity. All this would add up to something, but what?

Clausewitzians have no monopoly on this strategic concept. The Far East version comes in the ancient game of *Wei Ch'i*, or "Go," with its goal of "controlling the board." With the Islamic Republic of Iran's dispatch of Hezbollah elements to Venezuela, the whole globe may come into play in the future. ■

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Hopeless in Gaza

Palestinians, in refusing even to consider taking economic aid in exchange for reforms, are only harming themselves.

By Michael J. Boskin

At a workshop last June in Bahrain, White House senior adviser Jared Kushner presented an ambitious economic-development initiative for the Palestinian people. The Trump administration expressed hope that its Peace to Prosperity proposal will untie the Gordian knot of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, finally establishing peace between the Jewish state and its neighbors.

Though the workshop included several countries with vital interests in the region and a potential role to play in an economic-development program, the Palestinians themselves refused to participate. As a result, the Israelis were not included, either. Palestinian officials consider it an insult to think they would alter their long-standing political demands in exchange for economic assistance. But the White House's plan throws into sharp relief the opportunity costs of maintaining the status quo. Transforming the economy of the West Bank and Gaza could bring vast improvements to Palestinians' quality of life.

The US plan (to which I provided a few suggestions) is nothing if not ambitious. Grants and loans to the Palestinian territories would be accompanied by measures to strengthen property rights and the rule of law, strengthen the judiciary, improve infrastructure, and expand trade with Israel and other

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parts of the region. The goal is to double the territories' GDP and create one million jobs, thereby halving poverty.

The program comprises three interrelated initiatives, geared toward “unleashing economic potential,” “empowering the Palestinian people,” and “enhancing Palestinian governance.” Each offers specific reforms to address a wide array of issues. For example, there are proposals to strengthen human capital and support entrepreneurship; to open up the West Bank and Gaza with new roads, rail routes, and border crossings; and to expand energy, water, and digital infrastructure. Equally important, the plan would deepen the Palestinians' economic integration not just with Israel but also with Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon.

All told, Peace to Prosperity offers a viable roadmap for the Palestinian people to improve their economic future. Though major initiatives such as this rarely unfold exactly as expected (the private sector may pursue opportunities no one else had considered), progress toward a sizable share of the goals would represent a significant achievement.

A plan that unleashes human potential, trade, and private investment, while establishing sound money and fiscal discipline, represents a tried-and-true route to growth and individual liberty. (To witness the effects of the opposite approach, look no further than Venezuela.) When external assistance is targeted in such a way as to reduce physical and legal impediments to trade and investment, and if it is accompanied by the necessary governance reforms, the ensuing opportunities tend to be numerous and lasting.

This approach was at the center of the Marshall Plan. After World War II, European governments implemented reforms and removed barriers to trade, and the United States furnished the region with cash, food, and fuel worth 3 to 5 percent of its GDP. The clearest successes were in the countries that enacted the strongest reforms. West Germany owes its postwar “miracle” largely to the efforts of Ludwig Erhard, who pushed through currency reform and eliminated price controls before becoming the country's first minister of economic affairs.

To be sure, even with \$27 billion in donor grants and loans, as well as private investment from the rest of the region, securing the necessary reforms in the Palestinian territories would not be easy. Doubling GDP will require 7 percent average annual growth for at least a decade (or 6 percent for twelve years).

But that target is well within reach. In the eighteen years since China joined the World Trade Organization, its GDP has quadrupled; and India has achieved average growth of around 7 percent for the past decade. Similarly,

after opening up their economies decades ago, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore avoided the so-called middle-income trap—a pattern whereby a developing economy’s growth rate tends to slow to the advanced-economy average when per capita GDP approaches \$20,000—and “graduated” to high-income status. For comparison, the current Palestinian per capita GDP is one-tenth that level.

Additional examples of such success stories abound. The World Bank lists seven countries in Europe, Africa, and Asia (excluding China and India) that have achieved 7 percent average growth for the past seven years. An additional eleven economies have grown at an average rate of 6 percent during the same period, and twenty more have maintained average growth above 5 percent.

If the Palestinians were willing and able to adopt the reforms envisioned in Peace to Prosperity (admittedly a big “if”), there is no reason they could not emulate these successes with the help of wealthy neighbors, international institutions, the United States, and others. The alternative is a continuation of growth at a paltry 1.7 percent per year—or worse.

There are many deeply contentious territorial and political disputes between the Israelis and the Palestinians, and at some point these will have to be resolved. But at least now Palestinians can start to consider the economic potential of peace. Deeper economic integration with the region, and particularly with Israel, will translate into reduced geopolitical tensions and substantial gains in living standards, health, and education. Perhaps most important, younger Palestinians who have long suffered through unemployment and underemployment will finally have opportunities for entrepreneurship, personal advancement, and upward social mobility. Ultimately, it is they who will decide the future of their people. ■

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Elegy in an English Church

One quietly proud corner of Britain sees Brexit as a matter of what to keep, not whom to exclude.

By Tunku Varadarajan

Of all the lazy criticisms of Brexit, the laziest is that those who voted to leave the European Union were being “emotional,” not rational. You hear it said most often in London, which voted overwhelmingly to remain.

Yet walking through the Church of the Holy Trinity in Long Melford, an English village of fewer than four thousand, I grasped right away why Brexit won. The reason wasn’t emotion but that potent, rooted, ineradicable sense of local and national civilization that is plain to see in England.

Long Melford voted for Brexit, as did nearly 60 percent of the county of Suffolk, to which it belongs. The village is only sixty miles northeast of London but the contrast is striking. Long Melford isn’t a melting pot; it is gentle, proud England, and wants to stay that way. There is a belief that being part of a transnational union dilutes England’s essence, and it is not a belief that people easily abandon.

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This shouldn't be mistaken for racism or xenophobia. It is, instead, the purest cultural conservatism. And it is hard not to be conservative in a place like Long Melford. The beautiful church through which I walked was completed in 1484. Another preceded it, built in 1050, and the names of the rectors can be traced back to 1198.

Long Melford is gentle, proud England, and wants to stay that way.

This isn't Little England. Inside the church are memorials to men who fought abroad. Not all were paragons: witness the memorial to Admiral Sir Hyde Parker, to whose cautious orders Nelson turned a blind eye in the Battle of Copenhagen in 1801. There is one to a Colonel Richard Cornwallis Moore, who died in 1879 in the Burmese War. Scores from the village died in both world wars: I counted five dead in World War II from a single family called Sansum.

A reverence for the past endures into the present. Visitors clustered around the tomb of Sir William Cordell, speaker of the House of Commons under Queen Mary Tudor and master of the rolls—a job that long predates the European Commission—under Queen Elizabeth I. I gazed at his tomb for an age, entranced by the calm and the political magic of this history.

There is an imperial pride to British history. This is a land of people who went all around the globe and then came back enriched—not merely with wealth but with ideas and nuances, a clear sense of the world, and a notable generosity of spirit. You can see the latter at international cricket matches, where thousands of immigrant fans—including me—cheer for their country of ancestry when it plays against England, their country of citizenship. The English fans regard this as entirely natural, and not as an offense.

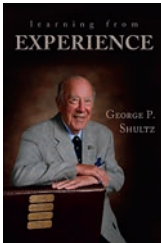
This is a land of people who went all around the globe and then came back enriched.

This same generosity of spirit lives in Long Melford's church. In a window near the entrance, a small roundel depicts three hares, a rare instance of medieval stained glass that survived the wrath of the Puritans following the outbreak of the Civil War in 1642. A sign tells us that "some like to think of this" as depicting the Holy Trinity. "But," it continues, "this symbol has also

been found painted on a Buddhist cave near Dunhuang in China and dated 600 AD.”

This lovely concession that the theme of a prized window might have been derived from another culture is as British as the Brexit vote. In truth, there is no contradiction. A nation that can give others their due is also a nation that can go its own way. ■

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Untangling Homelessness

Throwing money at the problem while blocking development just worsens housing problems. What would help? Unleashing homebuilders and job-creating businesses, especially in the Central Valley and the hinterlands.

By Lee E. Ohanian

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors has approved a plan to build a homeless shelter. The problem is that the location of this shelter is on the city's waterfront Embarcadero, which happens to be the most expensive neighborhood in San Francisco, where home sales have averaged nearly \$1,200 per square foot. The ground leasing rights for the city's Ferry Building, just down the street and on a similar size parcel, sold for \$291 million earlier this year. You are correct if you are thinking that San Francisco's decision to build a homeless shelter in this location makes no economic sense. This decision is just the latest in a long line of San Francisco homelessness policies that are enormously costly and that unintentionally perpetuate the very problem that they are supposed to solve.

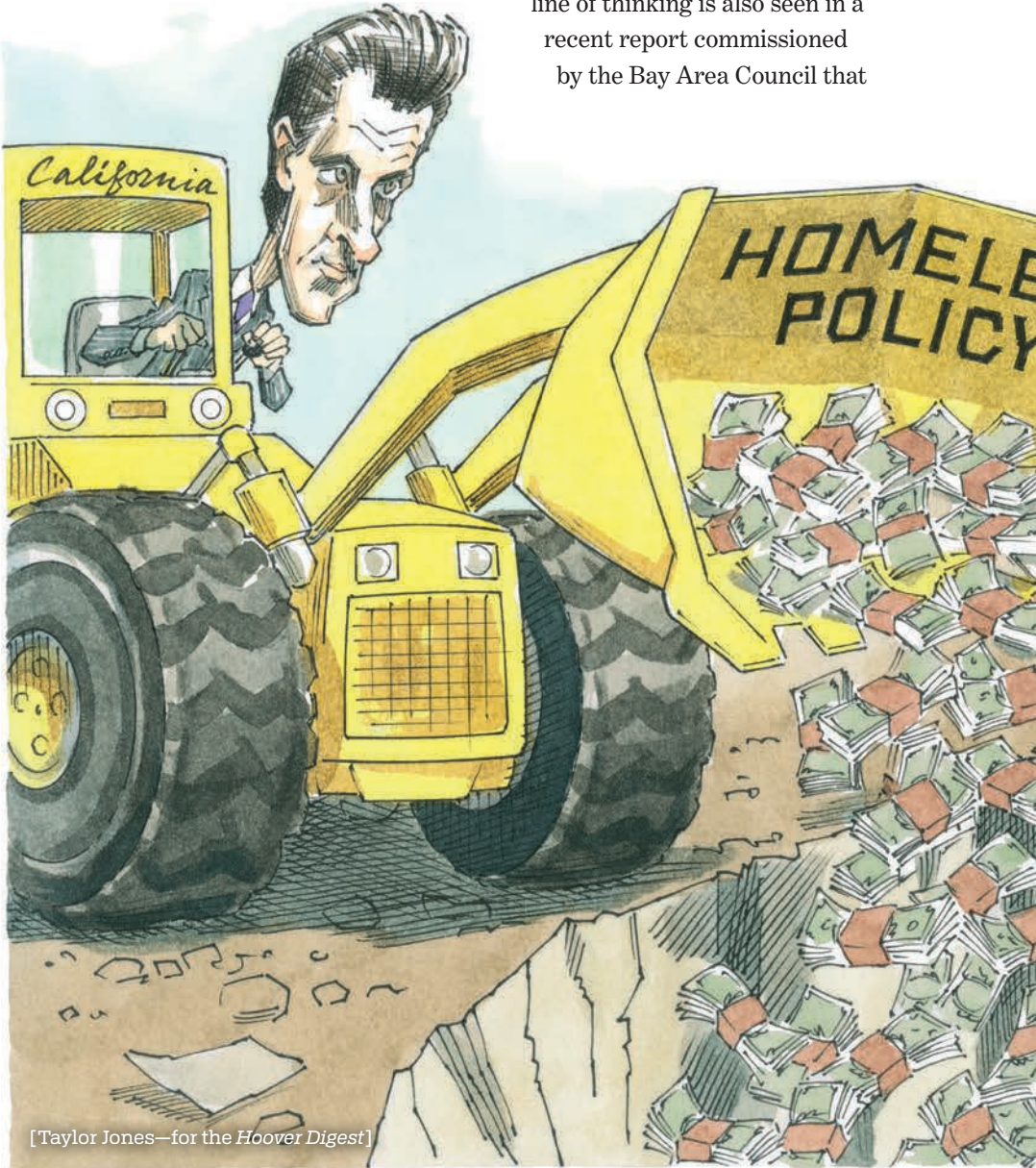
Why did the city choose this location? Partly because many homeless already are in the neighborhood. Paradoxically, this will be good news for

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residents in other neighborhoods, as more homeless will move to the Embarcadero from other locations in the city—the new shelter may draw even more homeless into San Francisco.

This decision represents an ineffective, expensive, and economically flawed approach to homeless policies in which it is assumed without question that homeless people in San Francisco must remain in San Francisco. This same

line of thinking is also seen in a recent report commissioned by the Bay Area Council that



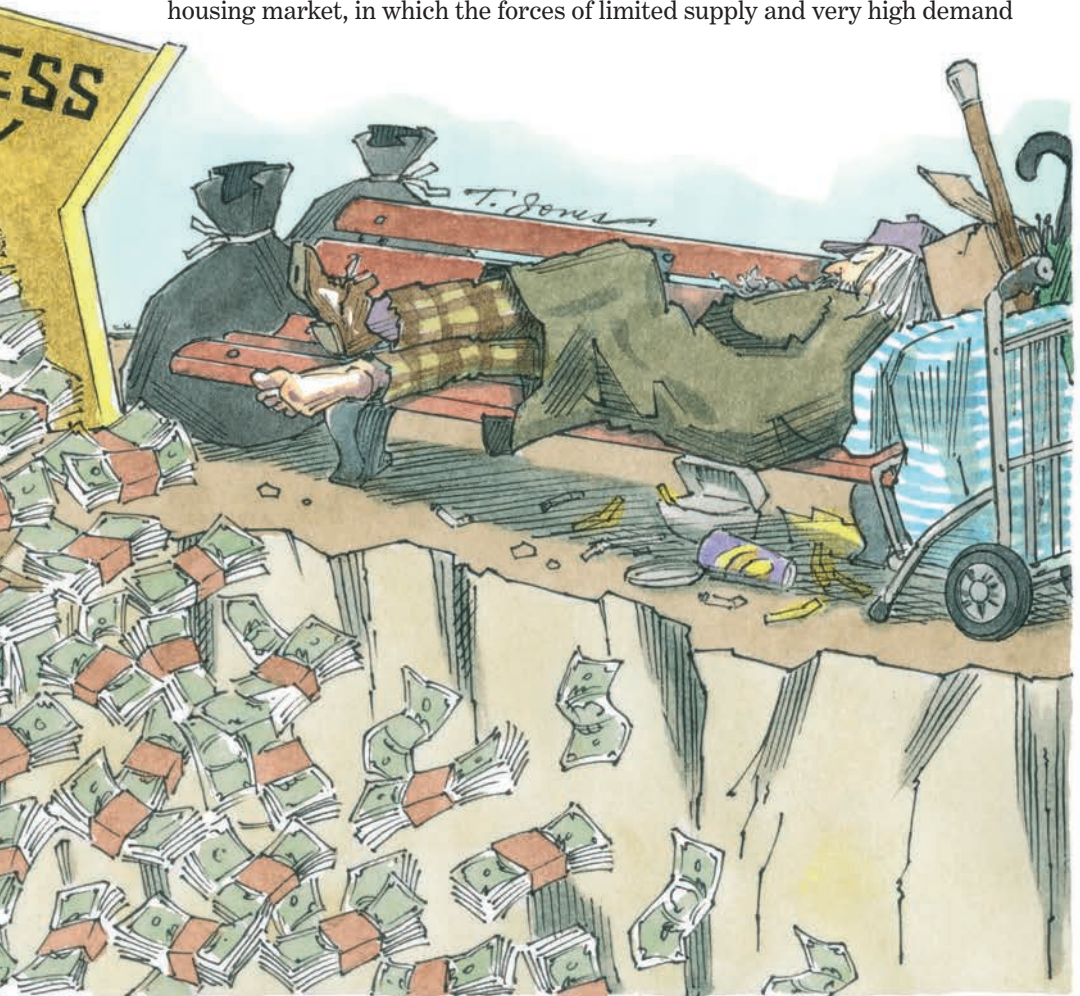
[Taylor Jones—for the Hoover Digest]

concluded that more than \$16 billion would be needed to house and provide ongoing treatment for the San Francisco Bay Area's homeless population.

LET THE MARKET DECIDE

San Francisco's homeless problem worsens each year and is creating a public health crisis. Roughly two million used hypodermic needles each year litter city streets and sidewalks. San Francisco streets are regarded as dirtier than those in extremely poor countries such as Kenya. Damage to the city's tourism industry includes the loss of a major annual medical convention that would have generated \$40 million in incomes for San Francisco businesses and workers.

The obvious economic issue is that not everyone who wants to live in San Francisco can feasibly live in San Francisco. This reality works through the housing market, in which the forces of limited supply and very high demand



allocate San Francisco's housing stock through extremely high prices. In principle, those who can't afford to live in San Francisco will move to another location and consume less expensive housing. From this perspective, housing is no different from any other good or service traded within the marketplace.

But this natural process of supply and demand is not occurring with many of the homeless, particularly those who suffer from substance abuse and mental health issues and who chronically live on the city streets. And

San Francisco's policies are not a safety net. Instead they've become a de facto transfer of property rights of parts of the city to the homeless.

here you can see the significant flaw in San Francisco's approach to homelessness. The city's approach seems to be that the homeless should unconditionally remain

in San Francisco. The city's policies are not a safety net—instead they have become a de facto transfer of property rights of parts of the city to the homeless. This approach, combined with the city's remarkable tolerance for drug abuse and its behavioral consequences, perpetuates the chronic and debilitating problems of homelessness.

There is a better, less expensive, and more humane policy than what San Francisco is pursuing. It makes no sense to use the most expensive land in the most expensive city in the state for a homeless shelter. Just imagine what San Francisco's homeless budget of roughly \$300 million per year—not counting the construction of the newest shelter—could buy in a lower cost-of-living location, such as the Central Valley. The cost of decent housing in major Central Valley cities such as Fresno and Stockton is less than 10 percent of that in San Francisco's Embarcadero. This means that for every homeless person housed in San Francisco, roughly eleven could be housed in lower-cost locations.

This approach, however, would require the city to take legal conservatorship over those homeless persons who would refuse to move. It would also require coordination with a statewide homelessness policy that focuses on providing humane treatment to those with mental illness and substance abuse and which makes the most out of resources for this purpose by locating treatment facilities in lower cost-of-living areas.

This could make an enormous difference. Whereas many homeless advocates estimate that only 25 percent of the homeless suffer from mental illness and substance abuse, these estimates are typically from self-reported surveys

of the homeless. In contrast, more reliable findings indicate that about 50 percent of the homeless have mental health and substance abuse issues.

GREENER FIELDS

Locating new housing and treatment outside the most expensive locations on the California coast would also probably face less resistance from existing residents, as many interior locations in the state remain depressed more than ten years after the financial crisis. These investments would improve local economies.

Developing this new approach for treating the chronic homeless who need medical treatment will allow the city to refocus homeless policies within San Francisco to provide an adequate safety net for those who need temporary support and shelter to move forward. This would improve the efficiency of shelters within the city that struggle with treating both the chronic homeless with mental health and substance abuse issues and the temporary homeless who have lost housing because of a very different set of circumstances.

An important reason why homelessness policies in San Francisco and in other expensive cities have failed is that they have not recognized the very difficult economic realities of trying to locate homeless treatment in the most expensive neighborhoods. Moving the homeless who need medical treatment for substance abuse and mental illness to lower-cost-of-living locations frees up resources that can be used to improve the lives of the homeless and to enhance public health, safety, and economic activity within the city. Status quo policies have done little to move the needle for decades. It is time to try something new. ■

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Tax Avengers: Endgame?

A recent schools tax measure failed—and failed badly. Californians may not be all that eager to weaken Proposition 13 after all.

By Bill Whalen

Baseball has spring training, Broadway its tech rehearsals, and software engineers their beta tests.

And California politics? The closest the Golden State comes to a “trailer”—in Hollywood-speak, a shorter clip of a longer and larger coming attraction—may be what occurred last June (fittingly enough) in Los Angeles, where voters were asked to vote on a new parcel tax in a countywide special election. The issue in question: Measure EE, which proposed an annual property levy of 16 cents per square foot on indoor spaces, excluding parking areas, with the proceeds going to public schools—aiming to raise an estimated

Key points

» Next year, California voters are again likely to be weighing higher taxes for public schools.

» Changing Prop 13 could drive businesses out of the Golden State.

» Voters aren't convinced that the state will distribute tax revenue where it was promised.

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\$500 million annually over twelve years for the Los Angeles Unified School District.

The outcome: EE received only 45 percent of the vote—not remotely close to the two-thirds threshold required to pass a new parcel tax.

The significance: voters statewide could very well be having this same conversation next year—higher taxes for the sake of public schools—should California’s November 2020 ballot include a measure that would modify 1978’s Proposition 13, which limits state property taxes.

SPLITTING THE DIFFERENCE

A quick glimpse of California’s secretary of state elections page (from the office that monitors statewide elections) shows two measures have already qualified for the 2020 ballot. One lines up as a highly visible, high-stakes, and high-dollar fight. That is “The California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act,” which actually qualified for the ballot in October 2018.

If approved (a simple majority is all that’s required), the measure would be the first significant modification of Proposition 13, which was approved in 1978 and presaged the Reagan revolution as a public backlash against high taxes.

Thanks to Proposition 13, California residential and commercial property is reassessed only at the time of its sale. Thus some property owners are locked into tax assessments that date back the better part of forty years. But if voters approved the Proposition 13 rewrite, a new system would be put in place to reassess commercial businesses every three years (businesses with fewer than fifty employees would be exempt, as would agricultural land), with (brace for impact) the state legislature able to reassess even more frequently if it so chooses.

In California, this is known as a “split roll” approach, addressing the commercial side of Prop 13 but not the residential, which would be far less popular with voters.

Supporters say the rewrite would add an extra \$11 billion a year to the state’s coffers.

Critics say it would

drive businesses out of the Golden State, since the property-tax cap is one of few business-friendly ways that California can distinguish itself from competing states.

The key to fending off the Prop 13 rewrite is to start asking questions about where education money really goes.

And there's an added budget wrinkle: while the proceeds would go to education, it's maybe not the right way to invest the windfall. Joe Matthews, a longtime California political observer (he wrote a terrific book on Arnold Schwarzenegger and the 2003 recall election) notes that the measure is heavy on money for K-14 education (not a surprise, as this is a teachers' union measure) but light on dollars for health care and other aspects of education, like early-childhood development.

SELLING THE TAX

So how will this break down a year from now?

Thanks to former California governor Jerry Brown, we already know the playbook. Twice in his eight gubernatorial years leading up to the current Newsom administration, Brown sold California voters on the concept of higher taxes for higher school funding (this would be 2012's Proposition 30 and 2016's Proposition 55). It's no coincidence that the former governor chose presidential election years in which to do his hiding of these proposals. The higher turnout means more Democrats coming to the polls—presumably a more tax-friendly audience.

Moreover, Brown drew a logical beeline between taxes and schools—even if it wasn't an honest sale. The tax hike on upper earners wasn't "temporary," as the governor promised. Nor did Brown bother to note how insatiable pension costs (the California State Teachers' Retirement System, or CalSTRS) funneled money away from classrooms.

Brown also had some extra wind behind his sails: a California business community that stayed out of both initiative fights. Why? In part because a California governor—and his veto pen—is the last line of defense against an overzealous state legislature. The business community didn't want to end up

in Brown's doghouse for fighting his pet initiatives.

Plus, in both instances, individual earners—not businesses—were asked to take the tax hit.

The November 2020 ballot is already set to contain a highly visible, high-stakes, and high-dollar fight.

The question in 2020: can Governor Newsom and his friends in the teachers' unions pull off higher taxes a third straight time if indeed the Prop 13 rewrite stays on the ballot?

And that takes us to lessons learned from last June's vote in Los Angeles.

First, the Los Angeles special election was a reminder of what Californian political observers already knew: parcel taxes, with their two-thirds approval

threshold, are a heavy lift. Only one in seven school districts in California have passed them.

Second, Measure EE's sharp rebuke meant a bad night for establishment figures in the Southland. The measure was touted by Los Angeles mayor Eric Garcetti and LAUSD superintendent Austin Beutner, in addition to United Teachers Los Angeles

(it represents teachers, nurses, and school counselors), the California Charter Schools Association, and Local 99 of the Service Employees

International Union. Yet despite a healthy \$8 million budget to market the measure, it failed to reach even 53 percent approval, which is where the last Los Angeles parcel tax stalled nine years ago in another June vote (in retrospect, it seems a good idea that Garcetti didn't run for president).

Opposition came in the form of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, the Valley Industry & Commerce Association, and BizFed (a business grass-roots organization). They didn't have the same financial resources, but they did enjoy at least four advantages:

- » The special election generated a turnout of perhaps 10 percent—in California, the lower the turnout, the less likely a tax increase passes.
- » A last-minute change to the measure (to address its lack of oversight), coupled with its quick placement on the ballot, played into a suspicion that it was an end-run around usual public scrutiny.
- » That skepticism was furthered by the argument that LAUSD couldn't be trusted with the annual \$500 million supplement; instead of making its way to the classroom, it would go toward solving LAUSD's projected \$576 million operating deficit.
- » Finally, bad ink—news accounts that questioned the education establishment's good sense. One example: LAUSD, years ago, using school construction money to buy iPads for students.

If voters approved the Proposition 13 rewrite, a new system would reassess commercial businesses every three years, or even more often.

ASK HARD QUESTIONS

So what should the respective sides of the looming Prop 13 fight take away from this failed Los Angeles experiment?

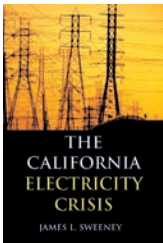
The pro-tax side could easily shrug off the results, given the low turnout. Still, the fact that Measure EE was far less popular than its predecessor of nearly a decade earlier should be a cause for concern—especially when a

teachers' union, empowered as it felt coming off a January strike and paired with an ambitious mayor and earnest education leaders and reformers, thought it could close the deal.

What the anti-tax side should note: a question of accountability eroded voters' confidence. So perhaps the key to fending off the Prop 13 rewrite is to start asking questions about how education spending breaks down in California.

It's another aspect of higher learning in California: teaching voters to understand what exactly they're being asked to approve. ■

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“None of the Wars Has Been Won”

Hoover fellow **David Davenport**, co-author of *How Public Policy Became War*, calls for a rhetorical cease-fire.

By Peter Robinson

Peter Robinson, Uncommon Knowledge: For fifteen years president of Pepperdine University, David Davenport is now a fellow at the Hoover Institution, where he writes about international law, American politics, and the Constitution. His newest book, which he co-authored with the Ashbrook Center’s Gordon Lloyd, is *How Public Policy Became War*. David, welcome.

David Davenport: Thanks, Peter. Great to be here.

Robinson: Let me quote from your book: “We must better manage the war metaphor in public policy. . . . The future of our republic depends on our ability to do this.” You’re the first man I’ve encountered who has said the future of the republic depends on managing a metaphor. Explain what you mean.

Davenport: Well, I am an academic, of course, and the phrase I use to describe my work at Hoover is “saving the republic one word at a time.” So,

*David Davenport is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution. He is the co-author (with Gordon Lloyd) of the new book **How Public Policy Became War** (Hoover Institution Press, 2019). Peter Robinson is the editor of the **Hoover Digest**, the host of **Uncommon Knowledge**, and a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.*

we perhaps exaggerate the value of that [laughs]. We argue that metaphors do matter and that metaphors in public policy not only describe the political world but they end up prescribing what we should do about it.

Robinson: So the way we talk about a problem limits the way we think about a problem.

Davenport: That's precisely right. If you're in a war on poverty, for example, you can't really reconsider the policy options or change direction easily—because we're at war, for crying out loud! So, we battle on in all these wars over decades because the war metaphor really describes the limits of what we're able to do.

AMERICA'S FRENCH REVOLUTION

Robinson: Franklin Roosevelt was elected president in the Depression year of 1932. Not quite a decade later, the United States would enter the Second World War, but you argue that FDR talked about domestic issues as if they were wars long before the real war. During the 1932 presidential campaign, he said it was “high time to admit with courage that we are in the midst of an emergency at least equal to that of war.” When he accepted the Democratic Party's nomination for president, he said that it was “a call to arms.” And on and on. Yet he's talking only about domestic issues. What's he doing?

Davenport: Well, he's increasing his own executive power and influence, for one thing. And he's really trying to frame the attack on the Great Depression in crisis, war, emergency, and action terms so that he can get things moving. On his first day in office he drafts a bill to close the banks and declare a holiday. He sends it over to Congress in the morning. Believe it or not, Congress in those days normally drafted its own bills, but in this case, Roosevelt drafts it and sends it over. They vote in the afternoon and—just like today—very few in Congress had even seen it. Done. That's action mode.

One of his close advisers said that in a way Roosevelt didn't really care what policy we followed as long as we did things. FDR elsewhere used the phrase, “bold experimentation” to describe what he wanted to do. What Roosevelt really did was move the presidency from part of the Washington deliberative process to become the action arm. What everybody remembers from his first inaugural address is freedom from fear.

Robinson: “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”



DAVENPORT: *“If you’re in a war on poverty, for example, you can’t really reconsider the policy options or change direction easily—because we’re at war, for crying out loud! The war metaphor really describes the limits of what we’re able to do.”* [Hoover Institution—Uncommon Knowledge]

Davenport: The most predictive thing he said was: “This nation asks for action, and action now.”

Robinson: From rhetoric to action. You just mentioned he moved extremely quickly. You also write in your book about executive orders—that is, orders that a president has the power to issue on his own without congressional legislation. Roosevelt set the record for the most executive orders signed by a president, at 3,721. By way of contrast, George W. Bush signed 291 and Barack Obama signed 277. So, FDR is just in a class by himself.

Davenport: Without question.

Robinson: Explain what’s going on there.

Davenport: FDR did two things extremely well. First, he used his own executive power to the absolute limit. Someone said to me that of course Roosevelt signed the most executive orders because he was president for so long. But

even on a per-day basis, he has the most executive orders of any president. So, he marshalled the power of the presidency. He created all those alphabet soup agencies and began shifting power to the administrative state. Second, as David Kennedy said in his wonderful book about the Great Depression and the New Deal, FDR rode Congress like a skilled jockey. So, what he didn't do by executive order he pushed Congress to do in this spirit of tremendous action. The first hundred days was the most revolutionary time in American policy history, and with the New Deal it just kept going.

Robinson: You write: "Prior to Roosevelt the federal government had been relatively small. But federal spending more than tripled between 1930 (under Herbert Hoover) and 1940 (in Roosevelt's second term). In the first six years

of Roosevelt's presidency, federal employment grew by nearly 60 percent, from 572,000 to 920,000. . . . All told, this constitutes nothing less than a revolution in the

"Metaphors in public policy not only describe the political world but they end up prescribing what we should do about it."

function, power, and operation of the federal government." Elsewhere in the book, you say that the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt was the American republic's French Revolution—it was the moment that changed everything. Elaborate on that just a bit.

Davenport: Well, first of all, you doubtless remember Barack Obama's then-chief of staff Rahm Emanuel saying that it's a shame to let a crisis go to waste because it allows you to do things you couldn't otherwise do. I think Roosevelt was an early case study in that, because he saw in the crisis of the Great Depression a chance to begin to implement the Progressive agenda that had been developing for decades but was sort of waiting for the right leader and the right moment for implementation. I think Roosevelt became that leader and the Great Depression provided the moment. He didn't waste that crisis. He made dramatic changes. Eighty years later, the New Deal is still the paradigm of American domestic policy. We are still living under the New Deal—we just expand it. We add health care to Social Security and we add other benefits and powers, but we're still working under that New Deal paradigm.

Robinson: You and your co-author are also discussing values in your book, and you're pretty disapproving of Franklin Roosevelt. You don't particularly care for America's French Revolution. Is that right?

Davenport: I think that's fair. Gordon and I have written three books together and they all start in the New Deal and that's no coincidence, because we think that it is part of the fundamental problem. We believe that's when a major shift took place in our values as a country but also in how the government operates and the role of government in people's lives. We think you have to start there. To understand policy today you have to start with Franklin Roosevelt and "action now"—that's kind of when the whole modern presidency began.

I do think that a very important issue that FDR tackled—and Teddy Roosevelt had tackled it before him—was the proper role of government in regulating the economy and big business. I think some tough decisions did have to be made, and the Great Depression was the obvious window of opportunity to do that. But the notion that the government can do a better job of planning the economy seems fallacious to me. That's the conceit that sort of originated with Woodrow Wilson: we don't need politics anymore, we have experts, and experts can plan the economy. So, I think FDR did tackle some important issues about the government's role in economic regulation, but I think the notion of government planning is really sort of a pie-in-the-sky solution.

We end up declaring many of these domestic policy wars because we don't know what else to do. But here we are today, and none of the wars has been won.

STATES OF EMERGENCY

Robinson: I'm quoting again from your book: "Presidents from 1945 to 1963 essentially made the New Deal paradigm permanent. Postwar presidents Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy . . . continued to build on the rhetoric of war and an emphasis on executive power and action." FDR's successors declared wars on poverty, crime, drugs, energy, and terrorism—among other things. You also talk in your book about the National Emergencies Act, which President Ford signed into law in 1976. You note that twenty-eight national emergencies are still in effect, covering everything from vessels near Cuba to Democratic processes in Zimbabwe to cyberwarfare to narcotics trafficking. And this fits into your argument how?

Davenport: Well, a national emergency has the effect of undoing a lot of normal constraints on a president. By declaring an emergency, a president gains all kinds of powers that he can exercise unilaterally and, again, it's a case of pure action. By the way, today we are at thirty-one wars. We were at

twenty-eight when we wrote the book several months ago, but we have grown to thirty-one already—and the oldest one was enacted by Jimmy Carter. If you ask the typical American how many states of national emergency there are, I don't think anybody would get close to thirty-one, and no one would say the earliest one was forty years ago and we still live under it. When you add up all of these domestic wars and all these national emergencies, you have a major shift in power to the president. You have a major shift away from deliberation in government to action, and President Trump's wall is a classic example. The deliberative process actually reached one conclusion, then Trump said, "Well, I don't care. I have the power to do it and I'm just going to do it."

Robinson: He declared a national emergency at the border.

Davenport: Precisely.

Robinson: And according to statute, the president does that unless two-thirds of Congress overrides him. Once he flips the switch, he gets to spend money without the usual constraints. OK, so why wouldn't the president flip that switch whenever he's frustrated? Why wouldn't we end up with all these national emergencies?

Davenport: It would be hard to resist—and it has been.

“MAKE CONGRESS GREAT AGAIN”

Robinson: So, what's to be done?

Davenport: Sadly, I think this is no great revelation, but really what happens now in Congress and in Washington is basically political theater. It's not deliberation. We don't take votes that might cause a member to have to take an unpopular stand and risk being run against in the primary or risk re-election. We kind of hold bills in secret; we don't deliberate; we don't change our minds. A lot of the things that the founders thought were the essence of democracy don't really work if your goal is political theater—to be loyal to your party and to raise money and be re-elected.

Robinson: This is a longish quotation from your book, but it's important: "Our political leaders need to make Congress great again, clawing back powers it has ceded to the president over time. Starting with war powers and the budget, Congress needs to step up to its proper constitutional role. Congress must also return to regular order and become more deliberative."

Restoring the power of committees and committee chairs over that of party leaders is a key part of that. Rules changes can help but, in the main, we need more statesmen and fewer party loyalists in Congress.” What incentive does Congress have to reassert itself? This system works fine for members of Congress. They get to grandstand and let the president and the administration take real responsibility, and then they go home and they can talk out of both sides of their mouth when they’re running for re-election.

Davenport: The premise of your question is absolutely correct—power has traveled a one-way trip down Pennsylvania Avenue from Congress to the president. But it’s not just because presidents have been grasping power; it’s because Congress has been ceding power. We’re doubtful that presidents are going to suddenly give back power to Congress. We think Congress is going to have to claw that power back.

Here’s the funny thing: if people in Congress get together now to work on a bipartisan basis,

they’re called the Gang of Nine or the Gang of Seven. They have to meet in a broom closet, because they can’t be seen to be deliberating and compromising. But we see a few hopeful signs. There are members of Congress who have been working on immigration policy that could be useful to both sides. There are members who have actually started looking at the budget more carefully.

You’re right—the incentives are tough to find. Clearly, we’re going to need some statesmen. We need to make Congress great again to have meaningful deliberation. And we have to make Congress more deliberative again. It’s not enough to just keep passing bills on party-line votes.

Robinson: You note in *How Public Policy Became War* that the executive branch comprises 188 agencies, 4.1 million employees, and a budget of \$3.9 trillion a year. Congress, in contrast, consists of a handful of agencies, 10,000 employees, and a \$4.3 billion annual budget. Congress enacts perhaps 50 significant laws per year, while executive agencies issue 4,000 new rules per year.

The republic that you celebrate in this book—the republic of the founders—has been replaced, first by FDR but now ratified again and again over seven decades by a vast technocratic, administrative state. The old republic isn’t coming back. Is it all over?

“A national emergency has the effect of undoing a lot of normal constraints on a president.”

Davenport: Well, first of all, it makes me think of a bumper sticker I saw on the freeway in Los Angeles: big letters on top “THERE IS NO HOPE” and in smaller letters below “. . . but I may be wrong.” That is sort of my sentiment. I get a little grumpy about the future now and again. When Gordon and I co-author books, we have this debate. He is more optimistic than I am, and we’ve concluded one reason is that Gordon is an immigrant. When he came to this country it was a sense of relief for him to see all of the good things that are still available and how well things do work. I grew up in the country with certain expectations of how the country was going to work and it has declined, I think.

Robinson: You grew up in Kansas, where there is a strong sense of value and community.

Davenport: Sure. And deliberation.

Robinson: And neighborliness.

Davenport: Exactly. I do think that President Trump is on the right track to take some of the measures he has taken to begin to limit the administrative state. I do think that there are other proposals that will help. Having Congress approve fundamental regulations is out there as an idea that is gaining some support. I hate to say this as a conservative, but I actually think if we’re going to make Congress great again, we may have to let Congress bulk up a little bit in terms of its own staffing and its ability to oversee things. I would insist on coupling that with reform. In other words, I wouldn’t just put more money into the present Congress. But I think if Congress is really going to get active in the budget, well, you know, the president’s Office of Management and Budget is going to overwhelm anything that the Senate staff can put together. So, I think if Congress is going to play any meaningful role, we may actually have to increase some of their staffing. And even some of their membership. I admit it’s going to be a tough fight, but I don’t know what else to do but to keep fighting. ■





A Bridge over a Troubled Century

Celebrating Hoover fellow Norman M. Naimark.

*Last spring, Hoover senior fellow Norman M. Naimark was celebrated in a conference, “Redefining Eastern Europe: Norman Naimark and the Shaping of a Scholarly Generation,” convened by the Stanford Humanities Center. According to the program description, “The event honored the field-defining scholarship and extraordinary mentorship of Norman Naimark, who has just completed his thirtieth year of teaching at Stanford and finished his seventh historical monograph, *Stalin and the Fate of Europe: The Postwar Struggle for Sovereignty* (Harvard University Press), due out in October 2019. The symposium’s participants included twenty-five of his former and current graduate advisees and several senior colleagues in Eastern European studies. They came to Stanford for the occasion from across the United States as well as from Europe, Canada, and Mexico.”*

Herewith are selected remarks from two of Professor Naimark’s colleagues:

Ronald Grigor Suny

Let me thank the organizers of this conference for inviting me to speak about my friend, colleague, and—this is my highest compliment reserved for those I treasure and trust—comrade, Norman Naimark.

One of the sources of our friendship is our love for scholarship, for our shared and intense search for understanding Eastern Europe, Russia, and

Norman M. Naimark is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies. He is also the Robert and Florence McDonnell Professor of East European Studies at Stanford University.

the Soviet Union, communism, the Cold War, mass killing, genocide, and political violence more generally. Over the past forty years we have discussed, argued, disagreed, and come to positions of shared agreement on issues and topics that would have driven others apart. We have collaborated on projects on mass violence and co-edited a book on the Armenian genocide. I have benefited enormously from those exchanges, both intellectually and personally.

Norman, as he once wrote to me, is not thin-skinned. If he had been, I would not have been invited here today to give this talk. He not only can take

criticism; he asks for it.

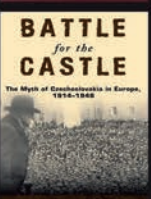
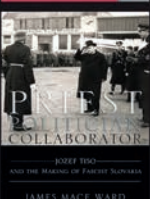
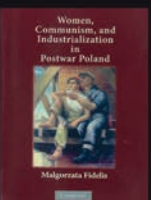
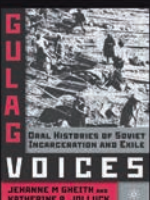
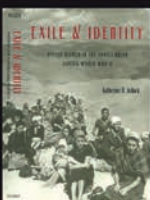
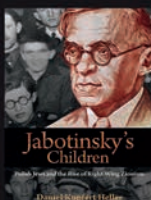
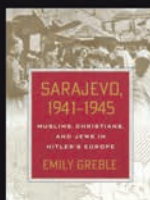
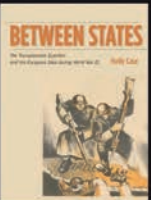
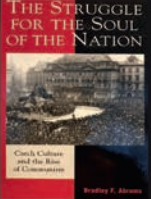
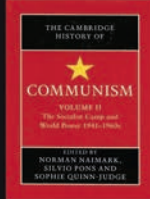
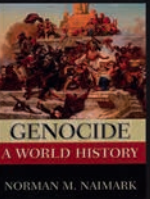
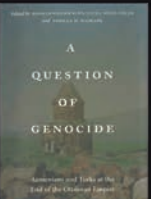
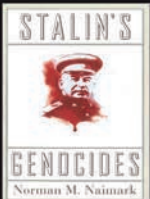
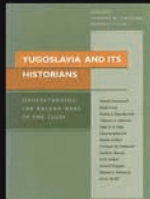
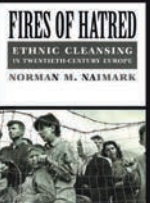
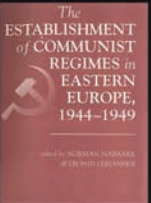
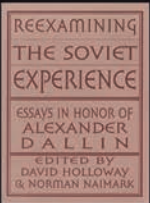
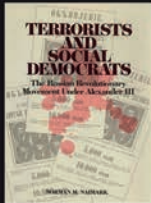
As I searched through my computer to see what I had written about Norman's work, I found his repeated requests that I

He was the first Western scholar allowed into the Soviet Ministry of Justice archives.

read his manuscripts before they were published. Apparently I must have felt confident about giving him my frank, often critical opinion of the work. Norman has always been aware that our politics and preferences have diverged, that I—as Stanford political scientist Ken Schultz once put it—am proudly “to the left of Lenin.” In my career there would be no invitation to become a fellow of that venerable institution, the Hoover Institution. Yet, Norman submitted to my comments and suggestions, and whether he took them or not, he seems to think that the exchange was worth the time.

Norman is not a radical; he is a liberal. By nature he is moderate and middle-of-the road. His favorite word is “nice”; everyone seems to be nice. He repeatedly beats me in the running for the nicest person in Slavic studies. And yet in his scholarship he is quietly iconoclastic and stealthily revisionist, and he happily and with strong strokes swims upstream. This is evident in his book *Terrorists and Social Democrats: The Russian Revolutionary Movement Under Alexander III* (Harvard University Press, 1983), where he takes on the Soviet master narrative of the sacred history of populism and Marxism. He does this revision with the tried-and-true methods that honest and careful historians use: deep dives into the archives. For this book he was fortunate that Soviet archives were being opened just as he undertook this research.

WAYS OF KNOWING: A collage prepared for the scholarly conference (opposite page) shows the many publications to which Hoover senior fellow Norman M. Naimark has contributed. [Stanford University]



REDEFINING EASTERN EUROPE: Norman Naimark and the Shaping of a Scholarly Generation

5 - 7 APRIL 2019



***“MORAL BUT NOT MORALISTIC”*: A fellow scholar says Norman Naimark’s work “is animated by an abiding belief in the significance of knowing about the past, of understanding those distant times and places, of doing justice to the people we study.”** [Hoover Institution]

been featured in much of the historiography. But Norman’s approach here is not simply political history. He places his discussion of both governmental and revolutionary politics in the social environment. This is political history from the bottom up (or even from the underground up)! A book of recovery, of rescue from obscurity, like his first book (*The History of the “Proletariat”: The Emergence of Marxism in the Kingdom of Poland, 1870–1887*), it treats his protagonists with respect if not full admiration.

Norman shows the kaleidoscopic nature of the revolutionary movement in the 1880s and early 1890s, the blurring of boundaries between the Marxists, populists, and terrorists, and their shared values that by the end of the

He was the first Western scholar allowed into the Ministry of Justice archives, and there he went through thousands of files on radicals in the 1880s and early 1890s.

Apparently the czarist government took the activities of the approximately five thousand terrorists and social democrats more seriously than subsequent historians have. Norman was able to show the continued activity in the 1880s of the *narodnovoltsy*, the radical populists, who, it had been presumed, stopped their work once they had carried out the successful assassination of the Czar Liberator in 1881. Norman’s findings were telling: he foregrounded the radicals in the underground; it turns out they were more important in developing the movement, even the ideas that reshaped that movement and the future of social democracy, than the leaders like Georgii Plekhanov, who have

period brought them together in a commitment to moving the autocracy toward a parliamentary form of democracy.

For all his interest, and knowledge of Marxism (maybe because of the latter), Norman never

became a Marxist (no one is perfect!), but nor did he casually dismiss it or condemn those who were closer to Marxism than he. There is no

love lost for Lenin, the Bolsheviks, the USSR, or communism. But there is a deep curiosity about the fate of those revolutionaries—what the Soviet Union became, and how that evolution affected those who fell under its imperial reach.

Norman has been lucky in his life, and fortuitously when he took up his next research endeavor, the study that would result in what many consider his masterpiece, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–1949* (Harvard University Press, 1995), the Soviet bloc was disintegrating and long-closed archives were being *razsekretovan* (unsecreted). Turning from revolutionaries to the Cold War, he entered a field with deep divisions between the orthodox interpretations that believed that the USSR was the principal source of the great schism after 1945 and those revisionist accounts that distributed blame on both sides. Norman's approach was to build a careful mosaic of facts and factors that would explore and explain how Russians influenced the creation of the DDR and how that influence would shape the future of Germany, both east and west. Without taking sides in the polemics around blame, he allowed the chips to fall where they might.

His powerful intervention rejected simplistic explanations of either evil or benign Soviet intentions. Like his close colleague, David Holloway, he argued that security, not revolution, was uppermost in Stalin's mind. But unforgettable in this book is the stunning second chapter in which the wanton rape and murder of German women is related in horrific detail. Stalin was indifferent to the punitive actions of his troops until he concluded that "the cruel treatment of the German population is not useful for us, because it increases the resistance of the German army." Norman demonstrates that the occupiers and the German communists would never be able to cleanse their cause of the stain of rape and plunder that occurred during the occupation.

And now for something completely different! Violence, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. Norman started with his study *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing*

In his scholarship Norman is quietly iconoclastic and stealthily revisionist, and he happily and with strong strokes swims upstream.

in Twentieth-Century Europe (Harvard University Press, 2001), a work centered on the new term that had come out of the Balkans in the post-communist years of bloodletting and ethnic mass killing. That book basically created a field of study and was an initial foray into a burgeoning literature on ethnic conflict that spanned history, sociology, anthropology, and political science. This is a true historian's approach, surrounding the events with potentially explanatory factors but abjuring the aim of the political scientist for a single, weighty, parsimonious explanation.

I conclude with admiration of how faithfully Norman engages in the historian's enterprise. Historians are best at making distinctions; they are fundamentally splitters rather than lumpers, and even when he eschews theory Norman engages in careful comparisons between different phenomena. As we are all aware, history is not only a political science but a politicized science. It is impossible to avoid big moral and political questions even while trying to be as objective, balanced, and neutral as possible.

Norman Naimark is troubled by the inhumanity of which people are capable. His work is deeply moral but not moralistic. Norman sees history as a way of understanding what we might otherwise want to avoid. He looks straight ahead into the darkness and has always tried to bring us some light. For that we all should be grateful.



James Sheehan

Few historians have written about a more diverse set of subjects, national experiences, and periods of time than Norman Naimark. Each of Norman's books is different from the others, ranging from classic monographs to broad syntheses to collections of interconnected essays. But behind this impressive variety there are, I think, some notable lines of continuity. Let me mention three.

First, Norman has always been aware of the energizing connections between past and present. In the opening paragraph of his dissertation, he considered why so many historians were drawn to studying radical movements, suggesting that this reflected the turbulent times in which they lived—an appropriate response to the political climate of the late Sixties and early Seventies. Again and again—in his work on the postwar era, on ethnic cleansing, and on genocide—he has illustrated Marc Bloch's insight that the "solidarity of the ages is so effective that the lines of connection [between past and present] work both ways." "Misunderstanding of the present," Bloch went on, "is the inevitable consequence of the past. But a man may wear

himself out just as fruitlessly in seeking to understand the past if he is totally ignorant of the present.” Norman’s engagement with the present at once inspires and illuminates his study of the past.

The second enduring element in Norman’s work is what I will call his voice. By that I mean his prose style—always clear, uncluttered, beautifully balanced, and carefully crafted to perform the task at hand. But by voice I also mean those qualities of emotional tone and moral timbre that were present in his writing from the start. This is what George Eliot had in mind when she wrote that the highest pleasure of reading was “hearing a voice, speaking as it were directly to you—almost as a confidence—of something the writer has come to know at cost, or as a joy.” Now “joy” is perhaps not the right word to use when we consider the subjects that Norman writes about, but listening to his voice does invite us to share both the costs and the satisfaction of what he has come to know, however dark that knowledge turns out to be.

And this brings me to the third and final characteristic of Norman’s scholarship: its profound seriousness. Totally free of pretension and self-importance, Norman’s work is animated by an abiding belief in the significance of knowing about the past, of understanding those distant times and places, of doing justice to the people we study by getting their stories as right as we can. The literary scholar Christopher Ricks once wrote that the reason his teacher, C. S. Lewis, mattered so much to him was the sense that Lewis conveyed of “how much had always mattered to him [that is, to Lewis], including the here and now, and the then and there.” Norman’s enduring sense that what he does matters to him is why it matters to us, and this is, I think, a significant source of his remarkable achievements as a teacher. ■

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Trafficking in Thoughtcrime

How a distinguished thinker learned of his disinvitation.

By Harvey C. Mansfield

Recently I was disinvited from giving a commencement address at the small liberal arts college within Concordia University in Montreal. My speech was to be on the study of great books, to which that college is devoted. The invitation was a surprise, and the rejection less of one, because I am a white male conservative professor. Though I teach at Harvard and lecture elsewhere fairly often, I don't get invitations for occasions when universities put their principles on display. My last commencement address was for a private high school in rural California.

My relative lack of celebrity likely made me easier to disinvite. Most universities don't ask a professor to speak at commencement, figuring that the professors have already had their turn. Students and parents prefer the relief of hearing something not worth remembering on which they won't be tested.

Still, I had been invited and then disinvited. My reaction was more a sigh than a rush of anger at the manifest insult it was. Having devoted my life to teaching the great books, I was not going to be tongue-tied or at a loss as more specialized professors might be. Each of my classes is a commencement

Harvey C. Mansfield is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and the William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of Government at Harvard University.

address. Thus the fear about my appearance at Concordia was not that I would speak badly. But what was the reason behind it?

SORRY, NOT SORRY

It could not be found explicitly in the letter I received from Principal Mark A. Russell of the college. This was a performance too obviously clever to be clever. The principal regretted to inform me of a change of plan. His invitation committee had “acted in good faith but rather precipitously.” When it spoke with the entire faculty and some alumni, “we were unable to reach consensus as to what we wanted to achieve with this event.” Since he did not describe what had been discussed, nor disinvite me explicitly, he could say with apparent innocence that he was “sorry for any inconvenience that our decision not to proceed may cause you.”

No disinvitation, no insult, hence no apology except for inconvenience. Also, no broken promise, no suppression of free speech, and no violation of academic freedom. Mr. Russell and his college were guiltless and safe. To be magnanimous, they admit to having acted “rather precipitously” in inviting me.

What had taken place, I learned but not from him, was a faculty meeting prompted by a letter from twelve alumni that demanded a reversal of the committee’s invitation

because my “scholarly and public corpus . . . heavily traffics in damaging and discredited philosophies of gender and culture.”

Promoting “the primacy of

masculinity,” apparently a reference to my book *Manliness*, attracted their ire. Though I was to speak on great books, not gender, this “trafficking”—as if in harmful drugs—disqualified me without any need to specify further. Such sloppy, inaccurate accusation was enough to move a covey of professors to flutter in alarm.

This is not the place to repeat or defend my thoughts on women and men, which are much more favorable to women than to feminism. When I die I wish it said that I gave my best to my female students. The new doctrine of feminism in which women are essentially the same as men, except that women have all virtues but no characteristic defects and men have no virtues and terrible defects, has little appeal to me either as fact or right. It does have relevance to my Canadian adventure, though.

***I had been invited and then disin-
vited. My reaction was more a sigh than
a rush of anger at the manifest insult
it was.***

Feminism is not so much an attack on “toxic masculinity” as on feminine modesty, the “feminine mystique” of Betty Friedan’s devising. To feminists, modesty diminishes women’s power and keeps them dependent on men. Yet it is to be replaced by the notion of a “safe space” that will protect women and liberate them from the need to defend themselves in the hostile environment presupposed by the so-called virtue of modesty. A moment’s reflection suggests a certain resemblance between the old-time feminine modesty and the newfangled safe space. In both, women are dependent on men to defend them—whether they are old-school gentlemen or sensitive men like Mr. Russell.

But feminism is not the only source of intolerance in the universities today—nor the only reason for my disinvitation. It is joined by the notion that free speech is an expression of one’s power rather than a contribution to truth or toward a reasonable settlement. In this notion, speech is more determined by one’s desire to get the better of an opponent or to defeat an enemy than offered as persuasion to an audience. Speech is like a gesture or wail of defiance, a rallying cry, or shout of triumph. It is defined as coming from within oneself against the hostility awaiting from others in the outside world; it is not defined by the need to address them, their needs, and their opinions. Speech is irrational rather than rational, for this view regards reason as nothing but an instrument of power with no power of its own.

FORBIDDEN SPEECH

Thus understood, free speech is no longer possible or desirable. It is diminished by the view that seizes on the power of speech to manipulate and denies its power to enlighten. Speech is not an alternative to power but a

The committee admits to having acted “rather precipitously” in inviting me.

form of power, political power, and political power is nothing but the power to oppress. A professor like me might trick gullible students and lure

them to the wrong side. So it is quite acceptable to exclude speakers from the other side. Supremacy of the wrong side must be prevented by supremacy of the right side. The university cannot be an ivory tower, a force for good above partisanship. It must be what it has allegedly always been, either a battleground fought over or a redoubt of the winner. This is the idea of postmodernism, a present-day version of ancient sophism.

When I was much younger and a student in the 1950s, Senator Joseph McCarthy and his allies went on the warpath against the universities, demanding that they exclude communist professors. The universities defended themselves

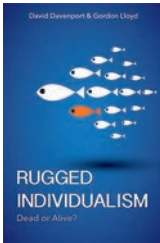
at that time, rejecting the spirit of what is still notorious as “McCarthyism.” I little thought that

I would now in my old

age be qualified for exclusion from Concordia University in our free neighbor to the north, not as the member of a conspiratorial organization serving an enemy power, but simply for holding opinions shared by half the American—and perhaps the Canadian—population. ■

In the current thinking, supremacy of the wrong side must be prevented by supremacy of the right side.

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Reparations Are for the Living

Trying to repay people for the losses their ancestors suffered would never work. Worse, it would never achieve justice.

By **Richard A. Epstein**

Earlier this year, Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, a Texas Democrat, introduced HR 40, which is intended to address “the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of slavery in the United States and the thirteen American colonies between 1619 and 1865 and to establish a commission to study and consider a national apology and proposals for reparations for the institution of slavery.” Since then, many Democratic presidential hopefuls have endorsed her proposal. Senator

Key points

- » It’s not enough to say that the federal government should pay reparations. Who should be taxed to pay for them?
- » Reparations would somehow have to account for welfare, housing, Medicare, Medicaid, and other benefits that have long been on the books.
- » Most of the post-slavery activities that have hampered the economic progress of black citizens can be laid at progressives’ doorstep.

Richard A. Epstein is the Peter and Kirsten Bedford Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution and a member of the steering committee for Hoover’s Working Group on Intellectual Property, Innovation, and Prosperity. He is also the Laurence A. Tisch Professor of Law at New York University Law School and a senior lecturer at the University of Chicago.

Elizabeth Warren, for instance, said she was in favor of government reparations “to black Americans who were economically affected by slavery.” Warren also urged us to “confront . . . the [nation’s] dark history of government-sanctioned discrimination,” an odd qualification given that national and state policy for more than fifty years has vigorously enforced civil rights laws in areas like employment, education, housing, and health. Other presidential candidates such as Senator Cory Booker and former congressman Beto O’Rourke have added their support to Jackson’s proposal.

A national apology for slavery may well be overdue. But the real battle will be over reparations. There is no formulation in the current legislation indicating the size of the financial burden of this program or how reparations should be distributed. Noticeably absent is any effort to reconcile the policy with other proposed new entitlements, including the “Green New Deal,” free college tuition, and Medicare for all.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

How then to approach this particular claim on public resources? The initial premise of the black-reparations movement is one that everyone of all political persuasions should accept: there is no place for slavery in any civilized society. But the issue here is not whether slavery is immoral. It is what should be done about that problem more than a hundred and fifty years after slavery was ended, often through the blood of white abolitionists and soldiers whose descendants are asked to be held to account for the wrongs that they bitterly fought against.

As I have long argued, one particularly troublesome aspect of the black-reparations movement is its strained relationship to generally accepted theories of individual or collective responsibility.

In dealing with ordinary private lawsuits, it is often instructive to ask: who is suing whom and for what? Those questions receive clear answers in commercial disputes between two traders, or even in civil rights claims that discrete individuals bring against the individuals or organizations whom they identify as the source of the discrimination. But calls for reparations are painted on a far larger canvas that do not satisfactorily address three key issues.

First, which people or groups are to pay for the reparations? It is not sufficient to say that the federal government should pay, without asking which individuals or groups should be taxed to cover the expenses. To pay these expenses out of general revenues means that black taxpayers should be included in the pool of potential payers, along with the descendants of

many other groups that have also suffered from official and private forms of discrimination, including Chinese-American citizens whose ancestors were subject to exclusion laws, people of Japanese ancestry who were subjected to years in internment camps, and Jews and Roman Catholics who suffered

Slavery ended more than a century and a half ago, often through the blood of white abolitionists and soldiers whose descendants now are being asked to pay for the very wrongs they opposed.

various indignities, both private and governmental, sometimes at the hands of a white Protestant majority. Indeed, many citizens of all races arrived long after slavery had ended, and many taxpayers are permanent aliens who do not participate in the

political life of the nation. Do they all pay, and if so, in what proportions?

Second, who should receive the reparations? Do black immigrants to the United States after the Civil War receive benefits from the programs? What happens with children born hundreds of years later? What should be done with mixed-raced individuals? Senator Warren seems to suggest that the potential eligible pool should include those parties who suffered from government-sanctioned discrimination. But it is far from clear whether all black populations throughout the United States have suffered to the same extent as blacks who were trapped in such places as Mississippi at the height of Jim Crow. It is also difficult to figure out in any individual case, or even estimate, whether and to what extent each individual was adversely affected by slavery, its aftereffects, or government-sanctioned discrimination. Are athletes and entertainers with million-dollar-plus incomes to receive reparations, or is there some income or wealth cap that eliminates at least some potential applicants?

It is impossible to answer the full range of questions that arise separately for millions of people, all of whom have had different life experiences. Nor is it clear what account, if any, should be taken of the substantial government aid given to many black individuals and families, sometimes under race-specific programs and sometimes under general provisions of social services—welfare, housing, Medicare and Medicaid, unemployment benefits—that have long been on the books.

Third, the current claims for reparations do not fit easily into any known theory of remedies. The strongest lawsuits always address claims that a victim brings against a wrongdoer. For these purposes, the relevant claims

come in two sorts. The first claims for reparations point to the deliberate and premeditated acts of theft and despoliation committed by white slave owners and others against black slaves. The second alleges that when the defendant has been unjustly enriched by taking the fruits of the plaintiff's labor, the plaintiffs are due recompense for those benefits wrested from them by force. Both of these claims resonate in connection with the many sins of slavery. But the moment all the original victims and malefactors are gone, neither of these theories can easily apply.

The descendants of any given wrongdoer are not themselves wrongdoers, and in any private dispute, the estate of the decedent could be held liable in a wrongful-death action, but no one could seek to recover for those wrongs from the separate assets, independently acquired, of their descendants.

To the advocates of reparations, it is tempting to say that the descendants received the gains that their ancestors wrongfully accumulated, which they are now bound to return. But claims of this sort typically fail for many reasons, the simplest of which is that the wrongdoers who have gained from these illegal actions have long ago consumed the benefits they obtained, making it is very difficult to trace these wrongful gains down across generations.

TIME TO HEAL

Indeed, progressives have to look at themselves in the mirror. Most of the post-slavery activities that have hampered the economic progress of black citizens can be laid at progressives' doorstep: legislation behind zoning, unions, and minimum-wage laws, as well as fierce opposition to charter schools, have long disadvantaged black people. Indeed, the recent improvement in wages for black

and minority citizens is largely attributed to the labor market liberalization of the much-reviled

Trump administration. The lesson: voluntary market exchanges can produce wealth far better than any transfer program, no matter how noble (or partisan) the motivations.

Nor does a program of the size and scale of black reparations gain any traction from the successful, focused reparations programs of the past. The German reparations program after the Holocaust, signed by Germany and Israel in 1953, came right after a systematic campaign of extermination that in scope and sheer evil exceeded ignominies of slavery and segregation, horribly brutal as they were. And the activities of the Holocaust were all

Do all American taxpayers—even blacks—pay for reparations?

organized by a unified government in a short twelve-year period, not over decades in which many key legislative, executive, and judicial bodies were united in their opposition to discriminatory practices. No one would think

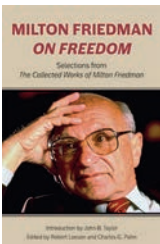
that a German reparations program should have begun a hundred and fifty years after these gross atrocities were committed.

Under law, the descendants of any given wrongdoer are not themselves wrongdoers.

Nor are the long-overdue reparations for the World War II internments of Japanese-Americans an apt precedent for black reparations today. President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which issued a public apology and provided a payment of \$20,000 to each camp survivor, for a total estimated at \$1.25 billion. But no provision was made to provide additional payments to spouses or to the descendants of these survivors, which is the demand made in the case of black reparations.

No nation should ever forget the sins of its past. But by the same token, the most important task going forward is to heal the tattered social fabric. We need closure, not further animosities, which is what we are likely to see if Congress does establish a reparations commission. ■

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I Unlearned Hate

Born into a culture that blamed Jews for all wrongdoing, a scholar explains how she broke free of that prejudice—and how a certain Somali-American congresswoman can, too.

By Ayaan Hirsi Ali

I once opened a speech by confessing to a crowd of Jews that I used to hate them. It was 2006 and I was a young native of Somalia who had been elected to the Dutch Parliament. The American Jewish Committee was giving me its Moral Courage Award. I felt honored and humbled, but a little dishonest if I didn't own up to my anti-Semitic past. So I told them how I'd learned to blame the Jews for everything.

Fast-forward to 2019. A freshman congresswoman from Minnesota has been infuriating the Jewish community and discomfiting the Democratic leadership with her expressions of anti-Semitism. Like me, Ilhan Omar was born in Somalia and exposed at an early age to Muslim anti-Semitism.

Some of the members of my 2006 AJC audience have asked me to explain and respond to Omar's comments, including her equivocal apologies. Their main question is whether it is possible for Omar to unlearn her evident hatred of Jews—and if so, how to help.

A HATEFUL NARRATIVE

In my experience it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to unlearn hate without coming to terms with how you learned to hate. Most Americans are familiar

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FOUNDATIONS: “Muslim anti-Semitism . . . is anti-Semitism’s most zealous, most potent, and most underestimated form,” says Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Compared to its European form, she says, “Muslim anti-Semitism has a broader base, and its propagators have had the time and resources to spread it widely.” [IPON-Boness/SIPA]

with the classic Western flavors of anti-Semitism: the Christian, European, white-supremacist, and communist types. But little attention has been paid to the special case of Muslim anti-Semitism. That is a pity because today it is anti-Semitism’s most zealous, most potent, and most underestimated form.

I had never heard the term “anti-Semitism” until I moved to the Netherlands in my twenties. But I had firsthand familiarity with its Muslim variety. As a child in Somalia, I was a passive consumer of anti-Semitism. Things would break, conflicts would arise, shortages would occur—and adults would blame it all on the Jews.

When I was a little girl, my mom often lost her temper with my brother, with the grocer, or with a neighbor. She would scream or curse under her breath “Yahud!” followed by a description of the hostility, ignominy, or despicable behavior of the subject of her wrath. It wasn’t just my mother; grown-ups around me exclaimed “Yahud!” the way Americans use the F-word. I was made to understand that Jews—Yahud—were all bad. No one took any

trouble to build a rational framework around the idea—hardly necessary, since there were no Jews around. But it set the necessary foundation for the next phase of my development.

At fifteen I became an Islamist by joining the Muslim Brotherhood. I began attending religious and civil-society events, where I received an education in the depth and breadth of Jewish villainy. This was done in two ways.

The first was theological. We were taught that the Jews betrayed our prophet Muhammad. Through Quranic verses (such as 7:166, 2:65, and 5:60), we learned that Allah had eternally condemned them, that they were not human but descendants of pigs and monkeys, that we should aspire to kill them wherever we found them. We were taught to pray: “Dear God, please destroy the Jews, the Zionists, the state of Israel. Amen.”

We were taught that the Jews occupied the Holy Land of Palestine. We were shown pictures of mutilated bodies, dead children, wailing widows, and weeping orphans. Standing over them in military uniform were Israeli soldiers with large guns. We were told their killing of Palestinians was wanton, unprovoked, and an expression of their hatred for Muslims.

The theological and the political stories were woven together, as in the Hamas charter: “The Prophet, Allah bless him and grant him salvation, has said: ‘The Day of Judgment will not come about until Muslims fight the Jews (killing the Jews), when the Jew will hide behind stones and trees. The Stones and trees will say, ‘O Muslims, O Abdulla, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill me.’’ . . . There is no solution for the Palestine question except through Jihad.”

That combination of narratives is the essence of Muslim anti-Semitism. Mohammed Morsi, the longtime Muslim Brotherhood leader who died June 17 but was president of Egypt for a year beginning in 2012, urged in 2010: “We must never forget, brothers, to nurse our children and our grandchildren on hatred for them: for Zionists, for Jews”—two categories that tend to merge along with allegations of world domination.

European anti-Semitism is also a mixture. Medieval Christian antipathy toward “Christ killers” blended with radical critiques of capitalism in the nineteenth century and racial pseudoscience in the twentieth. But before the Depression, anti-Semitic parties were not mass parties. Nor have they been since World War II. Muslim anti-Semitism has a broader base, and its propagators have had the time and resources to spread it widely.

INDOCTRINATION

To see how, begin at the top. Most men (and the odd woman) in power in Muslim-majority countries are autocrats. Even where there are elections, corrupt



INTERSECTIONAL: Minnesota congresswoman Ilhan Omar, born in Somalia, has aroused controversy with statements such as “It’s all about the Benjamins baby” in reference to supposed Jewish influence over the US government. Meanwhile, tens of billions of dollars are being spent worldwide to spread Islamist ideologies. [Michael Brochstein/SIPA USA]

rulers play an intricate game to stay in power. Their signature move is the promise to “free” the Holy Land—that is, to eliminate the Jewish state. The rulers of Iran are explicit about this goal. Other Muslim leaders may pay lip service to the peace process and the two-state solution, but government anti-Semitism is frequently on display at the United Nations, where Israel is repeatedly compared to apartheid South Africa, accused of genocide, and demonized as racist.

Media also play their part. There is very little freedom of expression in Muslim-majority countries, and state-owned media churn out anti-Semitic and anti-Israel propaganda daily—as do even media groups that style themselves as critical of Muslim autocracies, such as Al-Jazeera and Al-Manar.

Then there are the mosques, madrassas, and other religious institutions. Schools in general, especially colleges, have been an Islamist stronghold for generations in Muslim-majority countries. That matters because graduates go on to leadership positions in the professions, media, government, and other institutions.

Refugee camps are another zone of indoctrination. They are full of vulnerable people, and Islamists prey on them. They come offering food, tents, and first aid, followed by education. They establish madrassas in the camps, then indoctrinate the kids with a message that consists in large part of hatred for Jews and rejection of Israel.

Perhaps—I do not know—this is what happened to Omar in the four years she spent in a refugee camp in Kenya as a child. Or perhaps she became acquainted with Islamist anti-Semitism in Minnesota, where her family settled when she was twelve. In any case, her preoccupation with the Jews and Israel would otherwise be hard to explain.

THE FINANCIAL LIBEL

Spreading anti-Semitism through all these channels is no trivial matter—and this brings us to the question of resources. “It’s all about the Benjamins baby,” Omar tweeted in February, implying that American politicians support Israel only because of Jewish financial contributions. The irony is that the resources available to propagate Islamist ideologies, with their attendant anti-Semitism, vastly exceed what pro-Israel groups spend in the United States. Since the early 1970s the kingdom of Saudi Arabia has spent vast sums to spread Wahhabi Islam abroad. Much of this funding is opaque, but estimates of the cumulative sum run as high as \$100 billion.

Thousands of schools in Pakistan, funded with Saudi money, “teach a version of Islam that leads [to] anti-Western militancy,” according to Connecticut senator Chris Murphy—and, one might add, to an anti-Semitic militancy.

In recent years the Saudi leadership has tried to turn away from supporting this type of religious

radicalism. But increasingly Qatar seems to be taking over the Saudi

role. In the United States alone, the Qatar Foundation has given \$30.6 mil-

In my experience it's difficult, perhaps impossible, to unlearn hate without coming to terms with how you learned to hate.

lion over the past eight years to public schools, ostensibly for teaching Arabic and promoting cultural exchange. For years, Qatar has hosted influential radical clerics such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi and provided them with a global microphone, and the country’s school textbooks have been criticized for anti-Semitism. They present Jews as treacherous and crafty but also weak, wretched, and cowardly; Islam is described as inherently superior. “The Grade 11 text discusses at length

the issue of how non-Muslims should be treated,” the Middle East Media Research Institute reports. “It warns students not to form relationships with unbelievers, and emphasizes the principle of loyalty to Muslims and disavowal of unbelievers.”

The allegation that Jewish or Zionist money controls Congress is nonsensical. The Center for Responsive Politics estimates that the Israeli government has spent \$34 million on lobbying in Washington since 2017. The Saudis and Qataris spent a combined \$51 million during the same period. If we include foreign nongovernmental organizations, the pro-Israel lobbying figure rises to \$63 million—less than the \$68 million spent lobbying for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

In 2018, domestic American pro-Israeli lobbying—including but not limited to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, or AIPAC—totaled \$5.1 million. No comparable figures are available for domestic pro-Islamist lobbying

efforts. But as journalist Armin Rosen observes, AIPAC’s 2018 total, at \$3.5 million, was less than either the American Association of Airport Executives or the Association of

I am living proof that one can be born a Somali, raised as an anti-Semite, indoctrinated as an anti-Zionist—and still overcome all this.

American Railroads spent on lobbying. AIPAC’s influence has more to do with the power of its arguments than the size of its wallet.

Now consider the demographics. Jews were a minority in Europe in the 1930s, but a substantial one, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. Today Jews are at a much greater disadvantage. For each Jew worldwide, there are a hundred Muslims. In many European countries—including France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Great Britain—the Muslim population far exceeds the Jewish population, and the gap is widening. American Jews still outnumber Muslims, but won’t by 2050.

HIJACKING “SOCIAL JUSTICE”

The problem of Muslim anti-Semitism is much bigger than Ilhan Omar. Condemning her, expelling her from the House Foreign Affairs Committee, or defeating her in 2020 won’t make the problem go away.

Islamists have understood well how to couple Muslim anti-Semitism with the American left’s vague notion of “social justice.” They have succeeded in couching their agenda in the progressive framework of the oppressed versus the oppressor. Identity politics and victimhood culture also provide Islamists

with the vocabulary to deflect their critics with accusations of “Islamophobia,” “white privilege,” and “insensitivity.” A perfect illustration was the way Omar and her allies were able to turn a House resolution condemning her anti-Semitism into a garbled “intersectional” rant in which Muslims emerged as the most vulnerable minority in the league table of victimhood.

As for me, I eventually unlearned my hatred of Jews, Zionists, and Israel. As an asylum seeker turned student turned politician in Holland, I was exposed to a complex set

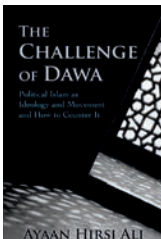
of circumstances that led me to question my own prejudices. Perhaps I didn’t stay in the Islamist fold long enough for the indoctrination to stick.

Perhaps my falling out with my parents and extended family after I left home led me to a wider reappraisal of my youthful beliefs. Perhaps it was my loss of religious faith.

In any event, I am living proof that one can be born a Somali, raised as an anti-Semite, indoctrinated as an anti-Zionist—and still overcome all this to appreciate the unique culture of Judaism and the extraordinary achievement of the state of Israel. If I can make that leap, so perhaps can Omar. Yet that is not really the issue at stake. For she and I are only two individuals. The real question is what, if anything, can be done to check the advance of the mass movement that is Muslim anti-Semitism. Absent a worldwide Muslim reformation, followed by an Islamic enlightenment, I am not sure I know. ■

Islamists have mastered the art of coupling Muslim anti-Semitism with the American left’s vague notion of “social justice.”

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Red Again

Who would have expected both a new Cold War and a fresh fascination with socialism?

By Niall Ferguson

If you had told me thirty years ago that America would be in another cold war with another communist superpower by 2019, I would not have believed you. If you had told me that, simultaneously, socialism would be the height of fashion among young Americans, I would have directed you to a psychiatrist. But here we are. Three decades ago, Francis Fukuyama published his seminal essay “The End of History?”, hailing the victory of liberal capitalism over all its ideological competitors, but especially over communism. The essay he needs to write today is “The Upend of History?”

In 2016 a cold war between the United States and China seemed like the febrile fantasy of Steve Bannon and a few fringe academics. Even Donald Trump’s campaign threats to impose tariffs on Chinese goods struck me as a throwback to an earlier era. I remember patiently making the counterargument that the incoming Trump administration would be better served by improving relations with China and Russia and making the permanent members of the UN Security Council act like the five great powers after the Congress of Vienna—maintaining a global balance of power.

I had been reading too much Henry Kissinger. I should have listened more to Graham Allison, another Harvard-trained veteran of US national security policy. When he told me he was writing a book on the US-China relationship with the title *Destined for War*, I was incredulous. He was right.

Niall Ferguson is the Milbank Family Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution and a senior fellow of the Center for European Studies at Harvard.

“When a rising power threatens to displace a ruling power,” Allison wrote, “alarm bells should sound: danger ahead. China and the United States are currently on a collision course. . . . War between the US and China in the decades ahead is not just possible, but much more likely than currently recognized. Indeed, on the historical record, war is more likely than not.”

WORLDVIEWS IN COLLISION

Since the publication of *Destined for War* two years ago, the world has gone Allison’s way. It is as if his “Thucydides trap”—derived from the ancient Greek historian’s observation that war between Athens and Sparta was inevitable—has a magnetic force, drawing the United States and China towards it.

“What made war inevitable,” wrote Thucydides, “was the growth of Athenian power and the fear this caused in Sparta.” In the space of barely a year, Americans have suddenly grown fearful of the growth of Chinese power. What was once the position of a few alarmists is the new orthodoxy in Washington, shared by Republicans and many Democrats, foreign policy wonks, and technology nerds. We may not be destined for a hot war, but we certainly are on track for a cold one.

In Cold War I, the launch of the Soviet satellite *Sputnik* in 1957 was the moment America woke up to the red menace. I am not sure quite what the Chinese *Sputnik* moment was—maybe the publication last year of Kai-Fu Lee’s *AI Superpowers: China, Silicon Valley, and the New World Order*. China-bashing is no longer about unfair trade policies and the loss of manufacturing jobs in the Midwest. The trade war that Trump launched against China last year has morphed into a tech war over 5G networks, artificial intelligence, online payments, and even quantum computing.

Of course, there is an old-fashioned arms race going on as well, as China stocks up on missiles capable of sinking aircraft carriers. But that is not what is interesting about Cold War II.

As in Cold War I, the two superpowers are ideologically divided, with President Xi Jinping reasserting the importance of Marxism as the foundation of party ideology even as Trump insists: “America will never be a socialist country.” And, as in Cold War I, both superpowers are seeking to project their economic power overseas.

So what are the big differences? First, China is now a match for America in terms of GDP, whereas the USSR never got close. Second, China and America are economically intertwined in what I once called “Chimerica,” whereas US-Soviet trade was minimal. Third, there are hundreds of thousands of

Chinese students in America (between 350,000 and 400,000) and 2.3 million Chinese immigrants (half of them naturalized), whereas the number of Soviet citizens in America was always tiny.

THE SOCIALIST VOGUE

Is a new cold war a bad thing? Not necessarily. It is certainly preferable to our acquiescing in a Chinese world takeover. And the past cold war was also characterized by massive investments in technology, which had all kinds of positive economic spinoffs. The worst features of the past cold war were the protracted and bloody proxy wars fought in places such as Southeast Asia, Central America, and Southern Africa. Right now, there is not much sign of that kind of thing happening again, though watch Venezuela, where the kleptocratic regime of Nicolás Maduro has long depended on Chinese checks but Washington is now backing the opposition leader, Juan Guaidó.

Now for the bad news. It was not inevitable that the West would win the Cold War. And it is far from clear that it's going to win this one. China seems a more formidable antagonist than the Soviet Union was, demographically, economically, and technologically. For many countries, including staunch US allies such as Australia, Beijing's economic pull is hard to ignore.

However, I am more worried by America's enemies within, who are surely much more numerous than during the Cold War. I do not mean the Chinese immigrants, though I fear that in a new Cold War they might have their loyal-

ty called into question, like German-Americans and Japanese-Americans during the world wars. My concern is with those native-born Americans whose antipathy to Trump is

leading them in increasingly strange directions.

The vogue for socialism among Democratic voters is one sign of the times. According to a recent Gallup poll, 57 percent of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents view socialism positively, as against 47 percent who view capitalism positively. The left-wing firebrand Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has done much to make socialism attractive on Capitol Hill this year. Even



[Taylor Jones—for the *Hoover Digest*]

more disturbing, because it is much more subtle, is the way her fellow Democratic congresswoman Ilhan Omar, of Minnesota, is making Islamism acceptable. Earlier this year, she and her allies won a significant victory by turning a resolution intended to condemn Omar's recent anti-Semitic remarks into one that also condemned "anti-Muslim discrimination and bigotry against minorities" and deflected the blame for those who "weaponize hate" onto "white supremacists."

Like her supporters on the Council on American-Islamic Relations, Omar knows that attacking Israel and accusing its American supporters of dual loyalty is an easy way to draw progressives to the Islamist side. It is strange that she has nothing to say about Beijing's persecution of the Uighurs, a Muslim minority in Xinjiang province, hundreds of thousands of whom are being held in "vocational training centers." In the old Cold War, such camps were called the gulag.

So what if we reran the Cold War and half the country sided with the enemy? It wouldn't be the end of history. But it might be the end of liberty. ■



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Stanford and the Great War

Collections in the Hoover Archives tell the stories of the Stanford students who were eager to go “over there,” driving battlefield ambulances and flying over the front lines.

By Jean McElwee Cannon

“**H**e is my lifelong hero,” Alan Nichols said to me at a lunch at the Stanford Faculty Club in July 2017. Nichols, a Stanford graduate, retired lawyer, adventurer, writer, and former president of the Explorers Club, was describing his uncle and namesake, Alan Hammond Nichols, whose collection is housed at the Hoover Library & Archives and whose papers I had been researching for an exhibition marking the centennial of America’s entry into the First World War. The elder Alan Hammond Nichols, a native of Palo Alto who attended Stanford in 1916–17, left his studies in February of 1917 as one of the twenty-one undergraduates who formed the university’s American Ambulance Field Service Unit #14, America’s first university group to join the service as a complete unit. After serving as an ambulance driver, Nichols joined the Lafayette Flying Corps. He was shot down in combat on June 2, 1918; he died of wounds soon afterward in a casualty clearing station.

Jean McElwee Cannon is curator for North American Collections at the Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

The junior Alan Nichols, who, along with his wife Nancy, edited and published a collection of the elder Nichols's letters titled *Letters Home from the Lafayette Flying Corps* in 1993, explained to me the circumstances of his lifelong hero's death on the Western Front. With eyes near tears he told me that after his uncle died in France, the family in Palo Alto received a letter from the nurse who treated Nichols in his final hours. At the time Nichols was to undergo surgery for wounds that probably could have been treated successfully, a badly battered unit from the trenches came to the hospital, bleeding and in desperate need of immediate care. Nichols requested that the nurses and doctors treat the infantrymen before attending to him. Without immediate attention, Nichols's wounds worsened and he died the next day. His namesake remains grateful to the nurse who recorded the event so the family could know that their son and brother acted nobly in the last hours of life.

As I listen to this story about Alan Hammond Nichols's last days in the war I am struck by how, even a century after the end of the Great War, the legacy and memory of the actual individuals involved in the conflict continue to resonate. Nichols's nephew, who exudes both a physical spryness and a sharp wit, obviously inherited his namesake's keen desire for adventure and thirst for knowledge gained through travel. In his late eighties when we spoke, Nichols had just returned from a transcontinental cycling trip on a "superbike" he had designed with the help of New York Institute of Technology engineers; in 2010 and 2012, he was the first explorer to lead expeditions into little-traveled areas of Mongolia and China in search of the tomb of Genghis Khan.

As we walked from the Stanford Faculty Club to the Hoover Tower, we remarked on how many reminders of the war and those who served in it still populate the campus: Green Library houses the flag carried by Alan Hammond Nichols' ambulance unit from San Francisco to Paris; Memorial Auditorium stands as a lasting dedication to the seventy-seven Stanford students, faculty, and staff members who died during the conflict; and Hoover itself houses numerous collections of the Stanford ambulance drivers, pilots, medics, nurses, and infantrymen who served.

FRIENDS OF FRANCE

The Hoover Library & Archives, established as the Hoover War Library in 1919, has long been a hub of study for the geopolitical aspects of the First World War—the records of Herbert Hoover's Commission for Relief in Belgium, the American National Red Cross, and cornerstone collections related to the troubled Paris Peace Conference are all frequently consulted by historians. The less frequently explored collections of the young men and women



YOUTH: Alan Hammond Nichols put his Stanford education on hold to drive ambulances in France and later to train as a fighter pilot with the French air corps. His letters home provide keen descriptions of New York, Paris, the Somme, and the skies above the Western Front—and also provide humorous anecdotes about meeting unlikely individuals such as Theodore Roosevelt and voluptuous French jazz singers. Nichols did not survive the war; he became one of seventy-seven students, staff, or faculty members who never came home. [Alan Nichols Collection—Hoover Institution Archives]

democracy as it came under threat. He supported student and faculty participation in Herbert Hoover's Commission for Relief in Belgium (CRB) and promoted the formation of a Stanford Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) that drilled publicly and patriotically on the Stanford football field. Fundraising

who left Stanford during wartime to serve abroad, however, as well as records that illuminate the divisive climate of the campus before America joined the Allied war effort, provide intimate portraits of how the Great War affected the actual individuals who lived through it.

No veterans remain to testify to the lived experience of the war, making the correspondence, scrapbooks, drawings, and photographs of participating Stanford students such as Joseph Eastman, Alan Nichols, Susan Louise Dyer, and W. H. Honens critical to preserve. Speaking across a century, the students' archives describe in fine detail what it was like to anticipate, and then experience, the world's first expression of truly global warfare.

Stanford University, forged in the utilitarian-progressive tradition of the late nineteenth century (in 1885 Jane and Leland Stanford specified the university's goal was "to promote the public welfare"), quickly prepared for the possibility of American entry into the European war almost as soon as the guns of August 1914 fired—but not without a good deal of controversy among educators and students. Though by no means a warmonger in modern terms, Ray Lyman Wilbur, a close associate of Herbert Hoover who became president of Stanford University in 1916, believed vehemently that the university and its students should prepare to defend

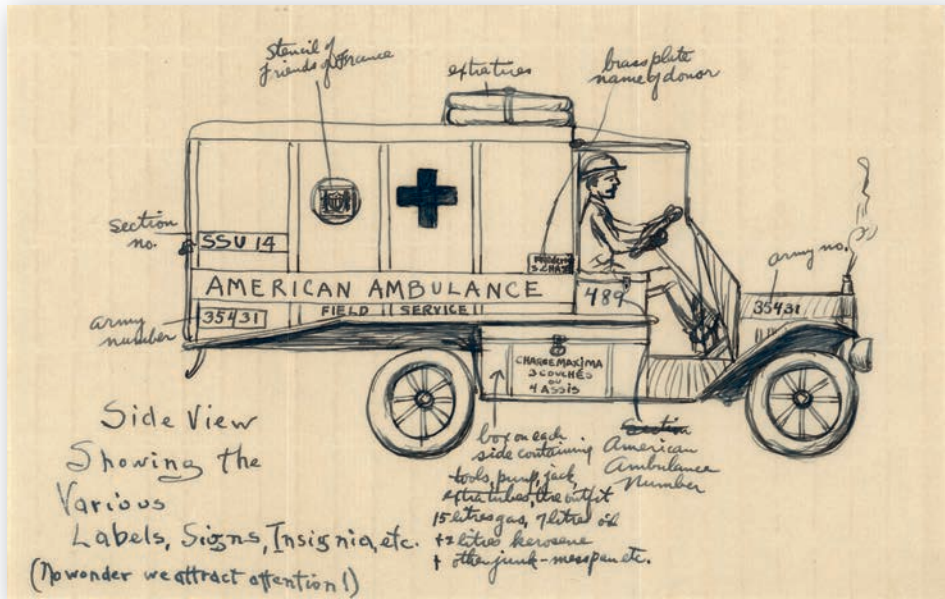


OVER THERE: Stanford's first ambulance unit, the Service Sanitaire Unité 14 (known as SSU#14), poses for a group picture with the Eiffel Tower in the background. The unit arrived in France in February 1917. Many of the students had joined the American Field Service for adventure and travel as well as political principle; camaraderie also played a part. [William Jackson Losh Collection—Hoover Institution Archives]

for the CRB and the American Red Cross, subscribing to war bonds, and providing tuition and financial assistance to ROTC cadets all received enthusiastic endorsement from the president's office.

Wilbur's programs faced stern opposition, however, in the form of David Starr Jordan, the staunchly pacifist president of Stanford between 1891 and 1913, who was appointed university chancellor in 1913. A dedicated anti-interventionist, Jordan spoke out passionately against America's entry into the war, galvanizing the campus community for debate and attracting a sizable following among student pacifists.

Student journals, which proliferated on the Stanford campus in the early twentieth century, reveal that the debate over American intervention personified by Wilbur and Jordan reverberated in the student community. While the



TO THE FRONT: Stanford sophomore and Palo Alto native Alan Nichols documented his experiences in France with a detailed series of letters and drawings sent home to his family. He notes that the Stanford ambulance unit sported various labels, signs, and insignias (including a brass plate touting the name of the ambulance's donor) and exclaims, “No wonder we attract attention!” [Alan Nichols Collection—Hoover Institution Archives]

Stanford Daily supported war work, the more iconoclastic satirical magazine titled the *Stanford Chaparral* (“The Chappie”) mocked the more conventional *Daily*’s intention to “be good and make the campus safe for democracy.”

Volunteering for war service also heightened class and gender tensions. Pacifists resented Wilbur’s offer of tuition assistance for ROTC cadets, and less financially fortunate students pointed out that only well-heeled members of the student body could volunteer to drive ambulances and fly planes in exotic locales, as they would need substantial pocket money to live and serve in Europe in support of the cause. Women under the age of twenty-five were, in 1917, denied passports for relief work overseas by the US State Department; of the more than eighty-one Stanford-affiliated women who served overseas during the war, only five were undergraduates when they began. Most female students were relegated to participating domestically in the war effort by rolling bandages, knitting socks for soldiers, “Hooverizing” campus

with food conservation efforts, tending campus gardens, and serving as hostesses at YMCA recreation halls. (The last such vestige of Stanford's World War I-era YMCA halls still exists as MacArthur Park, a bar and restaurant near the Palo Alto Transit Center beloved by the Stanford community. While sipping the signature Moscow mule, patrons can enjoy archival photographs from the building's wartime past in which young women with Gibson-girl silhouettes dance with young men in uniforms and puttees.)

Inequality and the lack of institutional and government support for female students' participation in overseas war relief work would become rallying cries during the postwar suffragist movement on campus.

“GLOWING OPPORTUNITY”

As war in Europe escalated in 1916 and news of fallen faculty and alumni reached the Stanford campus, however, students began to mobilize to aid France and prepare for what seemed to be an inevitable American entry into the war. In the fall of 1916 the *Stanford Daily* declared, “A glowing opportunity is now given Stanford to take part in humanity's aid.” The university's growing support for war service persuaded A. Piatt Andrew, founder of the American Ambulance Field Service (later renamed the American Field Service, or AFS), one of America's largest and most influential volunteer ambulance organizations before the official entry into the war, to visit the Bay Area in the fall of 1916 with plans for forming ambulance units at Stanford and the University of California, Berkeley. Having enjoyed a tremendous response at elite Eastern schools such as Harvard, Princeton, and Yale, Andrew hoped the West would provide not just drivers but fundraisers. He was not disappointed. More than

a hundred Stanford students applied to be drivers; ultimately Stanford and Berkeley would be among the top ten sources of AFS volunteers.

Memorial Auditorium stands as a lasting dedication to the seventy-seven Stanford students, faculty, and staff members who died in the conflict.

Being accepted as an AFS driver was not as simple as many students hoped; dedication to democracy was not enough. Applicants under the age of twenty-one had to obtain parental permission. All drivers had to provide six references who could vouch for their character, sobriety, and American citizenship; passports, which were sometimes hard to obtain as many students, born at home at this point in the nation's history instead of in



“FOR HUMANITY AND THE HUMANITIES”: The first Stanford ambulance unit overcame its financial hurdles with the help of the “Friends of France,” an organization of wealthy San Franciscans devoted to helping the French cause. The group covered more than half the expenses for Stanford’s first two ambulance units. In appreciation, drivers wore badges such as this one and stenciled the Friends of France emblem on their vehicles. [Joseph Eastman Collection—Hoover Institution Archives]

hospitals, would not have birth certificates; typhoid inoculations; proof that their families were not German or of German extraction; language skills, which many students gained by cramming in special sessions with Stanford French professors; and a mechanical knowledge of cars. In 1916, few and mainly well-to-do families owned automobiles; knowing how to drive a car was not a common skill. Many of the accepted AFS drivers would spend their days before departure lingering around garages in Palo Alto, learning about engines, brakes, and tires.

The Ford ambulances with Model T chassis that the drivers would navigate through muddy, shell-pocked roads at the front were hand-cranked and often broke down—a dangerous proposition when under heavy artillery fire. Hearing of the Stanford students’ rush to learn the mechanics of cars, the manager of a Bay Area Ford factory invited the Stanford

volunteers to visit his factory floor and learn how to make quick repairs on automobiles.

By far the biggest obstacle to most drivers, however, was money. Volunteer drivers would need not only pocket money but a pledge—the AFS required that volunteers contribute or raise the estimated \$500 per driver that would subsidize their transport and equipment. The enterprising Stanford student Joseph Eastman, the main organizer of Stanford’s first ambulance unit, solved this problem via the long-held Stanford tradition of networking—through connections of his brother’s, he employed the support of the “Friends of France,” an organization of wealthy San Franciscans dedicated to the cause of protecting a fellow democracy. In exchange for funds for Stanford’s first unit, Eastman promised that each driver would wear a Friends of France patch (one of which is found in Eastman’s archive at Hoover) and paint a Friends of France logo on his ambulance, as can be seen in photographs taken by Eastman and drawings of ambulances made by Eastman’s good friend Alan Nichols. With the help of powerful and generous San Francisco families and business owners, Stanford’s first undergraduate ambulance unit, the “Service Sanitaire Unité 14,” headed to France in February of 1917.

BRAVERY

The twenty-one students—many of them mere teens—who formed what came to be known in campus parlance as “SSU#14” became the first university group to join the American Ambulance Field Service as a complete unit. Members of the Friends of France sponsored a sendoff celebration for the Stanford students in

San Francisco, and soon the volunteers found themselves on a cross-country rail odyssey that delivered them to

The students’ archives describe in fine detail what it was like to anticipate, and then experience, the world’s first expression of truly global warfare.

New York, whence they journeyed by steamer across the Atlantic Ocean to Europe. During the expedition, the initial air of eager excitement gave way to the gravitas of their undertaking. As their steamship faced a German U-boat threat in the Atlantic, Alan Nichols reflected that one torpedo could destroy the lives and promise of twenty-one of Stanford’s most talented students, many of them his best friends. His thoughts in that moment foreshadow the Lost Generation mythology that would follow the war. Nichols himself,



VALOR: *In a photo taken on the Fourth of July, 1917, the ambulance unit receives the Croix de Guerre, one of the highest military decorations awarded by the French military, which can be seen pinned to the flag. The flag in this photograph was returned to the United States in 1918 and eventually sent to Stanford to hang in Memorial Church. In the early 1970s, it found a home in the special collections at Green Library.* [Allan Henri Muhr Collection—Hoover Institution Archives]

shot down by a German plane the following year, would become one of those sacrificed lives.

The SSU#14 arrived in early spring at the Paris headquarters of the AFS. The young men posed for a group photograph at the Eiffel Tower and then for individual photographs at the wheels of their ambulances—photographs lovingly arranged by driver Bill Losh in his personal album, complete with nicknames for all the drivers. After a few days of exploring the city, enchanted by art and gobsmacked by women smoking cigarettes in the street (as a mortified Alan Nichols reported to his family), they settled down to the sober business of training for the front.

The volunteers were put under the command of section head Allan Henri Muhr, a Philadelphia expatriate who was an international rugby star in France before joining the American Ambulance Field Service. A mentor and marvel to the young Stanford drivers, he encouraged them to play rugby in their leisure time behind the lines and taught them French strategies

that they would take back to America after the war. In the interwar years he remained a faithful correspondent to surviving members of SSU#14. In World War II Muhr, a Jew, would fight in the French Resistance and be taken prisoner by the Nazis; he died in a concentration camp near Hamburg in 1944.

With training and guidance from Muhr, the drivers soon found themselves transporting wounded troops on the Western Front through

artillery shells, rain, and mud. The drivers of the Ford ambulances faced treacherous conditions and the constant threat of injury or death. By all accounts—even that of AFS director Andrew himself—SSU#14 was one of the most tenacious and successful AFS units in the war.

They were also one of the most prolific in documenting their experiences. In the spirit of fellow, if better-known, writers such as Ernest Hemingway, John Dos Passos, and E. E. Cummings, drivers such as Joseph Eastman, Alan Nichols, and Bill Losh not only wrote elaborately descriptive letters to their family and friends but contributed articles to Stanford publications. The vivid accounts of their experiences encouraged other Stanford students to volunteer; before war's end Stanford had sent

five ambulance units to theaters of war across the continent. Many of the drivers would go on to careers in journalism: drivers

Bill Losh and Ed Kneass would write for well-regarded San Francisco newspapers while volunteers Frank Taylor and Harry Frantz would have careers with the United Press.

For bravery under fire, the US government bestowed upon SSU#14 the first official American flag to be presented on the Western Front, and the French government awarded them the coveted Croix de Guerre.

FLYBOYS

When America officially entered the war in April 1917, many of the SSU#14 drivers left the unit to join the US Army—many of them drawn to the daring

In fall 1916 the Stanford Daily declared, “A glowing opportunity is now given Stanford to take part in humanity’s aid.”

The Ford ambulances that the drivers would navigate through muddy, shell-pocked roads at the front were hand-cranked and often broke down.



TAKING FLIGHT: Stanford student Joe Eastman was one of the university's most decorated veterans of World War I. After organizing, fundraising, and leading Stanford's first ambulance unit, Eastman in 1917 joined the US Army Air Service, where he served with distinction. Eastman's collection at Hoover also attests that he was a leading member of a group of Great War veterans who met annually for decades after their service. [Joseph Eastman Collection—Hoover Institution Archives]

but dangerous opportunity to fly. The new and glamorous art of aviation—a technology in its infancy in World War I—attracted many adventurous young men eager to attack the enemy in open-air dogfights that became the stuff of lore both at home and abroad. The ranks of the Lafayette Escadrille and Flying Corps (French aviation squadrons that trained American pilots) and later the US Army Air Service swelled with university boys eager to take wing.

Alongside the glamor of aerial combat, however, was mortal danger—the average World War I combat pilot had a life expectancy of fifteen hours in the air. Stanford, UC-Berkeley, and Ivy League schools in the East would lose many of their best and brightest students to the treacherous skies above the

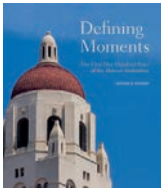
trenches of the Western Front. Among them would be Stanford sophomore Alan Nichols, who in his last letter home to his parents before being mortally wounded in aerial combat on June 2, 1918, describes the excitement of having shot down his first enemy plane singlehandedly:

Though I don't revel in lust for blood, it certainly is a keen satisfaction to have gotten away with what I've hoped for so long. . . . This is the acme of human life.

Posthumously Nichols's was awarded the Croix de Guerre by the French government. Now a century old, Nichols's words and memory—as well as those of his fellow student servicemen—live on through the richness of his archives. His letters, journals, and photographs remind us that even a life cut so dramatically and tragically short can continue to affect and enrich our understanding of human experience—for a century, and perhaps much longer. ■

Stanford, UC-Berkeley, and Ivy League schools in the East would lose many of their best and brightest students to the treacherous skies over the Western Front.

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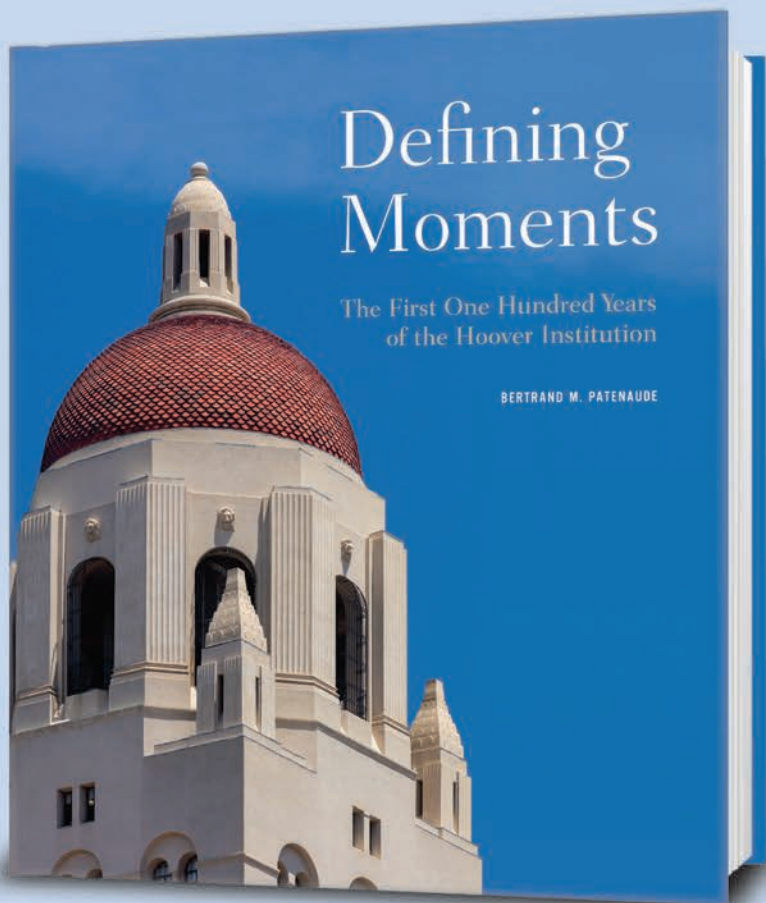
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