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Containing China: Containing Temporarily

Abstract Permanent containment of crisis risks is good, permanent containment of states dangerous. Only temporary containment of states works, and only when combined with ongoing dialogue on what states must do to get containment lifted. Temporary re-containment of Russia makes sense at the time of writing because it wages a war of aggression in Ukraine. Likewise with Myanmar's military junta until it restores democracy, releases elected members of parliament, ends the Rohingya genocide, and ceases waging war on its own people.

Keywords Containment · Kennan · Russia · Ukraine · Myanmar · China

Containment of China today is a forlorn prescription. We have already seen two reasons why what worked with the Soviet Union never will with China. The public opinion survey data shows that China's citizens trust their government more than US and European citizens trust theirs. Throughout this century, China's economy has grown much more rapidly than all Western economies and soon will be the number one economy, however that is measured.

Beliefs that China will collapse from within if contained are implausible. Unlike the Soviet Union, in the long run China could possibly out-compete the West. It has already lifted more of its people out of poverty more rapidly than any Western society has, expanded educational accomplishment more rapidly, industrialized more rapidly, built a post-industrial innovation economy more rapidly, and expanded renewables production more rapidly. Containment theory is bound to fail if it is grounded in the same terms as those advanced for the successful Soviet case. China is not uncompetitive in respect of either popular legitimacy, trust in government, innovation and adaptation of the economy, or increasing wealth. That is not to deny that one day China may well find its own path to more democratic institutions. It may return to expanding freedom in the way that was slowly happening in the decades before Chairman Xi. This is only to say that containment by foreign powers will not prick Chinese bubbles, but that domestic demands for freedom likely will one day. What Western policies to contain China will foster is ecological, public health, economic and security crises that will weaken the West and China alike, but the West more than China.

Another difference from the Soviet Union argued in the last chapter is that for almost its entire history Russia has been intensely interested in conquest of other countries. China has not. China is interested in a hegemony over the South China Sea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and other smaller islands surrounding China's mainland that it believes it has always had until what it sees as a 'rule-based international order' captured by the West declared that its sovereignty in these spaces was limited. It makes no sense for China to invade other countries over which it makes no sustained historical claims of sovereignty. Modern Russia and Western powers grew that way. So did China one to three thousand years ago, but China has been uninterested in this for most of the past millennium. China's widest expansion was at the hands of Ghengis Khan and his Mongolian descendants, not the Han Chinese. Henry Kissinger said of his conversational engagement with all of China's top leaders of the past half century: 'They're not heading for world domination ... the answer is that they [in China] want to be powerful. They're not heading for world domination in a Hitlerian sense. That is not how they think or have ever thought of world order' (*The Economist* 2023).

Contemporary capabilities for guerrilla resistance with foreign weapons and civilian resistance against armed invasions, as Russia discovered again during its 2022 invasion of Ukraine, is a reason China thinks this way. Between 1800 and 1849, the weaker side in asymmetric wars secured their strategic goals in only 12% of cases; in wars between 1950 and 1998, the weaker side prevailed 55% of the time (Naim 2013). The comparative advantage of weaker sides has likely become even stronger in the past few years in instances like Ukraine, where the weaker side can be provided by foreign supporters with highly sophisticated hand-launched anti-tank weapons, drones, and cognate technologies. As John Mearsheimer said of Ukraine, why would Russia be so irrational as to aim to take over all Ukraine. Mearsheimer's argument was that it would make more realist sense for Putin to take Russian-speaking Eastern Ukraine and break the rest, where Russia is most despised. Regrettably, Mearsheimer seems right that this is what Putin aims to accomplish, a good reason to dissuade future Russian leaders who succeed Putin against being Mearsheimer-like realists. Why would any great power today get into wars of invasion of whole countries? In the last chapter we saw that the arithmetic of Goliath versus David wars began to change at least from the time of the Korean war onwards.

Another reason for failed invasions is the way modern invasions cause collapse of the very market assets that might make a country worth invading. After Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, the Ukrainian economy steeply declined. Russian GDP also declined. Given the depletion of domestic economic strength that foreign wars cause today, it makes no sense for China to consider invading countries in the way all great powers did until World War II. The Chinese analysis is that US invasions in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq; and Russian invasion of Afghanistan before that; 2014 and 2022 invasions of Ukraine, weakened these powers that compete with China for supremacy. China chooses to avert such mistakes. We saw in the last chapter that China's last invasion endured 27 days in Vietnam. Even that short war was waged at great cost in blood and treasure. China has preferred not to repeat these costs during the 45 years since.

Colonialism does not build national power in the way it once did. The colonialism that built empires became a drain on imperial

power in Madrid, Lisbon, Amsterdam, London, Paris, Vienna, and Constantinople more than a century ago. Beijing understands that. Moreover, China already controls a sovereign population and sovereign wealth vaster than any of those old empires imagined accumulating. As Krastev and Holmes (2019, 212) put it 'Xi is uninterested in forcing peoples at the other end of the stick to undergo identity-transforming Chinese indoctrination. Exporting made-in-China goods is a priority. Exporting Chinese ideology is not'.

Democrats defend the right of Taiwan to decide at the ballot box whether it remains a democracy or becomes a province of China. Taiwan is a strong and egalitarian democracy today compared to most democracies and to its authoritarian past under Chiang Kai Shek. It is a flourishing trading partner to all countries, especially China. It is reasonable to suspect that China will never give up until Taiwan eventually falls into its lap, as Hong Kong and Macau did. Why should China be in a hurry about this? History will be on its side. To trigger escalation to a nuclear exchange with the West over Taiwan would risk all the wealth, hegemony, and legitimacy China has accumulated in Asia, and can continue to sustain without Taiwan. Meanwhile if China is strategically wise, it will continue to learn valuable things from the intertwined relationship it has grown with Taiwan and from strengths of the formidable democratic culture and economy that has flourished in a Chinese way in Taiwan. As China does this, it can push its propaganda in Taiwan that in the new China business is free to start new businesses, students are free to travel wherever they like to study, unlike Chairman Mao's China.

One strategy available to China is to frighten Taiwanese and Western publics when saber rattling occurs over a supposedly impending Taiwan invasion. Western drumbeaters of containment of China play into their hands. Pundits who beat drums of war panic may eventually so frighten Taiwanese voters that one day Taiwan votes for a party with a platform of negotiating with China on a new one-country-two-systems deal. It would have to be a deal that has far stronger guarantees than were negotiated for Hong Kong. Why would some future Chinese leader not surrender such guarantees in preference to a war that jeopardizes Chinese regional hegemony? I presume the current leader, President Xi,

would not do this, but why would a successor leader not consider it after President Xi fails to achieve his ambition of absorbing Taiwan? That is, Taiwanese might one day vote for a different kind of one-country-two-system party because they see it as the way they can avert risks of their land being wiped off the map in a war between China and the United States.

Invasion of Taiwan by China would be more difficult than invasion of Ukraine by Russia. Invasion attempted across an intensively defended and mined Taiwan Strait has failed before and is more difficult than simply rolling tanks across a border as in Ukraine. Ships would be lost in the Taiwan Strait and tanks on the beach before they reached land. It might not only be Taiwanese missiles and drones attacking the incoming ships and paratroopers. In Ukraine, Russia faced a strategic certainty that US and other NATO armies would not participate in the battles. In Taiwan, China faces a different policy of strategic ambiguity. It faces a Taiwan with four times the GDP of Ukraine before the war collapsed Ukraine's GDP. If the Chinese invasion lands to defeat the Taiwanese regular armed forces and capture its cities, it would then face a long, well-prepared insurgency from mountainous terrain much more favorable to insurgency than the geography of Ukraine. During this long war, the invader would become a pariah state that would suffer cyber-attacks from many unidentified societies. The West decided not to launch cyberwar at scale after the 2022 Russian invasion. Not only might Chinese trade crash into recession from the combination of cyber-attacks, Western sanctions, and war jitters that shatter Chinese investor confidence, Chinese 5G that feed its Belt and Road would be cut and many shipping lines would opt to defend their assets by avoiding the Chinese coast during the war (and during any naval blockade that preceded it). The United States could not seize Chinese holdings in the US national debt as readily as it did with Russian reserves held in the United States. Would that be a financially self-destructive step too far for the United States? Part of the virtue of strategic ambiguity is that we have no idea. China itself would be worried about ships sent by one of its nearby enemies with concealed dirty nuclear bombs approaching its ports during total maritime warfare along the Chinese coastline. Flights into

Guandong to the south of Taiwan and Shanghai to its north, and everywhere in between, would cease until drone capabilities from dispersed Taiwanese mountain hideouts were eliminated. All this economic disruption to a trade-dependent economy would cause a stock market crash and a depression that would jeopardize the political future of the adventurist Chinese leader who ordered a Taiwan invasion.

All this is before the leader began to worry about becoming the Chinese president who causes the ending of Chinese civilization through nuclear Armageddon. What if Russia or India (or both together) surprised China or the United States with a tactical nuclear strike on a naval battle force from a hypersonic missile of unknown provenance? What if they calculated that this might cascade to nuclear war between the United States and China that would give India or Russia a shot at emerging as a hegemon? The imponderables are too many, too immense for China to invade Taiwan. For the modest gain of a razed Taiwan, why risk all to a chaos of any number of such surprise contingencies of total war along the Chinese coast?

Strategic patience that waits for Taiwan to fall into China's lap is a hard path for China now that President Xi's revived despotism has crushed one-country-two-systems in Hong Kong. Even so, a future Chinese government (perhaps post-Xi, or after a future depression) could change course if it were under domestic pressure from democracy movements that re-emerge in future. China could find it smart to rebuild its legitimacy by re-establishing an autonomous democracy in Hong Kong to prove to Taiwanese voters that they should vote for a Taiwanese party that seeks to negotiate a renewed, rebranded Taiwanese version of one-country-two-systems. That is reason for democrats in Hong Kong to never give up on return to democracy. If Hong Kong democrats have strategic patience as a social movement, in the long run of history renewed democracy in Hong Kong might prevail, just as it can in Mainland China and Taiwan.

Containment of China should be abandoned as a prescription because in the foreseeable future China probably will constrain itself from invading and taking over other countries for which it has no existing sovereignty claim. That is not to argue that China would never seek to intimidate Taiwan with robust measures like naval and air blockades that

do not escalate so far as to trigger total war. Nor is it to deny that China can covertly make political donations in Taiwan and other unfriendly democracies. China has enormous cyberespionage parties that it could turn to discrediting offshore political parties and leaders it dislikes and supporting those it likes. Nor is it to discount the possibility that China could unintentionally and incompetently blunder into nuclear war that starts in the Taiwan Strait. I have just described one among many soft power pathways to Taiwan ultimately falling into the lap of China, with help from Westerners who beat the drum of war fears in pursuit of their advocacy of containing China. China recalls the strategic patience of its soft power that delivered Hong Kong and Macau to it from former Western imperial powers, without war.

It makes sense to abandon containment of China in the way it is usually advanced as an arms race combined with passive military encirclement and economic containment. China is uncontainable in all these ways. The United States cannot militarily encircle China any more than China can succeed in encircling the United States. Principled engagement that politely speaks truth and human rights to China's power yes, containment no. For the United States and core allies like Canada and Australia, being principled in the engagement means being as condemnatory of detention centers in Xinjiang as it is of its own detention of locally born Japanese citizens during World War II, in the Australian case detention centers that denied incarcerated children an education. It means self-condemnation of long-term detention without trial of innocent people in Guantanamo Bay, who included Uyghurs. It means condemnation of genocide by others tempered with principled self-condemnation of genocide against the Indigenous owners of Australia and America, recent Western support for death squads across Latin America that targeted its genocidally decimated Indigenous populations, and more.

And it means speaking openly about racist oppression of Chinese people during and after Australian and American gold rushes and racist exploitation of Chinese 'coolie' labor in building great transcontinental railways. Condemnation of ethnic cleansing of Uyghurs in Xinjiang can be balanced with condemnation of our own sins so we are not politely condemnatory of China on any issue on which we are unwilling to

be condemnatory of ourselves. That is a good principle for restorative diplomacy. Without principled balance in Western engagement, critique about Xinjiang or Tibet is seen as hypocritical by Chinese people (Rudd 2022, Chapter 1) rather than principled engagement. When Willy Brandt kneeled in penance, sorrow and apology at the site of the World War II Warsaw ghetto, it was a shocking break with past German diplomatic practice. This was the kind of transformation needed by all major powers to remake their diplomacy in a more restorative mold.

Threatening to cut off an already unified and economically flourishing China will only cause its citizens to be more unified behind its communist government, more convinced that it is only Islamist terrorists that China punishes in Xinjiang. Containment of China by somehow isolating its economy with trade sanctions, will hurt those that impose the sanctions more than it hurts China. China can play this game with more economic clout and with a more unified people behind it than Western states can muster. Western resolve for containment would only have a chance of becoming greater than Chinese resolve after an illegal Chinese invasion of a peaceful society. Chinese publics will see failed attempts to contain a peaceful China as more evidence that their century of humiliation at the hands of Western powers is over. Feeble containment attempts thus rebound to humiliate Western power.

There is a case for shifting China's pattern of economic growth inwards toward more internally driven growth in its own market, especially in consumption of services. China's internal market is more massive than any the world has known. China can allow export-driven growth to drop off for a few decades to enable that shift to internally driven growth in services consumption, an important part of which is building a more solid welfare state that will improve the economic resilience and political survival prospects of its regime. In this respect, China is at an economic conjuncture not so dissimilar to that confronting Bismarck when he decided that building a strong German welfare state was the best path to geopolitical might (Ocampo and Stiglitz 2018). Hence China now has the resilience to win any waiting game of trade sanctions cat and mouse. Trade cuts to China cause China to bleed, but cause more bleeding by those who poke it to initiate the trade war. While everyone loses, China's

adversaries lose more. At least China thence builds its comparative hegemonic dominance measured against the comparative economic decline of its competitors in contests for hegemony.

Western democracies do better to focus their energies on keeping their own institutions strong and free. If instead they miscalculate on games of containment of powers mightier than themselves, they might catalyze a Western depression. That could bring despots to power on their own soil to destroy the institutional heritage of freedom that it is their duty to preserve, to grow, to flicker as a light on the hill to democrats living under the yoke of despots. Make America Great Again authoritarians are motivated by fear of the inevitable, that America will one day become number 2. They are also motivated by deindustrialization of America. A democracy that does not provide jobs for the old or white working class, nor decent health care, retirement care, nor equal opportunities for a good college education is at risk. In that sense, Bismarck is a better role model for the authoritarian right than Trump. Angela Merkel is a role model for a mainstream moderate party of the Christian right who delivered better prospects of sustaining conservative rule.

Permanently De-Containing China and Every Society

It hardly needs to be said that it makes no sense for China or Russia to seek to permanently contain any NATO state. Containing the United States would be impossible for the same reasons that I explain in this chapter why it is a bad idea to tilt at the containment of China windmill in the way Trump pioneered. Speaking truth to power and human rights to rights abusers are important. Escalating trade sanctions in response to crimes against humanity can be important. So is de-escalating them when the crimes against humanity cease. I happen to believe in social democracy that endlessly struggles for freedom and against domination. I believe that social democracy tends to be a superior approach to Chinese-style communism and to neoliberalism. That does not mean it is a good idea for social democratic societies to intervene in other societies, even to pressure China to become social democratic. Rather than

be political meddlers, we can all seek to build and display the strengths of the kind of society we favor, in the social democratic case by the example of democratic struggles for social democracy at home. If other societies ask for support to build new democratic institutions, particularly societies recovering from war and choosing to transition away from despotism, we offer it generously. If we are intellectuals, we research how to strengthen democratic institutions, how to proof them against corruption. We disseminate lessons from the research.

That intellectual work facilitates healthy global competition among liberal, social democratic, and authoritarian visions of good governance. At the same time, we know no system has all the answers. Social democrats accept that they can learn from neoliberalism when it comes up with superior ways of solving problems. Chinese communism can invent better ways of doing certain important things (tree planting, building electric cars, solar panels being contemporary examples discussed herein) than social democracies have managed to craft through our market-regulatory hybrids.

We can always listen respectfully to other societies to learn from their institutional architectures. Social democrats can take a page out of Ronald Reagan's book on this. Reagan at every stage was robust and rather extreme in his realism and his critique of liberal institutionalism. He always listened to his adversaries, however, and was polite to them, never calling Russian or Chinese leaders names. China has been more competent at respectful institutional listening and learning to the West than the West to China (Rudd 2022, Chapter 1). Fluent Mandarin-speaker, former diplomat in Beijing, and former Australian prime minister, Kevin Rudd, is right, therefore, that to seek to contain China is to be backward-looking. Rudd argues that the Western imperative is to prevent rivalry with China from causing World War III. Rudd (2022, Chapter 1) has three alternative prescriptions:

1. Agree on 'principles and procedures for navigating each other's strategic redlines' (e.g., for Taiwan). I tweak this with work at restorative diplomacy that listens so that inadvertent crossing of these redlines does not stumble to cataclysm (Chapter 8).

2. Mutually identify 'areas of nonlethal security policy—foreign policy, economic policy, technology development (for example, over semi-conductors)' where strategic competition is healthy. Each side does well to learn humbly from ways that the other side outperforms it in that competition.
3. 'Define those areas where continued strategic cooperation (for example, on climate change) is both recognized and encouraged'.

Put another way, the principled engagement favored by the Obama administration with China (and other former adversaries, Iran and Myanmar) was prudent. That is, cooperation with enemies is imperative on some issues, and what Rudd calls 'managed strategic competition' on others. Cooperation at some times and competition at others. This applies equally to old despotic friends and enemies, such as Saudi Arabia and Cuba. Saudi Arabia might be an old ally and Cuba an old enemy, but they have track records of starting and fueling flames of destabilizing wars.

The challenge is that strategic predictability under Rudd's prescription (1) is unlikely if there is competition under prescription (2) in the form of a destabilizing arms race. This is exactly where we are at this historical conjuncture. The three greatest powers are all contributing to erosion of the arms control architecture of the Cold War that evolved after the Cuban missile crisis and in the decade after the Reagan-Gorbachev summit. The idea of defeating an overwhelming conventional attack with tactical nuclear weapons is on the table again with the response Putin threatened against NATO forces that might surge to join Ukraine to defeat Russia. To defend the nuclear weapons taboo, even threatening to dominate with nuclear weapons in the way Putin did should be defined by future international criminal law jurisprudence as a war crime. Threats of short-range tactical nuclear weapon attacks dismantle safeguards erected by Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev when they reached consensus that any tactical nuclear response could not be contained to prevent escalation to Mutual Assured Destruction. The required path is a return to strategic arms limitations that takes a first step from MAD toward credible second-strike deterrence as a more responsible kind of deterrence that refuses to start nuclear escalation.

Likewise, the containment of anti-American regimes favored by many US Republican leaders has far too much permanence structured into it. There was point and purpose in containing a Cuba with trade and travel bans when it was one of the most shockingly oppressive regimes that threatened the United States with nuclear missiles and promoted regional revolutions during the Cold War. But there has been limited US responsiveness to softening of that oppression (compared to European responsiveness to Cuban reforms). Today, Cuba is still oppressive in important ways, but less so than it used to be, and less so than dozens of other countries including US allies in the Middle East and Latin America. Cuba has ceased threatening other societies militarily. It has played valuable peacemaking roles with important regional conflicts such as in Colombia during the past decade. Hence, when citizens of other Western countries visit Cuba as tourists, they take all this in and think less of the United States for its hypocrisy and want of responsiveness in its engagement with old enemies. That loss of international respect is among a long litany of ways that permanent containment of Cuba, China or anyone else makes no sense, ethically or pragmatically.

Cyber-Guardrails

Kevin Rudd is right that one of the needed agreed red lines puts boundaries around cyber-ops to prevent them from escalating to MADD (Mutual Assured Digital Destruction). An example is pledges to eschew cyber-attacks against nuclear command, control, communications, and intelligence systems. That in turn would be assisted by agreed initiatives to disentangle conventional from nuclear command, control, communication, and intelligence systems to the extent this is possible. This, however, will not be credibly guaranteed until step-by-step strategic nuclear weapons negotiations seriously begin to dismantle MAD. Why would two states with credible MAD capabilities dismantle MADD capabilities they had acquired at great expense? MADD is not the civilization-ending escalation that MAD is in a situation where states believe they have no option but to escalate? MADD would mutually destroy great economies and disable their war fighting capabilities

until their cyber systems were rebuilt, but without killing millions of people. I might add that if a great power invades and occupies a weaker country, one path of nonviolent civilian resistance is for young people of the invaded country and its refugee diaspora to be encouraged to acquire training in strategies for accomplishing digital destruction of the invader and endless cyber-attacks of maximum impact on the occupation administration.

The path to credible guardrails against MADD is difficult because the guardrails would be almost impossible to verify and could not work without credible guardrails against MAD first. Nuclear weapons guardrails are much easier to verify through agreements on surprise weapons' site inspections (of the WMD kind witnessed during dismantling of the various Iraqi WMD programs before 2003). Once strategic arms limitation treaties against MAD have moved existing great powers to universal guardrails against first use, against nuclear launch on warning of incoming nuclear missiles,¹ and away from capability to wipe each other out, guardrails that protect against escalation to MADD would be feasible.

President Jimmy Carter was a leader in 'minimum deterrence' thinking. He wanted large cuts in military spending, bans on nuclear testing, and sought to persuade all major powers to reduce strategic forces to levels where it would no longer be possible for any state to launch a decisive first strike. This would leave all major powers safer from one another. This was successfully opposed by the Republican Party and by the military-industrial complex in Moscow as well as Washington (Schlosser 2013, 362).

Carter was the president who understood that even if nuclear powers go only part way to wiping each other out, they will transfer hegemony to a successor great power that is untouched. For example, a limited nuclear war between Russia and NATO would accelerate the rise of China to hegemonic domination. That is why I argue for restorative diplomacy as a fundamental requirement for preventing such an outcome.

MADD guardrails against first use, space war guardrails, and killer robot guardrails will all become more possible once MAD guardrails have been strengthened. Once MAD powers have moved away from capability to totally raze another society to a will only to inflict nuclear second

strikes on those that strike first, once great power deterrence theory has moved from MAD to minimally sufficient deterrence,² guardrails that protect against escalation to MADD and other new weapon risks become feasible. When there is agreement against first use of nuclear weapons,³ it will be much more feasible to agree to a guardrail against first use of some form of cyber-attack. Until then, the best hope is mutual understanding that a particular form of cyber-attack is a red line that will trigger a proportionate response. That is, the best we can do is reciprocal escalation, which is a building block of escalation to preventable MADD.

Strategic nuclear reductions are still difficult between nuclear powers because we live in a world where a Pakistan general can say of a shaky Pakistan economy that an inexplicable crash on the Karachi stock exchange will be interpreted as an act of war by India and trigger nuclear alert (Braithwaite and D'Costa 2018). The reality might be that India *is* keeping its cyberwarfare within agreed guardrails. That does not mean that India can prove this; it does not guarantee that Pakistan will believe them when it panics over a catastrophic stock market crash that is hard to explain. An imperative remains resumption of neglected restorative diplomacy over Kashmir. A second imperative is an India and Pakistan that both become geopolitically stronger as a result of a South Asian peace that allows each to flourish economically (Chapter 6 and Braithwaite and D'Costa 2018). What a failure of the great powers and the United Nations it is that they have given up on trying and trying again with a Kashmir peace process that could prevent our grandchildren being afflicted with billions of lives lost worldwide in a famine and nuclear winter caused by yet another war between India and Pakistan over Kashmir that next time escalates to nuclear war.

Guardrails that protect against wars most crucially start with strategic arms limitations that can simultaneously make rapid progress against AI⁴ warfare guardrails. Those agreements can eventually move on to total bans that make for more credible trust and verify inspections against killer robot programs and war-in-space programs than are currently possible against cyberwarfare programs. This is because the cyberwar programs of all the great powers historically have been significantly

about bottom-up entrepreneurship. Outsourcing to private sector criminal organizations has been endemic. These come in genres with which we have familiarity from popularization of extreme forms of them in James Bond films. Cyber 'Spectres' do not overwhelmingly emanate on the territory of the enemy great power that shares in any kind of guardrails inspection protocol. Hence, the practicalities of trust and verify are fraught compared to nuclear safeguard inspections under UN auspices.

Containing Iran and Other 'Rogue States'

Containing Iran as a state that disrupts peace in the Middle East is at a different conjuncture than the US-China relationship. The United States and Europe hurt Iran by cutting them off from trade far more than Iran hurts them. Nevertheless, the West must be prudent with containment. On the one hand, when the United States cut all trade with Cuba, Cuba was substantially weakened, and the United States only a little. In turn, however, it resulted in Castro turning totally to Moscow for its economic lifelines and changing its political colors from pink to deep red, indeed becoming for a time much more fanatically Communist and combative than the Soviets themselves. That upshot was not pretty; the Cuban Missile Crisis was the closest humankind approached to a war that wiped out a billion people in the United States, Europe, the Soviet Union, China, and beyond. China would have suffered terrible famines from the nuclear winter the Cuban Missile Crisis almost caused.

Containment of Iran or Myanmar that Iran or Myanmar sees as permanent, giving them no pathway to lifting that containment, means that they might see themselves in a similar situation to Cuba. They are turning toward alliance with China and Russia in response. They might acquire a level of cyberwar capability from China and Russia that allows them to cost many times over the damage to the US economy than the United States is able to inflict on Iran's currently isolated economy. There is no permanency of certainty about sustaining supremacy through containment in the new world of rapid technological and AI flux.

This is also true of North Korea, which is the circumstance where the case for long-term containment is strongest because North Korea leans on long-term support from China in building WMDs, cyberwar, AI, and killer robot capabilities that threaten neighbors. Up to a point, China does not mind a North Korea that threatens neighbors. North Korea has a weak, contained, and containable economy. Even so, the threat it poses with Chinese aid is large, as it was in 1950. The West must nevertheless keep assuring North Korea that it prefers to make the containment temporary. It wants to open those roads that would allow North Koreans the joy of visiting South Korea, that would allow its economy to grow like surrounding East Asian economies, like Vietnam after its era of containment, to eliminate hunger and poverty. The Western message should also be that it wants North Korea's most gifted children to study in the world's best universities, like Chinese children. One way to make that pitch more genuine is for the United States and its allies to announce a policy of opposition to long-term containment of any state as they energetically pursue endless new initiatives to open diplomatic pathways to decontainment by the West and WMD de-escalation by North Korea. With balance and integrity, the United States would also build diplomatic respect by imploring WMD de-escalation from authoritarian US allies like Israel and Pakistan.

Iran is building a nuclear weapons program of its own in a way that Cuba never did. The Myanmar military junta also seriously played with that option in the past. Its future now looks less pretty than Burma's ugly past. The more effective military card Iran has played throughout this century, a card that Cuba used to play, is to be a fomenter of many small regional wars that are serious problems for the West in a sensitive and unstable region where it has vulnerable key allies.⁵ Libya played this card as well, but less potently than Iran, less by starting war than by supporting terrorists as far away as Indonesia, southern Africa, and the IRA in Northern Ireland.⁶ Hopefully the current rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran, between Iraq and Iran, and in future between the US and Iran, will cascade a restorative regional diplomacy that will put an end to Iran reigniting wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Lebanon, and beyond.

Iran is a problem in US eyes because every time there is an internal conflict with Palestinians in Israel, Iran has supported Palestinian proxies that are not directly under its control, and Hezbollah proxies that are more under Iranian control. That support has been with Iranian weapons and increasingly sophisticated and longer-range missiles to attack Israel. This has drawn Israel into wider civil war in Lebanon against a range of Lebanese armed factions, including Palestinian armed groups. Iran has also supported Huthis in Yemen's terrible war. That support includes missiles and drones with which Huthis hit Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Iran has armed, trained, and supported Shia militias in Iraq who exerted influence over past Iraqi governments that the US occupation installed. These Iraqi Shia militias have in the past attacked US forces in Iraq with heavy casualties.⁷ Iran has supported armed groups in Afghanistan who inflicted casualties on NATO forces there and shaped the balance of power in peace negotiations for Afghanistan. Iran supported the ground war against Islamic State with more troops than any outside force (counting the Kurds as more an inside than as an outside armed resistance). In many other ways Iran destabilizes the region to give the message to the United States and Europe that it can destabilize a region that the West wants to be stable. Iran will continue to do this unless the West agrees to fully integrate Iran into the world economy, its banks into SWIFT transfers, integrate its universities into global knowledge networks, its film industry, poetry, and other cultural industries into global cultural streams, its citizens into global travel. That seems a more win-win path than endless containment, endless regional wars, and Iran growing a stronger alliance with Russia and China and becoming a strategically significant supplier of drones that kill Ukrainians.

President Obama's peacemaking with other members of his predecessor's axis of evil in Iran, but also North Korea, Libya until 2011, and Myanmar, was about all these 'rogue states' abandoning the politics of causing unrest in regions the West wanted to stabilize, from Bangladesh and India to the Middle East and Africa. Crucially, it meant abandoning the incipient nuclear programs that all these states toyed with. Obama's diplomacy was wisely one of only temporary containment, as it had been with some other US administrations. Against Pentagon advice and warnings from European allies, neocon Republicans and President Trump

dissented on the Iran nuclear deal. They wanted a mix of confrontation, permanent containment, and regime change in Iran. Obama himself sided with those in his administration who in 2011 shifted to support for international military intervention and regime change in Libya when an opportunity for this was presented at the time of the Arab Spring. That was an imprudent opportunism as dangerous in its consequences as the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

These invasions deeply compromised the project of temporary containment of North Korea that could be lifted when it abandoned its nuclear weapons program. North Korean generals started then to say, not only in private communications detected by Western intelligence, but also in public speeches, that if North Koreans want to see what happened to regimes the US considered rogue regimes when they abandon their WMD programs, look at what happened to Gaddafi and Saddam Hussein.

Obama's diplomacy for temporary and contingent containment in Iran and Myanmar, as it negotiated a nuclear deal with Iran and a transition to democracy with Myanmar, unraveled under his successors (so far). In the case of Myanmar, a case might be made that the failure to impose significant sanctions on successive waves of Myanmar military attacks on various ethnic minorities emboldened the military to attack the National League of Democracy as well. Another factor was that by 2021 the time had passed when the United States and China could work together for a peaceful Myanmar that was in both their interests, as well as the interests of the people of Myanmar. By 2021, the world had entered a phase where if US sanctions cut off Myanmar or any country, Russia, China, and Iran rush in to befriend them. This also occurred with Afghanistan from 2021.

President Obama's diplomacy over the Iran nuclear deal was creative and effective in securing a win-win deal during his Presidency. He initially sought to engage the Supreme Leader of Iran with unsigned letters not on Presidential letterhead that said, in effect, we know that you think our policy is regime change in Iran.⁸ The letters argued that a point of writing them was to persuade the Supreme Leader that he understood that Iran demonstrating capacity to destabilize the Middle East was a way of showing that they can resist foreign pressure for regime

change. Obama explained to the Supreme Leader that the US interest is allowing the people of Iran to decide what sort of regime they want without US interference. Ultimately the objective should be normalization of the relationship, but the nuclear deal would be the initial, yet huge, confidence-building step that would change the game to principled engagement. Obama had the foresight to see that if the United States did not step in to be a broker of rapprochement between Iran and Saudi Arabia to stabilize the Middle East, China could become that broker. Indeed it did after Obama's departure and after the United States walked away from the agreement with Iran that Obama signed on behalf of his state. I return repeatedly to the theme of how empirically important narratives of the broken promise are, and to restorative diplomacy as a remedy to broken promises.

When that deal was signed, containment of Iran by Europe and the entire world economy began to be dismantled. During Donald Trump's Presidential campaign in 2015, he pitched to Republican hawks that he would join arms with his base by promising to dishonor the Iran nuclear deal. Neocons like John Bolton and allies of the right like Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu embraced Trump as a result of his commitment to reach beyond containment of Iran to confrontation with Iran. Iran's people, but not its leadership, descended into greater poverty. Iran then accelerated its nuclear weapons program, its cyberwarfare programs, and began sharing its impressive drone technologies with Russia.

Containing Myanmar

Hilary Clinton led US diplomacy toward a deal with Myanmar's junta to empower a transition to democracy, to release Aung San Su Kyi and allow her to lead the National League of Democracy in competitive elections with international monitors. There were many layers of diplomacy for democracy, particularly domestic peace diplomacy, that went to support from many ethnic armies that would commit to seek peace in a democratic, federal Myanmar. Chinese diplomacy was important too at a time when the United States and China could work well in unison. China saw Myanmar as a large country sharing a border

with China; it had fought half a dozen wars with Myanmar in past centuries. China wanted Myanmar to become a peaceful, flourishing trading partner. It wanted to end recurrent flows of refugees and drugs across its border from the fighting in Myanmar. By 1989 China had completely withdrawn its support for the insurgency against the military by the Communist Party of Burma. That insurgency then collapsed (Braithwaite and D'Costa 2018, Chapter 9). Indeed, in the 1980s China (unlike the United States) seemed to withdraw its support for armed insurgencies everywhere (Pembroke 2020, Chapter 7).

The National League of Democracy won one landslide election after another. In contrast, the political party backed by the military proved unpopular. In 2021, the military responded with a coup, arresting Aung San Su Kyi and most of the elected leadership of the National League of Democracy. The junta claimed that it would restabilize the country and then hold fresh elections. Gradually, perhaps too gradually after the Rohingya genocide, because of fear that Russia and China would exploit the situation to make the junta its new best friend, the international community reintroduced a containment policy toward Myanmar. Economic, travel, lifting of aid, and other sanctions were put in place and are likely to stay until elected leaders are released, and concrete steps are taken to implement the promised resumption of Myanmar's journey to democracy.

This was a principled return to containment by the West. In contrast, the Trump administration's resumption of containment of Iran was unprincipled, a broken promise. With Myanmar, it was the junta who broke its democracy undertakings to the international community. With Iran, it was the Trump administration who dismantled the nuclear disarmament deal to return to a mix of containment and military confrontation, with President Trump even threatening genocide (to totally destroy Iran and wipe other rogue regimes off the map)⁹ if Iran's proxies in Iraq did not desist from attacks on vulnerable US forces.

Implications of Containing 'Rogue States' for Containing a 'Rogue Russia'

The resumption of formidable temporary containment of Russia after its invasion of Ukraine was justified because this was a shocking war crime that gravely endangered Europe and the planet. My argument is that containment is only justified until a sustainable peace between Russia and Ukraine is negotiated. This is important because the belief of countries like Russia and Iran is that the United States is always prompt to impose sanctions on regimes it resents, but always tardy in dismantling them after a diplomatic resolution.¹⁰ That belief undermines the effectiveness of sanction deterrence. Russia and Iran believe what the United States truly seeks is regime change in their country rather than compliance with the posited reason for the sanction. On both sides, this kind of thinking is always woolly about regime change to what? It is important that the people of Russia, Iran, and Myanmar can clearly see what the regime oppressing them must do to trigger an end to containment policies. Regime allegations that dissidents are naïve dupes of US designs to crush their country will seem more plausible if containment is not responsive by being dismantled when the required reform is made. Leaders and diplomats with a restorative justice philosophy should always preface announcements of new sanctions on a despotic regime with an apology to oppressed citizens of that country who suffer collateral damage from the sanctions and always explain that the sanctions will be lifted as soon as possible after the tyranny that motivates them is ended.

Containment of Russia seemed to end after the Reykjavik Summit between Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev. The peace diplomacy of other Western leaders who had previously been drum beaters was also important, notably the warm relationship Margaret Thatcher established with Gorbachev. 1986 was the summit where Reagan famously said publicly what he had been saying privately to his diplomatic and military leadership: 'It would be fine with me if we eliminated all nuclear weapons'. Gorbachev was already an abolitionist who agreed with him.¹¹ Some question whether Reagan and Thatcher were genuine. Perhaps they were lying to cool out their naïve mark, Gorbachev. Many Russians

believe this. The evidence is clear, however, that Reagan was genuine. Today's Russian civil society cynics wrongly perceive Western leaders of 1986 as gaming Russia with an endgame of permanently keeping Russia down and dismantling its strengths.

They believe the West was playing from the same gamebook when it negotiated the 2014 Ukraine-Russia Minsk peace accord. The West and Ukraine never intended to support implementation of the Minsk accords, allowed increased discrimination against the ethnic Russians of the Donbas. Instead NATO armed Ukraine to the teeth, including its non-state fascist militias, in preparation for an escalation of the 2014 war that began in 2022. German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President of the time Hollande both said publicly that at Minsk they were playing for time to arm Ukraine. The Russian narrative, their Minsk narrative of the broken promise, was not just a Putin narrative. Westerners can say that this narrative is wrong, but they cannot articulate what the West was doing between 2014 and 2022 to prove to Russian civil society that its good faith of 1986 was still genuine. By then the West could no longer prove that there were no broken promises; the West had sold out to the neocon narrative of a diplomacy of deceit. The 10 years after the 1986 Summit had been fertile, nevertheless; a succession of arms containment treaties were signed, making the world much safer, not only from intermediate nuclear weapons elimination in Europe accomplished quickly by Reagan and Gorbachev. Putin reversed this civilizational accomplishment after the Minsk agreement was dishonored.

By 2014 it was perhaps understandable that Western leaders should want to return to containing Russia, including through arming Ukraine, and weakening Russia every way they could. It was clear by 2014, and should have been clear earlier, that Russia was no longer a society transitioning to democracy and free markets, but was transitioning to autocracy and domination of markets by Putin and his old KGB cronies. President Medvedev seemed to President Obama to be opening a door to a turn back to democracy. That proved a mirage (Belton 2020). Putin's KGB faction still dominated Medvedev. It put Medvedev back in his box after he supported Obama on step-by-step toward total abolition of nuclear weapons. Russia had decided to compromise on allowing NATO

to expand to former Soviet satellites like Poland and the Baltic States. Putin publicly drew a red line on NATO expansion to Ukraine and Georgia, however, as too close for security, too fundamental. Whether there was a red line against NATO expansion to Moldova, Armenia and Azerbaijan was less clear publicly. Russia persistently acted to fragment these states with separatist ethnic conflicts that Russian military peacekeepers flared when these states made overtures toward solidarity with the Western alliance. This made these states so politically indigestible for the EU and NATO that their accession was never close enough to justify Putin speeches about red lines with respect to them. Sadly these societies continue to live under a shadow of considerable Russian domination.

Russia has so far succeeded in keeping all five of these states out of both the EU and NATO. Nevertheless, these were ‘catastrophic successes’ for Russia because accomplishing it brought Sweden and Finland into NATO, brought NATO missiles closer to Russia’s border, encircled Russia with a more unified NATO, all this at massive cost to Russia in blood and treasure. Because the costs to Ukraine were larger and combined with significant NATO-wide depletion of economic growth and inflation, these successes were also catastrophic successes. For both sides, restorative diplomacy over a security architecture for Europe that was inclusive and listening to Russian fears, would have been superior to the partial and catastrophic successes both sides secured.

Other world leaders of the 1990s, such as former Australian Prime Minister, Paul Keating, argued that dismantling containment of Russia failed to go far enough. Keating argued that NATO as we had known it should have been dismantled at that point in history to prove to Russia that a powerful club from which Russia was excluded no longer had a place. Not only was NATO retained as an anti-Russia alliance, it expanded in tranches that included Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary in 1999, and the Baltic states of Estonia, Lithuania and Slovakia, with Romania, and Bulgaria in 2003. Then came the Bucharest NATO summit of 2008 when President Bush announced that Georgia and Ukraine would be on a track to NATO inclusion. This clearly signaled the crossing of Putin’s repeatedly articulated red line. He saw these as former core parts of the Soviet Union and the old Russia of the Czars before that. They were in close missile proximity to the Russian

core. The missiles in Ukraine before 1990 were pointed at the NATO powers; Russia believed it had guaranteed that Ukraine's post-communist government would never be subjected to a campaign to persuade it to join NATO and reassemble a missile capability—now aimed instead at Russia.¹²

Eastern expansion of NATO up to Ukraine had long been warned against by diplomats and many serious thinkers on the left and right (such as Henry Kissinger),¹³ among liberal institutionalists and realists such as John Mearsheimer (Chotiner 2022), and George Kennan (1997). This view was reinforced in the pro-Western early years of Putin's Presidency when he enthused about moving closer to the United States and EU. Keating argued Western leaders failed to grasp a potential 'new era of peace and co-operation', failing to find a place for Russia inside a global 'strategic fabric'. By expanding NATO so widely, 'the US failed to learn one of the lessons of history – the victor should be magnanimous with the vanquished'.¹⁴ The upshot, Keating argued, was that NATO states on the borders of Russia would keep its nuclear arsenal on dangerous levels of alert. 'This posture automatically carries with it the possibility of a Russian nuclear attack by mistake'. Keating argued that Russia compensated for turning down the dial on how up to update its nuclear warning systems by turning up the dial on levels of nuclear alert. 'This means that while the Cold War is over, the risk of a mistaken pre-emptory (nuclear) response has increased'. Keating contended that if nuclear weapons were the world's most pressing problem, its greatest challenge was building 'a truly representative structure of world governance which reflects global realities but which is also equitable and fair'. George Kennan (1997) was prophetic:

Expanding NATO would be the most fateful error of American policy in the entire post-cold-war era. Such a decision may be expected to inflame the nationalistic, anti-Western and militaristic tendencies in Russian opinion; to have an adverse effect on the development of Russian democracy; to restore the atmosphere of the Cold War to East-West relations, and to impel Russian foreign policy in directions decidedly not to our liking. And, last but not least, it might make it much more difficult, if

not impossible, to secure the Russian Duma's ratification of the Start II agreement and to achieve further reductions of nuclear weaponry.

This section of my book was drafted during the months before the Ukraine crisis escalated to the invasion of 2022. It became clear in the speeches Putin gave and the proposals he tabled in 2021 and early 2022 when he was effectively threatening that invasion that he feared NATO missiles close to Russian metropolises. He also professed fear that Ukraine had the scientists and historic knowhow and the massive nuclear plants to itself rebuild Soviet-era nuclear missiles. There were defense strategists in Ukraine and US realists like John Mearsheimer (1993) who indeed suggested that Ukraine be 'quietly encouraged' to acquire its own nuclear deterrent. A problem with realism is that its practitioners want to make recommendations like this one, for example that nuclear balancing would create stability by Iran getting the bomb to balance Israel (Waltz 2012)! This when Saudi Arabia has made it clear that if both Israel and Iran have the bomb, it may become a nuclear power. Putin also made much of Ukraine's neofascists that he seems to worry little about when they are his neofascists in Russia. It is unlikely that this was one of Putin's key motivations, but rather an edgy way of mobilizing militarism in Russia to honor the memory of the millions of Russians who fell defending Ukraine from Nazis in World War II.

Washington would have done better to be less obsessed with expanded containment of Russia, and Russia with expanded containment of Ukraine. Better to have been obsessed with regional European architectures of inclusion and diplomatic dialogue. This aspect of the analysis is taken further in subsequent chapters.

What the West saw as progressive people power uprisings in Eastern Europe to shun elected former Communist leaders in favor of pro-Western leaders, Putin saw as a breach of reaffirmed agreements three decades earlier to surrender East Germany, dismantle the Warsaw Pact, and end NATO expansion. Putin perceived the color revolutions not as people power revolutions but as NATO-inspired destabilization campaigns. 'What the West celebrated as popular democratic revolutions were simply Western-sponsored coups d'état' for Putin, especially in cases like Ukraine where the deposed leader was perceived in Russia to

have been democratically elected with particularly strong support from Russian-speaking communities of Eastern Ukraine' (Krastev and Holmes 2019, 94). I commenced the Peacebuilding Compared data collection for Europe totally convinced that it was the Western perception that was correct here, and I still think Western perceptions of the inspiring bottom-up character of the color revolutions in Eastern Europe are overwhelmingly correct. Now I do, nevertheless, see that there is some limited merit to the Russian perception and critique; there was significant, unnecessary, and counterproductive political meddling by the United States in many democracies struggling against Russian domination. It has not helped democracy in Eastern Europe.

Some of the new waves of Ukrainian leaders put in place provocative discriminatory policies in the regions populated by ethnic Russian minorities. Western human rights critique of this was wanting. On February 24, 2014, the Ukrainian Parliament voted to repeal minority language laws, that mainly affected Russian speakers. On February 27, Russian soldiers started seizing checkpoints in Crimea. A preventable war that would take the world to new levels of danger had escalated.

The legislature of the overwhelmingly ethnically Russian Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the local government of Sevastopol (both subdivisions of democratic Ukraine) voted to hold a referendum on the political status of Crimea on March 16, 2014. These governments claim that there was an 83 percent voter turnout and that 97 percent of them voted to rejoin Russia. Crimea had been ceded to Ukraine by Russia's Krushchev sixty years earlier. Putin then reinforced Russian bases that were already in Crimea (at its Black Sea naval base). These elections may have been corrupted, but it is probable that the majority of the predominantly Russian-speaking people of Crimea were more aligned at that time with Russia than Ukraine. The military occupation of Crimea doubled what had been falling approval ratings for Putin inside Russia, to over 90 percent according to the reading of the polls by one US State Department Russia expert and at the time of writing they may still approach 80 percent. They will not stay there, however. Contrary to the hopes of decent people, Putin did seem to militarize the Russian people. But even credible poll numbers in an authoritarian context can exaggerate

realities. History teaches that after years of the horrors of wars of aggression, the decent people of Russia will reflect on the facts, spurn aggressive warmaking, and the Putin legacy.

In parallel with the occupation of Crimea, ethnic Russian militias rose up in other parts of Eastern Ukraine with escalated weapons, military advisors, then boots on the ground, supplied by Putin, reinforced by Russian troops in militia garb. A civil war raged there for eight years notwithstanding the phony Minsk ceasefire agreement to establish an autonomous regional government for the Donetsk and Luhansk regions inside Ukraine. Although sanctions against Russia were justified by what escalated to become a huge 2022 war of Russian aggression, the West needed to be careful not to be seen by the *people* of Russia to have abandoned its commitment to dismantle containment in return for Moscow pulling down the Iron Curtain, reducing Soviet nuclear arsenals and installing a democracy. Putin (who the West disliked) was undoubtedly more democratically popular in Russia than his predecessors who the West had liked, but played like fiddles (Gorbachev, Yeltsin). This was true even as all Russian elections starting with the 1996 election of Yeltsin were seriously corrupted. Western leaders had a tin ear for Russian democratic sentiment. Distaste for a particular leader is a foolish reason for abandoning an agreement important to the survival of all peoples. Perceived Western betrayal is precisely the perception that Putin successfully played to with his home crowd.

Putin overplayed his hand with that domestic base, indeed with all independent thinkers, and with the Chinese leadership, which sought to persuade him to end his war after the first day of fighting. The referendum result in Crimea may have been corrupted, but there was little doubt that most people living in both Russia and Crimea were supportive of separatism from Ukraine. The corruption of referendums was probably greater, and the levels of support for separatism and war much more mixed in other parts of Eastern Ukraine. Putin's 2022 crime of aggression in Ukraine was strategically stupid. If the West responds to it with enduring containment of Russia that seems to have no escape path, that would equally be folly for a world with high risks of escalation from accidents or miscalculations.

Putin's war crimes in Ukraine and the West's preventive failures and mismanagement leading up to 2022,¹⁵ were sad setbacks for collaborative crisis prevention. The dismantling of nuclear weapons, including in Ukraine, in the 1990s made both sides safer when nuclear missiles were kept back from close proximity from enemy capitals. That margin of safety has narrowed for all earthlings thanks to preventive failures on all sides of the Ukraine war. The needed 2014 Minsk outcome was more an Andrew Mack and George Kennan style of outcome (see Chapter 6), perhaps agreement for a UN peacekeeping mission to disarm armed factions and a diplomatic process for discussion of UN-supervised referenda, as in Timor-Leste.

Admittedly, the internationally supervised outcome was not pretty in Kosovo, where Russia and NATO held opposed views, where the shoe was on the opposite foot, and it was NATO which was in breach of international law in its military assaults on the sovereignty of Serbia and Yugoslavia. Yes, the United States used military force to decide who would rule Kosovo, and meddled shamelessly in the politics of the successor Kosovo democracy.¹⁶ The US pick to rule Kosovo was a cabal of war criminals, murderers, and thieves. Then, so was the Serbian leadership, even moreso. For all that, the outcome in Kosovo was not as ugly as in Ukraine. It involved no risk of nuclear war. In Kosovo, as in Bosnia, fighting was brought to an end by reactive international intervention, but also preventatively in the former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia by Russia and NATO collaboratively interposing their peacemaking troops to prevent Serbian attack (Braithwaite and D'Costa 2018, Part I).

The NATO bombing of civilians in Belgrade was a war crime and a setback for the democracy movement in Serbia who sought to overthrow President Milošević (Marsavelski et al. 2018; Braithwaite and D'Costa 2018, Part I). It left Russian leaders, including Yeltsin, Medvedev, and Putin, seething over the hypocrisy of NATO and its rules-based international order. China seethed in 1999 when bombing was so reckless that Operation Allied Force directed five US joint direct attack munition guided bombs to hit the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, killing three Chinese officials. It was disappointing that the ensuing Western conversation was not about how such a war crime in future circumstances might ignite a cascade of violence. That discussion did occur in Russia. For

Putin, the Belgrade lesson was that if NATO can get away with this kind of reckless war crime, so can Russia.

My conclusion is that Bosnia and Kosovo were less than glorious peacemaking and peacekeeping successes, but much more successful than Minsk, 2014. Macedonia was an inspiring accomplishment of Russian and NATO troops working together to prevent war through UNPREDEP (United Nations Preventive Deployment Force, Macedonia). US diplomat David Phillips (2012, 208) was right that: ‘The UN Preventive Deployment in Macedonia (UNPREDEP) was a model for preventive diplomacy’. That model was the road not taken in Ukraine, in Georgia. The lesson that might have been learned was that the West needed to make Russia and China partners in peace as it did in Macedonia in 2001–2002 after Putin had assumed the Russian leadership. In future, NATO needed to avoid bombing that was in breach of international law. Collaborative preventive diplomacy and peacekeeping was that path not taken at Minsk. It was the better path attempted in the former Yugoslavia with imperfection along the way, but with profound success in Macedonia. NATO, Russia and the United Nations should have learned lessons from those imperfections to forge an agreement between the great powers to do peacekeeping better and preventatively to save Ukraine from war at Minsk in 2014. Instead of being peacemakers at Minsk, Western leaders were pretenders, warmakers who gamed a vital peace process to prepare for war.

Contain Threats; Abandon Long-Term Containment of States

My argument is that containment of the Soviet Union was a well-crafted alternative to confrontation, a diplomatic triumph for the United States and NATO. Temporary containment of Saddam Hussein in Iraq had also been a partial success in weakening that regime, gaining effective independence for the oppressed Iraqi Kurds, and motivating Saddam to dismantle all his WMD programs, nuclear, biological, and chemical. Those accomplishments turned to dross when containment was discarded in favor of the illegal 2003 invasion of Iraq. The upshot was a

more pro-Iran government in Iraq than Saddam's, and a door opened to Islamic State not only in Iraq, but in Syria, ultimately across Africa and beyond. Islamic State was murdering more innocents (in Africa) after it was defeated in Iraq than before.

Likewise, temporary containment of Gaddafi's Libya had succeeded in motivating Gaddafi to dismantle his nuclear weapons program, to desist from his widespread support for anti-Western terrorism, and to become an ally of the West against Al Qaeda and Islamic State. When the Western alliance seized the Arab Spring opportunity to assassinate Gaddafi and militarize its Arab Spring, we have seen that this cascaded Gaddafi's mercenaries south with his stolen arsenal to destabilize a long line of African dominoes and open doors to Islamic State affiliates.¹⁷

Although containment of Russia is again justified at the time of writing until a sustainable peace with Ukraine is working, permanent containment of Russia deep into this century is a prescription for return to something worse than Cold War politics. That worse outcome is a widened NATO alliance that totally dominates Western Europe facing off against a China-led alliance that includes Russia, North Korea, Iran, and their allies such as Syria. Continued pretenses of containing China will fail even more profoundly than continued containment of Russia. In a world of mutually contained multipolarity, most societies will have contempt for the dangerous behavior of all poles. On the positive side, the disengagement of most societies from alliance with any pole could become the driving force for restoration of peaceful institutions and renewal of the United Nations. The last thing the world needs is a multipolarity of spheres of hegemony by NATO, Russia, China, by Erdogan's NeoOttomanism, or by Iranian attempts to reconstitute a Persian empire.

Return to containment of the military regime in Myanmar remains a short-term imperative because the junta has reneged on its side of the deal to honor democratic institutions and temper its own domination of the society, especially its ethnic minorities. The West and ASEAN might insist the junta keep its word that it will return to genuine democracy. Diplomats can signal that temporary containment of Myanmar should end when it is clear that genuine democracy is back, when the National League of Democracy is unchained. This overall conclusion is that while

long-run containment of the Soviet Union was a bold and brilliant alternative to confrontation, in today's circumstances only shorter-term containment of states is coherent, such as this current containment imperative for the Myanmar junta and containment of Russia while it continues to take Ukrainian territory. More than that, explicit rejection of any policy of long-term containment of Russia or China is needed if Russia and China are not to undermine shorter-term containment for cases like the Myanmar junta, Iran, Syria, Afghanistan, North Korea, and future cases that resemble them.

Why is long-term containment of Russia or China (or the United States for that matter) an unusually massive folly? With China, it cannot possibly work. We have seen that China is not an old Soviet Union whose economy was of little consequence to the non-Communist world. Chinese growth and lending by Chinese banks that are the largest banks in the world (Braithwaite 2021) are critical to global recovery when the West has to pull itself out of recessions like 2008 and the covid recession of 2020. Collaboration of the West with China under the auspices of the WHO was imperative to treating the root cause of the covid economic crisis, as Helen Clark and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (2021) concluded in their *Make it the Last Pandemic* report. China, the West, and Russia were all needed for the heavy lifting of vaccinating all of the planet and preventing the regions of deepest poverty, for example in Africa, from becoming the incubus of future HIVs, covids, and ebola variants that it did become in the recent past. The contemporary climate crisis cannot be tackled without committed collaboration with China as both the biggest polluter in the world on the negative side and the biggest investor in renewables (45% of world renewables investment this century) (Braithwaite 2021) and by far the most renewables patents of any country, on the positive side. Peter Drahos (2021b) goes so far as to argue that Chinese leveraging of green investment is the best of the slim prospects the planet has of averting a major climate catastrophe. Drahos argues that the crisis is now so close to irreversible tipping points that Western market mechanisms are certain to be too slow to tame the crisis.

Thankfully, policies that sought to isolate Chinese universities have failed. 2023 was the first year that Chinese universities significantly surged past US universities on the Nature Index of high-quality research

publishing in top science journals. Six of the top 10 institutions on the Nature Index are now Chinese.¹⁸ China also publishes as much in the top science journals as the combined output of the next ten countries after the United States on the Nature Index (Germany, the UK, Japan, France, Canada, South Korea, Switzerland, India, Australia, and Italy). Attempting to contain that level of excellence in science is absurd for a planet that must secure scientific collaboration on climate change, pandemics, other catastrophes, and simpler evidence-based challenges like the most cost-effective ways to scale up ambulance services during crises and how high bank reserve deposits should be to prevent crashes.

The argument against long-term containment of Russia is that as disappointed as Westerners might be at how shallow Russian democracy is, and how widespread is Putin's domestic despotism, until 2008 (Georgia) and 2014 (Ukraine) Russia basically kept its side of the Reykjavik bargain forged by Reagan and Gorbachev that was supported by all NATO states. Hence, Ukraine and the West will do best to find peace in Ukraine and then rediscover a path to reverse the formerly successful policy of Russian containment. And it must be explicit about signaling that this is how it thinks about containment of Russia, China, and Iran. A glimmer of hopeful light here was this May 2021 statement by US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken on China:

It is the one country in the world that has the military, economic, diplomatic capacity to undermine or challenge the rules-based order that we care so much about and are determined to defend. But I want to be very clear about something. And this is important. Our purpose is not to contain China, to hold it back, to keep it down. It is to uphold this rules-based order that China is posing a challenge to. (Blinken 2021)

Rejecting long-term containment and supporting a rules-based international order that will see more Russian and more US war criminals in the dock of international tribunals is indeed required. The risk to the United States of being seen by ordinary Russians as snubbing commitments it made to abandon containment of Russia is this: that they will think in the way North Korean generals do about the trustworthiness of détente. We have seen that North Korean generals say: look at what happened

to Gaddafi and Saddam when they dismantled their nuclear weapons capability; look at how despised Gorbachev is by the Russian people for dismantling the Soviet counterbalance to US domination. With China, containment simply cannot work. The inflation and recession Europe and the Global South suffered after decoupling from Russia are minor blips compared to the consequences of Europe and the United States decoupling from China.

Enduring containment might have other hugely counterproductive effects, for example in hobbling the UN Security Council's ability to prevent and end wars, politicizing pandemic prevention and poisoning cooperation on climate justice and financial crisis prevention. The next chapter will discuss persistent Russian and Chinese vetoes of important Security Council resolutions that are imperative for building a more peaceful planet. Blinken's May 2021 message is a central message of this book. The West must not have a containment mentality toward China and Russia but want them to flourish in the way the West wanted for them (Neocons excepted) at the end of the Cold War when Security Council vetoes dropped to zero. The planet then became objectively more collaborative and peaceful. It reduced poverty more quickly. It closed the ozone hole. Reconciliation of diverse kinds was on the rise, as discussed in the following chapters.

The next chapter argues that for the foreseeable future, containment of threats must be more in focus. Long-term containment of states should become a practice of the past. The most internationalized kind of threat arises when one state or army seeks to expand its sovereignty by invading another. The world should have learnt from how much better off the world has been since the end of World War II as a consequence of dramatic reduction of invasions, especially by great powers. Conversely, international society has grasped how devastating the cascades of violence have been from the rare invasions that have occurred in this period—the invasion of the Democratic Republic of Congo by Rwanda, Uganda, and other African states, the invasion of West Papua, then East Timor by Indonesia, the invasion of other former Yugoslavian republics by Serbia, the multiple invasions of Lebanon between 1978 and 2006, and the Iraq and Kuwait invasions. Not as bad as the invasions of World Wars I and II, but bad enough.

Preventing invasions requires rapid threat containment that diverges from the politics of long-term state containment of the Cold War. In earlier Peacebuilding Compared research, my co-authors persuaded me that better cooperation between the United States and Russia could have prevented wars in Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. When that better cooperation did happen, it succeeded in preventing a Serbian invasion of Macedonia (today Northern Macedonia) by placing both Russian and NATO troops in the path of any Serbian advance (Braithwaite and D'Costa 2018, Part I). Even moreso, containment of threats is superior to the politics of confrontation with enemy states that prevailed in all previous centuries of modernity prior to the post-World War II era of containment.

Re-summarizing in a different way, humankind is best to pursue the *Better Angels of Our Nature* (Pinker 2011) in a progression from gunboat diplomacy to a post-invasion world. Then a post-containment world is needed with respect to states. This must be a world that preventively contains threats permanently, however. That is our next topic.

Notes

1. Launch on warning empowers high-level commanders to launch a retaliatory nuclear weapons strike as soon as satellites and other warning sensors detect an incoming enemy missile.
2. For the more general development of the theory of minimally sufficient deterrence, see Braithwaite (2022, Chapter 9).
3. Unlike China and other NATO nuclear powers, the United States refuses to tie its hands against nuclear first use. It has experienced rounds of debates this century when it has reaffirmed its rejection of no first use. Although China has a no first use policy, speculation abounds that the Chinese commitment to no first use will not hold in a world where its peer competitor rejects this.
4. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been defined as 'a set of algorithms giving a machine the analytical and decision-making capabilities

- to react intelligently to situations by making predictions based on data already acquired' (Initiatives for Nuclear Disarmament 2021, 39).
5. This conclusion is based on my Peacebuilding Compared Project interviews in Iran, including with senior military officers, Grand Ayatollahs, former ministers in portfolios like foreign affairs, and at its Council for National Security.
 6. Again, this is based on Peacebuilding Compared interviews I conducted in Libya.
 7. Peacebuilding Compared interviews by the author in Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan.
 8. This is based on my interviews in Iran and beyond. They are confirmed to a degree in memoirs of members of Obama's administration.
 9. A Trump rogue regimes speech that singled out Iran and North Korea was to the UN Security Council in 2017. It was there that he shocked the audience by threatening to 'totally destroy' North Korea and bring other rogue states to heel (Borger 2017). In addition to these rogue states, Trump, also Tweeted that he could 'wipe Afghanistan off the face of the Earth' (Ward 2019).
 10. Peacebuilding Compared interviews by author.
 11. See Kurtz-Phelan (2014). Krepon (2021, 329) described the exchange that preceded Reagan's famous statement: 'Reagan's team offered the Pentagon's notional proposal to eliminate all ballistic missiles—"fast flyers". Why stop there, asked Gorbachev? How about all bombers, warheads, tactical nuclear weapons, and, for good measure, cruise missiles?' After Reagan replied with his famous statement on total abolition, Gorbachev concurred: 'We can do that. Let's eliminate them. We can eliminate them'. They both concluded that getting there by the end of the twentieth century was too slow.
 12. Putin made these points at length in interviews with Stone and Scheer (2017). A restorative peace was possible up to the February 2022 Ukraine invasion. It might have promised ceasefire, diplomacy to discuss federalism and how to empower the people of Eastern Ukraine to decide their own future, full preservation

of Ukrainian democracy and sovereignty, a fast track to EU accession, but guarantee that NATO keep the promises of US and German leaders to reject NATO expansion. These promises are recorded in minutes from both sides of meetings at the time Gorbachev agreed that the Berlin Wall would be dismantled to take East Germany into NATO (in the context of moving toward dismantling the Warsaw Pact). Russian leaders of all stripes (Gorbachev, Yeltsin, Medvedev, Putin) believed there was agreement to reject any other expansion of NATO. US Secretary of State James Baker and the German Chancellor and foreign minister explicitly agreed there would be 'not one inch' of NATO expansion Eastwards once East Germany became part of NATO. See the minutes of the Baker-Gorbachev meeting declassified in 2017: National Defense Archive, NATO Expansion: What Gorbachev heard. George Washington University, 12 December 2017. <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/russia-programs/2017-12-12/nato-expansion-what-gorbachev-heard-Western-leaders-early> (accessed September 29, 2023). Yeltsin's claim that in 1993 he received similar assurances from the Clinton administration, were dismissed by US Secretary of State Christopher after Yeltsin's death as a 'misunderstanding' by a Yeltsin who was 'drunk'. Subsequently released US records of the meeting support Yeltsin more than Christopher: National Security Archive. March 16, 2018. NATO Expansion: What Yeltsin Heard. <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/russia-programs/2018-03-16/nato-expansion-what-yeltsin-heard>. Yeltsin and Putin surrendered grudgingly to considerable NATO expansion before what had always been the Ukraine red line was reasserted. The evidence makes reasonable the Russian claim that the promises made to both Gorbachev and Yeltsin and their foreign ministers were broken.

13. Kissinger opined:

Any attempt by one wing of Ukraine to dominate the other—as has been the pattern would lead eventually to civil war or breakup. To treat Ukraine as part of an East–West confrontation would

scuttle for decades any prospect to bring Russia and the West—especially Russia and Europe—into a cooperative international system: Kissinger (2014).

14. All the quotes from Paul Keating in this paragraph are from Hyland (2008).
15. On this mismanagement, Mearsheimer argued that the ‘deep cause’ of the Ukraine civil war was ‘The aim of the United States and its European allies to peel Ukraine away from the Soviet orbit and incorporate it in the West’ (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrMiSQAGOS4>). Equally, the deep cause was foolish determination of Putin to peel it back. Like Putin, Mearsheimer saw the key elements of Western strategy was ‘NATO and EU expansion’ and ‘fostering an Orange Revolution’. A West that pressed Ukraine to implement the 2014 Minsk Protocol could have helped, something Ukraine never did in the eight years after it was signed by Russia, Ukraine and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Tatars who were racially distrusted by Stalin and forcibly relocated from Crimea to Uzbekistan had no voice in the Minsk negotiations. It contained no gesture toward their right of return to their farms in a Crimea that became overwhelmingly Tatarized over seven centuries of Tatar rule until Stalin ethnically cleansed Tatars. The endless, oppressive politics that Minsk should have changed rather than gamed was squeeze and oppress those who were not devout supporters of the great power you prefer.
16. Aleksandar Marsavelski and I were told during Peacebuilding Compared interviews by Kosovo political party leaders of the US Ambassador dictating to them who were and were not acceptable political candidates during Kosovo’s transitional administration.
17. This analysis of Libya and its pan-African implications are discussed in much more detail in Part I of Braithwaite and D’Costa (2018).
18. Nature Index Institution Tables. 2023: <https://www.nature.com/nature-index/institution-outputs/generate/all/global/all> (accessed September 29, 2023).

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