### Plan

#### I affirm:

#### Plan text: A just government of India ought to recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike against the government.

### Price Guarantees

#### Advantage 1 is Price Guarantees

#### Modi’s promise to repeal isn’t enough---strikes are key to ensuring additional protections

BBC News 11-19-21. . "Farm laws: India PM Narendra Modi repeals controversial reforms." 11-19-21. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-59342627

What has the reaction been?

Farmers in Punjab and Haryana are celebrating the news, raising flags of victory and distributing sweets. But they say **the fight is not over.**

"We have no faith in a verbal promise. Unless we see it in writing that the laws have actually been repealed, we will stay here," Raj Singh Chaudhary, a 99-year-old protester, told the BBC's Salman Ravi.

Mr Chaudhary is among hundreds of farmers who have been striking at the Delhi-Ghazipur border for a year.

His view was echoed by Rakesh Tikait, a prominent farmer leader who said they would call off the protest only **after the laws were repealed in the winter session of parliament.**

Another farmer leader said they needed additional promises from the government around assured prices for their crops to end their protest.

The announcement has stunned political observers as well as those who both support and oppose the laws - many tweeted saying it was a huge victory for the farmers and a "major climbdown" for Mr Modi.

But some farm leaders and economists who saw merit in the laws have expressed disappointment over their repeal. Anil Ghanwat, head of a farmers' union in western India, said it was an ["unfortunate" decision](https://twitter.com/VijaytaL/status/1461587947904405506) driven by political considerations.

Opposition parties welcomed the decision, with Congress party leader Rahul Gandhi calling it "a win against injustice". And West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, took to social media to praise farmers and congratulate them.

BJP members said the decision to repeal the laws had nothing to do with the polls and the decision was taken to end the protest. They did not say if there were plans to bring back the laws in another form later.

Narendra Modi's decision to repeal the contentious farm laws is, at once, a strategic and political move and a belated admission of the government's haste and high-handedness.

The laws had whipped up an unprecedented firestorm of protests in the states of Punjab and Uttar Pradesh and posed a real challenge to Mr Modi. They had mobilised farmers and civil society in Sikh-majority Punjab and spread to parts of Uttar Pradesh, states which will see key elections early next year.

By repealing the laws, Mr Modi hopes to regain the confidence of the farmers in general and Sikhs in particular. It would also boost the BJP's chances in the polls.

#### Scenario 1 is the Economy:

#### India economy down now---farm market reforms are key

Emily **Schmall and** Hari **Kumar** | Published Feb. 1, 2021 Updated **02-02**, 2021 | India’s Modest Budget Signals Modi’s Limited Options | NYTimes | https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/01/world/asia/india-budget-modi-economy.html

NEW DELHI — The world’s biggest economies are trying to borrow and spend their way out of the pandemic, from the European Union’s [$900 billion stimulus package](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/world/europe/eu-stimulus-coronavirus.html) to President Biden’s proposed [$1.9 trillion rescue plan](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/14/business/economy/biden-stimulus-plan.html).

Then there’s India.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government on Monday proposed a nearly half-a-trillion-dollar budget for the 12 months beginning on April 1 that shows New Delhi is taking a largely conservative tack. Infrastructure and health care spending are set to rise significantly, but Mr. Modi’s budget also calls for reducing debt.

Over all, **spending would rise less than 1 percent at a time when India is suffering from** [**its worst recession in years**](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/27/business/economy/india-economy-covid-19.html) while battling the coronavirus. India’s economy, once one of the world’s fastest growing, is estimated to have **shrunk nearly 8 percent in the current fiscal year,** which will end on March 31.

“I don’t know why the **government is so hung up on being fiscally conservative** when the whole world is suggesting that this is the time, like no other, to be profligate,” said Mahesh Vyas, an economist and the chief executive of the Mumbai-based Center for Monitoring the Indian Economy.

“I don’t know any economist suggesting this line of policy,” he said.

The amount allocated toward defense, for example, totals only a fraction more than last year, **even as Indian and Chinese troops** [**face off**](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/25/world/asia/india-china-border.html) **along their** [**largely undefined high-mountain border**](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/17/world/asia/india-china-border-clashes.html)**.**

“This was only to be expected given the state of the Indian economy, but will certainly impact the military’s modernization,” said Lt. Gen. D.S. Hooda, India’s former commander of the area’s northern border with Pakistan and China.

In many ways, the budget reflects Mr. Modi’s difficult position. He remains [hugely popular](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/16/world/asia/coronavirus-modi-india.html), and the country’s opposition parties have not been able to [seriously challenge him](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/09/world/asia/india-bihar-election.html).

But **Mr. Modi’s** [**stringent lockdown**](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/25/world/asia/india-lockdown-coronavirus.html) **in March** [**cratered the economy**](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/05/world/asia/india-economy-coronavirus.html)**.** His government says the move saved countless lives, but it also cost jobs. Many people are still out of work or earning less.

[photo removed]

A government-run hospital in Kolkata, India. The Indian government is allocating a much larger share of its nearly $500 billion budget to infrastructure and health care.Credit...Rupak De Chowdhuri/Reuters

He faces thorny challenges on other fronts. For months, **farmers** [**have been clamoring**](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/27/world/asia/india-farmer-protest.html) **on** [**the capital’s borders**](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/25/world/asia/india-farmers-protests-delhi.html) **for lawmakers to repeal a trio of farm laws that Mr. Modi** has said are key to India’s market reforms.

#### Lack of price guarantees inevitably creates market crashes and unemployment

By Ravinder **Kaur** | 2021-**02-19** | How a farmers’ protest in India evolved into a mass movement that refuses to fade | New Statesman | https://www.newstatesman.com/ideas/2021/02/how-farmers-protest-india-evolved-mass-movement-refuses-fade

The [protests began](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-55630394) last summer in the northern state of Punjab, in response to the [rushing through](https://thewire.in/politics/farm-bills-rajya-sabha-legislative-scrutiny) of three [new farm laws](https://www.business-standard.com/about/what-is-farm-bills#collapse) to open India’s agricultural sector to the market. Subsidised and once partly shielded by the state, the sector, according to the World Bank, employs more than 40 per cent of India’s workforce. The protests only became visible in national media in late November – international coverage of the mobilisation, still remarkably thin, has been even more belated – when the farmers’ unions gave the call to march to the national capital: [“Chalo Delhi”](https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/dilli-chalo-why-angry-farmers-want-to-storm-new-delhi/story-jXPjzqOmTgxralskj1e7HI.html) (“let’s go to Delhi”).

What made the images of seemingly endless caravans of people travelling to Delhi in tractors, trolleys, cars or sometimes on foot so spectacular was not just the march itself but the government’s attempt to stop it from reaching the city. **Tens of thousands of protesters faced barricades, water cannon and even tear gas shells. Soon, tent cities began appearing along Delhi’s outer perimeter as the government refused to allow the farmers entry**. The tent cities of Singhu, Tikri, Shahjahanpur Kheda, Ghazipur – once just the names of villages at the doorstep of the capital, have become part of a popular vocabulary of democratic dissent and solidarity.

The [three laws](http://egazette.nic.in/WriteReadData/2020/222040.pdf) at the heart of this dispute – on pricing, sale of produce and storage – remove safeguards that had partly insulated farming from the vagaries of [the market](https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/opinion-farm-bills-a-false-experiment-in-the-name-of-agricultural-freedom/362281). While the government claims deregulating agriculture will [double](https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1657657) farmers’ incomes and improve productivity, the small and marginal farmers who make up [85 per cent of the sector](http://farmer.gov.in/imagedefault/DFI/DFI%20Volume%201.pdf) fear they will [lose](https://www.indiaspend.com/fear-distrust-behind-punjab-farmers-protests/) out to private investors. **The new laws strip away the protective cover of a** [**minimum price guarantee**](https://farmer.gov.in/mspstatements.aspx) **and the** [**mandi system**](https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/economy/why-punjab-stands-to-lose-from-farmers-produce-trade-and-commerce-ordinance-72040) **(regulated wholesale markets), leaving farmers exposed to a** [**barrier-free**](https://www.indiaspend.com/why-farmers-are-worried-about-new-laws-its-the-history/) **market in which they have little bargaining power against the major corporate players.**

The farmers’ anxiety also stems from **previous measures to deregulate agriculture, which increased agrarian distress**. The often-cited cautionary tale is of Bihar state, in eastern India, where the **liberalising reforms of the farm sector in 2005 eventually crashed prices, forcing small-scale farmers to sell their produce for paltry sums**. Faced with debt and dispossession, many farmers became farm labourers in other states where regulated agricultural markets were still intact. Fear of dispossession is fuelling the protests, though their expansion to other sections of society, including journalists, activists and other workers, reflects a wider, growing disenchantment with Modi’s “New India”: an illiberal state locked in an embrace with “liberal”, free-market capitalism.

#### Strong Ag creates a sustainable recovery.

By Emily **Schmall** | Published Dec. 4, 2020 Updated **10-22** Oct. 22, 2021 | Indian Farmers’ Protests Spread, in Challenge to Modi | NYTimes | https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/04/world/asia/india-farmers-protest-pollution-coronavirus.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article

NEW DELHI — Before [India’s farmers](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/22/world/asia/india-farmers-protests-modi.html) rose up in anger, presenting an increasingly difficult challenge to a government already grappling with the coronavirus outbreak and a devastating economic slump, Devinder Singh set his field on fire.

Mr. Singh would have preferred to clear his rice field. A 41-year-old farmer in the parched region of Punjab, he knew that setting piles of field waste on fire after harvest contributes to the pollution that often chokes New Delhi and the rest of northern [India](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/30/world/asia/india-ban-islamic-schools.html).

But he is one of [thousands of farmers](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/25/world/asia/india-farmers-tractors-delhi.html?referringSource=articleShare) in an increasingly nationwide pushback against Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s proposal to overhaul the way many of the country’s 146 million farms do business. Mr. Modi has said that his market-oriented reform would free them from the constraints of a state-run system.

Many Indian farmers believe the overhaul will lead to lower prices and pave the way for corporate takeovers of their small farms, which average [less than three acres](http://agcensus.nic.in/document/agcen1516/T1_ac_2015_16.pdf) in size. [Farmer protests](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/22/world/asia/india-farmers-protests-modi.html) that began choking the roads to New Delhi last week have spread, intensifying pressure on Mr. Modi’s government to strike a deal.

Mr. Singh, who joined the protests outside New Delhi, was also incensed by a new, pollution-focused government ordinance prescribing prison, a fine of up to 10 million rupees (about $135,000) or both for burning crop residue. So last month, when it came time to clear his field for the winter wheat season, he burned the rice straw instead.

“Most of the farmers, we have tried not to burn, but we wanted to show our resentment,” said Mr. Singh, who works a 17-acre farm in the Firozpur district of Punjab. “If you impose on us, we will burn it.”

Their defiance may be worsening problems in New Delhi. Deaths from the coronavirus are rising as the Indian capital grapples with a third wave of infections, exacerbated by worsening air pollution. Some experts say fires from angry farmers are contributing to the pollution. The government disputes the theory.

The two sides are set to resume talks on Saturday. While officials have said they will not give in and repeal the laws, they could compromise on one of the farmers’ demands: enshrining minimum prices for some crops into law.

[photo removed]

Farmers protesting at the Delhi-Haryana border listened to a speaker on Tuesday.Credit...Altaf Qadri/Associated Press

In the meantime, the protests have spread beyond New Delhi. Farmers marched and waved banners in the southern states of Kerala and Karnataka and in the northeastern state of Assam. Sugar cane farmers in Uttar Pradesh, who would be less affected by the farm overhaul, set up a protest camp in solidarity, clogging a central artery on the state’s border with Delhi.

India’s foreign ministry summoned Canadian diplomats on Friday after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau [voiced concern](https://thewire.in/world/canada-expresses-concern-over-indias-handling-farmers-protests-india-hits-back) for the farmers during a Facebook Live session. The ministry said the comments constituted “unacceptable interference” and risked damaging ties between the two nations.

Mr. Modi’s government faced similarly [widespread protests](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/22/world/asia/modi-india-citizenship-law.html) late last year after it enacted an anti-Muslim naturalization law. But these demonstrations present a trickier challenge.

Farmers represent a powerful political constituency for Mr. Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party. Farmers could also be important for bringing India out of [its debilitating, coronavirus-driven recession](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/31/world/asia/india-economy-gdp.html). Agriculture has been [a rare bright spot](https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1657224), with farmers continuing to purchase consumer goods and offering income for people who lost their jobs after Mr. Modi locked down the country to stop the pandemic earlier this year.

Outside New Delhi, protesters were settling in for a long wait.

At the village of Singhu, on the border between the territory of Delhi and the state of Haryana, protesters blocked several miles of highway. On a recent visit, they were cooking and serving food on long mats, spread on the ground in the style of Sikh temple kitchens, and sleeping on hay in tractor-trailers covered with canvas tarps. An armed barricade blocked the road to New Delhi.

Harjinder Singh, a wheat and cotton farmer in Gujarat, Mr. Modi’s home state, traveled more than 600 miles to join the protest. He said that farming had become untenable in Gujarat because farmers had no access to a state-run market that subsidizes their crops.

“I’ve got 100 acres there,” he said, “and now I’ve turned it into barren land because of the government’s rude policies.”

Angry farmers could make their worries felt beyond the protests.

[photo removed]

At a police barricade Thursday in Singhu, a village on the Delhi-Haryana border.Credit...Danish Siddiqui/Reuters

After enjoying some of its cleanest air in memory during the lockdown, New Delhi has recorded day after day of catastrophically bad air. Pollution in the capital surges near the end of every year, as cold winds sweep down from the Himalayas and people try to keep warm, but the elevated levels amid the outbreak have prompted questions.

Farmers traditionally play a role in the annual pollution. Many set fire to large swaths of land to clear fields ahead of the winter wheat sowing season, a practice known as stubble burning. Farm fires have been estimated to contribute between 2 and 40 percent of Delhi’s air pollution during the period.

Experts say this year’s pollution levels could be blamed in part on displaced laborers returning to farms, resulting in more cultivating. Satellite data has registered the worst farm fires in four years. “Farm production is at a record level,” said Panwar Sudhir, a life sciences professor of zoology at the University of Lucknow who follows farming issues.

But Mr. Sudhir [and other experts](https://scroll.in/latest/978619/punjab-records-73883-incidents-of-stubble-burning-highest-in-4-years-amid-farm-laws-protests) said farmers may be ignoring official threats and inducements to curb stubble burning as a way to protest. State authorities have long worked to discourage the practice, including offering the use of stubble-clearing tractors and paying farmers not to burn.

“What farmers were saying was if we are protesting, and you don’t listen to us, then we will burn the stubble,” said Ramandeep Singh Mann, an engineer turned farmers’ activist in Punjab.

Government officials dispute the idea of a direct connection.

“The farming laws have nothing to do with this pollution impact,” said Prakash Javadekar, India’s minister for the environment, adding that farmers will stop burning when they have a less costly alternative — a goal that the government wants to help them find.

“There will be more solutions in the offing,” he said.

Whatever the cause, the rise in pollution has been deadly as the coronavirus has made its way through New Delhi. Delhi has witnessed [record daily infection numbers](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/world/asia/india-coronavirus-cases.html) and its highest death toll since the pandemic began, registering 2,612 deaths in November.

[photo removed]

Burning stubble in the state of Punjab in October.Credit...Archana Thiyagarajan/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

“Pollution and cold waves worked like splashing petrol on the burning building,” said Dr. Nikhil Modi, a pulmonologist at Apollo hospital in New Delhi.

The pollution makes it harder for coronavirus victims, like Ritesh Agrawal’s diabetic mother, to breathe. Last month, after she said she was struggling to breathe, Mr. Agrawal immediately took her to be tested for Covid-19.

She tested positive, and doctors advised home isolation. But within hours of returning home, her oxygen levels plummeted.

Mr. Agrawal, a 41-year-old businessman in Delhi, said his mother died after being turned away from one hospital after another.

“I have money and connections,” Mr. Agrawal said. “But even that did not help.”

The Indian government has made fixing New Delhi’s pollution a priority. Mr. Javadekar said that the government has purchased a fleet of electric buses, expanded metro rail service and imposed steeper emission standards on personal cars. It has also pushed sooty refinery work outside the city limits. It monitors pollution levels from more than 3,000 industrial plants and notifies plant managers by text message when emissions exceed federal limits.

At the camp in Singhu, many of the farmers said they had no choice but to burn their waste. Many of the farmers from Punjab are Sikhs. For hundreds of years, males in that community have used the surname Singh to show their common bond.

That community is under threat, said Navdeep Singh, 30, a seventh-generation farmer from Amritsar in Punjab. Times are hard, he said, and government efforts like making tractors available are ultimately still too expensive.

“We are forced to burn,” Mr. Singh said, as he shelled peas for one of the demonstration camp’s free kitchens. “The government hasn’t really helped us with any other way to dispose of it.”

#### Indian economic strength deters China---military buildup and signal of resolve diffuses conflict.

Husain **Haqqani** **and** Aparna **Pande** **7-10**-21. Haqqani is the director for South and Central Asia at the Hudson Institute in Washington D.C. and was Pakistan’s ambassador to the United States. Pande (Ph.D) is director of the Initiative on the Future of India and South Asia at the Hudson Institute. "India has a long way to go in confronting China". The Hill. https://thehill.com/opinion/international/562397-india-has-a-long-way-to-go-in-confronting-china

India’s decision to move [50,000](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-06-27/india-shifts-50-000-troops-to-china-border-in-historic-defense-shift) additional troops to its border with China bolsters its ability to protect itself against Chinese aggression. It is a belated response to China’s actions [last year](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-57234024), when the Chinese army [surprised](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-china-military-families-insight-idUSKBN2460YB) ill-prepared Indian soldiers and occupied several square miles of Indian territory in the Ladakh region to build roads and fortify military encampments. The hope of some Indian policymakers to resolve the matter diplomatically has not so far been fulfilled. Several rounds of military and diplomatic negotiations since April 2020, when the Chinese incursions started, have yielded little result. Any willingness on India’s part to deal forcefully with China would be welcomed in the U.S., where successive administrations have sought to integrate India into America’s Indo-Pacific strategy. Several years of an India-U.S. entente cordiale has been premised on India standing up to China. After all, with a population of more than one billion, India is the only country with enough manpower to match that of China. China sees India as a potential rival and covets parts of Indian territory. China [occupied](https://www.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-43780820091108) 15,000 miles of Indian territory in the Aksai Chin section of Ladakh after war in 1962. China’s desire for influence in South Asia and the Indian Ocean Region challenges India in its backyard, setting off [competition](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09700160801886314) for the same sphere of influence. But China’s phenomenal economic growth, coupled with India’s inability to keep pace, has hampered India’s ability to respond to China strategically. Even now the moving of troops to Ladakh is a tactical maneuver not backed by a clear strategic plan. On [four](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/why-chinese-and-indian-troops-are-clashing-again/2020/09/11/c5939466-f402-11ea-8025-5d3489768ac8_story.html) occasions since 2012, China has indulged in salami-slicing along the largely un-demarcated India-China border. India’s response each time has been limited to diplomatic negotiations with limited military pushback. There is a co-relation between relative economic strength and China’s willingness to flex its muscle. Between 1988, when India and China signed a series of agreements to restore relations, and 2012, the border between India and China remained by and large quiet. During that period, the size of the two countries’ economies was not huge. In 1990, India’s GDP stood at $320 billion and China’s GDP at $413 billion. By 2012, China’s GDP had grown to $8.5 trillion, seven times larger than India’s $1.2 trillion economy. The [change](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/sunday-times/all-that-matters/chinas-rising-support-for-pakistan-and-their-collusion-may-affect-our-interests-says-former-nsa-shiv-shankar-menon/articleshow/82234601.cms) in China’s policy after 2012, encouraging its troops to use force against India along the border, coincided with the rise in China’s military and economic power and its impact on the relative balance of power with India. Like many in the West, India during the 1990s had bought into the view that deeper economic and diplomatic engagement with communist China would help maintain peace between the two Asian giants. But the India-China border dispute could not remain on the back burner as China became more aggressive in the wake of growing economic and military power. India can no longer rely solely on diplomacy to deal with China. It will soon have to build and deploy hard power to deter the Chinese. The recent deployment along the Ladakh border could mark the beginning of that process. With the latest addition, 200,000 of India’s more than a million strong army now face China along the 2,167-mile border. By way of comparison, 600,000 Indian troops are positioned along the 2,065-mile, fully fenced and fully demarcated border with Pakistan. It is inconceivable that any attempt by Pakistan to take territory would go unretaliated by India. While India’s attempts over the last year have been to convince China, primarily through diplomatic engagements, to return the border to status quo ante, most [military](https://www.orfonline.org/research/eastern-ladakh-the-longer-perspective/) and [strategic](https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/crisis-after-crisis-how-ladakh-will-shape-india-s-competition-china) experts argue that China has no interest in resolving the border dispute with India. India has for far too long acquiesced to Chinese aggression without sufficient retaliatory military action. India may not seek to provoke China into an all-out war, but it needs to find a sweet spot between ignoring and provoking. The United States and its allies, too, would like India to act like a major power in not taking Chinese provocations lightly. Western democracies and Japan have viewed India as an ideal partner and future ally in Asia and the Indo-Pacific. India has consistently been a democracy, shares pluralist values with the United States, and its embrace of free market reforms since 1992 have created an opening for expanded economic ties. India also shares America’s concerns about China’s rising power. In developing a pivot to Asia or an Indo-Pacific policy, successive U.S. administrations have assumed that a shared concern about China makes India a natural American ally. India-U.S. relations were referred to as the “[defining](https://www.google.com/search?q=obama+india+defining+partnership+of+21st+century&rlz=1C1GGRV_enUS751US751&oq=obama+india+defining+partnership+of+21st+century&aqs=chrome..69i57j33i160j33i299.7702j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8) partnership of the 21st century” under President Obama. The Trump administration’s [2017](https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf) National Security Strategy spoke of India as a “leading global power” and a strong “strategic and defense partner.” The Biden administration’s [March](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/03/interim-national-security-strategic-guidance/) 2021 “Interim National Security guidance” has described the “deepening partnership” with India as being critical to America’s “vital national interests.” But the Indo-Pacific policies of both the Trump and Biden administrations have focused on maritime security, ignoring India’s challenge from China on the continental landmass. China views India as an inward-looking democracy that has yet to focus on economic growth or military prowess. Only an expansion in India’s economy and military capability would convince China’s leaders to view it differently. Moreover, the two decades of celebrating convergence of democratic values and voicing of strategic concerns by Washington and Delhi now needs to be followed up with specific steps to counter Chinese hard power with Indian muscle.

#### Sino-Indo war escalates.

Jeffrey **Gettleman et al 20**. Jeffrey Gettleman is The Times’s South Asia bureau chief. Hari Kumar is a reporter in the New Delhi bureau of The New York Times. Sameer Yasir is a reporter for The New York Times. “Worst Clash in Decades on Disputed India-China Border Kills 20 Indian Troops”. The New York Times. 6-16-20. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/16/world/asia/indian-china-border-clash.html

NEW DELHI — The worst [border clash between India and China](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/17/world/asia/india-china-border-clashes.html) in more than 40 years left 20 Indian soldiers dead and dozens believed captured, Indian officials said on Tuesday, raising tensions between nuclear-armed rivals who have increasingly been flexing their diplomatic and military muscle. For the past several weeks, after [a series of brawls](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/30/world/asia/india-china-border.html) along their disputed border, China and India have been building up their forces in the remote Galwan Valley, high up in the Himalayas. As they dug into opposing positions, adding tinder to a long-smoldering conflict, China took an especially muscular posture, sending in artillery, armored personnel carriers, dump trucks and excavators. On Monday night, a huge fight broke out between Chinese and Indian troops in roughly the same barren area where these two nations, the world’s most populous, had fought a war in 1962. Military and political analysts say the two countries do not want a further escalation — particularly India, where military forces are nowhere near as powerful as China’s — but they may struggle to find a way out of the conflict that does not hint at backing down. Both countries and their nationalist leaders, President Xi Jinping of China and Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/17/world/asia/india-china-border-clashes.html) of India, have taken increasingly assertive postures that pose real risks of the conflict spinning out of control. “Neither PM Modi or President Xi want a war, but neither can relinquish their land rights either,” said [Ashley J. Tellis,](https://carnegieendowment.org/experts/198) a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington. What’s happening along the Himalayan border is an unusual kind of warfare. As in the brawls last month, Chinese and Indian soldiers fought fiercely without firing a shot — at least that’s what officials on both sides contend. They say the soldiers followed their de facto border code not to use firearms and went at each other with fists, rocks and wooden clubs, some possibly studded with nails or wrapped in barbed wire. At first, India’s military said only three Indian troops had been killed in the clash, where the Ladakh region of India abuts Aksai Chin, an area controlled by China but claimed by both countries. But late Tuesday night, a military spokesman said that 17 other Indian soldiers had succumbed to injuries sustained in the clash, bringing the total dead to 20. An Indian commander said dozens of soldiers were missing, apparently captured by the Chinese. Indian television channels reported that several Chinese soldiers had been killed, as well, citing high-level Indian government sources. Chinese officials did not comment on that. It’s not clear what India can do now. Mr. Modi and his Hindu nationalist party have pursued a forceful foreign policy that emphasizes India’s growing role in the world and last year, after a devastating suicide attack that India blamed on a Pakistani terror group, Mr. Modi ordered airstrikes on [Pakistan](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/29/world/asia/pakistan-stock-exchange-shooting.html), bringing the two countries to the brink of war. But India is in no shape to risk a war against China — especially now, as it slips deeper into the economic and health crisis caused by the coronavirus, which has cost the country more than 100 million jobs. “Whatever India might want to do it’s not in a position to do,” said Bharat Karnad, a professor of security studies at the Center for Policy Research at New Delhi. “The Modi government is in a difficult position,” he said. “This is bound to escalate.” And, he added, “we are not prepared for this kind of escalation.” Mr. Xi has been doubling [down on China’s territorial claims across Asia](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/24/world/asia/china-hong-kong-taiwan.html), backing up arguments with the threat of force or sometimes even the use of force. In recent weeks, the Chinese have tightened their grip on the semiautonomous region of Hong Kong; menaced Taiwan; and sunk a Vietnamese fishing boat in the South China Sea.

#### Scenario 2 is The Environment

#### Price guarantees are key to sustainable ag--- water crisis and bio-d collapse inevitable now

Big Issue North **BIN** | **07-13** 13 Jul 2021 | No farmers, no food | Big Issue North | https://www.bigissuenorth.com/comment/2021/07/no-farmers-no-food/

What makes these bills so damaging is that most of India’s farmers are small scale, with 68 per cent of them owning less than one hectare of land. More than half, in the words of economist Ajit Ranade “don’t even have enough to sell”(8). How has the agricultural sector failed to the point where Modi can justify passing such extreme bills by declaring that they are in fact in the farmers’ interest?

One answer for this is discussed by Dr Vandana Shiva in her book The Violence of the Green Revolution, in which she deconstructs the myth that India’s agricultural issues, prior to the 1970s, were resolved as a result of the use of pesticides and GMOs as prescribed by America. Shiva instead argues that the acclaimed Green Revolution left India and its farmers in a vulnerable and damaged state, accounting for the ecological and economic issues that have arisen with the failures of the overuse of these chemicals on Indian crops.

Another issue that has deeply affected the Indian agricultural sector is climate change, including excessive and unseasonable rain, floods and droughts. Journalist Shruti Bhogal describes how “cropping patterns, irrigation and other agricultural practices” that are fundamental to the sustainability of agricultural systems are not being addressed. One of the most catastrophic effects of climate change is the growing water security crisis. Bhogal describes how much of India’s farmland is being fed by rainfall as opposed to canals and wells, resulting in continuous short growing seasons lasting only 2-6 months, even in historically well-irrigated regions like Punjab, which is slowly developing desert-like conditions. Other climate-related issues, such as a decline in biodiversity, are also having detrimental effects as there are now only a handful of different crops being grown in India(9). Soil quality is declining and is easily eroded, affecting crop yields. Bhogal says this has “pushed farmers into debt and distress”, with many abandoning their farms altogether by moving to cities or even being driven to suicide. “This is particularly true of small-scale landholders who, alongside the landless labourers, have been the worst affected.”

Bhogal says that in Punjab and Haryana, “this stagnation [of crop yield] is exemplified by the continuous cultivation of wheat and rice as the winter and summer crop respectively, for many decades now”. Farmers have persisted with wheat and rice because they are the only crops where they are assured a minimum support price through the public procurement systems, even though crop diversification has been recommended as a response to the environmental challenges. “There are more climate-resilient and less water-intensive crops that would be better suited to particular regions, but farmers will not start growing them until they get the kind of state support currently extended to wheat and rice in northwest India”.

The protests have entered their seventh month and have drawn support from Canada, the US and the UK, particularly from Indian communities in those countries that have ties to agricultural areas in India. Environmental activists such as Greta Thunberg have also backed the farmers, although their protests have slipped from the headlines. Through the few futile meetings the Indian government has had with farmers, and Modi’s unwillingness to retract these bills despite the global and political pressures he is now facing, we have begun to learn more about the nature of India’s democracy. From media censorship, detainment of journalists such as Nodeep Kaur and Disha Ravi and internet blackouts to cutting off food and water supplies and police brutality at the protest sites in Delhi, it is clear these protests are not just about farmers but for the nation and democracy of India as a whole.

#### Water crisis goes nuclear – it’s codified in Pakistani nuclear doctrine.

**Mehsud and Khan, 19** (Muhammad Imran Mehsud and Tariq Anwar Khan,\*Authors are PhD Scholar, School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid I Azam University Islamabad and Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Hazara University Mansehra. "Water War Thesis: Perspective from South Asia", Journal of Political Studies, 31 December 2019, accessed: 6-22-2021///OK

The upper riparian's hydro-hegemony China is upper riparian to India. River Indus, Brahmaputra and Ganges flow from Chinese territory of Tibet into India. As discussed earlier, Indian media and think tanks have already expressed their lower riparian anxieties and alleged China of pursuing hydro-hegemony. Similarly, India is upper riparian to Pakistan and Bangladesh on the stated rivers. Both the lower riparians of **Pakistan and Bangladesh have expressed displeasure with the Indian upstream hydro-behavior.** However, Pakistan in particular is vocal in this regard. Pakistan has alleged India of storing and diverting the western rivers, entitled to Pakistan under the Indus Waters Treaty, to achieve **hydro-hegemony** against downstream arch-rival Pakistan. **Pakistan fears that the Indian dams** on the western rivers, few of them already built and **many more yet to be built** could be a source of **downstream Pakistan's economic and strategic vulnerabilities.** The dams will empower India to store water and use the same as a weapon against Pakistan. The stored waters could be used to destroy the agrarian based economy of Pakistan by either withholding waters or releasing the same to flood downstream vast agriculture lands of Pakistan. The same dams could pose strategic threat to Pakistan's territorial integrity in two ways. First, by withholding the waters through the dams, Pakistan's defense canals, built on the eastern India-Pakistan border, could be turned futile and easily crossable. These canals had served as Maginot Lines against the Indian attack on Pakistan in 1965 and had, thus, served as a strong bulwark against the Indian invasion (Nawaz, 2008). Two, the Indian dams could be used to release waters in its natural course of the western rivers and trap Pakistani forces in between the vast lands between the rivers and, thus, reduce Pakistan's armed forces strategic maneuverability. For Pakistan, the Indian assistance to Afghanistan's dams on the river Kabul is the extension of Indian hydro-hegemony from Kashmir to Kabul. In order to withstand any future Indian hydro-aggression of one kind or another, **Pakistan has added a strong hydrological dimension to its nuclear doctrine**. One of the four nuclear red lines elaborated in its nuclear **is about Indian attempt at stemming the water flow into Pakistan.** Pakistan has made it clear that **in case India stemmed the flow of water into Pakistan, it will retaliate with nuclear weapons** (Kumar-Sinha, 2008). Political atmosphere laced with such strategic posturing on the part of Pakistan and Indian threats of stemming the water, and that too from a Premier, leaves the water war thesis at the heart of the regional political terrain. Political atmosphere **South Asia is** a region **rampant with political trust deficit** on many fronts. India and Pakistan have many nettlesome political disputes like Kashmir that had already triggered two total wars in 1948, in 1965 and one half-war in 1999, Siachen Glacier, Rann of Kach, and mutual allegations of involvement in cross border terrorism. Similar political trust deficit reigns in India-Bangladesh and India-Nepal political disputes. Pakistan and Afghanistan are also lacking trust due to the Durand Line issue. China and India too are bound to compete and contest in the long run with many unresolved border disputes and mutual contradictory territorial claims. All these issues have created a gulf of political trust deficit amongst the nations of South Asia and this lack of trust has spilled over unto water disputes as well. Unless the regional political environment improves, water war thesis will remain relevant in the international hydro politics of South Asia. Hydrological dimension of international political disputes Recent research on the hydro-politics of South Asia have discovered interesting hydrological dimension to the political disputes discussed in the preceding section. The Kashmir dispute, for instance, is projected in many facets as an ideological feud, a proxy war, a freedom movement, a case of state terrorism and many more. However, **it is the waters of Kashmir that has made the region of Kashmir precious for both India and Pakistan.** It was, indeed, “not sheer coincidence” that a regular division of Pakistani military entered Kashmir after the Indian Punjab government stem the flow of few of the canals flowing into Pakistan on April 1, 1948 (Wirsing, 2008). Similarly, Pakistan's proposal of dividing Kashmir across the Chenab river at many occasions from 1950s until Pervez Musharraf proposed Chenab formula speak volumes for the fact under discussion (Bisht, 2011). Equally visible has the issue of immigration between India and Bangladesh a strong hydrological aspect. Indian stemming of waters through the Farrakha barrage has caused downstream effects on fisheries and agriculture and resultantly people are immigrating into India for livelihood. The issue of Kalapani between India and Nepal also has a strong hydrological dimension. Dr Iram Khalid of the Department of Political Science at the University of Punjab has brought to fore this fact that the region of Kalapani is origin to many rivers thereby making the control of the region precious for both the states of India and Nepal (Khalid, 2010). Therefore, with looming water crises, these political disputes have the potential to unfold itself more clearly in terms of water and thus **result in wars with clear water objectives and strategies.**

**Causes Pakistan-India water war**

**Umar, 16** (Baba Umar, Kashmiri journalist. The piece is an excerpt of a research paper written during the author’s Chevening South Asia Journalism Programme (SAJP) fellowship in 2016, 6-9-2016, accessed on 8-9-2021, The Diplomat, "Kashmir: A Water War in the Making?", https://thediplomat.com/2016/06/kashmir-a-water-war-in-the-making/, HBisevac)

Today Pakistan and India are locked in a **bitter water conflict**. Though diplomatic exertions have prevented a major escalation, both countries are entangled **in legal battles** as more **dams and power projects come up in Kashmir**. In Kashmir itself, politicians and civil society groups of all hues have been demanding a review of IWT, which has been labeled “detrimental” to the region’s economy. Pakistan and India are **dangerously energy-starved** and **nowhere close to an agreement on** disputed **Kashmir**. The intertwining impact of climate change and population pressures offer a forecast on their water conflict that is anything but encouraging. Predictions that the **next major war will be over water** are common. But is such a scenario realistic? Could both countries amicably end their water disputes? Between 1905 and 1908, a Swedish explorer, Sven Hedin, became the first European to discover the mouth of the river Indus (or the Lion River) in Tibet’s Sangi-Kabab area. Four decades later, the British divided the Indian subcontinent. The land division occurred without considering the irrigated boundaries. On April 1, 1948 India — taking advantage of its control over the headworks — cut off the supply of water in every canal that crossed into Pakistan. India briefly restored the flow at a price. In July 1951, Pakistan accused India of cutting water supplies to its Wagha and Bhaun villages. Both sides traded accusations until David Lilienthal, who had won preeminence in the United States as head of the seven-state Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) made a trip to India and Pakistan. Lilienthal described the dispute as “a Punjab powder keg” in his articles about the trip. He observed: “No army, with bombs and shellfire could devastate a land as thoroughly as Pakistan could be devastated by the simple expedient of India’s permanently shutting off the sources of water that keep the fields and the people of Pakistan alive. India has never threatened such a drastic step… but the power is there nonetheless.” The interlocutor proposed that the whole Indus system be developed as a unit while a corporation — with representation from both sides and the World Bank — worked out an operating scheme for storing and distributing water. A month later, the World Bank offered its “good offices” in mediating between Pakistan and India. But as negotiations continued, it became clear that Lilienthal’s idea of involving “brothers” on a common project had ignored the endless hostility between both sides. The waters would have to be split instead. The World Bank in 1954 proposed that Pakistan be given the waters of the three western rivers and India the Indus’ three eastern tributaries. Hiccups continued until both sides agreed to sign a water-sharing agreement in 1960. The vice president of the World Bank, William A.B Iliff, would later remember using “cajolery” to press both sides. The treaty allocates entire rivers and tributaries, instead of water volume, and has remained relatively intact for over 50 years. However, the IWT’s long-term effectiveness is uncertain in light of Pakistan-India tensions over Kashmir. There is doubt whether IWT can address India’s mounting use of the waters for hydroelectricity and Pakistan’s growing need of the same waters for agriculture. Pakistan-based Arshad H Abbasi, a trans-boundary water expert, tells me there are some serious emerging violations of IWT “as India plan to construct 155 hydropower projects in Kashmir” and that “India isn’t sharing any information pertaining to the detail design, structural drawings, and design calculations of the upcoming projects.” India began building major hydropower projects in Kashmir in 1970s and now has 33 projects at various stages of completion on the rivers in Kashmir. Currently, the most controversial dam project is the proposed 330 megawatt dam on the Kishanganga River (also called Neelum in Pakistan-administered Kashmir), a tributary of the Indus. Its construction began in 2007 and is almost complete. The waters are to be diverted through a 24 kilometer tunnel for power production and the rest of the water flow is supposed to join the Wullar Lake and ultimately run through Jhelum to Muzaffarabad (in Pakistan-administered Kashmir) — dodging the 213 km long Neelum, on which Pakistan is also building its own Neelum-Jhelum Hydro-Electric Project (NJHEP). Pakistan has also objections regarding the 850 MW Rattle hydropower project on Chenab river, which Islamabad says involves faulty designs. Earlier in 2013, the International Court of Arbitration decided that “India shall release a minimum flow of 9 cumecs [cubic meters per second] into the river below the KHEP [Kishanganga Hydroelectric Plant] at all times.” The judgment also dictated that “[a]t any time at which the daily average flow in the river immediately upstream of the KHEP is less than 9 cumecs, India shall release 100 percent of the daily average flow.” While media and officials on both sides hailed their respective countries for winning this case, late South African water expert John Briscoe observed that India “has won the battle, but … lost a far more important war.” The **rush to meet energy demand** through hydropower is occurring in both countries amid shortages of adequate access to energy. The number of dams under construction and their management are a **source of significant bilateral tension**. Briscoe argued that if India builds all its planned projects on the Indus, New Delhi will be capable of holding up about a month’s worth of river flow during Pakistan’s critical dry season, “enough to wreck an entire planting season,” as the New York Times put it after interviewing Briscoe. “The treaty worked well in the past, mostly because the Indians weren’t building anything,” Briscoe told the Times. “This is a **completely different ballgame**. Now there’s a whole battery of these hydro projects.” **Mistrust threatens IWT’s stability**. Any perceived decrease in the flow of waters augments this mistrust, no matter whether caused by India’s activities or climate change. The Economist argues that the Indian bureaucrats fuel these fears with “obsessive secrecy” about water data. Climate change threatens Kashmir, already worn-out by the armed conflict between over half a million Indian soldiers and about a dozen rebel groups fighting for independence or merger of the territory with Pakistan. “Climate change indicators are quite loud and clear in the region and have impacted the snow and glacier resources in the upper Indus,” glaciologist Shakil Ahmad Romshoo tells me. The Indus supports about 90 percent of Pakistan’s agriculture. Scientists say a number of glaciers in the area are rapidly receding due to climate change. The large-scale human intervention in the form of unorganized pilgrimages and mindless tourism too is upping the temperatures, resulting in the fast melting of glaciers. “The stream flows emanating from the region has significantly decreased. It is pertinent to mention here that the IWT [Indus Water Treaty] did not have any clause on climate change impacts on stream flows,” Romshoo says. The Indian Rivers Inter-link project in India and mismanagement of existing water supplies augments the pressure on both countries. A glaciologist quoted by the Economist calls the dams “water bombs” on the Indus, as they are in an earthquake prone zone. In fact, a top water expert (preferring anonymity) who worked with the World Bank on a report about Indian dams argues that about 15 large Indian dams in the Himalayas are “dodgy dams” and shouldn’t have been commissioned at all. “In its survey, two of these [dams] were found adequate but not earthquake-proof. [The] other 13 should have never been built. It found a lot of corruption in [the] Indian dam building system. The bank didn’t publish the survey though,” the expert told me recently in an interview in the U.K. The increase in global temperatures and the significant number of dams thus calls for a review of the IWT. Kashmir can produce 20,000 MW of electricity but currently production is a mere 2556 MW. Power shortages are normal. One reason is that most of the electricity is generated by India’s National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC), but it shares a mere 12 percent of the energy with the region as a royalty. It trades the rest to other Indian provinces. At peak hours, NHPC sells the same power to the Kashmir government at inflated rates. Recently a senior pro-India leader equated NHPC to the East India Company, accusing it of “sucking all electricity” generated on “our waters.” Others argue that IWT itself is the problem calling it “discriminatory” toward the disputed region. The argument is that India signed IWT without consulting then-Prime Minister of Kashmir Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad. While successive governments inside India-administered Kashmir have sought to amend IWT and increase NHPC royalties, New Delhi continues to block concessions. It also refuses to offer counter-guarantees to the foreign companies willing to invest in Kashmir’s power projects. Besides the Kashmir dispute, the new battle cry of the non-state actors — water — is threatening to adds **a new dimension to the long-standing conflict**. Some Pakistani officials continue to blame India for water shortages in the country while India continues to dismiss such accusations. Articles and think tanks analyses frequently appearing in the Indian media suggest that India “should leverage this natural advantage” while rebel groups vow to fight India’s “water terrorism.” In fact a U.S. Senate’s Foreign Relations Committee report from 2011 also warns that unless Pakistan and India are able to resolve their water disputes amicably, a future war between them cannot be ruled out. Recently, when the Royal Institute of International Affairs, better known as Chatham House, launched a survey of the attitudes toward water in South Asia, it found the challenges “exacerbating” trans-boundary water concerns in the region. “There is a scope of updating it (IWT),” Gareth Price, senior research fellow at Chatham House, tells me in his London office. “Ten years ago if you would talk about India-Pakistan tension one would end up saying water is one good thing in their relationship. But in last ten years, it suddenly shifted. Because there are more people, there is potentially less rain or more climate change related things … more flooding or there is more encroachment,” he says.

#### Nuke war causes extinction

PND 16. internally citing Zbigniew Brzezinski, Council of Foreign Relations and former national security adviser to President Carter, Toon and Robock’s 2012 study on nuclear winter in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, Gareth Evans’ International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament Report, Congressional EMP studies, studies on nuclear winter by Seth Baum of the Global Catastrophic Risk Institute and Martin Hellman of Stanford University, and U.S. and Russian former Defense Secretaries and former heads of nuclear missile forces, brief submitted to the United Nations General Assembly, Open-Ended Working Group on nuclear risks. A/AC.286/NGO/13. 05-03-2016. <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/OEWG/2016/Documents/NGO13.pdf>

Consequences human survival 12. Even if the 'other' side does NOT launch in response the smoke from 'their' burning cities (incinerated by 'us') will still make 'our' country (and the rest of the world) uninhabitable, potentially inducing global famine lasting up to decades. Toon and Robock note in ‘Self Assured Destruction’, in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists 68/5, 2012, th1AR - AT: 13. “A nuclear war between Russia and the United States, even after the arsenal reductions planned under New START, could produce a nuclear winter. Hence, an attack by either side could be suicidal, resulting in self assured destruction. Even a 'small' nuclear war between India and Pakistan, with each country detonating 50 Hiroshima-size atom bombs--only about 0.03 percent of the global nuclear arsenal's explosive power--as air bursts in urban areas, could produce so much smoke that temperatures would fall below those of the Little Ice Age of the fourteenth to nineteenth centuries, shortening the growing season around the world and threatening the global food supply. Furthermore, there would be massive ozone depletion, allowing more ultraviolet radiation to reach Earth's surface. Recent studies predict that agricultural production in parts of the United States and China would decline by about **20 percent** for four years, and by 10 percent for a decade.” 14. A conflagration involving USA/NATO forces and those of Russian federation would most likely cause the deaths of most/nearly all/all humans (and severely impact/extinguish other species) as well as destroying the delicate interwoven techno-structure on which latter-day 'civilization' has come to depend. Temperatures would drop to below those of the last ice-age for up to 30 years as a result of the lofting of up to 180 million tonnes of very black soot into the stratosphere where it would remain for decades. 15. Though human ingenuity and resilience shouldn't be underestimated, human survival itself is arguably problematic, to put it mildly, under a 2000+ warhead USA/Russian federation scenario. 16. The Joint Statement on Catastrophic Humanitarian Consequences signed October 2013 by 146 governments mentioned 'Human Survival' no less than 5 times. The most recent (December 2014) one gives it a highly prominent place. Gareth Evans’ ICNND (International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament) Report made it clear that it saw the threat posed by nuclear weapons use as one that at least threatens what we now call 'civilization' and that potentially threatens human survival with an immediacy that even climate change does not, though we can see the results of climate change here and now and of course the immediate post-nuclear results for Hiroshima and Nagasaki as well.

#### Biodiversity loss causes extinction.

Phil Torres 16. Affiliate scholar at the Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies. “Biodiversity loss: An existential risk comparable to climate change.” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists 4/11/2016. http://thebulletin.org/biodiversity-loss-existential-risk-comparable-climate-change9329

Such considerations warrant decoupling biodiversity loss from climate change, because the former has been consistently subsumed by the latter as a mere effect. Biodiversity loss is a distinct environmental crisis with its own unique syndrome of causes, consequences, and solutions—such as restoring habitats, creating protected areas (“biodiversity parks”), and practicing sustainable agriculture. The sixth extinction. The repercussions of biodiversity loss are potentially as severe as those anticipated from climate change, or even a nuclear conflict. For example, according to a 2015 study published in Science Advances, the best available evidence reveals “an exceptionally rapid loss of biodiversity over the last few centuries, indicating that a sixth mass extinction is already under way.” This conclusion holds, even on the most optimistic assumptions about the background rate of species losses and the current rate of vertebrate extinctions. The group classified as “vertebrates” includes mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, and all other creatures with a backbone. The article argues that, using its conservative figures, the average loss of vertebrate species was 100 times higher in the past century relative to the background rate of extinction. (Other scientists have suggested that the current extinction rate could be as much as 10,000 times higher than normal.) As the authors write, “The evidence is incontrovertible that recent extinction rates are unprecedented in human history and highly unusual in Earth’s history.” Perhaps the term “Big Six” should enter the popular lexicon—to add the current extinction to the previous “Big Five,” the last of which wiped out the dinosaurs 66 million years ago. But the concept of biodiversity encompasses more than just the total number of species on the planet. It also refers to the size of different populations of species. With respect to this phenomenon, multiple studies have confirmed that wild populations around the world are dwindling and disappearing at an alarming rate. For example, the 2010 Global Biodiversity Outlook report found that the population of wild vertebrates living in the tropics dropped by 59 percent between 1970 and 2006. The report also found that the population of farmland birds in Europe has dropped by 50 percent since 1980; bird populations in the grasslands of North America declined by almost 40 percent between 1968 and 2003; and the population of birds in North American arid lands has fallen by almost 30 percent since the 1960s. Similarly, 42 percent of all amphibian species (a type of vertebrate that is sometimes called an “ecological indicator”) are undergoing population declines, and 23 percent of all plant species “are estimated to be threatened with extinction.” Other studies have found that some 20 percent of all reptile species, 48 percent of the world’s primates, and 50 percent of freshwater turtles are threatened. Underwater, about 10 percent of all coral reefs are now dead, and another 60 percent are in danger of dying. Consistent with these data, the 2014 Living Planet Report shows that the global population of wild vertebrates dropped by 52 percent in only four decades—from 1970 to 2010. While biologists often avoid projecting historical trends into the future because of the complexity of ecological systems, it’s tempting to extrapolate this figure to, say, the year 2050, which is four decades from 2010. As it happens, a 2006 study published in Science does precisely this: It projects past trends of marine biodiversity loss into the 21st century, concluding that, unless significant changes are made to patterns of human activity, there will be virtually no more wild-caught seafood by 2048. Catastrophic consequences for civilization. The consequences of this rapid pruning of the evolutionary tree of life extend beyond the obvious. There could be surprising effects of biodiversity loss that scientists are unable to fully anticipate in advance. For example, prior research has shown that localized ecosystems can undergo abrupt and irreversible shifts when they reach a tipping point. According to a 2012 paper published in Nature, there are reasons for thinking that we may be approaching a tipping point of this sort in the global ecosystem, beyond which the consequences could be catastrophic for civilization. As the authors write, a planetary-scale transition could precipitate “substantial losses of ecosystem services required to sustain the human population.” An ecosystem service is any ecological process that benefits humanity, such as food production and crop pollination. If the global ecosystem were to cross a tipping point and substantial ecosystem services were lost, the results could be “widespread social unrest, economic instability, and loss of human life.” According to Missouri Botanical Garden ecologist Adam Smith, one of the paper’s co-authors, this could occur in a matter of decades—far more quickly than most of the expected consequences of climate change, yet equally destructive. Biodiversity loss is a “threat multiplier” that, by pushing societies to the brink of collapse, will exacerbate existing conflicts and introduce entirely new struggles between state and non-state actors. Indeed, it could even fuel the rise of terrorism. (After all, climate change has been linked to the emergence of ISIS in Syria, and multiple high-ranking US officials, such as former US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and CIA director John Brennan, have affirmed that climate change and terrorism are connected.) The reality is that we are entering the sixth mass extinction in the 3.8-billion-year history of life on Earth, and the impact of this event could be felt by civilization “in as little as three human lifetimes,” as the aforementioned 2012 Nature paper notes. Furthermore, the widespread decline of biological populations could plausibly initiate a dramatic transformation of the global ecosystem on an even faster timescale: perhaps a single human lifetime. The unavoidable conclusion is that biodiversity loss constitutes an existential threat in its own right. As such, it ought to be considered alongside climate change and nuclear weapons as one of the most significant contemporary risks to human prosperity and survival.

### Backsliding

#### Advantage 2: Democracy

#### India is in a democracy crisis now.

**Singh 7/5** [Prerna Singh, July 5, 2021 at 5:00 a.m., “India has become an ‘electoral autocracy.’ Its covid-19 catastrophe is no surprise”, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/07/05/india-has-become-an-electoral-autocracy-its-covid-19-catastrophe-is-no-surprise //](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/07/05/india-has-become-an-electoral-autocracy-its-covid-19-catastrophe-is-no-surprise%20//) JB recut by Lex AKo]

On Thursday, the White House announced that it is deploying [response teams](https://www.cnbc.com/2021/07/01/delta-white-house-to-deploy-response-teams-across-us-to-combat-covid-variant.html), composed of officials from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other federal agencies, to combat the “hypertransmissible” delta variant of the [coronavirus](https://www.washingtonpost.com/coronavirus/?itid=lk_inline_manual_2) spreading across the United States and the world. This variant first emerged in India, where a devastating second wave of virus infections have been accompanied by a parallel epidemic of [mucormycosis, or “black fungus,”](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-deadly-black-fungus-is-ravaging-covid-patients-in-india/) that is maiming and killing patients. **India’s humanitarian tragedy is linked to** a **deeper political crisis** — that of **democratic erosion**. At independence from colonial rule, **India** had relatively **low** economic **development and industrialization**, widespread poverty and illiteracy, and immense ethnic diversity across linguistic, religious and caste lines. [Leading political science theories](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1951731) argued these conditions made India [infertile terrain](https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Success_of_India_s_Democracy/Io0NsnlRT6sC?hl=en) for democracy. Yet in 1947, India instituted a democratic government and, with the exception of [a short time from 1975-77](https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691186726/emergency-chronicles), has remained one. Up until a few weeks ago, that is. In its influential annual rankings of countries across the world, the U.S.-based democracy watchdog Freedom House downgraded **India from a free democracy to a “**[**partially free democracy**](https://freedomhouse.org/country/india/freedom-world/2021)**.”** Similarly, the **Swedish-based V-Dem Institute demoted** **the country to an “**[**electoral autocracy**](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-56393944)**.”** Both organizations cited the regime’s **crackdowns on freedom of speech** — and in particular, expressions of dissent — as a key factor driving India’s slide down these indexes. How are **India’s coronavirus crisis and democratic backsliding linked**? Here’s what you need to know. **The decline of free speech in the world’s largest democracy** Since assuming power in 2014, **the** ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (**BJP**) regime has **consistently and brutally undermined civil liberties**, especially freedom of speech. This crackdown has [affected](https://thewire.in/rights/india-modi-anti-national-protest-arrest-sedition-authoritarianism) journalists, editors, organizers, climate activists, Bollywood actors, cricketers, celebrities, and even ordinary citizens posting on social media. The BJP has forced editors of prominent newspapers to step down**. Police** have [**raided**](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/05/world/asia/india-ndtv-raids-narendra-modi-prannoy-roy.html)**or shut down the offices of media outlets** that featured articles **challenging the regime’s actions**. Physical attacks on journalists have become commonplace. Some have been gunned down in broad daylight outside their homes, earning India a [reputation](https://www.cjr.org/special_report/gauri-lankesh-killing.php) as what the Columbia Journalism Review called “one of the world’s most dangerous countries to be a reporter.” Meanwhile, reporters and media organizations sympathetic to the regime have been [protected](https://theprint.in/opinion/arnab-goswami-swift-bail-should-be-rule-for-undertrials-not-exception/545301/) and supported. [Thousands](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/5128-uapa-cases-229-sedition-cases-lodged-in-five-years-government/articleshow/81433613.cms) of individuals and organizations critical of the regime have had wide-ranging charges filed against them. Many awaiting trial still [languish](https://thewire.in/rights/jail-bail-hearings-court-delhi-riots-elgar-parishad) in jails across the country. **These attacks on freedom** of speech **harm democracies’ effective functioning. An uncensored public realm enables** the **open exchange of information**; an unencumbered press enables popular accountability. **That leaves governments** insulated from evidence and accountability, **making decisions in isolation**. [What's behind India's dramatic pandemic surge? Here's one factor: Too little competition in parliament.](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/06/02/whats-behind-indias-dramatic-pandemic-surge-heres-one-factor-too-little-competition-parliament/?itid=lk_interstitial_manual_16) Silencing critics can be lethal during natural disasters. In their influential 1991 book “[Hunger and Public Action](https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/0198283652.001.0001/acprof-9780198283652),” development economists Jean Drèze and Nobel laureate Amartya Sen explored why India had not endured famine since independence, despite chronic undernourishment and food production difficulties. Under colonial rule, devastating famines were numerous. Sen and Drèze concluded that the key difference since independence has been watchdog journalists whose reporting on early signs of a famine in an uncensored news media aroused public concern and pushed the government to act. But in March 2020, Prime Minister Narenda **Modi’s government**[**petitioned**](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/sc-asks-media-to-publish-official-version-of-corona-developments/articleshow/74919142.cms?from=mdr)**India’s top court** to **prevent journalists from reporting covid-19 information that the regime had not sanctioned**. The Supreme Court denied the petition — but nevertheless directed the media to broadcast “the official version” of covid-19 developments. Meanwhile, **the government** has [**filed charges**](https://rsf.org/en/news/surge-harassment-indian-reporters-over-coronavirus-coverage)**against** and arrested dozens of **journalists reporting** on the **government’s mismanagement of the coronavirus crisis, whether that was about** the urban [migrant crisis](https://thewire.in/media/himachal-pradesh-firs-journalists) caused by the regime’s abrupt lockdown at the start of the pandemic; dire conditions at quarantine centers; or the shortage of oxygen and other key medical supplies. Following Drèze and Sen’s logic about famines, this quashing of a free press has both prevented the government from accessing accurate information about how the pandemic was unfolding on the ground and reduced its sense of public accountability. [Millions of people in India's crowded slums can't keep each other at a distance during a pandemic lockdown](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/04/13/millions-people-indias-crowded-slums-cant-keep-each-other-distance-during-pandemic-lockdown/?itid=lk_interstitial_manual_23) The In February, the government announced controversial[new rules covering digital publishing](https://time.com/5946092/india-internet-rules-impact/) that give officials the power to block stories from being published or to shut down entire websites. In the past few weeks, the government has [pressured social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter to remove posts critical of the government](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/25/business/india-covid19-twitter-facebook.html). Many posts — including those with the trending hashtag #ResignModi — have disappeared and mysteriously reappeared. In India’s largest state, Uttar Pradesh, one man took to Twitter to locate oxygen for an ailing family member, who subsequently died. The [police charged him with circulating misinformation](https://scroll.in/latest/993484/up-fir-filed-against-man-who-sought-twitter-help-for-oxygen-for-grandfather) “with the intent to cause fear or alarm.” **These attacks** on free speech **are** all the **more dangerous because other key democratic watchdog institutions** — for example, an active [political opposition](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/06/02/whats-behind-indias-dramatic-pandemic-surge-heres-one-factor-too-little-competition-parliament/?itid=lk_inline_manual_29) — **are weak**. India has protected the freedom of speech, until now BJP government extended its power to censor The freedom of speech, including the right to critique, has been at the core of Indian nationalism, forged during resistance to British colonialism. The Modi regime’s [exclusionary Hindu nationalism](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/01/20/india-protesters-are-singing-national-anthem-waving-flag-heres-why-that-matters/?itid=lk_inline_manual_34) deviates from that history. Muzzling free speech has been [deadly](https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2021-05-08/india-covid-pandemic-deaths-narendra-modi) during the pandemic. Today **the scale of the covid-19 crisis** that **continues to burn across India remains unknown.** Experts [warn](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/05/25/world/asia/india-covid-death-estimates.html) that death tolls are likely many times the official reports. Scientists remain unclear about how well each of the vaccines work against the delta strain. In the United States, [concerns](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-dangerous-is-the-delta-variant-and-will-it-cause-a-covid-surge-in-the-u-s/) about a new surge are growing. A free press could not have prevented the pandemic. But it could have both provided critical early information about the unfolding second wave of virus infections and put pressure on the government to take action. This would have likely reduced the public health tragedy.

#### The Indian Supreme Court intervenes on the right to strike

By Samanwaya **Rautray** | Last Updated: **10-05**-2021, 08:21 AM IST | Farmers' protests must end: Centre in Supreme Court | The Economic Times | https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/farmers-protests-must-end-centre-in-supreme-court/articleshow/86771228.cms

The central government has told the Supreme Court on Monday that the farmers' protest must come to an end to ensure that no untoward incidents happen again like in Lakhimpur Kheri on Sunday, prompting the top court to wonder whether the farmers can still continue their protests while a challenge to the constitutionality of the farm laws was pending before the court.

The top court had, on January 2, 2021, stayed the three farm laws, but the protesting farmers had refused to accept anything short of a repeal of the laws and had continued to protest. The top court had, in its order, allowed them to protest if they so wanted and asked the executive authorities not to interfere with their protests.

The protests have been continuing since then. But after Sunday's incident in which a Union Minister's son allegedly ran over the farmers killing two of them, the Union government, through AG KK Venugopal, said in court that the protests cannot continue. "The protests must end," AG said, dubbing the incident as "unfortunate".

"Such unfortunate incidents should not happen. The protests must stop," the AG said.

In this context, a bench, led by Justice AM Khanwilkar, made several adverse comments on the protests. "Nobody takes responsibility when such events happen," Justice Khanwailkar observed. He also demanded to know why the farmers were protesting. "There is nothing to be implemented. What are the farmers protesting about? No one other than the court can decide the validity of the farm laws. When farmers are in court challenging the law, why protest on the streets? How can the executive allow these protests? What is the validity of the protests?"

#### Judicial activism collapses democracy.

James **Muffett 14**. Founder & President of Student Statesmanship Institute and President of Citizens for Traditional Values. “The Danger Of Judicial Activism”. Michigan All Rise. 9-8-14. <https://michiganallrise.org/resources/the-danger-of-judicial-activism/>

There is a battle in our nation between those who believe that judges should follow the law as intended by the legislature, and those who think judges have latitude to interpret the law according to their view of what the law ought to be. The latter are referred to as, “activist judges.” When judges insert their own personal bias, they usurp the role of the legislators whom the citizens elect to represent them in deciding disputed, difficult policy issues. Thus, judicial activism **undermines the very basis of our representative democracy.** It can be argued that activist judges have done more damage to traditional, Judeo-Christian values than the other branches of government combined. The areas of greatest damage include free enterprise, human life, marriage, personal freedoms, property rights and religious liberty. Judges who usurp the authority of the people are **not merely incorrect; they are themselves unconstitutiona**l. And they are unjust. In fact, Justice White in his Roe v. Wade dissent opinion, wrote that the court had acted “**not in constitutional interpretation**, but in the unrestrained imposition of its own, **extra-constitutional value preferences**.” In addition to short-circuiting the democratic process, this judicial approach creates an environment of unpredictability which ultimately leads to **destabilization and more litigation.** When judges exercising the power of judicial review are guided by the text, logic, structure, and original understanding of the Constitution and the law, they deserve our respect and gratitude. By operating with this type of judicial oversight, they are playing their part to make constitutional republican government a reality. But where judges usurp democratic legislative authority by imposing on the people their moral and political preferences, under the guise of fairness or empathy, they should be severely criticized and resolutely opposed. It is time for all citizens to wake up to this **crisis** and work to elect “Rule of Law” judges who exercise constitutional authority only to enforce the law as written and ensure that laws apply to everyone equally.

#### It’s an impact filter---democracies are comparatively more stable than autocracies.

**Kroenig 20** Matt. 4/3. Professor of government and foreign service at Georgetown University – you know who he is. “Why the U.S. Will Outcompete China” <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/04/why-china-ill-equipped-great-power-rivalry/609364/>) 1/20/2021

National-security analysts see China as one of the greatest threats facing the United States and its allies. According to an emerging conventional wisdom, China has the leg up on the U.S. in part because its authoritarian government can strategically plan for the long term, unencumbered by competing branches of government, regular elections, and public opinion. **Yet this faith in autocratic ascendance and democratic decline is contrary to historical fact. China may be able to put forth big, bold plans**—the kinds of projects that analysts think of as long term—**but the visionary projects of autocrats don’t usually pan out**. Watch White Noise, the inside story of the alt-right The Atlantic’s first feature documentary ventures into the underbelly of the far-right movement to explore the seductive power of extremism. Stream Now Yes, democratic governments are obligated to answer to their citizens on regular intervals and are sensitive to public opinion—t**hat’s actually democracies’ greatest source of strength. Democratic leaders have a harder time advancing big, bold agendas, but the upside of that difficulty is that the plans that do make it through the system have been carefully considered and enjoy domestic support**. Historically speaking, **once a democracy comes up with a successful strategy, it sticks with the plan**, even through a succession of leadership. Washington has arguably followed the same basic, three-step geopolitical plan since 1945. First, the United States built the current, rules-based international system by providing security in important geopolitical regions, constructing international institutions, and promoting free markets and democratic politics within its sphere of influence. Second, it welcomed into the club any country that played by the rules, even former adversaries, like Germany and Japan. And, third, the U.S. worked with its allies to defend the system from those countries or groups that would challenge it, including competitors such as Russia and China, rogue states such as Iran and North Korea, and terrorist networks. **America can pursue long-term strategy in part because it enjoys domestic political stability**. While new politicians seek to improve on their predecessor’s policies, the United States is unlikely to see the drastic shifts in strategy that come from the fall of one political system and the rise of another. Democratic elections may be messy, but they’re not as messy as coups or civil wars. Daniel Blumenthal: The Unpredictable Rise of China **Open societies** have many other advantages as well. They **facilitate innovation**, **trust in financial markets**, and economic growth. Because **democracies** tend to be more reliable partners, they **are typically skillful alliance builders**, and they can accumulate resources without frightening their neighbors. **They tend to make thoughtful, informed decisions on matters of war and peace, and to focus their security forces on external enemies, not their own populations. Autocratic systems simply cannot match this impressive array of economic, diplomatic, and military attributes.** David Leonhardt recently wrote in The New York Times, “Chinese leaders stretching back to Deng Xiaoping have often thought in terms of decades.” Commonly cited examples of that long-term thinking include the Belt and Road Initiative, a program that invests in infrastructure overseas; Made in China 2025, an effort to subsidize China’s giant tech companies to become world leaders in 21st-century technologies, such as artificial intelligence; and Beijing’s promise to be a global superpower by 2049. Since putting in place sound economic reforms in the 1970s, China has seen its economy expand at eye-popping rates, to become the world’s second largest. Many economists predict that China could even surpass the United States within the decade, and some have suggested that China’s model of state-led capitalism will prove more successful, in terms of economic growth, than the U.S. template of free markets and open politics. I doubt these predictions. Because autocratic leaders are unconstrained and do not have to contend with a legislature or courts, they have an easier time taking their countries in new and radically different directions. Then, when the dictator changes his mind, he can do it again. Mao’s autocratic China ricocheted from one failed policy to another: the Great Leap Forward, then the Hundred Flowers Campaign, then the Cultural Revolution. Mao aligned with the Soviet Union in 1950 only to nearly fight a nuclear war with Moscow in the next decade. Beginning in the time of Deng Xiaoping, China pursued a fairly constant strategy of liberalizing its economy at home and “hiding its capabilities and biding its time” abroad. But President Xi Jinping abandoned these dictums when he took over. As the most powerful leader since Mao—he has changed China’s constitution to set himself up as dictator for life—he could once again jerk China in several new directions, according to his whims, and back again. According to the Asia Society, he has stalled or reversed course on eight of 10 categories of economic reform promised by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) itself. Moreover, Xi is baring China’s teeth militarily, taking contested territory from neighbors in the South China Sea and conducting military exercises with Russia in Europe. The problem for Beijing is that stalled reforms will stymie its economic potential and its confrontational policies are provoking an international coalition to contain them. The 2017 U.S. National Security Strategy declared great-power competition with China the foremost security threat to the U.S.; the European Union labeled China a “systemic rival”; and Japan, Australia, India, and the United States have formed a new “quad” of powers to balance China in the Pacific. Furthermore, the plans often cited as evidence of China’s farsighted vision, the Belt and Road Initiative and Made in China 2025, were announced by Xi only in 2013 and 2015, respectively. Both are way too recent to be celebrated as brilliant examples of successful, long-term strategic planning. A certain level of domestic political stability is a prerequisite for charting a steady strategic course in foreign and domestic affairs. **But autocratic regimes are notoriously brittle. While institutionalized political successions in democracies typically lead to changes of policy, political successions in autocracies are likely to result in regime collapse and war**. China’s “5,000 years of history” were pockmarked by rebellion, revolution, and new dynasties. Fearing internal threats to domestic political stability—consider the protests this year in Hong Kong and Xinjiang—the CCP spends more on domestic security than on its national defense**. If you follow the money, the CCP is demonstrating that the government is more afraid of its own people than of the Pentagon. This domestic fragility will frustrate China’s efforts to design and execute farsighted plans. If threats to Chinese domestic stability were to materialize and the CCP were to collapse tomorrow**, for example, Chinese grand strategy could undergo another seismic shift, including possibly opting out of competition with the United States altogether. Shadi Hamid: China Is Avoiding Blame by Trolling the World Autocracies have other vulnerabilities as **well. State-led planning has never produced high rates of economic growth over the long term. Autocrats are poor alliance builders** who fight with their supposed allies more than with their enemies. And the highest priority of autocratic security forces is repressing their own people, not defending the country. The world has undergone drastic changes in just the past few years, but these enduring patterns of international affairs have not. Some fear that Trump’s nationalist tendencies will erode the U.S. position, but the momentum of America’s successful grand strategy has kept the country on a fairly steady course. Despite Trump’s criticism of NATO, for example, two new countries have joined the alliance on his watch, including North Macedonia this week. The coronavirus has upended a sense of security in the U.S., leading many people into the familiar trap of lauding autocratic China’s firm response in contrast to the halting and patchwork measures in the United States. But there is good reason to believe that this assessment will be updated in America’s favor with the benefit of hindsight. Already we are seeing evidence that conditions are much worse in China than CCP officials are letting on and that China’s attempts at international “disaster diplomacy” are backfiring. It has been revealed that the CCP has continually misrepresented the numbers of COVID-19 infections and deaths in China, and European nations have rejected and returned faulty Chinese coronavirus testing kits.

### Framing

#### The standard is minimizing existential risk

#### 1] Util is the only egalitarian metric---anything else collapses cooperation on collective action crises and makes extinction inevitable

Khan 18 (Risalat, activist and entrepreneur from Bangladesh passionate about addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, and other existential challenges. He was featured by The Guardian as one of the “young climate campaigners to watch” (2015). As a campaigner with the global civic movement Avaaz (2014-17), Risalat was part of a small core team that spearheaded the largest climate marches in history with a turnout of over 800,000 across 2,000 cities. After fighting for the Paris Agreement, Risalat led a campaign joined by over a million people to stop the Rampal coal plant in Bangladesh to protect the Sundarbans World Heritage forest, and elicited criticism of the plant from Crédit Agricolé through targeted advocacy. Currently, Risalat is pursuing an MPA in Environmental Science and Policy at Columbia University as a SIPA Environmental Fellow, “5 reasons why we need to start talking about existential risks,” https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/01/5-reasons-start-talking-existential-risks-extinction-moriori/)

Infinite future possibilities I find the story of the Moriori profound. It teaches me two lessons. Firstly, that human culture is far from immutable. That we can struggle against our baser instincts. That we can master them and rise to unprecedented challenges. Secondly, that even this does not make us masters of our own destiny. We can make visionary choices, but the future can still surprise us. This is a humbling realization. Because faced with an uncertain future, the only wise thing we can do is prepare for possibilities. Standing at the launch pad of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the possibilities seem endless. They range from an era of abundance to the end of humanity, and everything in between. How do we navigate such a wide and divergent spectrum? I am an optimist. From my bubble of privilege, life feels like a rollercoaster ride full of ever more impressive wonders, even as I try to fight the many social injustices that still blight us. However, the accelerating pace of change amid uncertainty elicits one fundamental observation. Among the infinite future possibilities, only one outcome is truly irreversible: extinction. Concerns about extinction are often dismissed as apocalyptic alarmism. Sometimes, they are. But repeating that mankind is still here after 70 years of existential warning about nuclear warfare is a straw man argument. The fact that a 1000-year flood has not happened does not negate its possibility. And there have been far too many nuclear near-misses to rest easy. As the World Economic Forum’s Annual Meeting in Davos discusses how to create a shared future in a fractured world, here are five reasons why the possibility of existential risks should raise the stakes of conversation: 1. Extinction is the rule, not the exception More than 99.9% of all the species that ever existed are gone. Deep time is unfathomable to the human brain. But if one cares to take a tour of the billions of years of life’s history, we find a litany of forgotten species. And we have only discovered a mere fraction of the extinct species that once roamed the planet. In the speck of time since the first humans evolved, more than 99.9% of all the distinct human cultures that have ever existed are extinct. Each hunter-gatherer tribe had its own mythologies, traditions and norms. They wiped each other out, or coalesced into larger formations following the agricultural revolution. However, as major civilizations emerged, even those that reached incredible heights, such as the Egyptians and the Romans, eventually collapsed. It is only in the very recent past that we became a truly global civilization. Our interconnectedness continues to grow rapidly. “Stand or fall, we are the last civilization”, as Ricken Patel, the founder of the global civic movement Avaaz, put it. 2. Environmental pressures can drive extinction More than 15,000 scientists just issued a ‘warning to humanity’. They called on us to reduce our impact on the biosphere, 25 years after their first such appeal. The warning notes that we are far outstripping the capacity of our planet in all but one measure of ozone depletion, including emissions, biodiversity, freshwater availability and more. The scientists, not a crowd known to overstate facts, conclude: “soon it will be too late to shift course away from our failing trajectory, and time is running out”. In his 2005 book Collapse, Jared Diamond charts the history of past societies. He makes the case that overpopulation and resource use beyond the carrying capacity have often been important, if not the only, drivers of collapse. Even though we are making important incremental progress in battles such as climate change, we must still achieve tremendous step changes in our response to several major environmental crises. We must do this even while the world’s population continues to grow. These pressures are bound to exert great stress on our global civilization. 3. Superintelligence: unplanned obsolescence? Imagine a monkey society that foresaw the ascendance of humans. Fearing a loss of status and power, it decided to kill the proverbial Adam and Eve. It crafted the most ingenious plan it could: starve the humans by taking away all their bananas. Foolproof plan, right? This story describes the fundamental difficulty with superintelligence. A superintelligent being may always do something entirely different from what we, with our mere mortal intelligence, can foresee. In his 2014 book Superintelligence, Swedish philosopher Nick Bostrom presents the challenge in thought-provoking detail, and advises caution. Bostrom cites a survey of industry experts that projected a 50% chance of the development of artificial superintelligence by 2050, and a 90% chance by 2075. The latter date is within the life expectancy of many alive today. Visionaries like Stephen Hawking and Elon Musk have warned of the existential risks from artificial superintelligence. Their opposite camp includes Larry Page and Mark Zuckerberg. But on an issue that concerns the future of humanity, is it really wise to ignore the guy who explained the nature of space to us and another guy who just put a reusable rocket in it? 4. Technology: known knowns and unknown unknowns Many fundamentally disruptive technologies are coming of age, from bioengineering to quantum computing, 3-D printing, robotics, nanotechnology and more. Lord Martin Rees describes potential existential challenges from some of these technologies, such as a bioengineered pandemic, in his book Our Final Century. Imagine if North Korea, feeling secure in its isolation, could release a virulent strain of Ebola, engineered to be airborne. Would it do it? Would ISIS? Projecting decades forward, we will likely develop capabilities that are unthinkable even now. The unknown unknowns of our technological path are profoundly humbling. 5. 'The Trump Factor' Despite our scientific ingenuity, we are still a confused and confusing species. Think back to two years ago, and how you thought the world worked then. Has that not been upended by the election of Donald Trump as US President, and everything that has happened since? The mix of billions of messy humans will forever be unpredictable. When the combustible forces described above are added to this melee, we find ourselves on a tightrope. What choices must we now make now to create a shared future, in which we are not at perpetual risk of destroying ourselves? Common enemy to common cause Throughout history, we have rallied against the ‘other’. Tribes have overpowered tribes, empires have conquered rivals. Even today, our fiercest displays of unity typically happen at wartime. We give our lives for our motherland and defend nationalistic pride like a wounded lion. But like the early Mosrioris, we 21st-century citizens find ourselves on an increasingly unstable island. We may have a violent past, but we have no more dangerous enemy than ourselves. Our task is to find our own Nunuku’s Law. Our own shared contract, based on equity, would help us navigate safely. It would ensure a future that unleashes the full potential of our still-budding human civilization, in all its diversity. We cannot do this unless we are humbly grounded in the possibility of our own destruction. Survival is life’s primal instinct. In the absence of a common enemy, we must find common cause in survival. Our future may depend on whether we realize this.

#### 2] Apocalyptic images challenge dominant power structures – contest the implausibility that inequitable structures can produce catastrophe

Jessica Hurley 17, Assistant Professor in the Humanities at the University of Chicago, “Impossible Futures: Fictions of Risk in the Longue Durée”, Duke University Press, https://read.dukeupress.edu/american-literature/article/89/4/761/132823/Impossible-Futures-Fictions-of-Risk-in-the-Longue

If contemporary ecocriticism has a shared premise about environmental risk it is that genre is the key to both perceiving and, possibly, correcting ecological crisis. Frederick Buell’s 2003 From Apocalypse to Way of Life: Environmental Crisis in the American Century has established one of the most central oppositions of this paradigm. As his title suggests, Buell tells the story of a discourse that began in the apocalyptic mode in the 1960s and 70s, when discussions of “the immanent end of nature” most commonly took the form of “prophecy, revelation, climax, and extermination” before turning away from apocalypse when the prophesied ends failed to arrive (112, 78). Buell offers his suggestion for the appropriate literary mode for life lived within a crisis that is both unceasing and inescapable: new voices, “if wise enough….will abandon apocalypse for a sadder realism that looks closely at social and environmental changes in process and recognizes crisis as a place where people dwell” (202-3). In a world of threat, Buell demands a realism that might help us see risks more clearly and aid our survival.¶ Buell’s argument has become a broadly held view in contemporary risk theory and ecocriticism, overlapping fields in the social sciences and humanities that address the foundational question of second modernity: “how do you live when you are at such risk?” (Woodward 2009, 205).1 Such an assertion, however, assumes both that realism is a neutral descriptive practice and that apocalypse is not something that is happening now in places that we might not see, or cannot hear. This essay argues for the continuing importance of apocalyptic narrative forms in representations of environmental risk to disrupt conservative realisms that maintain the status quo. Taking the ecological disaster of nuclear waste as my case study, I examine two fictional treatments of nuclear waste dumps that create different temporal structures within which the colonial history of the United States plays out. The first, a set of Department of Energy documents that use statistical modeling and fictional description to predict a set of realistic futures for the site of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico (1991), creates a present that is fully knowable and a future that is fully predictable. Such an approach, I suggest, perpetuates the state logics of implausibility that have long undergirded settler colonialism in the United States. In contrast, Leslie Marmon Silko’s contemporaneous novel Almanac of the Dead (1991) uses its apocalyptic form to deconstruct the claims to verisimilitude that undergird state realism, transforming nuclear waste into a prophecy of the end of the United States rather than a means for imagining its continuation. In Almanac of the Dead, the presence of nuclear waste introjects a deep-time perspective into contemporary America, transforming the present into a speculative space where environmental catastrophe produces not only unevenly distributed damage but also revolutionary forms of social justice that insist on a truth that probability modeling cannot contain: that the future will be unimaginably different from the present, while the present, too, might yet be utterly different from the real that we think we know.¶ Nuclear waste is rarely treated in ecocriticism or risk theory, for several reasons: it is too manmade to be ecological; its catastrophes are ongoing, intentionally produced situations rather than sudden disasters; and it does not support the narrative that subtends ecocritical accounts of risk perception in which the nuclear threat gives rise to an awareness of other kinds of threat before reaching the end of its relevance at the end of the Cold War.2 In what follows, I argue that the failure of nuclear waste to fit into the critical frames created by ecocriticism and risk theory to date offers an opportunity to expand those frames and overcome some of their limitations, especially the impulse towards a paranoid, totalizing realism that Peter van Wyck (2005) has described as central to ecocriticism in the risk society. Nuclear waste has durational forms that dwarf the human. It therefore dwells less in the economy of risk as it is currently conceptualized and more in the blown-out realm of deep time. Inhabiting the temporal scale that has recently been christened the Anthropocene, the geological era defined by the impact of human activities on the world’s geology and climate, nuclear waste unsettles any attempt at realist description, unveiling the limits of human imagination at every turn.3 By analyzing risk society through a heuristic of nuclear waste, this essay offers a critique of nuclear colonialism and environmental racism. At the same time, it shows how the apocalyptic mode in deep time allows narratives of environmental harm and danger to move beyond the paranoid logic of risk. In the world of deep time, all that might come to pass will come to pass, sooner or later. The endless maybes of risk become certainties. The impossibilities of our own deaths and the deaths of everything else will come. But so too will other impossibilities: talking macaws and alien visitors, the end of the colonial occupation of North America, or a sudden human determination to let the world live. The end of capitalism may yet become more thinkable than the end of the world. Just wait long enough. Stranger things will happen.

#### The roll of the ballot is to evaluate the fiated aff plan vs a competitive alternative or the status quo.

#### 1] Policies reduce material violence.

Mattson 12 (Michelle, Rhodes College German politics and culture professor, “Rebels Without Causes: Contemporary German Authors Not in Search of Meaning”, Monatshefte, 104.2, Summer, project muse)

I shall not venture to judge whether Baudrillard’s diagnosis of postmodern society is accurate, although it appears that many of Germany’s current writers agree with him or were influenced by postmodern theories of late 20th-century consumerist societies. I can, however, say in conclusion that it is not helpfulor productive on either an individual or social level in imagining ways of living in today’s world. As Steven Best points out: Baudrillard’s radical rejection of referentiality is premised upon a one-dimensional, No-Exit world of self-referring simulacra. But, however, reified and self-referential postmodern semiotics is, signs do not simply move in their own signifying orbit. They are historically produced and circulated and while they may not translucently refer to some originating world, they none the less can be socio-historically contextualized, interpreted, and critiqued.(57) In other words, human beings generate the simulacra in specific historical contexts that are subject to interpretation and challenge. Regardless of how pervasively the media spin our reality, real people suffer and—occasionally [End Page 259] prosper—because of political decisions made at the local, national, and international level. Media images may overpower us, but they shouldn’t make us lose sight of the real ramifications of political and economic development. Many critics have suggested that Baudrillard’s chief accomplishment was to serve as an agent provocateur. In an interview with Mike Gane, Baudrillard himself saw his method of reflection as “provocative, reversible, [ . . . ] a way of raising things to the ‘N’th power [ . . . ] It’s a bit like a theory-fiction” (Poster 331). One could argue that this is precisely the function of such novels and short stories as the ones examined here: to provoke us. But to what end? Naters, Regener, and Hermann all write very readable literature, and they challenge us to understand the world of the insipid, self-centered, and myopic characters that they have created. It would indeed be a disservice to the authors to imply that they do not view their own characters with critical distance. Thus, I am not suggesting that they believe their readers should emulate the characters they have created. They have not, however, successfully demonstrated either why we should care about them or—more importantly—what we can learn from them.

**2] any other ROTB is insufficient for anti-racist politics – instead, specific policy proposals and organizational action are key.**

**Rana 16** – (Winter 2016, Aziz, PhD in Government from Harvard, Professor of Law at Cornell, “Race and the American Creed: Recovering black radicalism,” https://nplusonemag.com/issue-24/politics/race-and-the-american-creed/)

But **one problem with Coates’s version of black radicalism is that at times**—more in his book Between the World and Me than in his political interventions in the Atlantic—**he depicts disillusionment in individual terms**. That book in particular conveys little of the communities of solidarity African Americans belong to, or of how things like reparations ground a shared social vision of the future. Instead, **Coates combines radical rejection of polite society with a personal notion of resistance**, **in which “struggle” is presented as the individual’s ethical refusal to comply with the totalizing injustice of racism and its structures**. **What is missing is a collective sense of action**, **let alone of the possibility of transformation through such action**. **We are left in the world of either overwhelming and oppressive institutions or isolated individuals of conscience**. **The force** of Between the World and Me **can be too easily contained**. Precisely because Coates imagines isolated individuals in the face of totalizing oppression, **one can walk away** from the book **feeling that real change**—**rather than just window dressing**—**is out of reach**. And for **this** reason, the book’s **sensibility can have the odd effect of buttressing the very institutions it condemns**. This form of **creedal rejection can be neutered publicly through praise: treated** by those like David Brooks **as** “hard truths,” but **truths that by their very profundity may be too difficult to overcome**. **The consequence is a mainstream (especially liberal) culture that laps up the attack and even accepts the structural dimension of race** **at the same time that it abandons fundamental racial reform as ultimately hopeless**. What we are witnessing is one way that defenders of the creed are coming to grips with its internal crisis. Perhaps **the problem is** not with the creed at all, but with race itself—an issue so fraught and overwhelming as to be impossible to address adequately. Even the failures of the creed therefore speak to **the heroism of the American project**—**which takes as its goal a truly Sisyphean task**. In this way, **racial pessimism can be absorbed into the narrative**, and actually prop up a weakened creed. **If getting from here to there is more or less beyond collective effort, and all we have is a position of ethical resistance and noble struggle, then political elites can feel guilt and torment** at the continuing force of racial subordination. **But** **they do not need to believe that their own practices have much effect**, let alone make matters worse. **Since this “union may never be perfect,”** to use Obama’s phrase, **maybe all that can be expected is to muddle along** as best we can. **THE HOPE FOR BLACK RADICALISM today is that the present mood can develop into an account of state, economy, and society strong enough to counter the creedal narrative**. Recent initiatives, like Campaign Zero, have put forward valuable concrete ideas for police reform—but these **demands must be combined with a more expansive and prefigurative politics**. **Activists must do no less than imagine and present their policy prescriptions**, as did earlier generations, **as a competing ideal of liberation, solidarity, and renewal**. Without a comparable ideal, it is incredibly difficult to counter even a weakened creedal story, let alone the patchwork of reactive policy initiatives proposed by liberal centrists—such as body cameras, a handful of high-profile prosecutions, and sensitivity training for officers.

#### 3] Scenario analysis is pedagogically valuable

Barma et al 16 – (May 2016, [Advance Publication Online on 11/6/15], Naazneen Barma, PhD in Political Science from UC-Berkeley, Assistant Professor of National Security Affairs at the Naval Postgraduate School, Brent Durbin, PhD in Political Science from UC-Berkeley, Professor of Government at Smith College, Eric Lorber, JD from UPenn and PhD in Political Science from Duke, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, Rachel Whitlark, PhD in Political Science from GWU, Post-Doctoral Research Fellow with the Project on Managing the Atom and International Security Program within the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard, “‘Imagine a World in Which’: Using Scenarios in Political Science,” International Studies Perspectives 17 (2), pp. 1-19, http://www.naazneenbarma.com/uploads/2/9/6/9/29695681/using\_scenarios\_in\_political\_science\_isp\_2015.pdf, Accessed 10/13/17)

Over the past decade, the “cult of irrelevance” in political science scholarship has been lamented by a growing chorus (Putnam 2003; Nye 2009; Walt 2009). Prominent scholars of international affairs have diagnosed the roots of the gap between academia and policymaking, made the case for why political science research is valuable for policymaking, and offered a number of ideas for enhancing the policy relevance of scholarship in international relations and comparative politics (Walt 2005,2011; Mead 2010; Van Evera 2010; Jentleson and Ratner 2011; Gallucci 2012; Avey and Desch 2014). Building on these insights, several initiatives have been formed in the attempt to “bridge the gap.”2 Many of the specific efforts put in place by these projects focus on providing scholars with the skills, platforms, and networks to better communicate the findings and implications of their research to the policymaking community, a necessary and worthwhile objective for a field in which theoretical debates, methodological training, and publishing norms tend more and more toward the abstract and esoteric. Yet enhancing communication between scholars and policymakers is only one component of bridging the gap between international affairs theory and practice. Another crucial component of this bridge is the **generation of substantive research programs that are actually policy relevant**—a challenge to which less concerted attention has been paid. The dual challenges of bridging the gap are especially acute for graduate students, a particular irony since many enter the discipline with the explicit hope of informing policy. In a field that has an admirable devotion to pedagogical self-reflection, **strikingly little attention is paid to techniques for generating policy-relevant ideas** for dissertation and other research topics. Although numerous articles and conference workshops are devoted to the importance of experiential and problem-based learning, especially through techniques of simulation that emulate policymaking processes (Loggins 2009; Butcher 2012; Glasgow 2012; Rothman 2012; DiCicco 2014), little has been written about the use of such techniques for generating and developing innovative research ideas. This article outlines an experiential and problem-based approach to developing a political science research program using scenario analysis. It focuses especially on illuminating the research generation and pedagogical benefits of this technique by describing the use of scenarios in the annual New Era Foreign Policy Conference (NEFPC), which brings together doctoral students of international and comparative affairs who share a demonstrated interest in policy-relevant scholarship.3 In the introductory section, the article outlines the practice of scenario analysis and considers the utility of the technique in political science. We argue that scenario analysis should be viewed as a tool to stimulate problem-based learning for doctoral students and discuss the broader scholarly benefits of using scenarios to help generate research ideas. The second section details the manner in which NEFPC deploys scenario analysis. The third section reflects upon some of the concrete scholarly benefits that have been realized from the scenario format. The fourth section offers insights on the pedagogical potential associated with using scenarios in the classroom across levels of study. A brief conclusion reflects on the importance of developing specific techniques to aid those who wish to generate political science scholarship of relevance to the policy world. What Are Scenarios and Why Use Them in Political Science? Scenario analysis is perceived most commonly as a technique for examining the robustness of strategy. It can immerse decision makers in future states that go beyond conventional extrapolations of current trends, preparing them to take advantage of unexpected opportunities and to protect themselves from adverse exogenous shocks. The global petroleum company Shell, a pioneer of the technique, characterizes scenario analysis as the art of considering “what if” questions about possible future worlds. Scenario analysis is thus **typically seen as serving the purposes of corporate planning or as a policy tool** to be used in combination with simulations of decision making. **Yet scenario analysis is not inherently limited to these uses**. This section provides a brief overview of the practice of scenario analysis and the motivations underpinning its uses. It then makes a case for the utility of the technique for political science scholarship and describes how the scenarios deployed at NEFPC were created. The Art of Scenario Analysis We characterize scenario analysis as the art of juxtaposing current trends in unexpected combinations in order to articulate surprising**and**yet plausible futures, often **referred to as “alternative worlds.”** Scenarios are thus explicitly not forecasts**or projections based on linear extrapolations of contemporary patterns**, and they are **not hypothesis-based expert predictions**. Nor **should they be equated with**simulations, which are best characterized as functional representations of **real institutions** or decision-making processes (Asal 2005). Instead, they are depictions of possible future states **of the world**, offered **together**with**a narrative of the**driving causal forces and potential exogenous shocks that could lead to those futures. Good scenarios thus rely on explicit causal propositions that, independent of one another, are plausible—yet, when combined, suggest surprising and sometimes controversial future worlds. For example, few predicted the dramatic fall in oil prices toward the end of 2014. Yet independent driving forces, such as the shale gas revolution in the United States, China’s slowing economic growth, and declining conflict in major Middle Eastern oil producers such as Libya, were all recognized secular trends that—combined with OPEC’s decision not to take concerted action as prices began to decline—came together in an unexpected way. While scenario analysis played a role in war gaming and strategic planning during the Cold War, the real antecedents of the contemporary practice are found in corporate futures studies of the late 1960s and early 1970s (Raskin et al. 2005). Scenario analysis was essentially initiated at Royal Dutch Shell in 1965, with the realization that the usual forecasting techniques and models were not capturing the rapidly changing environment in which the company operated (Wack 1985; Schwartz 1991). In particular, it had become evident that straight-line extrapolations of past global trends were inadequate for anticipating the evolving business environment. Shell-style scenario planning “helped break the habit, ingrained in most corporate planning, of assuming that the future will look much like the present” (Wilkinson and Kupers 2013, 4). Using scenario thinking, Shell anticipated the possibility of two Arab-induced oil shocks in the 1970s and hence was able to position itself for major disruptions in the global petroleum sector. Building on its corporate roots, scenario analysis has become a standard policymaking tool. For example, the Project on Forward Engagement advocates linking systematic foresight, which it defines as the disciplined analysis of alternative futures, to planning and feedback loops to better equip the United States to meet contemporary governance challenges (Fuerth 2011). Another prominent application of scenario thinking is found in the National Intelligence Council’s series of Global Trends reports, issued every four years to aid policymakers in anticipating and planning for future challenges. These reports present a handful of “alternative worlds” approximately twenty years into the future, carefully constructed on the basis of emerging global trends, risks, and opportunities, and intended to stimulate thinking about geopolitical change and its effects.4 As with corporate scenario analysis, the technique can be used in foreign policymaking for long-range general planning purposes as well as for anticipating and coping with more narrow and immediate challenges. An example of the latter is the German Marshall Fund’s EuroFutures project, which uses four scenarios to map the potential consequences of the Euro-area financial crisis (German Marshall Fund 2013). Several features make scenario analysis particularly useful for policymaking.5 Long-term global trends across a number of different realms—social, technological, environmental, economic, and political—combine in often-unexpected ways to produce unforeseen challenges. Yet the ability of decision makers to imagine, let alone prepare for, discontinuities in the policy realm is constrained by their existing mental models and maps. This limitation is exacerbated by **well-known cognitive bias tendencies such as groupthink and confirmation bias** (Jervis 1976; Janis 1982; Tetlock 2005). The power of scenarios lies in their ability to help individuals break out of conventional modes of thinking and analysis by introducing unusual combinations of trends and deliberate discontinuities in narratives about the future. **Imagining alternative future worlds through a structured analytical process enables policymakers to envision and thereby adapt to something altogether different from the known present**. Designing Scenarios for Political Science Inquiry The characteristics of scenario analysis that commend its use to policymakers also make it well suited to helping political scientists generate and develop policy-relevant research programs. Scenarios are essentially textured, plausible, and relevant stories that help us imagine how the future political-economic world could be different from the past in a manner that highlights policy challenges and opportunities. For example, terrorist organizations are a known threat that have captured the attention of the policy community, yet our responses to them tend to be linear and reactive. Scenarios that explore how seemingly unrelated vectors of change—the rise of a new peer competitor in the East that diverts strategic attention, volatile commodity prices that empower and disempower various state and nonstate actors in surprising ways, and the destabilizing effects of climate change or infectious disease pandemics—can be useful for illuminating the nature and limits of the terrorist threat in ways that may be missed by a narrower focus on recognized states and groups. By illuminating the potential strategic significance of specific and yet poorly understood opportunities and threats, scenario analysis helps to identify crucial gaps in our collective understanding of global politicaleconomic trends and dynamics. The notion of “exogeneity”—so prevalent in social science scholarship—applies to models of reality, not to reality itself. Very simply, scenario analysis can throw into sharp relief often-overlooked yet pressing questions in international affairs that demand focused investigation. Scenarios thus offer, in principle, an innovative tool for developing a political science research agenda. In practice, achieving this objective requires careful tailoring of the approach. The specific scenario analysis technique we outline below was designed and refined to provide a structured experiential process for generating problem-based research questions with contemporary international policy relevance.6 The first step in the process of creating the scenario set described here was to identify important causal forces in contemporary global affairs. Consensus was not the goal; on the contrary, some of these causal statements represented competing theories about global change (e.g., a resurgence of the nation-state vs. border-evading globalizing forces). A major principle underpinning the transformation of these causal drivers into possible future worlds was to “simplify, then exaggerate” them, before fleshing out the emerging story with more details.7 Thus, the contours of the future world were drawn first in the scenario, with details about the possible pathways to that point filled in second. It is entirely possible, indeed probable, that some of the causal claims that turned into parts of scenarios were exaggerated so much as to be implausible, and that an unavoidable degree of bias or our own form of groupthink went into construction of the scenarios. One of the great strengths of scenario analysis, however, is that the scenario discussions themselves, as described below, lay bare these especially implausible claims and systematic biases.8 An explicit methodological approach underlies the written scenarios themselves as well as the analytical process around them—that of case-centered, structured, focused comparison, intended especially to shed light on new causal mechanisms (George and Bennett 2005). The use of scenarios is similar to counterfactual analysis in that it modifies certain variables in a given situation in order to analyze the resulting effects (Fearon 1991). Whereas counterfactuals are traditionally retrospective in nature and explore events that did not actually occur in the context of known history, our scenarios are deliberately forward-looking and are designed to **explore potential futures** that could unfold. As such, counterfactual analysis is especially well suited to identifying how individual events might expand or shift the “funnel of choices” available to political actors and thus lead to different historical outcomes (Nye 2005, 68–69), while forward-looking scenario analysis can better illuminate surprising intersections and sociopolitical dynamics without the perceptual constraints imposed by fine-grained historical knowledge. We see scenarios as a complementary resource for exploring these dynamics in international affairs, rather than as a replacement for counterfactual analysis, historical case studies, or other methodological tools. In the scenario process developed for NEFPC, three distinct scenarios are employed, acting as cases for analytical comparison. Each scenario, as detailed below, includes a set of explicit “driving forces” which represent hypotheses about causal mechanisms worth investigating in evolving international affairs. The scenario analysis process itself employs templates (discussed further below) to serve as a graphical representation of a structured, focused investigation and thereby as the research tool for conducting case-centered comparative analysis (George and Bennett 2005). In essence, these templates articulate key observable implications within the alternative worlds of the scenarios and serve as a framework for capturing the data that emerge (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994). Finally, this structured, focused comparison serves as the basis for the cross-case session emerging from the scenario analysis that leads directly to the articulation of new research agendas. The scenario process described here has thus been carefully designed to offer some guidance to policy-oriented graduate students who are otherwise left to the relatively unstructured norms by which political science dissertation ideas are typically developed. The initial articulation of a dissertation project is generally an idiosyncratic and personal undertaking (Useem 1997; Rothman 2008), whereby students might choose topics based on their coursework, their own previous policy exposure, or the topics studied by their advisors. Research agendas are thus typically developed by looking for “puzzles” in existing research programs (Kuhn 1996). Doctoral students also, understandably, often choose topics that are particularly amenable to garnering research funding. Conventional grant programs typically base their funding priorities on extrapolations from what has been important in the recent past—leading to, for example, the prevalence of Japan and Soviet studies in the mid-1980s or terrorism studies in the 2000s—in the absence of any alternative method for identifying questions of likely future significance. The scenario approach to generating research ideas is grounded in the belief that these traditional approaches can be complemented by identifying questions likely to be of great empirical importance in the real world, even if these **do not appear** as puzzles **in existing research programs** or as clear extrapolations from past events. The scenarios analyzed at NEFPC envision alternative worlds that could develop in the medium (five to seven year) term and are designed to **tease out issues scholars and policymakers may encounter in the relatively near future** so that they can **begin thinking critically about them now**. This timeframe offers a period distant enough from the present as to avoid falling into current events analysis, but not so far into the future as to seem like science fiction. In imagining the worlds in which these scenarios might come to pass, participants **learn strategies for avoiding failures of creativity** and for overturning**the**assumptions that prevent scholars**and analysts**from**anticipating and** understanding the pivotal junctures that arise in international affairs.