

# Summaries

9–47

Pier Competitor: China's Power Position in Global Ports

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China is a leader in the global transportation industry, with an especially significant position in ocean ports. A mapping of every ocean port outside of China reveals that Chinese firms own or operate terminal assets in ninety-six ports in fifty-three countries. An original dataset of Chinese firms' overseas port holdings documents the geographic distribution, ownership, and operational characteristics of these ports. What are the international security implications of China's global port expansion? An investigation of Chinese firms' ties to the Party-state reveals multiple mechanisms by which the Chinese leadership may direct the use of commercial port assets for strategic purposes. International port terminals that Chinese firms own and operate already provide dual-use capabilities to the People's Liberation Army during peacetime, establishing logistics and intelligence networks that materially enable China to project power into critical regions worldwide. But this form of networked state power is limited in wartime because it depends on commercial facilities in non-allied states. By providing evidence that overseas bases are not the sole index of global power projection capabilities, findings advance research on the identification and measurement of sources of national power. China's leveraging of PRC firms' transnational commercial port network constitutes an underappreciated but consequential form of state power projection.

48–90

Soldiers' Dilemma: Foreign Military Training and  
Liberal Norm Conflict

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The United States regularly seeks to promote the liberal norms of respect for human rights and deference to civilian authority in the militaries that it trains. Yet norm-abiding behavior often does not follow from liberal foreign military training. Existing explanations ascribe norm violations either to insufficient socialization or to interest misalignment between providers and recipients. One reason violations occur is because liberal training imparts conflicting norms. How do militaries respond when they confront the dilemma of conflict between the liberal norms of respect for human rights and civilian control of

the military? The U.S. policy expectation is that trained militaries will prioritize human rights over obedience to civilian authorities. But when liberal norms clash, soldiers fall back on a third norm of cohesion, which refers to the bonds that enable military forces to operate in a unified, group- and mission-oriented way. Cohesion functions as both a military norm (particularly at the individual level) and an interest (particularly at the institutional level). If a military prioritizes cohesion, then it will choose the path that best serves its organization, which may entail violating human rights, civilian control, or both. An exploration of the effects of norm conflict on military attitudes among the Armed Forces of Liberia uses an experiment embedded in a survey to probe the theory. Results provide preliminary evidence that norm conflict weakens support for human rights and democracy. Results are strongest among soldiers with more U.S. training.

91–129

### Decline and Disintegration: National Status Loss and Domestic Conflict in Post-Disaster Spain

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Decline has long been a central concern of international relations scholarship, but analysts have only recently begun to investigate whether a change in international status influences a state's domestic politics. A new theoretical framework for understanding the domestic political consequences of relative national decline posits that eroding national status activates two sets of social psychological dynamics that contribute to domestic conflict inside declining states. First, eroding state status prompts some groups to strengthen their commitment to the state's status and dominant national identity, at the same time as it prompts other groups to disidentify from the state. Second, eroding status produces incentives for substate actors to derogate and scapegoat one another. These dynamics are particularly likely to contribute to center-periphery conflict in multinational states after instances of acute status loss. The plausibility of the argument is demonstrated by showing how the erosion of Spain's status (especially because of military failure in the 1898 Spanish-American War and the subsequent loss of its last colonies in the Americas) intensified domestic conflict in Spain during the first decades of the twentieth century. Findings indicate that decline may actually exacerbate domestic conflict, making it more difficult for states to adopt appropriate reforms.

130–171

### Why Drones Have Not Revolutionized War: The Enduring Hider-Finder Competition in Air Warfare

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According to the accepted wisdom in security studies, unmanned aerial vehicles, also known as drones, have revolutionizing effects on war and world politics. Drones allegedly tilt the military balance in favor of the offense, reduce existing asymmetries in military power between major and minor actors, and eliminate close combat from modern battlefields. A new theory about the hider-finder competition between air penetration and air defense shows that drones are vulnerable to air defenses and electronic warfare systems, and that they require support from other force structure assets to be effective. This competition imposes high costs on those who fail to master the set of tactics, techniques, procedures, technologies, and capabilities necessary to limit exposure to enemy fire and to detect enemy targets. Three conflicts that featured extensive employment of drones—the Western Libya military campaign of the second Libyan civil war (2019–2020), the Syrian civil war (2011–2021), and the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh (2020)—probe the mechanisms of the theory. Drones do not by themselves produce the revolutionary effects that many have attributed to them.

172–215

### The Nuclear Balance Is What States Make of It

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Does nuclear superiority offer states political or military benefits? And do those benefits accrue beyond acquiring a secure second-strike capability? International relations theory has long held that nuclear superiority does not confer significant advantages, a conclusion supported by much of the qualitative literature on bargaining and crisis interactions between nuclear-armed states. New work by scholars using statistical methods to analyze data on nuclear crises, interstate disputes, and compelling threats has sought to answer these questions, producing conflicting results. Despite the contributions of these recent works, this line of research has assumed that warhead counts are an appropriate measure of nuclear capabilities and that states possess accurate information about the material balance. Instead, states use multiple quantitative and qualitative characteristics to evaluate the nuclear balance, and they

often have inaccurate or incomplete information about the size, composition, and configuration of other states' nuclear forces. Using new data, replications of two prominent recent works show that results are sensitive to how the nuclear balance is operationalized. Drawing on archival and interview data from the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, findings show how states and leaders often understand and respond to the nuclear balance in inconsistent, asymmetric, and subjective ways.

#### NOTE TO CONTRIBUTORS

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