précis

in this issue

MIT CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

World War I, one century after its bitter end

Q&A with Stephen Van Evera

One hundred years ago on November 11, 1918, the Allied Powers and Germany signed an armistice bringing to an end World War I. That bloody conflict decimated Europe and destroyed three major empires (Austrian, Russian, and Ottoman). Its aftershocks still echo in our own times.

As we recognize this day of remembrance—commemorated throughout Europe as Armistice Day, and in the US as Veteran's Day—it is a reminder of Machiavelli's tenet that "whosoever wishes to foresee the future must consult the past."

Stephen Van Evera, Ford International Professor of Political Science and an expert on the causes of war

précis: Who caused the war? Do historians agree or not? Where does the debate stand?

SVE: My answer: the Germans caused the war. They wanted a general European war in 1914 and deliberately brought it about. Their deed was the crime of the century.

But others disagree. A hundred years later scholars still dispute which state was most responsible. Views have evolved a lot but there is no consensus.

During 1919-45 most German historians blamed Russia, or Britain, or France, while deeming Germany largely innocent. Historians outside Germany generally viewed the war as an accident, for which all the European powers deserved blame. Few put primary responsibility on Germany.

Then in 1961 and 1969 German historian Fritz Fischer published books that put greatest blame on Germany. His books stirred one of the most intense historical debates we've ever seen. The firestorm was covered in the German popular press, debated at public forums attended by thousands, and discussed in the German parliament, as though the soul of Germany was at stake—which in a way it was. Fischer and most Fischer followers argued that Germany instigated the 1914 July crisis in order to ignite a local Balkan war that would improve Germany's power position in Europe. German leaders did not want a general European war, but they deliberately risked such a war, and lost control of events. Some Fischerites went further, arguing that Germany instigated the 1914 July crisis in order to cause a general European war, which they wanted for "preventive" reasons—they hoped to cut Russian power down to size before Russia's military power outgrew German power—and to position Germany to seize a wider empire in Europe and Africa. Both Fischer variants assign Germany prime responsibility.

The Fischer school offered strong support for their argument, and new evidence discovered since Fischer wrote further corroborates their view. For example, John Röhl recently found evidence of a German-Austrian meeting in November 1912 where a joint move toward general war was apparently agreed. (See John Röhl, Into the Abyss [2014], pp. 889-911.) Germany was making nasty plans! We have also learned that after 1914 German leaders privately confessed their responsibility for the war. In 1915 German general Helmut von Moltke, who had large

influence on German policy in 1914, complained from retirement that "it is dreadful to be condemned to inactivity in this war which I prepared and initiated." German Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg confessed in 1917 that "yes, it was in a sense a preventive war." His foreign secretary Gottlieb von Jagow privately admitted in 1918 that "Germany wanted the war" that by then had gone disastrously wrong. These are telltale statements.

Within Germany the Fischer view holds sway today. Germans broadly take responsibility for the war. But several recent works by non-Germans reject the Fischer view, assigning Germany less responsibility than Fischer while blaming others more. Sean McMeekin blames Russia more than Germany. Christopher Clark blames all the major powers, without putting particular blame on Germany. Marc Trachtenberg argues that the Fischer school blames Germany unduly. So the Fischer school's views predominate in Germany but elsewhere the debate continues.

précis: What caused the war? That is, what phenomena?

SVE: The prime cause of the war was German aggression. The prime cause of German aggression was German militarism, i.e., the undue influence of the German military over German civilian perceptions of foreign policy and national security. The Wilhelmine German army had great domestic power and prestige. It used this power and prestige to infuse German society with a Darwinistic vision of world politics and a rose-colored view of warfare. Its propagandists told Germans that the life of states is nasty, brutish, and short; that states must conquer or be conquered; that states must strike others when the time is ripe or later be destroyed; that states must grow or die. As a result, German militarists argued, war was often necessary. They also claimed that wars usually ended quickly, before doing much damage, and warfare was a positive and even glorious experience. Hence, they argued, force was both necessary and cheap to use. These visions were illusions— the fake news of the time—but Germans widely believed them. As a result Germans civilians favored the bellicose policies that Germany pursued in 1914.

précis: Why is it important for scholars to assign responsibility for World War I, or for other wars?

SVE: When responsibility for past war is left unassigned, chauvinist mythmakers on one or both sides will over-blame the other for causing the war while whitewashing their own responsibility. Both sides will then be angered when the other refuses to admit responsibility and apologize for violence they believe the other caused, and be further angered that the other has the gall to blame them for this violence. They may also infer that the other may resort to violence again, as its non-apology shows that it sees nothing wrong with its past violence.

When responsibility for past war is left unassigned, chauvinist myth-makers on one or both sides will over-blame the other for causing the war while whitewashing their own responsibility.

The German government infused German society with self-whitewashing, other-maligning myths of this kind about World War I origins during the interwar years. These myths played a key role in fueling Hitler's rise to power in Germany in 1933. They were devised and spread by the Kriegsschuldreferat (War Guilt Office), a secret unit in the German foreign ministry. The Kriegsschuldreferat sponsored twisted accounts of the war's origins by nationalist German historians, underwrote mass propaganda on the war's origins, selectively edited document collections, and worked to corrupt historical understanding abroad by exporting this propaganda to Britain, France, and the US. This innocence propaganda persuaded the German public that Germany had little or no responsibility for causing the war. Germans were taught instead that Britain instigated the war; then outrageously blamed Germany for the war in the Versailles treaty's "War Guilt" clause; and then forced Germany to pay reparations for a war Britain itself began.

An enraging narrative for Germans who believed it! And many Germans did. Hitler's rise to power was fueled in part by the wave of German public fear and fury that this false narrative fostered. Hitler told Germans that Germany's neighbors had attacked Germany in 1914 without reason, and then falsely denied their crime while falsely blaming Germany in the Versailles Treaty. This injustice had to be redressed.

After 1945 international politics in Western Europe was miraculously transformed. War became unthinkable in a region where rivers of blood had flowed for centuries. This political transformation stemmed in important part from a transformation in the teaching of international history in European schools and universities. The international history of Europe was commonized. Europeans everywhere now learned largely the same history instead of imbibing their own national myths. An important cause of war, chauvinist nationalist mythmaking, was erased. Greatest credit for this achievement goes to truthtelling German historians and school teachers who documented German responsibility for World War I, World War II and the Holocaust and taught it to the German people. By enabling a rough consensus among former belligerents on who was responsible for past violence these historians—including the Fischerites and also others—and school teachers played a large role in healing the wounds of the world wars and making another round of war impossible.

An amazing turnabout! After wallowing in lies from 1918 until the 1960s, Germany has set the gold standard for truthtelling about the national past. Germans have a very difficult past to confront, and have confronted it in outstanding fashion. This German truthtelling project sets an example for all to follow. Honors are due those who inspired it and carried it out. Germany's truthtelling historians and school teachers top the list of those who merit a yet-ungiven Nobel peace prize. Memo to Nobel awards committee: seek ways to correct this oversight!

Nationalist/chauvinist historical mythmaking declined worldwide after World War II but it never disappeared. It still infects many places. Contemporary Turkish chauvinism is fed by Turkish denial of incontrovertible Turkish responsibility for the 1915 genocide of the Armenian people. With rare exceptions (eg, Saburo Ienaga) Japanese leaders and historians still avoid offering a forthright and unqualified admission of Japan's aggressions and crimes in World War II. Admirable exceptions aside (eg, the Israeli "new historians") Arabs and Israelis both repeat self-whitewashing, other-blackening narratives about one another. These narratives feed fear and hatred on both sides. The worldwide Christian community remains largely unaware of the scope of past Christian crimes against the Jewish people, and of past aggressions against the Muslim world. This inhibits Christians from moving to heal the wounds their churches and communities inflicted in the past. The Sunni Muslim world is likewise unaware of the great violence committed by Sunni Muslims against others, including Christians, Shia Muslims, Ahmadis, Yazidis, and other non-Sunnis in South Sudan, East Timor, Armenia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Indonesia, and elsewhere. This ignorance fuels Sunnis' sense of victimhood, which in turn feeds Sunni extremism, manifest in the violence of Al Qaeda, ISIS, and affiliates.

Within the US the white South clings to a false account of the origins of the civil war ("It wasn't about slavery") and the nature of slavery ("It wasn't so bad."). This innocence narrative feeds a white sense of victimhood, which in turn fuels white southern hostility to enforcing equal rights for all Americans and white southern support for extremists like those who chanted "Jews will not replace us" and murdered Heather Heyer in Charlottesville in 2017.

These communities should learn from Germany's example. If, like Germany, they faced their past truthfully they would downsize their sense of victimhood to better fit the facts. Their sense of grievance and entitlement would diminish accordingly. They would be quicker to see the justice in others' claims and to grant what others deserve. Peace with their neighbors would be easier to reach and sustain. War would be easier to avoid.

précis: What consequences (past and present) arose from the impact of the Great War?

SVE: Like a boulder that triggers a landslide as it tumbles downhill, World War I unleashed forces that later caused even greater violence.

Without World War I there would have been no Hitler, as he rose to power on (trumped up) grievances that stemmed from World War I, as discussed above. Hence without World War I there would have been no World War II. There also

would have been no Holocaust, as the Holocaust was a particular project of the Nazi elite that other German elites would not have pursued had they ruled instead of Hitler.

Without World War I there would have been no Russian revolution; hence no Leninism or Stalinism; hence no vast massacres by Stalin (~30 million murdered); and no Cold War between the Soviet Union and the West during 1947-89; hence no peripheral wars in Korea, Indochina, Afghanistan, Angola, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Cambodia, killing millions. There would have been no CIA coups in Guatemala, Congo, and perhaps Indonesia, hence no ensuing civil wars and/or massacres in these countries, killing many hundreds of thousands. There would have been no communist takeovers in China, Yugoslavia, Cambodia or North Korea, hence no epic communist-engineered massacres or famines in those lands (over 30 million were killed or died of famine born of crazed social engineering in China alone).

Moral of story: war can be self-feeding, self-perpetuating and self-expanding. It has fire-like properties that cause it to continue once it begins. It is hard to extinguish because, like fire, it sustains itself by generating its own heat. In this case the "heat" is mutual fear and mutual hatred born of wartime violence, and war-generated combat political ideologies, like Bolshevism, Naziism, and extremist Sunni jihadism, that see human affairs as a Darwinistic struggle that compels groups to destroy others or be destroyed themselves. Implication: preventing war of all kinds should take high priority. War can reach out and touch even those who are far away at the outset, or are yet unborn. Its furies cannot be predicted and sometimes cannot be contained. We should address these furies by moving to prevent war before it begins. ■

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On reducing gun violence

John Tirman

Mass shootings have become a regular feature of American life over the past few years. John Tirman shares from his research an ideal scenario for the US position and cultural ethos on gun violence and the policies necessary to move us toward that ideal.

John Tirman, Executive Director and Principal Research Scientist, CIS

Photo: Allegra Boverman

America's gun culture is a resilient fact of political life. Attempts to reverse the country's appetite for firearms have largely failed, even as gun violence persists at an astonishing pace. Lately, however, a social movement to challenge gun culture has rocked politics for the first time in a generation, and this might shake up congressional complacency in the midterm elections.

The bare facts are that Americans possess nearly 300 million firearms, and guns are present in more than 40 percent of US households. About 35,000 people die by gunshot each year, more than half by suicide, and the overall numbers are gradually climbing. There have been more than 1,800 mass shootings, defined as incidents in which four or more people are shot, since the horrifying Sandy Hook massacre of schoolchildren in 2012.

This is an international problem, too, as several countries with high homicide rates get guns from the United States, and gun advocates such as the National Rifle Association (NRA) lobby for looser gun laws in many nations. The culture of the gun is exported with the firearms.

That gun culture—the history, lore, social practices, networks, and politics of firearms—is a stubborn artifact of the American experience. We have long extolled the pioneer, the frontiersman, and the cowboy, those paladins of settler expansion across the continent. The gun was central to that frontier myth and remains strongly linked to the nation's core value of freedom. Today this archetype is valorized on television in the form of a cop or a soldier. It is no coincidence that gun homicides are markedly higher in other settler nations in the Americas than anywhere else in the world. Brazil and El Salvador, for example, even outpace the United States in per capita deaths by gunshot.

Proven methods

But the carnage and the culture are being tested as never before. The Parkland, Florida, high school massacre on Valentine's Day, in which 17 students and staff were murdered, sparked a survivors' campaign, March for Our Lives, that drew an enormous amount of attention. In Florida alone (a state and a governor long scornful of gun laws), a gun-control bill has been enacted that sets a three-day waiting period for purchases, changes the lawful age of possession from 18 to 21, and sets up a "red flag" mechanism for confiscating guns from those considered a threat to themselves or others. Other states have passed similar measures—all proven methods for reducing gun fatalities.

March for Our Lives was effective because the survivor students turned grief into activism—their authenticity was their principal asset. Another organization that uses its members adeptly and is shaking up several congressional races is Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, founded by a suburban Indiana mother, Shannon Watts, the day after the Sandy Hook massacre. Launched with a Facebook post and modeled after Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Moms Demand Action (which merged

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A social movement to challenge America's resilient gun culture has rocked politics for the first time in a generation, and might shake up congressional complacency in the midterm elections.

with the Michael Bloomberg–financed Everytown for Gun Safety in 2013) now has 4 million supporters and chapters in every state. The organization gets pledges from congressional candidates and provides endorsements.

The list of achievements by groups like Moms Demand Action is often preventative —blocking state legislation to loosen gun laws—and convincing businesses to stop selling semi-automatic weapons like those used in many mass shootings. Shifting attitudes Their success is also visible in public attitudes, which are shifting toward preventing gun violence. In Gallup polling, for example, in 2010 about the same numbers of Americans said gun laws should be more strict or should stay the same. Today, 67 percent say they should be stricter, with just 28 percent saying they should stay the same. By even larger margins, the public supports stricter background checks, red flag laws, and raising the age for the legal possession of firearms.

The old gun culture remains potent, as evidenced by the many legislative battles fought over ending restrictions on gun ownership and possession. The entertainment industry appears wholly committed to putting gun violence front and center in its programming. (A family physicians' journal notes "an average American youth will witness 200,000 violent acts on television before age 18.") And politicians pay homage to gun culture, bank NRA lobbying money ($5 million in 2017), and aver that they are powerless to stop the violence.

Redefining liberty

Preventing gun violence will entail disrupting gun culture—redefining liberty to include freedom from violence, insisting that citizen safety is implicit in the Second Amendment, and scripting gun-free versions of Hollywood heroism. A tall order, but in April, one opinion poll asked, "Would you definitely vote for or definitely vote against a candidate for Congress who wants stricter gun control laws?" Sixty percent said "yes" to a stricter-law candidate. A cultural transformation? It just may be happening. ■

Populism: A case-by-case study

Una Hajdari/MIT Center for International Studies

Elizabeth Leeds, research affiliate, CIS, and Sana Aiyar, associate professor of history, MIT, were among the speakers at a MIT Starr Forum on The Rise of Populism.

Photo: Laura Kerwin/CIS

A panel of academics whose work has focused on some of the most extreme forms of populism seen in the past years, spoke at a Starr Forum.

Discussions about populism have been front and center in recent societal debates—online, in the news, and in social settings. The subject has also drawn intense interest from academics and brought attention to those who have studied the phenomenon over the years.

While many people associate the populist wave with current political leaders, such as Donald Trump in the United States, Nigel Farage in the UK, and Marine Le Pen in France, its current manifestation has roots in movements, beliefs, and deficiencies in the liberal democratic order that predate these leaders rise to power.

For many countries experiencing an increase in support for populist ideas—or in the more extreme cases, whose current leader or leading party is of the populist mold—it represents a very acute risk, one that has endangered basic civil liberties and societal harmony, and has seen hateful and intolerant rhetoric permeate the public sphere.

The three countries—Brazil, India, and Turkey—share certain characteristics. All of them are very influential in their part of the world, both in size and political clout. They are all emerging economic powerhouses, and they all boast ethnically diverse populations. In their presentations in front of the MIT public, the speakers, all academics who are either from these countries or have studied them over a long period of time, highlighted the way in which the current populist governments slowly accumulated power and made use of the deficiencies in their societies to amass wide voter support.

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Una Hajdari, the author of this article, is the 2018 Elizabeth Neuffer Fellow at the International Women's Media Foundation and a research fellow at CIS.

Photo: International Women's Media Foundation

General overview

Pippa Norris, the Paul F McGuire Lecturer in Comparative Politics at the Harvard Kennedy School, explained the rise in support for populist parties as a result of what she called a "cultural backlash" leveled at the mainstreaming of progressive and liberal values. According to Norris's research with Ronald Inglehart, to be published soon in a book titled "Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism," this wave of populist support is buttressed by social conservatives who are uncomfortable with cosmopolitan lifestyles that encourage diverse sexual and gender identities, as well as other markers of progressive thinking.

This group supports authoritarian populists and strongmen, she said, because they offer forms of "tribal protection" against "perceived risks of instability and disorder," and feed into their insecurities by promoting a hostile approach towards "outsiders" such as immigrants, people of religious or ethnic backgrounds different from their own. These parties and leaders react to perceptions of cultural threat, and they in turn offer the leaders their loyalty in the voting booths.

Norris explained that this is the main reason for an increase in populist support for leaders like Trump, Farage, and Le Pen.

Brazil: A sharp turn to the far right

"Brazil's perfect storm of negative trends began in the late 2000s, which led to the ascension of the radical right," explained Elizabeth Leeds, a research affiliate of the Center for International Studies, and a leading expert on police reform and issues of citizen security in Brazil. Leeds has conducted research on these topics over the last four decades. "The economic downturn and the subsequent recession starting around 2013 due in part to the worldwide drop in petroleum prices—petroleum is one of the engines of the Brazilian economy— and China's economic retrenchment which caused drops in Brazilian exports to China, led to a sense of hopelessness and unemployment, especially amongst the Brazilian youth that had recently graduated from college."

In the mid-20th century, Brazil emerged from a military coup and subsequent military dictatorship as a country that largely voted for left-wing or left-leaning parties. The progressive spirit of these parties embraced its rich cultural composition and included many welfare programs to pull its most disenfranchised segments of society out of poverty. The deficiencies of these policies—lack of equal distribution of resources— proved to be its undoing.

"The Workers Party, what it had become famous for and praised in its first eight years, its redistributor policies, its poverty alleviation programs, the Bolsa Familia, racial justice, gender equality, LGBT rights, gay marriage — all of these policies became fodder for those who were not benefitting from economic redistribution and were resentful at the attempt for racial justice," Leeds said.

The founder of Brazil's previous ruling party, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva or "Lula", and the creator of its landmark social welfare programs, was found to have been part of

a massive corruption scandal and initially wanted to run his campaign from prison, where he is currently serving a sentence.

"The massive corruption scandal that occurred on the Worker Party's watch and involved all parties [severely damaged their electoral success]," Leeds explained. "This provided further pretext for attacking the Worker's Party and its redistributor policies."

"The increase in violent crime, prison rebellions and the spread of organized criminal activity in the country, led people to search for a savior," she said.

In this chaos, Jair Bolsonaro, the head of the Social Liberal party and a former military officer, provided an appealing contrast to everything the Worker's Party represented. Fernando Haddad was put forward as the candidate of the Worker's Party. While having a clean slate, he did not offer the appeal of "Lulism" and did not offer strong opposition to Bolsonaro.

The news that Bolsonaro won the October presidential elections with 55 percent of the vote was met with shock in intellectual and political circles around the world and led to headlines claiming that Brazil had "elected a fascist" to office. Bolsonaro has openly praised Donald Trump's foreign policies, has said that women and men should not be paid the same salaries, and is thought to be against progressive policies towards the LGBT community in the country.

Of the things he is expected to reverse, Leeds explains that his lack of commitment to the Amazon and wildlife reserves in the country is causing the most outrage.

"The most acute issues that people are aware of and afraid of are reversal in economic regulations especially in the Amazon. He is planning to reverse may of the indigenous reserves to expand agricultural development and mining," Leeds said. He also wants to quash dissent, by "criminalizing social movements," she said.

"The well-known MST or Landless Workers Movement may be prosecuted under the anti-terrorism laws," said Leeds, who believes Bolsonaro also wants to quash the liberal ideas that seem as if they support his predecessor's beliefs. "He has attempted to constrain academic expression or ideological expression labelled communist, he has asked students to report professors for spreading objectionable or ideological speech. The protection of minority rights, gender rights, is in jeopardy."

India: A reversal of diversity

Sana Aiyar, an associate professor of history at MIT, explored the ways in which populist nationalism has reversed the progressive and inclusive policies of post-independence India, and the way it clashes with the beliefs of the post-colonial secular and supra-ethnic state.

India's current Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, of the Bharatiya Janata Party or BJP, is a proponent of the belief that India should be ruled by its Hindu-centered party and that ethnic and religious minorities, such as the Muslim population, should not have a central role in the government.

"The increase in violent crime, prison rebellions and the spread of organized criminal activity in the country, led people to search for a savior," Leeds said.

In this chaos, Jair Bolsonaro…provided an appealing contrast…

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"Modi turned his back on India's spirit of tolerance, its inclusive pluralism," said Aiyar of Modi's beliefs. "When India declared independence in 1947... the nationhood of India was defined by its equality and diversity."

India's first post-independence Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru of the Indian National Congress, insisted on an Indian identity that was secular—thus eradicating, at least in the political sphere, the ethnic differences between the various religious groups in the country. However, in a large country with many states composed of different groups, this status quo was difficult to maintain.

"The Indian National Congress (INC), the party that ruled India in its post-independence period began to decline in the 1960s and 1970s as regional populist parties began to form," explained Aiyar. "Through the 1990s and 2000s two major changes took place. First the Congress itself began to decline, primarily in the states where regional parties began emerging at the state level, and eventually at the national level."

From the late 1990s onwards, there was a change and a shift towards coalition governments. The INC and the BJP would form alliances with these regional parties that had been emerging over the years. In 1991, India shifted from a socialist to a neoliberal country through economic reforms, and the Indian middle class began expanding.

One of the promises of these reforms, Aiyar said, is "that the economy will be depoliticized. That the institutions will be the mediators between the public and the state."

> "Modi, with his strong record, transforms his anti-corruption movement into an anti-Congress one. He cast the Congress leaders as being very out of touch with the nation," Aiyar said.

"As this unravels in the 2000s, growth falls from around 7 percent at the turn of the century, there is rising inequality, and there is a sense that aspirations were not fulfilled," sais Aiyar, explaining the spread of disenchantment across the country. "The institutions begin being seen, at best, as ineffective and at worst as incredibly corrupt, the INC blames this on coalition politics and regional parties."

"The one state that began defying this all-India trend of inefficiency, corruption and lack of development is Gujarat, where Narendra Modi had been the Chief Minister since 2001. He builds up a reputation as being pro-business, as being an extremely effective leader, attracting huge foreign investments," Aiyar continued.

"Modi, with his strong record, transforms his anti-corruption movement into an anti-Congress one. He cast the Congress leaders as being very out of touch with the nation," she said. "The Congress was cast as corrupt, out of touch with the pulse of the nation, its leaders as elites. Congress beliefs, such as socialism, secularism, and the focus on diversity were depicted as being Western or English notions of the nation."

Modi was part of a group of politicians in India at the time who were offering various definitions of populism. The approaches attempted to define Indian nationhood, and his belief centred around the fact that India should be dominated by its majority ethnic and religious group.

Modi supported "the idea that a nation's political destiny is [should] be determined by its religious and ethnic majority," Aiyar said.

"Majoritarianism has two components that one should keep in mind. It differentiates between citizens—those who are seen as having the majority faith are seen as being true citizens, the sons of the soil. The rest are minorities or courtesy citizens," he said. "For the first years after independence, by defining India as secular rather than Hindu, Nehru manages not to commit India to the decolonization's original sin. India defines herself not as majoritarian—not because these tendencies didn't exist but precisely because there were these notions that had existed from the 1920s onwards."

In many countries around the world, populist politicians attempt to instill the fear amongst the majority populations or ethnic groups—those they rely on for electoral victories—that they are being threatened by a minority or that they have to "appease" to them rather than assert their dominance, Aiyar said. In many of these countries, the minority populations can be first-generation immigrants; religious, ethnic or linguistic minorities that have always been present in the country or those who plan to move there in larger numbers for academic or work opportunities.

For Modi, promoting the idea that only Hindus were truly autochthonous in India since it was the birthplace of Hinduism helped him secure a win in 2014 and continues to be a hallmark of his mandate as prime minister. Aiyar described the ideology as emphasizing "a common fatherland, and a common holy land. This meant that all Hindus are Indians and that minorities, for whom the holy land lays in the west, are seen as somewhat suspect."

Turkey: A blueprint for populism

Turkey's president Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been making headlines in the past couple of years as his authoritarian grasp on the country grows stronger. His Justice and Development Party, or AKP in Turkish, has become the largest party in the country and promotes a conservative platform that insists on an Islamic identity for Turkey and fondly looks back at the Ottoman Empire, the predecessor of modern Turkey that controlled vast territories in the Balkans and the Middle East.

Intially seen as a reformer when he started making gains on the political scene in the early 2000s, Erdogan has asserted his dominance by weakening Turkey's strong military, which promoted the country's secularism in the 20th century, and by expanding the powers and mandate of the president in a referendum held last year.

His mandate has seen a crackdown on critical journalists, NGOs, and academics, and he has persecuted opponents both within the country and abroad. Aysen Candas, an associate professor at Bogazici University and a visiting associate professor at Yale University, explained what she called the core components of "a successful populist takeover."

According to Candas, the populist checklist includes certain key components. "Desecularization, no matter what religion the country is based on, is detrimental for the constitutional order of the country," she said. For populists, constitutions are not binding. "When movements that rely on a majority's identitarian claims monopolize power, they acquire the ability to reverse the accomplishments of constitutional democracies, no matter how weak or strong these accomplishments may be."

Another component is that populism is only a transitional phase. "Turkey's experience with unhinged advanced populism proves that populism is a temporary phase, a snapshot, within the [counter]revolutionary transformation process of constitutional states, into right-leaning totalitarianisms," she said. "The only remedy against it is forging a common front."

Candas explains that populism comes from a feeling of insecurity, where people feel that opportunities they are given in life are becoming constrained.

"They respond to the shrinking or uncertainty of the economic pie, and the associated crisis of solidarity in the most regressive manner," she said. "Populism's political proposal consists of a counterrevolution, against egalitarian, liberal democratic sources of political legitimacy to reinstall status hierarchies."

Candas said populist ideologies and influences should not be taken lightly. "The ideology of populists must be taken very seriously, as they do fulfil their campaign promises and they are not short-termers but marathon runners."

The Turkey of the 20th century was a modern, secular country that consciously split from its Islamic identity following the fall of the Ottoman Empire. "A Pew Research study, repeated every year, shows that only 12 percent of the people in Turkey want to live under Islamic rule. The rest, the majority, want to live in a secular society. How could it then be that political Islamists monopolized power in Turkey? The short answer to that question is that the majority failed to forge a common front."

The two main fault lines along which the country is divided include the religion issue, but also the question of the large Kurdish minority, consisting of 20 percent of the population. "Since the 1980s there is an ongoing kulturkampf on two major fault lines in Turkey. The first one is on the Kurdish issue," she said. "Recognition of Kurdish identity, some form of regional autonomy, equal representation, and the unsurmountable 10 percent threshold that was put into practice in 1983 to prevent Kurdish parties from entering the parliament."

"This threshold grossly skewed every election result, so much so that in 2002 AKP came to power with 34 percent of the vote, which translated into 66 seats in the parliament," Candas explained. "The electoral threshold designed by the military in the 1990s, that was designed to keep Kurds out, let Islamists in."

"The second question is that of the secular republic or Sharia-based monarchy. These two fault lines cross-cut each other, in the sense that many Turkish secularists, who are for example gender and LGBTQ egalitarians turn into illiberal authoritarians on the Kurdish issue because they suspect that granting Kurds cultural rights and autonomy will lead to the partition of the country."

"Similarly, the intensely religious portion of the Kurds supported and still support the Islamist party even when repressive policies remain in place," she said. ■

précisinterview
Admiral Scott Swift

Admiral Scott Swift, the former commander of the US Pacific Fleet, joined CIS as the 2018 Robert E Wilhelm Fellow. He is using his time at MIT to study key challenges facing US and global security.

précis: In your more than forty years of service in the Navy, you held command at sea, you commanded aircraft squadrons, and ended your career commanding the Pacific Fleet. Thinking back on what you learned from those decades of experience, what would you change about the way the Navy works today?

SS: One of the criticisms I have about the Navy is that in some ways they change too much and in other ways they don't change enough. Anytime there's a turnover of leadership—which happens on a frequent basis, every two to three years within an organization in the Navy—a new commanding officer will have a sense of I've got a year or two years to leave my mark," and that can be a disruption without a purpose.

When I took over the seventh fleet, I purposely didn't want to make a lot of changes right away. I spent 30 days listening, 30 days talking about what I'd heard and what I thought other people were saying, and then 30 days discussing what changes we needed to implement. Too often, we change for change's sake in the Navy. But the flip side of that is there's great resistance to change. We've seen this in the major conflicts that we've been involved with, certainly in World War I and World War II. There's an example of resistance to change in the Pacific with Admiral Chester W Nimitz. He was of the mind that he couldn't implement the changes that he felt were necessary until the Navy got to a failure point. In his sense that failure point was the attack on Pearl Harbor. Broadly, we don't think enough about strategy and I really don't think that we fully understand strategy.

précis: You've said before that the United States does not have a grand strategy right now. What do you think the consequences of not having a grand strategy end up being for the day to day life of people in the Navy?

SS: I'm interested in a grand strategy, not from a theory perspective, but from the practical perspective that the US has international interests it has to protect. We know we need to be focused internationally, and that we believe in free and open markets. These kinds of elements are the things that make up a grand strategy. But I think it's really important to write things down, and I think we should make an effort to go even further than the National Security Strategy to codify what we think our grand strategy is. I think the national security strategy, as it stands now, is a great step forward, but you have to look at where we're stepping forward from. What our nation needs is a grand strategy with a clear rule set that makes up its approach to its international interests from a global perspective.

From that grand strategy comes regional strategies. All fifteen departments of the executive branch should think about developing their own strategy in connection with that grand strategy. For homeland defense, there are a lot of areas where they could be engaging with countries around the world to help them better understand how we manage defense of our homeland. And then from each of those strategies, we should derive our policy, but currently what we do is we see something we don't like and we just throw a bit of policy at it. Then we cobble all those bits of policy together and say that must be reflective of our strategy. What we do is we see an action, like a freedom of navigation operation and we try to correlate it to this grand strategy. If we are going to make the investment to do one freedom of navigation operation, there shouldn't be this debate that surrounds why we're doing it. That's what's should be tied, I think, to a grand strategy. And without making that connection, it's difficult to make the case for exactly why we're doing freedom of navigation operations.

précis: So from your perspective, the consequences of not having these things written down really comes down to not understanding how your operational objectives tie into a national goal?

SS: Absolutely. When I was the director of operations working for Admiral Robert F Willard, we developed a process that we call derived strategy. We categorized and characterized public statements being made by the various secretaries of each of the departments, and assumed that must be representative of what the grand strategy was. Then based on that, we would figure out what operational and tactical things were consistent with that strategy. It's absolutely crazy. Can you imagine building a house that same way? You look at other houses and you take pictures of them saying, okay, from those pictures were going to construct our house. We're going to give this album of pictures to a builder and say, go build an amalgam of a house based on this. Outlets definitely wouldn't be in the right place. You need a design to drive your activities. Otherwise the opportunity that you have to derive value and support national interests is much more limited.

précis: Over the past few decades there has been a change in which individuals in the uniformed services started to do more and more policy work and more and more diplomacy on behalf of the civilian government. Given that change, military leaders might now have unique insight into what US goals and interests should be. How can military leaders contribute their insight to that conversation without overstepping their limits and disrupting civil-military relations?

SS: We need to be cautious about that approach. I think the most important thing that I did as Pacific Fleet Commander was build relationships. I started to understand that when I was the Seventh Fleet Commander, that building relationships really was a prime part of my responsibilities and obligations as a senior commander. It's also important to point out that I didn't make policy. I don't think even the Pacific Command makes policy. But after the 2016 election, what I found was that as I continued to travel through the region, more and more of my agenda filled up with meetings with prime ministers, chiefs of defense, more senior people. And the first question that they all asked was, "What is going on in Washington?" So of course I didn't know what the answer was and still don't know what the answer is today.

But I had a strategy. I would ask their permission—knowing that the protocol was that it was appropriate for them to talk first—to ask the first question. Invariably, they would be polite. I've known most of these people for a long time because all my 40 years in the Navy except for three Pentagon tours and two years in the Middle East were in the Pacific. My question would be: "if you could provide me any insights as to what the hell is going on in Washington, I would appreciate it." It was an immediate icebreaker, because that was their first question as well. So there is a concern that our foreign friends are reaching out more and more to the military, because they see us as an organization that's bringing stability to an unstable environment. I wouldn't go so far as to say that's dangerous, but it is counter to what we believe as Americans. It's counter to what the framers of the constitution had in mind as far as the sanctity of civilian government.

I don't think that the military should be making policy. I think Secretary Jim Mattis had it exactly right with respect to North Korea. When Rex Tillerson was secretary of state, Secretary Mattis continued to say that the State Department has to lead with China, with North Korea, with any international relations that are being negotiated or renegotiated.

précis: Do you think there's anything that senior leaders in the Department of Defense can do in terms of correcting that perception of the military as policy-makers or getting officers out of that awkward position?

SS: Yes and no. I think it's all right as long as officers are correcting the record in the moment and saying "I'm happy to share my opinion, but you really need to be talking to the State Department and I get the government appears to be confused." A lot of the problem is that we just haven't filled the civilian positions for whatever reason. So engagement is difficult, but I think it's important to make a caveat that "I can give you my military view, but that's not necessarily reflective the State Department's view and the State Department really has the lead on these points. I think freelancing to fill that in yourself as a military leader is certainly not ideal and potentially dangerous.

I'm not averse to the military being involved in policy development. They should be involved just like the Department of Agriculture, the Department of the Treasury, the Department of Homeland Security—they should all be involved in policy development. I don't have an issue with that. But in the absence of policy actions where it's up to our best guess to think what will be supportive of national policy, that's where we start to get in trouble.

précis: One of your signature issues as Pacific Fleet Commander was asking for more support for readiness and less for new ships. Can you elaborate on that and say what you think the Navy's operational imperatives are right now?

SS: I've gotten myself into hot water by saying we own more Navy than we can afford. Every year Congress says: "here's the money you have to run your Navy." Well, if this is the pot of money we have, and this is the amount of Navy we have, we have to make a reduction. This is just balancing your checkbook; it isn't rocket science. We don't have enough cash to operate, but we don't cut our operations. So that's why I say we own more Navy than we can afford. Well, people in DC didn't like that. But let's take the proposal for a 355 ship navy. Do we have enough shipyards to maintain 355 ships, to maintain more ships in Japan. We have more ships in Japan than we have dry docks to service them either in Yokosuka or in Sasebo. So we started doing some innovative things, trying to use any excess capacity that the civilian dry docks in Japan had. But that creates new security issues. Ship workers need to have clearances.

I remain skeptical about a 355 ship Navy for many reasons. Can you tell me what the grand strategy is again? Why 355? Can we support it from an infrastructure perspective? We can't support the Navy that we have today from a maintenance or a ship building perspective. And then when you look at it from a readiness perspective and what it takes to sustain that fleet, that's not what Congressmen want to hear. They want to build more ships because they want jobs. I think we can support the jobs program just by maintaining the fleet that we have.

précis: What is it that you wish civilian social scientists, policymakers and people like your colleagues this year at CIS understood about the Navy?

SS: It's really about understanding military personnel.It's so easy to judge folks in the military because it's so hard to understand. People are initially uncomfortable when they find out what my background is. I get that that's part of the baggage, but I hope that my being here at MIT is going to help break down some of those barriers and allow people to make more holistic judgments about people they're working with in the military. It's a big problem that the military has working with NGOs—there's this natural lack of trust. That's why I say the most important thing I do is build relationships. And the byproduct of building relationships is trust. I hope we can generate a deeper understanding of where we're coming from, and what we can do. ■

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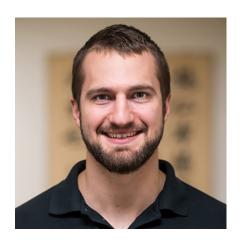
The other side of the COIN

Matthew Cancian

Counterinsurgency, or COIN, in its contemporary American incarnation, grew out of the inability of existing US doctrine to contain the insurgency in Iraq, says Matthew Cancian, a PhD student in security studies and international relations.

Matthew Cancian is a PhD student in security studies and international relations with research interests in military effectiveness and civil wars.

(L) A 7th SFG Special Forces medic gives a young boy a coloring book during a meeting with village religious leaders to gain their support and obtain information, Afghanistan 2008.

Photos: MIT Department of Political Science & Wikipedia Commons

The US military's "can-do" attitude is one of its greatest strengths, but it is also a weakness. Take for example a US Army Major speaking at a think tank conference in 2015. Describing the process of redeploying from Afghanistan to fight Ebola in Liberia, he said without irony, "All we had to do was change the threat vector and we could accomplish the new mission."

The Major's confidence is certainly an asset among people who might one day be charging into enemy fire, but over the course of the Global War on Terror, such confidence has begun to rub off on scholars of counterinsurgency. It is less useful in this second line of work. These scholars have painted a skewed picture of whether or not counterinsurgency (COIN) is feasible and winnable by relying on shaky theory. They ignore both recent political science arguments about insurgent violence and Carl von Clausewitz's theory of war, preferring instead to use economic theory that has led to faulty conclusions. Scholars of COIN should be commended for trying to help improve our national security, but the US military should not invest too heavily in their bullish predictions about the feasibility of COIN. Instead, military planners should forswear COIN as a tool of national security.

What is COIN?

Counterinsurgency, or COIN, in its contemporary American incarnation, grew out of the inability of existing US doctrine to contain the insurgency in Iraq. At the start of the Iraq war in 2003, a belief in the revolution in military affairs bolstered by the initial success of the Afghanistan campaign in 2001 led Donald Rumsfeld, secretary of defense, to push for a lighter footprint despite requests from General Tommy Franks, the CENTCOM commander (Gordon and Trainor, 2006). Prior to the invasion, Rumsfeld also refuted Army Chief of Staff General Shinseki's estimate that over three hundred thousand troops would be needed for the occupation. By 2006, however, high levels of insurgent violence and mounting US casualties prompted civilian leaders to push for a change in strategy. Civilians sought out a maverick in the officer corps (Posen, 1984) and found General Petraeus, who led the re-development of the Army's counterinsurgency doctrine at Fort Leavenworth and oversaw its first implementation during the Iraq Surge in 2006.

The Army Field Manual (FM) 3-24, product of a commission led by General Petraeus, advocated a 'population-centric' approach (as opposed to an enemy-centric one) with the objective of "outgoverning" the insurgents (Department of the Army, 2006). By outgoverning the insurgents, counterinsurgents eventually win the support of the people, who then provide the counterinsurgents with information thereby denying the insurgents anonymity and allowing them to be destroyed. Modern American COIN is not a new doctrine, but rather is based on the experiences of the French and British fighting against communist and nationalist insurgents during the Cold War. David Galula, a French officer who fought in Indochina and Algeria, wrote that "the aim of the war is to gain the support of the population rather than control of territory" (Galula, 1964). British officer Sir Robert Thompson (1966) emphasized the political nature of COIN, arguing that the goal was "to establish and maintain a free, independent and united country which is politically and economically stable and viable."

The "can-do" scholars

Taking COIN theory at face value, a decade of microlevel empirical studies using data generated during the American military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan have generally argued that the population-centric model is feasible. Berman et. al (2011) argue, using a formal model and micro-level observational data on Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) fund spending and SIGACTS (records of actions observed by coalition troops), that the provision of services by counterinsurgents does actually lead to increased information provision by locals. In turn, they find this leads to better targeting of insurgents, which leads to decreased attacks on coalition personnel. Beath et al. (2012) use an experiment varying the timing of implementation for a World Bank program in Afghanistan, that improving local governance leads to improved attitudes towards the government. Biddle et al. (2012) find support for the effectiveness of the Surge in decreasing violence in Iraq; Condra and Shapiro (2012) support the emphasis that population-centric COIN places on avoiding civilian casualties, finding that SIGACTs increase following incidents of collateral damage. Another study by Shapiro's Empirical Studies of Conflict (ESOC) program (Shaver and Shapiro, 2016), replicates the same finding.

On paper, these findings seem to suggest that COIN is feasible because the tactics that it advocates (reducing the use of firepower, using development projects, and increasing contact with civilians) are all correlated with a decrease in attacks on the counterinsurgents. These findings are misleading when it comes to the practicality of COIN. There are well-known measurement issues with these studies, (for example, attacks on counterinsurgents are not a good proxy for success of a strategy), but there more important and less widely known problems with their models: by accepting the undertheorized FM 3-24 as dogma, these empirical studies of COIN generate a false evaluation of COIN's feasibility, and this false evaluation has serious policy implications.

It's just a theory

One reason why the premises of population-centric COIN are accepted dogmatically by empirically-minded political scientists is because they interface easily with simplifying rational actor assumptions that are conducive to quantitative and formal modeling methods. These assumptions grow out of the behavioralist setting of political science when the Cold War era COIN authors were writing, combined with the continued acceptance of these assumptions by economists. In the economic sphere of firm behavior, these simplifying assumptions may be valid and illuminating; in the political sphere, however, they can be grossly misleading.Treating insurgents and civilians as instances of Homo Economicus leads to four analytical errors.

First, people have strong ethnic identities that shape their preferences, but COIN theories generally start from the assumption that all civilians are interchangeable. Greenhill and Staniland (2007) and Biddle (2006) both warn modern counterinsurgents against making false analogies between Iraq and Vietnam because those two wars were animated by different ethnic dynamics. On the one hand, Kalyvas' (2003)

> COIN is probably beyond the capabilities of our national resolve and best left to the history books. Whether politicians and scholars will draw the same lesson, however, remains to be seen.

emphasis on local conflicts might mean that this was less of a problem in 2003; in the initial stages of civil wars, he argues, much of the fighting is driven by local rivalries that are not related to ethnicity. As the conflict goes on, however, his theory of endogenous conflict argues that the "master cleavage" (in the case of Iraq, ethnicity) grows increasingly important, meaning that by 2006 ethnicity would be a crucial factor, even in his view.

Second, elites are not epiphenomenal decision aggregators who merely reflect the average preferences of individuals, as they are portrayed in economics, but are in themselves important agents whose role cannot be ignored. This point is illustrated by Christia's (2012) theory which stipulates that alliance behaviors are based on the interaction of preferences between local elites. Local elites are ignored in economic theories because they cannot be quantitatively modeled; this doesn't, however, mean that they are epiphenomenal. When I was deployed as a Marine in Helmand province in Afghanistan in 2011, we held a town hall meeting, a shura, every other week per directions from our higher headquarters. Most meetings were attended by around a dozen locals, including a man and his son who had been injured by an airstrike (and whose brother had been detained after a reconnaissance plane saw him serving Chai to the Taliban). At one shura, however, over a hundred people streamed into the base and berated us. Afterwards, we heard that a local landlord had instructed all of his tenants to go and complain on his behalf, possibly because we had driven a convoy over one of his fields. Perhaps we could have won the support of the regular attendee father avoiding collateral damage, but we could not have won over the hundred complaining locals without winning over the local elite, which we never succeeded in doing.

This leads to a third theoretical flaw that has led scholars to argue that COIN is feasible: the idea that economic incentives dominate human decision making in war. Again, this makes for easy modeling, and made sense to early COIN theorists who were fighting communist insurgents; but even communist revolutionary wars were just as often about nationalism and anti-colonialism as they were about redistribution. Authors like Petersen (2002) have written extensively on how perceptions of ethnic hierarchy are important drivers of collective emotions: the loss of status by the Sunnis led them to resent the Shiites in Iraq, leading to conflict that was almost certainly not profit-maximizing. This "technocratic conceit" (Jackson, 2014) induces an upward bias in estimates of COIN's feasibility.

The final and most serious theoretical flaw in empirical studies of COIN is the tendency to use structural models to describe conflict processes instead of a Clausewitzean, interactional theory. Clausewitz calls war a "Zweikampf" or duel, evoking the image of two wrestlers struggling against one another (Clausewitz, 1976). By this he means that every action in war incites a reaction. Using formal models to determine equilibria does not sufficiently take this interaction into account. SIGACTs might rise in an area because the counterinsurgent is losing and the insurgents have increased freedom of movement, as much existing literature would maintain, but the same empirical signal might also be evidence of the counterinsurgent moving into a hitherto abandoned area and mounting a new challenge to insurgent control. In one story, rising SIGACTs signal failure, in the other, they signal forward progress. The impor-

tance of dynamic models is clear in the history of the Uzbin valley in Kabul province, Afghanistan. The Uzbin valley was extremely peaceful until the French rotated in and took over for the Italians in 2008; a month later, a massive ambush killed 12 French soldiers as they patrolled into a new area. This is not to say the Italians had been "winning" and that the French had begun to "lose." Rather, Italians had been paying the Taliban to keep quiet while they huddled in their FOB and had not told the French: the level of SIGACTs had no correlation to COIN success. To bring it back to an example in the political science literature, Sexton (2016) uses the presence of American Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) to proxy for secure coalition territorial control. This is a mistake. It is true that the United States does not have FOBs in areas of Taliban control; they also don't exist in the quietest areas of the country where they would serve no purpose. In ignoring the interactional nature of war and modeling it as a product of structural factors, empirical proponents of COIN feasibility mistake war's fundamental nature and thus make false inferences about COIN's feasibility.

The future of COIN: Best left in the past

On last year's SSP trip, our program had the opportunity to visit the Army's National Training Center in Fort Irwin, where the Army prepares brigades for future conflicts. There was some talk of "full-spectrum warfare", the concept from the 1990s that an Army optimized for conventional conflict could also do COIN; the fact that these conflicts don't exist on a spectrum but are two entirely different phenomena was clearly revealed by our experiences during the Global War on Terror. Thankfully, at Fort Irwin, the focus was on defeating Russian mechanized divisions. While there was a village where some notional COIN work was practiced, the focus was decisively on the conventional battles that preceded and followed the occupation of the village. It seems that the Army has learned the right lesson from Iraq and Afghanistan: COIN is probably beyond the capabilities of our national resolve and best left to the history books. Whether politicians and scholars will draw the same lesson, however, remains to be seen. ■

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briefings

Starting new conversations about identity abroad

Madeline Smith & Michelle English

Students from diverse cultural, racial, ethnic, national or economic backgrounds; students with disabilities; LGBTQ+ students; first-generation students; and others face unique challenges when participating in international programs.

Eight IdentityX Ambassadors gathered at SPXCE Intercultural Center to discuss their international experiences.

(L-R) Standing: David Rich, Gabrielle "Gabby" Ballard; middle row: Carrie Watkins, Luisa Fernanda Apolaya Torres, Yara Jabbour Al Maalouf; front row: Enriko Kurtz Granadoz Chavez, Trang Luu, Johnson Huynh

Photo Madeline Smith

The MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives (MISTI), based in the Center for International Studies within the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, has launched an initiative to address identity-related issues and better understand those perspectives.

The mission is simple: to prepare and support all students while abroad. Through student blogs, guided peer-to-peer conversation sessions and tailored resources, MISTI aims to empower students with new methods for engaging with their identities during the course of their international experiences.

"I have always 'traveled' through the course of my life. I have, in my 19 years of life, lived in 19 different buildings, four different states, and two different countries. Being a first-generation, low-income student did impact my confidence in my abilities to do well traveling abroad. ...Thankfully, there were MISTI resources available that helped me," says sophomore Enriko Kurtz Granadoz Chavez, who participated in an internship in Santiago, Chile, at the University of Santiago de Chile through MIT-Chile.

Co-sponsored by the Institute Community and Equity Office (ICEO), MISTI received grant support to host speakers from Diversity Abroad for both staff and students in 2017, and this year received additional funding to foster student leadership. MISTI is focusing on professional development, campus collaboration, and student communication in order to better prepare students before departure to their host countries and to provide thoughtful support while students are abroad.

To develop the new programming, Mala Ghosh, MIT-India managing director and MISTI diversity lead, talked with campus partners, researched current best practices, and sought out student feedback. "We are proud of the diversity represented in MISTI participation," says Ghosh. "However, we must go beyond numbers and ensure that we are supporting all students to thrive abroad."

Creating a conversation

MISTI offers a series of dialogue-based sessions, led by students and guided by MISTI staff, partners, and speakers. These gatherings are focused on particular aspects of identity and are open to all MIT students, with the goal of preparing students for traveling and living abroad. Four sessions were held during the past year: "Embracing Your Diversity Abroad", "Being Out in the World: Being LGBTQ+ Abroad," "Going Abroad as a Student of Color," and "Religion & Spirituality Abroad."

Eduardo Rivera, MIT-Chile program manager, captures the goals for both students and staff, "Every international academic experience is unique. The singularity of those experiences is not only shaped by the particular context of the destination, but more importantly by the unique lens through which the student will see and interact with the new context. Offering our students an opportunity to reflect on their identities and their international experiences is a fundamental step to supporting their personal and academic growth before, during, and after an experience abroad."

briefings

Sharing student perspectives

MISTI also highlights student-to-student learning through MISTI IdentityX Ambassadors, where students write blogs about their MISTI experiences. These blogs start conversations on the ambassador's identity and how it shaped their global experiences. This summer, 10 students wrote about religion, race, heritage, prejudice, privilege, LGBTQ+ identity, and economic status, among other topics.

"I joined the MISTI IdentityX Ambassador Program because it was a way to capture my thoughts while abroad. I picked South Africa because I had questions about my own identity that I sought to answer and this was a perfect medium," says IdentityX Ambassador and sophomore Peter Williams, who completed a MISTI internship in South Africa to complement his MIT mechanical engineering studies.

"Participating in IdentityX has provided me the opportunity to frame, process, and write about my experience abroad in the context of identity," says Carrie Watkins, who is pursuing her master's in city planning and completed her internship in The Netherlands. "It has given me an excuse to enter into real conversations with new friends and colleagues."

MISTI aims for these conversations to inspire students who don't feel like international opportunities are for them, or are nervous about being successful in an internship abroad. "I think having honest accounts are valuable for individuals who are considering MISTI," says Yara Jabbour Al Maalouf, a senior in chemical-biological engineering who wrote her IdentityX blogs during her internship in India. "It isn't necessarily purely for advice on 'how to survive' or reassurance of certain worries, but it is also a unique perspective on how to make the most out of the experience and grow."

For master's student Trang Luu '18, who completed MISTI internships in South Africa and Cameroon through MIT-Africa, the international experience forced her to expand and question aspects of her identity. "When I got my acceptance letter to MIT, I felt like I had broken through a glass ceiling," says Luu. "I decided that the life I was going to live would be the life that I chose — and I chose to be an engineer. Never once did I anticipated that being an engineer could be have a downside; however, during my time in Cameroon, I began to realize that I needed to question my own perspectives and ensure broader social impact not only a technical or physical solution."

Future goals

Future MISTI events will continue to highlight different perspectives, the intersection of varying identities, and focus on providing country-specific resources to students. IdentityX Ambassadors will play an important part in that goal as peer mentors and program representatives.

"We believe one of the most effective ways for students to learn is by engaging with one another," says Ghosh. "We are preparing MISTI IdentityX Ambassadors to

help lead pre-departure sessions for students going overseas next year. It is vital for students to hear from other students not only about international academic and career opportunities, but also how their various identities played a role in their time abroad. We have found that students tend to open up more in smaller sessions focused on gender and safety abroad, being LGBTQ+ abroad, concerns around immigration and travel, student wellness while abroad, and preparing ahead for managing wellness or accessibility abroad."

"The blogs and other identity programming can only make MISTI more approachable as a community," says IdentityX Ambassador Johnson Huynh, who completed his internship in Mexico and is studying mechanical engineering. "If we could continue this trend of encouraging students to think about their identities, and highlight MISTI student personalities, I believe that it can only draw more participants towards the program and to international programs in general."

The blogs not only met a student need, but also fulfilled a MISTI goal. "The MISTI blogs are a window to discover our students beyond their course or simple demographic data. The blogs are an exercise of reflection, but moreover, they are an expression of life changing experiences narrated in first person, an open book to the entire MIT community," says Rivera. ◼

"Participating in IdentityX has provided me the opportunity to frame, process, and write about my experience abroad in the context of identity," says Carrie Watkins, who is pursuing her master's in city planning and completed her internship in The Netherlands. "It has given me an excuse to enter into real conversations with new friends and colleagues."

cis activities

Journalist Una Hajdari joins CIS

Una Hajdari, a Kosovar journalist, will use her time as the CIS 2018 Elizabeth Neuffer fellow to highlight the issues that affect the everyday lives of people in the Balkans and in Eastern Europe. "Oftentimes, outlets focus on the 'big geopolitical narratives' … and neglect the stories that don't necessarily fit into this polarized perspective, " said Una Hajdari, who began her journalism career in post-conflict Kosovo, focusing on the lingering tensions between the Serbian and Albanian communities there. Over the years, she has covered politics, minorities, nationalism, inter-ethnic tensions, right-wing groups and hate speech in the Western Balkans for regional and international English-language outlets. The Neuffer fellowship is sponsored by the International Women's Media Foundation.

Starr Forums

The Center hosted a series of public talks including: "The Assault on Intelligence: American National Security in an Age of Lies," with guest speaker and author General Michael Hayden (former director of the CIA and NSA), moderated by Joel Brenner (MIT); "Citizenship Under Attack," with Peter Spiro (Temple University), moderated by Justin Steil (MIT); "Pachinko," with author Min Jin Lee, moderated by Amy Carleton (MIT); "The Rise of Populism," with Elizabeth Leeds (MIT), Sana Aiyar (MIT), Aysen Candas (Bogazici University), and Pippa Norris (Harvard); and "Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress," with author Steven Pinker (Harvard). Most Starr Forums are available to view on the Center's YouTube channel.

Selin and Oye win 2018 Martore Teaching Award

The Joseph A Martore Award for Excellence in Teaching in the Institute for Data, Systems, and Society (IDSS) was awarded to two faculty members for 2018: Noelle Selin and Ken Oye. The curriculum underwent a periodic revision in 2017, requiring the merger of Selin's modeling subject with Oye's longstanding subject Science, Technology, and Public Policy. The synthesis reinvigorated both of their lesson plans while affording the students a learning environment that showcased their differing perspectives on the subject.

MIT-Japan goes full STEAM ahead

The MIT-Japan Program and Tohoku University's Science Angels held their second annual collaborative education program for children, appropriately titled "Let's STEAM!" The one-day event aims to encourage children—especially girls—to pursue their interest in science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM).

Visit our website and events calendar for a complete listing of fall 2018 activities. Many of our events are captured on video and available to view on YouTube.

Human Rights & Technology Fellowship Program

The Center announced a new fellowship program in human rights and technology for MIT undergraduates. The program supports students' research, participation in a working group, and other activities. It is intended to produce new knowledge about the relationship between human rights and technology—ie, how technology can enhance human rights work, and how the use of technology can impede human rights.

The Center awarded six research fellowships in its inaugural year. The students' projects are expansive, and include field work in Africa and South Asia and a variety of topics. Four of them in different ways address the human right to health care or healthy environments and how technology can ensure good outcomes.

SSP Wednesday Seminars

The Security Studies Program's lunchtime series included: Rajan Menon, City College of New York, on "The Rise and Fall (?) of the Humanitarian Intervention Project"; Kimberly Marten, Barnard College, Columbia University, on "Russia's Use of Semi-State Security Forces: The Case of the Wagner Group"; Max Abrahms, Northeastern University, on "Rules for Rebels: The Science of Victory in Militant History"; Lori Murray, Council on Foreign Relations, on "Rising Nuclear Threats in a Disrupted World"; and Jeanne Guillemin, MIT, on "Hidden Atrocities: Japanese Germ Warfare and American Obstruction of Justice at the Tokyo Trial."

Myron Weiner International Migration Seminar

The Myron Weiner Seminar Series on International Migration explores factors affecting international population movements and their impact upon sending and receiving countries and relations among them. The two events for fall 2018 were: "Current State of US Immigration: Trends, Policy Issues, and Public Opinion" (Neil Ruiz, Pew Research Center) and "Asian Americans and Affirmative Action Policy" (Van Tran, Columbia University).

MIT team digitizes Machu Picchu

A laboratory team from the MIT Department of Architecture, led by Professor Takehiko Nagakura and PhD student Paloma Gonzales, has been working on the MISTI Global Seed Fund Machu Picchu Design Heritage project since 2016. "We believe that...the digitalization of architectural monuments is key to the preservation of the cultural heritage of humanity."

The Move: Civic innovators help restore democracy

The Move is a new initiative out of MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning that features weekly podcasts, blog posts, and more from the civic innovators at democracy's front lines. Join the conversation at themove.mit.edu. The initiative is funded in part by the Center's International Policy Lab and MIT's Office of Open Learning.

MIT-Germany and University of Stuttgart

Representatives from the MIT-Germany Program and the University of Stuttgart (USTUTT) recently came together to formally extend a strategic partnership first created in 2015. Collaboration extends opportunities for faculty seed funds, internship opportunities, and a Global Teaching Labs program through 2020.

end notes

PEOPLE

Arthur and Ruth Sloan Professor of Political Science **M Taylor Fravel** participated in Track II US-China Maritime Security Dialogues in Beijing, China, in December.

SSP Senior Advisor **Jeanne Guillemin** presented her research on the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal at the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life at The International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life at Brandeis University on September 25th, and at the MIT SSP Wednesday Seminar on September 26th.

Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow **Se Young Jang** presented "Extended Nuclear Deterrence and Decoupling Fears in Asia: South Korea and Japan," at the Frederick S Pardee School of Global Studies, Boston University on October 25th. Jang also presented "Nuclear Re-proliferation and Reversal: The Change of South Korea's Nuclear Strategy Under US Carter and Reagan Administrations," Stanton Nuclear Security Seminar in Washington, DC, on October 18th, and "Strengthened but Limited: Canada's Nuclear Nonproliferation Policy towards Argentina and South Korea in the 1970s," at the Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History, University of Toronto, on September 22nd.

Marika Landau-Wells received her doctoral degree and the Lucian Pye Award for best dissertation from MIT's Political Science Department. She received a Beyond Conflict Innovation Lab postdoctoral fellowship to support one year of neuroscience research (2018-2019) at MIT. Dr Landau-Wells will join the Travers Department of Political Science at UC Berkeley as an Assistant Professor in July 2019. In November 2018, she presented "Danger is What We Make of It: The Role of Threat Perception in Shaping National Security Preferences" at the University of Chicago's Workshop on International Politics.

PhD Candidate **Phil Martin** received a research grant in August 2018 from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Political Inclusion and Accountability Program to implement a survey in former rebel territory in Côte d'Ivoire. Martin also presented a paper, "Ex-Rebel Commanders and Postwar Statebuilding: Subnational Evidence from Côte d'Ivoire" at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Dissertation workshop on Militaries and Democratization, in Boston in August and at the Working Group in African Political Economy (WGAPE) at Harvard University on November 16th.

Associate Professor of Political Science **Vipin Narang** was interviewed on WBUR's Radio Boston by Meghna Chakrabarti in advance of the US-North Korea nuclear summit in Singapore, in June 2018.

PhD Candidate **Reid Pauly** presented "Elite Aversion to the Use of Nuclear Weapons: Evidence from War-Games," at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, MA in August. Pauly also presented work from his dissertation project "Coercive Assurance," at Seoul National University, South Korea, and at Yale University.

Ford International Professor of Political Science **Ben Ross Schneider** presented "Teacher Unions, Clientelism, and the Fraught Politics of Education Reform in Middle-Income Countries" at Georgetown University in October 2018.

Associate Professor of Political Science **David Singer** presented "Attitudes toward Internal and Foreign Migration: Evidence from a Survey Experiment in China" at the Columbia University International Politics Seminar (CUIPS) in September. Along with Associate Professor of Political Science In Song Kim, Singer hosted the annual meeting of the International Political Economy Society (IPES) at MIT in November.

end notes

Professor of History **Elizabeth Wood** received a grant to study "Collaborative Russian-US Science Projects: An Analysis of Best Practices," from MIT Skoltech Seed Fund, along with Irina Dezhina, Group Leader, Science and Industry Policy Group, Skoltech; and Ellie Immerman, a HASTS graduate student at MIT. Wood also presented "When Emotions Become Sacred: Moving Beyond the Instrumental in Studying WWII and Memory" at the Memory and History Kennan Alumni Conference, Sarajevo, Bosnia, in October 2018.
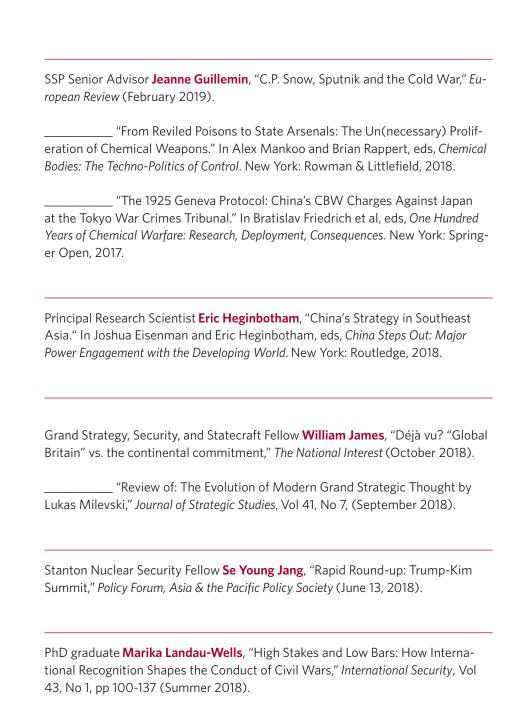
Fulbright visiting scholar **Tiejun Yu** was quoted by the *New York Times* in an article "Japan and China, Asian Rivals, Are Trying to Get Along" on October 24th, and again in an article "Shinzo Abe Says Japan Is China's 'Partner,' and No Longer Its Aid Donor" on October 26th. Yu also presented "The Sino-US 'Cold War' and Uncertainties in East Asian Security" at the Fletcher School at Tufts University in November.

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PhD Candidate **Marsin Alshamary** (with Safwan Al-Amin), "Who to blame for the protests in Basra, Iraq?" *The Washington Post* Monkey Cage (September 14, 2018).

Raphael Dorman-Helen Starbuck Professor of Political Science **Suzanne Berger**, "Brand New Left, Same Old Problems: What Populism Can and Can't Achieve," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 97, No 5, pp. 212-216 (October 2018).

PhD Candidate **Mayumi Fukushima** and Ford International Professor of Political Science CIS Director **Richard Samuels**, "Japan's National Security Council: Filling the Whole of Government?" *International Affairs*, Vol 94, No 4, pp 773—790 (July 2018).

SSP Senior Advisor **Jeanne Guillemin**, "C.P. Snow, Sputnik and the Cold War," *European Review* (February 2019).

_____ "From Reviled Poisons to State Arsenals: The Un(necessary) Proliferation of Chemical Weapons." In Alex Mankoo and Brian Rappert, eds, *Chemical Bodies: The Techno-Politics of Control*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.

_____ "The 1925 Geneva Protocol: China's CBW Charges Against Japan at the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal." In Bratislav Friedrich et al, eds, *One Hundred Years of Chemical Warfare: Research, Deployment, Consequences*. New York: Springer Open, 2017.

Principal Research Scientist **Eric Heginbotham**, "China's Strategy in Southeast Asia." In Joshua Eisenman and Eric Heginbotham, eds, *China Steps Out: Major Power Engagement with the Developing World*. New York: Routledge, 2018.

Grand Strategy, Security, and Statecraft Fellow **William James**, "Déjà vu? "Global Britain" vs. the continental commitment," *The National Interest* (October 2018).

_____ "Review of: The Evolution of Modern Grand Strategic Thought by Lukas Milevski," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol 41, No 7, (September 2018).

Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow **Se Young Jang**, "Rapid Round-up: Trump-Kim Summit," *Policy Forum, Asia & the Pacific Policy Society* (June 13, 2018).

PhD graduate **Marika Landau-Wells**, "High Stakes and Low Bars: How International Recognition Shapes the Conduct of Civil Wars," *International Security*, Vol 43, No 1, pp 100-137 (Summer 2018).

end notes

Fulbright Visting Scholar **Cagla Luleci**, "Domestic Threats and Foreign Policy Agenda: A Security Perspective on Turkey's Iran Policy," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol 45, No 5 (2018).

PhD Candidate **Phil Martin**, "Security Sector Reform and Civil-Military Relations in Postwar Côte d'Ivoire," *African Affairs*, Vol 117, No 468, pp 522-533 (July 2018).

PhD Candidate **Reid Pauly**, "Would US Leaders Push the Button? Wargames and the Sources or Nuclear Restraint," *International Security*, Vol 43, No 1, pp 151-192 (Fall 2018).

Ford International Professor of Political Science and SSP Director **Barry Posen**, "This 9/11, end the Afghanistan War," *USA Today* (September 10, 2018).

_____ "The Diffusion of Power and the Organization of the US National Security Establishment." In Heidi B Demarest and Erica D Borghard, eds, US National Security Reform: Reassessing the National Security Act of 1947. New York: Routledge, 2018.

SSP Senior Advisor **Carol Saivetz**, "Setting Expectations for the Helsinki Summit," *Lawfare* (July 2018).

Ford International Professor of Political Science and CIS Director **Richard Samuels** (with James Schoff), "Japan's Nuclear Hedge: Beyond 'Allergy' and 'Breakout'." In Demetrios James Caraley and Robert Jervis, eds, *The Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: Extending the US Umbrella and Increasing Chances of War*. New York: The Academy of Political Science, 2018.

Ford International Professor of Political Science **Ben Ross Schneider** (with Mansueto Almedia and MIT Alumnus Renato Lima de Oliveira), "Left Government, Business Politics, and the Revival of Industrial Policy in Brazil." In Barry Ames, ed., *Handbook on Brazilian Politics*. New York: Routledge, 2018.

PhD Candidate **Meicen Sun** (with Jacob Sotiriadis), "Why the US and China Can't Get to Yes (Even When They Could)," *The Diplomat* (November 19, 2018).

Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow **Paul Van Hooft** (with Annette Freyberg-Inan), "Europe May Be Done with Power, but Power Is Not Done with Europe: Europe During an Era of American Unipolarity and of Relative Decline." In R. Belloni et al, eds, *Fear and Uncertainty in Europe*. London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2019.

précis n. a concise summary of essential points, statements, or facts.