HEMISPHERES

Currency
of
Power

Cover art by Isabella Donoghue

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Letter from the Editors

I n a departure from our annual journal published every spring, this first magazine issue of Hemispheres explores trends in international affairs pertinent to the theme "Currency of Power." In launching a second, less conventional publication, we extend a hand to those at Tufts who wouldn't normally engage with IR academia. International affairs are undoubtedly convoluted and can at times feel existential, but they need not be arcane. Hemispheres takes seriously our civic role as a bridge between the IR program and the greater Tufts community. To that end, our staff and contributors come from a wide range of academic disciplines.

Power on the international stage can be capricious at times, seemingly immutable at others. Its forms are various: political, military, institutional, regional, soft or hard. Our staff writers explore transactions and reserves of these different forms of power across regions, capturing a snapshot of recent global trends in which power dynamics have shifted. Over the fall semester, we collaborated in three working groups to brainstorm, draft, and refine the articles to follow. The products of those groups are Shifting Borders, Comparative Politics, and International Law and Human Rights. In each section, writers explore how international actors grasp, consolidate, expend, or lose power as well as the tactics they employ to do so.

The "currencies" actors use to amass power are ever-evolving. We have seen leaps forward this year in technological capacities like artificial intelligence and semiconductors, which may alter the way we think about power dynamics from the physical to the digital world. Tensions between the United States and China continued to simmer in 2023, characterized by a race for a foothold in such critical technological domains. Still, 2023 was also marked by more traditional power struggles via the same essential currencies—including land and human life. The war in Ukraine persists, while Ukraine's counteroffensive lacks a discernable end, fatiguing Western efforts to bolster its resources.

Fully fledged war resumed between Israel and Hamas over Gaza, resulting in more than 20,000 civilian deaths, an alarming proportion of which are Palestinian civilians, and global calls for a ceasefire. Age-old debates about the efficacy of the International Criminal Court, democratic peace theory, and nuclear proliferation raged on in 2023.

As you flip through this magazine, you will encounter a diverse array of articles: book reviews, hypothetical debates, and even interactive trivia. We encourage you to engage thoughtfully with the pieces and consider your role as a global citizen looking to 2024. Our authors explore the rise of dictatorships in Latin America, the complexities of technological war between the United States and China, and the expansion of an alternative economic order in BRICS/BRICS+. Many of the following articles benefit from contributions by members of the Tufts community who are not formal Hemispheres staff members; we owe them many thanks for their collaboration.

Before you begin reading, we want to remind you that the statements expressed in this magazine are the views of individual authors and do not reflect the opinions of Hemispheres as a nonpartisan, non-ideological club committed to providing a platform for intellectual discourse and academic publication. For endnotes, see the Hemispheres website https://tuftshemispheres. org.

Yours,
Hannah Cox, Stewart James, Sam Sullivan, and Jason Wu

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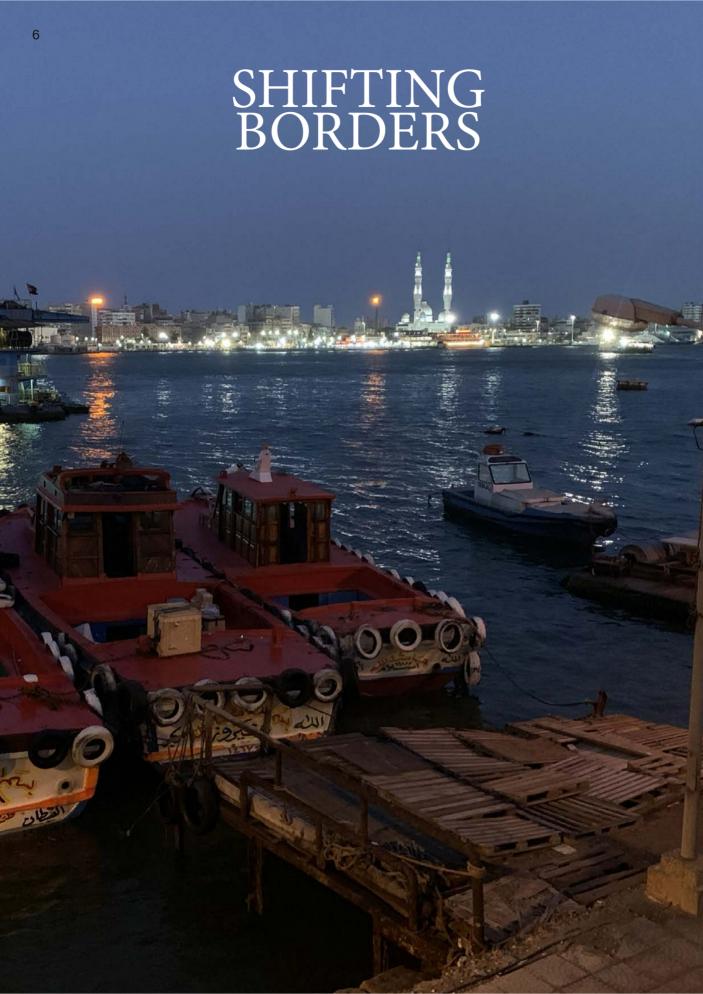**Programming Director**
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SHIFTING BORDERS

Murky Waters: An Uncertain Future for the South China Sea

By Theodorus Ng

On October 22, 2023, a Chinese coast guard ship collided with a Philippine vessel in the South China Sea—once again bringing the country's intimidation campaign there to a hilt. The BRP Sierra Madre was on a routine resupplying mission to marines stationed on Second Thomas Shoal; since 1999, the Philippines had grounded it on the submerged reef to assert its territorial claims. The antagonistic encounter was one of several this year. In August, China sprayed water cannons at two such resupply vessels; in February, it aimed military-grade lasers to temporarily blind Filipino sailors. Such sustained acts of intimidation reflect China's increasing militarization of, and determination to assert sovereignty over, the SCS.

Ongoing disputes hinge on four geographic features of the SCS: the Pratas Islands, the Paracel Islands, Macclesfield Bank and Scarborough Shoal, and the Spratly Islands. The greatest contentions surround the Paracels in the north and the Spratlys in the south. China, Taiwan, and Vietnam claim both in their entirety, while the latter are subject to additional claims by the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei. The maritime dispute has ostensible roots in China's

Figure 1: Claims of six nations in the South China Sea and China's "Nine-Dash Line" claim colored in maroon. Dispute between China, Taiwan, and Japan over Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands is a separate issue. (Image source: Katie Park / NPR)

controversial nine-dash line, which it asserted in 1952 and formalized in 2009. Beijing asserts "indisputable sovereignty over these islands and their adjacent waters" and professes to be their first recorded discoverer. China's demarcation encompasses approximately 62%

of the SCS. It also overlaps with the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs)—200 nautical miles to which, under the 1994 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the other Southeast Asian countries could lay claim.

Given the economic prospects of the SCS, the claimants seem more than willing to subvert international conventions. An estimated $3.4 trillion of commerce transits the sea each year, constituting a third of global shipping. Moreover, untapped resources abound. The US Energy Information Administration reports that the SCS contains about 11 billion barrels of oil and 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, with potentially more undiscovered. These staggering figures prompt claimants to treat territorial sovereignty in the SCS as indivisible.

Tensions in the SCS have flared periodically since China laid its claims in 1947. Armed combats raged against Vietnam's navy in the 1970s and 1980s over the western Paracels and reefs in the Spratlys. This past decade, tensions have been the highest with the Philippines. Following a naval standoff in 2012,

Figure 2: Map submitted by China to the UN in 2009 (Image Source: Permanent Mission of the PRC to the UN)

China seized de facto control over the Scarborough Shoal and began extensive land reclamation in the Spratly archipelago. Meanwhile, the Philippines sought arbitration under the UNCLOS. A tribunal ruled in 2016 that China had "no legal basis" for its claims to historic rights, which its 1996 ratification of the UNCLOS had implicitly revoked. It was also ruled that China violated Philippine sovereignty by interfering with their vessels and undertaking reclamation in the Philippines' EEZ.

China dismissed these rulings. It has continued creating artificial landmasses on which it stations military outposts with anti-aircraft and anti-ship missile systems.

Besides such international adjudication, China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have been negotiating a code of conduct (COC) for the SCS since 2002. Observers are skeptical. Huong Le Thu, a senior analyst with the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, neatly summarizes their mistrust: "China has used the prospect of a COC as a Holy Grail to entice the region. The protracted process diverted their attention while Beijing advanced its strategic objectives." Those objectives are China's incremental militarization of the SCS and deployment of gray-zone tactics—hostile acts that come short of instigating conflict—to coerce other claimants into concession.

There is no clear course of sailing ahead in the South China Sea dispute. In such murky waters, scholars have strived to identify policymaking processes with solutions. Optimists hold that international institutions remain viable to constrain bellicose behavior, as they bolster norms of diplomatic cooperation. However, they could serve as merely temporary stopgaps until international pressures wane. Others suggest that tribunals should trace states' intentions to act as sovereign, operating on the legal principle of à titre de souverain. These tribunals would determine, that is, which state best demonstrates its historical exercise of actual authority over the disputed territories. More suggest that claimant ASEAN states should convene on separate collective issues, such as overfishing and maritime law, before presenting a united front in negotiations with China. Such recommendations arise amid ASEAN's increasing paralysis and China's preference for bilateral over multilateral negotiations. Just as economic imperatives underlie the SCS dispute, however, so too do they guide regional cooperation. It behooves us to consider whether and how beholden claimants are to the regional economic hegemony of China, which naturally shapes their approaches to negotiation.

The US is implicated in recent disputes between China and the Philippines, should crises escalate to conflict, by its defense allyship with the latter. It serves the best interests of the international community and US if the Philippines, now rather than later, credibly reaffirms its commitments to the Indo-Pacific and encourages international abidance by maritime rights. The key objective for all implicated actors should be to persuade China that its interests lie in upholding international maritime norms and laws, rather than undermining them.

Perspective on the Future of Nagorno-Karabakh

By Jake Lanier

While Nagorno-Karabakh has been internationally recognized as a territory of Azerbaijan since Azerbaijan's independence in 1991, it and the surrounding regions comprised, until recently, the breakaway territory of Artsakh—an unrecognized state with a majority ethnic Armenian population and government. During Soviet rule, it was known as the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO). From 1988 to 1994, Azeri and Armenian troops fought over territory in and around the NKAO, with fighting escalating after the collapse of the USSR. The fighting saw war crimes committed by both Armenian and Azeri forces, including the Khojaly Massacre and the Maraga Massacre. In 1994, a Russian-brokered ceasefire led Artsakh to become a de facto independent region, although it was not recognized by any UN member during its existence. In 2020, Azerbaijan took control of much of the area surrounding the Nagorno-Karabakh region including the strategic Lachin corridor, a mountain pass that had connected Artsakh to Armenia. The 2020 war was short but resulted in a decisive Azeri victory over the armies of Armenia and Artsakh.

In September 2023, Azeri forces conducted another offensive against Artsakh, lasting about two days. It ended with a ceasefire and agreements to talks regarding reintegration of the region with Azerbaijan. Armenia did not intervene militarily to stop the September offensive, which resulted in an exodus of ethnic Armenians—who were the majority in Artsakh—as well as the disintegration of Artsakh as an independent entity. Many observers deem the events of September a human rights violation.

I had the pleasure of interviewing Dr. Ohannes Geukjian at the American University of Beirut. Dr. Geukjian is an expert on the Caucasus and Nagorno-Karabakh, having written many books and articles on the region, such as Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Conflict in the South Caucasus and Negotiating Armenian-Azerbaijani Peace.

Q: In your opinion, why do you think Azerbaijan chose this time to move against Artsakh? The control of Artsakh had been a goal of the Azerbaijani government for a long time.
OG: Three reasons determined Azerbaijan's decision to move against Artsakh in 2020. Firstly, the West was preoccupied with the Russia-Ukraine war; second, the

strong Turkish military support of Azerbaijan - prior to the 2020 war, Ankara conducted military drills with Baku; and third, Russia consented to weaken Nikol Pashinyan, who captured power in 2018 and therefore removed the pro-Russian President, Serge Sarkisian. Russia disliked "color revolutions" and regime change. True, Azerbaijan regained control of Karabakh, but the conflict is not solved.

Q: What was Russia's involvement in preventing or allowing conflict? Russian peacekeepers were in Artsakh to enforce the 2020 ceasefire, but they don't seem to have tried to stop the 2023 annexation.
OG: Russia did not prevent the second Karabakh war mainly because Moscow in its foreign policy documents has been emphasizing the territorial integrity of states. Russia's position was clear: it supported self-determination, provided that it was realized by the consent of the parent state - in this case, Azerbaijan. It also did not prevent the war because [Putin] had made it clear that Karabakh belongs to Azerbaijan. In addition, Karabakh was outside the borders of Armenia.
True, the Russian peacekeepers did not try to stop the September 2023 military attack on the remaining parts of Nagorno-Karabakh that were still under Armenian control for three main reasons: firstly, considering the deteriorated relations between Russia and Armenia, Moscow was seeking new alliances with Azerbaijan and Turkey. Pashinyan no longer trusted Russia and declared that Armenia had committed a "strategic mistake" by relying on Russia. Secondly, Russia did not want to get involved militarily in Karabakh because it was preoccupied with Ukraine. Thirdly, Moscow negotiated gas deals with Ankara after being hit by Western sanctions.

Q: How will this change the balance of power in the region? Is the lack of Russian support for Artsakh emblematic of a shifting Russian alignment in the region, or did they not intervene for some other reason, like being bogged down in Ukraine or lacking the will to act on behalf of an unrecognized state?
OG: As I said earlier, Russia has been seeking new alliances with Azerbaijan and Turkey given Pashinyan's criticism of Russia and the CSTO [Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Russian-led military alliance], which did not deter Azerbaijan from its military campaign. In addition, to the dismay of Russia, Armenia has invited European mediation and the deployment of European monitors in Armenia to prevent Azerbaijani violations of Armenia's borders. The loss of Armenian control of Karabakh will also provide an opportunity for Turkey to boost its influence in the region and seek the creation of a land corridor between Azerbaijan and Turkey through the Nakhichevan exclave. Both Azerbaijan and Turkey

have been pushing toward the establishment of the so-called "Zangezur Corridor" in Armenia's Sunik region to connect Azerbaijan to Turkey and consequently create territorial continuity between Turkey and the Turkic-speaking republics of Central Asia. Meanwhile, Armenia and Iran oppose the creation of such a corridor.

Q: The streets of Yerevan have seen widespread protests asking for Pashinyan's resignation, while Ilham Aliyev has seen a boost of domestic support. Will politics change dramatically in Armenia and Azerbaijan because of this? Also, will the large number of ethnic Armenian refugees from Artsakh now in Armenia change the Armenian political environment?
OG: After the loss of Karabakh, demonstrations in Armenia failed to depose Pashinyan from power. Even more, he won a snap election after the Armenian defeat against Azerbaijan. Certainly, the Armenian refugees from Artsakh will create a humanitarian and economic burden on Armenia's authorities. It is not likely that the Artsakh refugees would create domestic infighting in Armenia mainly because the government is trying to settle them in the countryside and provide housing for them. In addition, the political leaders of the Artsakh refugees are imprisoned in Azerbaijan, and the opposition Dahsnak party is powerless. More importantly, the alternative to Pashinyan is uncertain, and therefore Armenia could experience chaos. As for Azerbaijan, Aliyev will invest his victory domestically to entrench further his corrupt dynasty and authoritarian rule. Concerning Armenian properties, including the cultural heritage such as churches and monasteries as well as many factories established by Armenian-American citizens who invested big sums of money to develop the region, it is uncertain how Azerbaijan would protect them. So far, Azerbaijan has been trying to change all Armenian names and demolish religious sites to change the Armenian identity of those sites and erase what is Armenian. Azerbaijan could be held accountable for its acts.

Q: Was Turkish support key to the decision by Azerbaijan to mount an offensive? Erdogan has come out in support of Azerbaijan, but is it likely he had prior knowledge of Azerbaijan's plans?
OG: Sure, Turkish support was key to Azerbaijan's decision to mount its offensive. Both Erdogan and Aliyev planned the offensive. But we should not forget that modern weaponry, Turkish drones, satellite data provided by Israel, and the mercenaries from Syria were the real game changers during the 2020 war.

Q: Is Turkey's role in the Caucasus changing? We've seen Turkish-made drones in combat in Ukraine (and in the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war), and Turkey has

emerged as a major producer and vendor of drone technology. Do you see Turkey as a greater force in this region in the future?

OG: Certainly, Turkey's role in the Caucasus will change, particularly if the Zangezur corridor becomes a reality. After the 2020 war, Turkey and Russia had already established the ceasefire monitoring center in Agdam, Azerbaijan, to maintain a balance with Moscow. But currently, this monitoring center has lost significance after the enforced departure of the 120,000 Armenians from Karabakh and the dissolution of the de facto Armenian authorities. As long as Russia is in a weak position because of the war in Ukraine and the Western economic and financial sanctions imposed on Moscow, Erdogan will try to manipulate Russia.

Q: Finally, you have written on paths to peace in the South Caucasus. How do these events change the landscape, and is more conflict likely to occur in the future? Azerbaijani officials have spoken of creating a corridor to Nakhichevan – could this be a future flashpoint?

 OG: Peace in the South Caucasus depends on a peace treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan and between Armenia and Turkey. However, several factors could determine whether peace would prevail. Firstly, demarcating and delimiting the Armenian-Azerbaijani border; Secondly, opening of all transportation links between Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Turkey; and Turkey's position with regard to Armenia. The possible establishment of the "Zangezur corridor" could become a future flashpoint because so far it is unclear who would control it. Armenia and Iran categorically oppose its establishment, Azerbaijan and Turkey insist on it, whereas Russia says it is ready to control it. However, Armenia cannot trust Russia anymore.

Note from the author: The Zangezur Corridor is a proposed corridor between mainland Azerbaijan and the Nakhichevan exclave. It would create a continuous link from Turkey to Central Asia and has been one of Ankara's recent policy objectives.

NATO Expansion and the War in Ukraine: An Explainer

By Max Druckman

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was formed in 1949 between twelve nations: ten in Western Europe in addition to the U.S. and Canada. The organization was to serve as a peacetime military alliance and counterweight to the Soviet Union's Eastern Bloc. Following the mass devastation of World War II, the U.S. sought to prevent Soviet interference in the rebuilding of Europe. For the U.S., an economically developed and armed Europe would provide the best course of action to that end. Thus, the signatories of the North Atlantic Treaty declared an "attack against one an attack against all" in 1949. This agreement is known as the mutual assistance clause.

In the decades since its formation, NATO has expanded significantly. In 2020, upon North Macedonia's admission, there were thirty total members. Three nations —Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Ukraine — are designated "aspiring members". In order for a nation to be granted admission to NATO, all existing members must vote unanimously in favor. That being said, admissions procedures remain open to any nation in Europe. After agreeing that a nation may join the alliance, each member must ratify the Accession Protocols to complete the process.

The question of new member ascension has become one of widespread debate since the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Russian President Vladimir Putin cited Ukraine's potential ascension to NATO as one of the grounds for that invasion. Moscow designated the alliance's prior expansions as instances of Western aggression towards Russia. In a 2008 summit in Bucharest, NATO members had agreed that Ukraine would join the alliance at some future, unspecified date. However, Ukraine was never extended a Membership Action Plan. For that reason, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy repeatedly pressed the organization to extend the plan and route to membership. NATO has hesitated prior to and throughout the present conflict for a number of different reasons. The main one is NATO's mutual assistance clause. Were Ukraine to join, the alliance would immediately become an active belligerent in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Thus, while Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg reiterates the 2008 conclusion, he holds that Ukraine will not join NATO while it is at war.

Two more dilemmas facing the alliance are Sweden and Finland. Both nations were invited to join NATO directly at the 2022 summit in Madrid in an effort to counteract Russian expansion in Eastern Europe and build greater alliances that border Russia in order to limit its influence. Finland strayed from decades of military neutrality and became NATO's 31st member in April 2023. Only Finland's process for ascension was swift and relatively uncontroversial. By contrast, Sweden's ascension has met resistance from President Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey. In July 2023, Erdogan stated that Turkey would not support Sweden's candidacy on the grounds that Sweden harbored individuals it deemed as terrorists. Ankara wants Sweden to take action against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), an

outlawed separatist group it deems responsible for the 2016 coup attempt in Turkey. Sweden too has labeled the PKK a terrorist group, but ongoing pro-PKK protests in Sweden convinced Erdogan that the nation remains a safe haven for it. President Victor Orbán of Hungary, another NATO member, has insisted that other members listen to Turkish concerns.

October 2023, Ankara reiterated that it would continue to delay ratification of Sweden's membership while it awaited American approval for Turkey's purchase of F-16 fighter jets. Its military is NATO's second-largest, so the demand to bolster its defense interests in the name of growing the organization is fairly valid. Erdogan said that he would send the issue to the Turkish parliament when it opened at the beginning of October. Just prior to parliament's resumption, however, the KK bombed government buildings in Ankara to the effect of delaying that course of action.

Since then, Erdogan has submitted a bill to the Turkish parliament that would ratify Sweden's membership. That being said, he still believes that Stockholm has not sufficiently condemned or acted against the PKK. Erdogan has recently stated that planning his government's 2024 budget is parliament's current priority, meaning Sweden's membership will face further delay. With the war in Ukraine continuing to rage on, Sweden's ascension into NATO is a critical component of the organization's effort to diminish Russian influence. However, the continued stalling of its membership can limit NATO's ability to be united during a time of conflict.

A Century of War in Palestine: A Hemispheres Retrospective

By Turan Tashkin

T he current conflict in Gaza reflects a century-long struggle over the lands of Palestine. The Israeli government's ever-shifting goal post and desire for a homeland exclusive to Jews have prevented a lasting solution since its inception, which has pushed Palestinians increasingly towards retaliation. Over its 47 years at Tufts, Hemispheres has published a number of different perspectives on this long and bloody conflict. This article comprises several excerpts from the journal's prior publications that reveal patterns between the conflict as it stands today and its past, long before October 7th. The first part shows how Israeli and Palestinian attitudes and actions have changed throughout the decades while the ideology of Likud (Prime Minister Netanyahu's

party) has not. The second part examines the pressure that the international community placed on Israel during the First Intifada and on apartheid South Africa, which suggests how it could push Israel to resolve this conflict today. This article reflects on a question many have had on their minds recently:

? Why is it that Israel, given the means and the opportunity to achieve a lasting peace, has not done so? (1991, p. 95)

THE EVOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Palestine Before 1967

To the Jews in Palestine, whether recent victims of the Holocaust or settlers since the 1920s, Arab condemnations and calls for the overturning of the Partition Plan represented a threat to their survival both as individuals and as a "people." (1979, p. 35)

The effect of the Emergency Regulations [of 1945] on the Palestinian populace in the Occupied Territories has been tremendous. … According to the Regulations, Israel may detain someone at will for one year; it may deport someone at will; it may take possession of land; it may demolish property; and it may close areas that it deems "necessary" for closure. These measures and others have been applied by the Israelis extensively. Consequently, the **suffering and humiliation that this has brought upon the Palestinian people is immeasurable.** (1990, pp. 40–41)

Of all the differences between the situation in '48 and '78, the greatest contrast can be found in the acceptance of U.N. resolution #242 by those very members of the Arab League who invaded Israel in 1948 (excluding Iraq) and the perceived willingness of Israel to finally recognize and deal with the Palestinian problem. [Their] willingness …to "respect…the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area" in exchange for a return of those territories occupied by Israel in the 1967 war marks a radical turning point in the Mideast conflict. **Unlike the "zero-sum game" situation of 1948, the very existence of Israel is no longer at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict.** (1979, p. 36)

Likud and Its Ideology

Israel's claim to the [West Bank] is based on the grounds that "Judea" and "Samaria," as [the founder of Likud and Israel's sixth] Prime Minister Begin refers

to the West Bank, are historically part of the Jewish homeland. **How is it possible,** he argues, **to "occupy" an area that already belongs to you?** In Begin's mind **Israel "liberated" the territory**… Furthermore, according to Begin, a state of war exists mentally if not in actuality. (1978, p. 43)

The Greater Israel idea had been at the core of the values of the Likud from its inception. …When the territories were taken in 1967, a seemingly heaven-sent opportunity offered to fulfill the dream and establish Greater Israel in one version of its historical frontiers. To the Labor party, **the [Palestinian] territories had been a means to security,** they were a negotiable asset, but to Likud, the **retention of the territories was and still is a prime objective.** …Militant new settlers doubled the Israeli population in the territories in the first two years after Likud came to power, and in the years **from 1975 to 1985, the number of settlers in the West Bank went from 2,851 to 52,000**. According to [Geula Cohen, a former member of the Knesset and a radical Revisionist], "The Jews did not come back to Israel to make peace or even to be safe, but to build a nation on the lands given to us by the Bible." (1991, pp. 97-98)

It seems, therefore, that Israel's concept of security is conflicting. On the one hand, it has what could be termed as a well-founded fear of renewed Arab attack, but on the other hand, it defeats the security of its "buffer zone" (West Bank) by placing settlements there which, according to military experts, represent more of a burden than an aid to the security of the Israeli state. (1990, p. 38)

The government's motivation to develop and settle the West Bank might stem from the desire for increased national security, but the more overreaching rationale seems to be to resolve the sovereignty issue in a manner that would give Israel special privileges in the area. The Begin Plan, submitted …on December 23-26, 1977 [was] a plan for administrative, limited self-rule for the West Bank under a democratically elected council in conjunction with an Israeli military presence which would maintain security and public order. … [However,] the Palestinians see the Begin Plan as worse than continued occupation or direct annexation. **It is perceived as annexation of the land without responsibility for the people.** (1978, pp. 44, 47)

The First Intifada

By the mid-1980s an entire generation of Palestinians had grown up under Israeli occupation. Additionally, Palestinian frustration at the inability of other Arab nations to liberate the territories from Israeli control exacerbated the overall situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. By December 1987, Palestinian resentment towards the Israelis had soared. On December 9 spontaneous protests led to a full-fledged civil uprising in response to the killing of four Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, which came to be known as the Intifada. The Intifada had mixed results. It led to tragedy, with **the death rate in the first year of the rebellion six times the annual per capita death rate of American soldiers in Vietnam.** (1997, pp. 52–53)

[Though] Israel is legally obliged to act in accordance with international law, part of which deals with the behavior of an occupying force, … Israeli strategists have implemented policies based on "realist" assumptions. This has caused the Israeli Defense Forces to completely ignore international human rights law since 1967 with regard to the Occupied Territories. It is no surprise that the collective anger of the Palestinians crystallized into the "Intifada," which started on December 9, 1987, and still continues at the time of writing [in 1990]. … **Israel maintains that it has no choice but to use violent means to achieve order.** Further, Israeli officials hold that since disorder, such

Girls sit on a barred window at the Al-Azza Refugee Camp, West Bank. Since 1948, many Palestinians were forced to leace their communities and adapt to life as refugees, and still today children in camps like this one, of which 60% of the refugees are children, are growing up outside of what their parents call home. (2015)

as the present uprising in the West Bank and Gaza, is a threat to Israeli "national interests," **any means that would eliminate the uprisings are justified**. (1990, p. 35)

THE ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

International Pressure on Israel

Despite its tragic consequences, the Intifada reshaped the nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Palestinians finally attracted attention to themselves, which underscored the need to find a solution to the volatile situation in the Occupied Territories. (1997, p. 53)

The Palestinian Uprising also brought Israel the mounting economic and political costs of continued occupation, thereby reinforcing the recognition of a need for a historic compromise between Arabs and Jews. By 1989, Israeli leaders began searching for some initiatives that would lessen Israeli isolation and soften the judgment that Israeli policy had slipped further into a rejectionist mode. …In the midst of these developments, some Israeli military and political analysts concluded that **the cost of continuing Israeli domination over a hostile population in all the territories would exceed any Israeli gains and would not serve Israel's interests.** (1997, p. 57)

[Regarding the Israeli lobby's loan request in 1991, President H.W. Bush said] that foreign policy could not simply be the construct of domestic political interests. …The President's comments stunned American Jewry. …Edward Tivnan, author of "The Lobby," reacted to the President's remarks by saying the following: "What George Bush said today was the pro-Israel lobby's worst nightmare come true. An American president stood up before the American people and said that Israel's interests were not only incompatible with American interests, but they were an obstacle to American interests. " (1999, pp. 29–30)

Israel, **faced with the negative effects of the Intifada both within the nation and in the international arena,** chose to initiate peace talks, which resulted in the Declaration of Principles in September 1993. …[Also,] as the political, economic, and psychological effects of the Uprising became unbearable for Israel, the government was compelled to modify its former policies and begin negotiations with the Palestinians. (1997, p. 55)

Lessons from Apartheid South Africa

[The] challenge to apartheid began to develop under the Carter administration. In his Inaugural Address [in 1977] , Carter said, "Because we are free, we can never be indifferent to the fate of freedom elsewhere…our commitment to human rights must be absolute." …Under Carter, the United States supported UN Resolution 418, which **denounced apartheid and instituted a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa.** (1996, p. 33)

[During Reagan's presidency,] despite overwhelming evidence of continued oppression of South Africa's blacks, Reagan referred to the [South African] government as "an ally and a friend." Many viewed this remark as evidence of what they called Reagan's indifference to global demands for human rights and freedom for South Africa's blacks. This perceived indifference sparked widespread pro**test, which in turn brought added attention to the plight of South Africa's blacks**. …The Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA) of 1986, which Congress passed over Reagan's veto, …consisted mainly of trade and financial sanctions, but included measures to aid victims of apartheid. **This act finally put America's economic clout and global influence behind the anti-apartheid movement,** influencing other nations to impose sanctions as well. (1996, pp. 34–35)

Eleanor Holmes, a Georgetown law professor, ...said "What can we do except draw the attention of the world to black South Africans who cannot speak for themselves?" and that **"constructive engagement" was merely "letting the South African government go and do what it feels like doing."** (1996, p. 34)

It is time for those people who are waiting for the Palestinians to give up their struggle and return to "normalcy" to realize that, like the Jews who longed for Israel for almost two thousand years, the Palestinians will not forget their homeland. (1991, p. 103)

Implications of the 2023 Nigerien Coup d'État

By Henry Wilson-Sadlowski

In late July, President Bazoum of Niger's military guard overthrew the country's government and installed a military dictatorship led by General Abdourahmane Tchiani, a former close advisor to the president. The coup followed months of Bazoum's campaigning against corruption, which had reportedly bred significant insecurity among top military officials regarding their positions in government. Tchiani's takeover therefore met little resistance from the other branches of the military and was even welcomed among some citizens of the capital who had come to mistrust the leaders of Niger's nascent democracy.

Since achieving its independence in 1960, Niger has undergone five similarly undemocratic transitions of power, with Bazoum's assumption of the presidency in 2021 marking the first peaceful change of leadership in the country's young history. Niger's prominent geographic position and its significant contributions to fighting regional jihadist insurgencies always made the possibility of its collapse particularly concerning for its international partners like the United States and Nigeria, and Bazoum's imprisonment prompted an immediate response from the international community.1 The United States and France suspended military cooperation with the government and the Economic Community of West

African States (ECOWAS) immediately condemned the new ruling junta, placed a series of economic and travel sanctions on Tchiani's government, and issued a threat of military intervention in the event that Bazoum's government was not immediately restored.2 Despite foreign condemnation, domestic reaction to the coup was more positive, with some citizens in the capital publicly celebrating the overthrow of a government they deemed incapable of meeting their needs and subject to imperialist French influence.3

Such optimism is unlikely to last. While Nigerien citizens deserve a government that they feel advocates for their interests, previous military governments have displayed a propensity for human rights violations, often commit arbitrary arrests, and generally contribute to a breakdown in the rule of law. In recent years Mali and Burkina Faso, two former French colonies whose militaries also took power riding a wave of anti-French sentiment, witnessed a vast increase in the territory held by Jihadist groups and a severe decline in economic growth.4 Such conditions make it difficult for the international community to justify cooperation with the new military government, whose assumption of power has already produced significant consequences. The departure of French troops, suspension of US military activity and the lack of attention by the Nigerian Military have all emboldened Jihadist groups to increase their activity in the countryside.5 At least 29 soldiers were killed in early October using "improvised explosive devices and kamikaze vehicles" according to the Nigerien defense ministry in what was the largest such attack since the coup.6 Furthermore, prices of food and nonalcoholic beverages rose to their highest levels since May 2018.7 Even before the coup Niger was the world's third least developed nation, with 4.3 million people in need of humanitarian aid. Now, economic and travel restrictions imposed by ECOWAS and Western countries will inevitably increase the hardships experienced by the Nigerian population.

While particularly geopolitically significant, the coup in Niger is only one example of what has been labeled an "epidemic" of autocratic upheaval in central Africa during the past decade. Similar coups in neighboring Mali and Burkina Faso demonstrate a regional trend of democratic backsliding that has generated some concern among the international community. ECOWAS' president Abdel-Fatau Musah described past negotiations between ECOWAS and coup leaders in Mali and Burkina Faso as ineffective. In Musah'sview the juntas' purported three-year "democratic transition plan" amounted to little more than a hollow attempt at temporary appeasement.8 He reiterated the organization's commitment to intervene militarily should the situation not resolve itself quickly and in a manner that satisfied the organization's commitment to democratic self-rule and human rights. While the United Nations Security Council has condemned Tchiani, growing ties between the Russian Wagner group and coup leaders make it unlikely that any military intervention would actually be authorized by Russian representatives on the body.9 The responsibility therefore falls upon ECOWAS to handle what is the clearest threat to their legitimacy since expanding their mandate to include the protection of democratic norms in 1993. The body struggled in combating authoritarianism in the following decades, though by the late 2010s it began achieving some successes. In 2015 it successfully negotiated for the reinstatement of democratic principles in Mali, and later that year helped the interim president of Burkina Faso return to power after an attempted coup. Between 2015 and 2020 there was not a single undemocratic transition of power in West Africa, an achievement for which the organization received high levels of praise.10 However, ECOWAS' failure to address democratic backsliding in Guinea after its president, Alpha Conde, implemented undemocratic constitutional changes was said to have emboldened the special forces who overthrew Conde's government in 2021.11 Successive coups in Mali (August 2020 and May 2021) and Burkina Faso (January and September 2022) also served to undo much of the credit built up by the organization's successes.

The recent string of failures for ECOWAS has placed even greater pressure on the manner in which it handles the coup in Niger. However, the stakes of this conflict are also much greater than in any of the previous examples. As soon as ECOWAS announced its willingness to intervene militarily in Niger in early August, the military governments of Mali and Burkina Faso both announced that they would see such an intervention as a direct threat to their own sovereignty, and have since formalized a security alliance with Niger's military government.12 The dangerous possibility of the situation collapsing into a regional war is likely the reason why ECOWAS has thus far been hesitant to abide by its own threats of intervention, however the organization has not ruled out the possibility of an invasion should Niger's military government fail to adequately satisfy their demands.

As recent French military withdrawal across Africa has signified the country's diminishing role as a regional policeman, Niger and its neighbors are finally emerging from the influence of their former colonizers. However, Jihadist groups continue to capitalize on these withdrawals for territorial gain, and democratic institutions are under stress. ECOWAS and its partners will have to weigh the consequences of a possibly region-encompassing conflict against those of a world in which it did nothing to stop a fourth military Coup in as many years by one of its members.

The US Stake in a BRICS+ Order: Roundtable Discussion

The Rise of BRICS and BRICS+

By Stewart James

BRICS (now BRICS+) is an intergovernmental economic forum between Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. It poses an alternative to the G7—a powerful council of industrialized countries in North America, Western Europe, and Japan. These five members represent 3.23 billion people, almost tenfold the US population and roughly 40% of Earth's inhabitants. BRICS also contributes a quarter of global GDP, a larger share than the G7's. Though established over a decade ago, the bloc has attracted considerable attention recently. At its annual summit in Johannesburg this past year, BRICS decided to incorporate six new members among dozens of applicants: Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and UAE. Argentina declined the invitation. Javier Milei, inaugurated in December, vows not to "do business with any communist," shaking his fists at the CCP and Lula da Silva of Brazil. Still, BRICS+ is a big deal. Its share of global GDP has jumped by up to four percentage points and that of population by six.

In 2001, a Goldman Sachs analyst first drew attention to the four economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China. He predicted that the BRICs, for short, would assume the greatest share of world economic growth between then and 2050.24 Indeed, if one includes South Africa, the BRICS countries are developing much more rapidly than those of the G7. While G7 countries have experienced annual GDP growth of 2% on average, BRICS has witnessed rates of over 8%.

Throughout the 2000s, the five governments also aligned their concerns toward the existing economic order. The IBSA (India, Brazil, and South Africa) Dialogue criticized the IMF and World Bank of disproportionate influence by the Global North. They advocated "South-South Cooperation" on trade, fiscal, and financial policies, much as the Third World Project and Non-Aligned Movement did in the twentieth century. Ministers from Brazil, Russia, India, and China convened in 2006 before grouping formally amid the global financial crisis. South Africa later joined in 2010.

The immediate collective cause of BRICS was to reform economic governance where the World Bank and IMF had failed. It was conceived secondarily as a force for multipolarity and counterweight to the G7. By its 2010 expansion, the forum established an agenda based on principles of the IBSA Dialogue. BRICS held

that existing multilateral institutions had demonstrably neglected the needs of industrializing countries. The Great Recession and its global reverberations were icing on the cake. Even Joseph Stiglitz—Chief Economist of the World Bank from 1997 to 2000—testifies,

"The critics of globalization accuse Western countries of hypocrisy, and the critics are right. The Western countries have pushed poor countries to eliminate trade barriers, but kept up their own barriers, preventing developing countries from exporting their agricultural products and so depriving them of desperately needed export income. The United States was, of course, one of the prime culprits... Special commercial and financial interests."

The World Bank and IMF once embodied Keynesian principles of expansionary policy and market intervention, which aligned with postwar development goals. In the 1980s, however, a paradigm of austerity took hold. Amid the rise of neoliberalism between the US and UK, the IMF began stipulating contractionary measures on the part of its debtors. Social spending was privatized and policy made technocratically. Capital markets liberalized, driving speculative hot money into Asia and Latin America; when inflows reversed, currencies and banking systems collapsed. The 2008 global recession delivered credibility to criticisms levied against this economic order, which plainly subordinated the demands of industrializing economies.

BRICS is formulating an alternative order of international economic governance. Trade and investment links among members have proliferated under Chinese and Indian capital, also due to agreements to denominate transactions in each other's currencies instead of the US dollar.

Farm life in central Brazil. According to the OEC, agricultural and livestock products comprised over a third of Brazil's export value in 2021. Image courtesy of Victoria Muller-Kahle.

In fact, BRICS envisions a new global reserve currency to that end. The forum has also established a New Development Bank and Contingent Reserve

Arrangement, each with an initial authorized capital of 100 billion USD, to serve the functions of the World Bank and IMF respectively. All these initiatives decrease dependence on the Global North.

BRICS receives many criticisms, not least that it reproduces the very paradigms and practices it deplores. For Vijay Prashad, the forum is a "conservative attempt" to earn its constituent governments the same asymmetric influence as the G7. Because BRICS initiatives focus on aggregate growth and capital, some hold that they might enrich members' wealthiest strata without empowering their popular majorities. The recent admission of resource-rich countries including Iran, Saudi Arabia, and UAE does little to dispel such claims.

Another debate persists around BRICS+ regarding its implications for the US. Many voice concerns toward this forum's alternative economic arrangement, not to mention the geopolitical stakes of its membership. **Does a BRICS+ order, commentators ask, pose a threat to US hegemony?** Below are two sets of arguments—for and against.

BRICS Eschews US Influence Abroad
By Rohith Raman & Jason Wu

The BRICS+ expansion threatens US hegemony in numerous ways. It will decrease the dollar's power, challenge US and Western energy infrastructure, and facilitate diplomatic relations that threaten Western spheres of influence.

As a global reserve currency, the dollar gives great financial power to the US over the rest of the world; most international trade is conducted in dollars. As of 2022, over 60% of all central banks hold their foreign exchange reserves in dollars. This creates conditions of dependence on the American economy, which is often weaponized against others in the form of sanctions and internal instability. In 2013, Indonesia's reliance resulted in the value of its rupiah plummeting after a market panic. For European allies, American sanctions on countries like Iran forced them to enact measures like the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges to continue trading.

Global financial institutions have further cemented US hegemony. In the wake of WWII, the US directed aid from the World Bank and revoked loans to Poland, France, and Czechoslovakia because of their communist presence. The IMF has a similar reputation of providing economic redress to countries while simultaneously "meddling in the domestic affairs of sovereign states for the sake of globalizing…under US Dominance." It has hence pressured countries between Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa into drastic economic transitions.

The emergence and expansion of BRICS could shift the tides from the US to a decentralized

Attaba Square in Cairo teems with markets for diverse consumer goods. Egypt joins BRICS+ effective January 1, 2024. Image courtesy of Stewart James.

economic system. To decrease dependence on the dollar, BRICS countries have prioritized the use of alternative currencies in settlements and trade agreements, including recent deals made between India and UAE. In fact, of all Russia's exports to BRICS countries, only 36% are represented by the dollar, which is a 50% decrease since 2018. Strengthening local currencies ensures that emerging economies are less reliant on the dollar and susceptible to market fluctuations and sanctions. For this reason, many countries across Asia express interest in joining the bloc.

BRICS has also been developing a new currency that could compete with the dollar as a global reserve standard. After announcing that their prospective currency will be based on the gold standard, gold purchases among central banks and BRICS countries have increased significantly while central banks have reduced their stock of dollars, showing substantial support for a new competitive currency. This may sow the seeds for future economic competition with the US.

The bloc's expansion indicates global energy and resource infrastructure as emerging priorities. Not only does BRICS already include the world's first and third largest importers (China and India), but its recent additions endow BRICS+ with 43% of global oil production and 29% of global GDP. New membership has hence proven a decisive tool to accommodate various oil interests without US intrusion. Moreover, Egypt is the 13th largest natural gas producer and contains the Suez Canal.

This is indicative of the bloc's interest in leveraging global resources. BRICS+ will control 72% of all rare minerals and secure full discretion in shaping global resource politics. US dependence on lithium for military and aerospace developments could pose a problem now that BRICS+ includes two of the largest lithium producers globally (Brazil and China). As BRICS+ centralizes resources, export restrictions will force the US into compliance. They are already increasingly common among members including China,

which imposed 35 in 2021.

Questions surrounding BRICS+ leadership will grow increasingly pressing. China, and to a lesser extent Russia, wield significant power over the bloc, despite claims toward multipolarity. China contributes to roughly 70% of the bloc's combined GDP. BRICS+ could provide it a medium to extend its aggressive economic foreign policy, where the Belt and Road Initiative and Asian Infrastructure Development Bank were just groundwork. Hence, China has long pushed for BRICS expansion, even while others express reservations.

Critics also refer to BRICS+ as an international "repressive" alliance in that new additions are motivated by shared authoritarian practices. China and Russia have an extensive list of human rights violations, from Xinjiang to Ukraine. Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and UAE all receive major international scrutiny for their outright authoritarian rule. BRICS+ is diversely composed of both American adversaries and allies, and their intermingling presents great challenges ahead to the US. Amid the Russia-Ukraine war, for example, India refused to abide by mandated sanctions on Russia. Despite its condemnations of authoritarianism, the US may need to entertain BRICS+ lest it break alliances.

A Crisis of Identity in BRICS+ Permits Continued US Dominance
By Grayton Goldsmith

BRICS+ is a force to be reckoned with. Regardless of its ultimate success or failure, the alliance proves that the formation of a multipolar world order is not only possible but inevitable. Overwhelming demand for membership in the bloc sends a clear message that the Global South is no longer content with a unipolar world—a world in which the United States can make (and break) the rules as it so pleases. The launch of initiatives like those of the New Development Bank (NDB) and the BRICS Interbank Cooperation Mechanism are rooted in a shared drive for de-dollarization and increased use of local currencies. However, BRICS continues to encounter contradictions against its founding tenets in practice—namely dedollarization, sustainable development, and multipolarity. The expansion to BRICS+ further contributes to a crisis of identity in the bloc that weakens its challenge to US hegemony.

After seeing lackluster return on investments tied to the Belt and Road Initiative, renewed Chinese interest in BRICS and the NDB has brought them back to the fore. The NDB was established in 2014 with the express purpose of financing infrastructure projects in local currencies. The bank's initial subscribed capital is distributed equally among the five original members of the bloc. Unlike the broadly scoped Asian Infrastructure Development Bank, the NDB is distinguished by a clear emphasis on "high-impact operations that are climate-smart, disaster-resilient, technology-integrated and socially-inclusive." Despite its lofty goals, the bank remains acutely dependent on the US dollar. Nearly ten years on from its founding, local currency financing represents less than a quarter of the bank's portfolio. Although the current president has hopes to increase that number to thirty percent by 2026, it is obvious that weaning off the dollar will be far more difficult than BRICS countries had initially envisioned.

This shared drive for de-dollarization and sustainable development has proven sufficient to sustain the alliance until now, despite discord among members' foreign policies. However, with the recent additions of Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and UAE, that could all be set to change. Following the 2023 BRICS Summit, only Argentina and the aforementioned five were invited to join the bloc out of some forty interested countries. The choice of admitted members, then, indicates the group's shifting priorities. As Rohith and Jason mentioned, China was a key advocate of this expansion despite other members' reservations. Whereas prior summit declarations placed emphasis on biofuels and energy efficiency, the 2023 declaration stressed the importance of fossil fuels in supporting the energy transition. To that effect, despite only adding a meager three percentage points to its share of global GDP, the expansion will more than double the bloc's share of global oil production. BRICS+ will become responsible for more carbon emissions than the rest of the world combined. For an organization that continues to pride itself on its uncompromising commitment to sustainable development, a crisis of identity seems imminent. If BRICS+ continues down the path set during the 2023 Summit, it leaves itself increasingly vulnerable to subsumption by Chinese interests.

Some interpret BRICS and BRICS+ as the resurfacing of a powerful, anti-Western force on the global stage. While the bloc is helmed by two prominent challengers to the established world order, that is not what BRICS+ is. Its political ambiguity, evident in the diversity of its members' interests, makes it more viable as the basis for a multipolar order. As it encounters discrepancies between its mission and practice, however, the bloc finds itself at a crossroads. The next steps are crucial as it seeks to transition from nascent economic alliance to formidable global force. Rather than boldly reaffirming its commitment to multipolarity, the 2023 Summit has instead reinforced the very dynamics of which it sought to dispose. If BRICS caves to the interests of a single member state, it will fail to ever truly challenge American hegemony.

The Geopolitical Landscape
By Jason Wu

NATO Expansion

Russia's invasion of Ukraine compelled Finland and Sweden to apply for NATO membership in May 2022. Finland became an official member in April 2023 while Sweden awaits the ratification process. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo have all expressed membership aspirations, and Ukraine applied for membership in September 2022.

US-China Competition

Strategic competition between the US and China will remain the most consequential geopolitical challenge as the rivalry escalates in all domains (trade, security, AI, semiconductors, diplomacy, etc.) and across geographic regions (Indo-Pacific, Middle East, Africa, Latin America, etc.).

Far-right victory in Dutch elections amid rising right wing support across Europe

War in Gaza
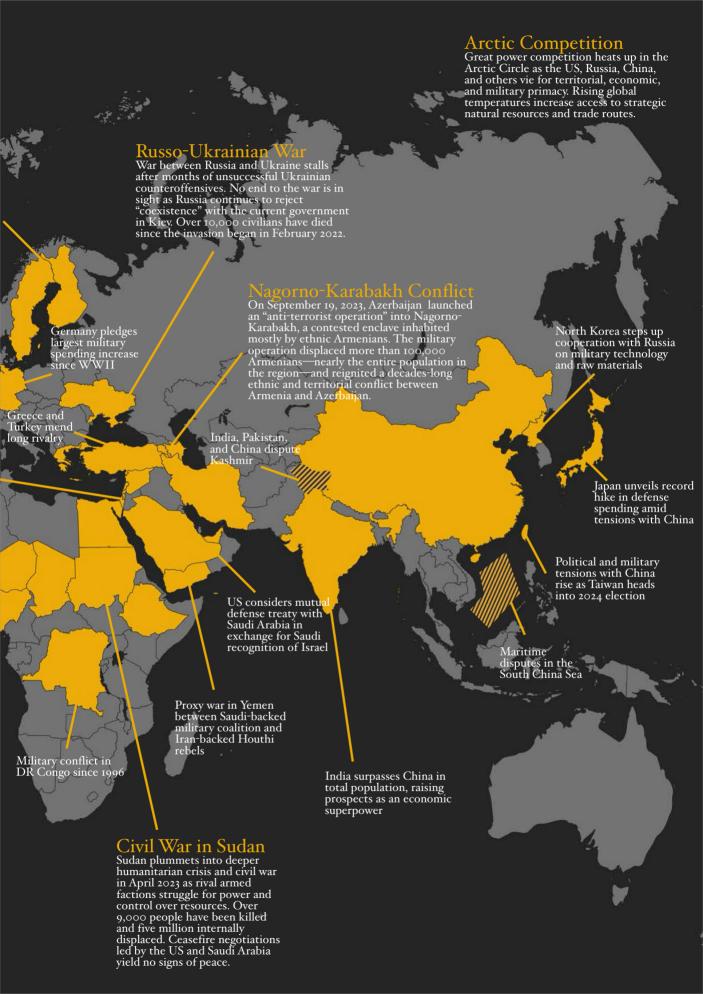
In response to a large-scale terrorist attack on October 7th by Hamas, Gaza's governing militant group since 2007, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) announced an invasion of the Gaza Strip with the goals of freeing hostages taken by Hamas and removing the group from power. The IDF claims its actions are necessary for Israel's security, though its tactics and the region's fraught history have generated widespread international dispute over the conflict's consequences. More than 18,000 people have died and 1.8 million internally displaced.

US-Mexico border crisis escalates as Texas installs razor wires and walls

Venezuela and Guyana on verge of military escalation in reignited border dispute over the oil-rich region of Essequibo

Violent Extremism in the Sahel

An upsurge of violence plagues the Sahel amid political instabilities following successive military coups since 2020. Civilian casualties climb as security forces in Chad, Mali, and Nigeria perpetrate severe human rights violations. Niger became the latest Sahel state to succumb to a military coup in July 2023.

BRICS Expansion

Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE are invited to the BRICS economic bloc of developing nations with Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. BRICS is a formidable counterweight to the West that could potentially reshape the international political and financial order. The expanded bloc will represent roughly 46% of global population and 37% of global GDP by purchasing power parity.

Argentina declined the invitation but many others such as Pakistan, Venezuela, and Vietnam have applied or expressed interest in BRICS+ membership.

France withdraws troops while the US stays in Niger following the July military coup, echoing the waning French influence in West Africa

Far-right populist Javier Milei elected president of Argentina as inflation nears 150%

Arctic Competition

Great power competition heats up in the Arctic Circle as the US, Russia, China, and others vie for territorial, economic, and military primacy. Rising global temperatures increase access to strategic natural resources and trade routes.

Russo-Ukrainian War

War between Russia and Ukraine stalls after months of unsuccessful Ukrainian counteroffensives. No end to the war is in sight as Russia continues to reject "coexistence" with the current government in Kiev. Over 10,000 civilians have died since the invasion began in February 2022.

Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

On September 19, 2023, Azerbaijan launched an "anti-terrorist operation" into Nagorno-Karabakh, a contested enclave inhabited mostly by ethnic Armenians. The military operation displaced more than 100,000 Armenians—nearly the entire population in the region—and reignited a decades-long ethnic and territorial conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Germany pledges largest military spending increase since WWII

Greece and Turkey mend long rivalry

North Korea steps up cooperation with Russia on military technology and raw materials

India, Pakistan, and China dispute Kashmir

Japan unveils record hike in defense spending amid tensions with China

US considers mutual defense treaty with Saudi Arabia in exchange for Saudi recognition of Israel

Political and military tensions with China rise as Taiwan heads into 2024 election

Maritime disputes in the South China Sea

Proxy war in Yemen between Saudi-backed military coalition and Iran-backed Houthi rebels

Military conflict in DR Congo since 1996

India surpasses China in total population, raising prospects as an economic superpower

Civil War in Sudan

Sudan plummets into deeper humanitarian crisis and civil war in April 2023 as rival armed factions struggle for power and control over resources. Over 9,000 people have been killed and five million internally displaced. Ceasefire negotiations led by the US and Saudi Arabia yield no signs of peace.

COMPARATIVE POLITICS

A Tour of Historical Memory

By Claire Ellis, Mary Anna Joyce, and Sam Sullivan

From Argentina's Parque de la Memoria to Japan's Hiroshima Peace Memorial, varying applications of historical memory around the world reveal unique stories of triumph, struggle, and evolutions in national identity. The following exploration begins in Latin America, extends to East and Southeast Asia, and culminates in North and East Africa where Algeria's 'Le Pavois' transforms from a symbol of colonialism to one of liberation, and Uganda's mass grave sites reflect the complexities of the nation's past.

Parque de la Memoria, Buenos Aires, Argentina, November 2023. Photo by Ishika Gupta.

Argentina: Following the end of the 1976-1983 military dictatorship in Argentina, also known as 'The Dirty War," several groups formed ephemeral and permanent sites to memorialize the victims of the dictatorship. One of the best known sites is Parque de la Memoria (Remembrance Park) in Buenos Aires, a public monument created in 1999 dedicated to the victims and forcibly "disappeared" Argentinians (los Desaparecidos) during the 1976-1983 military dictatorship. Situated near the Jorge Newbury airport, where former Desaparecidos were often thrown out of planes over the ocean by military officials, the location of the park reflects the history of the dictatorship. The park also features a stone wall engraved with the names of the nearly 30,000 victims of the military dictatorship. Now, the park is used for public remembrance, recreation, and diplomatic visits from other world leaders to pay respect to los Desaparecidos. The decision to locate the monument in the casual setting of a public park, rather than a museum or stand alone statue, rehumanizes the victims and serves as Argentinians' daily reminder of the lives that the dictatorship intended to eradicate from history.

Venezuela: Following the death of former Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez (1993-2013), several statues of Chávez were erected across the country. The statues, which often depict Chávez in his military uniform, right hand raised in salute, have been the subjects of political opposition and disillusionment with current president Nicolás Maduro (2013-Present). Although the official number of Chávez statues throughout Venezuela are unknown, 6 of the 17 known statues were toppled in 2017 by dissidents protesting Maduro's calls to rewrite the constitution in an attempt to limit the powers of the opposition-led national assembly. Protesters smashed, toppled and burned statues, demonstrating their opposition to the Maduro government through the symbolism of his predecessor. Although statues of Chávez still exist in Venezuela today, they no longer memorialize the legacy of the former president in the eyes of the opposition, but rather represent the shortcomings of Maduro's government in preserving socioeconomic stability and democracy.
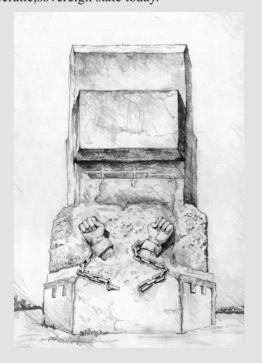

Hiroshima Peace Memorial, Japan. Photo courtesy of Mary Anna Joyce

Japan: The Hiroshima Peace memorial honors the most devastating nuclear attack in modern history. Displaying the names of hundreds of thousands of victims and survivors, the memorial reminds the public of the extreme dangers of nuclear war and the devastating civilian toll it is bound to take. The Genbaku Dome, pictured in the center back of the image, was one of the only structures that withstood the initial attack, and it is now a symbol of hope for "No More Hiroshimas." Thus, the site celebrates the promotion of global peace,

ultimately conveying the motive of Japan's prioritization of peaceful relations since World War II. Ultimately, by honoring the victims every year at the Hiroshima Peace memorial on August 6th, Japan reinforces the idea that the use of nuclear weapons will never be forgotten in Japanese historical memory.

Philippines: During World War II, the Malinta Tunnel was an integral strategic fortress for the Philippines, and thus a high priority target for the Japanese military to occupy. Known as the First Battle of Corregidor in 1942, Japanese troops overpowered Filipino and American forces and successfully pushed General McArthur and President Quezon to Australia. In 1945, Filipino and American forces faced the Japanese army in Corregidor for a second time and reclaimed their land. Throughout the battles, a group of primarily Filipino soldiers and civilians converted the artillery tunnel into a hospital as they hoped to evade conflict. Some Japanese soldiers stuck in the artillery tunnel during the Second Battle of Corregidor committed suicide, and their remains have never been removed from the site. Today, tourists can visit the Malinta Tunnel museum and view an artistic depiction of the evacuation of President Quezon and General McArther during the First Battle of Corregidor. The Malinta Tunnel demonstrates that democratic historical memory in the Philippines is alive and well. Film director Lamberto V. Avellana's audio-visual reconstruction conveys the inevitable triumph of democracy against imperial powers during the conflict by centering the human perspective of the soldiers' experiences. Indeed, without the Filipino and American joint effort in WWII, the Philippines may not be a democratic, sovereign state today.

Algeria: "Le Pavois," literally meaning "The Bulwark," is a since-forgotten monument in Algeria that has been encased in a brutalist liberation monument since 1978. Originally designed by Paul Landowski in 1928, the monument was intended to "show the close ties that bind the populations of Europe and Africa." In other words, it was a tone-deaf expression of French colonialism that had systematically oppressed Algerian society for almost a century. Around a decade after the Algerian War of Independence ended in 1962, Algiers hosted the All-African Games and could not display such an overtly colonial monument in the city that intended to showcase "itself as the cradle of revolutionary anti-colonialism." Consequently, local artist M'hamed Issiakhem organized a group of artists to convince government authorities to repurpose the monument into a brutalist design with fists breaking out of the chains of colonialism carved on the outside. Although Algerian civil society still suffers restrictions on political liberties, the FLN party's rule exists in a post-colonial context that should be examined as such and not by the standard of the liberal international order that might justify regime change over promoting the positive direction of democratic historical memory.

Uganda: In Luwero Triangle, an area in Uganda just north of the country's capital Kampala, a mass grave site has become the topic of controversial perceptions of historical memory. The Luwero Triangle was an important site in the Ugandan Civil War (1980-1986) between the official Ugandan government and the ultimately victorious rebel group, the National Resistance Movement (NRM). During the war, an estimated 300,000 civilian deaths occurred in the Triangle. Today, Uganda houses 33 mass grave monument sites of unidentified skulls and remains in remembrance of the lives lost during the war. The graves have been repurposed, however, to serve the political ends of the contemporary Ugandan government: In the time since the Civil War took place, NRM leader Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the current president of Uganda, has exploited these well-intended memorials to evoke memories of the civilian death toll to intimidate political and military opposition groups. Using the remains as "scarecrow propaganda," the Museveni government frequently implies that if Ugandans vote for the opposition, the country will return to its violent past. In this way, Uganda's collective memory of the Luwero graves is still being defined by the political narrative of the present government.

The World: A Brief Introduction by Richard Haass

Review by Amber Abdul & Tara Wirtschoreck

A New York Times bestseller, *The World: A Brief Introduction* by Richard Haass, focuses on the modern challenges of globalization and how influential countries, events, and ideas shape the world. Haass wrote *The World* to fill in what he views as a gap in America's public knowledge about international relations as a result of the lack of IR curriculum requirements for college and high school students. Written in an engaging format for this reason, readers are likely to find Haass' views on globalization intriguing, especially since it is unclear in academia whether it hurts or helps countries that are integrated in world politics and economies on the whole.

The World is split into four sections which give the reader what Haass deems necessary information to be globally literate. The first section covers world history from 1618 to modern times, with more detailed information as he nears modern times. Though none of the information in this section is particularly detailed, Haass manages to condense over 400 years of history in under 60 pages in a way that is easily comprehensible. The second section describes each of the regions of the world, providing an overview of region-specific conflicts, challenges, and successes, as well as the history that led up to the current state of each region.. The third section, which covers globalization and its challenges, is the longest and most detailed: Haass describes the challenges and possible solutions for terrorism, nuclear proliferation, climate change, the internet, global health, international trade, and monetary policy. The fourth section describes the modern-day world order and the extent to which the world is in a state of disorder. He also evaluates factors that contribute to order or disorder, including alliances, war, economic interdependence, and global governing systems such as the United Nations. *The World* gives the reader an evolutionary understanding of globalization up until the modern age; simplifying a chronology of how we got to where we are today.

One of the main arguments of The World is that countries are not ready to face the challenges that globalization presents. Haass argues that governance concerning critical areas such as climate change and cyberspace has consistently diverged from public opinion, highlighting an important disconnect in the current approach to multi-stakeholder issues. (Haass, 273). Haass also notes that the world is largely unable to make meaningful environmental protection policies due to the extreme difficulties of enforcing emission reductions globally. It should be noted that there is a slight pessimistic ring to Haass' evaluation of globalization. Haass thus indicates that globalization causes a variety of coordination challenges among countries that already display great skepticism towards being able to overcome issues such as climate change in the first place.

Another argument Hass makes is that the solution to these challenges is to reinforce the United States as a unipolar power – a global policeman. He argues that the U.S. must reclaim its Cold War era role and counter non-democratic countries such as Russia and China to enforce a liberal, democratic-based world order. Haass writes that "this liberal world order is now fraying, [which is] the result of a decline in the U.S.'s relative power and its growing unwillingness to play its traditional role in the world, a rising and increasingly assertive China, and a Russia determined to play the role of the spoiler" (Haass, 297). Haass believes that certain global security challenges are exacerbated because of the U.S.'s perceived security weakness on the global stage. Take America's vulnerability to terrorism, for example: in the wake of 9/11, the U.S was unable to keep the Taliban from taking control of Afghanistan, and lacked a sufficient focus on terrorism in Pakistan, leaving the U.S open to terrorism from this region. Similarly, the United States's credibility in the Middle East has been eroded due to a lack of intervention in two key events. First, during the Iraq War, the US was unable to install a well-functioning central government in Iraq to replace the government that the U.S. military ousted. The lives and resources lost in the Iraq War also made the American public rightfully wary of other foreign intervention in the Middle East. America's reputation in the Middle East was further damaged during the Syrian Civil War. During the war, President Obama assured that if Syria's Bashar al-Assad regime used chemical weapons against civilians, it would be crossing a "red line" that would warrant a U.S. invasion. Though al-Assad used chemical weapons, the Obama administration was unwilling to use military intervention in Syria, leading many allies in the Middle East and around the world to question the U.S.'s reliability.

Although Haass may believe the world would be better off with the US reclaiming its unipolarity to preserve a liberal world order, he also thinks it's unlikely. Realistically, the world order will probably fragment without clear global leadership, leading to an increase in disorder and conflict. Though Haass's perspective on globalization and America's declining role on the global stage may be tinged with negativity, the overall message of The World is to stay informed about current events and international affairs. This book is helpful for anyone who has an interest in international relations, political science, or international economies. The World provides a helpful overview of today's failures and successes and the path it took to get there. This book is also incredibly accessible for someone who is looking for an introduction to international affairs, especially if they do not have extensive knowledge in the field. The writing is well-paced, time efficient, and easy to follow for beginners and IR savants alike.

El Salvador

Nayib Bukele

2019-present

Bukele has used extreme hard-on-crime rhetoric to justify the erosion of human rights.

In March 2022, Bukele declared a state of emergency because of gang violence, which he has used to crack down on human rights including arbitrary detenŁ tion and lack of fair trials.

Overcrowding, torture, and inhuman conditions are common in the El SalvaŁ doran prison system.

The Bukele regime uses allegations of gang affiliations to silence independent journalists, union leaders, and others that the government views as a threat.

Bukele has stacked the Supreme Court in order to allow laws and constitutional changes that contribute to Bukele's consolidation of power.

Nicaragua

Daniel Ortega

2007-present

Police use excessive force against protesters and other political dissenters being arrested in order to prevent others from speaking up.

Ortega has consolidated power within the judicial system by stacking courts with judges loyal only to him.

The Ortega administration has restricted freedom of press and harassed indepenŁ dent journalists.

Ortega imprisoned political opponents ahead of elections in order to eliminate competition, and create elections that were not fair or free.

Cuba

Raúl Castro

2008-2018

Cuba is a one-party state; the Communist Party of Cuba is the only legal party.

Raúl Castro commonly jailed people who he viewed as a political threat, including anyone suspected of protests or labor unions.

Raúl Castro continued Fidel Castro's use of communism to justify authoritarianŁ ism.

All Cuban media is state-controlled and independant journalists and dissenters are subject to arbitrary arrests.

There is a lack of due process for political prisoners in Cuba.

Venezuela

Nicolás Maduro

2013-present

Maduro created a new constitution that had unfair voting practices and solidified his power.

Economic mismanagement has led to hyperinflation that makes it impossible for most people living in Venezuela to access basic necessities.

Elections are undermined by the arbitrary arrests of political opponents, Maduro's monopoly on social media, and significant barriers to voting and running for office.

Venezuelan law enforcement authorities often react with extreme violence against demonstrations and protests, as well as use torture and other inhumane conditions within the Venezuelan prison system.

Making a Dictator

How do dictators centralize power and what lengths do they go to in order to hold onto it?

Article by Grant Garland

The phenomenon of dictatorships has been ubiquitous throughout history, coming in many forms, across various regions, and rising in the wake of distinct circumstances. The 21st century has been the stage for a resurgence in authoritarian tendencies, including concentrations of power, the suppression of opposition, and the attrition of liberties, but why? What allows dictatorships to gain power, thrive, and survive? What makes them successful and are there any patterns? This article searches for answers to such questions by comparing 21st century Latin American dictatorships, with a specific focus on Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Bolivia, and El Salvador.

Cuba: Cuba's extensive history of dictatorships is mainly tied to the Castro regime, the political leadership of the Castro family that began with Fidel Castro in 1956 as a result of the Cuban Revolution who was succeeded by his brother Raúl Castro. Raúl Castro, the most prominent dictator of the Castro regime in the 21st century, became president in 1976 after growing up with a front seat to the lesson of how to be a successful dictator taught by his brother Fidel. Raúl had big shoes to fill, so to maintain the Communist Party's monopoly on political power, Raúl employed an extensive tool kit with suppressing dissent as his trusty hammer. He saw those who opposed him as enemies and made sure to display the consequences of any opposition, mainly in the form of incarceration. In a report conducted by Human Rights Watch, there were more than 40 cases where Cuba imprisoned individuals because they believed they were planning to stage protests or organize labor unions under Raúl. Enforcing harsh consequences on opposition no matter what evidence existed spread fear–and fear maintains power. To sustain his power and thrive, Raúl also ensured that socialist principles were at the core of his policies and actions.

Nicaragua: Nicaragua's history of dictators has similarly been shaped by current president Daniel Ortega. Like Raúl, Ortega has made significant efforts to suppress political opposition. In 2021, for example, a rival candidate named Cristiana Chamorro faced legal challenges by the prosecutors' office and was accused of abusive management, ultimately leading to her disqualification. Manipulating information has also served as a key tool in Ortega's ability to consolidate power and achieve success as a dictator. Ortega's government has taken control of state-owned media outlets and turned them into a tool for propaganda, spreading messages that support his narrative and limiting the coverage of opposing perspectives. The government has also suppressed independent media outlets: in 2018 and 2021, for example, the prominent news outlet known as Confidencial was raided and its director Carlos Fernando Chamorro faced legal threats.

Ortega has further consolidated power by limiting individual freedom of speech by passing laws that restrict online freedoms. In 2020 Nicaragua passed the Special Cyber Crimes Law which gave authorities the ability to monitor online content and established legal ramifications (including prison terms of two to four years) for "those who promote or distribute false or misleading information that causes alarm, terror, or unease in the public" (Associated Press). Controlling the narrative is a helpful and widely employed tool for dictators as it allows for the shaping of public perception to portray themselves as favorable and stifle dissent. In essence, it safeguards the regime from any scrutiny or criticism.

Venezuela: Venezuela is home to one of Latin America's most notorious dictators, none other than Nicolas Maduro. In many ways, Maduro has laid the blueprint for entrenched dictatorships in the 21st century. As the handpicked successor of Hugo Chávez, Maduro assumed power in 2013 and has done all he can to keep hold of it. One key instrument to Maduro's success has been the manipulation of electoral processes. In the 2018 election, Maduro implemented a range of measures to limit the participation of potential candidates and key opposition figures. He used state resources to fund his campaign and maintained control over electoral institutions such as the National Electoral Council sparking contestation domestically and internationally by a range of actors including the U.S. When a dictator cannot gain approval in an electoral system, one must do all that they can to paint a picture of legitimate authority. For Maduro, whose approval rating was just 24% (Statista) in 2018, controlling the electoral process was the way to do so. The symbol of opposition that Maduro targeted was Leopoldo López, a Venezuelan politician who directly challenged Maduro when he ran for president in 2013 and lost. In 2014, López helped lead the widespread protests known as "La Salida" that called for the resignation of Maduro and a restoration of democratic values. Violence broke out between the government and protesters, ultimately resulting in Lopez's arrest on charges of inciting violence. Maduro framed López as a clear enemy and "monster," to unite people against a common enemy and demonstrate the consequences of disobedience and opposition, creating that oh-so important ingredient: fear. Maduro has also strategically placed military officials in government positions, used the military to suppress opposition movements, and sought support from countries like China and Russia. In the eyes of the public, military power is often viewed as the sword and shield for a dictator; it can be used to protect against opposition and lay strong blows to enforce rulership.

El Salvador: El Salvador provides interesting cases for the evaluation of what makes a successful dictator because their leader isn't widely accepted as a

dictator in the way that Maduro was, for example, but has taken steps that can be perceived as authoritarian. El Salvador's current president Nayib Bukele calls himself the "world's coolest dictator" (Youkee) and he has faced criticism by the public for playing cards from the deck of a dictator. The most notable card played by Bukele from this deck was the occupation of the Legislative Assembly in 2020. Bukele entered the assembly accompanied by armed soldiers and police officers in an effort to convince lawmakers to approve a plan that would secure a $109 million loan that he thought would allow for better equipped military personnel and law enforcement. Such an action is an example of Bekele's use of executive power to influence democratic decision making processes with the military serving as a source of persuasion through intimidation. Under the lens of authoritarian consolidation of power, Bukele has also failed to comply with a number of rulings of the Constitutional Court. Similar to Ortega and others, Bekele has also taken a stab at manipulating information, mainly through the use of social media whereby he uses Twitter to undermine traditional media outlets to communicate directly with the public and spread his narrative. Bekele has also been accused of limiting the press's freedom. For example in 2019, Bekele expelled journalists from El Faro and other organizations and accused them of being fake journalists. So why don't most people call Bukele a dictator like they do Maduro? One reason is because Bukele was democratically elected president in 2019 and had widespread support. In addition, despite Bukele's siege of the Legislative Assembly, El Salvador has maintained its democratic instructions, including regular elections. Although it has received criticism, Bukele's government also still receives recognition on the international stage. From his leadership however, we can learn how fundamental the role of undermining democratic institutions is when it comes to being a prototypical dictator, even if there is no objective definition.

The examination of 21st-century Latin American dictatorships, focusing on Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela, and El Salvador, reveals common patterns and strategies employed by authoritarian leaders to gain and maintain power.. Whether through the calculated repression of dissent in Cuba, the control of information in Nicaragua, the manipulation of electoral processes in Venezuela, or the authoritarian tendencies of El Salvador's Bukele, common threads of fear, propaganda, and strategic undermining of democratic principles emerge.

Disclaimer:
In no way does this article mean to rationalize methods of dictators, but rather aims to examine the tools that dictators use to maintain power and hence identify what allows them function.

Slovakia and Poland: Eastern Europe's Litmus Tests

By Carl Svahn

Eastern Europe has seen a reckoning over the last few years over the presence of populist and increasingly authoritarian governments, a trend that has only been amplified by Russia's Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. On September 30th, SMER-SSD (Direction-Slovak Social Democracy) won the majority of seats in the Slovakian parliamentary election on a platform based on halting aid to Ukraine, limiting sanctions against Russia, and getting the European Union on board with these initiatives. Just a few weeks later on October 15, Poland saw the United Right coalition– which includes the ruling right-wing Law and Justice (PiS) party– fail to secure a majority within their own parliamentary elections amid a flurry of public protests, accusations of corruption within the party, and opposition to its abortion policies. With these two elections, it's possible we will see both the continuing rise of these forces within eastern Europe, and the emergence of organized resistance to some of their more extreme views and implemented policies.

Prime Minister Robert Fico served as Slovakia's leader twice before his recent election, from 2006-2010 and 2012-2018. He was forced to resign from power in 2018 following his party's alleged ties to the murder of Ján Kuciak, an investigative journalist, and his own alleged ties to the Italian crime organization 'Ndrangheta. However, the charges against him were eventually dropped, and he would emerge as the leader of SMER-SSD's campaign to win back the premiership and parliament following their loss in the 2020 parliamentary elections.

Fico's new government is not an unfamiliar one to Slovakians, but is perhaps more determined than ever to see its goals achieved. His party, SMER-SSD, was founded in 1999 by Fico himself as an alternate "Third Way" center-left party, and would eventually gain enough support to create two coalition governments (2006-2010, 2016-2020) and even a single-party government from 2012-2016. Throughout his nearly two decades in power, SMER-SSD has been implicated in numerous corruption scandals and has been noted for its intensely anti-American and anti-Western stances, despite its membership in the EU and NATO. Remaining true to its Russophile tendencies, once the invasion of Ukraine was underway, the party began to openly call for an end to sanctions against Russia.

Poland's government, despite similar Western-skeptic and anti-Europe views, has started to see greater

public pushback. PiS has held power through the presidency and parliamentary majority since 2015 and through the 2019 parliamentary and 2020 presidential elections. Throughout this period, the party has shifted to the right and taken a firm stance against LGBTQ and abortion rights within Poland. Under the leadership of Deputy Prime Minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski, the party has made efforts to stifle the free press and judiciary to give the executive branch, which they control, even more power.

Poland's President Andrzej Duda has been at the forefront of this era alongside Kaczynski. Duda has served as president of Poland since PiS' 2015 electoral victory, previously serving as a lawyer, member of the Sejm, and member of the European Parliament. Though he has maintained an anti-Russian stance on foreign policy, Duda has aligned himself with Kacynski's policies and growing authoritarian tendencies. In the last three years, Kacynski's government has issued a near-total ban on abortion via the Constitutional Tribunal (Poland's constitutional court) and worked on the "Lex Tusk" law that would establish a commission to investigate supposed Russian infiltration within Poland– a law that the EU claims may be used to silence PiS' opposition.

Both elections, and their results, have given a clearer picture of what eastern Europe has been facing for the last ten years.

> **"**
> With growing nationalist and far-right movements sweeping Europe as a whole since the mid-2010's, the continuing success of said movements within the east has prompted two major concerns: the future of the EU's ties to the region as well as Russia's influence and reach with the countries closest to it.

While Slovakia has followed this rise with the return of Fico and his Russophile views, the setbacks for PiS in Poland despite their established hold on the country has demonstrated the growing pushback, particularly from younger people, against these movements and governments.

What lies ahead for Slovakia and Poland remains to be seen. Fico's newly formed government has already halted military and financial aid to Ukraine and is promising to continue blocking their proposed entrance into NATO. Several key anti-corruption investigators have been dismissed and corruption charges will reportedly carry less harsh sentences in Slovakia in the future. Poland's opposition parties (Civic Coalition, the Third Way, and the Left) have formed their coalition government and have promised to maintain Poland's commitments to Ukraine and reform the country's laws regarding women's rights– though they still have to wait to officially take power until President Duda and Prime

Minister Morawiecki acquiesce their unlikely bid to form their own new government. If the new coalition takes power, it will be led by Donald Tusk– leader of the Civic Coalition, former prime minister from 2007-2014, and president of the European Council from 2015-2019. However, even if Tusk's government is formed, he will have to work with an actively hostile President in Duda to get his policies passed. Whatever the outcome, both countries' elections have upended the established order within Slovakia and Poland, and the short-term future for both countries is sure to be contentious.

"Lex Tusk" law that would establish a commission to investigate supposed Russian infiltration within Poland– a law that the EU claims may be used to silence PiS' opposition.

The Battle for Chips: A Look into the U.S.-China Tech War

By Ashley Lee

In just two decades, China has transformed from a developing country, with a significant portion of its population living in poverty, to one of the world's largest economies and leading technological powers. This transformation, driven primarily by its massive labor force, export-oriented manufacturing, and foreign direct investment, has propelled China to become the world's second-largest economy, second only to the United States. With the country's "Made in China 2025" initiative, China seeks to further upgrade its industries and become a global leader in advanced technology sectors, moving away from predominantly being a producer of cheap low-tech goods. In 2015, the announcement of the plan sparked significant backlash from the U.S., with apprehensions focused on the potential damage to American industry and the likelihood of unfair trade practices, including subsidies to Chinese companies and forced technology transfers. Concerns also revolved around the potential risks posed to the U.S., encompassing cybersecurity, supply chain vulnerabilities, and military applications, stemming from China's dominance in critical technology sectors.

In response to U.S. concern, the Trump administration imposed tariffs in 2018 on a wide range of Chinese goods to address trade imbalances and perceived unfair trade practices, marking the beginning of a trade war with China. The U.S. government also imposed restrictions on Chinese technology companies operating in the U.S., such as Huawei, WeChat, and

TikTok because they pose an "unacceptable risk to national security," as stated in the Secure Equipment Act. By implementing stricter export controls on critical technologies, particularly semiconductors, to China, the U.S. made clear that it not only wants to prevent China from "spying" but also curb China's ability to access advanced technology and high-end computing power.
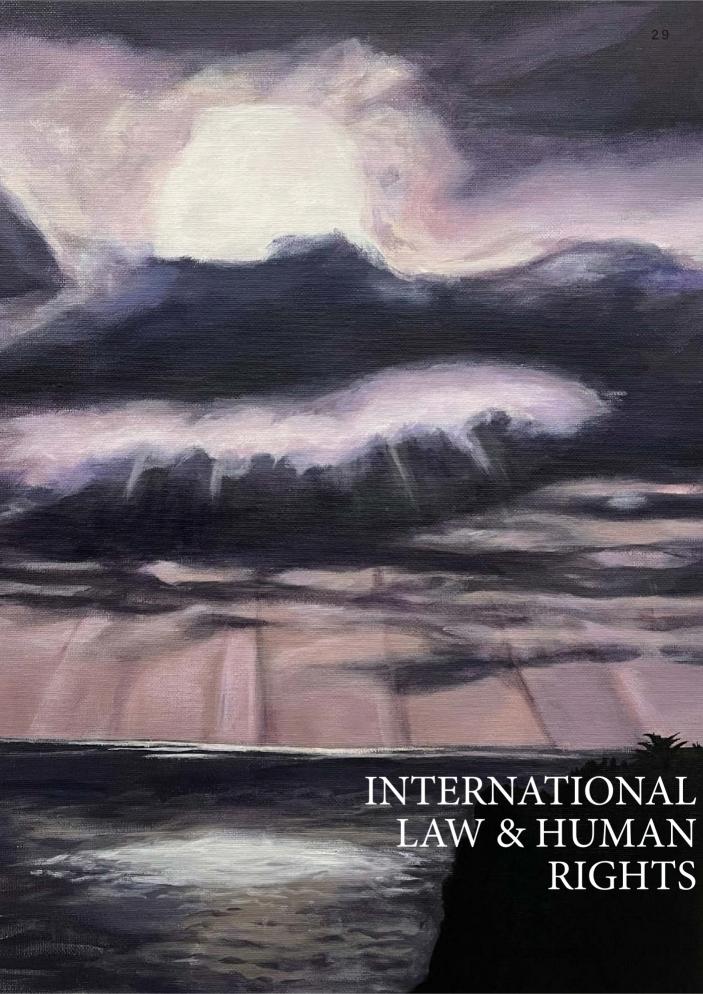
Although the ongoing tech war between the U.S. and China began as a trade dispute in July 2018, it has broadened into a larger contest for dominance in core technologies such as semiconductors, 5G, and artificial intelligence (AI). Semiconductors, the fundamental building blocks of modern electronics and technology, are crucial for not only consumer electronics but also data centers, telecommunications, and defense systems. Because control over semiconductor manufacturing capabilities can affect a country's ability to develop advanced military technologies, it is particularly critical for national security. Recognizing the strategic importance of semiconductors, both the U.S. and China have been working to develop their domestic semiconductor industries to reduce dependence on foreign suppliers, mainly Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan. The U.S. has imposed export controls on certain semiconductor equipment and technology to limit China's access to cutting-edge chips, while China has invested heavily in its semiconductor industry, establishing initiatives like the National Integrated Circuit Industry Investment Fund (or the "Big Fund").

Despite China's large investments in its semiconductor industry, the U.S. still undoubtedly has the upper hand in the sector, as virtually every microchip around the world was either designed with American-made software, produced using American-made equipment, or inspected with American-made tools. Even though U.S. firms manufacture only about one-tenth of the microchips sold across the world, a group of U.S. companies control all of the higher levels of the supply chain. Consequently, the U.S.' export controls on microchips are all the more devastating for China, significantly disrupting supply chains and hindering China's ability to compete globally in chip manufacturing.

Along with semiconductor chips, AI chips have been another focal point in the U.S.-China tech rivalry. AI can automate many processes, enable data-driven decisions, and deliver customized experiences, thus it is expected to disrupt and transform various industries. As a result, both China and the U.S. view AI as the key to maintaining a stronghold in various industries. Both countries have implemented AI policies and strategies to support research and development, but regulatory approaches and policies related to AI like data privacy have become areas of contention between the U.S. and China. The U.S. government has also imposed export controls on AI technologies that have potential national security implications and placed restrictions on Chinese tech companies operating in the U.S. Despite these areas of contention, the U.S. and China have recently agreed to work together with at least 25 other countries to mitigate potential risks that may arise with the progression of AI, especially those in the domains of cybersecurity and biotechnology. By signing the Bletchley Declaration at the UK AI Safety Summit, the two countries, along with the EU, India, Germany, France, and many other countries, have agreed to oversee the evolution of AI and ensure its safe technological advancement.

While these collaborative initiatives reflect a partial alignment of interests between the two nations, the future of the great tech rivalry between the U.S. and China is highly uncertain and undoubtedly complex. The competition seems likely to persist as both nations will protect their own interests and continue to fight for technological leadership and economic power. Opportunities for collaboration and cooperation will always remain in areas where mutual interests converge, however. The decisions made by the U.S. and China in the coming years regarding cooperation, competition, and diplomacy will shape the trajectory of this multifaceted rivalry, with consequences that will extend far beyond their own borders.

INTERNATIONAL
LAW & HUMAN
RIGHTS

Jumbo on Earth

By Alison Cedarbaum

What do Tufts students know about human rights around the world?

Follow along with this quiz to see how your knowledge of human rights and current events stacks up against your fellow Jumbos! Our sample responses are quoted from Tufts students with majors ranging from Engineering to Philosophy to Biology to Studio Art. Correct answers are on the bottom of the page.

1. What nation was expelled from the UN Human Rights Council in 2022 as a result of its invasion of a neighboring country?
All respondents: Russia

2. In August of 2021, the United States withdrew its troops from a nation in Central Asia, which was swiftly taken over by a terrorist group called the Taliban. Do you know what country this was? What do you know about the history of the Taliban, its role in this country, and its human rights record?
Respondent 1: Afghanistan. I don't know the history of how the Taliban first entered the country, but I know that they're fundamentalist Muslims and that they've severely restricted the rights of their citizens, especially women.
Respondent 2: I do not know what country this was, but I know this was a terrorist organization. I think the US may have killed their leader under President Obama.

3. What is a protracted refugee situation (PRS) or in more common terms, a refugee crisis? What are some contemporary or historical examples of protracted refugee situations that you know of?
Respondent 1: [A refugee crisis is] when people are forced to leave a country either by the government or other circumstances and nowhere is taking them in or they have nowhere to go. An example is from this week: a lot of Palestinians are fleeing to Egypt because it's not safe in Palestine, and Egypt isn't taking them in.
*Respondent 2:*There's, like, a lot of countries… I think Syria has a refugee crisis?

4. The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights was divided into two major International Covenants to be ratified by members of the United Nations: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ratified by 173 countries) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ratified by 171 countries). Has the United States ratified either or both of these treaties?
Respondent 1: I have no idea… I guess only the first one? The US is very democratic and they seem to be more involved when there are political things at stake and not cultural things at stake.
*Respondent 2:*I think at least the civil and political one. The US is kind of leading the world in that regard.

5. In the Myanmar Rakhine state, a human rights disaster has been unfolding for decades as Buddhist nationalism drives the country's Muslim minority group, the Rohingya, into peril and out of the country. What natural disaster has recently aggravated the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar?
Respondent 1: No clue.
*Respondent 2:*Tornado? Do they have that there? I don't know where Myanmar is geographically – maybe a hurricane.

Flip for correct answers: ↻

1. Russia was voted out of the UNHRC in April of 2022 because of its February invasion of Ukraine.

2. The country in question is Afghanistan. The Taliban is an extremist group that emerged in the midst of the Afghan Civil War (1992-1996). The Taliban took over the country in the late 1990s, imposing a strict interpretation of sharia law. The United States ousted the Taliban in 2001, and they only re-seized power after the United States' sudden departure under the Biden administration in 2021. The assassination referenced by respondent B was that of Osama bin-Laden, the leader of Al-Qaeda, a different terrorist group in the region. The Taliban has had an overwhelmingly negative human rights record, conducting extrajudicial killings, preventing women from accessing education, and abusing members of the LGBTQ community. Meanwhile, their rule has also caused an extreme economic downturn and widespread poverty as the country has become isolated from the world.

3. According to the UN High Commissioner on Refugees, "protracted refugee situations are those in which at least 25,000 refugees from the same country have been living in exile for more than five consecutive years." As of 2019, 16 million people were in a PRS, including in Iran, Pakistan, Syria, Kenya, Sudan, Myanmar/ Bangladesh.

4. The United States has only ratified one of these treaties: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The United States is one of four countries that has not ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

5. Cyclone Mocha hit Myanmar in May, 2023. It has caused an exacerbated human rights, health, and human security crisis that Myanmar's ruling military junta (a group that has taken political power by force) has blocked from international aid and assistance.

Duterte's Moral Gambit:

Unmasking the Interplay of Law, Order, and Power in the Philippine War on Drugs with David Art

By Vanessa John & Sharon Li

Since assuming office on June 30, 2016, Filipino President Rodrigo Duterte has embarked on a determined mission to eradicate drug use within the country. He ran on a anti-drug campaign that has led to the death of over 12,000 Fillipinos through the utilization of large-scale extrajudicial killings as a means to "solve" drug use. Other countries have launched similar "War on Drugs" campaigns,, including the United States in 1971 under Richard Nixon. Although both countries utilized the War on Drugs as a weapon for social control, below we explore how their respective strategies and outcomes vastly differ.

David Art, a professor at Tufts University specializing in comparative politics, European politics, democracy, and policing in democratic societies, brings a critical perspective to these anti-drug campaigns. In our exclusive interview, he unpacks the impacts of such policies and draws comparisons with historical precedents.

Q: What factors, in your opinion, have contributed to the historical significance of drug-focused campaigns in various nations, including President Nixon's "War on Drugs" and President Duterte's anti-drug campaign?

A: The interesting thing about the comparison between the two is that they were both announced quite suddenly, and in the context of politics rather than a public health emergency. That is not to say that the methamphetamine problem in the Philippines is not bad. [It's also important to acknowledge] that there was in the United States a heroin crisis in the late 60s and 70s. But in both cases, Nixon and Duterte overhyped the War on Drugs and used it to campaign on. In both cases, they were pretty successful because the strategy was to pick a marginalized group that really has no way of pushing back politically and make them a target of your law and order policy. So in that way Nixon very clearly wanted to target Leftists, Black people, and other groups. With Duterte in the Philippines, there is not, like, this real ethnic component to it. It is not broken down on religious lines, it really is drug users in society. What is distinctive or unique about the Philippines is that Duterte's language and policies had just gone beyond any other case.

Q: How would you assess the historical utilization of the police as an institutional force to suppress marginalized individuals in the United States? Do you see any parallels or differences between the U.S. and the Philippines?

A: I think there are big differences with Duterte's vigilante squads(these are extrajudicial killings) whereas the United States has police kill approximately 1,000 people a year. We are talking 5 to 6 times that per year in the Philippines at the height of the War on Drugs. The scale is quite different when you look at policing in those respects; vigilantism is something that we do not want in the US, that police agencies fight actively against. We do not want people taking the law into their own hands, as we can see law and order breaking down in the Philippines when that happens. Duterte has kind of facilitated it and that has probably more to do with the weakness of these institutions in the Philippines rather than their strength, there is some degree of outsourcing to others [in order to exert power rather than utilizing governmental institutions]. So, I think Duterte, Reagon, and Nixon are examples of penal populism and running on law and order and in the American case "lock them up throw away the key" and in the philippines case "kill". Duterte was stone cold literal in what he wanted to do. Also, in the Philippines–with relatively weak institutions all across the board –here have been huge corruption cases as well in the War on Drugs involving the police. There have been police corruption cases in the US as well but nothing like I have seen in the Philippines.

Q: How do you interpret the events in the Philippines, where thousands are killed by police and vigilante squads, bodies hidden and marked as DUI's, journalists murdered, and accused drug lords' corpses publicly humiliated, given the fact that they particularly impact low-income areas disproportionately impacting low-income areas? What is the future of human rights, the Filipino government, and its constituents? Assessing potential global and domestic implications, how do Duterte's actions detailed above impact the future of the Philippine government?

A: It appears that the Philippines garnered international attention, which Duterte aimed for domestically, but [it] did not resonate well globally. The media extensively covered the War on Drugs, despite the risks to journalists in the Philippines. While some countries, like Indonesia, seemed to view it favorably, there are few imitators of Duterte currently, perhaps due to the absence of a similar regime. It seems that the Philippine society thought this was a good idea—and vigilantism is a complicated

thing—but the state does not need to do much to give permission for gangs to start dragging up who is on Duterte's list and producing them with a trademark with tape over their mouths. It's shocking when you look at all the elaborate, theatrical stuff like videos around the bodies; [it's] really gruesome stuff, sort of parading almost like the old American west, perhaps. So there was a dehumanization, not in contemporary America to the same degree, but particularly during the crack epidemic absolutely. That's when this sort of dehumanization, I think, in the US took place in this country. A: It appears that the Philippines garnered international attention, which Duterte aimed for domestically, but [it] did not resonate well globally. The media extensively covered the War on Drugs, despite the risks to journalists in the Philippines. While some countries, like Indonesia, seemed to view it favorably, there are few imitators of Duterte currently, perhaps due to the absence of a similar regime. It seems that the Philippine society thought this was a good idea—and vigilantism is a complicated thing—but the state does not need to do much to give permission for gangs to start dragging up who is on Duterte's list and producing them with a trademark with tape over their mouths. It's shocking when you look at all the elaborate, theatrical stuff like videos around the bodies; [it's] really gruesome stuff, sort of parading almost like the old American west, perhaps. So there was a dehumanization, not in contemporary America to the same degree, but particularly during the crack epidemic absolutely. That's when this sort of dehumanization, I think, in the US took place in this country.

Q: The concept of "power" has been a recurring theme in our discussion. From your perspective, how do you perceive the significance of power in the context of the War on Drugs in the Philippines?
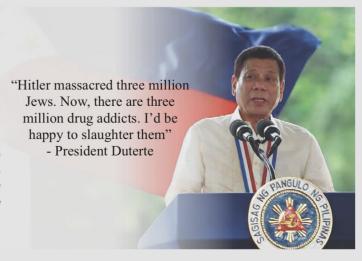A: I believe it underscores the appeal of law and order messages, not only in fully democratic societies like the US and Western Europe but also in partly free, competitive, and authoritarian ones. [This can be appealing] even during stages in history when the Philippines approached genuine democracies with real political parties. Law and order prevails, and, as discussed, the Philippines is a much more insecure society than even the US, with double the homicide rate of an already dangerous society. Did the War on Drugs work in terms of curbing the issue? Probably not, [because of] Duterte's consolidation of power, though it likely didn't eradicate the problem—an outcome similar to the US War on Drugs. Penal populism proves useful for both, as seen historically in the US and emulated by Duterte in Philippine society. State weakness is a significant factor in the Philippines, a country that,

despite growing, remains very poor. Methamphetamine use, a prevalent issue, is often justified as a stimulant to endure long working hours due to poverty. While some argue that poverty itself is the core problem, the public consumption aspect of these killings is used to demonstrate the government's power and showcase the state's ability to eliminate perceived enemies. It reflects an Foucault (utilizing public torture as punishment to demonstrate the power of the sovereign) understanding of law and order, akin to tearing apart offenders, in this case, drug addicts.

Q: Do you have any closing thoughts about the War on Drugs through a comparative politics lens, specifically regarding the United States?
A: Fortunately, I don't observe many campaigns similar to Duterte's, but I wouldn't be surprised if we see more of them due to their effectiveness. What makes the Philippines unique is that it targets not just gangs, but also individual people and society at large, particularly the poor and marginalized. While this isn't entirely unique—similar situations occur in Brazil and Argentina—it differs in the sense that these countries also deal with well-organized criminal gangs as a significant player. While I'm not an expert, I haven't observed the same degree of organized criminal influence in the Philippines.

With the end of President Duterte's term, his successor President Bongbong Marcos has declared that he would continue the "War on Drugs" however would redirect the campaign to a rehabilitative approach. Yet, the Philippines continues to witness the same patterns of violence, with little to no tangible change in the Filipino society continuing the legacy of his predecessor in the violent "War on Drugs." This intersection of law, order, power, and societal impact outlined by Professor Art provides a profound understanding of the complexity of the campaigns.

"Hitler massacred three million Jews. Now, there are three million drug addicts. I'd be happy to slaughter them"
- President Duterte

Ask the Community: Nuclear Proliferation

By Zoe Raptis, Jake Pryor & Hannah Cox

Nuclear proliferation is a hotly contested topic in international affairs with incredibly high stakes. Hemispheres staff asked the Tufts community their peerspective on nuclear proliferation using the following prompt: What do you think is the most convincing argument in favor of or against the acquisition of nuclear weapons by new countries?

Ilan, a fourth year history and classics major: I think the most convincing argument against the acquisition of nuclear weapons by new countries is the risk of escalation and potential instability. While nuclear weapons have had a stabilizing effect on global politics in the Cold War through mutually assured destruction, MAD is a very dangerous stability. Every new country with a nuclear weapon creates a new possibility for someone to use it. Old points of conflict become much deadlier, and new contentions form. Nuclear weapons need to be managed by good actors, and every new nuclear weapon increases the chance that someone controlling one has bad intentions and could use it unprovoked. I think the most convincing argument against the acquisition of nuclear weapons by new countries is the risk of escalation and potential instability."

Shane, a third year biology major on the pre-med track: I don't blame new countries for trying to create their own nuclear arsenal. In modern world politics it has become the new standard in the strength of a country and the power they hold in conversations, and for good reason. Conflicts between neighboring states such as India and Pakistan have become threats to the existence of everyone on Earth thanks to nuclear weapons, while at the same time being a reason that the situation has not resulted in all out war. The instant any state uses a nuclear weapon, no matter the situation, it opens the possibility of total annihilation and a ripple effect of death to hit the world. It's hard to be optimistic about the future with the constant threat of nuclear weapons whiping away everything I have, but there's nothing we can do but continue living with a sense of ignorance to the feebleness that holds our global society together.

Steven, a second year international relations major: I think the most persuasive argument against new countries acquiring nuclear weapons is the absence of cordial great-power relations under the current status quo. Commenting on Abolishing Nuclear Weapons, Harald Müller stressed on the 'need to create and maintain cordial great-power relations' as the precondition for moving toward a future of abolition in any promising way. Without any institutions, principles or norms of nuclear arms in place, the unpredictability of nuclear sudden attack can be problematic and still raises tensions. As all of the nuclear-armed states have to maintain political unity to effectively confront the potential rule-breaker in the international stage for a nuclear-free world, the current relationship between great-power were far from this scenario. Thus any acquisition of nuclear weapons by new countries can be interpreted as a threat or an opportunity for their rivals to bolster their positions around the world, worsening international relations.

Andrew, a first year international relations and computer science major: From a general perspective, I believe the most convincing argument against the acquisition of nuclear weapons by new countries is the creation of even more tension and strain between countries in the international system. In recent years a large amount of friction between countries has fostered as a result of countries developing nuclear weapons. This in turn deters countries from cooperating with each other, which creates less economic dependency and less international cooperation which then further isolates states from one another and can lead to overall catastrophic effects.

Alexandra, a PhD candidate at Fletcher: Nuclear weapons are fundamentally a tool of state dominance and power and do not reflect a pathway to a safer more peaceful world. While it is often argued that they provide a modicum of global stability, the continued expansion of nuclear weapon possession would serve as an inherently destabilizing force in international politics and increases the likelihood of their use. Even if not deployed, the development and testing of nuclear weapons has devastating environmental and humanitarian effects, including, but hardly limited to, widespread radioactive pollution and the diversion of vast amounts of public funding from provision of vital social goods to meet basic human needs. In other words, the development of nuclear capabilities in the name of state security has an inverse relationship to the provision of human security and societal well-being.

Oxana Shevel, professor of Comparative Politics and Director of the Tufts International Relations program: I think - especially in light of Russia's war against Ukraine - that one argument in favor of acquiring nuclear weapons is that it could be an effective deterrent against foreign invasion/attack. Ukraine used to have - but then voluntarily gave up - nuclear weapons, only to be invaded two decades later. If Ukraine had nuclear weapons perhaps it could have deterred Russia's invasion. While we don't know for a fact whether it would have played out this way in the Russia-Ukraine

case, this may be the lesson many states will draw and in the future more may seek to acquire nuclear weapons as an insurance against conventional attack.

Michael Beckley, professor of political science at Tufts: Countries seek nuclear weapons to deter others from nuclear strikes, to deter conventional invasions of their homeland, and for national prestige. In addition, some countries seek them to carry a nuclear blackmail, that is using nuclear threats in order to shield their own offensive operations. Putin's Russia is currently doing that, using veiled nuclear threats to scare NATO and deterrent from helping Ukraine, while Russia invades the country.

Kelly Greenhill, professor of international relations and security studies at Tufts: Paradoxically, what may be wise for individual states is deeply problematic for the community of states in the international system. Why is this the case? The possession of nuclear weapons is eminently rational for individual states, as they are potent and effective deterrents against foreign aggression. In the aggregate, however, the more states that possess nuclear weapons, the more likely is it that they will be used, whether intentionally or accidentally; the higher the probability of other potentially catastrophic accidents involving these weapons; and, arguably, the higher the number of low-intensity conflicts and proxy wars, due to the stability-instability paradox, which posits that when two states each possess nuclear weapons, the probability of a direct war between them radically declines, but the probability of minor or indirect conflicts between them correspondingly increases.

The Solid Base of Liberal Internationalism?

By Daniel Chung

In many of Tufts' Intro to International Relations classes, students are assigned Jack Snyder's piece "One World, Rival Theories." In the piece, German philosopher Immanuel Kant is associated with the liberal position in international relations theory – position of democratic peace theory. This theory asserts that since democracies elect "accountable" leaders, and the people bear the burdens of war, democracies will not go to war, especially with one another, as these regimes view each other as "legitimate and nonthreatening". The institutions and processes of democracies, subjecting leaders to the will of the people, will, according to this logic, make international cooperation easy to sustain.

This commonly held view of a democratic peace theory, unfortunately, does not approximate, but rather vulgarizes the position of Kant from his famous essays, "Perpetual Peace", and "An Idea for a Universal History with Cosmopolitan Intent". Snyder's article acknowledges that liberal theory, which has become "largely self-evident" in the US and has taken hold abroad, foresees that increased trade will forge ties between nations and facilitate the spread of democratic norms, enabling an escape from realist anarchy. However, even Kant recognized that foreseeing a progressive movement in history is not necessarily grounded on reason as liberals may claim. In his essay on Universal History, Kant prefaces his argument by acknowledging that the idea of progress is based on a "hope" to discern a movement, hedging his argument as only an attempt. Further, at the end, he characterizes his efforts as a justification of "Providence" itself, out of a refusal to "turn [his] eyes from [the world] in disgust" which would result from renouncing the idea of a rational purpose in history. Kant's language implicitly would indict current theories based on the certainty of progress in peace as based on something that cannot ever be certain, but must result instead from a certain form of faith which people are compelled to believe in.

Beyond the realization of the irrationality of liberalism as dependent on a form of faith, the full possibility of liberal internationalism can be further questioned by leaning on another German theorist, this time of the early 20th century, Carl Schmitt. Although Schmitt ended up participating in the politics of the Third Reich, he formulated critiques of liberal internationalism which remain salient today. Particularly, he critiqued liberalism for holding two separate and self-contradictory norms: the "equal weight of states," or the sovereignty norm, and the "nation assimilating" current of liberalism which trends to "overturning the old concept of state into a universalistic-imperialistic world law" inherent in its universal arguments for human rights; of course, the universalism of human rights arises from arguments formulated around domestic liberalism based on the equality of individuals and the necessity of creating toleration, a norm which eventually expands in weight until it becomes seen as needing to be applied on the international scale, even by force. As Western states define themselves as superior by their advancement in human rights, and influence international organizations like the United Nations, universalistic human rights arguments have led to claims of intervention against the states of Central and Eastern Europe in Schmitt's time and the Middle East in ours, with arguments for remaining committed to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan resulting at least partially from arguments of the necessity of ensuring universal human rights. In such a world, the sovereignty norm is undercut, and liberalism undermines one of its own values. According to the own demands of the effects of liberal internationalism, the strongest strand of it, democratic peace theory, becomes self-defeating and incoherent.

Is the ICC Effective?

By Zoe Raptis and Jake Pryor

The International Criminal Court was established by the 1998 Rome Statute and is housed in the Hague to try "the most serious crimes of concern to the international community." Its role is to prosecute individuals, including heads of state, for international crimes of genocide, war, and crimes against humanity. 124 states have ratified the Rome Statute, accepting ICC jurisdiction. What follows is a hypothetical debate expressing two distinct persepctives regarding the efficacy of the ICC.

Jake:

The ICC is effective because it creates an international standard for trials regardless of the parties or nature of the conflict. Imagine every leader being tried by different courts created by the victors in any given war. There would be no standards for how to put leaders on trial, leading to, at best, different standards for justice and, at worst, letting leaders get away with crimes in the absence of international laws to hold them accountable

Zoe:

I would question the assertion that the ICC creates a constant standard of international justice. From the start the ICC's international scope was significantly in doubt. When the Rome Statute was voted upon only 120 states voted in favor. China, Russia, and the US do not accept the ICC's jurisdiction over their internal sovereign affairs. Overall, 70% of the world's population is outside the jurisdiction of the court. How can the ICC be effective if the 3 most powerful members of the United Nations Security Council do not even accept its jurisdiction?

Jake:

Your point serves to prove that the structure is not the issue with the ICC but rather a lack of scope. While not having jurisdiction over a large amount of the population hurts the ICC, it has nevertheless successfully prosecuted three world leaders. It is also no surprise that two of the three most powerful members of the UNSC have citizens under current investigation, including Putin himself, and a handful of American service members. It also does not matter the amount of states joining if the statue lacks actual power. Often states who knowingly violate international law will actively sign on to follow these laws because they are weak. If the ICC was weak and ineffective why are we not seeing the same effect?

Zoe:

On the contrary, the structure of the ICC is a problem that disincentivizes global leaders from signing on. States are not willing to relinquish their sovereignty. The international community has no mandate to intervene within states. The fact that major players such as the US, India, and China have not signed on undermines any attempts to legitimize international law. The ICC cannot really do anything about Putin; it can only point fingers. Thus, the ICC lacks legitimacy and hurts rather than helps the progression of international law. You also mention its success in prosecuting 3 leaders. The only people to have been indicted by the court are Africans, implying an inbuilt bias against Africa. No matter if this institutional bias is true or not it further undermines the ICC if international organizations such as the African Union has urged members not to cooperate with the ICC

Jake:

Regarding bias against Africa, The ICC's former president was from Nigeria and the current second vice-president is from the Republic of the Congo. What's more, the ICC is trying to put Putin on trial and has investigated the United States, United Kingdom, Russia, Israel and Venezuela. While some states are not willing to relinquish sovereignty, 120 nations signed on to the Rome Charter, as you mentioned, displaying that a majority of states believe the ICC should be put above state sovereignty and it is up to each one to determine whether or not it is worth it.

Zoe:

The crux of the debate is if the ICC is effective. So far you have proven that it has the potential to be effective, but is currently not as effective as it should be. You mention the ICC is trying to put Putin on trial, but analyzing sheer efficacy, the only successful convictions have resulted in a rift with the African Union that will take careful negotiation and adaptation of policy to bridge. Yes, 120 institutions have signed onto the Rome Statute but that is not enough to constitute an international scope. The ICC is ornamental, not effective when looking at the results.

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