
Hegemonic Delusions

Power, Liberal Imperialism, and the Bush Doctrine

JEFFREY W. TALIAFERRO

REVIEW OF

CHRISTOPHER LAYNE

The Peace of Illusions:

American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present

(Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006) 290 pages, \$29.95 hardcover

and

TONY SMITH

A Pact with the Devil:

*Washington's Bid for World Supremacy and
the Betrayal of the American Promise*

(London: Routledge, 2007) 255 pages, \$30.00 hardcover

March 20, 2007, marked the fourth anniversary of the Iraq war. The administration of President George W. Bush sold the invasion to Congress and the American people as a preventive war—a conflict ostensibly launched to prevent Saddam Hussein from acquiring or reconstituting weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Yet, from the outset, President Bush and other members of his administration were quite clear that Operation Iraqi Freedom had grander objectives. By toppling Saddam's regime and turning Iraq into a liberal democracy, the United States could fundamentally transform state-society relations in the Arab world, eliminate the sources of jihadist terrorism, send a message to other rogue states, and consolidate America's hegemonic position in the international system. Moreover, the

Jeffrey W. Taliaferro is Associate Professor of Political Science at Tufts University.

risks of such an undertaking would be relatively low and the benefits would be quite high.

Five years later, the Bush administration's crusade to bring liberal democracy to the Middle East has degenerated into a bloody civil war between Iraqi Shia and Sunnis and a guerilla war between Sunni insurgents and foreign fighters and U.S. forces. Despite a written constitution, three national elections, the deaths of over 3,200 U.S. military personnel, the trial and execution of Saddam and his top aides, and the investment of tens of billions of dollars, Iraq is a failing state and a haven for terrorists. The U.S. Army, Marine Corps, National Guard, and Army Reserves are stretched thin after repeated deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. The Middle East is far less stable than it was in 2002. The damage to U.S. credibility among its allies and its adversaries is incalculable.

Dozens of books and articles detail the Bush administration's hubris and incompetence in the planning and execution of the Iraq war. To date, however, only a few books have tried to explain this debacle in the broader context of U.S. grand strategy. Tony Smith's *A Pact with the Devil* and Christopher Layne's *The Peace of Illusions* have undertaken that challenge. These are two well-written, well-researched, and theoretically sophisticated

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books by well-regarded political scientists. Both authors advance complex theories and make provocative arguments, and their books should generate a much needed debate about the future of U.S. grand strategy.

Smith, the Cornelia M. Jackson Professor of Political Science at Tufts University, where he has taught since

1971, is the author of five books and a leading proponent of liberal (or Wilsonian) internationalism. Layne, currently associate professor at the George H. W. Bush School of Government at Texas A&M University, is a proponent of realism and a critic of democratic peace theory. Neither Layne nor Smith sees the Bush Doctrine as *sui generis*. However, they differ on how novel a departure from past grand strategic doctrine and practice it actually is.

For Layne, the Bush administration's Iraq war, its vision of an "axis of evil," and its democracy agenda in the Middle East are part of a pathological pattern in U.S. grand strategy dating back to World War II. Successive administrations have not only sought to establish and preserve America's preponderant position in the international system, but they have also been tempted to impose what Layne calls "Open Door hegemony" on the rest of

the world. As a consequence, the United States consistently provokes fear and resentment among allies and adversaries and periodically finds itself entrapped in counterproductive conflicts around the world.

Smith, on the other hand, argues that the Bush Doctrine is a radical departure from the grand strategies of past administrations. Contrary to conventional wisdom—which attributes the Bush Doctrine exclusively to the so-called neoconservatives—he argues that many of its core elements originated with liberal internationalist scholars and activists. Furthermore, in tracing the intellectual origins of the Bush Doctrine to the “1990s” (a period he defines as roughly 1986 to 2000), Smith challenges another piece of conventional wisdom that sees the Bush administration’s aggressive foreign policy as a reaction to the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Despite their differences, Layne and Smith seem to find common cause in this sense: the Bush Doctrine and the Iraq war resulted from a veritable witch’s brew of American preponderance, international opportunity, messianic faith in democracy and free markets, and policy entrepreneurship by a small community of neoconservative *and* liberal internationalist scholars, pundits, and government officials. That brew has boiled over into the greatest foreign policy debacle since the Vietnam War.

NEOCLASSICAL REALISM AND EXTRAREGIONAL HEGEMONY

In *The Peace of Illusions*, Layne presents a theory of “extraregional hegemony” to explain American grand strategy from the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt to the present. He argues that since 1940, the United States has consistently sought to establish and then maintain a hegemonic role in the world’s three most strategic regions outside the Western Hemisphere: Europe, East Asia, and the Middle East. Physical distance from Eurasia, the exhaustion of the European great powers after fighting two world wars in the span of 20 years, and the tremendous expansion of its economic and military power were the permissive conditions for the United States to assume a more assertive world role.

Relative power, however, is not the whole story. Layne contends there has always been a strong ideological and economic component to American threat perception and grand strategy. Specifically, the dominance of an “Open Door” ideology among Washington’s foreign policy elite from the late nineteenth century onward predisposed the United States to adopt certain grand strategic alternatives and to reject others out of hand. Drawing upon the work of “revisionist” historians Walter LaFeber, Ross Kennedy, Michael Hogan, and the late William Appleman Williams, Layne argues that offi-

cials in Washington also feared the possible closure of European and East Asian markets to American goods and services and a return to the economic autarky of the 1930s. A return to autarky would not only threaten U.S. economic interests, but erode gradually the “American way of life” at home.

Preventing these twin dangers—regional instability and the closure of overseas markets—not only required the United States to maintain a preponderance of power and actively weaken potential great power rivals, but also to impose what Layne calls “Open Door hegemony” on its allies and defeated adversaries alike. By fostering open markets and the spread of liberal democratic governance (where possible), the United States sought to enhance both its long-term economic prosperity and physical security. The maintenance of open markets abroad, in turn, necessitated the long-term forward deployment of U.S. forces.

During World War II, the Roosevelt administration aimed to “reduce permanently the power of Germany and Japan” and concurrently “knock Britain from its great power perch and remove it as a possible peer competitor.” In the Cold War, successive administrations aimed to both eliminate the Soviet Union as a peer competitor by all means short of war, and perhaps more importantly, according to Layne, to maintain U.S. hegemony in Western Europe. Efforts by allies to assert their autonomy such as Britain’s and France’s initiation of the 1956 Suez Crisis, West Germany’s flirtation with developing its own nuclear arsenal in the late 1950s, or France’s withdrawal from the NATO military command in 1966 brought swift rebukes from Washington. Layne argues that even if Soviet expansion did not threaten Western Europe and the Cold War never happened, the United States would have still sought a hegemonic role in the region to maintain open markets and a liberal political order.

Finally, Layne contends that his extraregional hegemony theory explains certain continuities in grand strategy during and after the Cold War. Maintaining U.S. preponderance and preventing the emergence of multipolarity in Eurasia figures prominently in the *National Security Strategy* reports released by the George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush administrations. Despite rhetorical and tactical differences with its predecessor, the current administration’s grand strategy is hegemonic in scope, shaped by Open Door ideology, and largely blind to the long-term consequences of its actions and the legitimate concerns of other states. Regardless of whether Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, former Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and the others in the administration actually believe their rhetoric about democracy promotion and the benign motives for U.S. policy, the fact is

that hardly anyone else believes them. Layne notes, "Wilsonian liberalism self-consciously rests on the conviction that the United States is a model for the world and that its values and institutions are superior to everybody else's. . . . The inclination to universalize liberal democracy puts the United States on a collision course with others whose ideologies, institutions, and values differ from America's. . . ."

Layne presents his extraregional hegemony theory as an example of neoclassical realism, a body of foreign policy theories that have emerged over the past decade. Neoclassical realism draws upon the theoretical insights of the neorealism (or structural realism) of Kenneth Waltz, John Mearsheimer, and Robert Gilpin, without sacrificing the practical insights about foreign policy and the complexity of statecraft found in the classical realism of Hans Morgenthau, Henry Kissinger, and Arnold Wolfers.

Neoclassical realists argue that while the international system sets parameters for the types of policies states can pursue, the path between systemic variables and actual policy is indirect, complex, and problematic—at least in the short run. Over time, international outcomes generally correspond to the relative power distributions among states. Yet, systemic variables can only shape foreign policy through the medium of leaders' perceptions and calculations of the balance of power and domestic political constraints. Self-described neoclassical realists are concerned about methodological rigor. To test their theories, they construct detailed historical or policy analyses, often drawing heavily on archival sources, published documents, and interviews. Layne tests hypotheses from his extraregional hegemony theory against those derived from two variants of neorealism—the offensive realism of Mearsheimer, Eric Labs, and Fareed Zakaria, and the defensive realism of Stephen Walt, Stephen Van Evera, and Robert Jervis.

Layne has amassed enormous amounts of primary and secondary data to construct rich historical narratives of the major junctures in U.S. grand strategy, at least with respect to Europe, over the past 60 years. The historical cases in *Peace of Illusions* appear designed to support Layne's argument that a grand strategy of "offshore balancing" would better serve the U.S. national interest. Since the only real strategic interest at stake in Europe and East Asia is the possible emergence of a rival hegemon (which is unlikely in the near future), the United States can afford to maintain a substantial military force "over the horizon" in the Western Hemisphere and on the high seas, ready to intervene should a rival hegemon emerge in either region.

There are three weaknesses in Layne's book. First, many of his historical arguments are simply incorrect, or at the very least overstated. For example, he is certainly correct that during and after World War II, the United

States deliberately pursued policies contrary to British interests, thus casting doubt on the myth of the Anglo-American special relationship. However, he takes this argument too far. The defeat of Germany and Japan, not the dismantlement of the British Empire and the establishment of a U.S. hegemonic position in postwar Europe, were the foremost concerns of Roosevelt and Truman. Layne ignores the rapid demobilization of the U.S. armed forces following Japan's unconditional surrender in August 1945. Unlike fellow neoclassical realists Aaron Friedberg and Thomas Christensen, he does not address the difficulties that the Truman administration subsequently

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encountered in building congressional and public support for emergency aid to Greece and Turkey in 1947, the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949, and increased defense spending.

As others have noted, Layne's account of the early years of the Cold War downplays the extent to which the Truman and Eisenhower administrations genuinely feared the long-term growth of Soviet power and were uncertain about the future intentions of Josef Stalin and his successors. Contrary to Layne's assertion, there is no evidence

to suggest the Truman administration could have reached an agreement with Stalin for a unified Germany that would have restored the European balance of power and allowed the United States to withdraw across the Atlantic. Drawing heavily on archival sources, historian Marc Trachtenberg makes a compelling case that Secretary of State James F. Byrnes and others in the State Department actively sought the permanent division of Germany as early as late 1945, because they feared a neutral united German state might fall into the Soviet sphere of influence and decisively shift the balance of power against the United States. Layne dismisses Trachtenberg's argument and, at times, suggests that the maintenance of an Open Door in Western Europe, not the containment of the Soviet Union, was the primary strategic goal of U.S. policy.

One can make a reasonable case that international opportunity led some administrations to pursue more ambitious foreign and military strategies, but there are also numerous instances where presidents and their advisers expanded U.S. strategic commitments in response to perceived vulnerability, or because they feared a loss of credibility and prestige. Such

fears—not a desire to establish a hegemonic position in East and Southeast Asia—were what drove the Truman administration to intervene in the Korean War in 1950 and the Kennedy and the Johnson administrations to escalate U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War in the early- and mid-1960s. One could make a similar argument about the first Bush administration's response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the ensuing 1991 Persian Gulf War. Layne states that while his extraregional hegemony theory purports to explain the global scope of America's hegemonic ambitions, considerations of space and time prevent a detailed examination of U.S. grand strategy in East Asia and the Persian Gulf. This is understandable, but unfortunate, since such an examination of U.S. strategy in these regions may have established the parameters of his theory.

Second, many of Layne's arguments about the feasibility of an offshore balancing strategy today seem disconnected from political reality. He devotes only five pages in a 290-page book to a discussion of how the United States ought to go about implementing his preferred strategy. He never grapples with the tremendous sunk costs of U.S. forward deployment in Europe and East Asia, nor does he consider the lack of support for such a radically different grand strategy among officials in Washington or the American people. It is also difficult to imagine Washington's allies in the Persian Gulf, East Asia, and even Western Europe openly advocating the withdrawal of all U.S. forces in the near future, if for no other reason than that the American military presence dampens the security dilemma in those three regions.

Third, Layne's extraregional hegemony theory does not appear to explain much of the variation between and across different administrations' grand strategies during the Cold War and afterward. In fairness, his book seeks to explain broad patterns in U.S. grand strategy over the course of six decades and to make recommendations for the future. However, he does not address the fact that many aspects of the Bush Doctrine—its elevation of preventive war ("preemption") to the status of declared doctrine; its division of the world into "good" liberal democracies and "evil" outlaw regimes; its ill-concealed contempt for international institutions and long-standing allies; and its bold assertion that democratization is the only long-term solution to the threats of jihadist terrorism, WMD proliferation, and regional instability—are radical departures in U.S. grand strategy.

THE LIBERAL HAWKS AND THE BUSH DOCTRINE

Layne is a neoclassical realist who acknowledges the pervasive (and often malign) influence of liberal internationalism on U.S. grand strategy.

Tony Smith, on the other hand, is a liberal internationalist who has reluctantly come to the same conclusion. But, whereas Layne sees the Bush Doctrine as the latest symptom in a long-term pathology in U.S. grand strategy going back to World War II, Smith sees that doctrine and the ensuing Iraq war as an entirely new ailment that could have only arisen after the United States' emergence as the lone superpower in the early 1990s.

Smith opens *A Pact with the Devil* with a heartfelt confession: "When I arrive at the Pearly Gates, the question from Saint Peter I most fear will be how, given the evidence from the war in Iraq, I myself could have been so naïve as to put so much intellectual stock into supporting Liberal Democratic Internationalism. . . ." In the following chapters, he presents both an intellectual history of the Bush Doctrine and a devastating indictment of much of the cutting-edge scholarship in international law and the international relations and comparative politics subfields of political science in the 1990s. He calls the Bush Doctrine a "pact with the devil" in two respects. First, the United States succumbed to the temptation to

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exploit its overwhelming military superiority and the ideological primacy of liberal democracy and market capitalism to dominate the international system for generations to come. Second, neoliberal scholars made an implicit pact with the neoconservatives in the Republican Party in order to influence the direction of U.S. foreign policy.

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 Contrary to the conventional wisdom, Smith argues that the neoconservatives in the Republican Party were not the sole authors of the Bush Doctrine and the Iraq war. Instead, prominent liberal scholars such as Larry Diamond, Michael Doyle, Bruce Russett, John Oneal, Ann-Marie Slaughter, and Andrew Moravcsik are just as culpable as neoconservatives such as Paul Wolfowitz, William Kristol, Robert Kagan, Frank Gaffney, Charles Krauthammer, James Woolsey, Douglas Feith, and Richard Perle. According to Smith, the principal contribution of the neoconservatives to the Bush Doctrine lay in their emphasis on the preservation of American preponderance and preventing the emergence of a peer great power competitor, or what he calls "the pillar of power." However, aside from luminaries like Kristol, Kagan, and Francis Fukuyama, and polemicists like Max Boot and Joshua Muravchik, most neoconservatives failed to mount a coherent case for democracy promotion abroad as a critical element of grand strategy. This pro-

vided an opening for neoliberals to provide the necessary second component of the Bush Doctrine, what Smith calls “the pillar of purpose.”

In the wake of the Cold War and with the triumph of democracy and capitalism in Eastern and Central Europe, South Africa, and elsewhere, self-described liberal scholars and activists began to adopt a more activist posture in world affairs toward democracy promotion and the protection of human rights. According to Smith, “these neoliberals were the functional equivalent for the Democratic Party of the neoconservatives within the Republican Party, a pro-war faction able to articulate in seemingly persuasive fashion why America’s moment of unrivaled power meant embracing a mission that would echo through the ages for its vision and its courage.”

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universal appeal, and that the liberal democracies had an obligation to intervene in the internal affairs of so-called rogue states. In the policy arena, the neoliberal arguments advanced in the pages of *The New Republic* and by the Progressive Policy Institute bore similarities to neoconservative arguments advanced in the pages of *The Weekly Standard* and by the Project for the New American Century and the American Enterprise Institute. Thus, long before the 9/11 attacks or the 2000 presidential campaign there was a budding consensus among scholars, pundits, and policymakers on the political left and the political right for a more aggressive U.S. effort to spread democracy and free markets.

Smith identifies three strands of neoliberal scholarship and ideology in the 1990s that directly influenced the Bush Doctrine: (1) the democratic peace literature and related efforts to elevate liberal theories of international relations to the status of empirical laws; (2) philosophical and international legal scholarship on sovereignty; and (3) comparative political analysis on democratic and economic transitions. Doyle revived interest in the Kantian idea of a “republican peace,” while quantitative scholars like Russett and Oneal offered an array of statistical studies to show that no pair of liberal democracies has gone to war with each other since 1815. By implication, an international system wherein the majority of states were liberal democracies would likely be more peaceful. Meanwhile, other international relations

theorists, especially Moravcsik, sought to recast liberalism as a “non-utopian and non-ideological” social scientific research program, while simultaneously discrediting realism. Liberal international legal scholars and philosophers, like Slaughter and the late John Rawls, began to redefine the rules of sovereignty and the just war tradition so as to justify the use of force against nondemocratic states engaged in gross human rights violations or acquiring WMD. Comparative politics scholars, such as Diamond, overturned decades of scholarship about the necessary preconditions for democratic transitions; instead, they argued that democratic institutions and values were easily exportable. Finally, human rights activists, such as Samantha Power and Michael Ignatieff, began to argue that the United States and other liberal democracies had a moral obligation to intervene in the affairs of other states (using military force if necessary) to stop genocide and other gross human rights abuses.

Smith challenges the view that the Bush Doctrine is simply an updated version of Wilsonian internationalism. To make the case that the Doctrine and the role that neoliberal thought played in its formulation represented a radical departure from the past he traces the evolution of liberal internationalism from the War of Independence to the present. He posits five stages in the evolution of liberal ideology: *pre-classical* (from 1782 to the Spanish-American War), *classic* (the presidency of Woodrow Wilson), *hegemonic* (from the defeat of Nazi Germany until the collapse of the Soviet Union), *imperialist* (academic theory through the articulation of the Bush Doctrine in 2002), and *fundamentalist* (from 2002 to the present). The pre-classical, classic, and even the hegemonic incarnations of liberal internationalism all shared common assumptions about America’s unique role as the first constitutional republic since antiquity, the superiority of liberal democracy to other forms of government, and the shared interests and pacific relations among liberal democracies. However, these incarnations were also cognizant of the limits of U.S. military and economic power. The liberal imperialist phase differs from its predecessors in both the scope of its ambitions and assumptions about the relative ease of democratic transitions. Finally, liberal fundamentalism completely abandons the caution about the ease of democratic transitions and the efficacy of U.S. military power found in previous incarnations. It is global in scope and unlimited in its ambition.

Smith delivers a devastating indictment of the Bush Doctrine and the intellectual contribution of liberal scholars to it. The book provides both an intellectual history of the Bush Doctrine and the follies of the academy in the decade after the Cold War. It has already generated controversy because

the author, a self-described liberal international relations scholar, has exposed both the hubris of his intellectual brethren and the inherent danger of their ideas. Cutting-edge research on democratic transitions in comparative politics, the democratic peace thesis and “scientific” liberal research programs in international relations, and the redefinition of sovereignty and the just war tradition in law and philosophy had real world consequences. However, the strong case that Smith builds against the so-called liberal hawks also points to the book’s one problem.

The principal architects of the Bush Doctrine and the Iraq adventure were the neoconservatives, not the neoliberals. It is certainly the case that many liberal scholars, who otherwise did not support the George W. Bush administration, provided much of the intellectual underpinning of the Bush Doctrine. They openly embraced the March 2003 Iraq invasion (largely for humanitarian reasons) and subsequent efforts to establish democracy in that country and throughout the Middle East. However, it was the neoconservatives who occupied key positions in the administration (especially in the Defense Department and on Vice President Cheney’s staff), the media, and the think tank community before March 2003. They had plotted the unabashed assertion of U.S. preponderance and the use of force to remake the Middle East for a decade before the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In short, the neoconservatives had both the organizational ability and the access to power that neoliberals lacked, especially after the 2001 presidential election.

In short, the neoconservatives had both the organizational ability and the access to power that neoliberals lacked, especially after the 2001 presidential election.

Despite their differences, Layne’s *The Peace of Illusions* and Smith’s *A Pact with the Devil* highlight the interplay of systemic constraints and liberal ideology in shaping the types of policies the United States pursues abroad. Both books offer a sobering warning for the future of U.S. grand strategy regardless of whether the Democrats or the Republicans win the 2008 election: overwhelming preponderance, arrogance, and blind faith in the ability of liberal democracy and free markets to alleviate international threats can have disastrous consequences for the United States and for the rest of the world. Unfortunately, the chances that any of the presidential candidates will heed that warning are low. ■

The Internet and the Democratization of Power Myth or Reality?

ANDREW BENNETT

REVIEW OF JACK GOLDSMITH AND TIM WU

Who Controls the Internet? Illusions of a Borderless World

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Think about these now-familiar phrases: the information superhighway, a technology of freedom, a free speech domain, the World Wide Web; it seems that our commonplace nomenclatures for describing the Internet come packed with the language of democratization, liberty, and empowerment. In the imagination of the contemporary cyber-citizen, freedom via the Internet is nothing short of unfiltered, unrestricted, and ungovernable. These are the revolutionary roots of cyberspace, that placeless place of refuge for geeks, hackers, and the previously excluded that serves to level the playing field and flatten the world.

Meanwhile, an Internet search for words like “freedom,” “democracy,” and even “Falun Gong” from within China’s borders yields results that are far from unfiltered. In the birthplace of the information superhighway, American teenagers are subject to multimillion dollar lawsuits by record companies accusing them of theft and exploitation. In France, the free speech domain of the World Wide Web turns out to be neither completely free nor worldwide, as the French government, with the assistance of Yahoo!, has proven adept at preventing the sale of Nazi paraphernalia within its borders. Similarly, the *Wall Street Journal* discovered the hard

Andrew Bennett is a master’s degree candidate at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

way that the Internet can make one subject to the jurisdiction of foreign governments (the newspaper was sued under Australian libel law in a defamation case concerning what the *Journal's* online edition published about an Australian citizen).

In their book, *Who Controls the Internet? Illusions of a Borderless World*, Jack Goldsmith and Tim Wu set out to prove that the story of ungoverned

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cyberspace, as told by early Internet visionaries and cyber-enthusiasts, is a fairytale. The real story is one of control, and the authors answer their title's question with two words: *the state*. Given the widely held misconception of the Internet as borderless and ungovernable, this contrarian answer is difficult to express in just 184 pages. However, Goldsmith and Wu, professors at Harvard and Columbia, respectively,

prove up to the task in this concise and well-argued book that could also serve as required reading for Internet History 101.

Goldsmith and Wu begin their history with the band of outcasts who developed the technologies that would eventually constitute the World Wide Web. These early innovators are cast as the Frankensteins of an electronic frontier, creating a technology and infrastructure that they believed would obliterate political geography. The authors dedicate the first section of their book to exploring the ways in which these cyber-enthusiasts conceived of the Internet. Among their targets are engineers and computer scientists like Jon Postel and Vint Cerf, entrepreneurs like Pierre Omidyar (eBay) and Nicklas Zennstrom (Kazaa), and pundits like John Perry Barlow (*Wired* magazine), Frances Cairncross (*Death of Distance*), and Thomas Friedman (*The World Is Flat*).

Goldsmith and Wu clearly do not share the visions of these Internet pioneers. For example, they highlight the erroneous prediction of a telegraph enthusiast in the 1890s, who declared that, "[t]hanks to technological advance, there are no longer any foreigners, and we can look forward to the gradual adoption of a common language." State sovereignty and group identity, though, are hardly things of the past, and the authors predict that the Internet may be no more successful than the telegraph in obliterating international transactions costs and the national, ethnic, religious, and linguistic barriers that divide the human race. Goldsmith and Wu are eager to debunk the fantasies of an ungoverned Internet, and the second section

of their book replaces these fantasies with the reality of borders, filters, foreigners, and top-down authority.

The authors expose a bounded Internet through illustrative examples of state control of the very facets of the World Wide Web that cyber-enthusiasts believed could not be touched by government: speech, search, commerce, and even the very technological architecture they pioneered. We see that intermediaries on the Internet—many of them corporations and organizations like Yahoo!, Google, and eBay, whose brands alone evoke the freedoms associated with the Internet—can serve a government's interest in control. The state, as it turns out, was forcing the hands of these corporations to the point of near complicity in human rights abuses in China at the same time that Bill Clinton was comparing control over the Internet to "nailing Jell-O to the wall" and Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens was praising the Web as a "vast democratic fora . . . not subject to the type of government supervision and regulation that has attended the broadcast industry."

The depths to which these misconceptions regarding the difficulties of Internet control have penetrated the global imagination make Goldsmith and Wu's work vital and enlightening. Their history is also accessible, even when they dive into the technical side of the administration of the Internet's root-server system. Through a lucid description, the authors outline what is essentially the Internet's automated phonebook that assigns addresses to websites and computers and delivers information across the superhighway to your screen. In an equally crisp argument, Goldsmith and Wu reveal that human control over this system is necessary to Internet functionality and that such control is ultimately in the hands of the U.S. government.

Unfortunately, Goldsmith and Wu do not achieve the same degree of clarity when they attempt to describe how governments actually rule the Net. Here, their comparisons of "realspace" versus cyberspace crime and their diagrams of control through intermediaries are quite convoluted, and not nearly as clear as similar concepts illuminated in the work of Lawrence Lessig, who initially articulated the concepts of computer code governing the Internet just as laws govern realspace. (*Who Controls The Internet?* is rightfully dedicated to Lessig, and a reader would be well-served by reading his *Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace* for a better understanding of these concepts.) Goldsmith and Wu's book loses little value despite the weakness of this section; its real strength derives from the authors' fresh history of the Internet and their debunking of the many myths of the Internet's ungovernability.

However, after reading this highly digestible history the reader is left

to wonder if Goldsmith and Wu's story is complete. It seems as if after writing *Who Controls the Internet?* the authors rose from their keyboards, dusted themselves off, and said: "Case closed, the state controls the Internet." But it is important to place this bold assertion within a broader perspective. Goldsmith and Wu themselves concede that the Internet, like previous advances in communications technologies, "produced radical changes in human organization and interaction, and required governments to develop new strategies for regulating human affairs." This book is about successful government strategies in this context, but we are left to wonder if the Internet does not also present new challenges to government regulation across a broad spectrum of issues. The authors do little to explore the entire landscape of Internet regulation and the many non-state actors and organizations that can contribute to it.

As a result, many readers will be left unsatisfied with the book's scant seven-page conclusion that feels like a rushed attempt to offer a normative argument on the future of Internet governance. Here, the authors claim that Internet rules and governance cannot "function apart from an underlying system of territorial government and physical coercion." Such an argument is not so troubling after digesting Goldsmith and Wu's state-centric story, but a deeper analysis of the components of Internet governance might reveal that there are many more variables at play than the authors take into account.

The case of China makes for an excellent example of such an omission. The authors dedicate an entire chapter to China and its recent history of Internet speech crackdowns, with foreign companies bowing to Communist Party demands by manipulating search results, which, in turn, have led to actual arrests and human rights abuses via cyberspace policing. China, like other states, has exploited Internet technologies to serve its preferences (in this case for minimal dissent), but that same technology also offers citizens the ability to reroute defiant speech around state censors, for NGOs to organize massive and effective campaigns against human rights abuses, and for corporations to exercise their muscle to negotiate compromises with the Chinese government on free-speech issues in exchange for services. Companies like Google, Yahoo!, and Microsoft, often cited as examples of corporations bowing to state demands, are at the same time developing a corporate compact and statement of principles for operating in nations that threaten human rights, specifically rights to free speech via the Internet.

Thus, although Goldsmith and Wu have set forth an important argument regarding the very real power that national governments can retain

over Internet technology, their readers may also miss out on current trends in the field that threaten this state-centric view. If information is power in cyberspace and realspace, to what degree is the power of non-state actors enhanced by the Internet's vast dissemination of such information? How is the state challenged by this distribution, or democratization, of the power to organize, the power to strategize, and the power delivered through access to markets and the ability to broadcast to a worldwide audience?

These are questions that Goldsmith and Wu avoid in their book, and they fail to make a convincing case for the omission to readers seeking answers to their ultimate question: *Who Controls The Internet?* Nevertheless, this remains an important work because of the depths to which the fantasy of a completely ungoverned Internet has penetrated the imagination of the public and official policymakers in Washington. In this respect, Goldsmith and Wu provide a better understanding of the possibilities for state governance of cyberspace, and their book will prove informative for those who have been lulled to sleep by the fairytale of unfettered citizen control. But again, we must remember that the story articulated by Goldsmith and Wu did not begin, and likely will not end, with the state. ■

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