

are uncertain; few are confident either way.<sup>25</sup> In fact, Glaser and Kydd observe that “China’s intentions are . . . less clear than those of many other states,” and they reference the “uncertainty the international community faces about China’s goals and intentions.” In a more extended analysis, Glaser concludes, “Overall, then, one is left with grounds for concern about China’s motives, but also much uncertainty.”<sup>26</sup> Russian intentions have also been hotly debated, and contrary to my critics’ claims, the West is no more certain about Moscow’s medium- to long-term strategic plans today than it was before the Ukraine crisis. For some, Russia’s annexation of Crimea is a reflection of aggressive intentions; for others, it is a reaction to the threat posed by NATO enlargement and EU expansion.<sup>27</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

The debate between my critics and me is of more than theoretical or historical interest. It has important implications for how scholars and practitioners think about the future of international politics. In particular, my argument implies that the United States and China are destined to engage in an intense security competition if the latter continues its impressive rise. Unable to reach confident conclusions about the other side’s current and future intentions but acutely aware of its formidable capabilities, Washington and Beijing will have no choice but to strengthen their military and diplomatic positions in Asia, triggering a dangerous action-reaction spiral with the potential for arms racing, crises, and possibly even war.<sup>28</sup> In contrast, my critics argue that it is possible for the United States and China—even in the absence of near certainty about each other’s intentions—to avoid such a tragic outcome. Regrettably, I think they are wrong.

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25. James B. Steinberg and Michael O’Hanlon, “Keep Hope Alive: How to Prevent U.S.-Chinese Relations from Blowing Up,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 93, No. 4 (July/August 2014), pp. 107–108. Steinberg and O’Hanlon point out that China is also uncertain about U.S. intentions.

26. Charles L. Glaser, “A U.S.-China Grand Bargain? The Hard Choice between Military Competition and Accommodation,” *International Security*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Spring 2015), p. 67.

27. See, for example, John J. Mearsheimer, “Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West’s Fault: The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 93, No. 5 (September/October 2014), pp. 1–12; Jacob Heilbrunn, “The Interview: Henry Kissinger,” *National Interest*, August 19, 2015, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-interview-henry-kissinger-13615>; Alexander J. Motyl, “The Sources of Russian Conduct: The New Case for Containment,” *Foreign Affairs*, November 16, 2014, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/2014-11-16/sources-russian-conduct>; and Michael McFaul, Stephen Sestanovich, and John J. Mearsheimer, “Faulty Powers: Who Started the Ukraine Crisis?” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 93, No. 6 (November/December 2014), pp. 167–178.

28. I am not sure why Glaser and Kydd interpret this theoretically informed prediction as a policy prescription.

#### ERRATUM

In the first sentence of the note below map 1 on page 43 of Fiona S. Cunningham and Taylor Fravel’s article, “Assuring Assured Retaliation: China’s Nuclear Posture and U.S.-China Strategic Stability” (Vol. 40, No. 2), the word “triggers” should be “brigades.” The sentence should read: “No launch brigades are attached to Base 22, which is the Second Artillery’s central warhead storage base.”