# HOOVER DIGEST

RESEARCH + COMMENTARY ON PUBLIC POLICY

SUMMER 2024 NO.3

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The *Hoover Digest* (ISSN 1088-5161) is published quarterly by the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, 434 Galvez Mall, Stanford University, Stanford CA 94305-6003. Periodicals Postage Paid at Palo Alto CA and additional mailing offices.

Cambey & West provides sales processing and customer service for the *Hoover Digest*. For inquiries, e-mail hooverdigest@cambeywest.com, phone (866) 889-9026, or write to: Hoover Digest, PO Box 355, Congers, NY 10920.

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to the Hoover Institution Press, 434 Galvez Mall, Stanford University, Stanford CA 94305-6003.





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# Summer 2024

HOOVER DIGEST

## HOOVER ARCHIVES




# *Good Job, Fed*

**When the Federal Reserve started paying interest on its reserves, economists worried that the practice could lead to instability and other problems. Instead, it proved a success—and may have staved off a recession.**

***By John H. Cochrane***

The Federal Reserve takes a lot of criticism, but on occasion we should stop and cheer its successes. Over the past fifteen years, the Fed has engineered a fundamental advance in monetary policy by paying interest on reserves and supplying "ample" reserves.

Reserves are accounts that banks have at the Fed. Banks settle transactions by transferring reserves between those accounts. Reserves are the most liquid asset in the economy. Before 2008, the Fed paid no interest on reserves. Banks held as little in reserves as possible, typically below $50 billion. In 2008, the Fed started paying interest on reserves. In the quantitative-easing era, the Fed bought assets, creating a lot of new reserves. Reserves are currently $3.5 trillion.

Milton Friedman described the "optimal quantity of money" as that situation in which money and short-term investments pay the same interest

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rate. Then banks, people, and businesses hold a lot of cash, and waste less effort economizing on its use. Since the Fed can costlessly buy bonds and issue interest-paying money, providing such "liquidity" is free. So, provide it in abundance. Money is the oil in the economy's engine, and it's free. Fill 'er up.

Ample reserves are also great for financial stability. Bank runs happen when banks hold illiquid interest-bearing assets to back their deposits. When banks funnel deposits into reserves, a run can't break out. All financial institutions holding lots of interest-paying cash more easily stay out of trouble.

Why not? Experience of the past fifteen years has put to rest most of the objections.

Banks holding lots of reserves don't lend less. If the Fed buys Treasury bonds to create reserves, banks hold more in reserves and less in Treasurys. Money available for lending is the same.

Economists worried that paying interest on reserves would unhinge the price level by eliminating the separation between money and bonds. Many predicted inflation or deflation spirals. We learned that simply isn't the case. Inflation trundled along from 2008–21 at 2 percent or so. Inflation spiked recently, but nobody thinks the Fed was primarily responsible. The Fed bought a lot of assets during the pandemic, but the same purchases had no effect in the 2010s. The cause of inflation was massive fiscal stimulus, not interest on ample reserves.

***When financial institutions hold lots of interest-paying cash, it's easier to stay out of trouble.***

More deeply, we learned that the Fed can fully control the short-term interest rate by simply varying the rate it pays on reserves without having to ration money.

Other advantages seem to be unfolding in front of us. Why didn't a widely predicted recession break out when the Fed raised interest rates 5 percentage points? Well, back in the day, to raise interest rates the Fed reduced the quantity of reserves, and with that, via reserve requirements, the amount banks could lend and deposits people could hold. Scarce money and credit, arguably, caused the economy to tank. Now, raising interest rates has no such credit and quantitative effect. The Fed used to slow the car by draining oil. Now it just eases off the gas.

Will the Fed lose some control over inflation? A common story says the Fed cools the economy, and, via the Phillips curve, that lowers inflation. If the Fed can't cool the economy as effectively, then it loses some control over inflation. Yet most observers chalk up today's easing inflation to the Fed's interest-rate rises, though the economy hums along. If they are right, the new regime will have doubly proved itself, eliminating painful credit crunches and recessions as needless casualties of Fed action.

In fact, the Fed has always had less control over inflation than most thought. The burst of inflation was a one-time effect of the pandemic-era fiscal blowout, and the Fed is now just helping on the margin. But that doesn't mean we need to return to the old way of deliberately inducing a credit crunch to control inflation.

The system can be improved. There is no economic reason for the Fed to limit the quantity of reserves. Many other central banks basically announce deposit and borrowing rates, and let banks have whatever they want at those prices. There is also little reason to give banks better rates than other financial institutions.

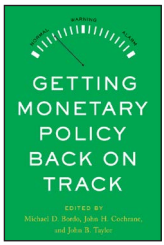
***The cause of the recent inflation was massive fiscal stimulus, not interest on reserves.***

Illiquidity can still break out when banks choose to hold higher-yielding illiquid assets. As Dallas Fed President Lorie Logan pointed out in a recent speech, banks and the Fed should be better prepared to borrow reserves quickly against collateral.

The Fed's choice of which assets to buy, including long-term Treasurys and mortgage-backed securities, has had negative consequences. Shortening the maturity structure has made interest costs on the debt spike quickly, multiplying the Treasury's awful decision to bet on low rates by borrowing short. Buying other assets distorts credit allocation.

Many of these problems would be solved if the Treasury issued overnight, fixed-value, floating-rate debt directly. Then the Fed could worry only about immediate liquidity to the banking system, and not be in the business of providing the safe asset for the whole economy or managing interest rate risk for the federal government.

But these are little fixes, which just make a good system better. Well done, Fed.

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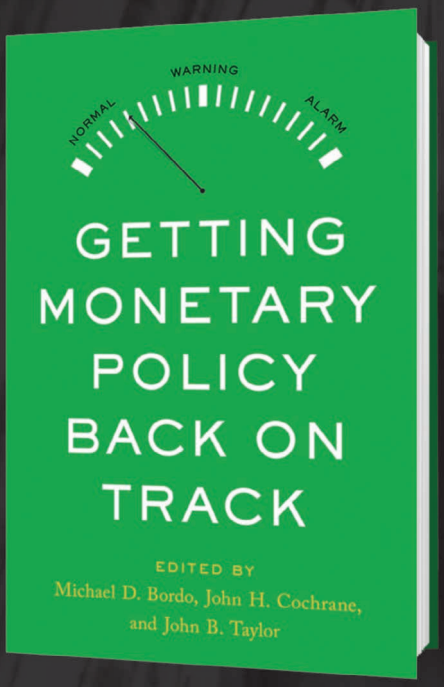
FROM HOOVER INSTITUTION PRESS

# Getting Monetary Policy Back on Track

Edited by Michael D. Bordo,
John H. Cochrane, and John B. Taylor




Experts in economic policy debate the 2021 surge in inflation, why the Federal Reserve was slow to respond, and whether rule-like policy is the best approach to controlling inflation.

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# Requiem for a Grand Strategy

**Mere months ago, American foreign policy makers were shifting their attention from the Middle East to China and Russia. The shock of October 7 made it clear that Israel, Gaza, Yemen, and Iran would not be ignored.**

***By Russell A. Berman***

As late as September 2023, American foreign policy circles seemed to have settled on the need for the United States to direct its attention away from the Middle East. The experience in Iraq was viewed as having led to disappointing outcomes, while the war in Afghanistan had ended in a humiliating exit. A general malaise about "endless wars" had gained sway among parts of the public, despite genuine achievements and

### *Key points*

» A general malaise about "endless wars" gained sway among parts of the public, despite achievements and prospects for success.

» The fatal flaw: it makes little sense to relinquish US power in one region to move to another.

» The United States cannot pretend that the Middle East is irrelevant to its grand strategy.

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underestimated prospects for success. The argument justifying US power in the Middle East because of oil and gas lost ground to environmentalist claims about a global transition to renewable energies. Furthermore, the perception that China would pose a military threat to US interests in the Western Pacific was taken as a reason to exit the Middle East in order to shift military assets to the defense of Taiwan.

There was, of course, a fatal flaw in the argument: given the global competition with China and Russia, it makes little sense to relinquish American power in one region in order to move to another, since any American departure only facilitates the expanded influence of America's adversaries: Russia entering Syria or China's making inroads with Riyadh.

The illusion that the United States could give up on the Middle East came to an abrupt end on October 7, with the brutal Hamas attack on Israel and the subsequent unfolding of the Gaza war. October 7 has been likened to 9/11 or even Pearl Harbor, the violent end of an era of self-deception. For Israel, that illusion involved the expectation that a modus vivendi had developed with Hamas, which naive optimists misperceived as growing into a responsible governing power in Gaza. That foolish vision has ceased to be tenable; hence the Israeli war goal of eliminating Hamas as a military and political force. That goal is part of a profound shift in Israeli national self-understanding, reflecting the heightened priority of national security in the wake of the attack.

***The credibility of the United States as a defender of global order is at stake.***

Yet what does October 7 mean for the United States? Clearly, support for Israel, the key American ally in the region, informs American policy, but US global interests require the distinct analytic framework of a superpower. Israel needs to secure its borders, but the United States faces adversarial pressures from an emerging coalition of opponents: China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. The Middle East is only one theater in America's multifront power struggle. Gaza, Ukraine, and Taiwan are three fronts in one war, competing for resources and attention, even as conflict threatens to erupt in other arenas, most notably the Sahel of Africa.

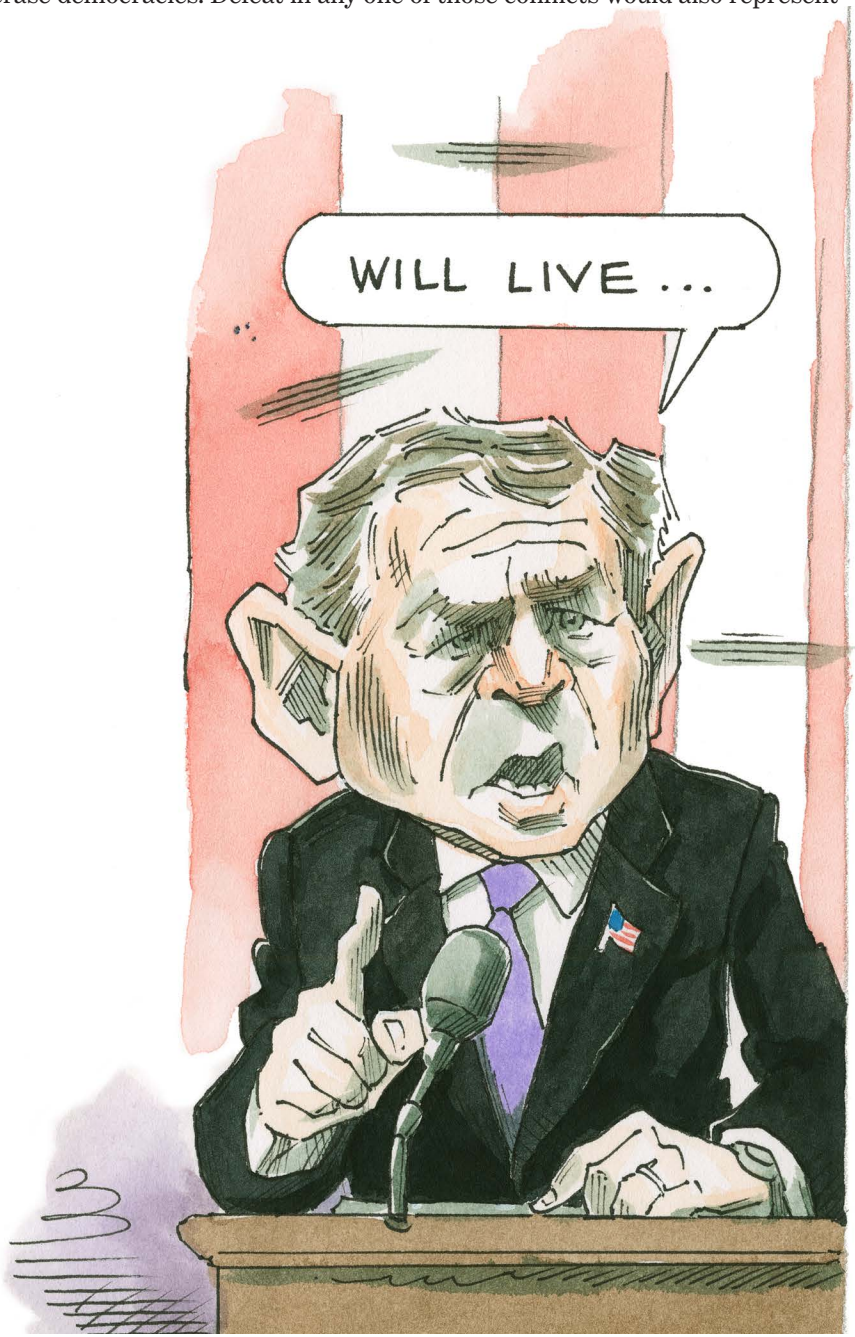
## ACCOMMODATION FAILS

America's allies and partners are under attack on several continents simultaneously because our opponents intend to unravel the network of

pro-American states and degrade American credibility definitively. In order for the United States to succeed in this global conflict, it is urgent to demonstrate that a nation's security is enhanced if it partners with America. It must be clear that entering into an alliance with the United States is valuable,


[Taylor Jones—for the *Hoover Digest*]

reliable, and reciprocal. If the United States were to abandon Israel, Ukraine, or Taiwan, leading to their defeat at the hands of their respective opponents, the result would be a loss not only for Western values, as illiberal forces erase democracies. Defeat in any one of those conflicts would also represent



a significant defeat for the United States and its credibility as a defender of global order.

For Israel, October 7 represented the failure of an accommodationist policy toward Hamas, that is, the erroneous belief that Hamas would govern Gaza in the spirit of economic development. Instead, October 7 proved that for Hamas, killing Israelis is more important than improving the lives of the Palestinians. For the United States, October 7 demonstrated the failure of Washington's policy to refuse to hold Iran accountable, since the Hamas attack was merely one particularly egregious example of the ongoing attacks on Western interests designed by Iran and carried out by its proxies: missile attacks on Saudi and Emirati targets, assassinations in Lebanon, and a pattern of assaults on US sites in Iraq and Syria, as well as the disruption of Red Sea commerce. The American response to date has failed to either deter these attacks or encourage Iran to rein in its front organizations.

Three high-level strategic consequences follow from these observations. First, the proposal that the United States depart from the Middle East has come to a definitive end. That legacy illusion inherited from the Obama administration had already begun to dissipate under President Biden, notably in his trip to Riyadh and the reversal of his judgment that Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman would remain a "pariah." After October 7, we have seen the deployment of major naval assets to the Eastern Mediterranean and efforts by Secretary of State Antony Blinken to engage in shuttle diplomacy throughout the region. Even the Biden administration, with its inclination to leave the Middle East, has discovered that it has interests and responsibilities in the region that it cannot easily relinquish. Furthermore, if the United States were to be seen as abandoning Israel, every other ally around the world would suddenly lose faith in American promises of support.

***The Mideast is only one theater in America's multifront power struggle.***

The second consequence is that American engagement in the region thankfully does not require large-scale military presence, or "boots on the ground." Israelis are willing and more than able to defend their own country. For some, this expression of a national will to survive came as a surprise in the wake of the divisive debates over judicial reform plans that had divided the Israeli public in the months before October 7. In addition, there was some pessimism that the young generation addicted to social media would have the mettle to fight a hard war. It turns out, however,


[Taylor Jones—for the *Hoover Digest*]

that the soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) were underestimated, and as they return from the front battle-hardened they are bringing a new will to Israeli political debate. A slogan now circulating asserts that today's fighters "must not fall behind the generation of 1948," Israel's "greatest generation" of the War of Independence. For the United States, it is an enormous advantage to have allies who will fight their own wars, as is also the case in Ukraine. However, these allies require sufficient weapons and munitions. To equip them with these supplies is not only a matter of congressional support for foreign military funding but also a need to rebuild America's defense industrial base. American ability to support those allies who want to defend themselves is premised on a reconstruction of domestic manufacturing capacity: no victories without factories.

The third consequence is the importance of recognizing the root cause of Middle East turmoil—the Tehran regime—which is as much America's enemy as it is Israel's. The standard chant in Iranian demonstrations since the 1979 Islamic Revolution has been "death to America, death to Israel." Our adversary could not be clearer. Nonetheless, currents of naiveté in American foreign policy prefer to dismiss the facts and cling to illusions about some imaginary accommodation with Tehran. This avoidance is a reflection of a liberal worldview, according to which real-world conflicts can be harmonized away through abstract formulas. For the Obama administration, that formula was the JCPOA, the "Iran deal," a Potemkin village of an arms-control agreement that only camouflaged Iranian progress toward nuclear capacity.

***Israelis are willing—and more than able—to defend their own country.***

For the Biden administration, the corollary project is the tired exhortation of a Palestinian state. There is no evidence that the slaughter of October 7 took place because of frustrated aspirations to establish an independent state. On the contrary, the scope of the violence and hostage-taking was, if anything, a clear demonstration of the absence of the necessary political maturity to establish a state: rapists do not deserve statehood.

Nonetheless, Secretary Blinken and his echoes in the press have begun to raise the demand for a Palestinian state, characteristically with no discussion at all as to the character of this state, let alone its borders. The arguments for and against a Palestinian state are many and complex, but they are not even being engaged. Instead, Blinken appeals to a magical thinking about

Palestinian statehood, lacking in any realism, in order to avoid naming the source of the conflict: Iran.

## STATE OF CHAOS

Israel has its own specific concerns with regard to the prospect of a Palestinian state. Currently, the IDF has the authority to exercise security control throughout much of the West Bank. The sovereignty of a Palestinian state would end that arrangement. As a result, Israel's major population center in and around Tel Aviv could easily be targeted by weaponry from the overlooking hills only miles away. Americans should not advocate putting an ally in this sort of danger.

***The instigator of Middle East turmoil—the Tehran regime—is as much America's enemy as it is Israel's.***

To the rejoinder that a Palestinian state might be demilitarized, one can only reply that the same promise was made about southern Lebanon, which is now home to enormous numbers of Hezbollah rockets and missiles. Who will enforce the demilitarization of the Palestinian state?

Yet the question of Palestinian statehood implies another bucket of concerns for American grand strategy. Some may believe that a state will solve the Palestinians' problems, but it is not at all clear how establishing a Palestinian state would serve American national interest. Free elections there would probably lead to an empowerment of Hamas or Hamas-like forces. The new state would then inevitably turn into a further outpost for Iranian and potentially Russian interests, in line with the so-called "axis of resistance," Lebanese Hezbollah and Assad's Syria. Perhaps it needs to be spelled out that empowering America's enemies is not in American national interest.

Introducing a radical Palestinian state in the West Bank would also have ripple effects eroding the stability of another US ally, neighboring Jordan, with its large Palestinian population. Such developments would necessarily be viewed as entailing an abandonment of Israel by the United States, a lesson that would not be lost on the Gulf states, which in turn would have a deleterious impact on American interests.

The United States cannot pretend that the Middle East is irrelevant to its grand strategy. Exit is not an option. Fortunately, the region is home to at least one strong ally, Israel, and a network of other partners with pro-American inclinations. It is not in America's national interest to squander

those assets by betraying friends in order to pander to enemies in Iran. It will, however, probably require a different administration in Washington with a clearer understanding of the Middle East to articulate and execute the necessary policies.

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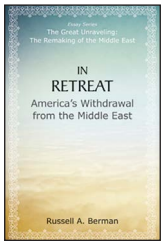


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# War Is Interested in You

**Why American leaders are repeatedly drawn back into the Mideast, the crucible of great-power designs and aspiring hegemons.**

*By Cole Bunzel*

No recent US president has wanted greater military involvement in the Middle East. None has been able to avoid it.

Joe Biden is the third president in a row who sought to draw down the American military presence in the region, only to find himself either stuck or drawn back in. Barack Obama moralized about the urgent need to withdraw from Iraq and rebalance toward Asia, only to see an ill-planned withdrawal produce civil strife and the rise of ISIS. Donald Trump vowed to put an end to "endless wars" but struggled to withdraw from Syria and carried out large operations against a variety of actors.

### Key points

» Biden is the third president in a row who sought to draw down the US military presence, only to find himself drawn back in.

» The Mideast is by no means peripheral to the challenges of a rising China and an increasingly aggressive Russia.

» Defense of the Middle East includes supporting US allies, fighting jihadism, and securing free transit in the Persian Gulf.

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[Taylor Jones—for the *Hoover Digest*]

Biden likewise set out to terminate America's "forever wars." He did manage to withdraw from Afghanistan (if in ignominious fashion) but has since been sucked into the vortex of the region's divided politics. Hamas's surprise attack on Israel on October 7 and the Israeli response sparked a renewed offensive by Iran's proxies against US forces in Iraq and Syria and a major challenge to freedom of navigation in the Red Sea in the form of the Houthis of Yemen.

After declaring in September that the "Middle East region is quieter today than it has been in two decades," the Biden administration has been forced to grapple with a not-so-quiet region, striking back at Iran-backed groups in Iraq and Syria and repeatedly striking Houthi military assets used to attack commercial shipping and US naval forces in the Red Sea. The costs in blood and treasure have been far from negligible. In January, two Navy SEALs died in the Red Sea during an operation to seize lethal aid intended for the Houthis; later, three US service members were killed in an attack on a US base in Jordan carried out by an Iran-backed group.

***Abruptly, the Biden administration has been forced to grapple with a not-so-quiet region.***

It is no surprise that today one hears repeated calls for American retrenchment in the Middle East. This is an era of great-power competition, so the argument goes, and therefore the United States must refocus its limited resources on the greater contests with China and Russia.

The Middle East, however, is by no means peripheral to the challenges of a rising China and an increasingly aggressive Russia. Indeed, the idea that the Middle East is merely a distraction from the imperatives of great-power competition belies reality, as well as history.

## THE ORIGINS OF THE US PRESENCE

It is worth recalling that the US presence in the region has its origins in geostrategic rivalry with the Soviet Union. In the early Cold War period, the United States recognized the Middle East as a key strategic area that could not be ceded to Soviet influence without suffering grave consequences to its own security. With the Truman Doctrine of 1947 and the Eisenhower Doctrine a decade later, Washington resolved to provide economic assistance and deploy military force to prevent Middle Eastern states from succumbing to the threat of "international communism." To this end, after nationalist

revolutions in Egypt and Iraq, the United States dispatched forces to Lebanon in 1958 with the aim of stemming the revolutionary tide. Meanwhile, British paratroopers landed in Jordan in hopes of preserving the stability of that country.

The general framework of American policy in this period was given the name "defense of the Middle East" by the American political scientist and former State Department official John C. Campbell. In an influential book of that title published by the Council on Foreign Relations in 1958, Campbell charted the rise of American power in the region and the decline of the British role in the years after World War II. Echoing the thinking of American policy makers, he argued that a strong American presence in the Middle East, one that defended the area from Soviet encroachment, was critically important to US national security.

***"Once in control of Middle Eastern oil, Moscow would have its grip on Europe's jugular vein."***

"Soviet control of the Middle East," he wrote, quoting President Eisenhower, "would have the most adverse, if not disastrous, effect upon our own nation's economic life and political prospects." In Campbell's view, the Middle East was important for its location on the soft underbelly of Europe—"territory of great strategic importance . . . which if it fell into the hands of a hostile power would certainly be used against us"—but also because of its vast oil resources critical to European economic security. As Campbell wrote, "Once in control of Middle Eastern oil, Moscow would have its grip on Europe's jugular vein. It could hardly be long before our European allies would be forced to consider accommodation on Soviet terms which would leave the United States isolated. . . . The whole uncommitted world would see the writing on the wall. NATO would be outflanked."

Campbell's framework of "defense of the Middle East" is helpful for understanding American thinking about the region throughout the Cold War. Another Cold War presidential doctrine, the Carter Doctrine, was based on the same premise. After the Iranian revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, President Carter declared that "an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."

This was the catalyst of America's vast deployment of military assets across the Gulf region.

## THE GULF WAR AND THE WAR ON TERROR

With the end of the Cold War, the idea of "defense of the Middle East" did not suddenly vanish. The United States continued to see the region, and the Persian Gulf especially, as a strategic area to be shielded from hostile forces. The challenge to the American order in the region came quickly in the form of Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, a move that prompted President George H. W. Bush to dispatch forces to Saudi Arabia to prevent a possible Iraqi invasion of the oil-rich Saudi eastern province. The United States then organized and led a coalition to restore Kuwaiti sovereignty.

***What President George W. Bush called a "forward strategy of freedom" was a marked change in outlook. It would prove difficult to sustain.***

The major task of articulating the American rationale for war fell to Vice President Dan Quayle, who in a famous address at Seton Hall University on November 29, 1990, outlined the United States' traditional strategic objectives in the Middle East. These objectives were (1) "to contain Soviet expansionism," (2) "to prevent any local Middle Eastern power from achieving hegemony over its neighbors," and (3) "to secure the uninterrupted supply of oil at a reasonable price." While the first of these goals had already been realized, the second and third remained firmly in place. Saddam was an aspiring hegemon who threatened America's allies and the regional status quo. His aim was "to dominate the Persian Gulf region," and so, pursuant to America's traditional strategic imperatives, his bid for regional hegemony had to be opposed. Though he did not use the phrase "defense of the Middle East," this was essentially the framework Quayle was articulating. Whereas the great threat to the Middle East from an American perspective had previously been from the Soviet Union, it was now a regional power, Saddam's Iraq, that had to be contained.

All this would soon be interrupted by the War on Terror that followed the attacks of September 11, 2001, leading to the US invasions of Afghanistan in late 2001 and Iraq in early 2003. The undertaking of such missions of regime change and democratic transformation were out of step with the

traditional American approach to the region, which was generally far less concerned with the domestic political arrangements so long as these did not offend American interests. What President George W. Bush called a "forward strategy of freedom" was a marked change in outlook, and one that would prove difficult to sustain. Over time, the strategy produced the "endless" or "forever" wars that became the source of popular frustration, fueling calls for retrenchment and withdrawal.

***Despite US hopes, Iran never had any interest in "sharing" the region at all.***

Today, the "forward strategy of freedom" is no longer the guiding principle of American policy in the Middle East, and America has struggled to comprehend what its role in the region ought to be. One of its stated rationales for continued involvement is the effort to defeat and degrade the jihadi group known as ISIS, which continues to operate in Iraq and Syria on a low level. But the stationing of US troops in these countries—some 900 in Syria and 2,500 in Iraq—has invited repeated attacks by Iran-backed militias that aspire to expel the American presence. The arming and training of these groups is part of a broader Iranian strategy for expelling the United States from the region entirely.

Much like Saddam's Iraq in 1990, the Islamic Republic of Iran is an aspiring hegemon with hostile intentions toward America's regional partners and American interests. To defend against this threat would be consistent with the "defense of the Middle East" paradigm outlined by Campbell and updated by Quayle during the Gulf War. But not all American policy makers have seen the situation in this way. It was President Obama's view that Iran and its Gulf adversaries ought to learn to "share the neighborhood," as he put it in an interview with Jeffrey Goldberg in 2016, and that the United States ought to stay above the fray. Rather than containing or pushing back against Iranian malign influence, Obama believed that it was in the American interest to adopt a more neutral stance that would allow for the emergence of some kind of Arab-Iranian condominium.

While the Iran nuclear deal of 2015, or JCPOA, was strictly speaking an agreement on matters of nuclear enrichment and arms control, it was no doubt motivated by the neutralist type of thinking on display in Obama's 2016 interview. This thinking was flawed in conception, however, as Iran

never had any interest in "sharing" the region in the first place but rather was—and remains—an avowedly revisionist power. Today this fact is hard to ignore. The region is divided between status quo powers such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Israel, on the one hand, and Iran and its network of proxies (from Hamas and Lebanese Hezbollah to Kataib Hezbollah and the Houthis) on the other. It is a division that can be managed and controlled but not overcome—certainly not with expressions of neutrality and goodwill.

## THE NEED REMAINS

Apart from defeating jihadi terrorism, the objective of US policy in the Middle East ought to be to support and defend our Arab allies from the hegemonic ambitions of a hostile Iran and its network of proxies. This is the framework of "defense of the Middle East." It also applies, in the current circumstance, to our great-power rivals, particularly China. As Lieutenant General Alexus Grynkewich of US Central Command recently commented, the Middle East today is "fertile ground for strategic competition," and "there is a risk of Chinese expansion into the region militarily" following from economic expansion. This risk, no doubt, will grow substantially in the event of a large-scale withdrawal of US forces from the region.

***Regional tensions can be managed and controlled but not overcome—certainly not with expressions of neutrality and goodwill.***

The Middle East still remains a region of tremendous strategic importance for the United States. One can argue for a trimming of the American force commitment—some forty-five thousand military personnel scattered across dozens of bases, most of them in the vicinity of the Persian Gulf—but one cannot reasonably assert that the region carries no strategic value and ought to be abandoned. For one thing, the global economy continues to run on fossil fuels and will continue to do so for decades to come. That means that a hostile power in control of the Persian Gulf would control some one-third of the world's oil production and around half of the supply.

While counterterrorism remains a major reason for America's continued involvement, the traditional framework of "defense of the Middle East" remains primary. ◼

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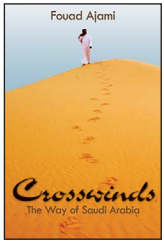


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# The Miseducation of Gaza

**Hamas teaches its children to become terrorists.**
**Why the Palestinian educational system must be totally reformed.**

***By Peter Berkowitz***

Schools in the Gaza Strip fostered the depraved sensibility that fueled the October 7 butchery perpetrated by Hamas jihadists in southern Israel. While Hamas exercised dictatorial authority over the whole of jihadist indoctrination in Gaza, the Palestinian Authority (PA) produced the textbooks and lesson plans, and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in significant measure administered the schools. The defeat of jihadism in Gaza will not be complete without a fundamental reorientation of its educational system.

### *Key points*

» American policy makers need to grasp that the preaching of hatred, violence, and Islamist supremacy is woven into Gaza's education.

» Hamas's destruction will be at best a temporary reprieve if jihadism still permeates the Palestinian schools.

» The United States must address the approval of ideological violence expressed at its own colleges and universities.

***Peter Berkowitz** is the Tad and Dianne Taube Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution and a member of Hoover's Military History in Contemporary Conflict Working Group.*


***TEACH YOUR CHILDREN: A painting of a female Palestinian suicide bomber appears on the wall of a girls' school in the Dheisheh refugee camp, West Bank. A monitoring group describes a children's magazine printed by Hamas as providing "scathing hatred, disdain, delegitimization, and demonization of the other—the West, especially the United States and Europe, the Jews, Israel, and Zionism."*** [Shark1989z—Creative Commons]

Given US interests in Middle East stability in general and the postwar reconstruction of Gaza in particular, American policy makers must grasp the preaching of hatred, violence, and Islamist supremacy woven into Gaza education. One obstacle is that many US diplomats—even more, the younger career Foreign Service officers—will have been indoctrinated at American universities in opinions and ideas that bear an uncanny resemblance to certain ugly dogmas championed by the jihadists.

IMPACT-se (Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education) provides indispensable English-language documentation of the training for terrorism inscribed in UNRWA Arabic-language textbooks and other Hamas educational materials. The training falsifies history, encourages submission to government-sanctioned doctrines, and fosters

loathing of Jews, Israel, America, and the freedom and democracy central to the West. Hamas's savagery on October 7 through Israel's border communities was not a hideous departure from central tenets of Gazan education but rather gave faithful expression to them.

In "*Al-Fateh*—The Hamas Web Magazine for Children: Indoctrination to Jihad, Annihilation and Self-Destruction," IMPACT-se examined one hundred and forty-five of the Hamas publication's issues, from September 2002 to April 2009. *Al-Fateh*'s "consistent educational message to its young readers," according to IMPACT-se, "mirrors that of the Hamas movement's ideology and includes scathing hatred, disdain, delegitimization, and demonization of the other—the West, especially the United States and Europe, the Jews, Israel, and Zionism—as well as a call for establishing an Islamic state in entire Palestine and the annihilation of the State of Israel through violent liberation of the land in jihad."

***In defiance of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Palestinian schools promulgate intolerance and Islamic supremacy.***

*Al-Fateh*—in Arabic, "The Conqueror"—portrays "Jews as enemies of mankind and killers of prophets," IMPACT-se shows. Rejecting compromise, negotiations, and peace agreements—those in operation and the pursuit of new ones—*Al-Fateh* advocates "total commitment to an armed and violent jihad, especially of the suicidal kind." Through "its pervasive indoctrination of the younger generation into the cult of martyrdom," *Al-Fateh* contributed to forming "the next generation of suicide bombers to join the violent jihad."

## POISONOUS LESSONS

Many October 7 jihadists and many Gaza Palestinians who cheered on the sadistic killers grew up on *Al-Fateh*'s poisonous tenets. They learned from the Hamas magazine that Israel and the United States, along with their friends and partners, are evil and implacable adversaries: "the Jewish enemy kills our people in beloved Palestine, while the United States, Britain, and the other European countries, and India, help it." They read that the United States is an omnipresent and insidious menace: "America is the terror, my child.… She is the plague that destroys my liver.… She is the viper that scatters poison inside me." And they were informed that Islam confronts a globe-spanning war: "Muslims and their children everywhere are under a

siege of injustice—in beloved imprisoned Palestine, in wounded Afghanistan, in Kashmir, in Chechnya, and in other parts of the world which are controlled by the most despicable of God's creatures: the Jews, and their agents in crusader America."

In "Review of 2022 UNRWA-Produced Study Materials in the Palestinian Territories," IMPACT-se surveyed the curriculum overseen by UNRWA in West Bank and Jerusalem schools as well as those in Gaza. Contrary to the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which affirm basic rights and fundamental freedoms, UNRWA's Palestinian schools promulgate intolerance and Islamic supremacy. UNRWA education features "a systematic insertion of violence, martyrdom, overt anti-Semitism, and jihad across all grades and subjects, with the proliferation of extreme nationalism and Islamist ideologies throughout the curriculum, including science and math textbooks; rejection of the possibility of peace with Israel; and the complete omission of any historical Jewish presence in the modern-day territories of Israel and the PA."

***Hamas's savagery on October 7 was not a hideous departure from central tenets of Gazan education. It gave faithful expression to them.***

IMPACT-se released "UNRWA Education: Textbooks and Terror" in November 2023. In addition to detailing praise that UNRWA staff members heaped on Hamas terrorists for the October 7 slaughter and the role played by UNRWA school graduates in the barbarities, the report examines UNRWA educational materials that "either harness anti-Semitism or encourage martyrdom or violent jihad."

For example, UNRWA teachers develop students' reading comprehension through a story that celebrates suicide bombers and the decapitation of Israeli soldiers. A map for fourth-graders in UNRWA schools erases Israel by placing a Palestinian flag over all the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. A fifth-grade reading lesson, "Hooray for the Heroes," glorifies Palestinians "associated with war, violence, religious extremism, and terrorism" but "does not include scientists, doctors, engineers, or athletes." UNRWA schools teach sixth-grade students

***"Palestinian girls are encouraged to kill, be killed, and send their children to die."***

that "The Zionists are the terrorists of the modern age, and they are fated to disappear."

In addition, documents IMPACT-se, UNRWA teachers instruct students that in Israel's 1948 War of Independence—when five invading Arab armies sought to annihilate the newborn Jewish state—Zionists were compelled by Jewish religious belief to massacre Arabs. UNRWA school lessons disparage peaceful lives while glorifying martyrdom in the fight against infidels (most prominently Jews and Christians) as a noble act that Allah will reward in heaven. Gazan students learn that jihad to liberate Palestine is a "private obligation for every Muslim." That obligation emphatically includes girls and women: "Palestinian girls are encouraged to kill, be killed, and send their children to die."

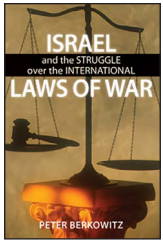
***American colleges imbued with hard-left ideology can't be expected to produce diplomats who can grasp the harms of such miseducation.***

## IT BEGINS AT HOME

Israel's destruction of Hamas as a fighting force and governing authority in Gaza will provide at best temporary reprieve if, after major military operations end, the PA and UNRWA continue to propagate jihadism through the schools. The United States would be in a better position to assist in thwarting this abuse of UN institutions and Palestinian children if America's own educational system were not itself saturated with concepts that bear an alarming resemblance to those of jihadist indoctrination.

Although the US public only recently has taken serious notice of the problem, American colleges and universities have for many years promulgated as campus orthodoxy the multilayered accusation that the country is divided into white oppressors and oppressed people of color, that the American political system is racist to its core, and that social justice requires redistributing wealth and power by discriminating based on race. Institutions of higher education that have abandoned their mission, which is to transmit knowledge and cultivate independent thinking, in favor of the reproduction of hard-left ideology cannot be expected to form diplomats capable of grasping the harms caused by the UN-sponsored Palestinian education for jihad or of possessing the judgment and motivation to implement the urgently needed correctives.

Here as elsewhere, effective US foreign policy depends on thoroughly reforming higher education in America.



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# *Change Iranians Can Believe In*

## The United States needs a policy that helps the Iranian people **take back their country.**

***By Kelly J. Shannon***

Ever since the founding of the Islamic Republic in 1979, Iran's leaders have believed that the United States seeks regime change to roll back the Islamic revolution and restore US hegemony in Iran. Yet the United States has not pursued this as a policy goal, nor has US policy appeared to include direct interference in Iran's domestic affairs. Instead, in recent years, US policy makers seem to have assigned Iran—and the Middle East more broadly—a lower priority than other areas like Ukraine, and have pursued a policy of containment toward Iran so that US attention could be focused elsewhere.

### *Key points*

» US policy makers have pursued containment toward Iran so that attention could be focused elsewhere. This policy has failed.

» The world is far less united in condemnation of Iran's behavior than in previous decades, and Tehran has acquired important allies.

» Should a democratic Iran develop, it would solve most of the problems with Iran's current behavior. And this change would be greatly in the US national interest.

***Kelly J. Shannon*** *is a W. Glenn Campbell and Rita Ricardo-Campbell National Fellow at the Hoover Institution. She is an associate professor of history at Florida Atlantic University and the author of* ***US Foreign Policy and Muslim Women's Human Rights*** *(University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).*


***RADICAL: A "Woman, Life, Freedom" protest takes place in late 2022 in Ottawa in front of the Russian embassy. While previous protests inside and outside Iran called for reform, many Iranians now declare that reforming the Islamic Republic is impossible.*** [Taymaz Valley—Creative Commons]

This policy has clearly failed. The Islamic Republic has become increasingly confident in its international behavior and domestic repression, bolstered by the belief that the West—especially the United States—is too weak to stop it. The result is that Iran today is a significant threat to stability, peace, and human rights in the Middle East.

The October 7, 2023, attack by Iran's client Hamas on Israel and subsequent attacks on shipping by the Iran-backed Houthi rebels of Yemen underscore two important realities: first, the crucial importance of Middle Eastern stability to global affairs; second, a dire need for the United States to overhaul its Iran policy. If the United States does not change its approach to Iran, the Islamic Republic's behavior and regional stability will only worsen.

## A DEMOCRATIC LAND?

The time is ripe for policy change. Despite harsh international sanctions, the clerical establishment has not moderated its behavior and flouts those sanctions, such as when it sells oil to China. Limited US engagement with Iran

has also failed to rein in Tehran's worst impulses. Despite the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also known as the Iran nuclear deal, the unilateral US withdrawal from that agreement during the Trump administration gave Iran an incentive to continue enriching uranium. The lack of consistency between US administrations makes a successful return to the negotiating table on nuclear issues unlikely. Meanwhile, Iran continues to engage in hostage diplomacy and flagrantly violates the human rights of its people. Its missile strikes against Iraq, Syria, and Pakistan on January 15–16 also indicate the regime's increasing willingness to use military force against its neighbors and project power outside its borders, which risks further destabilizing an already unstable region.

The world has changed since US policy on Iran was last set. An influential bloc of countries—led by Russia and China—has arisen to challenge the US-led international order. Iran has gained important allies by joining this bloc. Tehran's growing partnerships with Moscow and Beijing provide it with diplomatic support, an economic lifeline, and increasing military prestige through its aid to Russia in the Ukraine war. Quite simply, the world today is far less united in its condemnation of Iran's behavior—and in the support for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law—than in previous decades. US policy must adapt to account for this geopolitical shift.

***Limited US engagement with Iran has not reined in Tehran's worst impulses.***

Yet Iran's domestic situation has also changed dramatically in a way that could benefit US policy objectives. While Iran faced multiple waves of popular protest over the past two decades, the "Woman, Life, Freedom" uprising that began in September 2022 distinctly differs from earlier protests. While previous protests called for reform, many Iranians now declared that reforming the Islamic Republic is impossible. The current movement calls for nothing less than the end of the clerical establishment and the creation of a secular democracy. US policy makers should take note. Should a democratic Iran develop, it would solve most of the problems with Iran's current behavior. A stable, democratic Iran would be greatly in the US national interest.

## CHANGE COMES FROM WITHIN

While the mass protests of 2022–23 have died down, Iranian citizens, especially women, continue to defy the regime. The Iranian people are not likely to change their views on the theocracy, and the regime cannot survive in the

long term in the face of such widespread domestic opposition. After four decades of an oppressive, corrupt, ineffective government, there is not much more for the Iranian people to lose, but much to be gained, by seeking radical change. However, the regime's brutally violent crackdown on protesters and anyone who expresses the slightest hint of anti-regime sentiment indicates that mass protests alone will be insufficient to topple the government—the tactics of 1979 are not enough in the 2020s. Additional strategies are necessary, and international support will be critical to ensuring the success of any mass democratic movement in Iran.

The United States should, therefore, develop a new policy aimed at supporting the Iranian people in changing their government system. This must not be a policy of regime change in the traditional sense. While the United States has historically had success in overtly or covertly overthrowing foreign governments—including ousting Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh in 1953—it has been bad at managing the long-term consequences of such actions. The outcomes of the post–9/11 US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are but the most recent examples.

***US policy makers must resist the urge to take the lead.***

Iranian history also proves that regime change cannot come from the outside. Any government imposed by a foreign power—or that even appears to be—will lack domestic legitimacy. Ever since Iran's constitutional revolution in 1905–11, ending foreign influence over Iran's leaders has been a major reason why Iranians opposed—and toppled—previous governments, including the Pahlavi monarchy in 1979. Thus, any government that replaces the Islamic Republic must be understood by the Iranian people as entirely indigenous in origin. It can have foreign alliances, but it cannot be installed by foreign intervention. The traditional US approach of using military intervention or a coup to accomplish regime change would irredeemably taint whichever government replaces the current theocracy.

Instead of traditional regime change, the United States should adopt a two-pronged approach to assist the Iranian people in their pursuit of democratic change.

In the short term, US policy makers should continue to engage in difficult diplomacy and deterrence with the Islamic Republic to try to reduce Iran's bad behavior as much as possible, while keeping in mind that genuine détente with the regime is not possible given its ideology, in which anti-Americanism is a core element.

In the long term, the United States should implement a policy of overtly and covertly helping the Iranian people create the conditions to build and sustain a successful mass movement to democratize Iran and align its behavior with global norms and the rule of law, especially regarding human rights. To achieve this long-term goal, US policy makers must resist the urge to take the lead; they must instead listen to anti-regime Iranians in the country, especially experienced women's rights activists, and dissidents in exile, and help the Iranian people empower themselves to lead the change in their country.

Such a policy approach is rare in US history. Yet there are precedents when Americans supported positive change abroad by adopting a supportive role and genuine commitment to democracy and human rights that secured US objectives and international security. Rather than direct intervention, subtle forms of US support for anti-communist movements in Eastern Europe during the late Cold War, especially the Solidarity movement in Poland, helped those movements ultimately overthrow their communist governments on their own, build nascent democratic systems, and end the Cold War in 1989–91. While the US government hesitated for decades to condemn the South African apartheid regime, the American public's vocal support for the anti-apartheid movement and active participation in divestment helped the South African people end legal racial discrimination and build an inclusive democratic government led by Nelson Mandela in 1994. Updating these approaches for the twenty-first century could go a long way toward helping Iranians build an Iran that is no longer a threat to its own people or regional stability.

***Iran's prisons are full of promising leaders. Many more are emerging.***

## HOW TO FIGHT BACK

US policy makers could deploy various tools on multiple fronts to accomplish this objective, and the United States would need to do this in partnership with its democratic allies. Countries with no problematic history of dominating Iran—such as Ireland, South Africa, Mauritius, New Zealand, or Japan—would be best suited to this work. In essence, dissident Iranians need space, resources, meaningful international support, and a measure of protection to organize a powerful opposition movement. US policy would serve to support these suppressed voices in Iran.

To implement this policy, the United States would work covertly with Iranians and overtly to marshal international support for the Iranian people.

US policy makers should identify as many key in-country individuals with whom to work as possible. Ideally, these should be people with local or national influence who can get things done, show leadership potential, bring diverse perspectives to the table, and have clear ideas for what a post–Islamic Republic Iran should look like. Iran's prisons are full of such leaders; many more are emerging across the country. The United States would work with this cohort to help create and run workshops for Iranians on democratic capacity building, strategic planning, governance best practices, and help with ideas for economic support for movement participants, as well as connect these Iranians with activists abroad with relevant experience. The United States should also find a way to provide reliable, safe Internet access that is not easy for the regime to hack or trace, which will be essential for movement organizing and education efforts.

***If the greatest global challenge is the war between autocracy and democracy, then Iran is a major front.***

Along the way, US policy makers must resist the urge to anoint a particular opposition leader. The Iranian people will choose their leaders in a post–Islamic Republic future, which is as it should be.

The United States could, however, attempt to unify the Iranian diaspora. The unprecedented coming together of the diaspora in support of the Woman, Life, Freedom movement provided protesters with much-needed moral support and international amplification of their voices. When the coalition of diasporic leaders collapsed by late spring 2023, it was a major blow to the movement in Iran. Building solidarity and unity within the long-factionalized diaspora will be difficult. Still, a unified diasporic voice—and funding—supporting the opposition movement in Iran will be a key component in such a movement's ultimate success.

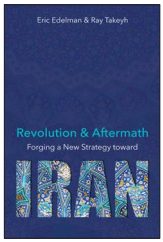
At the international level, the United States and its allies must keep the world's attention on Iran. There is already significant support for Iranians among the global public, as evidenced by the many worldwide solidarity protests during the Woman, Life, Freedom movement. Governments must align with this global public opinion. Just as the United States and its allies did with the Soviet Union during the Cold War, the international community must consistently and loudly condemn all human rights violations and political repression by the Islamic Republic. International condemnation of Iran's behavior through unified statements by a coalition of anti-regime—preferably, democratic—governments, as well as unified rejection of Iran

holding influential human-rights-related positions in the United Nations or its representation at legitimizing international forums like the World Economic Forum in Davos, would help maintain international pressure on the Islamic Republic.

The regime is not immune to global pressure to moderate its behavior. US policy makers could also do much to encourage enhanced US public support for the people of Iran. The Islamic Republic relies on lies and deception. Shining a harsh light on those lies and countering them with truth will be a valuable approach to combating autocracy and oppression. Propaganda efforts to drive a wedge between Russia and Iran, as well as undermine its support by the rank-and-file within the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and military, would also help weaken the regime.

If, as President Biden has insisted, the greatest global challenge today is the war between autocracy and democracy, then Iran is a major front in that war. Supporting the growth, maturation, and ultimate success of the Woman, Life, Freedom uprising is not only morally right but strategically logical for the United States. It will take years of commitment and a redefinition of what regime-change policy looks like, but helping the Iranian people end the Islamic Republic's bad behavior would be a major victory for democracy, human rights, and, ultimately, global stability. Iranians have the will and capacity to create a brighter future. Will US policy makers choose to help? ■





# The Wolf at Europe's Door

**The Baltic nations know there's no appeasing Russia. They can only prepare.**

***By Michael McFaul***

Over the past two years, I have given many talks around the United States and the world about Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. I discuss the causes of the war and what is at stake in Ukraine for American security interests. In these talks, I warn about the negative consequences of the United States' incremental actions and support to Ukraine. Vladimir Putin's victory in Ukraine will only encourage more threats and more war, first in Europe and then in Asia. Moreover, if Putin prevails in Ukraine, the United States will have to spend more of its defense resources and deploy more of its soldiers to Europe to deter a potential Russian attack on our NATO allies.

After some of these talks, audience members have called me alarmist. I must admit, at times I wondered whether I was. Putin surely is rational enough not to threaten NATO, I thought. Surely he is smart enough to realize that he does not have the means to take on NATO after losing so many

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soldiers and weapons in Ukraine. Putin surely will be satiated if, God forbid, he succeeds in annexing more Ukrainian territory.

My trip to Vilnius, Lithuania, in January, changed my mind. I was not being too alarmist in asserting that Putin will threaten NATO if he wins in Ukraine. In fact, maybe I was not being alarmist enough.

After meeting with Lithuanian officials, government representatives, and experts from countries in the region, I was struck by the urgency of their long-term thinking about the Russian threat. I heard representatives of many of our NATO allies express deep fear that Putin is only getting started in Ukraine—that Ukraine could be just the early phase of a major new war in Europe.

And what I heard in private, other European leaders have said in public as well. The prime minister of Estonia, Kaja Kallas, suggested that according to Estonian intelligence, Europe has "three to five years" to prepare for a possible military threat from Russia on the eastern flank of NATO, and "that very much depends on how we manage our unity and keep our posture regarding Ukraine."

Similarly, Lithuanian foreign minister Gabrielius Landsbergis has warned that "the next phase would be directed not just against Ukraine, Georgia, or Moldova, but possibly against NATO."

After all, Putin has now transformed Russia into a wartime economy. The Russian military-industrial complex today has more resources to build more tanks, artillery, and drones than at the start of the conflict, as Eric Schmidt writes. After re-election, Putin will also conscript more soldiers. One colleague in Vilnius warned that the war machine always takes time to get going, but once it does, it rolls with great momentum, as it did with Napoleon and Hitler. As for the intentions of this war machine, some Russian government officials are already threatening to deploy these resources to rebuild not the Soviet Union but the Russian Empire, which of course included Poland, Finland, and the Baltic countries. Former Russian president and current deputy head of Russia's Security Council Dmitry Medvedev wrote on his Telegram account:

***I was not being too alarmist in asserting that Putin would threaten NATO. In fact, maybe I was not being alarmist enough.***

> The existence of Ukraine is mortally dangerous for Ukrainians. And I do not mean only the current Bandera regime, but the existence of any, absolutely any Ukraine. … The presence of an independent state on historical Russian territories will now be a

constant reason for the resumption of hostilities. … There is a 100 percent probability of a new conflict … even if Ukraine entered the EU and NATO. This could happen in ten or fifty years.


[Taylor Jones—for the *Hoover Digest*]


***WATCHFUL: Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba meets with his Estonian counterpart, Margus Tsahkna, at a meeting in Brussels in April. Officials of many NATO allies express deep fear that the Ukraine conflict could be just the early phase of a major new war in Europe.*** [Estonian Foreign Ministry]

I still believe that the probability of a Russian attack on a NATO country is very low if the United States remains engaged in NATO. But many Europeans at Vilnius's Snow Meeting in January also invoked 1930s analogies to suggest that America's current isolationist proclivities echo that era. They already see the impact that presidential candidate Donald Trump is having on NATO unity, specifically in pushing the United States away from its NATO allies and helping delay new assistance to Ukraine that nearly every NATO ally supports. They worry that a Trump re-election will accelerate these isolationist trends.

***The prime minister of Estonia says Europe has "three to five years" to prepare for a possible military threat from Russia on NATO's eastern flank.***

I share their concerns. At a time when the United States should remain especially engaged in European security, too many American politicians are arguing for retreat and disengagement. Discontinuing aid to Ukraine would

echo appeasement and isolationist policies from the 1930s, and we know how that turned out. We cannot repeat those mistakes today.

It is not too late to reverse these ominous parallels to the 1930s. We Americans can resist the temptation to pretend that Russia's current war in Ukraine will not spread to the rest of Europe, and we can act accordingly.

***Russia has even more resources to build tanks, artillery, and drones than when the invasion began.***

John Mearsheimer writes in *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* on the subject of dealing with expansive great powers:

> Because great powers are programmed for offense, an appeased state is likely to interpret any power concession by another state as a sign of weakness—as evidence that the appeaser is unwilling to defend the balance of power. The appeased state is then likely to continue pushing for more concessions. … Furthermore, the appeased state's capability to gain even more power would be enhanced—probably substantially—by the additional power it was granted by the appeaser. In short, appeasement is likely to make a dangerous rival more, not less, dangerous.

Mearsheimer is right. Appeasing Russia now will only lead to more problems for the United States. That is why investing billions in aid to Ukraine could help save more money and more lives (maybe even American lives) in the future, just as greater US assistance to Europe and our Asian partners in the 1930s might have helped to deter Hitler.

The last thing anyone should want is a direct, conventional war between NATO and Russia. The best way to prevent that is to approve aid to Ukraine now. ◘

***Reprinted from* McFaul's World *(https://michaelmcfaul.substack.com).***



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# Good Fences

**As Vladimir Putin wages war in Ukraine, Donald Trump threatens to leave Europe to fend for itself—two good reasons why Europeans must assess their own defenses.**

***By Timothy Garton Ash***

On June 6, Europe celebrated the eightieth anniversary of the D-Day landings that began the liberation of Western Europe in 1944. However, there's another round anniversary this summer that won't be celebrated, because it marks a big failure. On August 30, 1954, a vote in the French national assembly killed the project of a European Defense Community (EDC). Instead, European integration proceeded around the economic community that remains the core of the European Union to this day, and European security was built around the US-led NATO. But as today's Russian president, Vladimir Putin, advances from the east and the US presidential

### *Key points*

» A 1954 vote in the French national assembly killed the project of a European Defense Community. Europe should revisit that approach.

» A defense force would connect European, bilateral, and national capabilities to the existing military role of NATO.

» A more European NATO is the only credible military core of an effective European defense community.

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***FRONT LINE: A Polish soldier takes part in a military exercise. Author Timothy Garton Ash argues that a more European NATO is the only credible military core of an effective European defense community today.*** [Konflikty.pl]

contender Donald Trump threatens to withdraw from the west, it's time to revisit the idea of Europe defending itself.

Historical circumstances were obviously very different seventy years ago, but there are some interesting echoes. Then, as now, a key driver for the European defense initiative was an aggressive Russia. Then, as now, another driver was the desire of the United States to focus more on threats involving China in Asia—in that case, the Korean War, which began in 1950. (The EDC treaty was signed in 1952, while the war was still going on.) Then, as now, a central issue was the military role to be played by the Federal Republic of Germany. France's then–prime minister, Pierre Mendès France, summed up the reasons his parliament rejected the EDC with perfect French clarity: "Too much integration and too little England." Might there also be a lesson there?

Today, a European defense project would not be a single, clear, unified institution of the EU. That was the road not taken seventy years ago. Rather, it would be a European defense community with a lowercase "d" and "c," connecting European, bilateral, and national capabilities to the existing military operational core in NATO. If you ask what are the structures of European security today, the answer is at once mind-numbingly complicated and perfectly simple. The result of multiple initiatives to strengthen European defense is an impenetrable jungle of acronyms and monikers. How will SHAPE work with CJEF and JEF, taking account of the St. Malo declaration, the "Berlin Plus" agreement, Pesco, EDF, EPF, Asap, and EDIRPA? (Do you really want to know?)

***Seventy years ago, as now, a key driver for the European defense initiative was an aggressive Russia.***

At the same time, it's very simple: eighty years on from D-Day, Europe still depends on the United States for its defense. In slightly longer form: Europe depends on NATO for its defense, and NATO depends on the credibility of the Article 5 guarantee from the United States. *Credibility* is the key word for deterrence, as confidence is for financial markets. Strictly speaking, Article 5 only commits a NATO member to take "such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force," if an ally is attacked. So where will Europe be if a President Trump didn't "deem it necessary" to defend Estonia? Or, before that, if Putin no longer believed—perhaps miscalculating, as he did over Ukraine—that Washington would do so?

## UKRAINE COMES FIRST

The most likely Trump shock is that he would pull the rug out from under Ukraine. Europe must therefore urgently increase its ammunition and weapon supplies and its training for the Ukrainian army so that Kyiv can not merely defend the territory it currently controls but actually turn the tide of the war in 2025. This should be Europe's objective even if Trump does a hard turn on US support and tries to negotiate a deal with Putin over Ukraine's head.

Second, Europe must do more for its own conventional defense. Unlike in the first Trump presidency, his prospective second term is being carefully prepared, with detailed plans drawn up by friendly think tanks. The Heritage Foundation's 2025 presidential transition project defines the relevant goal thus: "Transform NATO so that US allies are capable of fielding the great

majority of the conventional forces required to deter Russia while relying on the United States primarily for our nuclear deterrent and select other capabilities, while reducing the US force posture in Europe."

If we're honest, isn't this a reasonable ask? Eighty years after D-Day, why should a continent with an economy of similar size still depend so heavily on the United States for its security?

***Where would Europe be if a President Trump didn't "deem it necessary" to defend Estonia?***

In a market economy, arms manufacturers need large, definite orders before they ramp up production, and Europe's defense industry is not getting enough of those, fast enough. As Ukrainian soldiers have found to their cost, it's also a crazy zoo of different weapon types. A Munich security conference study identified 178 types of major weapon systems in European armies in 2016, compared with 30 in the United States. In practice, increased European defense spending would also mean more business for the United States. As the NATO secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg, pointed out in a speech earlier this year to the Heritage Foundation, US arms manufacturers already received European orders worth $120 billion over the last two years—an argument that should appeal to "art of the deal" businessman Trump.

What if it's a more disruptive Trump shock, meaning the US president undermines the credibility of American nuclear deterrence defending the Baltic states? Unlikely though that eventuality is, we need to start thinking more about European nuclear deterrence. Under the 1962 Nassau agreement, Britain's rather clunky old nuclear deterrent is put at the disposal of NATO, which means theoretically also for the defense of the Baltic states—although the ultimate decision lies with the British prime minister. France's nuclear doctrine does not specify over whom precisely the president will extend his nuclear parasol. "Mourir pour Dantzig?" was the notorious headline of a 1939 French newspaper article, arguing that French soldiers should not be asked to die for what was then the Free City of Danzig (today's Gdańsk). "Mourir pour Narva?" would be the question now—Narva being an Estonian city right on the border with Russia. No other European power has a nuclear deterrent.

***European defense procurement must reduce its narcissism of national difference.***

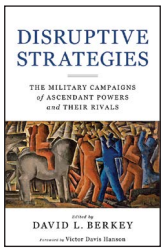
## BE PREPARED

I list these three levels of Trump shock in ascending order of gravity, but also of probability. Europe's priorities should follow: first, Ukraine; second, spend more and better on conventional defense; third, think about the ladder of nuclear deterrence. To achieve any of this, every country, institution, and tendency involved needs to jump over its own shadow. Politically difficult though this will be, European defense procurement must reduce its narcissism of national difference. Britain and its continental European partners must work more closely together. The two Brussels-based giants, NATO and the EU, need a better working relationship. Gaullists and Atlanticists should seek common ground, understanding that a more European NATO is the only credible military core of an effective European defense community today.

***The two Brussels-based giants, NATO and the EU, need a better working relationship.***

Perhaps someone would like to convene a conference to discuss all these issues, on the seventieth anniversary of a historic failure? Conference motto: don't be scared, be prepared. ■





# *Covert, Coercive, Corrupting*

**As Beijing attempts to extend its power throughout the world, scholars in the West can stand up to Beijing. Hoover fellow Glenn Tiffert, a historian of modern China, explains how.**

***By Jonathan Movroydis***

***Jonathan Movroydis:*** What was the genesis of the project on China's Global Sharp Power?

***Glenn Tiffert:*** Hoover's project on China's Global Sharp Power (CGSP) grew out of a 2018 report jointly edited by Larry Diamond and Orville Schell of the Asia Society called *China's Influence & American Interests.* This report took a hard look at the various ways in which China had penetrated different sectors of American society and was exerting influence in ways that were underappreciated and not readily apparent to the eye. The media, local government, national government, think tanks, academia—sectors of that sort. The report was seminal to the larger discussion the United States has since been having about how China exerts influence—sometimes malign influence—in democratic societies. When we finished it, we realized that there was a lot more work to be done and CGSP was born.

***Glenn Tiffert** is a distinguished research fellow at the Hoover Institution. He co-chairs Hoover's project on China's Global Sharp Power. **Jonathan Movroydis** is the senior content writer for the Hoover Institution.*

***Movroydis:*** Covert, coercive, and corrupting: are those generally the attributes of sharp power? What are some of its other characteristics?

***Tiffert:*** Those were the words former Australian prime minister Malcolm Turnbull used to describe it. It's a handy, easy-to-understand rubric for what "sharp power" really is and why it poses a threat to free societies in particular.

All governments engage in diplomacy, project their view of the world, and try to win friends and influence people. As long as that's open and transparent and it doesn't involve subversion, corruption, or coercion, then it's generally within the acceptable parameters of international relations. But there are certain governments that seem to have raised the conspiratorial covert, coercive, and corrupting dimensions of power to an art form, especially Leninist regimes. China in recent years exemplifies this.

***"China exerts influence—sometimes malign influence—in democratic societies."***

Many of the techniques China engages in today were techniques that the former Soviet Union and the communist states of Eastern Europe honed to spread disinformation, to try to trap people into compromising situations, and to exploit our freedoms and openness in order to undermine our interests, compromise our values, and subvert our institutions and political systems.

A familiar example of sharp power outside the China domain would be the allegations of covert Russian interference in the 2016 US presidential election. Russia also has interfered in elections throughout Western Europe. Similarly, disinformation attributed to actors in China that targets US voters is growing in sophistication and ambition.

***Movroydis:*** What are some of the initiatives under your project's purview?

***Tiffert:*** CGSP focuses on data-driven analysis of China's impact on issues central to American interests and values. We aim to inform the public and equip decision makers from all walks of life to manage relations with China on a sounder and more sustainable and vigilant footing. This means competing with China and, where we must, confronting it.

Within that mission, CGSP pursues three major streams of work. One is countering China's malign influence, both in the United States and among our partners. For example, we ran an eighteen-month project on China's

sharp power in sub-Saharan Africa, in which we worked with civil-society partners from more than two dozen countries to document the covert, coercive, and corrupting impact China was having in their region, to understand it through their eyes, and to return data and policy recommendations from the grass roots to our diplomats in Washington. We aim to launch a similar project focused on Latin America.

The second stream of work tracks China's progress in critical technologies. For example, CGSP has played key roles in Hoover studies on artificial intelligence, digital currencies, and the ramifications of the global competition in semiconductors. Again, our goal is to supply actionable knowledge and recommendations to enhance America's security and competitiveness.

The third stream concerns the security of our research enterprise. By that I mean the security of the research done in our universities, national laboratories, and companies, especially our startup ecosystem. We're working hard to identify where the risk is in working with international partners and how best to abate it without sacrificing the tremendous benefits that come with collaboration. I'm thinking about espionage or other forms of unauthorized technology and data transfer, risks to human rights and research integrity, and collaborations that may be legal but are nevertheless unwise in the long run because they jeopardize US economic and national security. We draw on experts from many domains to uncover these risks, to assess them, and to devise calibrated mitigations that empower researchers to remain open to the world, but in ways that are safer. Last year, I visited thirteen countries sharing our work on research security with stakeholders in government, industry, and academia.

***"There are certain governments that seem to have raised the conspiratorial covert, coercive, and corrupting dimensions of power to an art form."***

***Movroydis:*** What else is coming up for the project?

***Tiffert:*** For starters, we're preparing a study on how China cornered the global market in battery technology, a development that could have profound spillover effects for our auto industry, the modernization of our power grid, and, most alarmingly, for weapons like the drones that are being used to devastating effect in the war in Ukraine. Better batteries—and China has the world's best batteries right now—mean that those weapons can operate over

longer distances and carry more diverse payloads, which makes them more capable. We hope to publish this study in the fall.

We've just published a book edited by former US deputy national security adviser Matt Pottinger [*The Boiling Moat: Urgent Steps to Defend Taiwan,* Hoover Institution Press] on how to maintain deterrence and avert war with China over Taiwan. We publish a weekly newsletter on China's sharp power in the world and an occasional paper series, all freely accessible on our project's website. We host regular speaker events and conferences at Hoover, many of which are available on our YouTube channel. We hosted a major conference on the assaults on liberty in Hong Kong. We also partner with other teams at Hoover, including the project on Taiwan and the Indo-Pacific and the Hoover History Lab, and promote the research of the growing community of Hoover fellows working on China.

***"China cornered the global market in battery technology, a development that could have profound spillover effects."***

***Movroydis:*** Taiwan recently elected a new president. There were reportedly efforts by Beijing to sway the results of that election. Can you describe some examples of sharp power at play during that election?

***Tiffert:*** China engages in a range of activities to try to affect the outcome of elections in Taiwan. Almost daily, there are incursions of Chinese air force and naval assets in Taiwan's air defense identification zone and within Taiwanese waters. These incursions are designed to rattle the nerve of the Taiwanese people, undermine their will to resist, incentivize the election of a government more accommodating to China, and prepare for the day when those assets might be used kinetically.

Beyond that, China dangles promises of investment and economic rewards if its favored Taiwanese candidates win, and periodically targets constituencies in the electorate with trade restrictions to express its displeasure and influence voting behavior. Taiwan has a diverse media landscape in which some outlets affiliated with companies that have extensive business in China exhibit editorial lines that align with messaging from China. It is widely understood that the Chinese government capitalizes on the openness of Taiwanese society to provide covert support to groups with pro-China sentiments. Not least, the PRC and its surrogates have also engaged in active disinformation campaigns on social media to try to stain the reputation of

the current ruling party in Taiwan and shift or divide public opinion on hot-button issues.

In closing, let me add that Hoover is singular in the public policy think-tank space for its location at the heart of a world-class university. We have unparalleled public servants and scholars among our fellows in fields such as economics, national security, education, science and technology, and area studies. We can bring that critical mass together and use it in ways almost no one else can.

Moreover, if there's something we don't have at our fingertips here within Hoover, I can walk ten minutes in almost any direction on campus and get a world expert on it. That's powerful. And what we're discovering is that Stanford faculty are hungry to work with us to tap our expertise, deepen their impact, and reach new audiences.

A core part of CGSP's identity is to build those teams and draw on the best people we can find at Stanford, in the Silicon Valley community, and beyond. It makes everything we do better. The result? Together, Stanford and Hoover have emerged as the most dynamic center in the United States for research on China.

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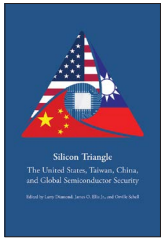


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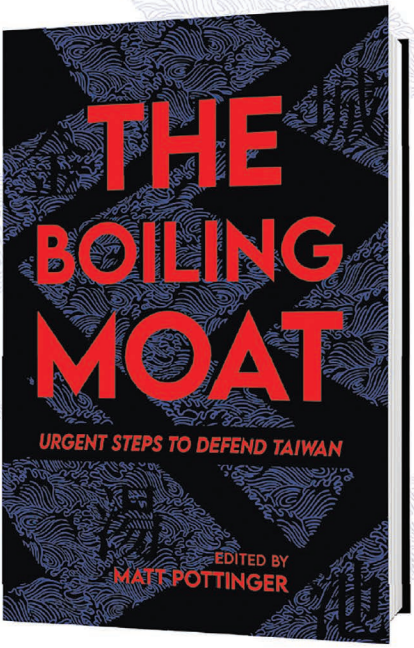
FROM HOOVER INSTITUTION PRESS

# THE BOILING MOAT

## Urgent Steps to Defend Taiwan

Edited by Matt Pottinger




Military and political leaders map out a workable strategy for Taiwan, the United States, and their allies to deter China from pursuing acts of aggression against Taiwan.

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"*The Boiling Moat* is a one-of-a-kind book that lays out precisely how we can deter the catastrophic war that China's dictator is planning."

—MIKE POMPEO, former US secretary of state and CIA director

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# *Israel and Ukraine Deserve to Win*

**Both democracies need our continued help. This is the wrong moment for Americans to become self-absorbed.**

***By Niall Ferguson***

This is a tale of two democracies, each under attack by a sworn foe of Western civilization. One is in Eastern Europe, the other in the Middle East. One is vast, the other tiny. One is just thirty-three years old; the other has been in existence for three-quarters of a century. One is relatively poor, the other quite rich.

Both have recently seen unarmed civilians, including children, brutally slaughtered, tortured, and kidnapped by their enemies. Both are sending their sons and daughters, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, into brutal battles.

Both democracies are struggling with the economic challenges of war: the increased spending on the means of defense and destruction, the reduced revenues from shuttered businesses and empty hotels, the inevitable

***Niall Ferguson*** *is the Milbank Family Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, where he is chairman of the History Working Group and co-leader of the Hoover History Lab. He also participates in Hoover's task forces on military history, digital currency, global policy, and semiconductors.*

inflationary pressures. Both are wrestling with the political strains of conflict, too: the recriminations about whether war could have been avoided, or whether it could more easily be won. And both must manage the elaborate diplomacy of wartime: wooing or placating allies, begging for or borrowing arms and money, trying to avoid making more enemies, trying to avoid making intolerable concessions in return for peace.

And yet, despite all these resemblances, these two fighting democracies are treated much differently by the world. One is praised for its heroism, the other is condemned—even accused of genocide and ethnic cleansing. One is encouraged to fight on to victory, "for as long as it takes," the other is told to agree to an immediate cease-fire before victory has been achieved. The armed forces of one country can do no wrong, those of the other are charged with "war crimes."

After a week spent first in Germany, at the annual Munich Security Conference, and then in Israel, I am very struck by these differences. Over seven intense days, I met not only with Ukrainian and Israeli decision makers but also Ukrainian and Israeli soldiers and civilians. I did not find myself feeling more sympathetic to one or the other. Rather, I felt an almost identical compassion: for the agonizing dilemmas of the leaders, for the heroism and self-sacrifice of the "ordinary" people, who are in both cases anything but ordinary—the female army medic who was taken prisoner and tortured at Mariupol, the young man who on October 7 raced to rescue families from the depredations of Hamas.

***The case for Palestinian statehood rests about as much on a caricature of history as the case against Ukrainian statehood.***

## TWIN ENEMIES

How can we explain the fact that Ukraine is lionized and Israel reviled? Why were there no Russians or pro-Russians in Munich to justify Russian president Vladimir Putin's war on Ukraine but at least a dozen representatives or proponents of the Palestinians?

Is it because the enemies of Ukraine and Israel are in some way different? That cannot be the reason. The Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran—Hamas's sponsor and Israel's true existential threat—are of course far from identical, one predominantly Orthodox Christian, the latter predominantly Shia Muslim. Yet in other ways, Russia and Iran are like two peas in a pod. They are sham democracies that hold phony

elections. They are brutal autocracies in which the rule of law and human rights count for nothing. They murder without compunction their enemies at home and abroad. They each pose threats that extend far beyond Ukraine and Israel.

Yet I have friends and relatives who are critical of Israel in terms they would never direct against Ukraine. I can think of one eminent historian who lets not a day pass without posting his support for the Palestinians, whereas he would rather be seen dead than endorse Russia's war aims in Ukraine. To him, the Palestinians have a just cause. They lost their land as a result of military defeats at the hands of Israel in 1948 and 1967. Their attempts to win it back by means of war, terrorism, and insurrection have all failed, but to him that somehow only makes their plight more poignant.

***One nation is praised for its heroism, the other condemned; one is encouraged to fight on to victory, the other to accept a cease-fire.***

Such attitudes hold an extraordinary sway over millions of people. Yet they are not, to my mind, a great deal better than the arguments propounded by Putin to Tucker Carlson in their notorious interview earlier this year. For the case for Palestinian statehood rests about as much on a caricature of history as the case against Ukrainian statehood. To call Israel a "settler-colonial" state is as preposterous as to claim that Ukraine has been Russian since 1654.

Thirty years ago, Israel agreed with the Palestine Liberation Organization on the beginnings of Palestinian self-government—"a separate Palestinian entity short of a state," in the words of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin—under the Oslo Accords. Prime Minister Ehud Barak went even further at Camp David in 2000, but PLO leader Yasser Arafat walked away from the table. Have the Palestinians enhanced the case for statehood in the subsequent years? No. The Palestinian Authority is an oxymoron; Palestinians despise it, and it has no authority. A large majority of the inhabitants of Gaza, to say nothing of the Palestinians of the West Bank, prefer Hamas. The nature of Hamas was laid bare on October 7, which should be regarded as an event disqualifying the Palestinians from self-government, not entitling them to it.

***The Palestinian Authority is an oxymoron. Palestinians despise it, and it has no authority.***

The contrast with Ukraine is striking. The Ukrainians had independence thrust upon them in 1991, when the Soviet Union collapsed. The first twenty-three years of Ukrainian self-government were an unedifying spectacle. The country was riddled with corruption and run by oligarchs. Yet a decade ago, in 2014, a new generation of Ukrainians stood up in Kyiv's Maidan Square and risked their lives to defy and chase away a crooked puppet of Moscow. When Putin seized Crimea and sent his "little green men" into the Donbas region in 2014, the Ukrainians fought. And when he unleashed the full might of Russia's colonial army eight years later, they fought again—like lions—driving the invaders back from the gates of Kyiv and then from Kharkiv and Kherson.

***Kyiv and Jerusalem are ancient and beautiful cities, reborn in our time as capitals of free peoples prepared to fight and die for their freedoms.***

To visit Kyiv and Jerusalem is to be struck by profound similarities. These ancient and beautiful cities have been reborn in our time as capitals of free peoples who are prepared to fight and, if necessary, die for their freedoms. National flags fly everywhere, yet, as democratic peoples, Ukrainians and Israelis nevertheless reserve the right to quarrel among themselves.

No one abroad has a bad word to say about Volodymyr Zelensky, the Ukrainian president, and no one abroad has a good word to say about Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's veteran prime minister. In the United States and Europe, I am regularly reminded of Netanyahu's continuing trial for corruption or of the reliance of his current coalition on extremist parties. The nontrivial problem of Ukrainian corruption is swept aside as a MAGA talking point.

It is a different story inside Ukraine and Israel. In Kyiv, there is criticism of Zelensky's handling of the war, especially since the debatable decision to replace his commander in chief. In Jerusalem, I heard not only noisy protests against the government but also an off-the-record tribute from one of Netanyahu's principal political rivals to his political skill.

## HOW THE WORLD SEES THEM

We are left with the puzzle of what begins to look like a double standard. Why do we prefer Ukraine's struggle for its survival as an independent democracy to Israel's? One possible answer, which is widely believed in Israel itself, is simply that the world remains—as it has been since time immemorial—rife with

anti-Semitism. And yet anti-Semitism is not a sufficient explanation for Israel's international isolation. As important is the striking failure of Israeli public diplomacy, public relations, and propaganda. In this field, where Ukraine has excelled, Israel has abjectly failed. And I think I now understand why.

It is partly, of course, a matter of leadership style. Machiavelli says that a prince must either make himself loved or make himself feared. The former comedian Zelensky specializes in eliciting love. Netanyahu, the former paratrooper, prefers to be feared.

Moreover, Zelensky is still a novice at politics, compared with Netanyahu. The Ukrainian leader is only just beginning to learn the hard way that those who pledge their love and support, even "for as long as it takes," are not to be relied upon. The Israeli leader understood many years ago that the United States is a fickle ally.

Viewed dispassionately, the Israelis have a better case to make than the Ukrainians. The latter insist that if only the United States and the European Union will give them the maximum quantity of military tools, they will finish the job, driving the Russian army back as far as the borders of 1991, after which peace talks may begin. The time frame is, to say the least, unclear, but it must certainly be years.

The Israelis are more realistic. They say: "Give us two more months to finish off Hamas as a military and political force in Gaza. We are close to victory. And, contrary to the other side's claims, we have achieved this with lower civilian casualties than in any comparable battle for a densely populated area with a hostile population and an enemy tunnel network. But you must let us destroy the remaining Hamas battalions in Rafah, or Hamas will simply reconstitute itself. And after the horrors of October 7, we cannot tolerate that."

And there might have been far more bloodshed. Netanyahu could have heeded his defense minister, Yoav Gallant, who urged a pre-emptive attack on Hezbollah in Lebanon in the wake of October 7. The Middle East was a hair's breadth away from the full-scale regional war so dreaded in Washington. But Netanyahu overruled Gallant. Destroy Hamas, he argued, and then negotiate. Pursue talks initiated by the Lebanese government and encouraged by the United States to get Hezbollah to withdraw its forces

***No future Israeli prime minister could disagree with Netanyahu on this point: Iran is the "octopus" whose tentacles most directly threaten Israel.***

from the Lebanon-Israel border. Resume discussions with Saudi Arabia that may yet produce a rapprochement with Israel and a defense treaty with the United States. And, if the world insists, resume the old back-and-forth about a Palestinian state.

## FIGHTING FOR THE WEST

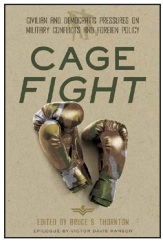
Netanyahu was careful in recent years not to antagonize Russia or China but instead to concentrate all attention on Iran and its proxies. He perfected the art of defying the United States while continuing to rely on it. No future prime minister could disagree with him that Iran is the "octopus" whose tentacles most directly threaten Israel.

Israelis are threatened with annihilation, as their ancestors were in the Holocaust. For many Israelis, there is a bitter irony that Ukraine—where so many Jews were murdered during World War II—has become the West's favorite just cause, while Israel must endure condemnation at the International Court of Justice and the United Nations.

The irony will be even richer if, as I strongly suspect, it turns out that Israel is waging war more cleverly than Ukraine. Similar though the two countries' predicaments may be, one is in fact much more likely to be victorious than the other—and it is not Ukraine.

If there were a few more Machiavellians in Munich, we might drop the double standard by which we judge the two democracies at war today. Both are fighting for Western civilization, one against Russian imperialism, the other against Iranian-backed Islamism. And we should want both to win—not just the one with the longer odds of victory. ■





# *It Seemed So Easy*

## Three **stubborn illusions about world peace** we must no longer entertain.

***By Jakub Grygiel***

Simultaneous crises are threatening global stability and taxing US power and attention. Russia's war in Ukraine, Hamas and Iran's aggression against Israel, and China's threats in the Pacific are all products of the grand ambitions of evil imperial regimes.

The West has cultivated illusions that have allowed these threats to rise and have left it unprepared. Three in particular are deeply ingrained in the American and European mindsets.

The first is that leaders are responsible for wars and these countries are our rivals only because of their bad leaders. Secretary of

### *Key points*

» The hostility of Russia, Iran, China, and even Hamas can have deep cultural roots and popular support. Deep enmities can't be transcended through leadership changes.

» The formative power of international institutions—especially their ability to pacify—has been greatly exaggerated.

» States engage in trade to become wealthy and competitive, not peaceful.

***Jakub Grygiel*** *is a national security visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution, a senior adviser at the Marathon Initiative, and an associate professor of politics at the Catholic University of America. His latest book is* ***Return of the Barbarians: Confronting Non-State Actors from Ancient Rome to the Present*** *(Cambridge University Press, 2018).*

***CHECKMATE: The "Big Three" World War II leaders—Josef Stalin, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill—meet in Tehran in 1943. Roosevelt, who hoped the Soviet Union would behave better once it joined the United Nations, counted on global governance to check national ambitions.*** [National Museum of the US Navy]

State Antony Blinken said of the Ukraine invasion at the United Nations Security Council in September 2022: "One man chose this war. And one man can end it."

But the war isn't just Vladimir Putin's; it is Russia's war. In a June 2022 poll, 75 percent of Russians either definitely or mostly supported the actions of Russia's military forces. One respondent asserted that "war is the locomotive of history" and that it was time for Russia to assert its independence. The Russian Orthodox Church is an instigator of the war and has formed a deep culture of Russian nationalism and imperial entitlement that extends beyond the Kremlin. The result is that Russia can incur massive casualties—recently around a thousand a day, according to some estimates—without much political backlash.

The hostility of Russia, Iran, China, and even Hamas can have deep cultural roots and popular support that allows these actors to engage in long

and devastating conflicts. Removing a bad leader or regime doesn't necessarily turn an enemy into a responsible actor.

The second illusion is that international organizations and global governance can overcome contentious national and regional politics. Because these institutions are the sources of international order for many Western policy makers, the primary objective of their diplomacy is to bring more states, democracies or not, under their pacifying umbrella. President Franklin D. Roosevelt hoped the Soviet Union would behave better once it joined the United Nations, and was willing to postpone hard negotiations with Moscow to have it participate in the founding of the United Nations. Western leaders hoped China would become a responsible stakeholder in the global order once a member of institutions such as the World Trade Organization.

***The Ukraine conflict isn't just Vladimir Putin's war. It's Russia's war.***

But like Russia, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China hasn't become a benign geopolitical actor after participating for more than two decades in the WTO. The formative power of international institutions has been greatly exaggerated, and the grand strategy based on it has left the West unprepared for the hard competition, including war, in front of us.

The third illusion is that greater trade and wealth produce peace. For decades, German foreign policy has followed the principle of "change through trade." Berlin thought trading with Russia, China, and other bad actors would ease their hostility and turn them into reliable partners. The United States thought trade with China would gradually alter Beijing's incentives by creating a peace-loving middle class and deeper diplomatic ties.

***Trade doesn't necessarily lead to peace. Trade also fosters the desire for power.***

The Western bet that expanding trade would overcome ideological differences and political rivalries was wrong. States engage in trade to become wealthy and competitive, not peaceful. Often, they want to be wealthy so they can attack their enemies and dominate others. As Russia has done with Europe since Peter the Great, China now is pursuing more trade with the United States to gain an advantage over its commercial partner.

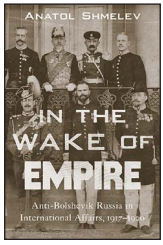
Trade also fosters the desire for power. Many states that traded and grew economically as a result developed large power-projection capabilities, most often through navies. Venice in the eleventh century, Britain in the seventeenth, Germany and the United States at the turn of the twentieth—each backed its commerce with a powerful navy, leading to great clashes.

***Military might lets states act in their own interests without constraints imposed by other powers.***

Military might, not interdependence, gives states the ability to act in their best interests without constraints imposed by other powers. Our rivals have been arming while the West, Europe especially, hoped that trade would render military capabilities useless.

Deep enmities can't be transcended through leadership changes, international organizations, or trade. They can be checked, and when necessary defeated, only through military power. ◘





# BATTLEGROUNDS

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# Drones: Something Old, Something New

**Robot weapons are reshaping the battlefield, and artificial intelligence will shape it further. But today, as in the past, victory depends on strategic breakthroughs.**

***By Seth Cropsey***

The Ukraine war has been dubbed the first drone war—and the first "Starlink war"—considering the publicly apparent role of advanced technologies in the conflict. What might it teach us about the future of military power? More specifically, is the Ukraine war a watershed moment after which unmanned, distributed technologies will dominate the battlefield, or is it

### *Key points*

» The battlefield logic of World War I—indirect-fire artillery and the need to build up reserves for a breakthrough—is just as valid today as in 1914.

» The "stalemate" in Ukraine stems from a combination of drone-artillery usage and minefields. Both sides lack the manpower and materiel for the decisive punch.

» Combat lessons always have a broader context.

***Seth Cropsey** is president of the Yorktown Institute. He served as a naval officer and as deputy undersecretary of the Navy.*

a remarkably public display of a broader set of evolutions in the character of warfare?

A clear-eyed assessment of the battlefield realities in Ukraine demonstrates that drones are largely in continuity with the development of military capabilities coherently understood since the late nineteenth century. They carry to maturation concepts under long-term historical development. By generating a widespread *reconnaissance-strike complex,* drones in Ukraine allow both Ukraine and Russia to fight in a truly systemic manner, bringing to fruition the logic of the modern battlefield. There is much to learn from the Ukrainian case—and those who learn its lessons are likely to gain military power. But its lessons are primarily intellectual, not technical or material.

## WIDE AND DEEP

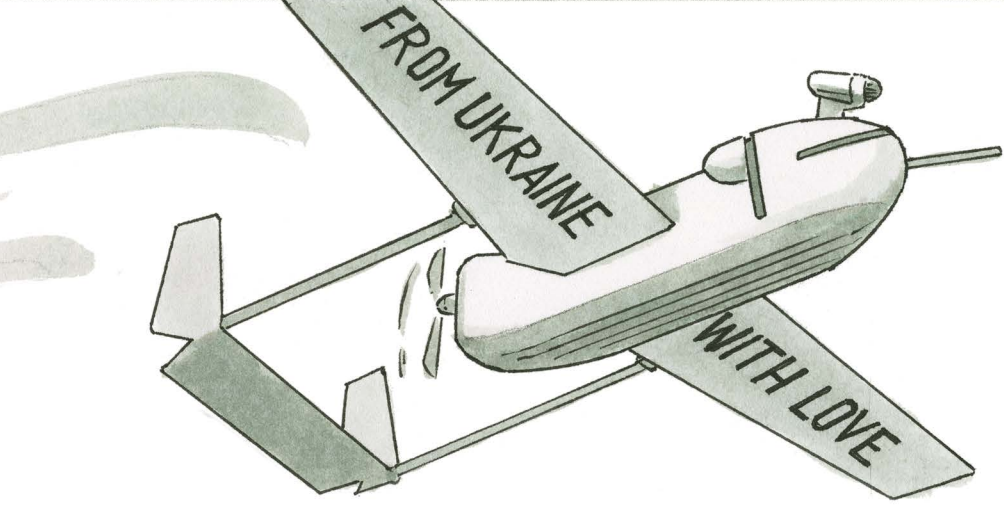
Ukraine has held off the Russian onslaught through a combination of tactical skill and operational competence. At the beginning of the full-scale invasion in February 2022, Russia held every military advantage. It had a larger, more sophisticated combat force, greater reserves, more ammunition, more numerous and more advanced armored vehicles, and an air force capable of prosecuting a large-scale strike campaign across Ukraine's strategic depth.

Russia's initial campaign plan leveraged every one of these advantages. Russia sought to execute a large scale, country-wide bombardment followed up by a swift ground invasion that would seize and hold cities within days. The vaunted Russian paratroopers would deliver the coup de grace, hitting Kyiv within twenty-four hours of the initial attack, allowing Russian armored formations from Belarus to enter the city in force by Saturday, February 26, 2022. Had this gone as planned, the Ukrainian government might well have collapsed. Indeed, it very nearly did. Had Ukraine's special-operations forces not held Hostomel Airport for a crucial few hours on February 24, Russia would have smashed into the capital. Even so, it took a tenacious, well-executed defense of Kyiv's outskirts, combined with resistance in other major cities to Kyiv's east, to spoil the Russian plan.

Modern military history demonstrates that barring a decisive initial victory, most wars settle into a long-term positional rhythm, broken only by societal collapse or a well-designed, well-executed series of offensives over months or years. The Great War is paradigmatic in this case. The initial German punch failed to encircle and destroy the French armies, triggering a race to the Channel that ultimately generated a positional stalemate. The Eastern Front had more movement, but even the Brusilov Offensive of 1916, the most

successful Russian offensive of the war, lacked the momentum to trigger a strategic collapse, and ultimately bled Russia white. The Second World War also had positional characteristics, despite the dominance of enormous tank battles in the popular imagination. The Soviet General Staff's masterstrokes at Stalingrad and Kursk took months of careful preparation, and brutal breakthrough battles. The exceptions—Israel's smashing victories in 1967 and 1973—prove the rule. After all, just a year before the Yom Kippur War of 1973, the North Vietnamese army launched an enormous


[Taylor Jones—for the *Hoover Digest*]




conventional offensive against South Vietnam, which ultimately failed to generate a strategic breakthrough at high cost.

The necessity of the breakthrough battle stems from changes in the character of war that began in the mid-nineteenth century. Indirect-fire artillery combined with rail-based long-range transportation and telegraphy to expand the battlespace in width and depth. This necessitated a new military logic that progressed beyond the linear tactical model that dominated early modern warfare, and which Napoleon ultimately perfected. No longer could campaigns be won with a single decisive engagement—Austerlitz was both the apex and the final instance of an age in warfare.

Moreover, the development of the modern bureaucratic state depersonalized military leadership. It is no coincidence that the final personalized battles of the nineteenth century occurred at the creation of the German Empire, which marked the final ascendance of bureaucratic governance and the destruction of the chivalric model that dominated from the tenth century. Campaigns had to be won over time in a series of engagements, individually disconnected, but made whole through a coherent strategic scheme.

The Great War's battlefield logic, defined by indirect-fire artillery and the need to accumulate reserves for a breakthrough of operational significance, still holds true today, and held true despite the apparent distinctions of combined-arms mechanized maneuver warfare—after all, a tank is a mobile artillery piece, while an aircraft-dropped bomb serves the same purpose as a heavy artillery shell. The logic is identical: winning a campaign requires coordinating engagements across space and time to collapse the enemy systemically, both in physical terms by breaking through defensive lines and in intellectual terms by overwhelming adversary processing capacity.


***KEY PLAYER: A Korean Air KUS-FS reconnaissance drone takes flight in February. Drones, though futuristic, are one element of a "reconnaissance-strike complex," a view of military capabilities understood since the late nineteenth century.*** [Korea Open Government License]

Space-based assets, long-range precision-guided missiles, and stealth aircraft are simply variations on a theme.

## HARMONY

This helps us better understand what we see in Ukraine. Both Ukraine and Russia are undergoing a process of military adaptation akin to that of the Great War. Drones employed en masse, linked to an effective data processing system and a distributed-fires network, create an increasingly mature reconnaissance-strike complex. The term originates in Soviet military theory, denoting a system that combines long-range sensors and precision weapons to attack the enemy's operational depth. Its tactical cousin, a reconnaissance-fires complex, is on display in Ukraine today. In reality, however, these two systems blend into each other, since attacking the enemy at depth on the modern battlefield, replete with sensors and disruption mechanisms, and conducted at scale, requires harmonizing tactical and operational fires. Put simply, the close fight and the deep fight must have a synergy to them—a reality that US planners have understood and which the most talented Soviet theorists began to grasp in the early 1920s.

***History shows that absent a decisive initial victory, most wars settle into a long-term positional rhythm.***

## Evolution, not Revolution

The success of high-tech weapons in Ukraine and Israel seems to manifest the prophecies of a revolution in military affairs. "The future of war will be dictated and waged by drones," warns Eric Schmidt, former CEO of Google and a science adviser to the White House and the US military. To some, such developments demand unprecedented legal and political regulation. UN experts have warned that drone strikes will be abused because "they make it easier to kill without risk to a state's forces." If intervention is too easy, these critics argue, states will be tempted to turn too quickly to force as a solution and to wage war too easily upon civilians.

Rushing to judgment on military technology would be a serious mistake. It is undeniable that new technologies are changing daily life, both civilian and military. New kinds of weapons, from robotic drones to attacks on computer networks, do offer the potential to change armed conflict. Nevertheless, robotics, cyber, and space may not trigger a wholesale change in the nature of warfare. Instead, the precision and speed of new technologies may help reduce the destructiveness of harm from war and help spare civilians.

Calls for legal regulation not only will fail but also could be counterproductive. Early regulation of military technology has rarely, if ever, succeeded when nations were still learning its costs and benefits. Agreement is especially unlikely today because nations would find it difficult, if not impossible, to verify compliance on computer activity or miniaturized, robotic attack vehicles.

There are two reasons to resist premature bans on advanced military technology. First, the world is becoming more chaotic. Western nations still need to defend against territorial aggression and terrorist attacks. And if the costs of war decline while the effectiveness of force improves, nations may be able to wage a more effective defense. Advanced technology can act as a force multiplier. We should welcome technologies that make intervention more precise and less costly.

Second, these new weapons may allow nations to compel others to stop these greater threats to international order more effectively. Rather than carry out attacks that could kill thousands, Western nations could use advanced technologies to paralyze, for example, Iran's banking system or stock market.

Academic commentators and NGO advocates have rushed in with confident pronouncements on what international law must be understood to prohibit. The United States will be better off if it does not allow such abstract legal reasoning to limit the way it uses new weapons technologies. Today's more focused weapons should cause us to rethink the very aim and purpose of attacks.

We cannot pretend that the new technologies make no difference. And we cannot ignore their potential for enhancing security, even as we grapple with the challenges.

*—John Yoo (excerpted from **Strategika**)*

Drones are an integral element of Russian and Ukrainian reconnaissance-strike complexes, since they provide an enormous amount of data and thereby allow the commander to identify and prioritize targets more efficiently, if he has a fast enough integration and analysis system to separate extraneous information from crucial reconnaissance. The "stalemate" we see on the battlefield today stems from the combination of drone-artillery usage and minefields. Ukraine and Russia both lack the manpower and materiel for a massive breakthrough punch—Ukraine because of Western drip-feeding of materiel, Russia because of the political choice to backfill units that suffer atrocious losses rather than accumulating a real reserve. The side that properly harmonizes the close and deep fight, and leverages capabilities to ultimately facilitate a breakthrough and exploitation, will be the victor.

***Today, campaigns have to be won over time in a series of engagements, individually disconnected, but made whole through a coherent strategic scheme.***

Mass employment of drones, particularly at the tactical level, has indicated an evolution in the character of combat. But its logic remains fundamentally identical to that of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. An Imperial German artillery commander would be shocked at the amount of data provided to the modern Ukrainian battery, but he would largely understand the tactical logic of engagement decisions.

Air-naval combat has also shown the logic of reconnaissance-strike complexes quite unmistakably since the early twentieth century. The difference is the ocean's vastness complicates the reconnaissance problem. Naval history is replete with instances of "encounter battles," engagements both sides stumble into by virtue of scouting limitations but that nevertheless decide the broader campaign. Moreover, even when one side chooses to fight, as the United States did at Midway in 1942, far more than half the problem was finding the enemy. The war's Mediterranean campaign provides a useful example of the characteristics a mature scouting complex generates: both the British and the Germans struggled to break into mutually competitive anti-access networks because ground-based aviation, considering technical realities, could mass against an enemy surface group relatively quickly. The Cold

***Austerlitz was both the apex and the final instance of an age in warfare.***

War's HAYSTACK and UPTIDE programs—US Navy attempts to increase detection time of Soviets and allow American carrier groups to launch strikes on advancing Soviet forces in Central Europe—also demonstrated this logic.

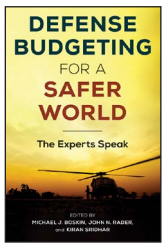
## A NETWORK, NOT AN INDIVIDUAL WEAPON

Ukraine has waged a creative air-naval campaign to break Russia's hold on the Black Sea and undermine its control of Crimea. Its spectacular employment of naval drones does have a programmatic implication for other navies: in the littorals or enclosed seas, cheap naval drones can be used to hit isolated enemy targets. However, Ukrainian naval drones are only the final element of a much broader system, which includes an air- and likely space-based reconnaissance network, supplemented with human sources, a concerted strike campaign executed by standard long-range missiles and attack aircraft, special-operations sabotage actions, and most critically, a coherent operational design that has broken apart the Russian air defense network. Combat lessons must always be put in their broader context. Otherwise, much as on land, supposed implications can be badly misleading.

***Ukrainian naval drones, however successful, are only the final element of a much broader system.***

The US military and allied militaries should undoubtedly procure more drones of all types, an objective for which the United States' insufficiently developed industrial base is woefully and dangerously unprepared. But they cannot forget that the baseline logic of combat remains relatively fixed and has been for just over a century. ◼





# *Conflicts for Our Century*

## Trusting in **half measures and old models,** America has yet to grasp that the country is at war.

***By Thomas H. Henriksen***

America is at war—an undeclared war Washington is trying to conduct as if it were yesterday's Cold War. The Biden administration needs to understand the changed nature of our adversaries. Their new belligerency is not being deterred—the belligerents aggressively prod and poke just up to the line of US retaliation without crossing it.

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the United States were wary of a chain reaction from a spark leading to a nuclear conflagration. Hence, both superpowers usually stayed deterred. The great close call, the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, chastened both Washington and Moscow. The nature of confrontations today departs from the old deterrence.

The current hostilities in Ukraine and the Middle East point to major conflicts, surpassing anything similar during the Cold War. Yes, the Pentagon waged large-scale wars in Korea and Vietnam during the containment age, but both were fought on the global periphery, largely against local opponents, and without direct Soviet involvement. Today, Moscow is engaged against Kyiv in the heart of Europe. Despite the gravity of Washington's military

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commitments, it treats these and other battlefronts as if it doesn't understand deterrence.

Deterrence has failed against Russia, and it shows signs of doing the same against China, North Korea, and especially Iran.

## SHATTERED COMPLACENCY

Seeing the contemporary struggle through Cold War lenses is not only wrong but also dangerous. The eras are different. In the immediate post–World War II period, the Kremlin was checked, in part, by US development of nuclear arms, the formation of NATO, and Soviet internal problems. The Red Army settled in as a preserver of the status quo. The USSR's tank-led interventions into 1956 Hungary and 1968 Czechoslovakia focused on preserving the communist order, not a fresh imperial conquest, as in Moscow's intervention into Ukraine.

***Washington treats today's battlefronts as if it doesn't understand deterrence.***

Moreover, Vladimir Putin's war against Ukraine is being actively supported and supplied by the non-European nations of North Korea and Iran, both deeply hostile to the United States. Little like this occurred in the bipolar standoff with Moscow, when the world saw the Kremlin backing up its surrogates. Now, former satellites reciprocate by dispatching Iranian drones and North Korean weapons to hard-pressed Russian soldiers in Ukraine.

The People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation make no bones about their diplomatic solidarity and strategic animus toward the United States. This transforming geopolitical realignment of the two anti-American superpowers represents a deep change in the international order, which has been unfolding by fits and starts over the past half decade. The two titans, in fact, opposed each other from the early 1960s on. Since the Cold War, they have grown closer in outright opposition to the United States and its allied democratic governments around the world.

Never has America faced such an array of adversaries since it burst onto the international stage in the Spanish-American War of the late nineteenth century. Conflicts came and went, but the United States remained protected behind its ocean moats. It won two global wars and prevailed during the bipolar standoff with the Soviet Union, enjoying a hegemony among world powers until the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 shattered its complacency. Aligned with Moscow is China, ranked as having the second-largest

economy in the world. Beijing is, if anything, even more politically ambitious than Russia to have its day in the sun.

Even as the Biden administration furnishes arms to our hard-pressed partners in Ukraine and Israel, it seems to be in selective denial. As valuable as this support is, Washington's largesse depletes American armories at a time when the Department of Defense should be contracting to restock missiles, rockets, and the sought-after 155mm artillery rounds expended in defense of Ukraine and Israel. Why hasn't the White House grasped the nettle? Complacency about shortages means the Pentagon might face a multifront war with empty guns. Imagine a full-court Chinese invasion of Taiwan or an island-wide embargo to seal it off from rescue. Does the United States have the wherewithal to forestall a Chinese invasion and sustain a resistance to it for a lengthy period? Of course not.

***Iranian drones and North Korean weapons are reinforcing Russian soldiers in Ukraine.***

Politicians have raised their voices for increased weapons deliveries. For their part, defense industries want assurances that government demand for arms will not drop after the crises pass.

Beyond Washington, supply-chain snarls need unclogging and new pipelines need to be opened.

## NEUTRALITY DRIFTS INTO HOSTILITY

Not long before this current phase of denial, America unwisely adopted neutrality while its enemies built tanks, warships, and goose-stepping battalions. During the 1930s, rather than re-arming against the emerging threats from Nazi Germany and imperial Japan, Congress veered down the path of neutrality, passing a series of laws designed to stay clear of another European war.

The legislative branch passed the first Neutrality Act in mid-1935, prohibiting the export of weapons, munitions, and other military implements to warlike nations in conflicts. Other such legislation over the next four years included the prohibition of loans to belligerent powers. The isolationist mood persisted as war broke out in Asia with the Japanese invasion of China in 1937 and in Europe with the German attack against Poland in 1939. American public opinion did not shift until the Pearl Harbor attack, two years later.

While the 1930s saw American isolationist feelings cloud strategic thinking about an impending war, the early 2020s witnessed a reluctance to understand the gravity of the threats confronting the United States.

America, in fact, is in shooting wars. The Russian invasion of Ukraine taxes US warfighting equipment as the Pentagon sends a variety of artillery, missiles, and planes to combat the Kremlin's intrusion. Instructors from the US armed forces train Ukrainian soldiers, pilots, and special forces in neighboring countries.

Washington's Ukrainian "front" became more complex and more difficult after the October 7 Hamas terrorist offensive into Israel. American military commitment to Israel has increased alongside rising tensions in the region. Iran, the decades-old adversary of both the United States and Israel (the "big Satan" and "little Satan"), has resorted to Iranian-affiliated groups in Syria and Iraq to target US ground troops with drones and rockets in both those countries. Rather than relying on its local proxy forces, the Pentagon has retaliated by conducting airstrikes against the Iranian-backed groups in Syria. This represents an escalation of US military actions against Iran.

***In a nightmare scenario, the Pentagon might face a multifront war with empty guns.***

More and more, the proxy wars resemble one-on-one wars between the two superpowers as Washington's Ukrainian allies battle Russian forces with greater participation from American military assistance. In the Syria and Iraq theaters, the Pentagon is also more directly intervening by striking Iran's allied groups from the air. The American arm's-length strategy is giving way to unilateral action.

Iran, an implacable adversary since the late 1970s, also actively pursues nuclear bombs and intercontinental missiles capable of hitting targets in Israel and Western Europe. The Iranian march to nuclear arms remains undeterred by either the West's warnings and an array of economic sanctions or its offers of better relations in return for arms-control agreements.

The list of America's enemies doesn't end here. It includes North Korea, a recent supplier of weapons to Russia; Pyongyang also taunts the Pentagon with provocations along its border with South Korea. North Korea's nuclear weapons tests and ballistic missile firings set East Asia on edge. Additionally, terrorist bands linked to Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria attack through the African Sahel region. These two violent predators and their offshoots pose threats to Americans and their interests.

## TAKE ACTION

Washington no longer understands the strategy of deterrence to hold the West's enemies at bay. America also looks overextended and unable to meet its commitments. At a minimum, Washington seems incapable of backstopping the anti-Russian forces in Ukraine and leading NATO's defense. The Department of Defense's expenditure of bombs and bullets has outstripped its stockpiles, and there can be no deterrence without adequate munitions.

At the least, the Biden administration should launch a concerted rearmament campaign, perhaps headed by a weapons czar, empowered to cut through red tape and mobilize the arms industry to open more production lines. It ought to enlist the services of someone like Robert Gates, who was President George W. Bush's secretary of defense during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. At the time, US soldiers and Marines were being killed by roadside bombs, but the Defense Department lacked vehicles to reduce casualties. After Gates assumed his duties, he sprang into action, pushing until the United States had shipped twenty-seven thousand Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles to Iraq, saving countless American lives.

***A weapons czar could be empowered to cut through red tape and mobilize the US arms industry.***

It is high time to take stock of our new security threats and defend ourselves.

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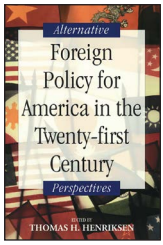


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# *I Spy AI . . .*

**Hoover fellow Amy B. Zegart says artificial intelligence can utterly transform intelligence gathering—if policy makers make some tough changes. "It's not just 'add a little AI and stir.' "**

***By Dylan Walsh***

The amount of data on Earth is doubling roughly every two years. Much of this comes from sources that are publicly available—social media feeds, commercial satellites, and media outlets around the world.

For Amy B. Zegart, a leading expert on US intelligence agencies who has served on the National Security Council staff and holds several appointments across Stanford, the implications for the world of spycraft are clear: a profession that once hunted diligently for secrets is now picking through huge haystacks for one or two needles of insight, and that's precisely the kind of project at which AI excels.

But the adoption and deployment of these technologies must be done thoughtfully, says Zegart, who recently joined the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered AI (HAI) as an associate director.

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***Amy B. Zegart** is the Morris Arnold and Nona Jean Cox Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution and a member of Hoover's working groups on national security and on intellectual property, innovation, and prosperity. She is also co-chair of Hoover's Technology, Economics, and Governance Working Group. She is a senior fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies and associate director of the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence (HAI).*
***Dylan Walsh** is a writer for the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence.*


***JUDGMENT: Hoover senior fellow Amy B. Zegart calls for caution when putting artificial intelligence to work: "These tools are good if the future looks like the past. But if the future doesn't look like the past, then AI is not going to help you very much."*** [Eric Draper—Hoover Institution]

"Any new technology comes with good news and bad news, benefits and vulnerabilities," she explained in a recent interview that touched on her hopes for and concerns over the use of AI in US intelligence gathering. "AI is no different."

***Dylan Walsh:*** I know you've written a book on this [*Spies, Lies, and Algorithms: The History and Future of American Intelligence* (Princeton, 2022)], but let's start with the basics: where do you see AI being most useful in the intelligence world?

***Amy B. Zegart:*** It has become very clear that AI is transforming not only the future but also our ability to understand the future. This is a profound opportunity for US intelligence agencies and people outside intelligence agencies to better anticipate threats and to prevent bad things from happening. Specifically, I think AI can be incredibly useful inside US intelligence agencies for augmenting the abilities of humans—accelerating analysis, aiding pattern recognition, better understanding what we know,

and divining insights from large amounts of data that humans can't connect as readily.

***Walsh:*** You've said that getting intelligence communities to adopt these technologies is much harder than it might seem. Why?

***Zegart:*** There are a couple of reasons. Number one, there are eighteen agencies in the US intelligence community and they all operate with bespoke technology. Now imagine stitching together and structuring and labeling all this data in a way that it can be seamlessly integrated. That alone is a hard enough technical challenge.

But then there are cultural challenges of getting agencies to adopt technology that is from outside the US government, for the most part, and that removes human analysis altogether from tasks that humans once did. That is a very unsettling proposition for many people inside the intelligence community. So, you have this big technical challenge alongside the big cultural challenge.

***Walsh:*** Are there risks of removing people too much, of relying too heavily on these tools?

***Zegart:*** I often joke that there are two kinds of AI challenges in intelligence. The first is not enough AI, and the second is too much AI. In the case of not enough: intelligence analysts are overwhelmed with data and AI holds enormous potential for dealing with this overload. But I think we haven't given enough attention to the "too much AI" problem.

One of the challenges of relying on AI too much is that it can distort what intelligence analysts conclude. I often say that it can lead analysts to count too much on things that can be counted. AI relies on data. The more quantifiable the data, the better. But many of the key indicators of intelligence are not quantifiable: What's morale like inside an army? How much corruption is there inside a regime? What's the mood of a leader today? Those are critical factors in anticipating what could happen, and they're not easily identified by AI.

***"One of the challenges of relying on AI too much is that it can distort what intelligence analysts conclude."***

Another challenge with too much AI is that these tools are good if the future looks like the past. But if the future doesn't look like the past, then AI is not going to help you very much. Those are often the challenges that

intelligence analysts face: discontinuous change. How do we understand and identify indicators of discontinuous change? AI is not so great at that. We need to be very clear about the promise and the pitfalls of AI.

***Walsh:*** You've noted in past interviews how, historically, spy technologies typically originated in the government. Now they come largely from industry. What are the implications of that?

***Zegart:*** This has huge implications. First, a different skill set is required to adopt technology from outside than is needed to invent it inside. You're really asking government bureaucracies to do things in fundamentally different ways. Government bureaucracies do some things really well, by design. They do the same tasks in standard ways, over and over again. They are designed to be fair and to replicate results. What are they not designed to do? They're not designed to adapt very quickly.

***"How do we understand and identify indicators of discontinuous change? AI is not so great at that."***

But for bureaucracies to adopt this technology means they must change how they operate. It's not just "add a little AI and stir." Agencies have to change how they think about buying, training, and using this technology. They ultimately have to change many aspects of what they do. That makes it hard.

***Walsh:*** There is a tight link between intelligence agencies and the policy makers who use intelligence. Does AI change how we think about the policy side?

***Zegart:*** If you think of policy makers as customers, AI could potentially help intelligence agencies better understand what their customers want and how to deliver it. What formats are best suited for informing policy makers about a threat? What are they reading? What do they want more of? AI can help identify and automate answers to these questions.

Perhaps a challenge, though, is that governments are not the only organizations with AI capabilities, which means that intelligence organizations have much more competition than they once did. Anybody who has a laptop can collect, analyze, and diffuse intelligence today.

***Walsh:*** Is that happening?

***Zegart:*** Absolutely. The availability of information on the Internet and the commercial satellite revolution are enabling low-cost remote sensing, which

was previously the province of billion-dollar spy satellites. Pretty much anybody can track troop movements on the ground with unclassified commercial satellite images and use algorithms to help process that imagery faster. Then, they can post what they're finding to X.

If you talk to government officials, they'll tell you that there are a handful of responsible open-source intelligence accounts on X that are doing exactly that and doing it faster than government.

***Walsh:*** What ethical questions are most salient for you when thinking about AI in national security?

***Zegart:*** A few things stick in my mind. The first is about who's in control of developing frontier AI. Right now, we're in a situation where a tiny handful of large corporations are the only organizations in the world capable of making frontier models. This raises governance concerns, not only about security but more generally. Who is responsible for asking tough questions and mitigating risks of AI? Right now, companies do that voluntarily. It's akin to having students grade their own homework. We need independent capabilities at places like HAI and other universities to examine and stress-test LLMs [large language models] before they are deployed.

***"AI is very good at following the rules. Humans are really good at violating rules."***

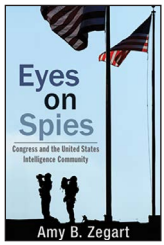
The second obvious set of concerns is making sure that humans and ethics are at the center of how government adopts and uses AI for national security purposes, whether for intelligence or military operations. The Defense Department has had ethical principles for years. Government agencies have typically been very transparent about this concern. That's not to say they can't do better, and it's important for independent academics and others to continue asking tough questions about human-centered AI in national security.

The third set of challenges relates to ethics around crisis decision making in a world of more AI. If you consider nuclear or financial catastrophe, how do we mitigate those risks? AI is very good at following the rules. Humans are really good at violating rules. And in crises, it's often the case that the violation of the rule or the order or standard operating procedure is what avoids catastrophe. We want to have situations where there is space for humans to violate rules to prevent catastrophe.

***Walsh:*** You've noted elsewhere that intelligence in general is a neglected topic in academia. How can a place like Stanford HAI start to address this?

***Zegart:*** I'm so excited about HAI. I think understanding the opportunities and risks of AI in national security is a team sport: we have to have leaders in computer science and social scientists working together on these difficult problems. HAI has been at the forefront of thinking about many issues in AI, and I'm excited to be at the forefront of this one as well.





STANFORD UNIVERSITY

# THE STANFORD EMERGING TECHNOLOGY REVIEW 2023

## A Report on Ten Key Technologies and Their Policy Implications

**CHAIRED BY** Condoleezza Rice, John B. Taylor, Jennifer Widom, and Amy Zegart
**DIRECTED BY** Herbert S. Lin

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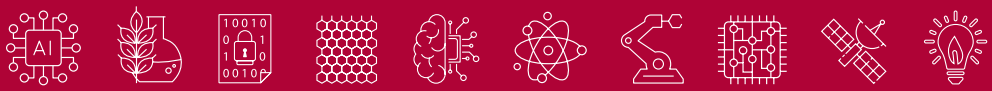
Emerging technologies are transforming societies, economies, and geopolitics, and at a time of great-power competition between the United States and China, the stakes today are especially high. The *Stanford Emerging Technology Review* brings together scientists, engineers, and social scientists to account for new developments at Stanford University in 10 key technology areas, highlight their policy implications, opportunities, and risks, and identify barriers for US government decision makers and private-sector leaders.

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# A Population Implosion

**Humans once dreamed of populating the universe. Instead, our population is set to begin shrinking right here on Earth.**

***By Niall Ferguson***

We used to imagine humanity populating the universe. In Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* (1951), mankind has established a vast multi-planetary empire by the year 47000. "There were nearly twenty-five million inhabited planets in the galaxy," Asimov wrote. "The population of Trantor [the imperial capital] … was well in excess of forty billions."

In Liu Cixin's *Three-Body Problem* (2008), by contrast, we're a cosmic rounding error, bracing ourselves for the terrifying Trisolaran invasion. As the trailer for the new

### Key points

» For many reasons, the total fertility rate—the number of live children the average woman will bear—has been falling since the 1970s.

» Only in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa does fertility remain well above the replacement rate. But there, too, it's expected to plummet.

» When the human population begins to fall, it will do so almost as steeply as it once rose.

***Niall Ferguson*** *is the Milbank Family Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, where he is chairman of the History Working Group and co-leader of the Hoover History Lab. He also participates in Hoover's task forces on military history, digital currency, global policy, and semiconductors. His most recent book is* ***Doom: The Politics of Catastrophe*** *(Penguin Press, 2021).*

***A DIFFERENT FUTURE: Chinese children walk to school. Gone is China's one-child policy, the harshest ever government intervention in human reproductive behavior. Even so, China, like other countries, has dropped below the replacement rate, which means its population is bound to decline.*** [Creative Commons]

Netflix series puts it: "They are coming, and there is nothing you can do to stop them."

When Asimov was born in 1920, the global population was around 1.9 billion. When he published *Foundation,* it was 2.64 billion. By the time of his death in 1992, it was 5.5 billion, nearly three times what it had been at his birth. Considering that there had been a mere 500 million humans when Christopher Columbus landed on the New World, the proliferation of the species *Homo sapiens* in the modern era had been an astonishing feat.

Small wonder that some members of Asimov's generation came to dread overpopulation and fret about an impending Malthusian disaster.

This led to all kinds of efforts to promote contraception and abortion, as described in Matt Connelly's *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (2008). Among these was China's one-child policy, the harshest ever government intervention in human reproductive behavior.

Superficially, these efforts were a complete failure. Frank Notestein, the Princeton demographer who became the founding director of the United Nations Population Division (UNPD), estimated in 1945 that the world's population would be 3.3 billion by the year 2000. In fact, it exceeded 6.1 billion. Today it is estimated to be more than 8 billion. In its most recent projection, the UNPD's median estimate is that the global population will reach 10.4 billion by the mid 2080s, with an upper bound of more than 12 billion by the end of the century.

***Nearly all demographers appreciate that we will likely reach peak humanity this century.***

Yet that seems rather a low-probability scenario. The European Commission's Center of Expertise on Population and Migration projects that the global population will peak at 9.8 billion in the 2070s. According to the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, an independent research organization, it will peak at a lower level and earlier still, at 9.7 billion in 2064.

The key word is *peak*. Nearly all demographers now appreciate that we shall likely reach peak humanity this century. This is not because a lethal pandemic will drive up mortality far more than COVID-19 did, though that possibility should never be ruled out. Nor is it because the UNPD incorporates into its population model any other apocalyptic scenario, whether disastrous climate change or nuclear war.

It is simply because, all over the world, the *total fertility rate* (TFR)—the number of live children the average woman bears in her lifetime—has been falling since the 1970s. In one country after another, it has dropped under the 2.1 threshold (the *replacement rate,* allowing for childhood deaths and sex imbalances), below which the population is bound to decline. This fertility slump is in many ways the most remarkable trend of our era. And it

***Not many people foresaw the global fertility collapse or expected it to happen everywhere.***

is not only Elon Musk who worries that "population collapse is potentially the greatest risk to the future of civilization."

## DECLINE IS WELL UNDER WAY

Our species is not done multiplying, to be sure. But, to quote the UNPD, "More than half of the projected increase in the global population between 2022 and 2050 is expected to be concentrated in just eight countries: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, and the United Republic of Tanzania." That is because already "close to half of the global population lives in a country or area where lifetime fertility is below 2.1 births per woman."

Not many people foresaw the global fertility collapse. Nor did just about anyone expect it to happen everywhere. And I can't recall a single pundit predicting just how low it would go in some countries. In South Korea, the total fertility rate in 2023 is estimated to have been 0.72. In Europe, there is no longer a difference between Roman Catholic and Protestant countries. Italy's current TFR (1.21) is lower than England's (1.44). Nor is there a difference between Christian and Islamic civilizations—those great historical entities whose clashes the historian Samuel Huntington worried about. The US total fertility rate is now 1.62. The figure for the Islamic Republic of Iran is 1.54.

***The Industrial Revolution reduced the importance of children as a source of unskilled labor.***

The timing of this huge demographic transition has varied, to be sure. In the United States, the TFR fell below 2.0 in 1973. In the UK, it happened a year later; in Italy in 1977. The East Asian countries were not far behind: in South Korea, TFR was above 2.0 until 1984; in China, until 1991. Fertility remained higher for longer in the Muslim world, but it fell below 2.0 in Iran as early as 2001. Even in India, the TFR has now fallen below 2.0.

Only in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa does fertility remain well above the replacement rate. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, the average woman still bears more than six children. But there, too, fertility is expected to plummet in the coming decades. The global TFR, according to the UNPD's medium-variant projection, will fall from 2.3 in 2021 to 1.8 in 2100. The differences in estimates of when we reach peak humanity largely hinge on how quickly demographers think family size will shrink in Africa.

## A SPECTRUM OF CHANGE

What are the drivers of the great fertility slump? One theory, according to a thought-provoking 2006 paper by Wolfgang Lutz, Vegard Skirbekk, and Maria Rita Testa, is that "societies progress up the hierarchy of needs from physical survival to emotional self-actualization, and as they do so, rearing children gets short shrift because people pursue other, more individualist aims.… People find other ways to find meaning in life." Another interpretation—advanced in a paper by Ron Lesthaeghe, for example—gives the agency to women, emphasizing that fertility drops as female education and employment rise.

***We can identify a clear correlation between the rise of secularization and the fall of family size.***

Over the past century, beginning in Western Europe and North America, a rising proportion of women have entered higher education and the skilled labor force. Improved education has also given women greater autonomy within relationships, a better understanding of contraception, and greater input into family planning. Many have opted to delay becoming mothers to pursue their careers. And the opportunity cost of having children increases as women's wages rise relative to their male partners.

Another way of looking at the problem is that after its initial kids-in-cotton-mills phase, the Industrial Revolution reduced the importance of children as a source of unskilled labor. As countries develop economically, families invest more in their children, providing them with better education, which increases the cost of raising each individual child.

Cultural change has also played a part. One study estimated that roughly a third of the decline in fertility in the United States between 2007 and 2016 was due to the decline in unintended births. My generation—the baby boomers—were more impulsive and indeed reckless about sex. By contrast, according to the psychologists Brooke Wells and Jean Twenge, millennials have fewer sex partners on average than we did. A 2020 analysis of responses to the General Social Survey revealed higher rates of sexual inactivity among the most recent cohort of twenty- to twenty-four-year-olds than among their predecessors born in the 1970s and '80s. From 2000–2002 to 2016–18, the proportion of eighteen- to twenty-four-year-old men who reported having no sexual activity in the past year increased from 19 percent to 31 percent.

The fact that the declines in sexual activity were most pronounced among students and men with lower incomes and with part-time or no employment suggests that declining sexual activity is economically determined. However, other possible explanations include the "stress and busyness of modern life," the supply of "online entertainment that may compete with sexual activity," elevated rates of depression and anxiety among young adults, the detrimental effect of smartphones on real-world human interactions, and the lack of appeal to women of "hooking up."

The most recent version of the UK National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles revealed a similar marked decline in the frequency of sex in Britain. The return of the "No sex please, we're British" ethos mainly affects married or cohabiting couples and—according to a careful analysis in the *British Medical Journal*—is most likely due to "the introduction of the iPhone in 2007 and the global recession of 2008."

Another key driver of declining fertility has been declining religiosity. Using data in the World Values Survey, we can identify a clear correlation between the rise of secularization and the fall of family size. A fascinating historical anomaly, the early decline of fertility in late-eighteenth-century France—described by the French demographer Alfred Sauvy as "the most important fact" of his country's history—has been plausibly explained by the advance of secular thinking, and therefore of contraceptive practices, in the wake of the religious strife of the previous two centuries.

***To North American and European elites, the simplest solution to the problem of falling fertility seems to be immigration.***

## WHY WON'T PEOPLE REPRODUCE?

Fertility can sometimes go back up—witness the COVID-19 baby "bump." Moreover, according to survey data, many women would like to have more children. In low-fertility countries, according to a 2019 study for the UN Population Fund, there is "a wide gap between fertility aspirations at younger ages and achieved fertility later in life, signaling that many women, men, and couples face obstacles in realizing their fertility plans."

That the main obstacles are the perceived economic costs of a larger family is borne out by the fact that many of the most successful professional women have more than two children. In the words of Moshe Hazan and Hosny Zoabi, "the cross-sectional relationship between fertility and

women's education in the United States has recently become U-shaped.… By substituting their own time for market services to raise children and run their households, highly educated women are able to have more children and work longer hours."

But not everyone can be a supermom with a crew of house managers and nannies. Can governments do anything to push back up fertility across the board? They are certainly trying. Since the 1970s, the number of countries aiming to raise fertility with a variety of government incentives has risen roughly fivefold. But there are no examples I know of in which pro-natal policies have really worked. For years, President Vladimir Putin has urged Russians to have more babies in order to prevent the depopulation of the vast federation he governs. Though Russian fertility rose in the decade after 2000, the TFR never even got close to 2, and has slumped back to 1.5.

***In the end, what Mussolini called "the battle for births" is a losing proposition.***

What Mussolini called "the battle for births" is a losing proposition. The global trend is to make abortion easier. (In the past thirty years, more than sixty countries have altered their abortion laws. All but four—the United States, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Poland—eased access to abortion.) A growing number of countries permit euthanasia or assisted suicide. Average sperm counts have fallen by more than 50 percent in fifty years. No one knows exactly why, but bad food, bad air, and bad lifestyle are the contenders. *How Mankind Chose Extinction* will be an interesting read if anyone is left to write it.

Half a century ago, we worried about *The Population Bomb* (the title of Paul Ehrlich's 1968 bestseller). Now that we can see "peak humanity" within our children's lifetimes—conceivably in the 2060s—why isn't everyone breathing a sigh of relief? I can think of three reasons.

First, the advanced countries that already have declining populations find the consequences of fertility restriction rather melancholy: low economic growth, empty schools, crowded retirement homes, a general lack of youthful vitality.

Second, because the fertility drop came later in the Middle East and North Africa and has barely begun in sub-Saharan Africa, we are seeing a dramatic shift in the global demographic balance in favor of people with darker pigmentation—as a Scotsman married to a Somali, I am doing my part for this trend—many of them Muslims. This worries many of the

mostly white and mostly Christian peoples who were globally dominant from around 1750 to 2000.

Third, the peoples with the highest fertility mostly live in poor places that climate change and armed conflict are making even less appealing. So, they move if they can—through North Africa or Western Asia toward Europe, or via Mexico to the United States—or, to a significant extent, get involved in violent activities (crime or terrorism) where they can't escape.

All this drives up the probability of right-wing politics in the developed world (old people vote for this and they outnumber the young), more conflict (borders can't seriously be defended without at least the threat of violence), the more rapid spread of infectious pathogens, and no effective attempt to address the climate issue.

Yet immigration still seems to North American and European elites to be the simplest solution to the problem of falling fertility. That is why, in high-income countries between 2000 and 2020, the contribution of net international migration to population growth exceeded the balance of births over deaths. What the geopolitical consequences of mass migration will be is anyone's guess. Some Russians worry that the Chinese have designs on their vast Eurasian empire east of the Urals. That seems unlikely if China's population is set to halve between now and 2100. China's problem is not a shortage of space; it is a surplus of empty apartment blocks.

## GRADUALLY, THEN SUDDENLY

In contemplating these and other scenarios, most pundits struggle to grasp that when the human population begins to fall, it will do so not gradually, but almost as steeply as it once rose. "Humanity will not reach a plateau and then stabilize," writes Dean Spears in the *New York Times.* "It will begin an unprecedented decline.... If the world's fertility rate [after 2100] were the same as in the United States today, then the global population would fall from a peak of around ten billion to [less than] two billion about three hundred years later, over perhaps ten generations. And if family sizes remained small, we would continue declining."

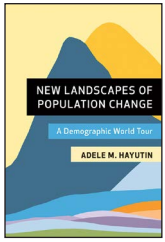
The problem is that this precipitous decline will come a century too late to avert the disastrous consequences of climate change that many today fear—and which are another reason why people will flee Africa, and another reason why young people in Europe say they will have few or no children.

The appropriate science fiction to read is therefore neither Asimov nor Liu Cixin. Begin, instead, with Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826), in which a new Black Death wipes out all but one forlorn specimen of humanity.

Then turn to Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003), in which the addled "Snow-man" is one of just a handful of survivors of a world ravaged by global warming, reckless genetic engineering, and a disastrous attempt at population reduction that resulted in a global plague.

For those, like Elon Musk, who still dream of building Asimov's galactic empire, such visions of human extinction are hard to stomach. He and others swim against the tide, siring five or six times as many offspring as the average male. But the reality is that a sub-2.1 global TFR is a more powerful historical force than even the fecund Mr. Musk. It is coming. And there is nothing we can do to stop it.





# Doomscrolling Is a Dead End

**Despite what modern Malthusians claim, the world won't run out of resources or room—as long as governments refrain from dampening innovation.**

***By David R. Henderson***

Something that seems obvious if you think about it for a minute is that a growing population pushing on a finite planet means that resources will become pricier and people will become, on average, poorer. In 2019, Bill Maher, for example, who most people, including me, think is a smart person, stated, "In 1900, there were less [sic] than two billion people on Earth; now it's approaching eight. We can't just keep on like this. The world is just too crowded." He went on to propose that we "not have kids, die, and stay dead." Maher is a twenty-first-century Malthusian. Thomas Robert Malthus, recall, was the person who wrote the famous 1798 "Essay on

### *Key points*

» Robert Malthus predicted widespread starvation, arguing that food production grows arithmetically while population tends to grow geometrically. He failed to foresee massive gains in productivity and health.

» People, argued Julian Simon, are the ultimate scarce resource.

» Why so much pessimism amid abundance? People pay too much attention to bad news.

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

the Principle of Population," in which he argued that food production grows arithmetically while population tends to grow geometrically. Malthus did more thinking than Maher, by the way. The fact that Britain didn't have widespread starvation was what led Malthus to examine the ways people did check their tendency to multiply. But Malthus did not foresee what actually happened: huge increases in standards of living for a much greater population.

Fortunately, we can think about this issue for much more than a minute. And our thinking can be informed not just by gut feelings but also by basic economic thinking about progress and by a vast economic history. It can also be informed by knowledge of a famous bet about resources. And the bottom line of all this thinking and economic history is that the vast majority of resources, especially those sold in relatively free markets, have become more plentiful relative to population.

***The vast majority of resources, especially those sold in relatively free markets, have become more plentiful relative to population rather than less.***

## JULIAN SIMON GOT IT RIGHT

Many of my fellow baby boomers probably remember *The Mary Tyler Moore Show,* which ran in the 1970s. The anchorman who read the news at the television studio where Mary worked was Ted Baxter. Ted often said foolish or outrageous things; he was in the show to provide laughs, which he did regularly. Once, in discussing population growth, Ted said that he wanted to have six children so that maybe one of them could solve the population explosion. Silly, right?

Actually, no. Not when you understand the work of a famous economist named Julian Simon, who departed this earth much too soon.

Early in his professional life, Simon, like many people, thought that population growth was a problem. He thought we would run out of resources. But then he read a book that got him rethinking and caused him to dig more into the data. He never stopped. That book was Harold J. Barnett and Chandler Morse's *Scarcity and Growth: The Economics of Natural Resource Availability,* published in 1963. Barnett and Morse showed that between 1870 and 1956, the inflation-adjusted prices of eleven out of thirteen minerals had fallen. Because prices reflect demands and supplies, and it was unlikely that demand for these resources had fallen, the lower prices must have been due to increases in supply.

How could that have happened at a time when both population and overall standards of living had increased substantially? Simon, in his book *The Ultimate Resource,* posited that it was precisely the growth in population that had led to the increased supply of resources. How so? Because, argued Simon, with more people, there were more minds, and with more minds, there were more minds solving problems. That's what led to his book's title. People, he argued, were the ultimate scarce resource.

In "Natural Resources," published in *The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics,* Princeton University economists Sue Anne Batey Blackman and William J. Baumol lay out three ways in which "the effective stocks of a natural resource can be increased." First, a technological innovation can reduce the amount of waste. They give the example of reducing the amount of iron ore lost in mining or smelting. They also note that improvements in technology can help force more oil out of wells that have been abandoned. Second, they write, there is some substitutability over a wide range of resources. They give the example of insulation, which allowed homeowners and tenants to use less oil. This doesn't mean that oil became more plentiful, of course. But it does mean that the available supply of oil was stretched so that the awful thing people feared—running out of oil—didn't happen. The final way they note of increasing resources is to recycle. While some products really should not be recycled because the resource costs of doing so exceed the savings, other resources, like aluminum, can be profitably recycled.

***With more people, there are more minds. With more minds, there are more minds solving problems.***

In their article, Blackman and Baumol give some striking data on five minerals: tin, copper, iron ore, lead, and zinc. They show world reserves in 1950, world production between 1950 and 2000, and reserves in 2000. If we were running out of those resources, all of the reserves should have been smaller in 2000 than in 1950. In fact, all were larger. The case of iron ore is the most striking. In 1950, there were 19 billion metric tons. Between 1950 and 2000, 37.6 billion metric tons of iron ore were produced, which was more than the number of tons to begin with. By 2000, world reserves were 140 billion metric tons, over seven times as many as in 1950!

Earlier similar data caused Julian Simon to conclude that the real constraint on resource availability was not resources but people.

## THE BOMB AND THE BET

In 1980, Simon put his money where his mouth was. Seeing the amount of publicity Stanford University biology professor Paul Ehrlich received for his book *The Population Bomb,* co-authored with his wife, Anne Ehrlich, Simon offered Ehrlich a bet on the future prices of resources. Simon reasoned that if resources were to become scarcer, their prices, adjusted for inflation, should rise. Ehrlich, presumably, bought that reasoning.

Simon let Ehrlich choose five resources and Simon bet that their prices would, on average, fall over the next ten years. Ehrlich chose chromium, copper, nickel, tin, and tungsten. He also brought two other people into the bet: Harvard University's John Holdren, who later became President Obama's science adviser, and ecologist John Harte of the University of California, Berkeley. The five resources were equally weighted, with $200 worth of each at 1980 prices. If, ten years later, the values added up to less than $1,000, Ehrlich et al. would pay the difference; if greater than $1,000, Simon would pay the difference. Notice, by the way, that the bet was asymmetric. At worst, Ehrlich et al. would have to pay $1,000 in the unlikely event that each mineral was priced at zero in 1990. But at worst for Simon, he could have easily paid much more than $1,000.

***In 1895, the average worker had to work 260 hours to buy a bike. By 2000, it took only 7.2 hours, less than a day.***

Yet Simon was supremely confident. As he explained in *The Ultimate Resource,* "The odds were all against them [Ehrlich et al.] because the prices of metals have been falling throughout human history." Simon added, "From my point of view, the bet was like shooting fish in a barrel."

Fortunately, Ehrlich's integrity was better than his predictive ability. Ten years later, he sent a check, written by his wife, to Simon.

## A LIGHTBULB MOMENT

It's easiest to see the importance of human minds by looking at extreme cases. Norman Borlaug, by figuring out how to grow high-yield wheats that resisted disease, helped start the "Green Revolution." His methods were used to almost double yields in Pakistan and India. Some observers claim, quite credibly, that his work saved more than one billion lives. Not for nothing did Borlaug win the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize. Interestingly, though, Borlaug didn't

understand the bigger picture. Simon points out that in his Nobel Prize lecture, Borlaug referred to "the population monster."

Another way to see how minds can stretch resources, making them much more plentiful, is with a particular product, the lightbulb.

Before lightbulbs were invented, people typically got light into dark places by using candles. As Yale University economist William D. Nordhaus showed in a 1996 paper, lightbulbs brought the cost of lighting down to a tiny fraction of what it had been. It's a pity that the Nobel Prize committee, in granting him the Nobel Prize in economics (shared with Paul Romer) didn't even mention that important work.

In their 2022 book, *Superabundance,* Marian L. Tupy, a senior fellow with the Cato Institute, and Gale L. Pooley, an associate professor of business management at Brigham Young University-Hawaii, quote Nordhaus: "The Age of Invention showed a dramatic improvement in lighting efficiency, with an increase by a factor of 900, representing a rate [of improvement] of 3.5 percent per year between 1800 and 1992."

***Only 2.2 percent of the gains from innovation go to the innovators. The remaining 97.8 percent are reaped by consumers.***

In a path-breaking 2000 study for the National Bureau of Economic Research, Brad DeLong, an economist at the University of California, Berkeley, took a number of items from the 1895 Montgomery Ward catalog and estimated the amount of time someone would have had to work at the average wage in 1895 to buy these items. Then he considered the amount of time someone would have had to work at the average wage in 2000 to buy those items in 2000. The study was titled "Cornucopia." The reason for the title is that the amount of time you had to work in 2000 to buy all but one item was typically a small fraction of the amount of time in 1895.

One example is a one-speed bicycle. In 1895, the average worker had to work 260 hours, or about a month, to make enough money to buy such a bike. By 2000, the average worker needed to work only 7.2 hours, less than a day.

In *Superabundance,* Tupy and Pooley extend the DeLong approach. They take fifty basic commodities from 1980 to 2018. They find that the "time prices" of the fifty fell by 71.6 percent. In other words, the amount of time someone had to work in 2018 to buy the fifty commodities was 71.6 percent less than in 1980. I recommend paging through the book's many graphs. It's hard to argue with so much good data.

## AFFLICTED BY THE NEWS

It's hard to argue, but not impossible. In August 2022, my former co-blogger Arnold Kling wrote a critical review of *Superabundance.* He argues that the changes in the prices of exhaustible resources reflect new information that speculators receive. Therefore, he argues, changes could just as easily be in one direction as in another. He bases his reasoning on a famous 1931 article by economist Harold Hotelling. But when I taught that article to the students in my energy economics class, I pointed out that virtually all the assumptions in the Hotelling model are at odds with reality. Laying out how that matters would take me too far afield. But I do want to point out the problem with the one counterexample that Kling gives: tickets to see the St. Louis Cardinals play baseball, whose prices are much higher now relative to wages than they were in 1966. The problem with this counterexample is that the number of seats has not increased substantially. But for the resources that Tupy and Pooley consider, the amounts have increased substantially. To Arnold Kling, I would propose the same kind of bet that Simon proposed. Choose ten exhaustible resources, price them now, and wait eight years. Why only eight? Because I'm seventy-three. I'm more optimistic about the world than about my health.

There are two other possible objections to the Simon/Tupy/Pooley optimism. First, for some resources, governments have hampered the working of markets. I have in mind, for example, water, which governments in the United States have a heavy hand in allocating. We could run out of water. Even then, though, I think that awful prospect would push governments to allow a market in water, as a drought in Australia did in 2007.

The second objection is that the events that happened in the past few decades occurred in relatively free markets. But governments increasingly are restricting innovation. If that trend continues, then even very clever minds will have trouble making progress.

Nevertheless, I'm relatively optimistic. Even if US governments get in the way of innovation, governments in other countries may not and we, as consumers, will still get the fruits of innovations. Another Nordhaus finding, which, disappointingly, the Nobel Prize committee also failed to mention, is that only 2.2 percent of the gains from innovation go to the innovators, with the remaining 97.8 percent being reaped by consumers.

Why are so many people so pessimistic? The reasons are too numerous to examine at length. But one is that people watch and read the news. A saying I read recently is: "If you don't read the news, you'll be uninformed; if you do

read the news, you'll be misinformed." There are two ways you'll be misinformed. One, which I think is implicit in the saying, is that the media often get the facts wrong. But the second is that the media tend to focus on bad news. As Harvard University professor Steven Pinker put it, "The news is a nonrandom sample of the worst events happening on the planet on a given day." Pinker is quoted, by the way, in a recent post by Malcolm Cochran titled "1,000 Bits of Good News You May Have Missed in 2023." I challenge readers to peruse those thousand bits and not emerge with at least a little more optimism.

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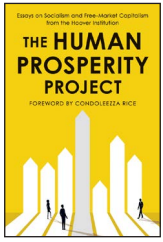

# Behind the Curve

**Even as test scores plummet, schools are awarding "A" grades. The results? Complacency, unfair college admissions, and unaddressed learning loss.**

***By Michael T. Hartney and Matthew Malec***

As cultural issues and free-speech battles dominate headlines, another fundamental problem infects America's schools: the watering down of academic standards. During the COVID-19 pandemic, grade inflation ballooned in both K–12 and higher education. Even after students returned to in-person learning, lenient grading persisted.

Recently, the *New York Times* reported that 79 percent of grades given at Yale University are As. Yale is no outlier. Earlier findings at Harvard similarly showed that in the 2020–21 academic year, 79 percent of grades awarded were in the A range.

At the K–12 level, things are even laxer. Last year, ACT documented a growing divergence between high school students' grades and their performance on the college-readiness exam. Kids' grades held steady, even as their results on the test cratered.

Student-level data from North Carolina last year suggest that this kind of divergence isn't confined to the ACT test. Researchers Tom Swiderski and Sarah Crittenden Fuller compared student performance on the Tar Heel

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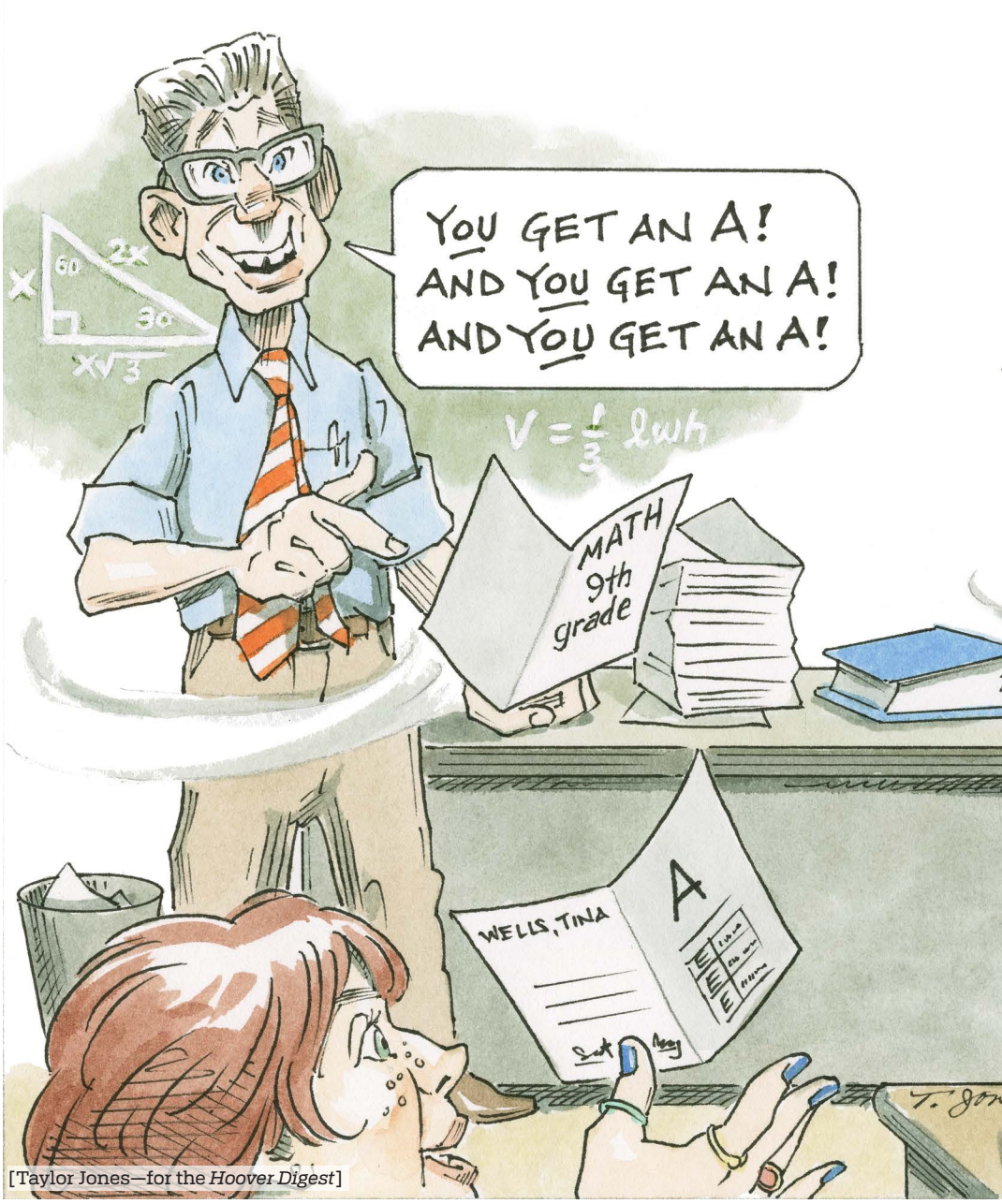
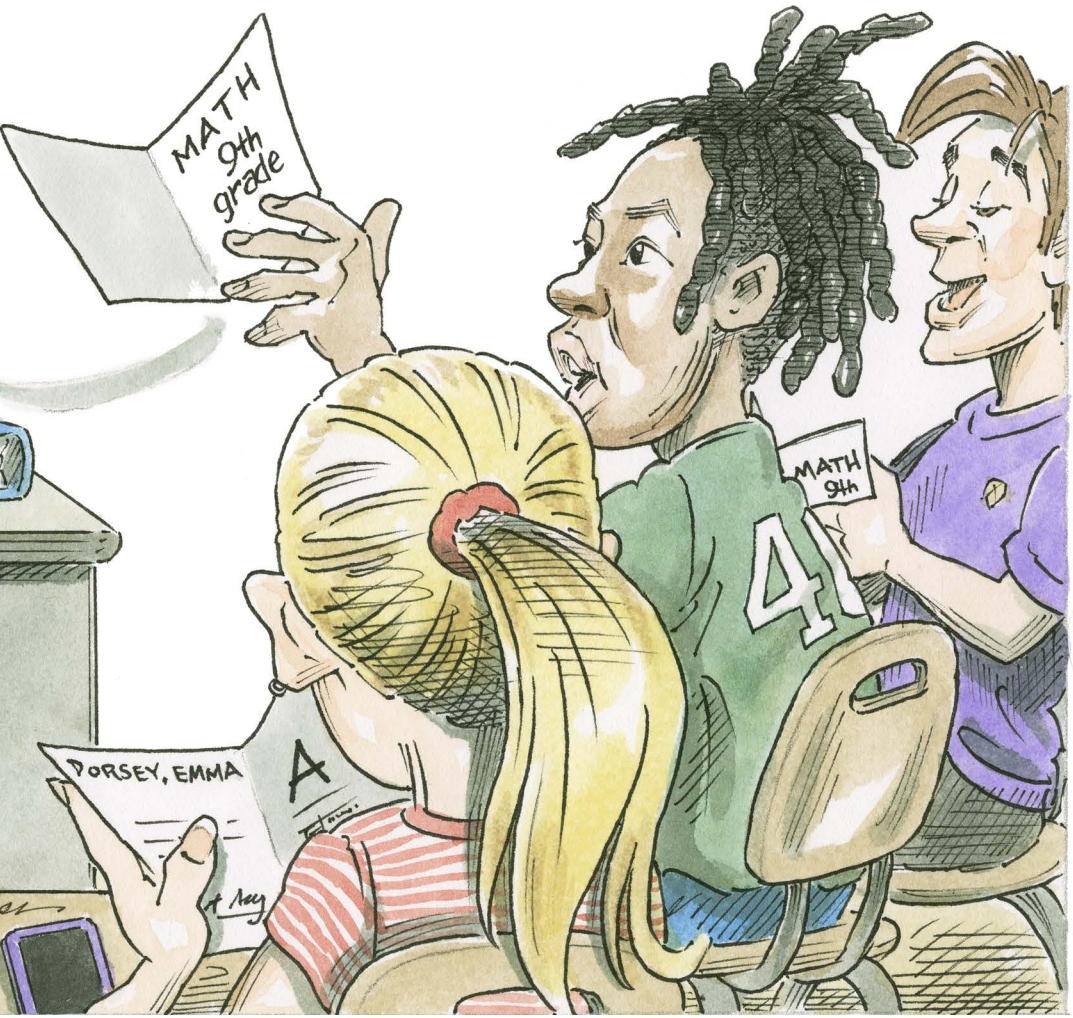
State's "end of course" math exam with math-course grades. Before the pandemic, "the percentage of students who earned an A or B in math was the same as the proficiency rate (54 percent). However . . . by 2021–22, the




[Taylor Jones—for the *Hoover Digest*]

proficiency rate had fallen by 11 percentage points (to 43 percent) while the percentage of students earning As or Bs [in their math courses] had fallen by just 3 points (to 51 percent)."

How did we get here? Forty years ago, the federal government's *A Nation at Risk* report sounded the alarm on the growing mediocrity in America's schools. Books like *The Shopping Mall High School* and even classic comic movies like *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* showed that many teachers and students were striking bargains that degraded the high school diploma. So long as students showed up and didn't cause major problems, teachers would help them graduate, even if they failed to achieve in rigorous courses.



In the decades that followed, politicians in both parties sought to restore rigor to the high school diploma. Many states toughened academic standards and course requirements. A bipartisan group of education leaders—from liberal union leader Albert Shanker to Ronald Reagan's conservative education secretary, Bill Bennett—supported an agenda to make schools more accountable for results.

***Students' grades held steady, even as their test results cratered.***

But during the 2010s, after some conservatives formed an unusual alliance with teachers' unions to repeal No Child Left Behind, many states and localities used their newfound autonomy under the Every Student Succeeds Act to weaken the old standards-based reforms. Then the COVID pandemic created a perfect opening for anti-testing advocates to push for a permanent end to high-stakes testing. Many postsecondary institutions followed suit by eliminating standardized tests in college and graduate-school admissions.

It's important to understand that the causes behind grade inflation in K–12 and in postsecondary institutions are distinct. Research shows that grade inflation helped boost college graduation rates. This may seem like an unambiguous positive to some, but others highlight the problematic trade-offs involved. "Grad school seats, jobs at top firms are still scarce," explains Ohio State professor Vlad Kogan. "When all grades are the same, hiring and admission criteria will change—and probably hurt [the] disadvantaged."

***Instructors on the tenure track often need good student reviews to get promoted.***

Policy makers need to fix these incentives—not easy to do in the university realm, where the tenured professoriate and administrators resist accountability reforms. Such reforms are especially urgent given tuition-dependent colleges' incentives to maintain enrollments and churn out more graduates. This dynamic will only worsen as colleges compete over a smaller applicant pool, resulting from demographic changes and a projected decline in demand for degrees.

At the individual level, professors have perverse inducements to dole out undeserved As and avoid failing students, no matter how little those students do. Instructors on the tenure track often need good student reviews to get

promoted, and research shows that student evaluations are driven largely by the ease of getting an A.

These troublesome incentives are another reason why colleges and graduate schools must maintain some objective (test-based) measures in admissions. Recall Kogan's concern about diminishing equality of opportunity. When employers and graduate schools have access only to inflated grades, they will inevitably rely on holistic factors like essays, extracurriculars, and social and family networks—factors more easily gamed and more accessible to wealthy students. In addition to maintaining testing requirements, universities should also reform faculty-evaluation procedures so that excellent but "tough" instructors don't get penalized for setting high expectations for students. Making course evaluations such a significant part of faculty performance assessments has encouraged instructors to grade softly.

***Universities should reform faculty-evaluation procedures so that excellent but "tough" instructors don't get penalized for high expectations.***

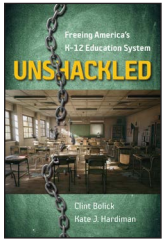
At the K–12 level, the problem is less about incentives and more about a lack of information. As pandemic learning loss persists and chronic absenteeism shows no sign of slowing down, many parents are unaware that their children are behind the learning curve. Though the problem is nuanced, grade inflation is at least partly responsible for leaving parents in the dark. An October Gallup poll found that nearly 90 percent of parents believed their child was performing at grade level in reading and math, which makes sense when you consider that these same parents (79 percent) received report cards showing their kids were earning Bs or better in those subjects. State assessments indicate that proficiency is far lower, however—suggesting that grade inflation is at least partly responsible for parents' misperceptions.

For kids, grade inflation has tangible consequences. Some research shows that it can worsen chronic absenteeism by creating the illusion that missing class has little effect on student learning—a belief belied by a recent White House Council of Economic Advisers report, which finds that "absenteeism can account for up to 27 percent and 45 percent of test score declines in math and reading." Grade inflation also leaves standardized tests as the last objective benchmark of school performance. (Predictably, teachers' unions are coming after those, too.) Removing objective measures of success makes it harder to gauge student performance—and harder, in turn, for parents and political leaders to demand higher standards for teachers.

With Democrats so tied politically to teachers' unions, public desire for reform presents an opportunity for Republicans. While much of Bush-era conservatism has lost favor among Republican officials, the GOP should reach further back and recall the three Cs that characterized Ronald Reagan's education agenda: character, choice, and content. In particular, returning to a focus on content will help solve grade inflation. ■

***Grade inflation leaves standardized tests as the last objective benchmark of school performance.***






*Available from the Hoover Institution Press is* ***Unshackled: Freeing America's K–12 Education System,*** *by Clint Bolick and Kate J. Hardiman. To order, call (800) 888-4741 or visit www.hooverpress.org.*

# *Truly Fair*

## How can we make peace among the battling school reformers who seek "educational equity"? **Here are three ideas.**

***By Michael J. Petrilli***

I have spent much of the past two years co-leading the Building Bridges Initiative, which sought to bring education reformers from left, right, and center together (again). One of the most useful moments in our deliberations came when one participant introduced the notion of a "suitcase word." Like a suitcase, such words may look the same to everyone, but we each have different ideas of what may lie inside. In order to avoid misunderstandings or unnecessary conflict, it's helpful to "unpack" these words and be crystal clear about the concepts we're discussing.

Suitcase words are everywhere in our political conversations and in K–12 education, including *social justice, parental rights,* and *accountability.* But the granddaddy of them all is surely *educational equity.* I aim to unpack this phrase, pun intended.

My experience is that educational equity lands very differently with my friends on the left versus those on the right. Their suitcases hold strikingly different contents. On the left, the phrase conjures up praiseworthy efforts to help low-income kids and kids of color succeed—to make up for past and present injustices by ensuring that students from marginalized groups have access to schools, teachers, and instruction that are just as good as, if not better than, those enjoyed by their more advantaged peers. Who could be

***Michael J. Petrilli*** *is a visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution and the president of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute.*

against that? Thus, my friends on the left don't understand why their friends on the right are triggered by the phrase.

But that's because, in conservative circles, there's much alarm over what we see as the move away from *equality of opportunity* as the goal in American society and its replacement by *equality of outcome.* This alarm stems from claims, like Ibram X. Kendi's, that "the only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination. The only remedy to present discrimination is future discrimination."

***There's been a move away from "equality of opportunity" as the goal in American society and toward "equality of outcome."***

Which goes on to include the assertion that any racial disparity (in educational attainment or achievement, or involvement in the criminal justice system, or wages, or anything else) is by definition racist. Conservatives view this as a vast oversimplification and at odds with notions of personal responsibility and agency, not to mention meritocracy. It also paves the way for policies that we tend not to like, such as affirmative action and income redistribution.

So, when liberals see the educational equity suitcase, they picture good things for poor kids and kids of color. When conservatives see that same suitcase, they picture Kendi-style discrimination and redistribution with a soupçon of accusation and implied guilt.

If we could unpack the suitcase, however, we might find a measure of agreement. For example, few people on the left or right would defend our (past) funding system that regularly sent more money to schools for rich kids than for poor kids. Nor would many disagree that it's more expensive to effectively educate poor students than rich ones, and thus that progressive funding policies are appropriate. (This is the classic "equity" versus "equality" example. It's not enough to provide equal funding for all kids; we must provide more money to high-poverty schools in order to ameliorate disadvantage.) Thus, we can find common ground around school funding reforms that provide adequate and equitable funding to high-poverty schools, as many red, blue, and purple states have embraced in recent years.

I'm not saying that identifying alternative words to use in place of educational equity will resolve all of our left-right debates; these have been around forever and will be here long after we're gone. What we can do, however, and something surely worth trying to do, is identify specific education policies

and practices that embrace a version of "equity" that can garner broad support across the ideological spectrum and benefit the greatest number of students. Let me suggest three rules for doing so.

» ***When aiming for equity, level up instead of leveling down.***

As one of my favorite Substackers, Noah Smith, writes about San Francisco's attempt to ban high-achieving students from taking algebra until the ninth grade, "When you think about the idea of creating equity by restricting access to advanced math classes, it's pretty much impossible to avoid the conclusion that the idea is to make all kids equal by making them equally unable to learn."

This is obviously terrible for the high-achieving students who don't get to live up to their full potential, as well as for low-achievers subjected to the "soft bigotry of low expectations." It's a version of "equity" that we should all reject out of hand.

Indeed, as I have argued, we should avoid pitting equity versus excellence. Whether the goal is to narrow achievement gaps, diversify gifted and talented programs, or reduce bias in grading, the strategy should always involve raising the bar, not lowering it.

» ***Focus on closing gaps between affluent students and their disadvantaged peers, not between high-achieving students and their lower-achieving peers.***

While most economically disadvantaged students are relatively low-performing academically, due to the challenges of growing up in poverty, thankfully not all are. And if we create policies that encourage schools to prioritize the needs of low-achievers over high-achievers, we create a double-disadvantage for high-achieving, low-income (HALO) students. There's no moral justification for doing so, nor is there a good argument from a societal level, given that these HALO kids are the ones with the best opportunity to use great schools (and selective colleges) to pole-vault into the middle class and above and into our leading professions.

***Few people on either left or right would defend our past funding system, which sent more money to schools for rich kids than for poor kids.***

Yes, it's critical to raise the achievement and other outcomes of our lowest-performing students. But not at the expense of their higher-achieving peers.

» ***Focus equity initiatives primarily on class, not race.***

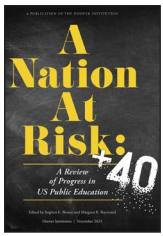
Let me be clear: anti-discrimination efforts must continue to be race-conscious, in line with longstanding civil rights laws. But when we switch our focus from ensuring fair treatment to giving disadvantaged students a boost, we should be cautious about defining disadvantage on racial grounds. On school funding, for example, it's easy to justify sending extra dollars to high-poverty schools, but much harder to justify additional funding to upper-middle-class black schools. And given that the vast majority of the racial disparities in education are correlated with (if not caused by) socioeconomic disparities, we can largely work towards racial equity via class-conscious but race-neutral approaches.

***Let's not "make all kids equal by making them equally unable to learn."***

I understand that such an approach won't satisfy all advocates on the left, but it will garner greater support from the center and the right.

How do we apply these rules to debates around school funding, accountability systems, advanced education, school discipline, career and technical education, and grading reform? What would it mean to level up, not level down? In other words: how can we do equity right? ◘






*Download* ***A Nation at Risk +40: A Review of Progress in US Public Education,*** *edited by Stephen L. Bowen and Margaret E. Raymond, by visiting Hoover Institution Press (www.hooverpress.org).*

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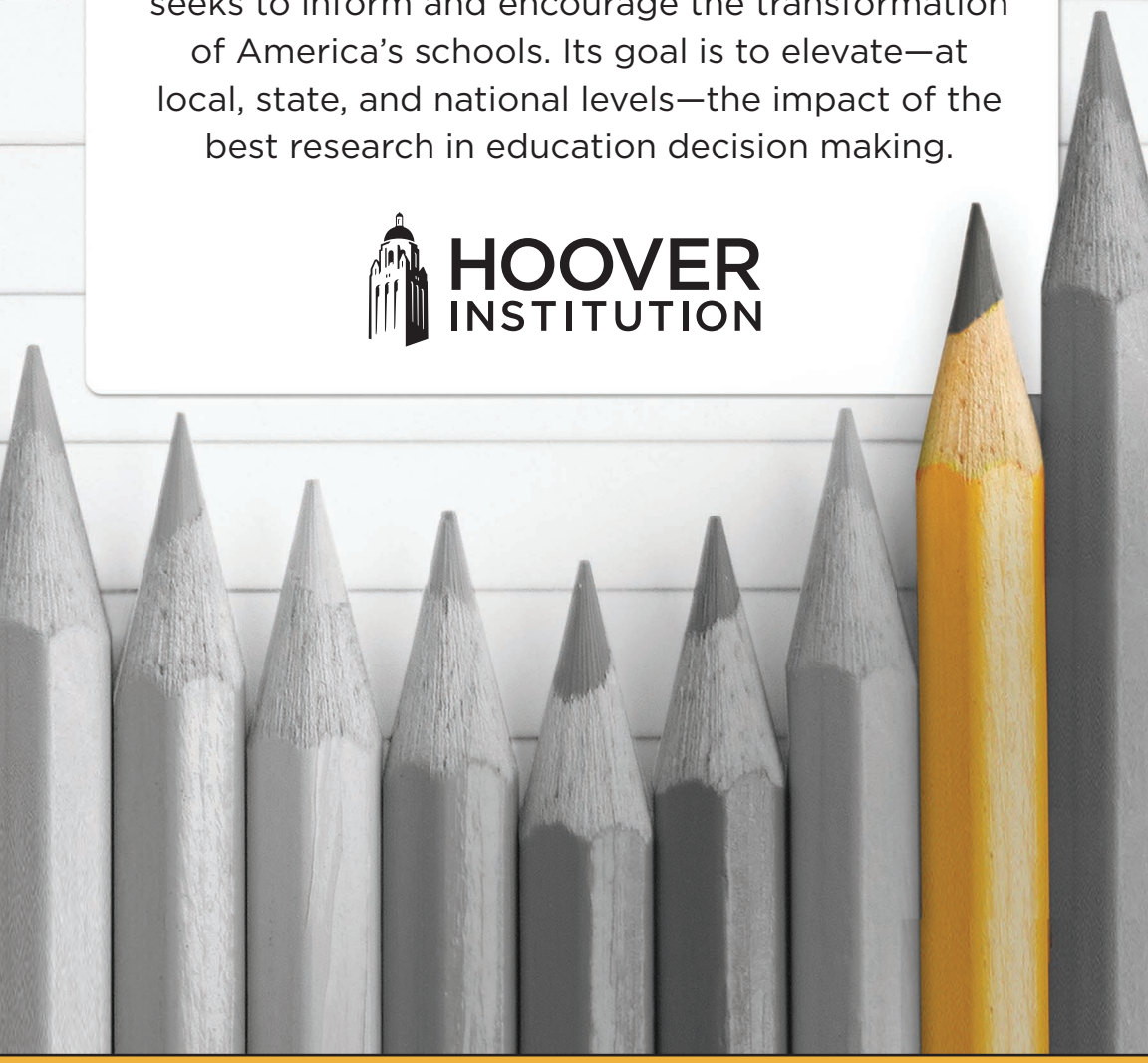

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# *Brave New City*

**A shining city on the hills … of Solano County. An enormous development is supposed to ease all kinds of civic problems— mostly the Bay Area's crippling housing shortage. Will it succeed? Should it?**

***By Bill Whalen***

Among the many bills that languished in last year's legislative session in Sacramento: SB 224, which would have prohibited foreign governments from purchasing, acquiring, leasing, or holding a controlling interest in any agricultural land within the confines of California—a topic in the news in January after the release of a Government Accountability Office watchdog report claiming that the federal government isn't doing its due diligence when it comes to foreign investments in US farmland.

The fate of purchased California land has made headlines in the San Francisco Bay Area after a group that calls itself California Forever revealed its intentions regarding the approximately sixty thousand acres of space it controls in Solano County, just east of Travis Air Force Base (that's double the size of San Francisco and four times Manhattan's acreage).

The plan, in California Forever's words: "to build a dynamic new community, with middle-class homes in safe, walkable neighborhoods," plus "a commitment to bring good-paying jobs in advanced manufacturing, renewable

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***TOMORROWLAND: An artist's rendering shows a bustling street in the mega-project known as California Forever. Investors have put forward an estimated $900 million to get the proposal off the ground—and past Solano County voters.*** [Designed by SITELAB/CMG]

energy, construction … as well as large investment in education, green spaces, clean energy, and the revitalization of downtowns across the country."

Translation: Solano County, which sits between Sacramento and the Bay Area, could see the construction of at least twenty thousand new homes—housing some fifty thousand residents in rowhouses and multistory apartment buildings, with the population eventually reaching four hundred thousand if development meets certain economic benchmarks.

A point of clarification: California Forever is not a front for an overseas entity with sinister designs on America's security, a concern that arose because of the proposed new city's proximity to the military base. It's more an example of strangers in a strange land—in this case, Silicon Valley movers and shakers parking their money in a stretch of California more famous for livestock than livestreams. The *New York Times* calls the group "a who's who of tech money" that includes LinkedIn co-founder Reid Hoffman, Laurene Powell Jobs (Steve Jobs's widow and founder of the Emerson Collective), venture capitalist Marc Andreessen, and other investors who have put forward a reported $900 million to support CEO and former Goldman Sachs trader Jan Sramek's vision of a California utopia a little over an hour's drive east of San Francisco.

Will this twenty-first-century vision become a reality? That's up to Solano County voters to decide in November, in the form of a ballot initiative (submitted title: "East Solano Homes, Jobs, and Clean Energy Initiative"). That sign-off is required, as the California Forever vision violates Solano County's 1980s-era policy restricting growth outside existing cities—that is, keeping farmland from turning urban.

As for that vision ("to build a better Solano County, with more middle-class homes, more good-paying local jobs, and cleaner energy," the initiative reads), here are the key selling points:

» Creating at least fifteen thousand jobs in which workers earn the annualized equivalent of at least 125 percent of the annual minimum wage in Solano County.

» $500 million in a "community benefit" fund for down-payment assistance, scholarships, and parks.

» A $400 million "Solano for All" pledge to help county residents buy into the community.

» A $200 million "Solano Downtowns" initiative to revitalize other local communities.

» Building homes in "safe, walkable neighborhoods," giving workers options to walk, bike, or take public transit to work.

» Designating "working families" as desired residents (further defined as "teachers, nurses, police, firefighters, construction workers").

» A pledge to build homes for "low income, very low income, extremely low income, and special-needs households" (with veterans, seniors, and agricultural workers singled out).

Are those promises realistic? Feel free to name a California town within proximity of a California metropolis that can call itself affordable, safe, cutting-edge, and eco-minded—not to mention commute free. What comes to mind is *The Truman Show,* a 1990s film about an ordinary man living an ordinary life in an idyllic town. As it turns out, the town has been fabricated for television, with Truman's life playing out in front of the cameras—as such, a precursor for today's staged and scripted reality television (is anyone at California Forever thinking *Real Housewives of Solano County*?).

***Proponents and funders of the new city have been called "a who's who of tech money."***

And it raises another question: with hundreds of millions of dollars at their disposal, is building a new community from scratch the best way for California's privileged class to contribute to the state's improvement?

If the community sees the light of day, will there be a chicken in every pot … but only in non-gas stoves? Let's consider other ways to invest Silicon Valley's riches.

First, there's the choice of which community to choose in terms of California's economic growth. Is it more vital to the state's future to further develop Solano County, or should money be committed to a grander scheme of revitalizing downtown San Francisco (say, converting commercial office space to residential property while also trying to bring back small businesses)? A wise friend of mine in Sacramento has another suggestion: make the new community part of a larger vision to improve rail service between Sacramento and San Francisco—California's capital city having been left out of the state's high-speed rail design, at least for many years to come.

***The California Forever vision violates Solano County's policy restricting growth outside existing cities. That's why it has to go to the voters.***

Second, is there a more practical approach to community design and investing—in other words, is it better to revamp an existing town rather than build a social utopia from scratch? Instead of dividing $1.1 billion three ways—the $500 million "community benefit" funding for down-payment assistance, the $400 million to help county residents buy into the community, and the $200 million to revitalize other local towns—should California Forever spend a nine- or ten-figure sum on a town already on the map?

Third, given California and the Bay Area's myriad challenges, are there more pressing matters to address? Take, for example, the issue of hunger. One in four San Franciscans are at risk of hunger because of low income. Statewide, 10.3 percent of households were "food insecure" from 2020 to 2022, up from 9.6 percent between 2019 and 2021 ("food insecure" meaning that at some point in the year, a family couldn't afford to put food on the table). Does that mean California Forever should be concentrating on bread and milk rather than brick and mortar?

Finally, there's a question of commitment and stick-to-itiveness. What comes to mind: the globetrotting billionaire Nicolas Berggruen and an endeavor to transform the Golden State, dubbed Think Long Committee for California. Established in 2010, the group dedicated itself to addressing "the dysfunctional state of affairs" in the Golden State. The end product, a year later, was a blueprint for renewing California, parts of which coincided

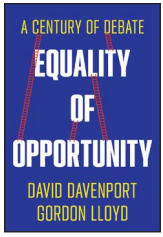
with actual reforms (for example, the creation of a "rainy day" fund for state budgeting in 2014's Proposition 2), while others were dead on arrival with the left-leaning legislature (for example, Think Long proposed an across-the-board reduction of California's personal income tax).

Think Long fell short. Its unfulfilled dream to dramatically change California for the better might serve as a cautionary tale for California Forever. The group may be able to muscle its way to a ballot win, come November. But then the hard work begins: dealing with lawsuits, state and local environmental red tape, plus publicity stunts and whatever else local opponents can gin up so as to disrupt plans (one such example of how complicated the process can be: Berkeley's struggles to develop a housing plan that complies with state law).

***Skeptics wonder whether it might be better to revamp an existing town rather than build a social utopia from scratch.***

Maybe California Forever succeeds and the result is paradise on Solano County's earth. But if the plan stumbles and the dream doesn't materialize, the moral of the story might be: when trying to dramatically transform California, perhaps it's wiser to start with one nibble rather than bite off sixty thousand acres of farmland. ◘

***Read* California on Your Mind*, the online Hoover Institution journal that probes the politics and economics of the Golden State (www.hoover.org/publications/californiaonyourmind).* **



# How about "Persons of Terror"?

**University of California ethnic-studies professors are offended by the accusation that Hamas commits "terrorism." These are the views they want to inflict on California's high-schoolers.**

***By Lee E. Ohanian***

In 2021, California became the first state to require ethnic studies (ES) for high school graduation. The University of California's Ethnic Studies Faculty Council (ESFC), which lists over three hundred UC faculty as members, has developed specific course criteria that the university is considering as an admissions requirement. If adopted, this requirement would eliminate the freedom that individual high schools would have in teaching ES courses, at least for students applying to the UC.

California passed the ES high school graduation requirement to help students become citizens of the world by honestly portraying our history and positively focusing on the scientific, artistic, economic, cultural, and

***Lee E. Ohanian*** *is a senior fellow (adjunct) at the Hoover Institution and co-editor of* ***California on Your Mind,*** *a Hoover online journal. He is a professor of economics and director of the Ettinger Family Program in Macroeconomic Research at UCLA.*

social achievements of different groups of people. But this is not what ethnic studies is about within the UC. Far from bringing people from different backgrounds together, the ESFC promotes a highly politicized high school curriculum called "Liberated Ethnic Studies," which is founded on the notion that the United States is a highly racist society in which whites systematically oppress minorities.

Since the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel, it has become obvious that the ESFC should have nothing to do with course content.

In response to the Hamas attack, UC President Michael Drake and UC Board of Regents Chair Rich Leib issued a brief statement on behalf of the University of California system condemning the terrorist attack, while expressing grief for those affected on both sides and hope for a peaceful resolution.

Drake and Leib's statement was attacked in a letter written by the ESFC. The letter is abhorrent and dishonest: "In the strongest possible terms, the UC Ethnic Studies Faculty Council … that represents over three hundred faculty systemwide, rejects recent UC administrative communications that distort and misrepresent the unfolding genocide of Palestinians.… [These statements that] irresponsibly wield charges of 'terrorism' and 'unprovoked' aggression have contributed to a climate that has made Palestinian students and community members unsafe, even in their own homes."

***"Liberated Ethnic Studies" is founded on the notion that America is a highly racist society in which whites systematically oppress minorities.***

Somehow, burning an Israeli mother and child alive as they clutched each other, raping women and girls, beheading a child, dismembering and torturing victims, and taking elderly and child hostages do not qualify as acts of terror to the ESFC.

The ESFC letter never mentions Hamas, an organization whose charter calls for the obliteration of Israel and the rejection of a negotiated peace. Yet, somehow, in the eyes of these three hundred faculty members, it is the UC leaders who distort, misrepresent, and make statements that promote violence. UC stakeholders deserve so much better.

The ESFC letter was condemned by UC regent Jay Sures, who wrote in response to the ESFC as follows:

> There are absolutely no words to describe how appalling and repugnant I found your … letter.… Your letter is rife with

> falsehoods about Israel and seeks to legitimize and defend the horrific savagery of the Hamas massacre.… You have asked us as a body to retract our "charges of terrorism, to uplift the Palestinian freedom struggle, and to stand against … [the] genocide of the Palestinian people." … I will do everything in my power to never let that happen. Full stop.… The thought that young and impressionable students might be taught the falsehoods of your letter absolutely sickens me.… Your organization should commit to learning more about anti-Semitism and all forms of hate and how it lives on our campuses where you are tasked and trusted to educating our next generation of students and leaders.

Exactly right. If the three hundred faculty within the ESFC—individuals who won't acknowledge the inhuman savagery of Hamas—have their way, they will determine the ES course content needed for high school students to gain admission to the university. Their website "demands" that it be implemented.

Liberated Ethnic Studies, the curriculum ESFC favors, is introduced as follows:

> The evidence of continued systematic and institutional racism is also apparent as we mourn the loss of several community members, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Steven Taylor, Erik Salgado, Sean Monterrosa, Andres Guardado, and George Floyd at the hands of the police and white people with impunity. Young people from a variety of backgrounds mobilize in the streets shouting "Black Lives Matter" in unsanctioned marches, rallies, and demonstrations. In some cases, protesters direct their anger at buildings that represent a political system that continues to dehumanize black bodies by placing more interest in buildings and corporations than in equity and social justice.

***Rape, murder, kidnapping, and dismemberment apparently do not qualify as acts of terror.***

This is not a course that celebrates the contributions of people from different ethnic groups and teaches how so many immigrants have achieved

the American dream. It is a course that teaches the biased opinion that the United States is a remarkably racist society that is hostile and punitive to non-whites. If the United States were indeed so racist, then why would the household incomes of non-Hispanic white households trail those of families with Indian, Sri Lankan, Pakistani, Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, and Korean descent? Why would the median household income for households of Palestinian descent be nearly 95 percent that of non-Hispanic whites, and exceed those of French descent? These facts will never be reported in such a course. They don't fit the narrative.

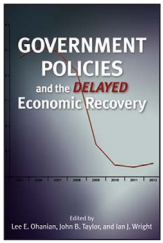
Liberated Ethnic Studies is currently used in some California classrooms, which has led to destructive situations, such as when a biracial student who identifies as black was told to address his "white dominance" and a child of Cuban heritage was told he wasn't a "real Latino." And the Liberated Ethnic Studies program is not just about ethnic studies. The program advocates that other courses, including math and science, be integrated with ES principles. Since capitalism oppresses minorities, according to Liberated Ethnic Studies, Marxism should be taught as an alternative, which requires that teachers have the "correct political views."

***This is not a course that celebrates the contributions of people from different ethnic groups.***

California's prioritization of ethnic studies within our schools was always questionable, given that the research showing its value was flawed, and given that roughly three out of four students fail to read or do math at grade-level proficiency. Now that it is obvious what ethnic studies is, the state should either eliminate the requirement or, alternatively, ensure reasonable course content, such as that developed by the Alliance for Constructive Ethnic Studies (calethstudies.org), a grass-roots coalition of over ten thousand individuals from many ethnic backgrounds. They have worked together to develop an uplifting curriculum that portrays history honestly while helping students see the beauty within all of us.

More broadly, University of California campus leaders should consider reallocating their respective budgets away from departments that are dominated by faculty who are committed to political ideologies rather than to the UC's mission of excellence in research, education, public service, and seeking knowledge without bias.

***Read* California on Your Mind,** ***the online Hoover Institution journal that probes the politics and economics of the Golden State (www.hoover.org/publications/californiaonyourmind).*** 

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# *Bitcoin of the Realm*

## Coinbase founder **Brian Armstrong** answers the skeptics of cryptocurrency with a vision that combines good business and greater freedom.

***By Peter Robinson***

***Peter Robinson,*** **Uncommon Knowledge:** Cryptocurrency and spinach: how are they alike? You either love them or you hate them. The late billionaire investor Charlie Munger said of cryptocurrency—this is a quotation—"I hate it." Which brings us to our guest today, who loves it. Brian Armstrong is the co-founder and chief executive officer of Coinbase, one of the biggest crypto exchanges in the world. The son of two engineers, Brian grew up in San Jose and went to high school at Bellarmine Prep, a Jesuit boys' school. He then attended Rice University, where he earned both bachelor's and master's degrees in computer science. He worked for IBM, Deloitte, and Airbnb. And then in 2012, at the age of not quite thirty, he founded Coinbase, the cryptocurrency exchange which now has a market capitalization of some $52 billion. Brian, welcome.

***Brian Armstrong:*** Thank you for having me.

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***Brian Armstrong*** *is co-founder and chief executive officer of Coinbase.* ***Peter Robinson*** *is the editor of the* ***Hoover Digest,*** *the host of* ***Uncommon Knowledge with Peter Robinson,*** *and the Murdoch Distinguished Policy Fellow at the Hoover Institution.*

***WILL IT PAY OFF?** Coinbase CEO Brian Armstrong speaks at TechCrunch Disrupt SF 2018. He says in an interview: "I'm very passionate about this idea of economic freedom. Most people don't even know what that means."*
[Steve Jennings for TechCrunch—Creative Commons]

***Robinson:*** We have to begin with this. It's a post on X a few days ago from something called Coinbase support. "We are aware that some users may see a $0 balance and may experience errors in buying and selling. Our team is investigating. Your assets are safe." What's going on?

***Armstrong:*** Well, for better or worse, crypto continues to go through these cycles of massive run up and then a correction down. Then another massive run up. Basically, over the last year, when crypto was down, we started to plan for when this next cycle would happen. We load-tested our site, assuming ten times of traffic could come in at any moment, which is pretty unheard of in most industries. Usually, you might see a 20 percent or 30 percent increase. Ten times is pretty massive.

***Robinson:*** Tsunami size.

***Armstrong:*** Yes. And when bitcoin passed the previous all-time high, we saw more than ten times come in in as little as an hour. There were display

errors that occurred on the site, but it didn't affect any of the assets held underneath. Unfortunately, now that people are really relying on us—not just people who use the Coinbase app directly, but actually massive financial institutions are building on top of our infrastructure—we've really got to keep investing in that infrastructure to get to the next level.

***Robinson:*** So, this is a glitch. Not an important event.

***Armstrong:*** It was important from our customers' point of view and those of the other companies that rely on us. There's no excuse for it. But the one you're referencing was a display error, yes.

***Robinson:*** I'm conscious that I am of a generation in which if you say, "What do you think of crypto?" you'll get some people who love it and some people who hate it. But you'll also get some people who say they've never really understood it. Can we just quickly do the basics? What the heck is cryptocurrency?

***Armstrong:*** It's such a broad term. Crypto is really a technology that can be used to update the financial system in a bunch of different ways. But let's start with the first and the most important thing that crypto was able to build, which was bitcoin. You should just think of it as digital money. It's decentralized. There's no country or company that controls it. It's a little bit like gold, in that sense. There's no central authority. It's provably scarce, like gold, and people are treating it as this new form of digital money.

So that alone is a powerful breakthrough to kick off this whole industry. We can talk about some of the other things subsequent to that, but that's a good starting place.

***"It's decentralized. There's no country or company that controls it. It's a little bit like gold."***

I think crypto is as important an invention as the birth of the Internet. And it truly is a computer science breakthrough. Now, the [foundational] bitcoin white paper happened to be published by an anonymous person. So, we don't even know who wrote it, which is its own fascinating topic. But if we did know, I feel pretty confident that person would be a Turing Award winner, the equivalent of the Nobel Prize for computer science.

What it did—this is a simplified way to think of the computer science breakthrough underlying it—is that before that paper, it was very easy to make copies of things in the digital world. If I take a photo on my phone, I can send it to

you. I can send it to my mother. You can make infinite copies of that image for free. The bitcoin white paper showed how you could have a digital item that's provably unique. That's a powerful idea, because now you can enforce scarcity. And you can start to represent assets, whether that's money, digital gold, commodities, or stocks. People can't make infinite copies of it.

***Robinson:*** You can enforce property rights, is one way to think of it.

***Armstrong:*** Yes, that's exactly right.

***Robinson:*** Coinbase is an exchange. What's an exchange?

***Armstrong:*** Well, I usually like to say that Coinbase is the easiest way that people can buy and store crypto. They can store it safely. But they can also use it for more and more things. An exchange is really just maintaining a list of people who, at any given moment, may want to buy or sell a particular crypto asset. And you're making an order book—they call them bids and asks in this book—so it's a little bit like the NASDAQ or the New York Stock Exchange. When the prices cross, a transaction occurs.

***"I think crypto is as important an invention as the birth of the Internet."***

The market for it is 24/7, 365. People are constantly trading these things. And crypto, especially bitcoin, has been pretty volatile over the past ten years. It's a nascent asset class. But it's gotten less and less volatile if you look at the extremes, the peak to trough. That's partly just because more and more people are coming in to trade now. About fifty-two million Americans have used crypto at this point. To be clear, it's still a lot more volatile than, say …

***Robinson:*** GM stock.

***Armstrong:*** GM, yes. Or a major fiat currency. But I think that over time, as you get to, I don't know, two billion people who've used this thing, bitcoin will probably approach the volatility of gold. And then it may get even less volatile.

## A REVELATION

***Robinson:*** In 2008, this anonymous person who calls himself … Satoshi Nakamoto? We don't even know if it's a him or a her. We know nothing about this person. Publishes a technically elaborate but quite brief white paper in

2008 that describes the technical basis for this new thing the unknown person is calling bitcoin. And a couple of years later, you read that white paper. What goes off in your head?

***Armstrong:*** This was a really interesting moment. I was home for the holidays in December 2010. Sometimes I get a little overwhelmed with all the family bustling around the house. I kind of retreated to my room and started to read some things on the Internet. And I happened to come across this bitcoin white paper. As you said, it's pretty dense. Remember, I had a master's degree in computer science.

***Robinson:*** You grew up in a household where people understood this kind of stuff.

***Armstrong:*** Well, I had certainly read research papers in college. And I had a bachelor's degree in economics, so I had some basics. But even for me, it was a dense paper. Yet as I was reading it, I remember thinking that this might be the most interesting, important thing I've read in a long time. The Internet is a decentralized thing that no country controls, and that's democratized how we move information around. What if we had a similarly decentralized protocol that democratized how we move *value* around? This idea of provable scarcity of digital assets: it's not just information that can be duplicated everywhere. It's actually value.

***"Did you ever see those photos of the computer club with Steve Wozniak, and they all have huge beards and they're wearing sandals? It felt a little bit like that."***

I had to reread that paper four or five times, by the way. But I thought, would anybody actually use this? Why would they trust it? Would governments try to shut it down? Could there be some flaw in the cryptography that would blow the whole thing up? I couldn't stop thinking about it for six months. And I started to go to these early bitcoin meetups around the Bay Area. I can tell you, that was quite an experience, too.

***Robinson:*** Unusual people in the early days.

***Armstrong:*** Yes. The people who would show up there, I lovingly say, half of them were computer science PhDs who were really interested in this cryptography and whatnot. And the other half were anarchists. There were even some homeless people who showed up who just wanted free drinks. It was

really a ragtag crew. Did you ever see those photos of the computer club with Steve Wozniak, and they all have huge beards and they're wearing sandals? It felt a little bit like that. It was very hacker house. It was not JP Morgan.

***Robinson:*** In a blog post you wrote a couple years ago, you said, "From the earliest days, I built Coinbase to harness the power of cryptocurrency to create more freedom in the world." In Silicon Valley, I understand "to make more money." But "to create more freedom in the world" is an unusual idea. Explain.

***Armstrong:*** I'm very passionate about this idea of economic freedom. Most people don't even know what that means—it's a term economists use to look at different countries. Like, is there sound currency? Are there property rights that are enforced? How prevalent are corruption and bribery? Can people engage in free trade? It's all this kind of wonky stuff. But to me, it touches on this idea of, if I try to do something good for the world, can I be rewarded for that and actually keep it? If you look at the data, high-economic-freedom countries have not just higher GDP growth but higher self-reported happiness of citizens, better treatment of the environment, and less corruption.

***Robinson:*** Cleaner air, cleaner water, better schools.

***Armstrong:*** Right. It even correlates with having less war. I spent a year living in Buenos Aires. And I got to see a country that used to be one of the top ten countries of the world—Buenos Aires was the Paris of South America. And essentially, through a series of negative government actions, it had fallen to 120th place in the world. Society was ruined by high inflation and corruption, and a lack of property rights. People's assets could be seized in a moment. And the poorest people were having their wealth eroded because they were holding cash.

When I first saw the bitcoin white paper, it took me a while to get to this conclusion. But what excited me about it was that this might actually be the most important technology that could increase economic freedom around the world. It would essentially take anybody who had a smartphone—which increasingly was everybody in the world—and an Internet connection, no matter what country you live in, even if you're in a corrupt regime, you could have access to good financial infrastructure. You could have access to sound money that can't be inflated away. You could have access to property rights. And if we could inject that good financial infrastructure into countries all over the world, it would actually lift the world out of poverty.

## DOING BUSINESS

***Robinson:*** Coinbase goes public in 2021. Brian, I have news for you. You now have a fiduciary responsibility to your shareholders. Your job is not to expand freedom in the world. Your job is to make your shareholders the highest returns you can. So, isn't there a tension now between the stated mission, which as I understand it is still very much the mission, and just plain old what corporate America and your investors are going to expect of you?

***Armstrong:*** Actually, I don't think so. I think they're very much aligned. I think great companies should have a big, important mission in the world that's beyond just making money. But usually, to accomplish that mission, you need a lot of capital. And you need a lot of really talented people.

You've got to have a great business model, and you've got to generate a profit. And then you've got to be able to use that capital to apply it towards even more important things so you can grow and make progress towards that mission.

We tried to build some products which actually serve emerging markets. And I think those could be interesting businesses over time. But we have to be appropriate capital allocators and make sure we're investing in the core so that it throws off enough cash so we can do the next adjacent business and some venture bets. You don't want to get too distracted and have the venture bets become the main thing because you'll run out of money, and you'll never accomplish the mission.

***Robinson:*** So, you're a businessman with a mission, but you're a businessman.

***Armstrong:*** Sure. And by the way, that's how you attract the best people in the world to come work for you, too. You have to have an important mission that's about something bigger.

***Robinson:*** One more question about the founding of Coinbase. The *Wall Street Journal* not long ago did a profile of you in which they called you—I think I'm quoting this exactly—the last man standing. And we know why that is. It's because Sam Bankman-Fried, who founded FTX, a gigantic crypto exchange, blew up and is now in prison. And because Changpeng Zhao, who founded Binance, which I think is the biggest crypto exchange in the world, has now pleaded guilty to violating US money-laundering laws. I want you to address this. Because in the backs of their minds, people are aware of

these two cases. Can you convince me that Coinbase is just fundamentally different?

***Armstrong:*** Well, I think seeing two of our major competitors stumble in a massive way was really a validation of this strategy we've taken over the past eleven or twelve years. Both FTX and Binance are relatively new companies. Coinbase has been around a long time, and we've seen lots of ups and downs of these cycles. And unfortunately, in the up cycles, we tend to see new entrants come in. And sometimes, especially with the offshore, unregulated exchanges, there's a little bit of a "cut corners, break the rules, get rich or die trying" kind of vibe. Sometimes, companies like these startups offshore will rocket up in popularity, but then they'll blow up in spectacular fashion as well.

Coinbase has taken a very different approach. From the earliest days, we've said, I want to build this company in America. I'm an American citizen. It was always obvious to me that you have to follow the law that exists today. We're probably going to need new laws for cryptocurrency, because there are a couple places in the law where it's a little unclear. But in the absence of that clarity, don't try to steal a base. Try to do something reasonable that you think would be the right thing to do in the absence of clarity. In the earliest days, we met with regulators. I put on the suit and tie and we kind of advocated for clear legislation. We got all the licenses that were available to us at the time, and we did that in more and more markets around the world.

***"I think getting four hundred million people in the world to use anything is actually a really great step."***

By the way, if you're going to follow a regulated, compliant approach, you can't always move as fast. And that was sometimes difficult to see, especially in 2021, when these competitors were rocketing up. Our investors and other people would ask us, "Why haven't you launched that, and that, and that?" It required a certain amount of discipline to say no at that time.

## RULES AND CLARITY

***Robinson:*** Imagine for a moment that we had a functional Congress. And who knows? Maybe after the election, we might. Imagine we had a functional Congress that did its job, and did enact a regulatory framework for this growing and exciting new sector of the economy—cryptocurrency. And then

the SEC didn't need to engage in regulation by enforcement, because Congress would have done its job. What should that regulatory framework look like?

***Armstrong:*** This is a great question. This is exactly what, by the way, the G20 countries are all doing. Europe has actually already passed this legislation, called MiCA. Singapore, Australia, Brazil, Canada, they're all in various stages of doing this. The United States is behind on this process, which gets to some of the dysfunction happening in DC. But I believe this will come together.

There's political will, and there are fifty-two million Americans who want to elect pro-crypto candidates who understand that you have to balance the innovation potential of this with protecting consumers. We need a comprehensive framework. We can't have a politicized SEC just trying to shut it down or something.

What should that framework look like? Some areas of the law around this are already clear and I don't think they need an update. For instance, anti-money-laundering rules and the ways sanctions are enforced. You can create a trust company or get money-transmission licenses. These things can be useful already for all types of financial services companies, including crypto companies. The part of the law that's really the least clear is, which of these are commodities? Which are securities? Assuming we're going to continue to have two federal regulators, we need to clearly delineate. Those are really the key questions so we don't have a politicized regulator trying to weaponize the lack of clarity. That's what Congress needs to do.

And I should add that there are two bills going through the House committees that have bipartisan support already. Some of those may come to a full House floor vote, maybe this year. If that goes well, they could go to the Senate next year. We, along with a bunch of people in the industry, are trying to help make that happen.

## IS THERE A THREAT?

***Robinson:*** May I play devil's advocate for a moment? I'm going to assume the role of Warren Buffett and his late investing partner, Charlie Munger. They make the point often that you can't use this stuff. You can't use bitcoin in transactions. Marc Andreessen, one of your board members, wrote, "Critics point to limited usage by ordinary consumers and merchants. But that criticism was leveled against PCs and the Internet at the same stage. Every day, more and more consumers and merchants are buying, using, and selling bitcoin." He wrote that ten years ago, and transactions are still at a very, very low level. How come?

***Armstrong:*** Well, I'd say it's grown a lot since 2014. At that time, there were probably only single-digit millions of Americans who used crypto. There are now about fifty-two million. Globally, it's probably about four hundred million. I think that criticism is partly correct, by the way. Let me just acknowledge that.

***Robinson:*** Nobody pays for groceries with crypto or tanks up with crypto, right?

***Armstrong:*** Everyday transactions, especially in retail merchants in the United States, are not going to be the earliest adopters of this. For early adopters, it's basically digital payments—so, online, and then it's in emerging markets. And I will say, if you'd asked me ten years ago, I would have thought we'd have made more progress by now.

But still, I don't want to fully acknowledge the point that it's very small because I think getting four hundred million people in the world to use anything is actually a really great step, if you zoom out ten years and look at the trajectory of the Internet through the '80s and '90s. It's a little like when domain names first came out on the Internet.

***"Young people want this. They clearly understand this is the future."***

***Robinson:*** Thank you. And now, a few words from Charlie Munger: "It's stupid because it's still likely to go to zero. It's evil because it undermines the Federal Reserve System," which we desperately need to maintain its integrity, and government control, and so on. That's a serious accusation. Not just "this thing isn't useful." As crypto grows, more people hold crypto, fewer people hold dollars. That limits the ability of the Federal Reserve to control the currency, manage the economy, keep employment up, keep inflation down—all that. And so, what you're doing, as I understand Charlie Munger and Warren Buffett, is you're posing a threat to the currency of the United States. How do you answer that one?

***Armstrong:*** I'll give you my perspective. I think that one of the most patriotic things you can do for America to ensure that Western civilization continues to flourish, and the dollar remains relevant, and everything, is to have a check and balance on deficit spending and high inflation. In 1971, we went fully off the gold standard under Nixon. And because the dollar was no longer backed by any hard commodity, it allowed essentially unlimited inflation of the money supply. I think that if we don't have a check and balance on

the dollar, the incentive is for the supply to be inflated away. Great empires fall when they lose financial discipline over the currency, and they lose the reserve currency status.

***Robinson:*** I was thinking about Charlie Munger. When he said crypto is "evil," I thought, where does that even come from? Well, he died last year at the age of ninety-nine. So, he was an old enough man to have had a formative experience in his life: the Great Depression. And for a lot of people, the government, in one way or another, was important in getting us out of it. And one way or another, the Federal Reserve, the banking system, finally figured out what to do so that we don't have to go through that again. But since Joe Biden has become president, inflation's eroded 20 percent of the value of the dollar. If you're a younger person and you watch this happen, you don't think the Fed is that great. Is there a generational problem here?

***"The way to ensure the survival of America is to ensure that the currency is strong."***

***Armstrong:*** Yes. I think you can see it in the data. All these polls show a loss of trust in our major institutions. But a well-run Fed could actually manage the shocks in the system and the ups and the downs. They've done a reasonable job, all things considered. It's also the problem of the incentives set up in Congress. There's really no party in Congress right now that wants to pass a balanced budget. It's like the ring of power. The potential for abuse is too tempting. Eventually, you go too far. I think there needs to be an alternative, and people are waking up to that.

Bitcoin is provably scarce. You don't have to trust the good intentions of mankind, or anything. You're trusting the laws of math. They're unbreakable in that sense.

America is still, I think, the strongest country in the world, and it's the best place to do business and everything. There's nowhere I'd rather be. But you can see some of the strain on the system. And I do think the best way to ensure the survival of the dollar, and to make sure that's the source of soft power for the United States, is a digitized dollar. The way to ensure the survival of America is to ensure that the currency is strong, and we continue this American experiment. I actually think bitcoin and crypto are essential to that.

***Robinson:*** Why hasn't this been more widely adopted already? The arguments in favor are really quite powerful in specific ways that I would have

expected to build political constituencies pushing for wider acceptance, for greater use, and for the SEC and Congress to get its act together.

***Armstrong:*** You're getting into an interesting psychology question about how progress happens. I do think that the eighteen- to forty-year-old demographic is much more interested in crypto. The majority of people in that age group in America are actively looking for alternatives to the existing financial system; they don't think it's working for them. But it takes a small miracle to get new laws passed. The government moves very slowly. That's certainly been a barrier to innovation. In some cases, we've seen active resistance.

But young people want this. They clearly understand this is the future. And there are now fifty-two million Americans who have used it. By the way, that's three times the number of people who hold a union card. It's five times the number of people who own an electric vehicle. You're not going to win any votes by being anti-crypto. You're actually going to turn off fifty-two million Americans.

# *Andrew Roberts's Long View*

**Hoover fellow Andrew Roberts—at home, the Lord Roberts of Belgravia—is a proud defender of the "great man" view of history, and of history itself. "It has a moral imperative behind it."**

***By William Rome***

Upon walking into the study of Andrew Roberts's Belgravia townhouse in central London, one is immediately struck by the passion he has for his craft. Containing an extraordinary private collection of historical memorabilia, the room had an air of gravity befitting its owner—or perhaps I should say steward, as they are preserved for future generations—but it was far from a museum. The artifacts clearly provide inspiration for the great tomes written in the study and sold in bookstores internationally.

Andrew Roberts's true passion for all things historical was immediately evident and the generosity of his welcome equally striking. He was recently ennobled as the Lord Roberts of Belgravia—one of King Charles's earliest

***Andrew Roberts*** *is the Roger and Martha Mertz Visiting Fellow at the Hoover Institution, a member of Hoover's Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict, and a member of the House of Lords. He is the host of a Hoover Institution podcast,* ***Secrets of Statecraft with Andrew Roberts.*** ***William Rome*** *writes for the* ***Palatinate****, the student newspaper of Durham University (UK).*

***HISTORICAL FIGURE: Andrew Roberts is shown in his official Parliament portrait. Roberts is best known as a biographer with a revisionist bent. When writing a biography, he advises, "the first thing to do is to ignore everything that's gone before."*** [Roger Harris—Creative Commons]

appointees to the House of Lords—but his humility and kindness give him none of the aloofness which one might expect of a Lord.

Roberts's study consists of reminders of the great men and women of history. His muses are Napoleon, Churchill, and Thatcher; these individuals occupy the pages of many of his most celebrated works. He has just released his twentieth book, a testament to his work ethic, this being a man who habitually starts work at 4:30 a.m. appreciating the hours of undisrupted work!

***"Nobody has any excuse for making history boring, because it's not."***

Roberts is best known as a biographer with a revisionist bent, rehabilitating those individuals whom it has become fashionable to condemn. This revisionism should not be mistaken for contrarianism: rather, throughout his career as a historian, he gives little attention to the arguments that have preceded his. When writing a biography, "the first thing to do is to ignore everything that's gone before, and the second thing to do is to create a chronology … and work out for yourself … the important places to concentrate on."

His historical approach is grounded in recognizing and appreciating nuance: history is rarely clear-cut. Certainly, one's political views, though important for articles and television, "should never be allowed to infect a serious book." He engages with the idea of decolonizing the curriculum and the broader history of empire with a well-defined and considered answer. "The decolonization of the curriculum is ludicrous in a country where colonization is an important part of our history. Between John Cabot landing in Newfoundland in 1497 and Chris Patten leaving Hong Kong in 1997 … there is a precise half millennium of colonization in which Britain was taking part. To attempt to strip out that part of British history leaves you with Hamlet without the prince."

***"Colonization is an important part of our history. . . . To attempt to strip out that part of British history leaves you with Hamlet without the prince."***

The key to teaching imperial history, though, is "to get people to put their prejudices aside completely and to start again—to have a conversation which doesn't start from the point of view of either 'Rule, Britannia' or 'Black Lives Matter.'" He emphasizes that empire was neither a universally "glorious attempt to spread human rights across the world" nor universally

"a question of guilt and blame and oppression and exploitation." "It's a fantastically complicated story, and all the more interesting because of that. To ignore the chiaroscuro of empire is essentially to present a very boring, straightforward, and unintelligent attitude towards it."

## A SUCCESSION OF LEADERS

Many modern historians reject the "great man theory" of history: that history is determined by the actions of a few remarkable individuals. Roberts unashamedly endorses great man—and woman—theory, whose titans populate his books. "The great men and women view of history is a very important one because it reminds us that individuals do matter. It has a moral imperative behind it, which reminds us that what we do in our lives and the decisions we take and the virtue we try to follow … is what history is all about, because all history is, really, is the decisions taken by billions of people every day."

A byproduct of the central role taken on by great individuals in Roberts's work is a focus on leadership. He takes little issue with the propensity of leaders, both successes and failures, to model themselves on past great leaders. He believes that "there's an apostolic succession of leadership": Thatcher presented herself as Churchillian; Churchill took inspiration from Napoleon; Napoleon modeled himself on Julius Caesar, who in turn deemed himself the new Alexander the Great. Charisma is not universally demanded for greatness, though: Clement Attlee, who "didn't concentrate on having personal charisma," was "a giant of the postwar period."

***"Britain essentially has acted as point man over Ukraine for the United States."***

Roberts believes that "there are some lessons of leadership that last over the generations and centuries." This reflects a characteristically nuanced view of history's role in informing the present and future, particularly when it comes to the military. He praises British High Command for being "historically switched on" and agrees with my assessment that Russia has failed systematically to learn from Soviet military mistakes ("thank God!"). His twentieth book, released last October and one of which he is evidently immensely proud, is *Conflict: The Evolution of Warfare from 1945 to Ukraine* (Harper, 2023), written with the eminent former general David Petraeus, of which Roberts showed me a copy.

"It's about conflict from 1945 to Ukraine, and what we try to do in that book is to look to see whether there are lessons of history that can be applied to this monstrous war that Putin has so despicably unleashed on poor old Ukraine, and to work out whether historically there are parallels in any aspects of the war." They also look forward, considering "the future of war and … what Ukraine can teach us about [it]. So, we try to use history to understand what's going on in Ukraine militarily … and then we use that to try to look forward into the future and try to work out what lessons we can learn from Ukraine for the future. And I think in both areas … that history is packed with help and guidance and aid."

Though Roberts believes that political alignment should not influence one's historical analysis, his work seems to have reinforced his political beliefs, in particular his Atlanticism. He is a strong believer in the US-British "special relationship," which he considers far from dead, and uses Ukraine to substantiate this argument. "We can see the way in which Britain essentially has acted as point man over Ukraine for the United States on each of the great moments of sending a head of government to Kyiv, sending anti-tank weaponry, high-precision weaponry, on sending the Storm Shadow missile." Moreover, "we still do together provide the basis for the defense of the rules-based international order since 1945, and this is something that my and David Petraeus's book, *Conflict,* tries to point out." It is also clearly a conviction he intends to advance in the Lords.

***Roberts sees a strong understanding of history as the "absolute best antidote" to conspiracy theories.***

## FACTS WILL PREVAIL

Roberts's passion for historical research beyond its pedagogical purposes is obvious. "It's been a passion of mine all my life" and originates in his charismatic prep-school history master, his father's enthusiasm for history, and two outstanding history dons at Cambridge, in particular Norman Stone, who "really changed my view of the world as well as history." He comments that "nobody has any excuse for making history boring, because it's not—it's the most fantastic, exciting adventure story imaginable."

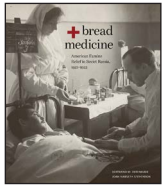
Yet, he is critical of the British history curriculum, "a disgrace … which jumps far too quickly from the Tudors to the Nazis," ignoring myriad foundational events for Britain "located amongst the Stuarts, the Hanoverians, the Victorians, and so on." He observes that since popular history is particularly

strong on the Tudors and Nazis, "it should be at school and university that you learn about everything in between."

He sees a strong understanding of history as the "absolute best antidote" to conspiracy theories. "The only way [they can be stamped out] is by shining light on them, and using ridicule, and using logic, and using reason. And luckily, history provides all of these.... It's the detergent that can get rid of these insane, and very insidious, and very bad for democracy ideas."

Roberts is a heavyweight of British historians of the past thirty years: he is a master of his craft and of detail but remains an engaging and popularly celebrated author, discussing grand themes. Like several of his predecessors as biographers of Churchill—notably Roy Jenkins and Robert Rhodes James (and, if one takes a generous interpretation of "biography," Boris Johnson)—he is now a parliamentarian and will take the same passion for historical research and faith in the power of an individual to change history to the seat of British power. At a time of widespread criticism of the caliber of Lords appointees, Roberts stands out as a well-qualified and deserving choice. ◘



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# August 1945: Fallout

**The moral qualms dramatized in the movie *Oppenheimer* were central to the discussions about whether to bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki. A new book illuminates what informed that decision, and what followed it.**

***By Michael R. Auslin***

Unlike the physical shockwaves that immediately destroyed Hiroshima when the atomic bomb was dropped on August 6, 1945, the bomb's psychic shockwaves took more than a year to hit America. John Hersey published his searing account of the event at the end of August 1946—taking up an entire issue of the *New Yorker*. After that, Americans began debating the bomb and never stopped. Were the atomic bombings of Japan justified? Could the war have been ended without them? Was the attack used to cow the

### *Key points*

» As the war ended, Americans began debating the bomb and never stopped.

» Leaders on both the US and Japanese sides were under crushing psychological pressure.

» The question of a president's sole control over nuclear weapons has become a hot topic again.

***Michael R. Auslin** is the Payson J. Treat Distinguished Research Fellow in Contemporary Asia at the Hoover Institution. He hosts the Hoover Institution podcast **The Pacific Century** and participates in Hoover research teams studying military history, the Middle East, Taiwan, China, and the Indo-Pacific.*

Soviets as much as the Japanese? As Christopher Nolan's movie *Oppenheimer* shows, the shockwaves reverberate still.

The veteran biographer Evan Thomas now enters the debate. In *Road to Surrender: Three Men and the Countdown to the End of World War II* (Random House, 2023), Thomas depicts the mindsets and emotions of three men directly involved in the decision to drop the bomb and end the war in the Pacific: Secretary of War Henry Stimson, Japanese Foreign Minister Shigenori Tōgō, and Army Air Forces General Carl "Tooey" Spaatz. Other key players figure prominently, especially President Harry Truman, General George Marshall, Army Lieutenant General Leslie Groves, and the aforementioned J. Robert Oppenheimer, the physicist who oversaw the weapon's construction.

***If there was one certainty for the Americans, it was that the bomb would be used.***

The crushing psychological pressure these men underwent forms the book's moral drama. Thomas is particularly good at limning the uncertainties they faced as they grappled with questions of timing, targets, peace conditions, and domestic politics, showing how every decision was debated and agonized over.

If there was one certainty for the Americans, however, it was that the bomb would be used once operational. As Stimson asserted in his defense of the decision, published in *Harper's* magazine in 1947, "I cannot see how any person vested with such responsibilities as mine could have taken any other course" than to recommend the dropping of the bomb. Thomas shows how Stimson and his colleagues wrestled with the dilemma of targeting civilians with the terrible new weapon, convincing themselves that both Hiroshima and Nagasaki were primarily military sites when they were not.

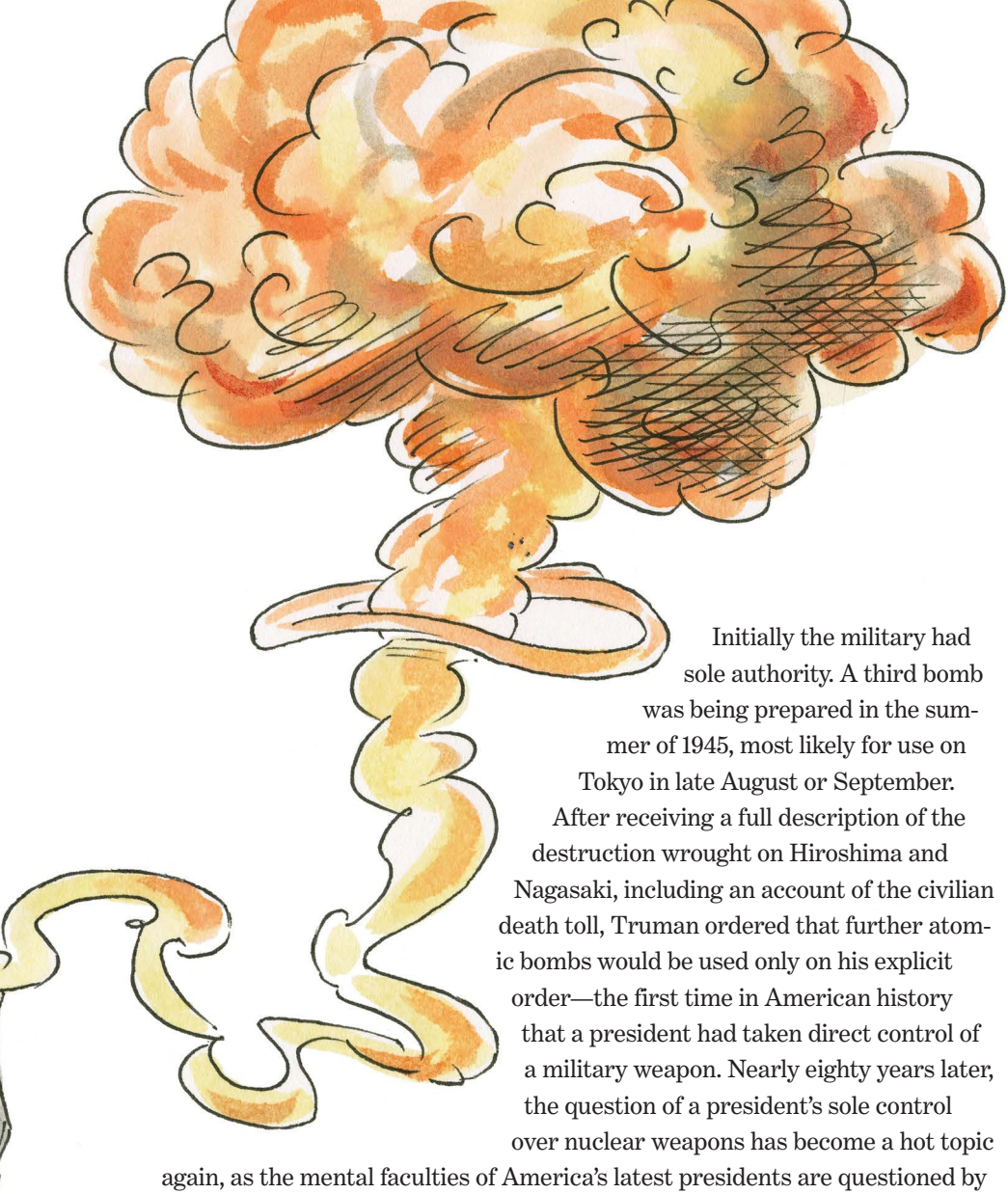
***The question of nonproliferation, like the bomb itself, was present at the creation.***

The history of the atomic bomb has been well covered, but Thomas's brisk narrative thrusts readers into the moral quandaries that bedeviled policy makers in both Japan and America. The focus on Tōgō and the tortuous impasse in Japan's Supreme War Council reveals a story far more complicated than the one most Americans are familiar with: that of a quick Japanese surrender

after the obliteration of Nagasaki. The *Götterdämmerung* in Tokyo paralleled that in Berlin earlier in 1945. Thomas makes clear that the decision to surrender was a close-run thing, even after Emperor Hirohito had made clear his wishes that the war end.

Similarly compelling, and likely new to many readers, is the brief but vital American struggle over civilian versus military control of the new weapon.


[Taylor Jones—for the *Hoover Digest*]



Initially the military had sole authority. A third bomb was being prepared in the summer of 1945, most likely for use on Tokyo in late August or September. After receiving a full description of the destruction wrought on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, including an account of the civilian death toll, Truman ordered that further atomic bombs would be used only on his explicit order—the first time in American history that a president had taken direct control of a military weapon. Nearly eighty years later, the question of a president's sole control over nuclear weapons has become a hot topic again, as the mental faculties of America's latest presidents are questioned by partisans on both sides.

One of the great controversies hanging over the atomic bombings is whether they were directed as much at Moscow as at Tokyo. Thomas briefly covers the revisionist argument that the bomb was used immorally against civilians to give Washington a leg up in the emerging Cold War. Geopolitics, as Thomas shows, was a factor, but far from the main one in Truman and Stimson's thinking.

Equally vexing, and critical for Stimson, was the question of national versus international control of atomic energy. The United States had a

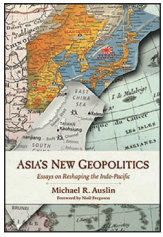
strong interest in maintaining sole control of atomic power. At the same time, however, other nations, particularly the Soviet Union, were sure to get their hands on this technology eventually. Best, argued Stimson and others, to establish a system of international governance at the outset. Thus, the question of nonproliferation, like that of civilian control of atomic bombs, was born at the dawn of the atomic age. And Stimson's dream was fated to remain just that.

As for the necessity of dropping both bombs, Thomas, like most historians, is in no doubt. The projected American casualties for an invasion of Japan's home islands, scheduled to begin in November 1945, ran to the hundreds of thousands, not to mention millions of Japanese, including civilians, expected to perish. Even after Hiroshima, Hirohito's ministers could not agree to surrender. Only after the Nagasaki bombing and the Soviet declaration of war on Japan on August 7 (the day after Hiroshima) could Tōgō get a majority of the war council, though not the military leaders, to bear the unbearable.

Truman and his advisers initially assumed that the A-bomb, while uniquely powerful, would be used like any other weapon. After Hiroshima, however, they understood its revolutionary nature, and senior military leaders like General Douglas MacArthur recognized that it changed warfare forever.

Nor could they ignore that the morality question cut both ways. For the several hundred thousand Japanese killed in the bombings, untold numbers on both sides were saved. One of them was Thomas's father, a junior officer in the US Navy awaiting orders to invade Japan. ■





# John Dunlop: An Appreciation

**The collection of the late Hoover senior fellow and Russia expert John B. Dunlop is a rich review of the movements and struggles that gave birth to the Putin era. It is also a tribute to an inimitable scholar and colleague.**

***By Norman M. Naimark, Paul R. Gregory, and Stephen Kotkin***

John B. Dunlop—a Hoover scholar, a Russia expert, and our colleague and friend—died on October 14, surrounded by his beloved family. Above all, John was an unusually gifted and insightful student of Russian history, both during the communist period and afterwards. In fact, Russia, as distinct from the Soviet Union, was his overwhelming passion, and there was little he did not know about its culture, politics, society, and religious life, along with myriad other subjects.

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***FREEDOM AND JUSTICE: John Dunlop testified before congressional hearings, gave countless lectures about Russian affairs, and wrote books and articles on a variety of Russia-oriented subjects. His meticulously kept archive leaves a record that future historians of Russia will want to consult.***
[Hoover Institution]

He recognized the existence and salience of Russian nationalism when most other scholars either ignored it or denied its existence. He was ahead of his time, and remained so all the way into and through retirement.

Many people today see Russia as evil and as reducible to Vladimir Putin—something to ban, block, and fight against. John was more aware than anyone of this threat, and warned us all of it, but for him Russia was far more capacious than one leader or a societal tendency, no matter how strong.

John spent a year at the Hoover Institution as a national fellow in 1978–79 and returned in 1983 as a senior fellow. During his four-decade career at the institution, John served as a co-chair (with Thomas H. Henriksen) of the US and World Affairs Seminar, as a deputy director of the Hoover Library, and as acting director of Stanford's Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies (CREEES).

He testified before congressional hearings, gave countless lectures about Russian affairs, and wrote a bevy of books and articles on a variety of Russia-oriented subjects. But John was happiest in his Hoover office collecting an amazingly wide range of materials about Russian and Soviet matters. These included the development of religious and nationalist circles in the 1970s and 1980s; the wars in Chechnya of Boris Yeltsin and Putin; KGB-inspired bombings in Dagestan, Moscow, and Ryazan in 1999; the Dubrovka Theater hostage-taking in Moscow in 2002; the brutal school siege in Beslan in 2004; the Kremlin-inspired murders of journalists, opposition politicians, and dissidents; and Moscow's aggression against Ukraine since 2014. He combined an intensely close reading of Russian trial transcripts, investigative journalism, Radio Liberty materials, and open-source intelligence revelations to put together thorough accounts of the Kremlin's criminal behavior.

***John Dunlop was ahead of his time, and remained so all the way into and through retirement.***

John's office contained a meticulously kept archive, filled with little-known materials culled from sometimes impossibly obscure sources. For example, the John B. Dunlop collection, now available for research in the Hoover Institution Library & Archives, contains 232 boxes of material on some of the most tragic and perplexing events in the transition from Soviet rule to that of Boris Yeltsin and ultimately to Vladimir Putin. Future historians of Putin's Russia, especially, will want to consult that archive for a wide range of important and little-known sources.

John is frequently referred to as a political scientist. He probably would have been happiest to be known as a contemporary historian. But few are aware that he was trained as a Slavicist, first at Harvard, where he graduated magna cum laude in 1964, and then at Yale, where he earned his doctorate. He also spent two years at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Yonkers, New York, after his first year at Yale, which gave him deep insights into Russian spirituality and religious history. His PhD thesis and first book—*Staretz Amvrosy: Model for Dostoevsky's Staretz Zossima* (Nordland, 1972)—was a perfect mesh of literary studies and the history of Russian Orthodoxy. His training in the seminary and his fifty-nine-year marriage to Olga Verhovskoy Dunlop, herself steeped in Russian Orthodoxy and its study and a former library and archive specialist at Hoover, shaped John's lifelong dedication to and scholarship about the Russian Orthodox tradition. After finishing his doctorate and before coming to Hoover as a senior fellow, John was professor and department chair of German and Russian Languages and Literatures at Oberlin College from 1970 to 1983.

His interventions in Russian and Soviet studies frequently went against the grain of contemporaneous scholarship, yet ended up capturing the essence of crucial developments in the USSR and the Russian Republic. He was one of the first to focus on Russia, as distinct from the Soviet Union, and identified major currents in Russian nationalism that undermined Soviet rule. One of those currents, "National Bolshevism," which he described at length in *The Faces of Contemporary Russian Nationalism* (Princeton University Press, 1983), could easily be seen as the precursor of "Putinism," as National Bolshevism was an expansionist, bellicose, autocratic, and Russocentric ideology that bordered on fascism. He also predicted the fall of the Soviet Union in part because of the unexpected Russian insurgency at the end of the 1980s.

***The John B. Dunlop collection, now available in the Hoover Institution Library & Archives, contains a trove of material on some of the most tragic and perplexing events in modern Russian history.***

There is no doubt that John hoped that a more liberal, Slavophile, decentralized, and "social-Christian" nationalist current, represented to some extent in the essays of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (some of which John edited and published), would prevail with the rise of Yeltsin. But, as he

demonstrated in *The Rise of Russia and the Fall of the Soviet Empire* (Princeton, 1993), the shallow roots of Russian institutions threatened the development of a peaceful, democratic state system. From the very beginning of Putin's rule, John was deeply suspicious of him and his imperial pretensions. John saw Putin's victory in the March 2000 elections as a devastating blow to the hopes for Russian democracy. In an appropriately titled essay, "The Lingering Dream of Empire," published in the *Hoover Digest* in 2000 at the outset of Putin's presidency, he expressed surprise that so little attention was being paid to Putin's "goal of reintegrating Russia with other former Soviet republics." He specifically mentioned that Putin already had his eye on Ukraine.

***Dunlop identified major currents in Russian nationalism that undermined Soviet rule.***

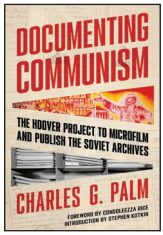
John dedicated the last decades of his career to exposing Putin as a criminal, a purveyor of state terror, and a violator of basic human rights and international norms. Along with David Satter, John wrote about the Moscow apartment bombings that brought Putin to power and on the botching of the Dubrovka and Beslan hostage crises—events that cost the lives of many ordinary Russian citizens. Dunlop used the evidence from the criminal trials of alleged Chechen assassins to successfully call into question the Kremlin's version of events. John used careful scholarship to assemble convincing evidence that Putin appeared ready to sacrifice the lives of Russians, both unknown and famous—to establish absolute power. The death in prison of dissident Alexei Navalny shows that this pattern still holds true.

***He showed how the shallow roots of Russian institutions threatened the development of a peaceful, democratic state system.***

On a personal level, John was modest, humble, and even self-effacing. At seminars and meetings, he spoke up rarely, preferring to remain in the background. But his colleagues who read his work and communicated with him regularly about Russian affairs were in awe of his erudition and knowledge of contemporary Russian politics. We all valued his e-mail news notices, which became increasingly frequent with the 2014 occupation of the Donbas region of Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea that same year, and the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

John's research and analysis have been described as scrupulous, methodical, and painstaking. He was careful with his evidence and cautious with his formulations. But his work was also deeply moral and ethical, committed to the elusive goal of freedom and justice for the Russian people. He never stopped believing that this was possible. H

***Special to the* Hoover Digest.**



# *"I Lived Hard and Fast but Good"*

**Who was Boris Pash?** **A Hoover collection gives a glimpse into his scarcely believable life: nemesis of Robert Oppenheimer, fervent anticommunist, and cold-blooded spy chief whose exploits may never be fully known.**

***By Oleg Beyda***

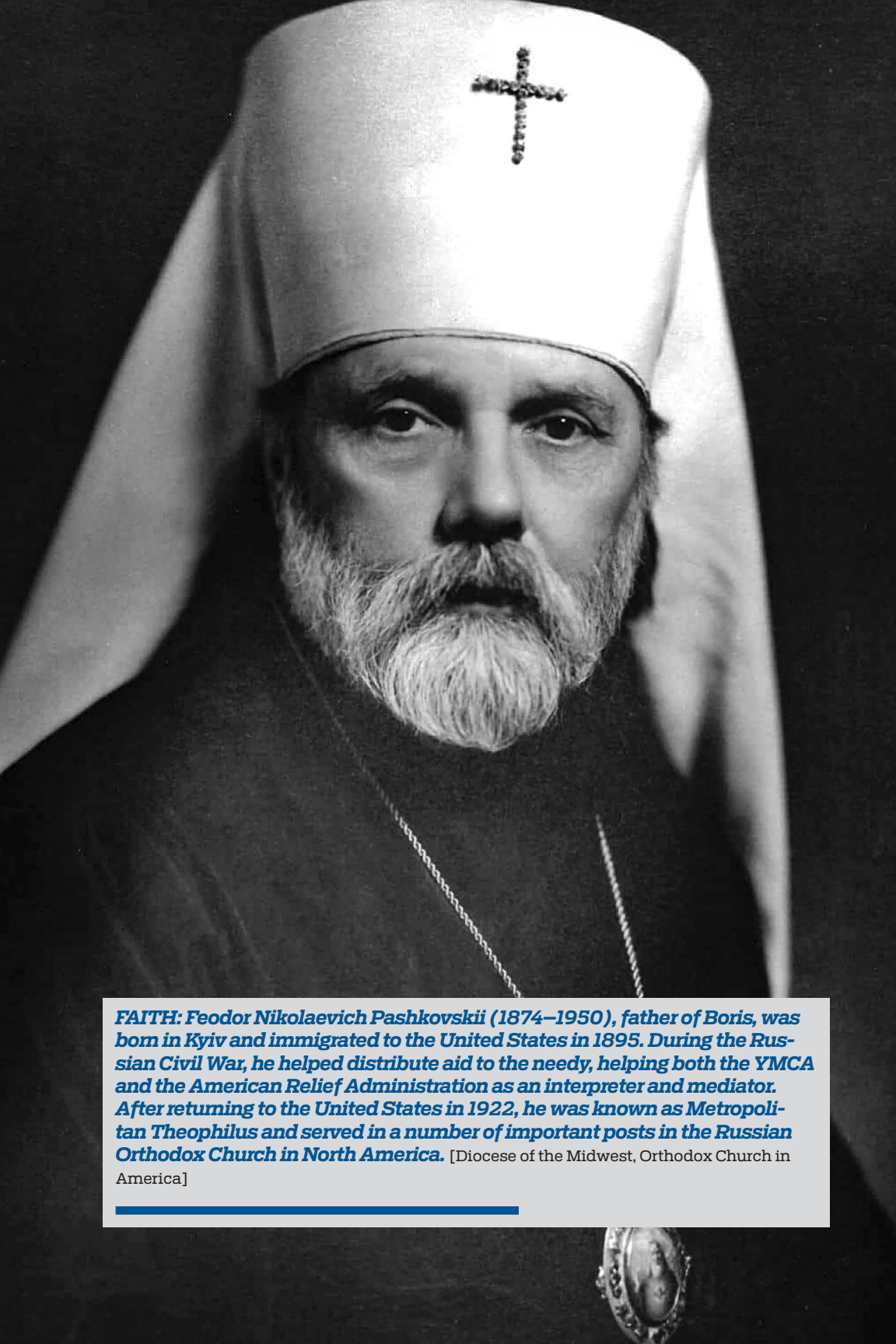
The umbilical cord of the past century connects the terms "Russian" and "American" in numberless ways. Russians who arrived on American shores as survivors of the imperial shipwreck of 1917 were privy to many key moments of US history, including the Second World War. When President Franklin D. Roosevelt complained of an unbearable headache and then collapsed, the only other person in the room was Russian émigré Elizabeth Shoumatoff, painting his portrait. The protagonist of today's story, Boris Feodorovich Pashkovskii—mostly known to Americans by his adopted surname, "Pash"—may be recalled by readers from Christopher Nolan's atomic blockbuster, *Oppenheimer*. Masterfully played by Casey Affleck, our hero was a sharp, clean-cut counterintelligence officer with a distant gaze, his politeness merely a thin layer, who filled the screen with frosty uneasiness.

***Oleg Beyda** is the Hansen Lecturer in Russian History at the University of Melbourne, where he teaches on World War II and Stalinism. He is the author of **For Russia with Hitler: White Russian Émigrés and the German-Soviet War** (University of Toronto Press, 2024).*


***HAUNTED: Born Boris Pashkovskii, the future counterintelligence figure held vivid memories of the earthquake and fire that ravaged his native San Francisco. While still a teenager, he went to Russia to fight for the czar and then, after Russia withdrew from World War I, against the communists. Years later, he reflected on both the San Francisco disaster and his experience of combat and looked back on "a lifetime of dread that it ever should happen again."***
[Boris Pash papers—Hoover Institution Library & Archives]

Not too far from reality.

His life was one of secrecy and remains a complex challenge to reconstruct. If not for his collection donated to the Hoover Institution Archives after 1972, it would be even more intricate a process. Neatly organized in six boxes, with hundreds of photographs enclosed, the collection represents his own outlook on the self and the complex legacy he left behind. It was a life driven by a host of partisan passions uncharacteristic of people of his calculating profession. Stacking up folders bulging with dispatches, colorful IDs, daily reports, and incoming correspondence full of plain respect, I could not but muse at the intensity of this dangerous human being.



***FAITH: Feodor Nikolaevich Pashkovskii (1874–1950), father of Boris, was born in Kyiv and immigrated to the United States in 1895. During the Russian Civil War, he helped distribute aid to the needy, helping both the YMCA and the American Relief Administration as an interpreter and mediator. After returning to the United States in 1922, he was known as Metropolitan Theophilus and served in a number of important posts in the Russian Orthodox Church in North America.*** [Diocese of the Midwest, Orthodox Church in America]

## FORMED IN FIRE

The tale of Boris T. Pash begins in San Francisco, where his father, Feodor Nikolaevich Pashkovskii, a graduate of the Kyiv Theological Academy, arrived late in 1895. There the young immigrant met a fellow member of the Orthodox faith, the Serb Ella Dabovich. On June 20, 1900, their son was born. Young Boris grew up in a multilingual community, and later in life was to master five languages. The core of his worldview was a fervent Orthodox Christianity, and by the age of five he was an altar boy. In April 1906, San Francisco was hit by a deadly earthquake. The resulting fire destroyed 80 percent of the city, not sparing the Orthodox cathedral where Feodor, braving the fire, salvaged many precious items. The power of the howling flames seared itself into the boy's memory. It was as if his fate had acquired two lodestars: one of them the faith he inherited, and the other, fire—pure energy, which once unleashed spared nothing in its path.

In 1913, the family returned to Russia. The following year, the old world plunged into the global conflict in whose trenches Feodor served as a chaplain to the czar's 52nd Infantry Division. In August 1916, after receiving special permission to enlist as an American citizen, Boris joined his father's division as an artilleryman, serving until May 1917. The Bolshevik coup lay ahead, and when it occurred, it understandably commanded no sympathy from the Pashkovskiis. In September 1918, Boris was in Simferopol, Crimea, where he worked for the YMCA. By February 1920, the teenager had thrown in his lot with the Russian anti-Bolsheviks, serving on the White navy cruiser *General Kornilov.* He saw action at sea, and in March 1920 the Cross of Saint George, fourth class, adorned his chest.

By that stage the Whites had lost their war, but they did not abandon their cause. November 1920 saw the harrowing evacuation of Crimea. Boris, by that stage a veteran and a newlywed, was in the thick of it. Many decades later he would write:

> The next day was the beginning of a period which is difficult to describe, but which leaves with one who has experienced it a lifetime of dread that it ever should happen again … (comparing with my personal recollection of the Fire of San Francisco 1906).

After Boris's wife, Lydia, had almost been lost amid a screaming crowd on the pier, the Pashkovskiis were taken aboard a Red Cross vessel. Boris watched as tens of thousands of faces grew smaller and smaller. On the shore, people continued throwing themselves on a barbed-wire fence, begging not to be left behind. The fire of revolution was turning their lives to ashes.


***ON THE MARCH: Edgar Pash (1921–1997), Boris and Lydia's son, parades in a Cossack outfit. An inscription on the back of the photo says, "To dear grandpa from his loving grandson. Edgar." The family moved around the United States in search of work in the 1920s, eventually settling in Los Angeles, where Boris Pash found steady employment.*** [Boris Pash papers—Hoover Institution Library & Archives]


***IN IT TO WIN IT: Boris Pash was a PE teacher and assistant principal before he found his niche in the intelligence realm. As the coach of the Sheiks of Hollywood High School, he was remembered as well-liked and energetic.***

They spent two years in a German YMCA camp, where Boris tried his skills as a sports coach, and then the couple decided to move to America. Once Boris had graduated from Springfield College in Massachusetts, the Pashkovskiis, with son Edgar in tow, traveled the country in search of employment. By September 1924, life for the young war veteran had picked up. His surname now shortened to "Pash," Boris had stable employment as a teacher at Hollywood High School, where he would come to head the athletic department. Short in stature, with antique-looking round glasses and a disarming smile, he was a knot of energy, nurturing undefeated school teams and loved by his students. A successful coach during the week, he never abandoned his faith. A newspaper photo of the 1930s shows three generations of Pashkovskiis: Boris's father, Feodor (Metropolitan Theophilus by that stage), his subdeacon son Boris, and subdeacon grandson Edgar, all in Orthodox vestments.

Boris Pash's connection to the US Army began in 1930, when his gift for languages was discerned and he was assigned to work in military intelligence in the event of war. In May 1940, he quit teaching at school and was sent to the Presidio in San Francisco to work in the headquarters of what became the Western Defense Command. In his new role as assistant to the counterintelligence chief (G-2), Captain Pash took part in discussions surrounding the internment of Japanese-Americans. Forty years later, this would come to haunt him.


***INTIMIDATING: In the Army, Pash was singled out for his multiple languages and talent for counterintelligence work. He was rapidly promoted, eventually to colonel. In 1942, he became head of the Counterintelligence Branch of the Western Defense Command, based in San Francisco. In 1943, on the trail of a purported "hotbed of communist activity" in San Francisco and Berkeley, he had his fateful encounter with J. Robert Oppenheimer.***

## UNBLINKING EYE

The war was to see Pash, in his unlikely new career, achieve rapid promotion. He discovered a gift for clandestine activity and soared through the ranks. A major from February 1942, in September he took over the Counterintelligence Branch of the Western Defense Command, capping this in October with a further promotion to lieutenant colonel. His schedule depicts a man constantly on the move from briefings to conferences and discussions. Pash attended to vaguely described "Russian matters," vouched for trustworthy Russian émigré volunteers, and oversaw a dozen agents in Mexico. Nor did the interned Japanese-Americans slip his attention. He received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communiqués on matters in the camps, and decided which families were to be put under additional scrutiny.

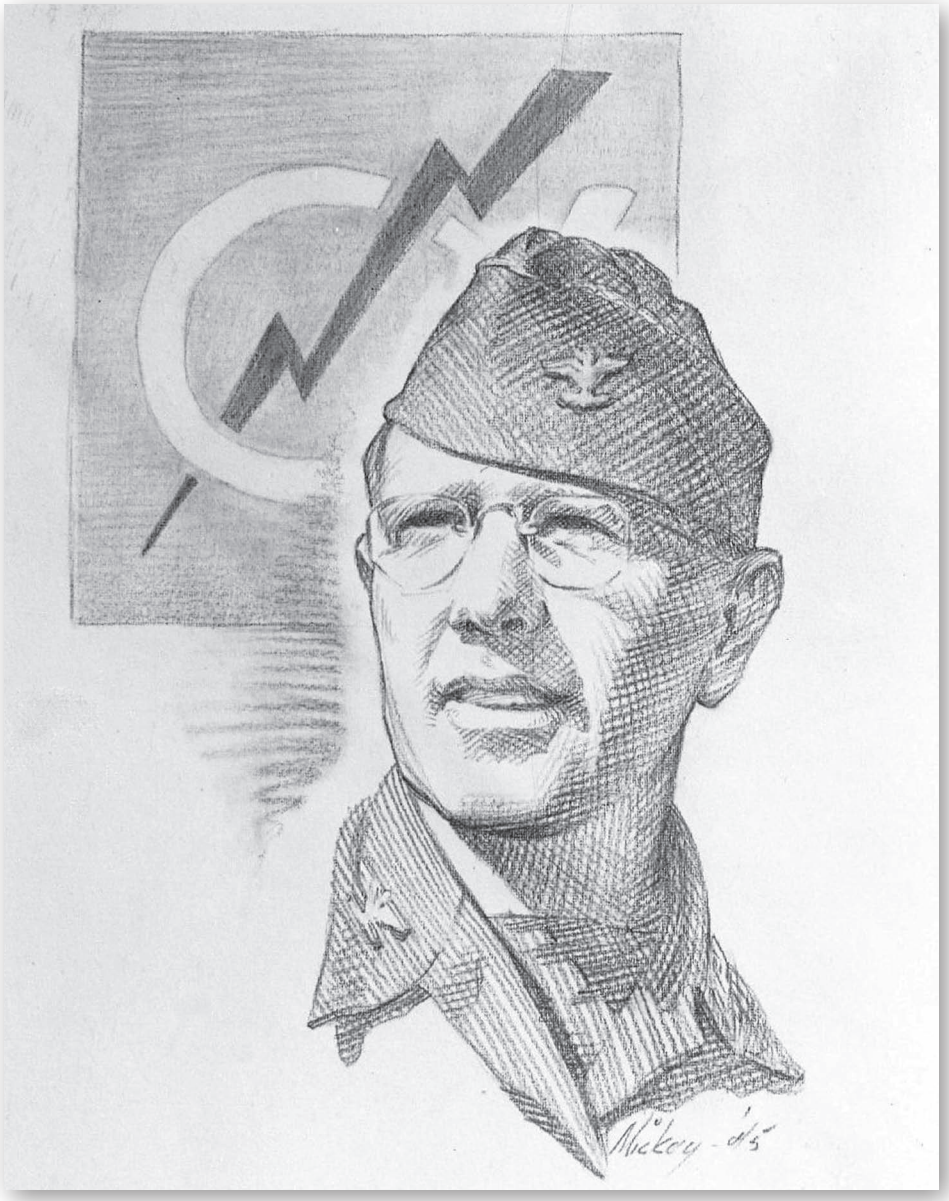
Colonel John Lansdale Jr., who shortly would take charge of security in the Manhattan Project, met Pash early in 1943. The Army and the FBI worked jointly in a task force eyeballing San Francisco and Berkeley, "a hotbed of communist activity." Boris impressed Lansdale as someone who fervently hated the communists and knew their organization intimately. General Leslie Groves, director of the Manhattan Project, held a similar opinion; his initial impression of Pash was of highly driven competence. "A dynamo," to quote Groves's right-hand man, Robert Furman.

***In* Oppenheimer, *Casey Affleck played Boris Pash as a clean-cut counterintelligence officer with a distant gaze, his politeness merely a veneer.***

Pash wove his intelligence web like a hungry spider. The phones of suspects were tapped and houses were bugged. Pash had a switchboard installed in the basement of a rented home and kept it staffed around the clock. His nondescript spooks watched the halls of every major hotel and special agents followed their marks. Every piece of mail was intercepted. Pash kept tabs on labor organizations as well, in the spring of 1943 infiltrating the Filipino Sakdalista groups, then believed to be pro-Japanese. For Pash, unlike most of his American colleagues, anticommunism was a personal vendetta. George Kistiakowsky, a Ukrainian-American scientist working on the Manhattan Project, remembered Pash as "a really wild Russian, an extreme right wing, sort of Ku Klux Klan enthusiast."

Pash was clearly excited by the hunt for subversives, so much so that he was reluctant to let moral qualms interfere with the process. In the summer of 1943, he was negotiating for authority to purchase a boat onto which suspects would be delivered. After a short sea voyage, they would be "thoroughly questioned after the Russian manner." Legality? Pash "did not intend

***FALLOUT: J. Robert Oppenheimer (opposite) appears on his official ID badge. In 1943, he ran afoul of Pash after telling him what Oppenheimer later admitted was a fabricated tale meant to deflect suspicion from a friend. In 1954, Pash's testimony helped in the revocation of Oppenheimer's security clearance.*** [Los Alamos National Laboratory]



***LEADER: A pencil sketch shows Lieutenant Colonel Boris Pash, head of the elite Alsos Mission (nicknamed "Lightning A"), a secret effort to find the hardware and personnel involved in Nazi Germany's own efforts to develop an atomic bomb. The Alsos unit prowled Western Europe, collecting critical materials and rounding up scientists before Allied occupation forces could settle in to the conquered lands.*** [Thurgood Collection, Emilio Segrè Visual Archives, American Institute of Physics]

to have anyone available for prosecuting after questioning," an FBI report stated. "Pressure was brought to bear to discourage this particular activity."

Pash's relationship with the tragic genius J. Robert Oppenheimer is well known, thanks to its pivotal role in the recent film. By the summer of 1943, "Oppie" was swamped with issues of secrecy, friendship, and compromise. This led to a fateful meeting with Pash in August, where Oppenheimer, in his own later words, "invented a cock-and-bull story" to protect a friend. The questioning of people's loyalty was a personal trademark for Pash, who two months before the meeting had recommended that Oppie be dismissed from the project. The same summer saw Pash sharply oppose the attempt to volunteer by the renowned writer John Steinbeck, another intellectual with strong leftist sympathies. Steinbeck had left for Europe by that stage, hence Pash's pushback on a decision already made by the higher authorities fizzled out.

***The core of his worldview was a fervent Orthodox Christianity.***

## THE CHASE IS ON

After the Allied landing in Sicily in September 1943, Groves assembled a small team of scientists and intelligence officers, later dubbed the Alsos Mission. The name was derived from the Greek word meaning "grove of trees"—a choice that General Groves wanted to veto but decided against changing to avoid drawing attention to it. In Pash's words, the title was "admittedly not too clever a selection," but the name stuck. Objective: to ascertain the progress of the German nuclear program. Pash was appointed to head the team, and they set off for Italy.

***By February 1920, the teenage Boris Pashkovskii had thrown in his lot with the anti-Bolsheviks.***

Following the American advance, the Alsos men searched for Italian scientists who might know something of the German development efforts. In June 1944, Pash entered Rome with the advancing troops and his team of sixty. The responsibility was great, and shared with the brilliant Alsos agents. An Alsos chemist, John Raven Johnson, rode with Pash, who carried only a .45 pistol. To Johnson's observation that such firepower was inadequate in case of a firefight, Pash replied that this not the point: in such a case, Boris had orders to shoot Johnson if necessary to stop him being captured.

***THE HUNTER: Pash and his men pushed through war-ravaged towns, sometimes before the enemy had even surrendered. The French, the Soviets, and the British were all seeking nuclear dominance as Hitler's empire crumbled. The Alsos Mission would be a major success for the United States: twenty-two operations, a rich bounty of machinery and materials, and four hundred detailed reports on scientific matters.*** [Boris Pash papers—Hoover Institution Library & Archives]

***THE QUARRY: Among the greatest prizes was this experimental "uranium machine," built by physicist Werner Heisenberg, that the Alsos team discovered in a beer cellar beneath a palace in Haigerloch, southern Germany. Cubes of natural uranium were to be lowered into the center—the design suggesting a bizarre chandelier—surrounded by graphite, and immersed in heavy water. Heisenberg had already fled on a bicycle, leaving his uranium buried in a field, the heavy water hidden in barrels, and lab documents secreted in an outhouse. Today the reactor site is the Atomkeller Museum. In a historical curiosity, most of Heisenberg's 660 or so uranium cubes are unaccounted for.*** [Emilio Segrè Visual Archives, American Institute of Physics]

The Germans did not seem close to their objective, but the Americans needed to be sure. Pash therefore prepared for the second act of the nuclear ballet. One of his new recruits was a Dutch physicist, Samuel Goudsmit. Pash impressed him, striking Goudsmit as a tireless professional and a master of psychological manipulation. According to Goudsmit, all the people working with Pash were handpicked and personally loyal to him. One of the Alsos soldiers, a nineteen-year-old corporal at the time, confirmed to me that Pash

# How Close Were Nazis To A-Bomb?

## Men Of Alsos Mission Found Answer To Question

By DON KEOWN

Just how close were the Germans to developing their own atomic bomb in the final stages of World War II?

That is an intriguing question over which historians have differed and debated.

But the one man who can answer it most authoritatively is a Marin County resident — Boris T. Pash of 474 Cedar Hill Drive, San Rafael.

It was Pash, now a retired U.S. Army colonel, who headed the Alsos Mission organized in the late fall of 1943.

**AN ELITE** and super-secret unit composed of both military and science people, the mission was handed the difficult task of determining the truth or falsity of the rumors that a desperate Adolf Hitler was preparing for use some new and terrible weapons in the hope that he could yet turn defeat into victory.

And especially was Alsos charged with determining if Germany was readying the same atomic bombs that Americans were hurrying to completion in their Manhattan Project.

Carried out in a Western Europe ablaze with war, it was a dangerous and difficult assignment. But Colonel Pash and his picked men carried it out, sometimes working immediately behind Allied forces engaged in reoccupying territory that had been captured by the Germans, sometimes moving into those very front lines, and sometimes even preceding the most advanced Allied patrols.

**EVENTUALLY IT** took them on forays into Germany itself.

It involved the location and the questioning of eminent scientists, both Germans and their captives. It involved minute inspections of Nazi laboratories, universities and factories. It involved scientific scrutiny of papers left behind by fleeing Germans. It involved hunts for and discoveries of missing stocks of uranium, heavy water and radium.

It made the Alsos men the first to re-enter Paris, and among the first to explore Hitler's Alpine redoubt.

**IT BROUGHT** Pash and his men frequently under close and heavy enemy gunfire and it aroused no little resentment and jealousy from other Allied intelligence units denied the free-wheeling and unrestrained operating procedures granted Alsos because of its special importance.

Eventually, the Alsos Mission came up with the answer to the big question concerning Germany's atomic bomb project.

In the process they took into American custody a long list of German scientists involved in the program, and they recovered a huge store of hidden uranium metal and heavy water.

**"ALSOS HAS** hit the jackpot," a triumphant Colonel Pash wired his commanding general.

And so notified, a jubilant Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower relayed the news on to the Pentagon, using the same phrase: "Boris Pash has hit the jackpot," adding that the information, material and personnel secured and developed had exceeded the "wildest expectations."

The answer to that key question about the Germans and their atomic bomb program?

**"THE GERMANS,"** says Colonel Pash today, "were nowhere close to the atomic bomb. In November, 1944, they were not as far along as we had been in early 1943.

"In fact, they were not even on the right track. It would have been a matter of years before they would have been able to correct their mistakes and to prepare the bomb for use."

This was the answer that Pash and his people gave to the men directing the campaigns in Western Europe, thus relieving their minds of the possibility that Hitler might still strike back with the most dreaded weapon yet developed by mankind.

**THE ALLIED** High Command was then able to plan its victory strategy accordingly, thus affecting the concluding course of the war in Europe.

Colonel Pash, out of the service since 1963, still speaks with enthusiasm of the Alsos Mission and the men who carried it out.

"I consider it one of the most extraordinary intelligence programs in military history, and I am proud of it and the men and women who made it possible," he says frankly.

**SO PROUD,** indeed, that employing his keen memory, sharpened by his training for intelligence work, plus extensive research through contacts with former Alsos personnel and associates and available records and other documents, Colonel Pash has written a book on the operation.

"The Alsos Mission" was published in January of 1970 in hardcover with illustrations. A paperback edition followed a couple of months later.

Award House, a division of Universal Publishing and Distributing Corp., is the publisher of the 95-cent softcover edition which is without pictures.

**THE SAME** publisher had also contracted to handle the hardcover book. But when there was some difficulty and delay over the hardcover project, Colonel Pash recovered those rights and paid for the publication of the book himself.

The colonel says he has already recovered most of his personal expenditure for the printing.

The illustrated hardcover book is priced at $6.95 and is available to World War II and espionage buffs in several Marin area bookstores.

**BUT A MAJOR** source of sales for Pash has been the surviving personnel of Alsos. "I contacted and notified all former Alsos people I was able to locate," Colonel Pash says. Almost unanimously they sent in their orders, for anywhere from one to 52 books. The book contains a complete roster of the Alsos personnel.

In addition, the three services bought 740 copies to place in camp, post and station libraries.

"While I am happy to get back my costs, money was not one of my purposes in writing the book," says Colonel Pash.

**"I FELT LIKE** it was such an outstanding and such an important intelligence operation that it should be recorded in acceptable book form. Then I wanted every man who had lived these experiences to

Continued on Page M9

AT HIS DESK in his San Rafael home, Col. Boris T. Pash, retired, U.S. Army, examines some of the photographs used as illustrations in his book, "The Alsos Mission." The book tells of a special intelligence mission headed by Colonel Pash, set up in the fall of 1943 to learn if Germany was readying an atomic bomb as its secret weapon. The colonel is pointing to an opening in the side of a cliff between two houses at Heigerloch that was the hidden entrance to a cave in which his men found a Nazi "uranium machine." The portrait behind him is of his Russian-born wife Lydia.

(Independent-Journal photo)

commanded respect with his bravery and "his sharp wisdom in making decisions."

The nuclear *Spetsnaz* (special forces) entered Paris in August 1944. Then came Belgium, southern France, and elsewhere. Alsos picked up documents and hunted for caches of uranium ore. By November, the documentary puzzle was complete: the Germans did not have the atomic bomb, and would not acquire it in the near future.

The last six months of war were hectic. The French, the Soviets, and the British all sought nuclear dominance for themselves; whoever could harness the nuclear fire could rule the world. On the trail of the Nazi nuclear program, Alsos men at times rushed forward even before cities had been cleared of the defending Germans. On April 24, 1945, Pash proceeded to the city of Thanheim. According to Hitler's decree, every city was to become a fortress, to be defended to the last. A few kilometers outside Thanheim, while waiting for a fire-support column to pull up, Pash went to a local hotel and made a phone call. Speaking German, he asked to be put through to the office of the mayor, who was at once informed that he was talking to a US Army colonel, and that he had fifteen minutes to throw out a white flag, or … "Thanheim surrenders," was the immediate reply.

***In World War II, he attended to vaguely described "Russian matters," vouched for trustworthy émigrés, and oversaw agents in Mexico.***

An exaggerated war story? Pash's collection contains movie reels showing white sheets flapping in the windows of Thanheim. And there is Pash, walking briskly up to the scared and obsequious burgermeister. Pash's capture of the city via the weapon of the powerful, the telephone, made the newspapers.

***LEGACY: Boris Pash, long retired from his secret life, gives an interview to the Marin Independent-Journal in 1971 (opposite). A portrait of his first wife, Lydia, hangs above his desk. At the time, Pash was promoting his book,* The Alsos Mission. *Answering the question in the newspaper's headline, he responded: "The Germans were nowhere close to the atomic bomb. In fact, they were not even on the right track." These findings, he pointed out, helped direct the denouement of World War II and shaped US defense for decades. In his last years, he remained proud of his career and had the satisfaction of seeing the Soviet Union crumble in 1991.***

The jackpot, to quote Pash's cable to Washington, was hit in mid-April—more than a ton of precious uranium and heavy water. The Americans were happy; it could be stated confidently that the German nuclear potential had been seized by the United States, and that the other Allied nations had received only scraps. A personal price that Pash paid was a radium burn from materials he carried for seven hours in his pocket (it looked "like a map on my hip here").

The Alsos Mission was a total success: twenty-two operations in the European theater amounted to six German communities captured, one whole town surrendering to the mission, and four hundred detailed reports on scientific matters compiled. The men of Alsos took many prisoners, but also secured plans and specifications for the ports of Antwerp and Bordeaux. Most important, they recovered the rich bounty the Germans had taken from Paris: 1,108 tons of various compounds of uranium, 43 tons of metal, and 313 tons of heavy water. Only one life was lost among the mission's members, as a result of an accident. Pash was showered with awards, including the Order of the British Empire.

***In one exploit, Pash singlehandedly forced a whole city to surrender. His weapons? Only a telephone, and a few crisp sentences in fluent German.***

## FURTHER CHESS MOVES

By mid-1946, Pash was in Tokyo, working on intelligence matters at General Douglas MacArthur's headquarters. Rivalry with the Soviets was heating up, and the former allies were vying to dominate local politics in the defeated Japan. The Soviets hoped to enlist the sympathy of Orthodox Japanese through bringing the Tokyo church into the fold of the Moscow Patriarchate. Suddenly, the negotiations were stymied, the visas of the Kremlin's priests were revoked, and the Japanese asked the North American Metropolia of the Orthodox Church to assign them a bishop. The change of heart was Pash's doing. By that stage, his father was head of the North American Metropolia. With Feodor's backing, Boris secured the help of MacArthur. In early January 1947, Bishop Benjamin (Basalyga) landed in Tokyo and was ordained as head of the faithful in Japan. In private letters to his father, Pash described the jubilation he felt that the hated Bolsheviks had "lost it all here, their faces now covered in dirt."

Two days later, Lieutenant General Kuzma Nikolaevich Derevianko, the head of the Soviet delegation in Japan, attended a diplomatic function at

the Dutch embassy. He and Pash were perfect frenemies, cut from completely different cloth. Son of a poor Ukrainian peasant, Derevianko, or "Dery" as he was known to other diplomats, ascended through the ranks of the Soviet system through tenacity and loyalty, now enjoying the high life of sharp suits and postings abroad. He reported directly to Stalin, who made him visit the nuclear rubble of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, where "Dery" contracted radiation sickness, and likely the cancer that would eventually kill him. Pash was everything Derevianko was not. The two loved playing chess, and everyone knew how much they enjoyed throwing zingers at each other. For Derevianko, the slip-up with the Orthodox Church had been a major blunder. Shaking Pash's hand at the embassy function, he declared to the group: "Ah, my good friend Colonel Pash has again checkmated me. Of course, you understand, I'm speaking of the game of chess." Pash shot back immediately: "I can assure you, gentlemen, that the other times are in the line of duty." Derevianko's face turned the color of the banner he swore allegiance to.

***For Pash, unlike most of his American colleagues, anticommunism was personal. And he was clearly excited by the hunt for subversives.***

The last chapter in the story of Pash's active duty is peppered with question marks and a number of wild allegations. He returned to Europe in 1948, becoming the Army representative with the CIA in 1949. In the mid-1970s, Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt would testify that the CIA in the 1950s had a secret hit team, authorized to kill suspected double agents and headed by a certain Colonel Boris T. Pash. Summoned to a hearing, the now-retired Pash denied everything. The result was another investigation, which established that from March 1949 to January 1952, Pash was the chief of Program Branch 7 (PB/7). According to Pash, the unit promoted defection and was effectively an anti-Soviet propaganda undertaking. Pash testified that he was "never in charge of or involved in any assassination planning, nor ever requested to do so." Another witness confirmed that it was within the purview of PB/7 to eliminate undesirables, but evidence of specific murders was never brought forward.

Declassified CIA documents confirm that PB/7 existed, and that it conducted subversion operations in Eastern Europe. In May 1949, Pash was involved in planning a coup in Albania, an exploit that was eventually launched but proved unsuccessful. Pash was probably involved in other

secret activities in Europe, but only further research can establish what transpired.

During the 1950s, Pash's career reached its zenith. In the spring of 1954, he participated in the Oppenheimer security hearings, testifying against the father of the atomic bomb, whom he had never fully trusted. Oppie lost his clearance, to a significant extent because of Pash's testimony. In 1956, Pash left the military. By that stage, he had struck up a conversation with the State Department, and the dialogue with government figures came eventually to include Richard Nixon himself. Correspondence suggests that Pash was contemplating another turn in his life, to a political career.

## THE HATED USSR EXPIRES

The 1960s, however, saw him in retirement. He helped rebuild the Saint Nicholas Orthodox Cathedral in Washington, DC. The local Russian Orthodox community treated him with the utmost respect, but according to one interviewee, he was regarded as "somewhat of a mystery because of his work and experiences." (Pash had apparently sought to assume leadership of the church upon his father's death in 1950, according to a letter he wrote to the church council. The board acknowledged his Army service and his piety but declined.) Russian-Americans recalled his gaze: perceptive, prickly, and ice cold, seeming to cut through the thick glasses. Otherwise, retirement gave him time for golf, morning coffee, and memoirs. Lydia worked on her flowers in the garden.

***The last chapter in Pash's career is peppered with question marks and wild allegations. Was there a secret hit team in the 1950s? He denied it.***

The bliss did not last: Lydia died in 1972. Then came the PB/7 investigation, hitting Boris hard and sending him, at one point, into cardiac arrest. He held tight to his shrinking circle of friends from the Alsos era. The loneliness of his golden years near San Francisco was softened by playing with grandchildren. In letters to Goudsmit, he sometimes lamented the heart that caused him pain.

The year 1981 saw the court hearings on the internment of the Japanese-Americans. Pash was one of the few officers alive to be brought to testify. His line of argument was met with laughter by the Japanese-Americans present. The judge grilled him hard, yet Pash did not relent. "I do not

believe that our nation owes anyone an apology [for the evacuation]," he stated, maintaining that his actions needed to be assessed in the context of the 1940s, rather than in hindsight. To the question "We apologize for our mistakes, don't we?" he replied that a mistake was "when we do something wrong." The room erupted in applause when he replied with a direct "no" to the question of whether he knew of any acts of sabotage on the part of the Japanese-Americans.

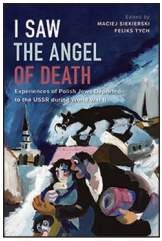
The twilight of his life was peaceful. He remarried. Interviewed by historian Christopher Simpson, who asked him about PB/7, Pash curtly asserted he had "no recollection … of anything like that." In 1988, he was immortalized in the Military Intelligence Hall of Fame at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. Two years later, in a calm, careful voice, he told the historian Robert S. Norris: "I am still alive at ninety.… I lived fast and hard but good." To Norris's remark that he was like "the real John Wayne," Pash chuckled and thanked him. In 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed. It is hard to ascertain what Pash felt, knowing that the regime he had tried to contain and undermine throughout his whole career had committed suicide. On May 11, 1995, Boris Pash died, just before his ninety-fifth birthday. He is buried in the Serbian Cemetery in Colma, alongside Lydia.

***Summoned to account for the internment of Japanese-Americans, he insisted, "I do not believe that our nation owes anyone an apology."***

Until Christopher Nolan's masterpiece sparked an explosion of interest, Pash's legacy was obscure. His deeds were blurred by the immensity of the global processes in which he was involved. Pash's brand of anticommunism, forged in the White exodus and galvanized by émigré irreconcilability, ran much deeper than the later McCarthian rendition. Acting as fuel for his undeniable talents, this firestorm of faith and duty raged throughout his life. For all his methods, at best abrasive and at worst shocking, and his murky dalliance with the CIA, the Alsos Mission he headed was instrumental in bolstering the defense of the United States for decades after 1945. Pash's unique background allowed him to set the stage for later political scheming in Japan, further securing the American position in the region.

Emblematic of the twentieth century itself, Pash was a dark and complex, efficient and charismatic figure who exemplified many of the Russian-American controversies, alloying them into life.

*Special to the* **Hoover Digest.** *The author gratefully acknowledges the Hoover Institution Library & Archives as an essential resource in the development of these materials. The views expressed are entirely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the fellows, staff, or overseers of the Hoover Institution.*

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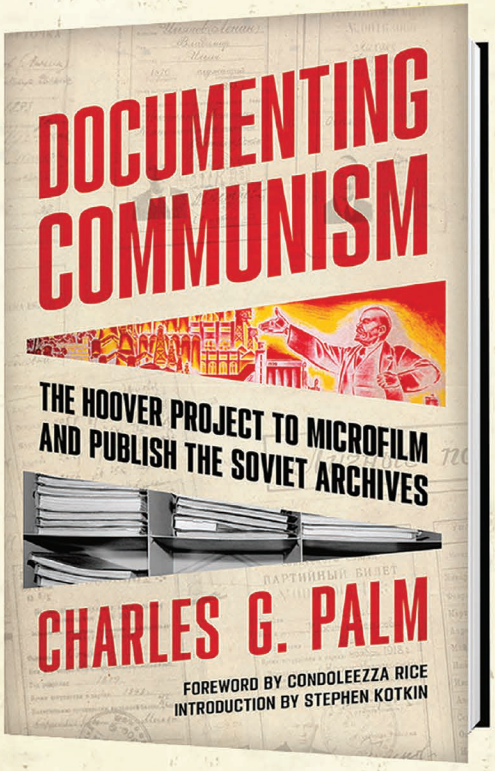


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SUMMER 2024 NO. 3