### 1

#### Business confidence is strong, driving US economic recovery.

Halloran ’9-14 [Michael; 2021; M.B.A. from Carnegie Mellon University, former aerospace research engineer, Equity Strategist; Janney, “Despite Potential Headwinds, Key Labor Market Indicators Bode Well for the Economy,” https://www.janney.com/latest-articles-commentary/all-insights/insights/2021/09/14/despite-potential-headwinds-key-labor-market-indicators-bode-well-for-the-economy]

However, we remain encouraged by the recovery that has been unfolding since the economy began reopening. We continue to see improvement in important cyclical sectors of the economy while consumers are historically healthy and still have pent-up demand. Business confidence has rebounded with strong corporate profits that should support further capital spending and hiring (there are now more job openings than there are unemployed people by a record amount).

We expect to see further improvement in the international backdrop, supported by unprecedented fiscal and monetary stimulus and accelerating rates of vaccination. Although the impact of the Delta wave is still being felt, recent evidence confirms the effectiveness of vaccines in limiting deaths and hospitalizations. With the pace of vaccination now picking up in the areas most impacted by this wave—Asia and Australia—the case for fading headwinds leading to improving economic growth later this year remains positive.

The signals from financial markets themselves remain positive. Despite consolidating last week, stocks remain near record highs while the 10-year Treasury remains well above the lows of earlier this summer when concerns about Delta first emerged.

These factors support our view of a durable economic recovery from the pandemic that should continue supporting stock prices. A healthy labor market is a critical element for a sustainable recovery that supports profit growth and last week’s news from the labor market remains encouraging.

#### A wave of violent strikes that oppose the state dooms recovery.

Mlungisi Tenza 20, LLB LLM LLD Senior Lecturer, University of KwaZulu-Natal. Based on a paper presented at the Nelson Mandela University Labour Law Conference on “Labour Dispute Resolution, Substantive Labour Law and Social Justice Developments in South Africa, Mauritius and Beyond” from 19–21 July 2019 in Mauritius. “THE EFFECTS OF VIOLENT STRIKES ON THE ECONOMY OF A DEVELOPING COUNTRY: A CASE OF SOUTH AFRICA” <http://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/obiter/v41n3/04.pdf> brett

Economic growth is one of the most important pillars of a state. Most developing states put in place measures that enhance or speed-up the economic growth of their countries. It is believed that if the economy of a country is stable, the lives of the people improve with available resources being shared among the country’s inhabitants or citizens. However, it becomes difficult when the growth of the economy is hampered by the exercise of one or more of the constitutionally entrenched rights such as the right to strike. 1 Strikes in South Africa are becoming more common, and this affects businesses, employees and their families, and eventually, the economy. It becomes more dangerous for the economy and society at large if strikes are accompanied by violence causing damage to property and injury to people. The duration of strikes poses a problem for the economy of a developing country like South Africa. South Africa is rich in mineral resources, the world’s largest producer of platinum and chrome, the secondlargest producer of zirconium and the third-largest exporter of coal. It also has the largest economy in Africa, both in terms of industrial capacity and gross domestic product (GDP).2 However, these economic advantages have been affected by protracted and violent strikes.3 For example, in the platinum industries, labour stoppages since 2012 have cost the sector approximately R18 billion lost in revenue and 900 000 oz in lost output. The five-monthlong strike in early 2014 at Impala Platinum Mine amounted to a loss of about R400 million a day in revenue.4 The question that this article attempts to address is how violent strikes and their duration affect the growth of the economy in a developing country like South Africa. It also addresses the question of whether there is a need to change the policies regulating industrial action in South Africa to make them more favourable to economic growth.

2 BACKGROUND

When South Africa obtained democracy in 1994, there was a dream of a better country with a new vision for industrial relations.5 However, the number of violent strikes that have bedevilled this country in recent years seems to have shattered-down the aspirations of a better South Africa. South Africa recorded 114 strikes in 2013 and 88 strikes in 2014, which cost the country about R6.1 billion according to the Department of Labour.6 The impact of these strikes has been hugely felt by the mining sector, particularly the platinum industry. The biggest strike took place in the platinum sector where about 70 000 mineworkers’ downed tools for better wages. Three major platinum producers (Impala, Anglo American and Lonmin Platinum Mines) were affected. The strike started on 23 January 2014 and ended on 25 June 2014. Business Day reported that “the five-month-long strike in the platinum sector pushed the economy to the brink of recession”. 7 This strike was closely followed by a four-week strike in the metal and engineering sector. All these strikes (and those not mentioned here) were characterised with violence accompanied by damage to property, intimidation, assault and sometimes the killing of people. Statistics from the metal and engineering sector showed that about 246 cases of intimidation were reported, 50 violent incidents occurred, and 85 cases of vandalism were recorded.8 Large-scale unemployment, soaring poverty levels and the dramatic income inequality that characterise the South African labour market provide a broad explanation for strike violence.9 While participating in a strike, workers’ stress levels leave them feeling frustrated at their seeming powerlessness, which in turn provokes further violent behaviour.10

These strikes are not only violent but take long to resolve. Generally, a lengthy strike has a negative effect on employment, reduces business confidence and increases the risk of economic stagflation. In addition, such strikes have a major setback on the growth of the economy and investment opportunities. It is common knowledge that consumer spending is directly linked to economic growth. At the same time, if the economy is not showing signs of growth, employment opportunities are shed, and poverty becomes the end result. The economy of South Africa is in need of rapid growth to enable it to deal with the high levels of unemployment and resultant poverty.

One of the measures that may boost the country’s economic growth is by attracting potential investors to invest in the country. However, this might be difficult as investors would want to invest in a country where there is a likelihood of getting returns for their investments. The wish of getting returns for investment may not materialise if the labour environment is not fertile for such investments as a result of, for example, unstable labour relations. Therefore, investors may be reluctant to invest where there is an unstable or fragile labour relations environment.

#### The impact is global war AND existential terror, prolif, disease, and pollution are inevitable unless the U.S. maintains economic strength.

Dr. Richard Haass 20, Master’s and Doctorate of Philosophy Degrees from Oxford University, Former Director of Policy Planning for the Department of State, Veteran Diplomat Under 4 Presidential Administrations, Awarded the Presidential Citizens Medal, Rhodes Scholar, “International Relations In The COVID-19 Era: Richard Haass On What Comes After A Pandemic”, Interview with Meghna Chakrabarti and Jack Beatty on NPR’s On Point, 4/22/2020, <https://www.wbur.org/onpoint/2020/04/22/international-relations-coronavirus-richard-haass> [Transcribed by Otter.ai, Grammatical transcription edits by Casey Harrigan]

So suddenly, the world is being left on its own. And what we're seeing is the world is not on autopilot. It doesn't self-organize. And that's the most worrisome thing going forward that this pandemic is both a reflection, but also an accelerant of that because the United States has not rallied the world to meet the challenge posed by this pandemic. And instead, we've pulled back we become much more national, kind of an island power, the rest of the world, it's on its own, it's not doing very well. And this is this is the reason I'm so worried that a lot of the trends that were in place, including them on America, much less involved in the world, nationalism, populism, the breakdown of international collaboration, all those things were in train before this pandemic, and now we're seeing them double down.

MEGHNA: So is the you're saying the world is not self-organizing right now, perhaps, at this moment? And at the same time, it doesn't? Is it feeling the loss of the centrality of American leadership? Because, I think we could argue that the way that, for example, international leaders do talk about the United States right now, at times, they're not necessarily feeling the loss of American influence.

HAASS: Well should I think they're feeling the loss of American leadership in the American example, that they had grown accustomed to your foreign policies about what our diplomats say and do what our military does, but it's also the example we set at home, the quality of our democracy, the strength of our economy, the response say to a pandemic, so they're looking at this United States and a lot of leaders and I speak to them all the time are essentially saying we don't recognize this America. This is not the America we thought we knew. So, they're in a very difficult position where now they have to essentially get on without us. But they don't really have the capability. There's no one who has the power that we have, the influence they we have. So no one can fill our shoes. So everybody's on their own, and no one does better on his or her own than they do, again, in a collective effort where the United States leads, so they're not happy about the situation. They're increasingly reconciled to it. But they very much miss the United States that for decades had help organize the world to meet a whole range of challenges.

MEGHNA: Jack, do you want to respond to that?

BEATTY: Well, I think that's very well said. And sometimes that did lead to overreach I mean, Vietnam, Iraq. But on the other hand, it also led to, you know, arms control treaties and efforts to combat threats to the environment that that stretched across, administration's I, you know, I'm struck with this, and I put it to you, Richard, it's as if, you know, the, the greatest generation ratified their experience, they looked at their experience, and they accepted America's new role in the world. Were a different people today. And it's inconceivable that in the post war, someone like Donald Trump could have gotten within, you know, hailing distance of the presidency just wouldn't have happened. For one thing, he wasn't a veteran. And I was just gonna say, the people that voted for Trump or no, go vote for him again, and then not voting for anything like the foreign policy, the security policy, that the times demand, and that our past has mandated. They're the people who feel left behind from the post-Cold War world of globalization and so on. And they're still there. They're a different people from those after World War Two

MEGHNA: Jack, if I just can just dovetail what you're saying. And then Richard I’ll, off back to you. I would actually say that that is not limited to the supporters of the President, that there is, in a sense amongst people a bipartisan agreement about feeling left behind, it's just that perhaps their preferred policy angles on how to solve that problem might be different. But your point is, is well taken, jack and, Richard, you want to respond to that? So go ahead.

HAASS: No, absolutely. I think it's exactly right. And it's really interesting to ask, why is this the case? And I think you're right Meghna, it is bipartisan, it crosses party lines. I think there's a sense that foreign policy has costs more than its benefited us people look at Iraq, they look at the World War, also in Afghanistan. And they simply, correctly I would say, don't think in any way either was worth it. These issues are not taught in our schools, or if they are taught, they're not required. So, you can graduate from Harvard, or Stanford or Princeton, and have no background whatsoever in international relations or in history. Our media, for the most part doesn't cover these issues. Over the last 20-30 years, there's been a real reduction in the degree of international coverage. So, most Americans simply don't see the connection between what goes on in the world and what goes on here in the United States.

So, you know, here was this place called Wuhan where a virus broke out. And what we've learned in an extraordinarily expensive way, is that nothing stays local for long. What happens in Wuhan doesn't stay in Wuhan, but it travels. And this has cost us trillions of dollars. And already what more than 40,000 lives and the toll keeps mounting by the hour. This is an expensive lesson in why isolationism is not an option in a global world. And the real question is, will we learn that lesson? Will we learn the right lesson? Will we basically say we have got to get more involved in the world to prepare for the next pandemic? To do something about climate change? To do something about structuring the world, the digital world so it's positive and not negative? Are we still going to deal say with the threat of terrorism or proliferation? The real question, for me, is coming out of this, do we have the bandwidth Do we have the resources to have we learned the lesson that we can't isolate ourselves from what goes on in the world and to do that safely?

MEGHNA: I think that's a good question, Richard, because it seems to me that for there's a generation of Americans out there who most often see the effects of US foreign policy through the instruments of failed wars. I'm just going to put it like that. There have not been enough examples of the positive benefits of American foreign policy or American leaders and that is part of what is causing people to doubt right now. And on that point, I would like to actually take a caller who has something to say about this. So let's go to Jeremy, who's calling from Racine, Wisconsin. Jeremy, what's your thoughts?

JEREMY: Alright, thanks for taking my call. I believe that we're coming into a point in our history. That is it's more of like an institutional crisis within our government and its inability to function with each other to have a clear intent, and to come together with all the resources to accomplish that. That intent clearly and to our desirable outcomes, given the fact what we did in Afghanistan and Iraq. We went in Iraq, we hosted Saddam Hussein, and then we kind of sat around and said, “now what”?. We just wasted incredible amount of lives, resources and money to to exert our foreign policy in an inefficient way. We just we have to restructure how we go about our foreign policy, how do we interact with other nations, instead of sending the big stick every time something goes wrong, we need to start working on better diplomacy and things like that. And Donald Trump is probably what I would consider, he is like, the fox in the henhouse. The American people just sent him into the henhouse, and he's just wreaking havoc all over the federal government. And that's pretty much what a lot of people feel right now. They just are tired with inability to come together and actually fix something and make it coherent, that everybody can understand. Yeah.

MEGHNA: Well, Jeremy, thank you for that thought. Richard Haass, did you want to respond to him?

HAASS: Sure. Let me react to Jeremy. I think he's right, that we've overused the military tool, and we've underused other tools, including diplomacy, foreign aid, and so forth. He points to the dangers of overreach in Iraq, Afghanistan, Jack before mentioned Vietnam, but I also think there's a real danger of underreach of the United States does too little. And you said Meghna, that people don't see the benefits. Well, think about it, the first half of the century, we had two enormous world wars, when the United States was detached from the world. We've avoided a world war between or among the great powers for the last 75 years, in large part because the United States has been involved. We've seen an enormous growth in the number of people who live in democracies and the degree of freedom. We've seen enormous improvements in the standard of living and the extension of lifespans. So, the last 70-75 years have actually been the most successful era of human history ever. Ever.

MEGHNA: Some would say it's anomalous. Yeah. Someone say it's an anomalous 70 years.

HAASS: Well, that's, to me, that's the big question. Were the last 70-75 years? Or are they the Can we make them the new normal? Can we extend them? Or did they become something of an aberration? And do we go back to the kind of world that for centuries before were we you know, that was the norm, World War One, World War Two constant wars in Europe? And that's where we are I actually think we're at one of those crossroads in history. And the issue for us. Another way to think about it: are we the United States, after World War One that's going to retreat from the world and let it and let it unravel? Or are we the United States after World War Two, that's going to have a creative surge, and try to restructure the world to deal with the challenges of this generation? And I think that is the fundamental question.

MEGHNA: And it is a very compelling one. Jack, did you do you have some I know, you have some thoughts on that?

BEATTY: Well, I mean, that frames it will weigh and, and, you know, to be more specific will the election, even touch on this, you know, in in 2016, we had a Secretary of State running for president and she lost to a man who said, I know more about war than the generals and I alone can fix it. And I get my ideas about foreign policy from the Sunday shows. That showed what at least, you know, a decisive Electoral College majority thought about foreign policy. And Trump isn't going to run as the leader of the free world. He's going to run as ‘America First’, ‘America alone’, ‘America, The Wall’ is his metaphor. And I don't see how it keeps out. dizzy, but nevermind. In other words, that's going to be on the ballot and America's role in the world and his will Joe Biden who you know, can seem like yesterday's man in so many ways. Will Joe Biden rise to that and say no, even though it's difficult for Americans in theu may have to spend money in foreign places to deal with threats. We have to do it. Will he argue that it will he just simply let Trump American first carry that.

MEGHNA: Well, when we come back, we're going to talk about what the possibilities are in this moment. So Richard Haass and Jack Beatty standby for just a moment. This is On Point.

MEGHNA: This is On Point. I'm Meghna Chakrabarti, we're talking with Richard Haass. He's President of the Council on Foreign Relations. He's also a veteran diplomat who served under four presidents. His recent essay in Foreign Affairs magazine is headlined, The Pandemic Will Accelerate History, Rather Than Reshape It. And we have a link to it at onpointradio.org. He has a forthcoming book due out in May called *The World A Brief Introduction*. And Jack Beatty On Point news analyst joins us as well. Richard, I wanted to talk with you and Jack about, you know about specific possibilities also that present themselves in this moment, and let's get very granular. I mean, let's talk about North Korea right now. Because even in the midst of this pandemic, we could be at a turning point there with, you know, questions around the health of Kim Jong Un. I mean, is the US positioned right now to take advantage of whatever possibility might be emerging on the Korean peninsula?

HAASS: Well, you're right. Anytime there's a crisis there, there are inevitably possibilities. One obvious one is in the area of improving global health governance. How do we increase the odds that the next outbreak of a disease does not lead to a global pandemic. In the case of North Korea, it's a little bit hard to read, it's in some ways the most closed country in the world. But, this could lead to a degree of instability, which on one hand, would be threatening, given their dozens of nuclear weapons could lead to significant refugee flows. But it could also, possibly, set in motion trends that would end the division of the Korean Peninsula. This is one of last holdout of the post World War Two situation, you still have a divided peninsula between a closed communist north and a democratic open south. It's the most armed border in the world. So it's just possible that this could set in motion trends. So I would very much hope the United States was talking to the government in Seoul and South Korea, and to Chinese about how we will manage a situation if there is a instability in North Korea. This could become a moment to at a minimum deal with the nuclear challenge in the North, and possibly even the, again, the fundamental division of the Peninsula.

MEGHNA: In fact, you tweeted just yesterday that it's in fact essential for the US, China and South Korea to stay in close contact right now about this?

HAASS: Oh, absolutely. Because you can imagine you have a situation where you suddenly have hundreds of thousands of refugees, going from North Korea, either into South Korea, or into China. China might be tempted to intervene well, so might South Korea, so might the United States. Well, we don't want to have a situation where suddenly you have a chaos and various armies moving forward. So, we've got to manage this at a minimum to avoid a bad situation becoming something incomparably worse. But also to see if we can steer the situation to a lasting outcome that would also be better. This really requires intimate choreography among Beijing, Seoul and Washington.

MEGHNA: But let me ask you, though, honestly, given the trend that you write about in your, in your Foreign Affairs article that we've been watching over the past 15 years or so. Do you have any faith that that cooperation would actually happen?

HAASS: I have very little faith, though, on the ground, the military they are is quite significant. And it's a US/UN force and they are in close touch with the South Koreans. We have some connections to the Chinese, but I worry about it, quite honestly, I'm not gonna sugarcoat it. People are so distracted for good reason. By the COVID-19. The US/Chinese relationship was in bad shape before this crisis, is now in worse shape. The US South Korean relationship hasn't been great. The President has been attacking the alliance trying to get the South Koreans to pay much more. So, I am not sure that we are up to the challenge. And again, North Korea is an extraordinarily difficult country to try to act in simply again, because it's the most shut off from the rest of the world. You know, we're sitting here talking about this and quite honestly, we do not know, either what the health reality is facing the North Korean leader or what, if anything, planning might be in place for succession.

MEGHNA: Right. I also feel like it's a very good example about the choice that you and Jack have been talking about that the United States is on the cusp of having to make about what kind of nation it's going to be because the issue of North Korea and the Korean Peninsula cannot be solved without the direct involvement of the United States and China. So that brings me back to this underlying question. Richard, can you can you imagine, imagine a new model of American national security, a new paradigm of American national security, that doesn't have American primacy on the world stage at its heart?

HAASS: Primacy can be understood as a fact of life or a goal. I don't think our goal ought to be one of primacy. We can't control that, because primacy is about relative strength. Right now, that the United States is still the world's most powerful military, we are the world's largest single economy. But the fact is, for all of our strength, we can't tackle the emerging problems in the world on our own. We can't maintain global health unilaterally, we obviously can't deal with climate change by ourselves. We can't control proliferation or terrorism, or set the rules for cyberspace on our own. So unilateralism, no matter how strong we are, is simply not a viable foreign policy strategy. We have got to partner with others. And the challenge with a country like China is: how do we selectively partner with China, given our profound disagreements, the difference between our systems and the fact that we, for example, have real foreign policy differences, say over the fate of Taiwan. And that that to me, is going to be one of the real foreign policy challenges going forward.

MEGHNA: Jack, did you want to respond to that?

BEATTY: Undoubtedly, it is going to be but you know, look at it. I mean, one of the one of the faults, I think of the of the current administration is the President sees things in a zero sum way, you know, we win, they lose even his view of trade, which is, you know, since Adam Smith, we accept that it's, you know, when comparative advantage and all that he sees that as No, I win, you lose, he was talking about the trade deficit with China just yesterday, and he said, Look, they ripped us off. They didn't rip us off. We got all that cheap goods that we wanted from China. That's, that's called trick, he doesn't seem to understand that basic fundamental of, of international economy. And he doesn't seem to, to look at foreign relations that way, either. Although you have to give him a lot of credit for trying to warm relations with North Korea at the top.

MEGHNA: Well, Richard, I wonder: it sounds like you are lamenting the death of a sort of liberal world order that, as you pointed out, the United States has been the beneficiary of and the leader of for the past 75 years. But if you had a magic wand, and you could you could wave it over Planet Earth right now, what would you change? I guess what I'm asking you is what would you do to, to set up the United States of the global community for success, as we come through this pandemic?

HAASS: I would look in two directions. Domestically, I would try to make the case to Americans about why foreign policy was in our national interest, why our involvement in the world would improve the quality of life here at home. At the same time, we would also need to attend to our many challenges and shortcomings here at home. I once wrote a book called Foreign Policy Begins At Home. And the whole idea was we needed to establish a greater domestic base if we were going to be capable of acting in the world and Americans were going to be willing to support it. I also made clear something the President might have missed in the book was the argument that foreign policy doesn't end at home, we've got to stay involved in the world. It's we now circling back to where we began the conversation. We've got to take into account this new global agenda and we've got to we've got to figure out how to narrow the gap between these emerging global challenges, like global health, like climate change, like terrorism, like proliferation, and global arrangements. One of the phrases you constantly hear from people in my businesses international community. Well, the fact is, there isn't one. And our goal should be to better build one where we take into account this newest security agenda. So that's what I would focus on, I wouldn't let go of the old agenda. I'm still worried about Russia, what they're doing in Europe. I'm worried about Iran. I'm worried about North Korea, worried to some extent about China. But I would put much greater emphasis on building global arrangements to deal with this new set of challenges that, as we've seen over the last few months, has the ability to fundamentally turn life here upside down.

#### \*\*\*Collapse of US primacy causes extinction via transition wars. The structure of the international system explains conflict.

Michael Beckley 18. Professor of political science at Tufts. *Unrivaled: Why America Will Remain the World’s Sole Superpower*. Cornell University Press.

The story of world politics is often told as a game of thrones in which a rotating cast of great powers battles for top-dog status. According to researchers led by Graham Allison at Harvard, there have been sixteen cases in the past ﬁve hundred years when a rising power challenged a ruling power. 3 Twelve of these cases ended in carnage. One can quibble with Allison’s case selection, but the basic pattern is clear: hegemonic rivalry has sparked a catastrophic war every forty years on average for the past half millennium.

The emergence of unipolarity in 1991 has put this cycle of hegemonic competition on hold. Obviously wars and security competition still occur in today’s unipolar world—in fact, as I explain later, unipolarity has made certain types of asymmetric conﬂict more likely—but none of these conﬂicts have the global scope or generational length of a hegemonic rivalry.

To appreciate this point, just consider the Cold War—one of the four “peaceful” cases of hegemonic rivalry identiﬁed by Allison’s study. Although the two superpowers never went to war, they divided the world into rival camps, waged proxy wars that killed millions of people, and pushed each other to the brink of nuclear Armageddon. For forty-ﬁve years, World War III and human extinction were nontrivial possibilities.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, by contrast, the United States has not faced a hegemonic rival, and the world, though far from perfect, has been more peaceful and prosperous than ever before.

Just look at the numbers. From 1400 to 1991, the rate of war deaths worldwide hovered between 5 and 10 deaths per 100,000 people and spiked to 200 deaths per 100,000 during major wars. 4 After 1991, however, war death rates dropped to 0.5 deaths per 100,000 people and have stayed there ever since. Interstate wars have disappeared almost entirely, and the number of civil wars has declined by more than 30 percent. 5 Meanwhile, the global economy has quadrupled in size, creating more wealth between 1991 and 2018 than in all prior human history combined. 6

What explains this unprecedented outbreak of peace and prosperity? Some scholars attribute it to advances in communications technology, from the printing press to the telegraph to the Internet, which supposedly spread empathy around the globe and caused entire nations to place a higher value on human life. 7

Such explanations are appealing, because they play on our natural desire to believe in human progress, but are they convincing? Did humans suddenly become 10 to 20 times less violent and cruel in 1991? Are we orders of magnitude more noble and kind than our grandparents? Has social media made us more empathetic? Of course not, which is why the dramatic decline in warfare after 1991 is better explained by geopolitics than sociology. 8

The collapse of the Soviet Union not only ended the Cold War and related proxy ﬁghting, it also opened up large swathes of the world to democracy, international commerce, and peacekeeping forces—all of which surged after 1991 and further dampened conﬂict. 9 Faced with overwhelming U.S. economic and military might, most countries have decided to work within the American-led liberal order rather than ﬁght to overturn it. 10 As of 2018, nearly seventy countries have joined the U.S. alliance network—a Kantian community in which war is unthinkable—and even the two main challengers to this community, China and Russia, begrudgingly participate in the institutions of the liberal order (e.g., the UN, the WTO, the IMF, World Bank, and the G-20), engage in commerce with the United States and its allies, and contribute to international peacekeeping missions. 11 History may not have ended in 1991, but it clearly changed in profound ways—and mostly for the better.

#### For them to win an impact turn, they need to defend and robustly define their alternative to the US-led international order -- it’s the best possible system

Kagan 18 - Stephen & Barbara Friedman Senior Fellow with the Project on International Order and Strategy in the Foreign Policy program at Brookings. Robert Kagan, “The World America Made—and Trump Wants to Unmake,” POLITICO Magazine, September 28, 2018, <https://politi.co/2zB3qCg>.

So, yes, the liberal order has been flawed, with its share of failure and hypocrisy. Liberal goals have sometimes been pursued by illiberal means. Power, coercion and violence have played a big part. The order has been the product of American hegemony and it has also served to reinforce that hegemony. But to note these facts is hardly to condemn the order. No order of any kind can exist without some element of hegemony. The Roman order was based on the hegemony of Rome; the British order of the 18th and 19th centuries was based on the hegemony of the Royal Navy; such order as existed briefly in Europe after the defeat of Napoleon—the so-called Concert of Europe—rested on the collective hegemony of the four victorious great powers. The idea of a peaceful, stable multipolar world where no power or powers enjoy predominance is a dream that exists only in the minds of one-world idealists and international relations theorists.

The same is true of those who would condemn the liberal world order because of the persistence of violence, coercion, hypocrisy, selfishness, stupidity and all the other evils and foibles endemic to human nature. Perhaps in the confines of academia it is possible to imagine a system of international relations where our deeply flawed humanness is removed from the equation. But in the real world, even the best and most moral of international arrangements are going to have their dark, immoral aspects.

The question is, as always, compared to what? Patrick Porter, the author of a widely discussed critique of the liberal world order, acknowledges that “if there was to be a superpower emerging from the rubble of world war in midcentury, we should be grateful it was the United States, given the totalitarian alternatives on offer. Under America’s aegis, there were islands of liberty where prosperous markets and democracies grew.” Indeed, that would seem to be the key point. At any given time there are only so many alternatives, and usually the choice is between the bad and the worse.

Are the alternatives on offer so much better now? Graham Allison, dismissing any return to the “imagined past” when the United States shaped an international liberal order, proposes that we instead make the world “safe for diversity” and accommodate ourselves to “the reality that other countries have contrary views about governance and seek to establish their own international orders governed by their own rules.” Others, such as Peter Beinart, similarly argue that we should accommodate Russian and Chinese demands for their own spheres of interest, even if that entails the sacrifice of sovereign peoples such as Ukrainians and Taiwanese. This wonderfully diverse world would presumably be run partly by Xi Jinping, partly by Vladimir Putin, and partly, too, by the Ayatollah Khamenei and by Kim Jong Un, who would also like to establish orders governed by their own rules. We have not enjoyed such diversity since the world was run partly by Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini.

The idea that this is the solution to our problems is laughable. Porter points out American policy has led to “multiplying foreign conflicts” and put the United States “on a collision course with rivals.” Setting aside the fact that multiplying foreign conflicts and collisions between rivals is the natural state of international relations in any era, it is hard for any student of history to imagine that these problems would lessen if only we returned to the competitive multipolar world of the 19th and early 20th centuries. To suggest that there could be a world with no collisions and no foreign conflicts, if only the United States would pursue an intelligent policy, is the very opposite of realism.

Strikingly absent from all these critiques of the liberal world order, too, is any suggestion of an alternative approach. The critiques end with lists of questions that need to be answered. Allison calls for a “surge of strategic thinking.” Others call for “new thinking” about “difficult trade-offs.” Some critics even complain that so long as people continue to talk about a U.S.-dominated liberal order, it will be “impossible for us to construct a reasonable alternative for the future.”

The most the critiques will offer are suggestions that sound more like attitudes than policies. They throw around words like “realism,” “restraint” and “retrenchment.” Allison proposes that the United States “limit its efforts to ensuring sufficient order abroad.” Beinart comes closest to offering an alternative, but he clearly has not yet thought it through fully. He wants to grant other powers their spheres of interest, for instance, but he mentions only Russia and China. Does this mean Russia should be granted full sway in, say, Ukraine, the Balkans, the Baltics and the Caucuses? Should China be able to impose its will on the Philippines and Vietnam?

And what of the other great powers? Does Japan get its own sphere of interest? Does India? Do Germany, France and Britain? They all had their spheres a century ago, and of course it was the clashes over those inevitably overlapping spheres that led to all the great wars. Is Beinart suggesting we should return to that past?

Of course, we may be moving toward that world, anyway. That is the implication of Trump’s “America First” foreign policy philosophy, his attacks on “globalism” and his recent suggestion that all nations look out strictly for themselves. Trump’s speech at the U.N. was an invitation to global anarchy, a struggle of all against all. His boasting about American power put the world on notice that the United States was turning from supporter of a liberal order to rogue superpower. This breakdown may be our future, but it seems odd to choose that course as a deliberate strategy, as Allison and others seem to do. Little wonder that they don’t wish to spell out the details of their alternative but prefer to carp at the inevitable failures and imperfections of the liberal world we have. As John Hay once remarked, “Our good friends are wiser when they abuse us for what we do, than when they try to say what ought to be done.”

No honest person would deny that the liberal world order has been flawed and will continue to be flawed in the future. The League of Nations was also flawed, as was Woodrow Wilson’s vision of collective security. Yet the world would have been better had the United States joined in upholding it, given the genuine alternative. The enduring truth about the liberal world order is that, like Churchill’s comment about democracy, it is the worst system—except for all the others.

## 2

#### Passing PRO will eliminate the filibuster [0:18]

Jones 4/13/21

[POLITICS](https://nymag.com/intelligencer/tags/politics/) MAR. 13, 2021 | https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2021/03/what-is-the-pro-act.html The PRO Act Could Do More Than Revive Unions By [Sarah Jones](https://nymag.com/author/sarah-jones/) (M.A. – Postcolonial Culture and Global Policy—Goldsmiths, University of London, writer at the Intelligencer)///(\*ak)

https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2021/03/what-is-the-pro-act.html

Americans like unions, but very few belong to one, a discrepancy that places the U.S. labor movement in a precarious state. In 2017, only [10.7 percent](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/union2_01192018.pdf) of all Americans belonged to a union, but that same year, a PBS NewsHour poll found that [nearly half](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/a-growing-number-of-americans-want-to-join-a-union)of all Americans said they’d join a union if they could. Union membership hasn’t budged much since then, even as overall support for unions reached its highest level in a decade — 65 percent of Americans [polled](https://news.gallup.com/poll/12751/labor-unions.aspx) by Gallup in 2020 said they approved of unions, up from a low of 48 percent in 2010.

A gap this wide indicates a serious problem. If Americans like unions and want to join them but aren’t, it’s likely because they can’t. Fortunately, a possible fix awaits: The Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act would mark the biggest expansion of collective-bargaining rights in decades. President Biden has said he supports the bill, and he may soon be in a position to make good on that support. The bill passed the House with bipartisan support late on Tuesday evening, and is headed now to the Senate.

Below, a brief outline of the PRO Act. What is it, exactly, and why should it matter to the 90 percent of Americans who don’t belong to a union? The answers, supporters say, are key to President Biden’s “build back better” agenda — and to a more equitable country.

What does the PRO Act do?

The act “modernizes and updates a lot of the loopholes and the brokenness of U.S. labor law,” explained Ryan Kekeris, an organizer for the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades, or IUPAT. Since Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the National Labor Relations Act in 1935, business groups and conservative lobbyists have worked with great success to hollow out and weaken its provisions. “Right-to-work” laws in various states require unions to represent all workers on a given jobsite, whether or not those workers choose to pay dues. That harms unions financially, drives down union membership, and, according to a handful of studies, [depresses wages](https://www.americanprogressaction.org/issues/economy/reports/2017/05/18/167539/right-work-harm-americans/) for all.

If it becomes law, the PRO Act would also prevent employers from misclassifying workers either as independent contractors or as supervisors, which excludes them from many protections of the National Labor Relations Act. That provision worries some freelancers, who believe they’ll be forced to unionize, or that companies will stop working with them. Those doomsday scenarios aren’t likely to occur, as labor lawyer Brandon Magner recently pointed out in his [newsletter](https://brandonmagner.substack.com/p/no-the-pro-act-wouldnt-kill-freelancing), Labor Law Lite.  The PRO Act concerns itself with a narrow question: “whether certain workers possess rights” under the National Labor Relations Act, including “the right to strike, collectively bargain, and engage in various other ‘concerted activities’ for ‘mutual aid or protection.’” That doesn’t mean a freelancer writer will automatically lose work. Nor would they suddenly find themselves forced into a union overnight; Magner writes that “a demonstrated majority of their freelancing-colleagues at a website” would have to push for it.

Employers would also have a harder time pressuring workers against forming a union, because, as matters stand now, employers “can make you spend more or less all day long sitting in captive audience meetings with an anti-union consultant, or a manager or supervisor, where they never stop telling you how this is a bad decision that could adversely affect the company,” Kekeris said. The PRO Act bans such meetings. It would also prohibit employers from permanently replacing striking workers with non-union labor, thus removing another key source of pressure on unionized labor. Employers that violate existing legal provisions by coercing or retaliating against workers who organize would also face stiffer penalties for doing so.

Can it pass?

The PRO Act passed the House with [bipartisan](https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/842/cosponsors?r=1&s=2&q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22protecting+the+right+to+organize%22%5D%2C%22party%22%3A%22Republican%22%7D) support. But it may face a harder road in the Senate, where a virtually certain Republican filibuster could block its passage. Though moderate senators, including Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, have both said they don’t want to abolish the filibuster, some voices within labor are urging them to reconsider.

Kekeris says his union, IUPAT, believes it’s time for the filibuster to go. “The Democratic Party controls the chambers. They control the presidency. If they cannot get the PRO Act passed with a simple majority then it is up to them to figure out how to do it,” he said. “We consider the end of the filibuster to be vital.” IUPAT isn’t alone, either. In a [press release](https://cwa-union.org/news/releases/pro-act-gives-workers-tools-regain-power-in-their-workplaces), the Communication Workers of America urged senators “to stop hiding behind outdated rules and procedures like the filibuster.” The executive council of the AFL-CIO also released [a statement](https://aflcio.org/about/leadership/statements/senate-rules-cannot-be-used-block-workers-first-agenda), saying that if the PRO Act proves impossible to pass with the current Senate rules in place, it will call for “swift and necessary changes.”

Should any of this matter to non-union workers?

If the business of getting the PRO Act passed knocks a hole in the filibuster, it’ll remove a substantial obstacle to the democratization of the Senate. That possibility reveals another, under-considered consequence of the PRO Act: It’s good for democracy. Democracy is an expansive idea, encompassing more than electoral politics or arcane Senate procedure. Unions don’t exist to elect Democrats. They exist so that workers can bargain better conditions for themselves — an act of workplace democracy that reinforces the right to free association and the right to free speech.

“I would say that America’s workplaces, absent a union contract, are probably the least democratic spaces we have in our society,” said Lane Windham, a Georgetown University professor and the author of Knocking on Labor’s Door: Union Organizing in the 1970s and the Roots of a New Economic Divide.

The bill will also have other, far-reaching ramifications. Unions, after all, are simply made up of workers; bills that are good for the former tend to be good for the latter. Workers who face racial and gender discrimination on the job could benefit the most from the PRO Act’s provisions. In unions, said Celine McNicholas of the Economic Policy Institute, “workers of color are not experiencing the same sort of wage suppression that they are in other, non-unionized settings.” Union membership thus correlates to lower racial wealth gaps. “The PRO Act promotes greater racial economic justice because unions allow for collective bargaining, essentially shrinks Black-white wage gaps, and brings greater fairness in terms of hiring opportunities,” she added.

As long as employers have the broad right to wear workers down for trying to organize, the First Amendment might as well stop at the office or factory doors. Employers can even block workers from speaking during anti-union, captive audience meetings. “People think that they have a right to their job and they actually don’t,” Windham said. “Employers, with a few exceptions like discrimination issues, can generally fire people at will and can limit your free speech at any time.”

To date, President Biden hasn’t endorsed calls to end the filibuster. But if he wants to build America back better, as he’s promised, advocates say the PRO Act is nonnegotiable. “In order to build an economy that is more just, that promotes greater equality, working people need a voice. They need access to unions,” said McNicholas.

#### Eliminating the filibuster gives Republicans ground to catalyze anti-democrat mobilization [0:19]

Burgess + Arkin 3/23/21

Killing the filibuster becomes new ‘litmus test’ for Democratic candidates But that framing of the issue also hands Republicans a potent weapon next fall. <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/03/23/filibuster-democrats-senate-midterms-477573> By [BURGESS EVERETT](https://www.politico.com/staff/burgess-everett) (John Burgess Everett is a congressional reporter for POLITICO. He previously was a transportation reporter for POLITICO Pro, Web producer, helping run POLITICO’s Twitter and Facebook accounts, and a contributor to the On Media blog.) and [JAMES ARKIN](https://www.politico.com/staff/james-arkin) (James Arkin is a reporter for the Campaign Pro team focusing on Senate races. Before joining POLITICO, James was a reporter at RealClearPolitics, where he covered Congress and the 2016 election. James earned a master’s and bachelor’s degree from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University. He hails from Columbus, Ohio, and is a diehard Cleveland sports fan.) 03/23/2021 04:30 AM EDT ////(\*ak)

“If we allow the filibuster to take down major priority items like civil rights legislation, then it would be a major drag on 2022,” Jackson said. It’s still a year before even the earliest primary contests, and Democratic primaries will grow more crowded. But the anti-filibuster positioning from early candidates cements once-obscure Senate rules as a front-and-center issue for primary voters. And running in a Democratic primary field without opposing the filibuster could prove difficult. “Democrats ought to be for getting shit done for people. And if somebody is still talking about how much they love the filibuster, then I want to hear their argument how we get things done for people,” Kenyatta said. Democrats’ big goals often clash with the simple math problem presented by the filibuster. The Green New Deal and Medicare for All dominated the party’s presidential primary last year. Yet even after Democrats emerged with a sweep of Washington, they're short of votes in the Senate to pass even relatively modest immigration bills. “That’s where I think a lot of voter frustration is. Democrats are running on, ‘Hey, we’re going to do all these things,’” Lasry said. “We get all three branches of government and we can’t do anything because of this supermajority rule that the Constitution doesn’t even have." The issue may be more resonant in Democratic primaries than in general elections in some swing states. Rep. Stephanie Murphy (D-Fla.), who is exploring a challenge to GOP Sen. Marco Rubio, declined to comment and said the filibuster was a Senate matter. But the two Senate Democrats in next year's toughest reelection races notably are entertaining efforts to change the filibuster. Sen. Mark Kelly (D-Ariz.) said he would weigh any changes to the Senate rules against “how this affects my constituents in Arizona, and is this good for our country or not?” Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-Ga.) put it this way: “I’m really focused on passing these voting rights bills. We’ve got to pass them, whether we get rid of the filibuster or not.” Filibuster talk has captivated the Senate for weeks, a fixation that will only heighten if Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer puts up House-passed bills on guns, immigration, voting rights and LGBTQ protections only to see them sunk for lack of 60 votes. The resulting focus on the filibuster will only make the issue more politically resonant. Steven Law, the president of Senate Leadership Fund, a McConnell-aligned super PAC, said he expected to see paid advertising on the issue next year regardless of what happens to the filibuster this Congress. “Every day that the news is filled with discussions about Democrats getting rid of the filibuster and talking about what they might pass if they could do it, it just makes it a much stronger issue going into this next cycle,” Law said. “It’s political malpractice for Democrats to think about scrapping the filibuster when they’ve got a 50-50 Senate.” Even with the odds stacked against them in a 50-50 Senate, the “battle for the filibuster is right now,” said Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.). “Big, core Democratic issues like access to the vote, corruption, gun safety, climate change — we can’t address those things unless we use a majority vote.” Candidates said the issue is already coming up on the trail. Voters are “hostile” to the filibuster, Jackson said. He did not outright endorse getting rid of the 60-vote threshold but said it should not be a roadblock to passing legislation on voting rights. Democratic contenders running against the filibuster see their position as a no-brainer because the need to win 60 votes is barring the party from achieving longtime goals that are objectively more possible with a simple majority ruling the day in the Senate. But that framing of the issue also hands Republicans a potent weapon next fall. They can argue that, in the midterms, even a single Senate seat can make the difference between a historic change to the fabric of the U.S. government and a system where the minority party still has the power to stop legislation it finds objectionable. Chris Hartline, a spokesperson for the National Republican Senatorial Committee, said Democrats are campaigning on “eliminating the filibuster so they can enact the most radical legislative agenda in history.” “The Democrat agenda which they could accomplish at 51 is an agenda that is very out of the mainstream where most Americans are,” said Senate Minority Whip John Thune (R-S.D.). “I do think that’s something that would resonate with voters.” Still, Democrats don’t see the downside to their position. Asked about GOP efforts to run as a check on the Democrats and as protectors of the filibuster, Fetterman replied: “promise?” Though both Sinema and Manchin have said they can’t be swayed on the filibuster, it’s also technically possible that they could change their mind if Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell builds a wall of opposition for the next 20 months. Even if Democrats were to get rid of the 60-vote requirement unilaterally, via “the nuclear option,” the midterms would still be a referendum on the wisdom of changing the Senate’s rules to pass party-line legislation. Fetterman and state Rep. Malcolm Kenyatta, the first official candidates in what’s likely to be a crowded primary in Pennsylvania, both support abolishing the filibuster. Among North Carolina Democratic Senate hopefuls, former state Sen. Erica Smith [supports abolishing the filibuster](https://twitter.com/EricaforUSSen/status/1365106998220627971?s=20), while state Sen. Jeff Jackson referred to himself in an interview as “filibuster-skeptical.” Both of the announced Senate candidates in Wisconsin, Milwaukee Bucks executive Alex Lasry and Outagamie County Executive Tom Nelson, are running on an anti-filibuster platform. Lasry said it’s a “relic of the past.” “I will make it an issue [in the primary] and I will make it an issue in the general so that the Republican nominee, whether it’s Ron Johnson or someone else, defends it. There’s absolutely no defense,” Nelson said. Senate Democrats lack the votes right now to scrap the filibuster. The midterms may change that. In three of the most competitive Senate races, Democratic candidates are already campaigning on killing the Senate’s 60-vote requirement for most bills, placing the chamber’s arcane rules at the forefront of the nascent 2022 midterms. Those reform-minded Democrats are running on voting rights legislation, a minimum wage increase and background checks for gun purchases, arguing that they're only possible through a simple majority vote in the Senate. If Democrats can expand their 50-seat majority by two or three seats, moderate Sens. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.) will no longer hold so much sway in a caucus increasingly interested in gutting the chamber’s supermajority threshold once and for all. “I would be surprised if there’s anyone in any of these [competitive] states... that would support maintaining the filibuster,” said Democratic Pennsylvania Lt. Gov. John Fetterman, who is pursuing his party’s nomination for a Senate seat up for grabs next year. “Getting rid of the filibuster is as close to a litmus test for our party as I can describe.” It’s basically impossible in 2022 for Democrats to pick up 10 seats and secure a filibuster-proof majority, given the Senate's current 50-50 split and their limited number of pick-up opportunities across the country. But snatching open seats in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin or North Carolina next fall while holding on elsewhere is a plausible way for Democrats to squash the legislative filibuster in 2023, provided they hold their House majority as well.

#### The brink is now--- Dem victory in Post-Trump era spikes violence spirals [0:15]

Jones et al. 10/22

[Seth G. Jones, Catrina Doxsee, Nicholas Harrington, Grace Hwang, James Suber, \* Harold Brown Chair; Director, Transnational Threats Project; and Senior Adviser, International Security Program, \*\* Program Manager and Research Associate, Transnational Threats Project, \*\*\* research associate for the Transnational Threats Project, \*\*\*\* Research Assistant, Burke Chair in Strategy, \*\*\*\*\* Research Assistant, Transnational Threats Project, Center for Strategic and International Studies, " The War Comes Home: The Evolution of Domestic Terrorism in the United States," 10/22/20, https://www.csis.org/analysis/war-comes-home-evolution-domestic-terrorism-united-states

A growing number of U.S. federal and state threat assessments have concluded that domestic terrorism could persist in the United States for the foreseeable future, including in 2021 and beyond. For example, the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness projected that “domestic extremists—primarily anarchist, anti-government, and racially motivated—will continue to manipulate national incidents” and remain a threat at least through 2021.40 Looking toward the future, there are several issues worth monitoring.

First, there are various scenarios for a continuation—and even a rise—of violence after the November 2020 elections, which could persist into 2021 and beyond. Rising political polarization, growing economic challenges, the persistence of Covid-19, and growing concerns about immigration could lead to a rise in domestic terrorism.

The actions of far-left and far-right extremists are likely to be interlinked as various sides respond to others during protests, riots, demonstrations, and online activity. There appears to be an assumption by some extremists that others are prepared to use force, which heightens the possibility of violence. All sides have access to firearms, incendiaries, crude explosives, and other weapons, and are willing to bring them to demonstrations. This situation is a classic security dilemma.41 Each side’s efforts to increase its own security and acquire weapons inadvertently threaten the other side. Since it may be difficult for individuals to distinguish between offensive and defensive arms, even efforts by one side to protect itself may motivate others to arm, creating a spiral of actions that leads to violence.42 As Figure 6 highlights, domestic terrorism incidents have not been isolated to specific geographic locations, suggesting that a rise in terrorism would likely be a national problem, not a regional one. The broad scope of domestic terrorism also makes it difficult to predict where future incidents will occur.

[FIGURE OMITTED]

In the event of a Democratic presidential victory, the threat could involve specific attacks by radicalized white supremacists, militias, and other related individuals. In these incidents, the primary weapons—particularly for fatal attacks—are likely to be firearms and explosives, as highlighted in the 2020 militia plots against the governors of Michigan and Virginia. Based on data from the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), the number of firearm background checks for gun purchases spiked to its highest level ever in 2020—which doubled over the past decade.43 The pervasiveness of guns—including automatic weapons—is particularly concerning in the United States’ ultra-polarized political climate. Based on our data, the targets are likely to be demonstrators, politicians, or individuals based on their race, ethnicity, or religion—such as African Americans, Latinos, Muslims, and Jews.

In the event of a Republican presidential victory, for example, the primary threat may come from large-scale demonstrations in cities, some of which become violent. Anarchists, anti-fascists, and other far-left extremists have utilized digital platforms and other publications to argue that Donald Trump is a neo-fascist and that violence is legitimate.44 As the Antifa-aligned journal It’s Going Down argued, “Suddenly, anarchists and antifa, who have been demonized and sidelined by the wider Left have been hearing from liberals and Leftists, ‘you’ve been right all along.’”45 A Baltimore-based Antifa activist explained the use of violence as graduated and escalating: “You fight them with fists so you don’t have to fight them with knives. You fight them with knives so you don’t have to fight them with guns. You fight them with guns so you don’t have to fight them with tanks.”46 Anarchists, anti-fascists, and other far-left individuals and networks have increasingly used firearms—in addition to explosives and incendiary devices—in conducting attacks. In this scenario, the primary targets could be government, military, and police facilities and personnel.

Digital platforms will likely continue to be a major battlefield. Far-left extremists will likely continue to use social media platforms—such as Reddit, Facebook, and Twitter—to release propaganda and instigate violence against political opponents, law enforcement, military, and the government.47 Many adopted slogans, such as ACAB (“all cops are bastards”), that were used in memes as part of their propaganda campaigns. Far-right extremists will likely use a multitude of mainstream platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Telegram, and Reddit), lesser-known platforms (such as Gab, Discord, Minds, and Bitchute), forums (such as Stormfront and IronForge), and other online communities to instigate violence against African Americans, Jews, immigrants, and others.48 Extremists from all sides will likely utilize digital platforms to fundraise, communicate, issue propaganda, conduct doxing campaigns (releasing an individual’s personally identifiable information), intimidate targets, and coordinate activity.

Second, the domestic landscape could shift from a decentralized milieu of extremists to more organized and hierarchically structured groups. As one study concluded, Louis Beam’s concept of “leaderless resistance” has been “a near total failure as a method of fomenting widespread armed resistance against the U.S. government.”49 Most effective militant organizations have established centralized organizational structures to enable their leaders to control how violence is orchestrated and how finances are secured and managed.50

In the United States, there are a handful of groups—such as The Base, the Atomwaffen Division (including rebranded versions such as the National Socialist Order), and the Feuerkrieg Division—with some leadership structure and command-and-control arrangements. There are also loose extremist movements that have a limited structure—especially in local areas or online—but lack a clear hierarchy and ideology. Examples include the Three Percenters, Oath Keepers, Boogaloos, QAnon, and some local networks of anarchists, anti-fascists, and militias. There have been some indications of greater organization, including the establishment of online hubs, such as MyMilitia, that provide a venue for individuals to find existing militias in the United States—or even to start their own.51

A shift toward more hierarchical groups could have at least two implications. It could increase the competence and professionalism of these organizations in numerous areas, such as planning attacks, recruiting, training, improving operational security, and fundraising. In the 1960s and 1970s, extremists in the United States established more centralized groups—such as the Order, Mau Mau, and White Knights—to improve their effectiveness.52 But research on terrorist and other militant groups indicates that centralized groups are more vulnerable to penetration by law enforcement and intelligence agencies.53

#### Extremist bases have resources, expertise, and will to use CBRN [0:24]

Koehler & Popella 17 [Daniel Koehler and Peter Popella, \* Fellow at George Washington University’s Program on Extremism, \*\* scholar of microbiology and specialist for infectious bacteria and antibiotic resistances. He holds a B.Sc., M.Sc. and Ph.D. degree from the Eberhard Karls University Tuebingen, Germany, Small Wars Journal, "Beware of CBRN Terrorism - From the Far-Right," 09/19/17, https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/beware-of-cbrn-terrorism-from-the-far-right, Date Accessed: 09/28/20, EA]

Around the same time, an anti-government extremist seeking to engage in terrorism received much less attention. Jerry Drake Varnell, a follower of the anti-government “Three Percenter” ideology was arrested for plotting to detonate a 1,000-pound vehicle bomb in downtown Oklahoma City. Varnell was reportedly worried that groups like ISIS could steal credit for the attack from him. These are just two examples of the increasing terror threat posed by far-right extremists (understood as an overlapping web of for example neo-Nazis, Ku Klux Klan, white supremacists, white nationalists, Christian Identity, racist skinheads, as well as parts of anti-government militia, sovereign citizen, or armed patriot groups) of which U.S. law enforcement and intelligences agencies have warned months, even years ago. Indeed, right-wing terrorists have killed more Americans since 9/11 than any other form of violent extremism, are overall more active in committing homicides, are perceived to be the no. 1 threat by local law enforcement agencies, and worship one of the deadliest terrorist in American history: Timothy McVeigh.

As the threat from domestic terrorism is clearly increasing, one must ask if violent tactics used by these attackers might develop beyond the use of explosives and guns. The vehicle attack in Charlottesville was an indication of that tactics diversification, even though this was not the first incident of its kind in the United States. As the Oklahoma plot shows, far-right terrorists might see themselves in some kind of competition for public recognition with Jihadist groups like ISIS, which could lead to a further escalation of tactics used for example with the deployment of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) weapons. In fact, right-wing terrorists have for decades been attempting to develop and use chemical and biological weapons. This article aims to give a short overview on the history of such efforts, the potential for right-wing terrorism to use chemical and biological agents in the future, and how authorities can counter this threat.

A Look at the Cases

Even though no significant cases of successful right-wing CBRN terror attacks in Western countries are known, a number of plots have been uncovered that indicate the motives and tactics of these extremists. In 2009 Ian Davidson, who was the leader of the right-wing terrorist Aryan Strike Force (ASF), became the first British citizen convicted of producing a chemical weapon of mass destruction. When Davidson and his son Nicky were arrested in the United Kingdom, the subsequent trial and conviction made history. His plot aimed to poison water supplies of Muslims in Serbia using the toxin ricin, which he already had produced in a significant amount. Estimations by investigators regarding the lethality of the material varied drastically but some thought the amount produced by Davison could have killed up to 1,000 people.

In the mid-1980s one of the few right-wing terrorist organizations in the United States, “The Covenant, the Sword, and the Arm of the Lord”, acquired large amounts of cyanide, intending to poison water supplies in major U.S. cities, but failed to overcome the technical difficulties of dissemination. In May 1996, a laboratory staff member and white supremacist in Ohio, Larry Wayne Harris, successfully acquired plague bacteria – not illegal at that time. Two years later, Harris and a co-conspirator were arrested for threatening to release anthrax in Las Vegas, even though his strain was a vaccine grade and harmless version. Material to extract ricin was also found at the home of white supremacist James Kenneth Gluck in Tampa, Fla., who was arrested by the FBI in November 1999 after he threatened judges with biological warfare. More serious seems to have been the plot led by neo-Nazi William Krar of Texas, arrested in April 2003. Investigators found more than 500,000 rounds of ammunition, 65 pipe bombs and remote-control briefcase bombs, and almost two pounds of deadly sodium cyanide. Along with white supremacist and anti-government material, components to convert the cyanide into a bomb capable of killing thousands were also secured. In November 2011, a plot to blow up government buildings and kill masses of people using ricin by a group of four men belonging to an anti-government militia in Georgia was uncovered. Especially concerning was the fact that one of the four was working for the federal Department of Agriculture, giving him access to chemicals, technical equipment and ways to disseminate the poison into food and water supplies. In February 2017, 27 year old William Christopher Gibbs, member of the white supremacist Creativity Movement, was arrested after hospitalizing himself for side effects of his experiments with ricin, triggering a large FBI operation.

When looking at these cases, far-right extremists attempting to acquire and use CBRN weapons have very mixed backgrounds, ranging from career criminals to senior biodefense researchers at United States Army institutions. However, the more serious plots came from well-educated individuals with necessary access to equipment and dissemination ways indicating that right-wing terrorists might be quite well embedded in Western societies. In his seminal study about far-right terrorists’ recruitment and radicalization from 2012 for example, Pete Simi found 56% of his sample belonged to middle or upper social class and 53% had some form of college or higher education (with and without degrees). The majority of far-right CBRN plotters were part of groups and networks associated with their ideological and criminal conduct but not all of them. However, every far-right CBRN incident appears to be a culmination of a radicalization escalation process, sometimes even over years, with long histories of openly expressed violent, right-wing extremist, racist or anti-government opinions. Many of the plotters repeatedly threatened to use CBRN weapons in public to bystanders, families or friends. Even the lone actors were known to have gradually distanced themselves from their social environments getting more and more agitated and aggressive.

Now, the key question is: what makes a threat of far-right CBRN terrorism more likely and dangerous than compared with other violent ideologies, such as left-wing or jihadi terrorism? Of course, far-right extremists have equal access to open market technical equipment and supplies for manufacturing such weaponry as all other extremists in the country and their ideology is not more or less dangerous than jihadi or left-wing extremism, for example. Nevertheless, in 2012 international terrorism expert Peter Bergen stated, that “11 right-wing and left-wing extremists have managed to acquire CBRN material that they planned to use against the public, government employees or both” while there was no evidence of jihadists in the United States managing to do that. From these 11 cases only one (Joseph Konopka) was motivated by left-wing extremist (more specifically anarchist) political ideals. This fact is striking, since other violent extremists, especially Jihadists, certainly do not lack the willingness to use weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), as it is currently experienced in Syria and Iraq. But how indicative is this retrospectively almost singular right-wing CBRN terror threat for the future?

To assess the possibility of an attack, one has to take three factors into account: 1) the feasibility of the used weapon (acquisition, available know-how, technology, materials or agents), 2) the “effectivity” or costs and benefits of the weapon and 3) the motivation to use the weapon regarding the pursued aims. The assassination of an individual person with a plain firearm is feasible (through the ease of acquiring a firearm), effective (since a single, well-placed bullet will “do the job”) and sends a clear message in terms of motivation, however not to an extent exceeding every-day criminality encountered on the streets of big cities. Using a deadly toxin, like ricin, presents bigger hurdles in terms of feasibility, but is also highly effective (in terms of toxicity and evasion of forensic investigation) and, more important, will provide added value in terms of public attention and media coverage about the attack and the very ideology of the originators. Considering the attack on a crowded public space, planting explosives will lead to severe damage as well potentially high lethality. However, by mixing the explosives with radioactive material – a so called dirty bomb – will not only cause more fatalities through radiation, but also evoke a higher level of fear and terror. Additionally, such an incident would represent a difficult challenge for first responders and might render the government incompetent of an appropriate response and preparation in the eyes of the public. All terrorists potentially share this goal to make their attacks more impactful and deadly, even though right-wing terrorists rarely have aimed to produce mass casualties, so far.

Factor 2, the effectivity of a weapon is, depending on the planned operation, similar for all kinds of terrorist as well. However, the feasibility to use CBRN weapons (factor 1) might be higher for far-right terrorists than for others, e.g. jihadists, since the extreme right can rely on established and much larger support networks, which can provide the required material, know-how and dissemination ways. Of course, it is not impossible for lone actors from all ideological strands to acquire the material as well as the know-how. Regarding factor 3, the motive, the violent far-right might be in an extraordinary position right now, making it more dangerous than ever.

The current Trump administration is openly courting the extreme right and – in the eyes of observers – fuelling a rising far-right terror threat, for example through the inadequate reaction to the Charlottesville attack. In addition, the general public is much less likely to perceive violent actions from far-right extremists as “terrorism” compared, for example, with those acts by Islamic extremists. This gives violent extremists from the far-right considerably more space to radicalize, escalate violent tactics and plot attacks without interference from the outside than from any other violent extremist group in Western countries. The most significant danger, however, will come to light after the demise of the Trump administration. A future US government trying to put the far-right jinni that Trump has released back into the bottle will face a much stronger, self-confident and aggressive opponent, already dreaming of a race war. The current government is favoured by anti-government militias and sovereign citizens and they are looking for a new enemy: those “counter-revolutionaries” attempting to return the United States to a pre-Trump state. Even open civil war was threatened in a case of impeachment. far-right extremists of all different strands might have heavily stockpiled firearms and explosives, but they know they cannot outgun and outman law enforcement, National Guard or the Military. A fight to retain their perceived newly gained freedom and powers therefore must include a tactical edge forcing the government to refrain from a too aggressive crackdown. CBRN agents or even the potential to quickly acquire them are the most effective and logical way to ensure the government’s passivity, especially giving the history of CBRN plots within the far-right.

What is Likely, What is Not? A Choice of Weapons

Some CBRN agents are more likely to be used in a terrorist attack than others, depending on factors such as ease of acquiring raw materials, difficulty of production, the required know-how, danger of storing the material for the terrorist, degradation of the material over time, deliverance, dispersion, and potential countermeasures. Nuclear and radiological weapons require radioactive elements that are generally stored under high-security and thus hard to obtain without a state sponsor. Low-level radioactive elements unsuitable for nuclear weapons, but sufficient for the construction of a ‘dirty bomb’ might be easier to obtain, since industry, agriculture and medical institutions are dependent on them. Americium, which is used in household smoke detectors, has indeed been found in the homes of far-right extremists, e.g. Tampa resident Brandon Russell. However, its actual effectiveness as a dirty-bomb ingredient is debated. Further, neo-Nazi James Cummings acquired four 1-gallon containers with a radioactive uranium and thorium mix in 2008, along with highly toxic beryllium powder and instructions to build a dirty bomb.

Chemicals and biological material, while for some part underlying governmental restrictions concerning proliferation and acquisition, are much easier to access. As noted by Edward You of the FBI’s Weapons of Mass Destruction Directorate, Biological Countermeasures Unit, “The materials are readily available (…), and the majority of equipment can be purchased outright and do not fall under any regulatory regime.” Precursors for chemical warfare agents, as sodium cyanide in the case of William Krar, can be simply bought online. Manuals explaining the synthesis of the active agents in small laboratory or kitchen setups have been found in many cases, illustrating that the required knowledge has already spread and advanced significantly. Explosives that have been found and used in terror associated cases include the so called ‘mother of Satan’, triacetone peroxide (TATP), and hexamethylene triperoxide diamine (HTMD). TATP can be synthesized from easily accessible household chemicals (acetone, hydrogen peroxide and sulfuric acid). Synthesis of chemical warfare agents like sarin, a nerve agent used by the Aum Shinrikyo attacks on the Tokyo subway, is highly demanding in terms of technology and know-how. Considering the difficulties of achieving sufficient quality of the material and the high risk for the producers during manufacturing and storage make and attack with nerve agents appear unlikely. However, structurally more simple chemicals, like cyanide compounds which can be commercially obtained, have been used in far-right terror plots.

Another potential dual-use chemical is chlorine. The highly reactive gas is nowadays widely used as disinfectant, bleaching agent and within different industry branches. Millions of tons are transported on roads and railways within the US every year, and may as such be targets for terrorist attacks. Upon contact with the human mucosa, the water soluble chlorine will at first cause local irritations and, during prolonged exposition of higher doses, evoke the deadly “dry-land drowning”. While no large scale attacks on hazardous material (HAZMAT) transports have been reported so far, guides to derail trains carrying such materials have been published by Jihadists and could easily be used by far-right terrorists as well. Additionally, application of commercially acquired chlorine as choking agent in local, small scale attacks pose a risk.

Alternatives to chemicals are agents of biological origin: toxins, bacteria (or spores – robust and dormant forms) and viruses. Toxins are harmful products of biological organisms, which interfere with vital body functions. Production and purification of these substances require in-depth knowledge and large amounts are thus hard to obtain. Ricin, which can be isolated from the castor oil plant, has been detected in multiple cases of far-right terror plots. While ricin is extremely deadly when taken up into the body, a wide spread application of ricin to target large groups of people is rather unlikely, just by the large amounts needed for such operation and the very proteinaceous nature. The isolation and cultivation of bacteria, although requiring some microbiological knowledge, can be done in improvised laboratory setups. Highly pathogenic strains are usually kept in isolated, high-security laboratories. However, Bacillus anthracis is an omnipresent, easy to isolate soil bacterium. Anthrax, as in the case of Larry Wayne Harris, is according to the CDC generally considered to be the most likely agent which might be used in large-scale bioterror. Viruses are dependent on cells as hosts for multiplication and thus require an even more complicated production process, which is highly unlikely to be established outside of academic or industrial laboratories. While the deadliest infectious diseases, like ebola or lassa, are caused by viral infections, application of viruses as terror agent by far-right extremist is unlikely. However, the growing industry and professionalization of DIY bio-laboratories across the United States was also noted by the FBI, which might also increase accessibility of the necessary technical equipment for potential biological and chemical terrorism.

Likely Goals of Right-Wing Terrorists

Existing research on right-wing CBRN terrorism is scarce and outdated. Few experts have even considered the potential threat, mostly in the late 1990s looking at Christian Millenarianism as a form of religious terrorism aiming for the apocalypse in a “sacrificial ritual of mass murder and suicide ”. Even though Christian millenarian groups have not attempted to develop CBRN weapons, they were scrutinized for such a potential threat after the Aum attack in Tokyo. Jessica Stern wrote in 1999 that “the costs of escalation to biological weapons seem to outweigh the benefits” for domestic extremists. Paul Blister and Nina Kollars confirmed this notion regarding the Christian Patriot Movement in 2011. Right-wing terrorism, however, goes beyond Christian fundamentalism and fanaticism circling around Armageddon. Especially given the dramatic increase in anti-government sentiment and militia groups in some western countries (e.g. the US and Germany) and their partial overlap with white supremacist and nationalist groups, there is potential for a future escalation of violent tactics if anyone might attempt to contain them again. Right-wing terrorists have usually not sought large public audiences for their attacks in order to communicate specific political programs but rather to annihilate their enemies by every means possible. In addition, to create chaos and panic, as well as erode a public’s trust in the government’s ability to provide safety by demonstrating its helplessness – a concept known as ‘strategy of tension’ among right-wing extremists – is thought to break the government’s monopoly of force and core political legitimacy.

Other research about right-wing extremism and terrorism has also shown, that an overlap between violent activists from the far-right and organized crime exists, which means that the acquisition of WMDs by these groups and actors could also be used as significant tool to shift the power base in extortion operations towards what could become right-wing extremist crime syndicates. In Austria for example a neo-Nazi group called ‘Object 21’ controlled large parts of the red light milieu along the Austrian-German border through the use of explosives, arson and attacks with butyric acid. In the United States, neo-Nazi oriented networks such as the Aryan Brotherhood for example, are deeply involved in drug trafficking. Highly militant and criminal hybrid networks could have severe impact within the organized crime world if they get their hands on CBRN weaponry, which is of course true not only of far-right but also for other terrorists.

Summing up, the potential goals of right-wing CBRN terrorism are most likely to use it for targeted assassinations, creating chaos and fear (not necessary connected with the own group and ideology, rather to erode trust in the government’s ability to protect, for which no large scale lethality is necessary as the agent itself might be scary enough), or to disrupt important commercial and logistical hubs to destabilize democratic governments, instead of producing mass casualties. In addition, it is a likely option that anti-government militias will use CBRN weapon capabilities to protect themselves from government prosecution and as leverage in extortion attempts involving their own “sovereignty” and criminal activities. This makes low to medium lethal CBRN terrorism with nevertheless severe psychological impact, creating sustained damage to democratic forms of government, a truly concerning threat. Based on previous cases, this threat seems to be greatest in the United States and Great Britain.

#### Nuclear terror alone causes nuclear war and total collapse [0:14]

Arguello & Buis 18 [Irma Arguello and Emiliano J. Buis, \* founder and chair of the NPSGlobal Foundation, and head of the secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Leadership Network. She holds a degree in physics, a Master’s in business administration, and completed graduate studies in defense and security, \*\* lawyer specializing in international law. He holds a PhD from the University of Buenos Aires (UBA), a Master’s in Human and Social Sciences from the University of Paris/Panthéon-Sorbonne, and a postgraduate diploma in national defense from the National Defense School, “The global impacts of a terrorist nuclear attack: What would happen? What should we do?,” 2018, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 74, Issue 2, pp. 114-119, https://doi.org/10.1080/00963402.2018.1436812, Recut EA]

Though hard to accept, the detonation of a nuclear device – by states or non-state actors – is today a plausible scenario. And while much of the world’s focus has been on the current nuclear weapons arsenals possessed by states – about 14,550 warheads, all of which carry the risk of intentional or unintentional use – the threat of nuclear terrorism is here and increasing. For more than a decade, Al Qaeda, Aum Shinrikyo, and other terrorist groups have expressed their desire to acquire fissile material to build and detonate an improvised nuclear bomb. None of them could fulfill that goal – so far. But that does not mean that they will not succeed in the future.

Making matters worse, there is evidence of an illicit market for nuclear weapons-usable materials. There are sellers in search of potential buyers, as shown by the dismantlement of a nuclear smuggling network in Moldova in 2015. There certainly are plenty of sites from which to obtain nuclear material. According to the 2016 Nuclear Security Index by the Nuclear Threat Initiative, 24 countries still host inventories of nuclear weapons-usable materials, stored in facilities with different degrees of security.

And in terms of risk, it is not necessary for a given country to possess nuclear weapons, weapons-usable materials, or nuclear facilities for it to be useful to nuclear terrorists: Structural and institutional weaknesses in a country may make it favorable for the illicit trade of materials. Permeable boundaries, high levels of corruption, weaknesses in judicial systems, and consequent impunity may give rise to a series of transactions and other events, which could end in a nuclear attack. The truth is that, at this stage, no country in possession of nuclear weapons or weapons-usable materials can guarantee their full protection against nuclear terrorism or nuclear smuggling.

Because we live in a world of growing insecurity, where explicit and tacit agreements between the relevant powers – which upheld global stability during the post- Cold War – are giving way to increasing mistrust and hostility, a question arises: How would our lives be affected if a current terrorist group such as the Islamic State (ISIS), or new terrorist groups in the future, succeed in evolving from today’s Manchester style “low-tech” attacks to a “high-tech” one, involving a nuclear bomb, detonated in a capital city, anywhere in the world?

We attempted to answer this question in a report developed by a high-level multidisciplinary expert group convened by the NPSGlobal Foundation for the Latin American and Caribbean Leadership Network. We found that there would be multiple harmful effects that would spread promptly around the globe (Arguello and Buis 2016); a more detailed analysis is below, which highlights the need for the creation of a comprehensive nuclear security system.

The consequences of a terrorist nuclear attack

A small and primitive 1-kiloton fission bomb (with a yield of about one-fifteenth of the one dropped on Hiroshima, and certainly much less sophisticated; cf. Figure 1), detonated in any large capital city of the developed world, would cause an unprecedented catastrophic scenario.

[FIGURE 1 OMITTED]

An estimate of direct effects in the attack’s location includes a death toll of 7,300-to-23,000 people and 12,600-to-57,000 people injured, depending on the target’s geography and population density. Total physical destruction of the city’s infrastructure, due to the blast (shock wave) and thermal radiation, would cover a radius of about 500 meters from the point of detonation (also known as ground zero), while ionizing radiation greater than 5 Sieverts – compatible with the deadly acute radiation syndrome – would expand within an 850-meter radius. From the environmental point of view, such an area would be unusable for years. In addition, radioactive fallout would expand in an area of about 300 square kilometers, depending on meteorological conditions (cf. Figure 2).

[FIGURE 2 OMITTED]

But the consequences would go far beyond the effects in the target country, however, and promptly propagate worldwide. Global and national security, economy and finance, international governance and its framework, national political systems, and the behavior of governments and individuals would all be put under severe trial. The severity of the effects at a national level, however, would depend on the countries’ level of development, geopolitical location, and resilience.

Global security and regional/national defense schemes would be strongly affected. An increase in global distrust would spark rising tensions among countries and blocs, that could even lead to the brink of nuclear weapons use by states (if, for instance, a sponsor country is identified). The consequences of such a shocking scenario would include a decrease in states’ self-control, an escalation of present conflicts and the emergence of new ones, accompanied by an increase in military unilateralism and military expenditures.

Regarding the economic and financial impacts, a severe global economic depression would rise from the attack, likely lasting for years. Its duration would be strongly dependent on the course of the crisis. The main results of such a crisis would include a 2 percent fall of growth in global Gross Domestic Product, and a 4 percent decline of international trade in the two years following the attack (cf. Figure 3). In the case of developing and less-developed countries, the economic impacts would also include a shortage of high-technology products such as medicines, as well as a fall in foreign direct investment and a severe decline of international humanitarian aid toward low-income countries. We expect an increase of unemployment and poverty in all countries. Global poverty would raise about 4 percent after the attack, which implies that at least 30 million more people would be living in extreme poverty, in addition to the current estimated 767 million.

[FIGURE 3 OMITTED]

In the area of international relations, we would expect a breakdown of key doctrines involving politics, security, and relations among states. These international tensions could lead to a collapse of the nuclear order as we know it today, with a consequent setback of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation commitments. In other words, the whole system based on the Nuclear Non- Proliferation Treaty would be put under severe trial. After the attack, there would be a reassessment of existing security doctrines, and a deep review of concepts such as nuclear deterrence, no-first-use, proportionality, and negative security assurances.

Finally, the behavior of governments and individuals would also change radically. Internal chaos fueled by the media and social networks would threaten governance at all levels, with greater impact on those countries with weak institutional frameworks. Social turbulence would emerge in most countries, with consequent attempts by governments to impose restrictions on personal freedoms to preserve order – possibly by declaring a state of siege or state of emergency – and legislation would surely become tougher on human rights. There would also be a significant increase in social fragmentation – with a deepening of antagonistic views, mistrust, and intolerance, both within countries and towards others – and a resurgence of large-scale social movements fostered by ideological interests and easily mobilized through social media.

Prevention, preparedness, response

Given the severity of the impacts, no country in possession of nuclear weapons or weapons-usable materials can guarantee its full protection against nuclear terrorism or nuclear smuggling for proliferation purposes. Nor is it realistic to conceive of full compensation to others in the international community, if a catastrophic event happens because of any country’s acts or omissions. Therefore, we consider that prevention is the only acceptable way forward to preserve global stability.

Consequently, it is essential for countries to make every effort to prevent nuclear terrorists from fulfilling their goals. It is true that the “primitivism” of currently active terrorist organizations gives a certain space to do what is necessary to enhance the current nuclear security effort concerning prevention and response. However, the perception of the “low likeliness” of a nuclear terrorist attack neutralizes the required sense of urgency in decision-making. Being in fact a “high-risk” scenario, it is imperative that governments consider this reality when setting priorities and making decisions about nuclear security.

## Case

#### Unions aren’t key to solve any of those things---polarization and extremism don’t go away just from increased worker power

#### OR democracy and equality are resilient, AND solves nothing.

Doorenspleet 19 Renske Doorenspleet, Politics Professor at the University of Warwick. [Rethinking the Value of Democracy: A Comparative Perspective, Palgrave Macmillan, p. 239-243]

The value of democracy has been taken for granted until recently, but this assumption seems to be under threat now more than ever before. As was explained in Chapter 1, democracy’s claim to be valuable does not rest on just one particular merit, and scholars tend to distinguish three different types of values (Sen 1999). This book focused on the instrumental value of democracy (and hence not on the intrinsic and constructive value), and investigated the value of democracy for peace (Chapters 3 and 4), control of corruption (Chapter 5) and economic development (Chapter 6). This study was based on a search of an enormous academic database for certain keywords,6 then pruned the thousands of articles down to a few hundred articles (see Appendix) which statistically analysed the connection between the democracy and the four expected outcomes. The frst fiding is that a reverse wave away from democracy has not happened (see Chapter 2). Not yet, at least. Democracy is not doing worse than before, at least not in comparative perspective. While it is true that there is a dramatic decline in democracy in some countries,7 a general trend downwards cannot yet be detected. It would be better to talk about ‘stagnation’, as not many dictatorships have democratized recently, while democracies have not yet collapsed. Another fnding is that the instrumental value of democracy is very questionable. The feld has been deeply polarized between researchers who endorse a link between democracy and positive outcomes, and those who reject this optimistic idea and instead emphasize the negative effects of democracy. There has been ‘no consensus’ in the quantitative literature on whether democracy has instrumental value which leads some beneficial general outcomes. Some scholars claim there is a consensus, but they only do so by ignoring a huge amount of literature which rejects their own point of view. After undertaking a large-scale analysis of carefully selected articles published on the topic (see Appendix), this book can conclude that the connections between democracy and expected benefts are not as strong as they seem. Hence, we should not overstate the links between the phenomena. The overall evidence is weak. Take the expected impact of democracy on peace for example. As Chapter 3 showed, the study of democracy and interstate war has been a fourishing theme in political science, particularly since the 1970s. However, there are four reasons why democracy does not cause peace between countries, and why the empirical support for the popular idea of democratic peace is quite weak. Most statistical studies have not found a strong correlation between democracy and interstate war at the dyadic level. They show that there are other—more powerful—explanations for war and peace, and even that the impact of democracy is a spurious one (caveat 1). Moreover, the theoretical foundation of the democratic peace hypothesis is weak, and the causal mechanisms are unclear (caveat 2). In addition, democracies are not necessarily more peaceful in general, and the evidence for the democratic peace hypothesis at the monadic level is inconclusive (caveat 3). Finally, the process of democratization is dangerous. Living in a democratizing country means living in a less peaceful country (caveat 4). With regard to peace between countries, we cannot defend the idea that democracy has instrumental value. Can the (instrumental) value of democracy be found in the prevention of civil war? Or is the evidence for the opposite idea more convincing, and does democracy have a ‘dark side’ which makes civil war more likely? The findings are confusing, which is exacerbated by the fact that different aspects of civil war (prevalence, onset, duration and severity) are mixed up in some civil war studies. Moreover, defining civil war is a delicate, politically sensitive issue. Determining whether there is a civil war in a particular country is incredibly diffcult, while measurements suffer from many weaknesses (caveat 1). Moreover, there is no linear link: civil wars are just as unlikely in democracies as in dictatorships (caveat 2). Civil war is most likely in times of political change. Democratization is a very unpredictable, dangerous process, increasing the chance of civil war significantly. Hybrid systems are at risk as well: the chance of civil war is much higher compared to other political systems (caveat 3). More specifcally, both the strength and type of political institutions matter when explaining civil war. However, the type of political system (e.g. democracy or dictatorship) is not the decisive factor at all (caveat 4). Finally, democracy has only limited explanatory power (caveat 5). Economic factors are far more significant than political factors (such as having a democratic system) when explaining the onset, duration and severity of civil war. To prevent civil war, it would make more sense to make poorer countries richer, instead of promoting democracy. Helping countries to democratize would even be a very dangerous idea, as countries with changing levels of democracy are most vulnerable, making civil wars most likely. It is true that there is evidence that the chance of civil war decreases when the extent of democracy increases considerably. The problem however is that most countries do not go through big political changes but through small changes instead; those small steps—away or towards more democracy—are dangerous. Not only is the onset of civil war likely under such circumstances, but civil wars also tend to be longer, and the confict is more cruel leading to more victims, destruction and killings (see Chapter 4). A more encouraging story can be told around the value for democracy to control corruption in a country (see Chapter 5). Fighting corruption has been high on the agenda of international organizations such as the World Bank and the IMF. Moreover, the theme of corruption has been studied thoroughly in many different academic disciplines—mainly in economics, but also in sociology, political science and law. Democracy has often been suggested as one of the remedies when fghting against high levels of continuous corruption. So far, the statistical evidence has strongly supported this idea. As Chapter 5 showed, dozens of studies with broad quantitative, cross-national and comparative research have found statistically signifcant associations between (less) democracy and (more) corruption. However, there are vast problems around conceptualization (caveat 1) and measurement (caveat 2) of ‘corruption’. Another caveat is that democratizing countries are the poorest performers with regard to controlling corruption (caveat 3). Moreover, it is not democracy in general, but particular political institutions which have an impact on the control of corruption; and a free press also helps a lot in order to limit corruptive practices in a country (caveat 4). In addition, democracies seem to be less affected by corruption than dictatorships, but at the same time, there is clear evidence that economic factors have more explanatory power (caveat 5). In conclusion, more democracy means less corruption, but we need to be modest (as other factors matter more) and cautious (as there are many caveats). The perceived impact of democracy on development has been highly contested as well (see Chapter 6). Some scholars argue that democratic systems have a positive impact, while others argue that high levels of democracy actually reduce the levels of economic growth and development. Particularly since the 1990s, statistical studies have focused on this debate, and the empirical evidence is clear: there is no direct impact of democracy on development. Hence, both approaches cannot be supported (see caveat 1). The indirect impact via other factors is also questionable (caveat 2). Moreover, there is too much variation in levels of economic growth and development among the dictatorial systems, and there are huge regional differences (caveat 3). Adopting a one-size-ftsall approach would not be wise at all. In addition, in order to increase development, it would be better to focus on alternative factors such as improving institutional quality and good governance (caveat 4). There is not suffcient evidence to state that democracy has instrumental value, at least not with regard to economic growth. However, future research needs to include broader concepts and measurements of development in their models, as so far studies have mainly focused on explaining cross-national differences in growth of GDP (caveat 5). Overall, the instrumental value of democracy is—at best—tentative, or—if being less mild—simply non-existent. Democracy is not necessarily better than any alternative form of government. With regard to many of the expected benefts—such as less war, less corruption and more economic development—democracy does deliver, but so do nondemocratic systems. High or low levels of democracy do not make a distinctive difference. Mid-range democracy levels do matter though. Hybrid systems can be associated with many negative outcomes, while this is also the case for democratizing countries. Moreover, other explanations—typically certain favourable economic factors in a country—are much more powerful to explain the expected benefts, at least compared to the single fact that a country is a democracy or not. The impact of democracy fades away in the powerful shadows of the economic factors.8