THE MARATHON INITIATIVE

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Illusions of U.S. Foreign Policy

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Built on the conviction that political order is engineered through a top-down process, it assumes that the state apparatus creates domestic order, while international institutions and rules build global order. Accordingly, what establishes a more efficient and lasting order is nothing more than the right application of power in its military, economic, or institutional forms.

Three specific illusions stem out of this view: that removing a bad leader or toppling a bad regime will result in a more benign state; that membership in international institutions will fundamentally alter hostile states; and that wealth and commerce will create lasting peace. The result of these illusions is that we overestimate the capabilities of the basic tools of statecraft, from military power to economic means.

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SUMMARY

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I. WHY ARE ILLUSIONS DANGEROUS?

The United States, and more broadly, the West, is prone to getting surprised: others do not act as they are expected to act; outcomes differ from what has been anticipated. We are surprised by China's pursuit of global hegemony through economic and military means; by Russia's engaging in the largest conventional war in Europe since 1945; by the United Kingdom leaving the European Union. We think that economic sanctions will fundamentally alter the calculus of our enemies—even deter a potential attack—and we are puzzled when they do not. We are startled to discover that the elimination of bad actors abroad does not result in harmonious politics and peaceful civil societies. The list of things not going according to plan is long.

The fact of being surprised is the outcome of a gap between expectations and tangible reality. It may be that the particular reality in a given situation is an outlier, a one-in-a-million event of minuscule probability that no theory or worldview could possibly foresee. But the recent streak of surprises is not a fluke of history, an unlucky combination of events. It may be that we are continually being caught off guard because we are approaching politics with the wrong assumptions, which lead us to expect dangerously unrealistic outcomes. In other words, the accumulation of surprises is the evidence that the spectator is looking at the world through the wrong lenses. It is proof of our detachment from reality, rather than of reality being chaotic and thus incomprehensible.

Surprises are dangerous because they are, by definition, unexpected. When we are surprised, we are, *ipso facto*, caught unprepared. Surprises mean that we do not plan for the next event on the geopolitical map, thus failing to develop both the capabilities required and also the alliances most effective to deal with it. Surprises also mean that our policies may result in unexpected and unintended, and in some cases very dangerous, consequences.

It is important therefore to examine the causes of our surprise. The overarching argument of this paper is that our surprise is due to a series of illusions or fables that characterize our foreign policy vision. These illusions in turn stem from a mistaken series of assumptions about the causes of political order and about the drivers of political behavior. If we misunderstand the cause and effect dynamic, no matter how much effort and resources we devote to our preferred policies, the desired outcome will not materialize. To achieve better outcomes at home and abroad, therefore, we must first diagnose and dispel these illusions.

II. What is the Core Illusion?

Over the past two decades, the United States has failed to achieve several of its sought-for, crucial objectives. Its most tragic failures were in Iraq and Afghanistan, where years of costly efforts were jettisoned—in the latter case in a spectacularly haphazard way—in frustration over the inability to create stable and self-sustaining polities. China has been an even greater failure, in terms of time invested and future effects. This failure is not yet as dramatically tragic as the U.S. interventions in the wider Middle East and Central Asia, but it has the potential of being even more damaging to the United States. In this latter instance, the failure or the surprise is in the gap between the Western expectation of a harmonization of interests and behavior between China and its regional neighbors on the one hand and with Western economic partners on the other—and the actual reality of China becoming an assertive power.

China has become wealthy, militarily powerful, and—to all appearances—eager to conquer nearby states, or at a minimum, to exercise regional domination. Likewise, the failure properly to assess Russia and her imperial ambitions (as well as Ukraine and its national desire to remain independent) can be added to the list. Each of these failures has causes that are specific to it. But their recurrence suggests a deeper, more systemic problem in how we look at the world's political dynamics: Perhaps we are not simply unlucky in our discrete analytical efforts but rather, are very mistaken in how we analyze, and consequently act, in the world.

The true source of analytical failure, and consequently of our policy mistakes, is in *how we see the causes of political order*. Our presumptions in this regard cloud our assessments both of other nations and of the effectiveness of our own actions.
The core error is in seeing political order as arising solely out of power wielded by a state or higher international organization, rather than as being rooted in natural communities below the level of the state. This quintessentially modern view of politics asserts that men are capable of creating (rather than merely discovering) reality and the order of things. As the mind "plays a creative role in the constitution of the real," so does political action, which can create a new social reality even *ex nihilo*.[1]

In this schematic, order is a top-down effect: because individuals are selfish, they require a superior and all-encompassing power to prevent them from killing each other. Without that higher political entity, the Hobbesian individual is at the mercy of others, in a state of war, and incapable of establishing deep bonds that anchor him within a larger order. As Cardinal De Lubac put it in his classic book, *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*, "[t]he more one believes man to be naturally egoistical and unjust, the more one must seek to protect his peers from him through a closely woven network of institutions."[2]

Social order is accordingly interpreted as an exclusive product of state power and authority rather than a fruit of deep private connections, families, and friends.[3] If men can't even aspire to be saints, their actions must be made holy through political power.

Similarly, on the international level, nations are power or security hungry, and because they exist in relative equality to each other and without a higher organization to manage their relations through rules and power, they are in a state of perennial conflict. Accordingly, higher political entities—the state for individuals; supranational entities for the states—are preferable to all the lower forms of order because these entities liberate either individuals from encumbrances (other individuals) or nations from security threats (other nations).

The fable of this modern view is that the state or the international institution creates and maintains liberty by freeing individuals and states from the dangers presented by others. The state allows individuals to survive next to other individuals; the supranational, international organization approximates the role of the state on a global scale, allowing individual states to survive next to each other as a prelude to replacing them as inefficient political forms.

Left alone, this argument specifies, individuals—and states on the international level—are always impediments to their own security and liberty. Self-governance is impossible, even retrograde: men cannot be trusted to develop virtue and states cannot be trusted to manage equilibria. Liberty is supplied by the state, and does not arise from nature, tradition, family ties, or virtuous individuals; international peace is built through the progressive expansion of authorities that provide and enforce rules and norms globally and administratively, not by nations in rough equipoise.

Such a worldview is based on an excessive faith in the power of the state and in the exaggerated promise of international institutions as a tool of progressive creation. This faith is rooted in the belief that order can be engineered—and then controlled and maintained—through the application of power wielded first by the state and then, over time, by a set of supranational institutions and norms (commonly referred to as the rules-based international order or RBIO). It is also based on a certain view of progress or history:[4] the belief that political successes will progressively accumulate into solving the problem of social life, that is, the removal of conflict and all associated failings of human interactions. (For example, that a sequence of successful technology- and "data-driven" policies *should* eliminate poverty and violence both at the domestic and international levels.) The gradual but progressively better construction of institutions that will establish peace is, in this view, mere technocratic competence overcoming reluctant actors through managerial authority and political power.

The opposite viewpoint from this posits that the truly self-sustaining and stable order arises from the bottom up. A well-ordered state arises out of a healthy civil society

composed of families, friends, and small communities that educate, instill responsibility, and keep the selfish instincts of individuals in check. These small communities and associations are the wellsprings of order in a polity. If a state lacks such a healthy society, it will have to rely on force, a finite resource, to maintain order.

Similarly, when a state is intentionally built to replace the natural functions of these communities, the state is likely to end up in conflict with large swaths of society. Men always carry strong qualifiers; they are national, religious, and local beings, with deep ties developed over time and grounded in specific traditions. Ultimately, this exhausts its reservoirs of legitimacy and raw power. Nevertheless, even when society is viewed as the fount of lasting order, the state with its institutions and force is not unnecessary.

Rather, it places the state in a dependent role, as a supporter and protector of order the roots of which are elsewhere.[5] A society without state power is at the mercy of other states, but a state without a well-ordered nation is a fragile polity.
These two broad teachings about the causes of political order shape how one approaches international relations. The former, Hobbesian, expectation is that a state or an international institution's application of power can create a new and lasting political order across regions and cultures. Order is the arrangement of "modular men" linked by effortlessly changeable ties that they, or political power, can alter with ease.[6] Hence, a state can intervene abroad to rearrange such modular men for whatever desired outcome. An international institution can similarly achieve an allegedly more advanced form of order than individual states can conceive on their own.

The latter viewpoint is more attuned to conservative sensibilities and is biased toward an international order that nations in rough equipoise maintain. Because power, while indispensable, cannot easily mold new societies because men maintain their particularities, so also international order cannot proceed from supranational arrangements and norms. They simply will never acquire the legitimacy necessary to function. Thus, international order arises from states keeping each other in check, while failures of that order are addressed only by states aligning and engaging in efforts to restore a new equilibrium.

III. What are the Effects of the Modern Illusion on U.S. Foreign Policy?

The modern worldview of state-based political order arguably predominates in contemporary American foreign policy, as the last three decades especially evidence. The seeds lie in the Wilsonian tradition. In at least three permutations—post-World War I with Woodrow Wilson; post-World War II with Franklin Delano Roosevelt's ideas; and post-Cold War with a neo-liberal bent—this tradition has understood U.S. security as

being a product of wider, multilateral institutional arrangements. In other words, only a top-down approach guarantees security and order.[7]

This worldview is not limited to a particular emphasis on multilateral and supranational arrangements. It is more pervasive than that. Whether qualified as specifically Wilsonian or not, the framework is informed by an illusion of what power can supposedly achieve. The belief is that political power—and its ancillary tools of military force, institutional organization, and economic wealth—can create political realities and order *ex nihilo*, molding them out of passive or even sympathetic material. But nations—and sustainable international order—cannot be built through a supra-imposed power.

Creatures of mere power are brittle and last only as long as that power is applied. And in fact, power can arise from order which it does not create: a healthy, coherent nation is more effective in international politics than a polity that requires consistent expenditure of resources (force) to maintain its internal stability.

This aforementioned mistaken view has given birth to three distinct categories of political illusions.

While these are distinguished analytically by the particular foreign policy tool employed, they all arise out of the belief in the transformative effect of political, economic, and institutional power.

1. THE "TARGETING ILLUSION."

   This is the belief that removing a bad leader of regime will automatically result in a propitious rearrangement of that state's domestic dynamic. Eliminate the autocrat (or autocracy), and society will flourish and the state will become a responsible actor. The assumption is that targeting, whether through military, political, or economic means, removes one source of power (such as dictators, "dead enders"), and a new, better one will de facto be installed, creating a fresh political (preferably post-national) order. To effect this scenario, military power is often employed without regard to any post-war consequences.[8]

2. THE "FDR ILLUSION."

   This is the temptation to expect international organizations and global governance (norms, rules, laws) to eclipse national and local politics. These international entities are seen as creators, rather than creatures, of order. If a more permanent, stable world order can arise through states submitting to a higher authority (akin to individuals submitting to a state), then the primary objective of diplomacy ought to be increasing the number of states under the pacifying umbrella of international institutions and norm-creating structures.

This is further desirable since it translates political decision making to a more efficient level because informed (allegedly) by scientific expertise. The cost is steep (for democracies, at any rate) but swept under this rug of progress: The loss of accountability for those decisions to the populations of individual nations. What matters most is that the particular state participates in the international organization, because participation will subsequently mold that state, while what least matters is the domestic regime or the nature of the prospective member state. FDR, for example, hoping that the USSR would behave better once it was in the UN, was willing to postpone hard negotiations with Moscow in order for this rival to participate in the founding moment of the UN.

3. THE "PEACE THROUGH WEALTH ILLUSION."

   This is the belief that economic progress—wealth through trade and market dynamism—alters inexorably the incentives of people, establishing peace-leaning forces. At its core, the belief is that structural material dynamics can be engineered and managed through the application of the science of economics, thereby creating a new international order. This faith arises out of a materialistic faith in the capacity of economic logic to overcome the logic of politics. While the latter focuses on relative gains and the fears associated with them, the former values absolute gains that benefit all involved, thereby lowering the drive to enter into a conflict with others.

   There are two ancillary fallacies to this: first, that rising living standards create more peaceful states; that wealth generates peace. The second: that trade links states, so entangling them that war becomes supposedly prohibitively costly. Commerce begets international concord. With commercial ties creating mutual vulnerabilities, making war more costly and hence less likely, war itself can become a historical residue relegated to regions where economic scarcity reigns and advanced commercial relations are absent.

TARGETING LEADERSHIP AND REGIME CHANGE: WHAT ABOUT A CORRUPT PEOPLE?

Much of U.S. and even Western foreign policy assumes that the principal problem with our rivals, such as Russia or China, lies with their leaders and the political systems associated with them. Thus, Russia must be pushing westward because Putin wants to reconstruct an empire and be known to posterity as Vladimir the Great. Similarly, China must be building its military capabilities to expand the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) authoritarian reach and to protect its hold over Chinese society. The leader or the political system are the primary determinants of state behavior, the particular society and its cultural values are not. Hence, a Kremlin without Putin or a China without the

CCP would enable the peoples of these great powers to tilt their polities in more benign directions, both in domestic and foreign policy. Eliminating the aggressive tyrant allows the subjects to be capable of placid self-government, with the state becoming a responsible actor. Remove the systemic strictures that force us to behave badly and we are saints.

This illusion arises out of the modern belief in the transformative power of political power. It posits that the leader or the domestic system that wields power is the determining agent, imposing a particular order on a society of modular individuals. Any leader or regime, therefore, will rearrange that society into a different entity with a naturally different type of foreign behavior. The political "top" is the decisive factor because order arises out of its power.

Such faith in the ability of political power—whether in the hands of a leader or in the processes of a domestic regime—is exaggerated. The lessons of the failures of the Enlightenment, as of more recent episodes from the Soviet empire, are rather about the strength of the underlying culture, that endures in its good and bad features. As Louis Dupré wrote, even "the builders of the Enlightenment had to confront the melancholy fact that culture leads a life of its own, escapes control, and fails to correspond to their intentions."[9] Hence, no matter how well-intentioned a leader or a regime can be, it is still possible that it's the nation as a whole that is corrupt.

If culture is in fact a determining factor for a nation's behavior, then the belief in the moral neutrality—or virtuousness—of every society and of every nation underwriting a state must be reexamined. It is possible that a nation is corrupt and its leaders are the symptoms, rather than the cause, of an imperial foreign policy and dictatorial domestic behavior. Years, and in some cases generations, of indoctrination can imbue ideas in societies that are antithetical to self-government, ordered liberty, and a prudent foreign policy. Such ideas can mold a people, or at least, can lead to numerous assertive groups within a society that pursue domestic and foreign policies similar to those of the leaders and the domestic regime. Thus, should those particular leaders leave power, there is likely still to be a continuity in the state's policy, because the mores of that nation are aligned with their leaders' objectives. While an imperialist leader can be dethroned, it does not necessarily remove the imperial élan of the nation. The source of the problem may just be the people, and not the leader.

National cultures powerfully affect all countries, both positively and negatively. This leads to the possibility that a people's very ethos can be the source of the nation's corruption. Many in the United States and Europe, for instance, are concerned today that their own societies are being despoiled by a relentless denigration of faith and reason, and the attendant elevation of unchecked emotions and subjective preference. These believe that education systems that reject the pursuit of objective virtue and the cultivation of character result in a culture that prevents the development of the

necessary habits of self-control. Without such habits, societies can only become degraded, incapable of self-government and with foreign policies lacking prudence. As Edmund Burke observed: "It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters."[10] In brief, culture, the aspirations and the values of a people, are not necessarily benign and noble—nor even neutral or easily shaped by the proper application of power. Without virtue, we love and do the wrong things.

Preoccupation with the decadence of our domestic cultures should not prevent us from understanding how analogous processes are at work in other countries. The ideas may be different, but they have equally potent effects on such states' behavior. If in the West the importance of the nation and its traditions is being attacked, in Russia and China almost the opposite extreme is celebrated. There, there is an active encouragement of an aggressive nationalism trumpeting the moral superiority of their own and the ancillary inferiority of others. Neither is a healthy approach; both shape the respective countries' foreign posture. American leaders, for instance, often spend more time in public self-flagellation for past sins than in attempts to advance U.S. interests abroad. Meanwhile, our rivals treat their neighbors as inferior polities that must kowtow to them, or perhaps, as having an illegitimate existence as either sovereign or free entities.

There are obviously profound differences between Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the Biden administration's accusations of an America driven by White supremacy.[11] But the point remains that political leadership, whether in an authoritarian or in a democratic state, is always a reflection, even if in different degrees, of a particular nation's underlying ideas and cultures. If there are bad ideas and corrupt but dominant subcultures permeating the nation, these will be visible in its foreign policy. Such influences do not stop at water's edge. Especially if there are no alternatives, these do not necessarily cease to impact the overall policy when a particular leader passes.

Today's Russia showcases this dynamic. Putin is rightly seen as a modern-day tsar, with tyrannical proclivities and a firm control over the state. His persistent quest to bring Ukraine under Moscow's dominion is clearly a personal project driven by hatred of the West, disdain for the Ukrainian nation, and an ambition to rebuild Russia's imperial grandeur (and thus, bolster the associated image of his own individual greatness). Many therefore consider Putin as the only cause of the war. As U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said at the September 2022 UN Security Council meeting: "One man chose this war. And one man can end it."[12]

This is a dangerous simplification. The war is not Putin's war only. It is a Russian war. In a June 2022 poll, 75 percent of Russians either definitely or mostly supported the actions of Russia's military forces. As one respondent articulated, "war is the locomotive of history," and it was time for Russia to assert its independence.[13] Not the few protesters against the war but the large swath of public—whether silent or insisting on

an even more decisive war against Ukraine and the West—are Putin's greatest issue. The absence of countervailing institutions, whether religious or civil, exacerbates the problem: The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) exercises a powerful influence on Russian society, not as a rampart of prudence and virtue, but as an instigator of the war.[14] And because it is an institution that transcends leadership changes in the Kremlin, the ROC's embrace of Russian imperial greatness will only continue to shape national political dynamics after Putin.[15]

This does not mean that every individual Russian supports the war. Cultures, after all, are never monolithic; nations are not unitary blocs. Every sign of domestic disapproval, every courageous political critic speaking his mind, every dauntless protester at the city square, is an inspiration, and suggest that the universal aspiration for liberty is indomitable. It is a source of hope that there will always be people willing to stand up for liberty and to advocate against a foreign policy determined to annihilate a neighboring nation. Moreover, Russian men are not thrilled to be sent to the trenches in the Wild Fields of the Ukrainian plains, even though they are protesting more against mobilization than against the war per se. In either case, these are welcome signs of alternative views within Russia and should be supported. They are sparks of new possibilities.

But decades, even generations, of nationalist indoctrination and of popular culture celebrating Russia's valiant stand against the "Western fascists" do take their toll. If the only choices are to protest, to emigrate, or to obey stoically, it seems most will choose the last option. Protesting has minimal effectiveness, and is not widespread outside of the main urban areas. Emigration, while visually striking via photographs of long queues at Russian border crossings, is exceedingly difficult for the vast majority of the Russian population having no capital to take with them, no skills to sell abroad, and no prior connections in foreign countries.[16]

Contrary to much of Western grand strategy that assumes that in rival countries such as Russia, the options to "exit" and to "voice" surpass "loyalty" (to use Albert Hirschman's terms), more often than not those citizens are not willing or able to protest or to leave. Nor are external inducements for either option, offered in hopes of creating pressure on the ruling regime to alter its policies lest they cause a costly rebellion or a social and economic degradation, very successful in this regard. Furthermore, such external efforts to encourage "exit" and "voice," are frequently seen by the targeted nations as foreign interference, thus generating a domestic reaction favoring "loyalty" in defense of national prestige and leadership. As a result, the anti-Western attitude, combined with the willingness to use force domestically and internationally, is prolonged.

Again, it does not follow that because a nation's culture is corrupt there is a collective guilt. The Russian people writ large are not responsible for the particular massacres in Bucha or the torture chambers in Izyum. Individual Russian soldiers and their

commanders bear that criminal responsibility. Similarly, genocidal polices against the Uighur ethnic minority in China are not a national responsibility but the product of decisions by specific leaders. However, simply because there is a distinction in moral responsibility between the authorship of individual decisions and the source of the state's general direction (or grand strategy) does not mean that the two are opposed: While the nation as such is not committing criminal acts of great brutality, it may support and justify the broad posture toward the targeted group or country.

Generational indoctrination, daily propaganda, and willful ignorance often result in a people's refusal to accept evidence, sometimes even in deliberate post hoc justification of violence. In other words, a corruption in national mores does not equate with direct responsibility, but it also does not portend well for any dramatic reversal in the nation's strategy and politics.

If a geopolitical rival is hostile not simply because of a transient leader or party in power then, but because of deeper enmity inscribed in its national culture and ideas, what does it mean for U.S. policy? What is the right response?

The recognition that there are serious limits to what the United States and its allies can do to alter the sources of their great power rivals' aggressiveness must be the starting point. There must be the recognition that the rivalry is not a product of a personality conflict or an antagonism between divergent domestic regimes, but that it has deeper roots. It is therefore a long rivalry. It is a problem that cannot be solved through the application of the "right" techniques of regime or through a leadership change; it is a condition that must be managed patiently and prudently.

Accordingly, it would be a mistake to base a grand strategy on the expectation that, with a few tweaks to leadership and domestic political institutions, such rivals would automatically convert into harmonious and calm states. If it is the society that is corrupt, the changes needed to restore it require years and decades of efforts, are mostly indigenous, and oftentimes, are associated with a massive crisis (such as a dramatic military defeat, foreign occupation, or economic wreckage). The ills of a polity "cannot be reduced to some poor organization of the city."[17] The correct approach is therefore to deter and, if that fails, to defeat the rival's military expeditions of conquest (such as Russia in Ukraine)—not to expect its swift transfiguration into a benign polity.

Recent history can teach the wrong lessons about this. The end of the Cold War in Europe, when several countries from the Baltic to the Black Sea shed their Communist regimes and rejoined the democratic and free world, was in fact unique and may not be repeatable in Russia or China. The 1989 changes in Central Europe were restorations rather than revolutions: they were rejections of a foreign imposed regime. Despite the extreme violence and oppression used, those imposed regimes had not succeeded in fundamentally altering the mores of these nations, in general. These latter survived

because supported by church authorities, intellectual centers, and underground opposition (all partly aided, but not created, by various Western government and non-governmental institutions). Even then the transition to self-government and liberty was difficult, with economic corruption and the absence of accountability. Even so, it remains dangerously naïve to expect analogous dynamics to occur in other countries such as Russia or China, because there the authoritarian regime has not been imposed from abroad. Furthermore, there, the reigning regime has succeeded in coopting church authorities and many intellectuals, while large portions of the population view it as a bulwark against decadent and aggressive foreign cultural aggression.

Cultures can change, of course. But they are slow-moving animals.[18] Change in the national mores requires literally generational change: old people to be replaced by young ones with a different mentality, such as is arguably happening in South Korea. The future of a nation is largely predicated on its educational system—what is instilled in the new generation, the history it is taught, and the myths that it repeatedly hears.

Thus in theory, a grand strategy to deal with such rivals ought to aim at the hearts and minds of those not yet born, rather than of those who are presently inimical to us. Whether we can actually conduct such a grand strategy, requiring long-term patience, even intragenerational consistency, is much in doubt. Should we even possess the necessary persistence, a foreign micromanaging of cultural change within a country is likely to be ineffective, even counterproductive. In this sense the Cold War lessons of the Soviet domination of Central Europe are instructive: intense Communist efforts to create a "new man," and to alter the national characters of the subjugated nations ultimately failed because they came from without, imposed by a Muscovite power.

Moreover, while change is possible, it is not inevitable that a corrupt national culture will ameliorate. It can have moments of improvement and sparks of benign energy. It can witness feats of great courage and noble virtue. But cultures can degrade as much improve. The path of progress that channels national cultures toward a domestic structure of ordered liberty and a foreign policy of prudent diplomacy is never preordained.

What foreign attempts to change a national culture can do is to elevate this or that voice, or to empower a particular artist or school curriculum—but only on the margins. The most effective source of change arises from within, and often from the realization that the political path taken by the state, fed by the nation and nourished by its culture, was devastating. A military defeat or a dramatic economic crisis have proven to be the more powerful catalysts of change. The great Franco-German friendship that provided the seed for the European Union was possible because of the decades of wars ending in 1945, and the mutual devastation of both nations. Similarly, the ongoing Russian eastward aggression and the resulting sense of urgent fear permeating Ukraine and its Western neighbors is resulting in a surprising amity between Poles and Ukrainians,

potentially removing or at least mitigating the animosity born out of old violence in this frontier land. These conciliations are the products of more than just cold strategic calculations; they are fruits of a cultural change sparked by crisis and initiated from the bottom up of society.

Finally, any profit from encouraging indigenous criticism of a rival's foreign policy is limited. Most people after all are concerned about their immediate lives, defined by domestic politics, economic conditions, and the arbitrary rapaciousness of state authorities. They may actually approve of a proto-imperial foreign policy promising national grandeur. As Aaron Friedberg suggests in relation to China, U.S. efforts should therefore amplify critical Chinese voices and increase the availability of accurate information about official corruption, environmental pollution, poor working conditions, unfair treatment of ordinary citizens, rural poverty, income inequality, government mismanagement, wasteful overseas investments, and the Party's ongoing attempts to whitewash its own history.[19]

The political behavior of many states is not easily malleable precisely because its roots are embedded in the culture, the customs and the beliefs, of the people. The leadership can always be removed and the political institutions altered, but the mores will remain. The former can be shaped relatively quickly through the application of power: a new leader can be installed and new institutions created. The latter, however, are more resistant to especially foreign power. At a minimum, it takes time to modify the culture of a people. With enough persistence and time, the state apparatus can change a nation's views and mores, especially when supported by religious and corporate entities. But it can do so only within the limits imposed by history and by other domestic bodies (local authorities, other religious groups, independent schools and intellectual centers) and over the long run.[20]

The "FDR Illusion": Transformation by Higher Institutions

The logic behind the illusion of any systemic benefits of toppling a bad political leader is related to the logic of a second foreign policy illusion: that international organizations or rules can have an impact on states analogous to how a rearrangement of domestic social dynamics can produce a new and improved state-level regime. In brief, the illusion is that states, regardless of their power or particular nature, will behave in a more peaceful and harmonious way if only they are corralled by international organizations. As domestic regimes can channel the behavior of individuals, so these higher entities are expected to channel states toward more benign actions, characterized by international cooperation, participation in a global interconnected society, and the advancement of

progressive social goals. This is the international corollary of the modern belief in top-down creative power.

Realists often accuse liberals that they naively ignore power, placing their faith in norms, in the ordering capacity of multilateral agreements, and in the gradual abandonment of military power as a tool of statecraft. The accusation is not entirely correct: Because they consider top-down power to be the most effective and progressive, liberals do not reject power per se. They also believe that order is created through power imposed from above, by a select few states in conjunction with institutions, which establish the rules that build an "international mutual-aid society."[21] President Franklin D. Roosevelt would refer to a "family circle" of the great powers, which in 1943, made up the wartime coalition, and which were expected to found the institutions to manage world politics in the aftermath of the conflict.[22]

The expectation is that such an order being in place, it will be universally attractive while simultaneously being resistant to revolutionary change. Having a life of its own, it exercises influence over its members, who are incapable of altering or destroying it even if they may have reactionary moments of rebellious nationalism or selfish mercantilism. This international order, so the argument goes, sustained by international organizations, regulated by rules of accepted political and economic behavior, and advancing progressive rights and notions of justice, has authority over states, and can successfully pressure them to follow the path of modernization and democratization.[23] Just as domestic regimes do not necessarily make people saints but turn their actions holy, so international organizations do not immediately transform states into freedom-loving polities but make them behave as harmonious members of a society.[24]

Two important consequences flow out of this view: First, conflict arises about the proper sequence of policies; second, alliances become denigrated.

As regards the first consequence: If international organizations and global governance (norms, rules, laws) eclipse national and local politics because a more lasting world order can arise through states submitting to a higher authority, then the primary objective of diplomacy is to bring ever more states under the pacifying umbrella of those international institutions and norm-creating structures. Political decisions must then be transferred away from being determined by or held accountable to the populations of individual nations to the supranational entities, because these latter, based on scientific expertise, are deemed more efficient. Consequently, what matters most is participation in international organizations rather than any domestic regime or nature of the states joining. Their participation in these higher entities will mold the member states. The result is a contradiction in the liberal worldview.

On the one hand, the "FDR illusion" privileges a top-down causation of international order. The existence of an international organization, such as the UN or the World

Trade Organization—or on a regional level, the EU—precedes in importance the democratic nature of the states. Hence, membership in an international organization is the more pressing need that a democratic domestic regime. The former supposedly has the power to shape the latter (or at least, to alter the behavior of its members). Consequently, the primary foreign policy goal becomes to coax states, including authoritarian rivals, to join the international institution or agreement because *ipso facto* their behavior will improve, bending ever more toward universal harmony. The belief is that the power emanating from the international entity is such that its members will converge in their external behavior at least, if not in their domestic politics ultimately. This worldview reverses the Kantian sequence: instead of demanding from states to become democracies first, it requests participation first in the international institutions, with the expectation of a later behavioral change. Hence, FDR could hope that, after World War II, as a member of the UN the USSR would be constrained in its actions and would converge in a more harmonious relationship with the other powers. A similar logic characterized the 2001 incorporation of China into the WTO: once a member of the international body, Beijing would be channeled toward a more responsible behavior, by virtue of the rules and benefits that came with membership.

A contradictory view is the Kantian one. Kant, and the intellectual tradition his arguments birthed, suggests that democratic republics are more peaceful especially toward each other. Hence, in building a well-ordered international arrangement, it is preferable to found it upon democracies. Subsequently, the condition to join the EU as well as NATO (two very different international groupings), is that the candidate state be a democracy, with separation of power, the rule of law, and civil control of the military. To enter into the EU or NATO, applicants must *first* alter their laws, institutions, and civil-military relations. Such organizations do and did change states through the promise of joining them: A state must become a democracy before it can join. This sequence is based on the recognition that larger international alignments, whether security alliances or supranational political entities, are not effective at shaping the domestic regimes and internal political decisions of its member states; also, that they function more effectively if the member states are democratic.

The problem facing the European Union can be reduced to this contradiction: While the EU accepts only democracies as its members, thereby accepting the primacy of the states and the legitimacy deriving from the individual nations, the EU has a powerful tendency to impose EU-wide mandates through rules that trump national constitutions and laws. It accepts the authority of individual nations, but is in constant search of a European demos of its own.

The ancillary consequence of this contradiction manifests in the understanding of the sources of legitimacy. The modern intellectual revolution placed legitimacy in the people, marking a revolution from the Christian age where legitimacy and authority came from God or from respecting natural law and a hierarchical order of things. The

postmodern revolution places the source of legitimacy in the supranational international agreement, with legitimacy deriving from being a responsible participant in the international institution. This means abiding by rules and principles that experts have decided upon—those with the most advanced knowledge of progressive values, that are considered universal (or at least universal within that particular international institution). What began as a rebellion against divine mandates and had empowered the demos with the authority to decide right and wrong now ends with the acceptance of a universal mantel of values decided and altered by a few.

Because they do not reflect a higher (metaphysical) objective and an unchanging order, progressive purposes and rules are not fixed in time. They change constantly, forever moving toward what is alleged to be an improvement of the human condition.[25] Being unmoored from an objective reality, however, they must be established by somebody who can claim to have the necessary knowledge. As Alisdair MacIntyre has pointed out, experts (who are always few because true expertise is narrow) replace virtuous men, who can be many and who should inspire imitation by all.[26]

This gives further impetus to the worldview that privileges the formative role of international organizations and arrangements: As the natural domain of experts, they can be severed from the messiness of electoral dynamics, freeing them to formulate objectives and rules according to the latest theory.[27] Woodrow Wilson was a passionate advocate for such rule by experts, trained in the special science of administration, separated from the messy and imperfect pull and take of democratic politics.[28] Similarly, management by international rules formulated and implemented by experts are allegedly more scientific and thus ought to eclipse local politics.[29]

Current dynamics within the EU—in particular tensions between EU institutions and countries such as Hungary and Poland—offer a regional glimpse of that tendency to elevate changing international rules (or "values") above the decisions of national legislatures and statesmen. Only by abiding within the parameters established by the international institutions can states gain legitimacy, and not through electorally-determined policies, national culture and traditions, and religious beliefs.

As regards the second consequence: a certain denigration of alliances naturally flows from the view that international order is best created and managed by international rules and institutions. FDR sought to distance himself from Churchill, fearing that the perception of a close alliance between the United States and Great Britain would negatively impact his relationship with Stalin. Hoping that the USSR would behave better once in the UN, FDR was willing to postpone hard negotiations with Moscow in order to have this rival in the UN's founding. As Truman articulated in a speech praising the UN, "you have won a victory against war itself… This new structure of peace is rising upon strong foundations. Let us not fail to grasp this supreme chance to establish a world-wide rule of reason."[30]

A policy of strategic equidistance can only make sense if the guiding principle is to erect an international set of rules and institutions, accepted by friends and rivals alike, through which order can then be established and managed. Alliances can be hindrances in such a pursuit—they can create favoritisms rather than equal partnerships. FDR wanted to establish a permanent peace through the partnership of four (or five if France was added) nations (the United States, the UK, Russia, China), who would act as the "policemen" of the world. He acknowledged the realities of power, however; namely, that no great state, including the United States, would consent to give full control over geopolitical dynamics to an international organization. Such an organization in any case could never act as a unified entity. Accordingly, the main powers had to be the agents of implementation. FDR's idea was thus to put global partners in charge of global politics, rather than to support particular allies in search of beneficial equipoise. Partnerships, in this view, transcend alliances.

But this gets the causation of order wrong. It assumes that international institutions are the creators of order rather than being mere creatures of states. The result is twofold. First, these international bodies become the battlefield of a new competition rather than the managers of state behavior (as with the UN's Human Rights Council). Second, this only postpones the inevitable clash with rivals, by concealing the comforting expectation that the joint membership will result in convergence and harmonization of behavior.

The danger of this illusion about the ability of international organizations to alter the very essence of a state through mere participation, therefore, is that it assuages fears of competition. The believer is lulled into a false sense of complacency that hampers any preparations for conflict. Meanwhile, the enemy continues to plan.

THE "PEACE THROUGH WEALTH" ILLUSION: THE FALLACY OF ECONOMIC PRIMACY

The legalism of international institutions parallels the economism of the "peace through wealth" argument. This third illusion arises out of an overly confident belief in the primacy of economic interests. Instead of a structure of institutional processes and rules erecting an order, in this worldview, economic interests of the various actors—individuals and states—can be corralled, expanding international harmony. The legal and institutional order examined earlier can complement such an economic order, but it carries a logic of its own.

The faith in the ability of economic logic to overcome the logic of politics is a peculiarly modern, materialistic one. While the latter privileges relative gains and seeks the advancement of the common good of a group, the former celebrates absolute gains that

ought to lower the impetus to enter into conflict with others. If economic dynamics take hold, so goes the argument, efficient cooperation will be the outcome.

The foundational idea of this economic-political illusion is that a wealthy society creates pressures toward peace. People like the material comforts that come with wealth; they have a strong interest in improving and maintaining it. Thus well-off societies must have a strong incentive to avoid war—war generally leads to a destruction of wealth, either because of direct devastation or because of the redirection of resources toward frontline combat needs. Guns costs money; artillery barrages destroy property; war wastes the pleasures of wealth. Don't all people choose material comfort over the hardships of war; the promise of rising living standards over the certainty of relative devastation; butter over guns? Accordingly, a developed a middle class, conscious of the material improvements that peace brings, will always seek to steer the state toward policies that prioritize negotiated settlements over conflict, continued commercial relations over an interruption of trade, and peace over war.

The flip side of this idea is that destitution creates fertile ground for conflict.[31] Jealousy, desperation, or even lack of meaningful employment resulting in eagerness for violent adventures, combine in an explosive mix that destabilizes international relations. Poverty breeds war.[32] As the American father of the United Nations, Secretary of State Cordell Hull, wrote in his memoirs after World War II:

> [e]conomic warfare results in a lowering of living standards throughout the world. It foments internal strife. It offers constant temptation to use force, or threat of force, to obtain what could have been got through normal processes of trade.... The basic approach to the problem of peace is the ordering of the world's economic life so that the masses of the people can work and live in reasonable comfort.[33]

Naturally then, low living standards go hand in hand with war; high living standards, allowing people to be in "reasonable comfort," are foundational to peace. The argument ties the level of living standard to the likelihood of war and peace.

Commerce becomes the additional variable that supposedly strengthens international peace, through two mechanisms. First, commerce increases the wealth of the trading partners, reinforcing incentives to avoid conflict. But war interrupts the flow of goods and services, decreasing a principal vehicle of wealth creation and upsetting those who normally benefit from it. War destroys commerce. Even the victorious power's eventual gains from war are highly uncertain; they may fail to compensate for the costs incurred. War therefore carries an enormous opportunity cost for the trading states.

Second, because trading partners are mutually dependent for the good that they cannot or do not want to produce, commerce arguably makes war between the partners more

difficult to conduct. Kant had argued that the natural desire for gain leads men to trade with each other, resulting in a "peaceful relation with one another," and gradually, in "an understanding and the enjoyment of friendly intercourse, even with their most distant neighbours."[34] Commerce creates and strengthens groups that share an interest in a stable geopolitical environment, whose choice of peace over war leads to a growing global commercial community. Furthermore, trade links states, so entangling them as to make war prohibitively costly. Wouldn't any consumer think twice about bringing destruction on his producer, and vice versa?

This interdependence obligates the respective partners to international concord. Any war between them would be a war between consumers and producers, something that makes no sense from an economic point of view. As Montesquieu observed: "Peace is the natural effect of trade. Two nations who traffic with each other become reciprocally dependent; for if one has an interest in buying, the other has an interest in selling; and thus their union is founded on their mutual necessities."[35] Where there is commerce, war becomes more costly than in a state of autarchy, perhaps making it even prohibitively expensive.

In both cases—wealth and trade—large, structural, material dynamics build and maintain international order. These dynamics can be engineered and managed through the application of the science of economics (again, so goes this argument), freeing the human spirit to pursue material fulfillment, which creates an ever-enlarging global zone of peace. This idea has become so pervasive in the modern world that it now permeates even Catholic thought, which since Saint Augustine had been realistic about the perennial presence of war. In the 1965 encyclical *Gaudium et Spes*, Pope Paul VI writes that the "increase of commerce between the various nations and human groups opens more widely to all the treasures of different civilizations and thus little by little, there develops a more universal form of human culture, which better promotes and expresses the unity of the human race to the degree that it preserves the particular aspects of the different civilizations."[36] Little wonder then, that war is increasingly seen as a historical relic relegated to regions lacking advanced commercial relations, where economic scarcity reigns.

Trade and wealth become the transformative forces that bend the course of history toward harmony and peace. Cordell Hull, again, detailed this logic: It is beneficial to enhance international trade because trade makes peace. In his words:

[t]he principles underlying the trade agreements program are therefore an indispensable cornerstone for the edifice of peace… it is a fact that war did not break out between the United States and any country with which we had been able to negotiate a trade agreement. It is also a fact that, with very few exceptions, the countries with which we signed trade agreements joined together in resisting the Axis. The political line-up followed the economic line-up.[37]

An ancillary argument arising out of this worldview is that states become less interested in conquering land proportional to their increases in trade. While in the past it may have been necessary to appropriate territory in order to obtain resources, goods, or a labor force, the expansion of trade arguably enables a cheaper and more efficient acquisition of the same. Conquest becomes unprofitable once the expenditure of required resources is not matched by the benefits of a victory, which in any case is always uncertain. The merchant triumphs over the warrior; the global bazaar trumps imperial occupation. And states alter their nature from "territorial" to "trading."[38]

The primacy of economic interests—or, in Hull's words, of the "economic line-up"—is not just a description of the allegedly dominant materialistic motivations of individuals and states, but also an agenda for action. This line of thinking leads to a belief in the possibility of engineering an international order through an adjustment of the incentives of the political actors, whether individuals or states, and by directing their actions toward a harmonious peace. Instead of a series of institutional processes and international rules (as advocated by the "FDR illusion" that replaces world politics with a legal order), in this scenario it is the economic motivations that principally drive a similar outcome. The science of economics is at the service of international order.

Accordingly, an ever-increasing international trade can build a harmonious order. Given the belief that the more intertwined states become, the less likely they will resort to violence, logically then, it becomes necessary to unleash the transformative power of commerce, and of economic forces more broadly, by lowering the barriers to trade and by drawing in all states, including rivals. Trade is no longer understood to be a glue of an alliance, it metamorphoses enemies into partners. This is a striking change. In the past, commerce was viewed as a tool to strengthen ties between already friendly states, improving their economic welfare and enhancing their mutual interests to defend each other. This for instance was one of the founding ideas behind the post-World War II efforts to solidify a European alliance, beginning from the Franco-German friendship.

At some point, the temptation to elevate commercial relations as more than just a supporting leg of an alliance prevailed: trade became the harmonizing force. Trade became the cause of order. The Western approach to China bears witness to this tenet. The thinking went that engaging China through trade and aiding its economic development would necessarily change its Communist regime, giving rise to a new domestic political structure or at least relaxing its own ideological principles in order to adapt to market forces. Enhanced trading with China, therefore, as with other revisionist powers (e.g., Russia) would alter their incentives, through changes in their societal interests (a peace-loving middle class) and entangling ties between the states (peace-inducing interdependence). That is, the Western assumption was that economic forces would naturally drive the strategic postures of these states toward harmony.

Hence, China was encouraged to join the WTO and not to change its domestic regime. Membership in the WTO would do that work effortlessly—a growing commercial interdependence would de facto convert a Communist dictatorship into a geopolitical actor committed to maintaining the international order. China would automatically understand it was in its own best interest to become a "responsible stakeholder."[39] Western policy, in other words, was based on a bet that participation in global trade would overcome ideological differences and political rivalries. That bet proved wrong.

Conversely, the historic changes in Europe in the 1990s proved to have the right sequence: Central European countries that shed Soviet domination changed their domestic regimes first and only later joined a free-trade zone such as the European Union (and this in 2004, fifteen years after the 1989 revolutions). The sequence indicates a fundamentally different understanding of the causal mechanism of international politics. An international order of harmonious relations was possible because states had already become democratic, rule-abiding, and interested in developing and maintaining peaceful relations with their neighbors (or, to be specific, with the other EU members). Certainly, they also expected to become wealthy from economic cooperation with the EU, but they were not seeking to dominate or upset the order they were joining. They shed their Soviet systems to be allowed into a common market; politics came first, trade second.

In part, the source of this mistaken faith in the power of trade may be due to the differences between how the USSR and China approached global commerce. The USSR chose not to join the IMF and the World Bank and consequently was not invited to participate in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1947. The Soviet approach was to push for self-sufficiency (autarky really), and not to lower barriers to trade. Only in 1986, with leadership changes in the Kremlin did the USSR apply to join the Uruguay Round negotiations of GATT, and in 1990, it was granted observer status in expectation of a liberalization of trade. The Soviet reluctance to participate in the great 20th century liberalization of international trade was in retrospect a clear mistake, as the economies of the Kremlin-ruled states rapidly fell behind those of the Western states.

Not only did the Soviet empire not achieve autarky, but also it destroyed its economic foundations. China, notably, is not repeating this mistake. In no way does this mean that Beijing has more benign aspirations—only that it considers the Soviet avoidance of global trade as one of the causes of the USSR's demise. That China has accepted the transformative power of trade and is adapting accordingly is therefore an erroneous conclusion. On the contrary, the lesson that China appears to have drawn is that an authoritarian regime is better off when it participates in global trade, deriving all the attenuating material benefits without having to adjust its ideological tenets or to liberalize its domestic control.

The trouble with the belief in the primacy of economics is that it is based on the wrong causation. Wealth and trade are not the causes, but the products of peace.[40] They are also correlated to peace: it is easier to become wealthy when not under an artillery barrage, and to prosper from commerce when trade routes are open and secure. But the danger of basing policy on this mistaken causation—wealth/trade *ergo* peace—is that we expect highly unrealistic outcomes, ultimately undermining the security of the state. This is a costly intellectual mistake.

Three sets of risks arise out of this fallacy.

First, people like wealth but often not as an end in itself. In fact, men and states work hard to become wealthy not to be at peace but to win against an enemy. They seek wealth not to enjoy it but to prevail over you. Wealth is thus a means to an end, that is not necessarily defined by economic calculations but rather by motivations born out of the political nature and aspirations of the state or group. A wealthy China deeply enmeshed in global commerce, for instance, is not automatically a peaceful China with no aspirations to extend its authoritarian reach abroad or to expand its territorial and maritime possessions.

Similarly, historically, commercial republics such as Venice did not always seek peaceful relations with its rivals, such as Genoa or the Ottoman empire. On the contrary, it was willing to incur commercial losses in order to inflict defeat on the enemy. While they may be neither popular nor welcome as respectable policies, mercantilist theories describe well what frequently occurs. As Jacob Viner has put it, "plague, war, famine, harvest failure, in a neighboring country was of economic advantage to your own country."[41] Mercantilists thought that wealth was necessary for power and that power was necessary to acquire and keep wealth. "[T]here is long-run harmony between these ends, although in particular circumstances it may be necessary for a time to make economic sacrifices in the interest of military security and therefore also of long-run prosperity."[42] It is political calculations, whether seeking domination over others to achieve imperial glory or for a sense of security, that trump economic ones (cooperation with others in order to augment reciprocal wealth).

It turns out that states often engage in trade not to enjoy international harmony, but to become wealthy and more competitive. Russia with Europe since Peter the Great, the USSR with the West during the Cold War, and China with the United States in the 21st century are all examples of states pursuing trade to accrue advantages over their commercial partner. This often takes the form of acquiring new technologies, saving on the research and development costs, or of rendering the trading counterpart dependent on a product or resource and hence vulnerable to pressure. Neither the goal pursued nor the unintended consequence of trade was peace. Not surprisingly, trade for most states is a tool to advance their national interest, narrowly conceived as the improvement of their own relative position. It is not conceived of as a tool through which to ameliorate

the global geopolitical environment. As in the case of the Soviet Union, "the purpose of imports [was] to make imports unnecessary."[43]

Trade alone is incapable of changing politics. The liberal faith in the transformative power of economics, and of trade in particular, is an unrealistic faith that can only end in disappointment. Not only might trade not alter the political nature of states, but it may actually increase incentives to build military power, resulting in ever more assertive foreign policies and even greater rivalries. Numerous great powers in history that engaged in trade—and that grew economically because of it—developed large power projection capabilities, most often navies (given that the most valuable commercial goods were seaborne).

Their goal was to protect not trade per se but their own ability to control trade, and to have continued access to markets and goods. Interdependence thus does not guarantee to states their independence, which is the power to act freely in the best interest of the respective nation without constraints imposed by other powers. Venice in the 11th century, Britain in the 17th century, Germany and the United States at the end of the 19th century, and China in the 21st are all examples of states that have sought to strengthen their commerce with powerful navies. As they've become more enmeshed in international trade, with their economic welfare and growth more dependent on distant markets and on the connecting sea lanes, they've felt the necessity to develop capabilities to protect the highways of commerce. With trade, that is, comes the incentive, driven by fear, to have exclusive control over the markets and routes.[44]

Second, the belief that economic factors drive politics risks an overreliance on economic levers in foreign policy. Specifically, economic and financial sanctions have become the first tools many Western states adopt in response to a threatening rival. This choice is driven partly by the Western democratic reluctance to use, or even to threaten to use, military forces: It is easier to sanction than to target militarily. Sanctions provide the appearance of serious action at very low cost and risk.[45] But behind sanctions is the recurrent hope that economic pressures suffice to alter the behavior of the enemy, redirecting their behavior toward a more propitious purpose. It is an assumption that pulling the economic levers, or more precisely, depriving other states of commercial and financial benefits, can channel those rival states toward desired outcomes. In cutting off a hostile state from trade, for example, the hope is that such punishment is serious enough to compel behavioral change. Moreover, given that trade is seen as a mutually beneficial enterprise, commercial sanctions arguably also impose some costs on the sanctioning state, increasing its own commitment to the preferred goal. In other words, because sanctions are not cost-free, the belief is that they should enhance the credibility of the sanctioning party.

And yet, sanctions rarely change the political calculus of the targeted states. The United States has had sanctions on Cuba since 1961, on Iran since 1979, and on North Korea

since 1950, all with no tangible strategic effect. While poor and decrepit, these countries continue to be threats. Some have even acquired (North Korea) or are on the path to acquire (Iran) nuclear weapons, the ultimate military capability in world politics. Similarly, current sanctions on Russia, imposed after its 2014 attack on Ukraine and expanded and invigorated after the 2022 renewed invasion, have not diminished Moscow's will or ability to continue a brutal war of aggression on its neighbor. Moscow has clearly not ceased its offensive war, and will not withdraw from occupied lands unless pushed to do so by Ukrainian forces. Sanctions do not stop tanks.[46]

Undoubtedly, there may be some states more vulnerable to economic sanctions than others. Small states with an economy dependent on foreign goods, with tenuous political control over their populations, may be rendered more cooperative by the threat of commercial sanctions. Similarly, states with powerful interest groups whose wealth and influence rests on access to foreign markets and capital may choose compromises over the risk of financial losses. Nevertheless, for large states with a diverse and sizeable economy, the prospect of economic sanctions may not suffice to dissuade them from war and the expected spoils, whether resources and material goods or a sense of prestige and imperial greatness. Generally speaking, however, it is dangerous to hope that a deep antagonism, whether driven by historical resentment, national glory, or ideological conviction—and firmly ingrained in the national culture—will abate simply on the basis of economic, material stimuli.

Third, this leads to the risk of mistaking the veneer of commercial harmony for the political reality of peace. Trade, and the associated wealth arising out of it, can create a situation of mutual benefits, as occurs in any relationship between a consumer and a producer, a buyer and a seller. Conflict too, undoubtedly carries a cost for the commercial state. In the early 15th century, Venice's doge, Tommaso Mocenigo, wrote in his alleged testament that "to make war" was "the devil's trade" (*guerreggiare è il mestiere del diavolo*). Peace made cities "great, multiplying people, palaces, gold, silver, joys, jobs."[47] But such a pean to peace in no way means that Venice, like any other state engaged and dependent on trade, shied away from war. Yes, war destroys. But trade and wealth do not remove the incentives for it.

Despite Mocenigo's criticism of war, Venice never trusted in the transformative power of commerce and it never disarmed. What *is* dangerous is when a state disarms in the belief that growing commerce and wealth transcends the reasons for war. This temptation was present at the birth of the American republic, most notably in the ideas of Thomas Paine. He went so far as to advocate for the "renunciation of all political alliances" because an independent America would be a "free port to serve the commercial interests of all nations."[48] Geography and commerce, not a strong military force, were, in his view, the best guarantees of security. If economic wellbeing through trade is seen as an alternative to the use of military force, the risk is that the state turns

out to be wealthy but quite vulnerable. It may survive, but its independence becomes a function of the decisions of those others who possess military power.

Expecting the ultimate victory of a commercial democratic state in a competition with authoritarian rivals is an ancillary risk of the faith in the primacy of economic forces. The 20th century democratic success in World War II and in the prolonged confrontation with the Soviet empire was never preordained, despite today's prevailing assumptions to the contrary. Especially in regards to Nazi Germany and imperial Japan, which had advanced technological and industrial capabilities, the Western victory was only possible because of the larger size of the Allies combined with the support of Soviet Russia.

Had Berlin and Tokyo not begun the war, it is not clear that either would have disappeared as failed political projects simply because of economic forces at work.[49] Many commercial states in history have suffered defeat. Athens and Carthage were overthrown despite being great commercial states, engaged in complex and vast trade far superior to what their rivals achieved. Western European states during the Cold War, and Europe now, survive because of firm American protection. The lucky streak of the 20th century was thus historically contingent, and largely due to the enormous role played by the United States in putting its power in the defense of democracies and global trade. Ultimately, the science of economics does not reflect the reality of politics and war.

ALTERNATIVES?

Together, these powerful illusions—that a scientific and precise top-down application of military, institutional, and economic power can create order—shape state efforts in ways that ultimately undermine its security. Unbeknownst to those affected by such modern illusions, what results is a veneer of harmony under which conflict brews, rather than true order.

The corrective alternative accepts that true political order arises from, and is most effectively maintained by, the lowest level of community. Nations are not monolithic blocks: human beings are not interchangeable simply; local differences matter. Thus at the national level, this means focusing on strong families and local communities; at the international level, on confident nations with legitimate and accountable rulers. Order is the tranquility that arises from political actors at all levels behaving in the roles proper to them, and with a shared acceptance of the domestic regime or international system's legitimacy. Order remains a fragile development maintained by prudent leadership, not a mechanical product of scientific management.

Three principles—the limits of power; trade-offs of every foreign policy; and the preservation of order—serve as salutary checks on these illusions.

First, the fact that power has limitations crystalizes once one rejects the feasibility of order being easily and effectively imposed from above. This does not mean that we should not employ military power or that we should avoid trade or sanctions, but rather, that we should not expect such actions to produce outcomes that they simply cannot deliver. We can defend ourselves, we can deter the enemy, but we cannot reform a political rival into a partner with the scientific precision of a laboratory experiment. Freed from unrealistic and outsized expectations, the temptation for power to trespass is kept in check. Rather than seeking for ultimate solutions, our focus is to manage tangible problems.[50]

The confines of the application of power in its military, institutional, or economic forms, come into focus particularly when power seeks to impose a global uniformity of behavior. There are serious limits to the extent to which political power can remold particular local cultures, regardless of any effort expended. Consequently, any foreign policy strategy has to understand and respect the "mentalities of localities."[51] This is not moral relativism, an equating of all cultures and values. Some, as mentioned earlier, are corrupt, and must be treated as such. But even corrupt cultures and regimes, however much they are prime targets for change, cannot easily be altered through power. Politics is, after all, the art of the particular, not the science of the abstract.

Accepting a limited scope for the achievements of a top-down imposed power leads to a greater reliance on local nations to establish and keep international order. Both domestic and international orders are in fact best maintained through geopolitical subsidiarity: local actors are often the most effective, albeit not the only actors, to address local problems. Nothing that can be done by the more organic, local, "lower" competent authorities should be done by larger, more complex, centralized organizations or powers. For the United States, this does not imply isolationism but rather the provision of conditions (such as nuclear deterrence, logistical backing, or technological support to maintain an advantage) that allow local states to be the first responders and keepers of their local order. If there is anything that Ukraine's defense against Russia shows, it is that the resolve of locals is more important by far than the resolutions of the UN.

Every political action has trade-offs. This is the second corrective principle. Politics deals with finite resources, requiring prioritization of goals and the prudent employment of means—hence the contentiousness of the annual U.S. budget process. Every action, in any domain (military, economic, or political), inevitably carries an opportunity cost: by acting in one place or on one issue, the power expended there cannot be used elsewhere. Nonetheless, the modern, liberal temptation is to seek universal goals on the cheap, believing that the ultimate objective—harmony and peace

on earth—is the true aspiration of all.[52] This attitude prioritizes letting individuals pursue their shared goal, with a limited and temporary use of military force (e.g., through the removal of a bad leader or regime) or economic power (e.g., through the imposition of costs through sanctions) employed toward such an end. In reality, actions have costs in efforts and limited resources that can be used in multiple, but mutually exclusive, ways.

Recognizing that foreign policy always has trade-offs is not a call for inaction and passivity. Rather, it demands a clear prioritization, which in foreign policy begins from a simple metric: the national security of the nation. The statesman's primary obligation is to the security of the citizens of his state; he *must* have a preferential option for his own. Manpower is precious. And military power, even for the greatest empires in human history, is scarce and not fungible. As a Spanish minister cautioned his emperor, Phillip II, in 1591: "If God had placed Your Majesty under an obligation to remedy all the troubles of the world, He would have given you the money and the strength to do so."[53] The universal protection of universal principles would require universal—that is, infinite—capabilities. But no state has ever had those and consequently, the "world's troubles" are an abstraction beyond the capacity of any one state or even a group of states to solve.

The perennial existence of trade-offs is further related to the fact that any action has often unintended consequences. The successful elimination of a tyrant, for instance, may not necessarily result in a more benign state. The splintering of an empire may not automatically lead to regional harmony of its component parts. The history of the 20th century, not to mention the last twenty years of U.S. foreign policy, are replete with such unintended consequences. This highlights the hard truth that policy is not some Newtonian experiment, or the mere application of scientific knowledge in controlled circumstances, but is the constant pushing and pulling in a competitive environment. With policy, the petri dish is shooting back while the lab is being rocked. Given that there is no linear path of history, politics is the constant management of problems.[54]

Third, the recognition that order cannot be sustainably created from above informs the desire to preserve existing orders that maintain a certain tranquility. The modern illusion tends to favor revolutionary changes, seeking to break apart empires, to provoke regime change, and to engineer new societies. Order, after all, is seen as the easy product of the application of power. But if order is rather the result of organic gradual developments, then a skepticism toward revolutionary changes naturally follows.

Such skepticism, again, does not mean that inaction is always the best posture. It does not advocate for non-resistance to every empire or great power for fear of the consequences, or for acceptance of the stability that they may impose through their domination. It is rather a check on the expectation that every change aiming to ameliorate social conditions will indeed result in a newer, better order. Hence, for

instance, the reality that the historic expansion of democracies in the years after the USSR's collapse —the enlargement era—did peacefully establish a new regional order in Europe, with deep legitimacy and greater liberty. But it does not necessarily follow that a policy to continue such enlargement toward Russia and the Middle East is the best way to enhance Eurasian order today. The age of enlargement ought to be followed by an age of preservation.

Above all, it is imperative to accept that just as reengineering societal foundations will not necessarily create a stable and lasting domestic order, so seeking to convert the world is no recipe for international order. Political order arises out of natural and primordial associations like the family, and the logic that had led to its creation does not end with its birth. Preserving existing associations, from family to religious and civil groups, is the surest way to maintain social order. Their demise requires greater, more costly, and more intrusive state intervention, none of which will ever produce the same ordering effect. Similarly in international relations, no military, economic, or institutional means applied from above or from the outside can establish on its own a sustainable order unless the historically lasting social groupings—nations—want it and maintain that order themselves.

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[1] Louis Dupré, *The Enlightenment and the Intellectual Foundations of Modern Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 337. Dupré elaborates: "The Greeks had conceived of reason as an ordering principle inherent in reality. The mind possesses the unique ability to understand its inner structure and consciously to pursue its immanent designs. Modern thinkers, however, reversed the relations and submitted all reality to the structures of the mind. They imposed the rules of the one science that the mind could indeed claim full authorship of and which depended on no external content, namely, mathematics. The mind thereby acquired an unprecedented control over nature, yet it ceased to be an integral part of it." Dupré, 16.

[2] Henri De Lubac, *The Drama of Atheist Humanism* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 455.

[3] It is plausible that this "top-down" view of order arises out of the modern (and, more specifically, Marxian) elevation of politics over metaphysics. Italian philosopher Augusto Del Noce argued that in the classical and Christian thought man had a necessary relationship with God and a contingent one with society: he was first a person in God's image and then a member of a particular group. With Marx, this is reversed: man is in a necessary relationship with the political entity (the state and society), and everything else is subordinate and even unnecessary. Politics, and technology, then become the principal tool for changing man. Augusto Del Noce, *Il Problema dell'Ateismo* (1964).

[5] If one considers the foundations of the state to be "below," in the natural primordial communities, then subsidiarity is the preferred policy: the most effective way of advancing the wellbeing of the society is at the lowest possible level with the state helping, or at a minimum, not obstructing. The state, that is, can assist but not replace. If, however, state power is the main source of social cohesion and order, then the state can outsource some of its functions to other bodies as a concession. The devolution of power, that is, may be the adopted policy because of efficiency, but it is a grant of the state, not a recognition of the primary importance of lower entities. The state, that is, can bestow functions to lower entities retaining the right to reclaim them. Concession and subsidiarity may in practice look similar (lower-level entities performing tasks at the local level), but they have a very different logic behind them. See Russell Hittinger, "Social Pluralism and the Principle of Solidarity," *American Affairs*, December 2021, at https://americanaffairsjournal.org/2021/12/social-pluralism-and-the-principle-of-subsidiarity/.
[6] Ernest Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals* (New York: Penguin Press, 1994), 100.
[7] Colin Dueck, "The End of the Wilsonian Century?", *The National Interest*, September 2019 at https://nationalinterest.org/feature/end-wilsonian-century-78426.
[8] Nadia Schadlow, *War and the Art of Governance* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2017).
[9] Dupré, *The Enlightenment and the Intellectual Foundations*, 12.
[10] "Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites—in proportion as their love to justice is above their rapacity—in proportion as their soundness and sobriety of understanding is above their vanity and presumption, —in proportion as they are more disposed to listen to the counsels of the wise and good, in preference to the flattery of knaves. Society cannot exist, unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere; and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without." Edmund Burke, *A Letter from Mr. Burke to a Member of the National Assembly* (London, 1791), 68-69, at https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=L1wPAAAAQAAJ&pg=GBS.PP6&hl=en
[11] https://usun.usmission.gov/remarks-by-ambassador-linda-thomas-greenfield-at-the-30th-annual-summit-of-the-national-action-network/
[12] https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/22/world/europe/un-security-council-lavrov-blinken-ukraine-war.html
[13] https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/09/07/my-country-right-or-wrong-russian-public-opinion-on-ukraine-pub-87803
[14] https://www.wsj.com/articles/vladimir-putin-the-patriarchs-altar-boy-kirill-russia-ukraine-war-invasion-theology-orthodox-church-11672345937?st=yekysru8ksdbhic&reflink=article_email_share
[15] Dmitry Adamsky, "Russia Botched Its Early War Propaganda Campaign, but Now It's Doubling Down," *Foreign Policy*, April 30, 2022, at https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/04/30/russia-putin-zampolits-ukraine-propaganda-campaign-war/?tpcc=recirc_latest062921#
[16] It is easy to overestimate the ability of people—say, conscription age men in Russia—to leave the country. The difficulty is less in the geography of the state (e.g., the hostility of neighboring countries that do not want to accept potential deserters) or in the authorities' ability to block the path of escape (e.g., by closing borders, canceling flights, etc.) and more in the possession or not of "movable wealth" by those seeking to exit. Albert Hirschman, expanding on his "exit, voice, and loyalty" argument, noted that the development of such wealth, in the form for instance of capital as opposed to land, had perhaps the effect of being a "salutary restraint on arbitrary government." (Albert Hirschman, "Exit, Voice, and the State,"

World Politics, Vol. 31, No. 1 (October 1978), 99 (90-107)). The threat of capital flight, in fact, could moderate the rapaciousness of state authorities. This forces the state to provide some appeal to those capable of exiting: either more wealth or some other public good. Hirschman noted that such goods can be social justice, democratic liberties but also the state's power and prestige in the world, a "public good that may be enjoyed by all of its citizens, including the most lowly and powerless." (Hirschman, ibid., 105). States, therefore, may specialize in the provision of a particular public good that maintains the people's loyalty. It is plausible that there may be a universally higher public good, valued by all societies equally, giving an advantage to the powers that specialized in them. For instance, democratic liberties in a powerful country could be seen as a more desirable good, draining people from a state that does not provide it to another one that does: "especially in a world of intensive communication networks, citizens of non-hegemonic countries would tend to give a higher rating to the achievements of the leading country than to those of their own." (Hirschman, 106) But it is not certain that people will choose to abandon their country, even if run by an authoritarian regime, because the costs of doing so (loss of job and income, separation from family and community, uncertain welcome abroad, loss of reputation if considered to be a deserter) may easily outweigh the potential benefits (not being oppressed or conscripted). In brief, the "exit" option is not that simple.

[17] Henri De Lubac, *The Drama of Atheist Humanism* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 453.

[18] Edmund Burke was the most eloquent critic of the modern revolutionary expectation that an imposition of a rationalist design by a new leader or a regime would change the national reality. Revolutionary France, for instance, "boasted that the geometrical policy has been adopted, that all local ideas should be sunk, and that the people should no longer be Gascons, Picards, Bretons, Normans, but Frenchmen, with one country, one heart, and one assembly. But instead of being all Frenchmen, the greater likelihood is, that the inhabitants of that region will shortly have no country. No man was ever attached by a sense of pride, partiality, or real affection to a description of square measurement. He will never glory in belonging to the Checquer, No 71, or to any other badge-ticket. We begin our public affections in our families." Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (New York: Penguin, 1986), p. 314-5.

[19] Aaron Friedberg, *Getting China Wrong*, p. 194.

[20] "Nations are in general very tenacious of their customs; to take them away by violence is to render them unhappy: we should not therefore change them, but engage the people to make the change themselves." Baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws* (New York: The Colonial Press, 1899), Book XIX, 299.

[21] G. John Ikenberry, "The Future of the Liberal World Order: Internationalism After America," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 90, No. 3 (May/June 2011), 61.

[22] Warren F. Kimball, *The Juggler* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 83-4.

[23] One of the reasons why a liberal word order is likely to remain in place is that there are powerful "internationalist-oriented elites in Brazil, China, India, and elsewhere [that] are growing in influence within their societies, creating an expanding global constituency for an open and rule-based international order." These elites were not party to the grand bargains that lay behind the founding of the liberal order in the early postwar decades… [but] they are nonetheless embracing the rules and institutions of the old order" because they want the national and global legitimacy and authority that is expected from following these international rules. Ikenberry, ibid., 63.

[24] In an address critical of FDR, Senator Robert Taft sarcastically said that "our policy seems to have been based on the delightful theory that Mr. Stalin in the end will turn out to have an angelic nature and do of his own accord the things which we should have insisted upon at the beginning." Speech of May, 10, 1944, in *Appendix to the Congressional Record*, Vol. 90, Part 9 (March 24, 1944 to June 12, 1944) (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944), A2292.

[25] The liberal order "is expected to move its inhabitants and their societies … in a progressive direction… The liberal international order is not static. Societies that are part of this order are constantly developing, advancing, and backsliding." G. John Ikenberry, *A World Safe for Democracy* (Yale University Press, 2020), 18; 40-42.

[26] Alasdair Macintyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1981).

[27] The problem is that theories, by their very nature, are mutable, changing as the assumptions are altered and as evidence disproves them. Hence, in a nod to the need for a more stable footing, the current trend is to advocate for "data driven" or "evidence based" policies, where the evidence is seen as a check on theories, a search for immutable or slow to change facts as opposed to fluid theoretical claims. But evidence in itself carries no judgment of its own value. For instance, there may be evidence that trade among countries has increased over the last century or that commerce enriches the trading partners, but in these facts there is nothing to indicate whether trade ought to be advocated and encouraged. Evidence, that is, cannot provide its own policy preferences.

[28] "[T]the many, the people, who are sovereign have no single ear which one can approach, and are selfish, ignorant, timid, stubborn, or foolish with the selfishnesses, the ignorances, the stubbornnesses, the timidities, or the follies of several thousand persons, - albeit there are hundreds who are wise." Woodrow Wilson, "The Study of Administration," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (June 1887), 208.

[29] Moreover, such experts, or elites, present in these international institutions but also in each country, then have a strong incentive to maintain the existing liberal order. While they may have been not present at the creation of these institutions and the resulting order, these "internationalist-oriented elites" are "embracing the rules and institutions of the old order…. they want to use the rules and institutions of liberal internationalism as platforms to project their influence and acquire legitimacy at home and abroad." G. John Ikenberry, "The Future of the Liberal World Order: Internationalism after America," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 90, No. 3 (May/June 2011), 63.

[30] Online at https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-san-francisco-the-closing-session-the-united-nations-conference.

[31] See also Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1944 State of the Union Address, in which he listed several "economic rights" based on the argument that "We have come to a clear realization of the fact that true individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence. "Necessitous men are not free men." People who are hungry and out of a job are the stuff of which dictatorships are made." Online at https://www.fdrlibrary.org/documents/356632/390886/state_union.pdf/24347bb7-fd01-4011-ba52-e5f0e3b9ea42

[32] There is a difference, however, between poverty derived from oppression and slavery and one arising out of simply not knowing the comforts of life. The former is a source of inaction; the latter spurs people to seek commerce. As Montesquieu points out, people in cities such as Tyre or Venice were poor but free, as they sought refuge in inhospitable lands or islands from the political violence. "It was necessary that

they should subsist; they drew, therefore, their subsistence from all parts of the world." Montesquieu, *Laws*, Book XX, 319.
[33] Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1948), Vol. 1, 364.
[34] Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, supplement.
[35] Montesquieu, *Laws,* Book XX, 316.
[36] Pope Paul VI, *Gaudium et spes* (December 1965), #54, online at https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.
[37] Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1948), Vol. 1, 364-365.
[38] Richard Rosencrance, *The Rise of the Trading State* (New York: Basic Books, 1986). For a contrarian view, see Peter Liberman, *Does Conquest Pay?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).
[39] Online at https://2001-2009.state.gov/s/d/former/zoellick/rem/53682.htm.
[40] See also, Geoffrey Blainey, Chapter Two in *The Causes of War* (New York: The Free Press, 1973), 18-32.
[41] Jacob Viner, "Power Versus Plenty as Objectives of Foreign Policy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *World Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (October 1948), 9.
[42] Viner, 10.
[43] Alvin Z. Rubinstein, "Soviet Policy in Ecafe: A Case Study of Soviet Behavior in International Economic Organization," International Organization, Autumn, 1958, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Autumn, 1958), 471.
[44] There is a dichotomy between the liberal faith in economic interdependence and the realist fear of vulnerability and dependence. These two positions may be too stark and idealized, of course. The most interesting compromise is done by Dale Copeland who tries to blend these two worldviews by arguing that states go to war if their future trade expectations are low. The fear of not having sufficient access to necessary materials and goods in the future leads states to be more belligerent and seek to guarantee trade through force. If, on the other hand, future expectations are good, promising an increase in trade and greater access to strategically important goods, then war is less likely because there is no perceived need to use resources to fight for something that can be easily accessible on the market. Dale Copeland, *Economic Interdependence and War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).
[45] Nicholas Mulder, *The Economic Weapon: The Rise of Sanctions as a Tool of Modern War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022).
[46] The ineffectiveness of sanctions, however, has not decreased the frequency of their use. The main reason is that sanctions constitute an action with limited liability. They satisfy domestic pressure to act in response to some egregious violation of rights or rules, but without the costs and risks associated with military force.
[47] Giuseppe Gullino, "Le frontiere navali" in Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci, eds., *Storia di Venezia*, IV: Il Rinascimento, Politica e Cultura (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1996), 39.
[48] Felix Gilbert, *To the Farewell Address* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 3.
[49] Azar Gat, "The Return of Authoritarian Powers," *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 86, No. 4 (July-August 2007), 59-69.
[50] It is interesting that one of the favorite metaphors of the American writers before the Revolution was that of a trespassing power. "Most commonly the discussion of power centered on its essential characteristic of aggressiveness: its endlessly propulsive tendency to expand itself beyond legitimate boundaries. In expressing this central thought, which explained more of politics, past and present, to

them than any other single consideration, the writers of the time outdid themselves in verbal ingenuity. All sorts of metaphors, similes, and analogies were used to express this view of power. The image most commonly used was that of the act of trespassing. Power, it was said over and over again, has "an encroaching nature"; ". . . if at first it meets with no control [it] creeps by degrees and quick subdues the whole." Sometimes the image is of the human hand, "the hand of power," reaching out to clutch and to seize: power is "grasping" and "tenacious" in its nature; "what it seizes it will retain." Sometimes power "is like the ocean, not easily admitting limits to be fixed in it." Sometimes it is "like a cancer, it eats faster and faster every hour." Sometimes it is motion, desire, and appetite all at once, being "restless, aspiring, and insatiable." Sometimes it is like "jaws . . . always opened to devour."" Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967, 1977 edition), 56.

[51] This is a phrase by James Kurth, cited, for example, in Walter A. McDougall, "Art of the Doge?", Foreign Policy Research Institute, January 9, 2017, https://www.fpri.org/article/2017/01/art-of- the-doge-2/.

[52] On the tradition of seeking sweeping objectives on the cheap, see Colin Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[53] Quoted in Geoffrey Parker, "The making of strategy in Habsburg Spain: Philip II's 'bid for mastery,' 1556-1598," in Williamson Murray et al., eds., *The Making of Strategy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 149.

[54] A successful policy, which achieves the goal it set out to pursue, can never resolve the human problem, which is beyond politics.