China and its seas: possible zone of conflict

Gar Pardy

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China is lapped by two seas. In the years since the death of Mao in 1976 these Seas, the East and the South China, have emerged as crucial elements in the projection of Chinese global geopolitical and economic power. There have been consequential responses from the United States.

China, historically, was not a significant maritime power concentrating preoccupations and power instead in the consolidation of its continental empire and relations with neighbours. Geopolitical activities involving surrounding waters were rare.

Today that has changed. The two Seas are now seen in Beijing as a Chinese military moat within its political and economic control. In turn, it has initiated policies and activities to control the activities of all other countries on, over and under these Seas.

The memory of the 19th Century when the navies of Europe and Japan showed up on China's shores is still sharp. These invading forces demanded not only access for trade but shore-based enclaves from which they could demand and obtain concessions from weakening emperors. The period remains one of national shame and fuels much of the current efforts by China to dominate its surrounding seas.

China for the past two decades has developed interrelated navigation, transportation, military, tourism and other facilities on the Paracel and Spratly Islands, some involving underwater reefs and seamounts. These activities provide a graphic manifestation of this determination.

Geographically, these activities, mainly in the South China Sea, stretch southeasterly from the island of Hainan in southwest China through the Paracel and Spratly archipelagos to islands within the economic zones of the Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam. These islands were largely unpopulated but today, a few, have significant populations.

The United States has responded with concern and alarm. Its post war military domination of the region, apart from its disastrous adventures in the Koreas and Vietnam, has been absolute and there remains long standing alliances and commitments buttressing its continued involvement. But the historical commitments come from a time when the United States Navy rode all waves and there was no significant countering power exercised by China.

Today these factors no longer prevail. The United States Navy in terms of ships is second to China and the economic power and interests of China are greater than those of the United States for all the countries of the region. A recent article in Foreign Policy

by a retired American Naval Captain concluded “over the past several decades, U.S. ship numbers have seen a dramatic overall decline.”

Regional countries with marine disputes with China remain ambiguous reflecting the importance of their broader relationship with Beijing. The dispute with Japan, in the East China Sea, is perhaps the least contentious as it centres on the establishment of an understanding on overlapping Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ).

For Indonesia, Brunei, Malaysia, and Singapore the disputes with China, will be settled through negotiations. They are not important enough to make them a significant issue in their relationship with China.

As for Vietnam, which shares islands of the Parcels with China there is a standoff but occasional minor conflicts involving fishing and resource exploration rights occur. But as with other regional countries, Vietnam is reluctant to see the issue become a dominant one in its relationship with China.

The erosion of American global military power, especially naval, has been underway for nearly fifty year and it was accentuated by the concept of the “peace dividend” following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The concept resulted in decisions emphasizing that the quality of American military strength was of more importance than quantity was paramount. This was effectively and convincingly challenged by the “forever” wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The domestic turmoil in the United States on the foundational issues of racism and social needs shows few signs of attenuating and will not give way for the rebuilding of American global military power.

Central to China’s ambitions offshore is Taiwan. Today it is a politically and economically progressive island of 24 million people, most of whom see little interest in becoming another Hong Kong. But Beijing’s ambition for its return is just as strong today as it was in the 1950s.

The recent increase in transits by foreign navies, including Canadian, American and several European countries, through the 110-mile-wide Taiwan Straight has prompted retaliatory incursions by Chinese aircraft across an American established median line and, largely unchallenged, into Taiwan’s self declared identification zone. These activities will not go beyond posturing as the risks for Beijing remain high. Should there be a lessening of American-Chinese tensions then there could be a return to the mutually beneficial economic cooperation between Taiwan and the mainland of a few years ago. But the posturing by the United States is illustrative of its need for military support from allies if it is able to maintain its historical dominance in the region. Its recent agreement with the UK and Australia for nuclear-powered submarines for Canberra and more frequent meetings of the four-member Quad Group are part of that effort.

But it is not much. Occasional visits by British or Indian ships or the appearance of new Australian submarines in a decade or two, will not create grey hair in Beijing. Equally, American efforts to see NATO add Asia-Pacific to its sphere of activity is not one that

finds general acceptable to many European members beset with their own serious issues some involving Russia. Canada has yet to voice its views and awaits further developments or for direction.

In the midst of this posturing, the Chinese and Russian navies held joint naval exercises two weeks ago in the Sea of Japan which borders the East China Sea. These exercises are part of increasing military cooperation between the two countries and today represent a significant factor in Chinese military capabilities throughout the region.

Does the Conference of Disarmament Have a Future?

Paul Meyer

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" looks bleak.

The grand assembly room in the Art Deco Palais de Nations, the UN's Geneva base, seem appropriate for a body designated as the UN's "single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum" for arms control and disarmament agreements. Its walls decorated with the massive gold and black murals of the Catalan artist José Maria Sert depicting human progress and the "swords into ploughshares" theme, this is the elegant venue in which the 65 nation Conference on Disarmament (CD) has operated since its creation by the UN's First Special Session on Disarmament (UNSSOD I) in 1978.

For some years, the CD had a record of productivity commensurate with its splendid setting. Its predecessor body (the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament) had produced the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), arguably the first humanitarian disarmament accord with its prohibitions on blinding lasers and incendiary devices, followed suit in 1980. The end of the Cold War laid the ground for even more ambitious undertakings – the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) with its comprehensive prohibition on chemical weapons was negotiated in 1993 and the Comprehensive (Nuclear) Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), stipulating the end of nuclear testing in all places for all times, was concluded in 1996.

The CTBT, however, represented the high-water mark of the CD's productivity and the one that required a diplomatic ruse to bring it before the UN General Assembly for adoption as India had denied consensus agreement on the final text. That text, with its unprecedented requirement for entry into force of ratification by 44 named states, to some a "poisoned pill" introduced in the end game of the negotiation, has prevented the CTBT from fully coming into effect for its states parties (eight of these named "Annex II" states, including China and the United States, have failed to sign and/or ratify the treaty). Thus, a quarter of a century after it was concluded, the CTBT still is not legally

in force and major provisions, such as its Executive Council governance regime and on-site inspection protocols, are not functioning.

The fact that the CD has not produced any agreement for twenty-five years is a shocking state of affairs, perhaps only surpassed by the shameful acceptance of this institutional failure by its member states. This commentary will examine the reasons for the CD's protracted dysfunction, explore some of the past attempts to get it back on track, and conclude with reflections on the implications of the CD's impasse for the credibility of the existing multilateral arms control and disarmament machinery and what might be done to reform it.

The Roots of the Problem

The roots of the CD's dysfunctionality appear to reside chiefly in its extreme application of the consensus decision-making principle alongside an increase in the selfish pursuit of national aims at the expense of the cooperation necessary to yield progress in a multilateral context. Both these factors have been exacerbated by a lack of transparency that has enabled "spoilers" to largely avoid accountability. Finally, an awkward frequent rotation of the Presidents of the conference coupled to a requirement for annual reconfirmation of existing mandates has hobbled efforts to provide coherence and continuity to the CD's proceedings.

The CD's rules of procedures enshrine a stringent application of the consensus principle whereby all decisions, be they procedural or substantive, require unanimity to be adopted. This arrangement provides each and every CD member state with a *de facto* veto over the body's decisions. As a direct result of this requirement for unanimity, the CD has not been able to agree on a Programme of Work to guide its official work for the half-year period (January to September) that it is in session. It is the responsibility of the state that holds the Presidency at its initial annual session each January to seek consensus agreement on the CD's Agenda and its Programme of Work. Whereas acceptance of the agenda (reflecting the so-called decalogue of objectives for multilateral arms control and disarmament set by UNSSOD I in 1978) has been routine, the outline of what official work should be undertaken on its items that are embodied in the Programme of Work has eluded agreement (with a sole exception to be discussed later) since 1996. As a result, whilst the CD still holds a weekly plenary session during which members can make statements on a variety of issues related to the forum's agenda, it is unable to establish the subsidiary bodies required to begin sustained work on any of the agreed agenda items.

Over the years, the CD has refined its agenda to seven items: i) nuclear disarmament, ii) a Fiissile Material (Cut-off) Treaty (under the rubric of the prevention of nuclear war), iii) negative security assurances (i.e. the provision by nuclear-armed states of guarantees that they will never threaten or use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states), iv) the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), v) new types of WMD, radiological weapons, vi) comprehensive program of disarmament and vii) transparency on armaments. The first four of these items have long been seen as the

“core issues” of the CD and the focus of numerous efforts to develop a Programme of Work acceptable to all.

An underlying factor in the inability of the CD members to agree on a Programme of Work is the differing priority attributed to each of the four core issues by various states. Whilst it is not surprising that priorities vary amongst the CD member states, a certain rigidity in the positions of states has resulted in negative “linkage” being applied that has effectively precluded progress. Western states, for example, have long considered a Fissile Material (Cut-off) Treaty the issue that is the “ripest” for initiation of negotiations. Indeed, the negotiation of this treaty has been an agreed priority of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) states parties since the 1995 Review and Extension Conference placed it in the second position only after the CTBT in the “Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament” decision that formed a key part of the package that enabled the indefinite extension of the treaty to be accepted.[1] The “immediate” commencement of negotiations for such a treaty has been reiterated at subsequent NPT Review Conference outcomes to an embarrassing extent as the specified negotiation has never even been initiated, let alone concluded. Despite the existence of an agreed negotiating mandate for the treaty, opposition to it has been manifested by various states at different times, most consistently by Pakistan that bluntly states that it does not view such a treaty as being in its national security interest.

The CD members are organized in groupings reflecting earlier Cold War era divisions, which, however, have been maintained all the same in line with the forum’s general conservatism. The Western group, the Eastern group and the G-21/NAM states are the three main groupings with China wanting to be considered a group on its own. Whereas the Western group has espoused the FMCT as its priority for negotiation, the Eastern group has championed PAROS and the G-21 tends to ascribe priority status to nuclear disarmament and negative security assurances. No group is prepared to see its favourite issue treated differently from the others, which impedes efforts to distinguish between a *negotiation* and a *discussion* mandate in establishing subsidiary groups to undertake work although some delegations argue that it would not be feasible for the CD to negotiate more than one agreement at a time. A further complication is that the mandate for any subsidiary body that has been established needs to be renewed each year. Work underway would simply be terminated if the CD failed to agree on a renewed mandate.

The 2020 Session and the P6 Proposal

This linkage among the core issues results in a situation whereby work cannot begin on any one issue unless equivalent work is undertaken on all the others. As a result, the proposed Programmes of Work have tended to downplay reference to “negotiation” (although this is the explicit purpose of the CD) and have set out general, if inclusive sounding formulas. For example, the initial draft text for a Programme of Work put forward at the 2020 session provided a two-paragraph description of what work would be undertaken by the Subsidiary Bodies (SB):

1. To establish, in accordance with Paragraph 23 of its rules of procedure, Four Subsidiary Bodies on agenda items 1 (one) to 4 (four) and One on agenda items 5 (five), 6 (six) and 7 (seven), with a particular focus on substantial elements of legally binding instruments and additional measures, and options for negotiations.

2. The aim of the Subsidiary Bodies established under this Decision will be to consider and recommend effective measures, in line with the Final Document of SSOD-I. To this end, the Subsidiary Bodies may deepen technical discussions and broaden areas of agreement, including through the participation, in accordance with the rules of procedure, of relevant experts and reach understandings on areas of commonalities as set out in paragraph 1, taking into consideration all relevant views and proposals past, present and future.[2]

An exemplar of clarity it is not, but this convoluted formula reflected much behind the scenes effort by the responsible CD Presidents to reconcile various positions of member states. Efforts to no avail as this proposal circulated to the CD on February 13 was followed by another variant on February 24 and a third on March 2, all of them failing to gain consensus approval. As if agreement on a Programme of Work was not already an intractable problem, the proposal was only the central element of a three-part package of decisions. The first decision concerned the holding of informal consultations by a coordinator relating to the "improved and effective functioning of the Conference" (an exercise that was initiated in 1990 and has limped along ever since with scant results). The third decision enumerated the appointment of the co-ordinators who would preside over the five Subsidiary Bodies and outlined the timetable to be followed that would ensure exactly the same amount of time for the deliberations of each of these bodies. Given the half year overall extent of the three CD sessions, plus the opening weeks dedicated to general debate and the lengthy break periods (e.g. eight weeks between the first and second sessions), the working time available for each of the Subsidiary Bodies amounted to five half-day sessions. Needless to say, not a great deal can be accomplished even by the most active delegations in such a truncated time frame.

A further impediment to concerted action at the CD is its policy of rotating its President to six different member states by alphabetical order in the course of its half-yearly session. In 2020, the six Presidents were Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh and Belarus. Each of these presidents preside only for a few weeks in any given year. At times, an effort is made to co-ordinate activity amongst the six Presidents in what is referred to as the P6 format, but this requires a fair degree of cooperation amongst the six states and as the above listing suggests, the policies and preferences of these states may not readily be harmonized.

Even if a President or the P6 as a leadership group is able to elaborate a proposed Programme of Work, the consultations with the groups regarding its acceptability are conducted behind closed doors. The lack of transparency is such that which group is responsible for opposing a proposed Programme of work let alone which state or states within the group rejected the proposal is not revealed. The rejectionist states are not obliged to be identified as such and can escape accountability if they so choose. Thus,

the annual reports of the CD carry brief “thumbs down” accounts in the following fashion: “Throughout the 2020 session, Presidents of the Conference conducted intensive consultations with a view to reaching consensus on a Programme of Work … However despite these efforts, the Conference did not succeed in reaching consensus on a Programme of Work”.[3]

An Iranian Critique

The 2020 session did provide some insight into which states objected to the P6 proposal and the grounds for this objection. On April 27 (almost two months after the final March 2 attempt to obtain agreement on the Programme of Work), the Iranian delegation submitted a *Note Verbale* with suggested amendments to the text set out in the P6 tripartite proposal.[4] The chief objections that Iran had with the P6 proposal concerned the issues of nuclear disarmament and the FMCT, the subject of the first and second Subsidiary Bodies. For the nuclear disarmament body, Iran wanted to modify the description of the aim “to negotiate elements of legally binding instruments and their scope” and specify that the focus should be “on the prohibition and verifiable, irreversible and transparent elimination of all nuclear weapons”. These changes, which would reflect the views of several CD states, are, however, opposed by others.

A similar situation pertained with respect to the body dealing with the FMCT. Iran sought to amend the proposed focus “on the ban of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons” so it would read “on the ban of the past and present production of fissile material for nuclear weapons”. This amendment aligns with the preference of some CD members that a fissile material production ban also addresses past stocks and not just future production, a position that other CD members reject. This debate over whether past production should be included in the scope of any fissile material production ban has been the source of a major divide among CD members ever since the conference agreed on a negotiating mandate (CD/1299) back in 1995 that had finessed the issue but did not resolve the dispute.

Although Iran by submitting its proposed amendments as a document of the Conference has made its views a matter of the public record, this should not be construed as indicating that it alone was responsible for the rejection of the P6 proposal. The lack of transparency at the Conference and its mode of operations allow for any number of “rejectionists” member states to scuttle potential agreements without exposing themselves. In this secretive and consensus dependent context, there are infinite opportunities for those who wish to sabotage possible progress to do so. As noted earlier, there has been a continuous failure by the CD over the last two decades to agree on a Programme of Work. Thus, it came as something of a shock when the Sri Lankan President of the 2018 session gaveled a decision at the February 16 plenary accepting a proposed Programme of Work, featuring the same five Subsidiary Bodies as per the 2020 session.[5] For a brief period, there was a flicker of hope that the CD might actually get back to work. However, this was not to be as those who in the diplomatic equivalent of being asleep at the switch had allowed the Programme of Work to be adopted now quickly engaged under the subsequent Swedish Presidency in a rear-guard action to

block the operationalization of the Programme. This work was readily accomplished as all the issues that needed to be defined to activate the Programme of Work, notably the appointment of coordinators on the basis of equitable geographical representation and the establishment of schedules for the Subsidiary Bodies with equal allocations of time, were subject to unanimous approval, which unsurprisingly was not forthcoming, and the historic February 16 decision was revealed as no more than a flash in the pan.

Reactions to the CD's Gridlock

If the CD was a business, it would have gone bankrupt years ago. Its consistent track record of failure would have sidelined any other organization, but the CD appears to enjoy unfathomable support by its member states and even has an outstanding request since 1982 for membership by 27 states, despite the fact that the CD has not been able to agree on this issue either. This abysmal state of affairs has been criticized on many occasions. A typical rebuke is that which the UN Secretary General delivered in his message to the opening session of the CD in 2020. "Our world entered 2020 with uncertainty and insecurity all around. One of the most significant drivers of this unease is – to put it bluntly – the atrophying state of our disarmament instruments, institutions and aspirations".[6]

In an earlier 2017 speech to the CD by Izumi Nakamitsu, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, she lamented that CD actions on its agenda rather than prioritizing progress "have come to represent stopping points – where the status quo can safely thrive".[7] She also warned that "Regardless of the ability of the CD to break its stalemate, it seems clear that the work of the UN in the field of disarmament will and must go on, through all prudent but effective pathways available".[8] She explicitly points to the growing involvement of the UN General Assembly in multilateral disarmament work including negotiations on treaties on both conventional and nuclear weapons. Finally, she challenges the CD members – "Do you want to protect the decision-making process called 'consensus' … or do you wish to follow the current path of increasing innovation and the use of other types of mechanisms and processes to tackle priority disarmament issues?"[9]

Whilst the manifest dysfunctionality of the CD is apparent to all, its member states bear a special responsibility for the forum's continuation and whether CD members will take up the existential challenge that the High Representative has put before them. Some states, which are not keen in seeing any progress on disarmament files they dislike, shed copious crocodile tears over the CD's impasse. Others invest in new expert groups to further study certain core issues, whist concluding that eventual negotiation must be entrusted to the CD despite its reputation as the forum where good disarmament issues go to die. Others simply scale down their presence at the CD, quietly reallocating personnel to more productive forums. Overall, the credibility of the multilateral disarmament enterprise is eroded and the tolerance of the CD's dysfunctionality by its members adds to the cynicism that many observers have as to the sincerity of state action to realize oft-proclaimed arms control and disarmament objectives.

What Can Be Done to Liberate the Core Issues?

Given the CD's protracted paralysis, it is not surprising that the only multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements to be concluded in recent times have been a product of UN General Assembly authorized negotiations. Both the 2013 Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) are examples of this route. The subject matter of these agreements could readily have been part of the CD's agenda, but their chief sponsors were well aware that relying on the CD to negotiate the accords would have been the "kiss of death" for these undertakings.

There is a precedent for a diplomatic initiative that attempted to employ the General Assembly route in order to circumvent the consensus straitjacket of the CD. In the leadup to the fall 2005 session of the General Assembly's First Committee, the CD delegations of Canada along with Brazil, Kenya, Mexico, New Zealand and Sweden developed an initiative aimed at obtaining a General Assembly authorization to begin work on the CD's four core issues via Ad Hoc Committees that would meet in Geneva. A draft resolution was prepared that paid due deference to the CD by indicating that if the CD was able to agree a Programme of Work whatever had been achieved in the Ad Hoc Committees would be transferred to the CD for further development.[10]

Interest was high amongst First Committee delegations as to this innovative approach to overcome the impasse at the CD. The initiative also, however, attracted the interest of some powerful states, which were not keen to have the protracted gridlock of the CD resolved and work actually commence on all four issues. Representations were made at a senior level in Ottawa and the Canadian delegation was instructed soon after not to proceed to table the draft resolution at the First Committee. With Canada ending its support, the other states involved also backed away from the initiative, which became just a footnote in accounts of the First Committee session that year.

The need to escape the paralysis of the CD is evident for those who would genuinely wish to see progress on its core issues. The linkage problem and extreme applications of the consensus rule have precluded progress in any of the issues on the CD's agenda. Suggestions have been made in the past for reform of the CD's procedures that would restrict use of the "veto" and decouple the Programme of Work from the schedule of activities undertaken by the Conference and the establishment of subsidiary bodies (Caughley 2010). The Delegation of the Netherlands, for example, presented in 2019 a working paper entitled "Back to Basics-the Programme of Work", which argued for reverting to the use of the Programme of Work as a "planning tool" separate from decisions on the creation of subsidiary bodies. The working paper noted that " … linking the organization of work with the establishment of subsidiary bodies and their mandates has created a situation whereby disagreement on the mandate of a single subsidiary body prevents substantive work on all agenda items".[11] Regrettably, such constructive ideas for overcoming the gridlock have not been embraced by member states at the CD. Many appear more comfortable with the *status quo* rather than exerting themselves in the pursuit of reform and solutions to the CD's stalemate.

Nothing, however, would prevent a state or group of states to decide to take one or more of the issues before the CD and transfer it to some other diplomatic forum. This could take the form of a General Assembly-mandated negotiation as per the ATT and TPNW examples or via an ad hoc diplomatic conference, which generated the Ottawa anti-personnel landmines ban and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The problem does not reside in an absence of diplomatic alternatives, but rather in a lack of will to utilize them. Until that occurs, the charade that passes for disarmament diplomacy at the CD is likely to continue indefinitely.

Nuclear disarmament must be a priority for the next Canadian government

Paul Meyer and Cesar Jaramillo

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If Canada wants to be more than just a back-row supporter of nuclear disarmament it will need to invest some diplomatic energy in this endeavour.

Much like the global climate emergency, the continued existence of nuclear weapons constitutes a clear and present threat to human civilization. But if the topics being addressed by party leaders and platforms during this federal election are any indication, nuclear disarmament would seem to be a non-issue in the Canadian political landscape.

Today nearly 14,000 nuclear weapons remain in existence, many of which are many times more powerful than the ones that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki 76 years ago. An entirely preventable existential threat lingers over humanity. And Ottawa is not doing all it can to address it.

With credentials as a bridge builder in international disputes, Canada is well positioned to tackle some of the challenges faced by the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Key among them: the chasm that has opened up among the 191 states, party to the cornerstone Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), that has pitted supporters of the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) against its opponents who defend the *status quo*.

The dispute revolves around the best means to achieve the NPT's commitment to nuclear disarmament. The TPNW stipulates a comprehensive prohibition on nuclear weapons, including not just the threat or use of such weapons, but their very possession. Its opponents favour a "step-by-step" approach to realizing the vaguely phrased NPT commitment to pursue "good faith negotiations on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament."

Since the TPNW's more stringent requirements would proscribe continued support for nuclear deterrence (i.e., the threat to use nuclear weapons under certain unspecified conditions), the nuclear weapon states party to the NPT and their allies (including Canada) have, to date, rejected the TPNW. Critically, Canada continues to embrace

NATO's nuclear deterrence policy as a legitimate security doctrine, effectively legitimizing the weapons of its nuclear-armed allies.

The disagreement over the TPNW has put additional stress on the NPT which is already in the diplomatic equivalent of an ICU. Its last Review Conference in 2015 failed to produce an outcome and its 2020 iteration, postponed repeatedly, is now scheduled for January 2022.

Limiting the global nuclear regime has seen major setbacks recently with all five nuclear weapon states engaged in multi-billion dollar "modernization" of their nuclear forces, the dismantlement of arms control agreements, paralysis of multilateral disarmament forums and increased sabre rattling by nuclear armed powers.

Canada is participating in the "Stockholm initiative for Nuclear Disarmament" a grouping of 16 non-nuclear weapon states launched by the Swedish foreign minister in June 2019, which has held four ministerial meetings. The initiative has endorsed 22 "stepping stones" relating to nuclear disarmament and has submitted a working paper to the next NPT meeting. These "stones" are generally light-weight and mainly a repackaging of commitments agreed to at past NPT meetings, but there is potential to do more with this grouping of states.

We see three near-term steps that Canada could take to demonstrate leadership on this challenging issue.

First, Canada should help heal the rift between TPNW supporters and opponents by attending, as an observer, the first meeting of TPNW states parties (currently 55) slated to be held in Vienna March 22-24, 2022. Such participation would be a welcome sign of engagement with fellow NPT states which have adopted a different route to fulfill the nuclear disarmament obligation.

Second, Canada should advocate for the inclusion in the Stockholm Initiative package, support for a "No First Use" declaration on the part of nuclear weapon states. Such a step would help counter a destabilizing (and proliferation-friendly) expansion of rationales for the use of nuclear weapons on the part of some nuclear states. It would also be timely given the favourable attitude towards such an adjustment of policy expressed earlier by President Joe Biden and the resumption of strategic stability talks between the U.S. and Russia.

Third, Canada should elevate its involvement in the Stockholm Initiative, including participating in the meetings at the ministerial level. Such engagement on the part of Foreign Minister Marc Garneau could be coupled with an invitation by Canada to host a meeting of the group this fall to prepare for the NPT Review Conference.

If Canada wants to be more than just a back-row supporter of nuclear disarmament it will need to invest some diplomatic energy in this endeavour. A contribution along the

lines of those suggested above would be a good place for the next Canadian government to start.

How Building a Multilateral System Fairer for All Could Revive American Leadership

Prime Minister Justin with Joe Biden at the Centre Block on Parliament Hill in December 2016 just weeks before the then-US vice president left office. Now as President Biden, he has an opportunity to lead the Western allies, including Canada, in an important multilateral moment.*Adam Scotti photo*

What Western allies have described as the systemic challenges posed by China's rise represent the most serious disturbance to the postwar international order since the Cold War. America's efforts to address those challenges have met resistance from within its own borders, including from the most un-democratic president in history, Donald Trump. Longtime senior Canadian diplomat Jeremy Kinsman reflects on how the United States can, under Joe Biden, recalibrate its international role.

Jeremy Kinsman
Policy Magazine, October 31, 2021

Friends and foes look with varying degrees of baffled concern or *schadenfreude* at what is going on in and with America, asking themselves and each other what the uncertainties mean going forward, including for international cooperation on crucial global issues.

Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland spoke for Canada early in her tenure as foreign minister in a speech to Parliament in 2017: “That our friend and ally has come to question the very worth of its mantle of global leadership puts into sharper focus the need for the rest of us to set our own clear and sovereign course. For Canada, that course must be the renewal, indeed the strengthening, of the postwar multilateral order.”

As competitive economic and political nationalism continues to weaken the multilateral system, the renewal project remains imperative.

Unlike his destructive predecessor, President Joe Biden unfailingly offers to lead global action on the world’s existential multilateral challenges, especially global warming and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, mindful of how America’s better instincts led the world out of the Second World War into a more co-operative multilateral order.

But potential US leadership is hobbled by American political issues. Donald Trump’s refusal to respect democracy’s defining obligation to defer to decisive electoral defeat clamps a perverse hold on his political party, plunging the nation into a schism of culture and purpose more vivid than any since the Civil War. Some, like writer Robert Kagan, fear that American democracy hangs in the balance.

Preoccupied with such domestic pressures and American voters, the US has resorted internationally to unilateral moves that has had allies wondering if the Biden administration’s allegedly globalist world view is in effect not just a nicer mask for Trump’s “America First” mantra, which has support in Congress, where globalization is still blamed for the loss of American jobs.

“Buy America” provisions affecting Canada, and protectionist tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from the EU, remain from the Trump era. The chaotic American exit from Afghanistan blindsided loyal NATO allies. For the sake of a surprise deal meant to rattle China and provide, in 19 years, submarines to Australia, the US trashed France. Closer to home, the US declines to respect a 1977 Canada-US Treaty on Transit Pipelines to block interruption by the state of Michigan of a pipeline for Canadian oil vital to Quebec and Ontario.

In bilateral relations, Canada tries to mobilize support in US public and political arenas, and show empathy with Biden’s administration that perhaps encouraged resolution of the Canada-China hostage crisis.

But more broadly, Canadians and others hope that the US will lean in to lead the positive reform of the world’s multilateral system, whose creation the US spearheaded after emerging victorious from the ruins of the Second World War.

That idealistic and pragmatic sense of mission, related to America’s original sense of exceptionalist promise, became more defensive and self-interested as the Cold War re-cast the challenges. The American public’s sense of exceptionalism became in the process increasingly invested in the necessity of maintaining unrivalled power, and of

remaining “number one” among the world’s nations. All this forms the eternal puzzle of America itself, its sense of mission, self-absorption, and often ambivalent relationship to others, the subject of mountains of commentary and analysis.

We might look to literature for insight. Walt Whitman’s “*Song of Myself*” from “*Leaves of Grass*.” (1855) asks:
“Do I contradict myself?
very well then, I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)”

Today, with the loudest political voices split into warring, distrustful halves, the competition between defining myths and objective reality is stark. Scott Fitzgerald made the sense of national greatness and exceptionalism, the “American Dream,” the allegorical subject of “*The Great Gatsby*” (1926). He cites America’s sense of its unique promise, felt by its first white settlers who came to occupy the “fresh, green breast of the new world,” against the ensuant contradictions of “the savage violence of the frontier brothel and saloon.” He depicts Jay Gatsby’s “extraordinary gift for hope” as America’s affirmation of the belief that all is possible, but vests it in his murky past as a swindler.

The ambivalence recalls Graham Greene’s “*The Quiet American*” set 30 years later in Vietnam where American interventionist idealism would crash and burn. CIA operative “Pyle” is there as “a soldier of democracy,” “absorbed in…the responsibilities of the West, determined to do good…to a country, a continent, the world,” Fowler, Greene’s cynical Brit narrator, asserts he “never knew a man who had better motives *for all the trouble he caused*.”

Gatsby’s relentless attention to the “drums of his (own) destiny” was more self-centered than Pyle’s but also caused a world of trouble. He clawed and possibly killed on his route to what he perceived as the American grail: the rewards of being rich. His obsessive but elusive prize would be Daisy Buchanan—whose voice was “full of money.”

Fitzgerald began a short story written around then by describing very rich people as “different from you and me.” He defined that difference in *Gatsby* through his portrayal of right-wing white supremacist Tom Buchanan and his feckless wife Daisy as “careless” people. “They smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made.”

In *The Moveable Feast*, Ernest Hemingway recalled the line about how the rich are different from you and me by sneering, “Yes, they have more money.”

Substitute “military power” for “money,” and Fitzgerald’s description of the dominating Buchanans might stand for the impression America makes today in a world faced with the mess they made and left in Iraq and Afghanistan. Canadians who have spent lives working on international security issues with US colleagues know vividly how the customary assumption of unrivalled US military power on the part of American officials,

military operators, and national security pronouncers has indeed made them “different from you and me.”

Frankly, they don’t get other people’s motives very well. Of course, millions of Americans have gone abroad as diplomats, scholars, humanitarians, teachers, and business people and do understand others, but they rarely inhabit the political-security milieux that frame the US political-military-technology narrative. Instead of figuring out what makes other people tick, the national security “blob” counts on US military dominance. To obtain influence in foreign countries, they rely on the CIA to identify local varieties of “our guy”—corrupt but compliant politicians, venal warlords, self-promoting fraud artists, whoever seems like an authoritative proxy to deliver the people, once overwhelming power has blown away armed opposition. Historian Andrew Bacevich in *After the Apocalypse*, blames this division of labour and such blind confidence in the technology of weaponry for America’s lost wars in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan to military inferiors.

A September 1921 photographic portrait of writer F. Scott Fitzgerald and wife Zelda, taken at Dellwood, approximately a month before the birth of their daughter Scottie. *Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society*

Identification with vast differentiating power “from you and me” is a syndrome that dies hard for superpowers. Soviet-born writer Gary Shteyngart tells of a return visit to post-Soviet Russia. His agitated cab driver wanted to get out to America, but couldn’t get a visa. Shteyngart suggested he try Canada instead. “Canada???” the disheveled cabbie snorted as he spat out the window. “Impossible! I could only live in a superpower!”

After the USSR collapsed, the US enjoyed being the lone “hyperpower.” As Madeleine Albright put it in a 1998 interview, “If we have to use force, it is because we are America; we are the indispensable nation. We stand tall and we see further than other countries into the future.” In her speech accepting the Democratic nomination in 2016, Hillary Clinton also reached back to the exceptionalist sense of self: “America is great because America is good.”

But polarized by inequity and grievances of all kinds, the nation succumbed to a nativist “America First” dissembler. As division persists and as China and others rise, America’s “number one” status now seems to many abroad more of a defiant and nostalgic boast than a safe bet.

But is it? America’s allies want to believe the best of America can come through. Though routinely humble on most matters, Joe Biden advises “don’t bet against America.” There is no need for him to preside over American retreat.

Different routes exist to renewing US leadership in a changing world.

According to the version now dominant with the national security “blob”, long-term strategic competition with China should be the prime organizing principle. The Atlantic Council anticipates “new alliance frameworks that connect transatlantic and transpacific partners … under a common umbrella to advance a free and open Indo-Pacific.”

Much of the rhetoric, including Biden’s, frames this competition in terms of democracies versus authoritarians. The President indeed hopes to convene democracies at a summit to mobilize solidarity. US power remains a security comfort for countries in the Indo-Pacific region keen for constraints to China’s coercive behaviour. But while no-one would want a world led by China as a unipolar superpower, there is no keenness for a new ideological Cold War, a division of the world in two, especially for the sake of shoring up US primacy and maximum global influence.

Another non-divisive route for American global leadership is to help the world re-create in today’s terms the cooperative, effective, and inclusive rules-based multilateral system US leadership anticipated in 1945. In a recent closed conference sponsored by the Canadian International Council and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, 20 Canadian and German scholars, experts, and practitioners acknowledged that our new era’s changes in the distribution of global influence and power call for transformative thinking.

Louise Frechette, former Deputy Secretary General of the UN, advised that it must pay heed also to the generally neglected 150 most vulnerable members of the “silent

majority" of the global community. They will support a more effective rules-based international order because it represents their best protection from coercion from greater powers.

But they wish a fairer, more equitable order, seeing systemic unfairness such as the current inequitable distribution of COVID vaccines as toxic to global confidence. Democracies will support human rights unconditionally and contest challenges from China and Russia to democratic principles (while working on getting our own houses in order) but should cease assuming the "rule of law" in international activity is synonymous with a need of domestic democratic governance. For many in the world, the West's reflexive expectation that world order should be "liberal" evokes fears of domination of the system by Western states acting in their own interests, not necessarily a dismissal of the liberal democracy values of transparency and human rights.

Strategic competition between China and the US is a forefront reality of our era. The world hopes for mutual accommodation on rules of the road. Most countries are allergic to the notion of rival "teams," fearing the hardening of ideological and adversarial strategy will foreclose essential cooperative outcomes, and aggravate multiple dangers including an accelerated and proliferating arms race.

During the CIC-Adenauer conference, German and Canadian panelists urged a resolution to the wider global competition between countries that privilege multilateral cooperation within a rules-based world order, and those that favour pursuing their interests in the international arena via national competition, that notably includes China, Russia and often the US.

Progress will be supported by a more variable geometry of alliances, coalitions and informal solidarity groups to mobilize cooperative solutions to overcome the gridlock in the formal system, such as the Ottawa Group for World Trade Organization reform, or the Human Security Network that Canada and Germany supported with like-minded partners and civil society to advance an essential multilateral paradigm shift a quarter-century ago.

If the US could re-direct its diplomatic power to such a drive for transformative change in the interests of all, it could be a global strategic game-changer more decisive than spending money and talent in races to stuff our oceans with more nuclear submarines.

Ultimately, in an increasingly interdependent world, only multilateral tools of international cooperation can deliver vital transnational outcomes, with demonstrable benefit to our own societies. This could be America's leadership opportunity, offering fulfillment of its sense of exceptionalist promise from ages past.

Indigenous heart' missing from LeBreton Flats plan

The Algonquin Nation should be the host for a new National Indigenous Centre involving native people from across Canada.

John Moses, Robert Hage

Ottawa Citizen, August 10, 2021

A still of the Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. Like the Canadian Museum of History, it was designed by Douglas Cardinal. jpg

In April, the National Capital Commission announced a “milestone”: the long-awaited LeBreton Flats Master Concept Plan . It detailed the Flats’ “four unique districts” but provided only a “strategy” for recognizing the area’s “deep history, including the indigenous presence and the industrial heritage of the area” (as if the two were equal).

The NCC’s initial plans for LeBreton, centred on a new hockey arena for the Senators, collapsed with rancorous lawsuits among its private sector proponents. Unlike its first attempt, there is no centrepiece in the new NCC proposals that would draw Canadian and foreign visitors to the area — an area the commission calls a “Capital destination that represents the cultural richness of Canada in all its diversity.” It stands to reason, however, that since LeBreton Flats sits on unceded Algonquin land where Indigenous

people have lived for up to 9,000 years, the heart of this “capital destination” must be linked to Canada’s Indigenous peoples.

The NCC has recognized the need to “honour the past.” Public consultations urged the NCC to do so “by incorporating Indigenous language, art, music and history into site amenities and building design and by creating a space for Indigenous peoples to use on the site itself.” The Master Concept Plan suggests such things as Indigenous place names — last week, it was announced that the future super library on the Flats will be called Ādisōke, meaning “story-telling” — and interpretive infrastructure, identifying and preserving heritage resources, integrating archeological discoveries into public spaces and maintaining a “meaningful and ongoing relationship” with the Algonquin Nation.

In 2016, each of us wrote separate letters to the Ottawa Citizen providing ideas on how the redevelopment of LeBreton Flats could fill the void in our capital in recognizing the presence and contribution Indigenous peoples have made and continue to make not only to the lands around Ottawa but across Canada. Robert’s letter reflected a recent visit to Washington D.C. where he toured the National Museum of the American Indian located in the city’s centre. The museum shares the curving surfaces and golden stone of the Canadian Museum of History — not surprisingly since both were designed by Canada’s well-known Indigenous architect, Douglas Cardinal. Sadly, the similarity ends there.

Adkisoke will be the name of the new super library to be built on LeBreton Flats. Anita Tenasco. director of education for the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation, speaks during the naming announcement in Ottawa on Aug. 5. jpg

Washington's National Museum was built following the requirements of a 1989 act of Congress "as a living memorial to Native Americans and their traditions." It is not a place of static exhibits, but a museum run by native people "steadfastly committed to bringing a native voice" through its exhibitions, presentations and publications in print or on the internet. Its holdings represent virtually all tribes in the United States and, according to the museum, "most of those in Canada." Canada had nothing comparable.

Robert saw LeBreton Flats as offering an ideal site for Canada's National Museum of Indigenous Peoples. At the same time, the Canadian History Museum was undergoing a major makeover and opening a new First Nations Gallery drawing on the museum's three million native artifacts. The museum made a good case that there was no need for duplication.

John's letter had a related but different perspective on LeBreton Flats. It was based on his own experience as a member of the Mohawk Nation and his late father Russ's role in the development, construction and presentation of the Indians of Canada Pavilion at

Montreal's Expo 67 . Russ Moses was a member of the Delaware band, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory.

John envisaged a National Indigenous Centre at LeBreton Flats specifically modelled on the Indians of Canada Pavilion, now recognized as a watershed in Indigenous self-representation before both Canadian and global audiences. While the centre would be hosted by the Algonquin First Nation, its scope would be nationwide. It would begin with the same question put to First Nations, Métis and Inuit across the entire country at the inception of the Indians of Canada Pavilion: "What do you want to tell the people of Canada and the World?"

This centre would be very different from the Canadian History Museum's First Peoples Gallery. First of all, it would be designed and run by Indigenous people, in the same way the U.S. National Museum of the American Indian is run. The story the centre tells, and will continue to tell, will be that told by its Indigenous designers and managers. It is unreasonable to expect that the Museum of History can manage its collection of more than three million native artifacts on its own. Close collaboration between it and the new centre is essential so that the museum's native ethnographic and archaeological collections can be presented and interpreted to the public by Indigenous experts.

Inside the Canadian Museum of History. jpg

When the NCC announced the completion of the LeBreton Flats Master Concept Plan in April, it also announced the three architectural/construction companies which will be invited to develop detailed proposals for a mixed-use development on LeBreton's so-called Library Parcel. The winning applicant is expected to be announced this January. At the same time, it announced "an Algonquin Nation Partnership Strategy will be added to the Master Concept Plan, in consultation and collaboration with Algonquin partners."

The question is: Can anything be started until the NCC has a clear concept of LeBreton Flats' "Indigenous heart?" The Algonquin Nation should be the host for a new National Indigenous Centre involving Indigenous people from across Canada. The time to start is now.

Links

Jeremy Kinsman

CTV News, Diplomatic Community, October 26, 2021: A world in climate crisis

https://www.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=2309372

CTV News: Diplomatic Community: October 19, 2021: the Taiwan Strait and US-China rivalry

https://www.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=2304765

CTV News, Diplomatic Community, October 12, 2021: Afghanistan's make or break moment: the Taliban problem; and the increase in China-Taiwan tension and war fears: performative, or real?

https://www.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=2299710

Gary Smith

1972 USSR-Canada Hockey Series

https://www.facebook.com/tj18h/videos/1757320521323667/

Jean-Yves Dionne

Diplomates en péril? suivi de Chroniques peu diplomatiques

https://dansnoslaurentides.com/expositions-litterature/litterature/lucie-tremblay-et-jean-yves-dionne

Podcasts

Canada-China Relations

CGAI, Global Exchange Podcast October 04, 2021

Colin Robertson, Gordon Houlden, Deanna Horton, Rob Wright

https://soundcloud.com/user-609485369/global-exchange-canada-china-after-meng

New Books

Triple Sex and Other Tales

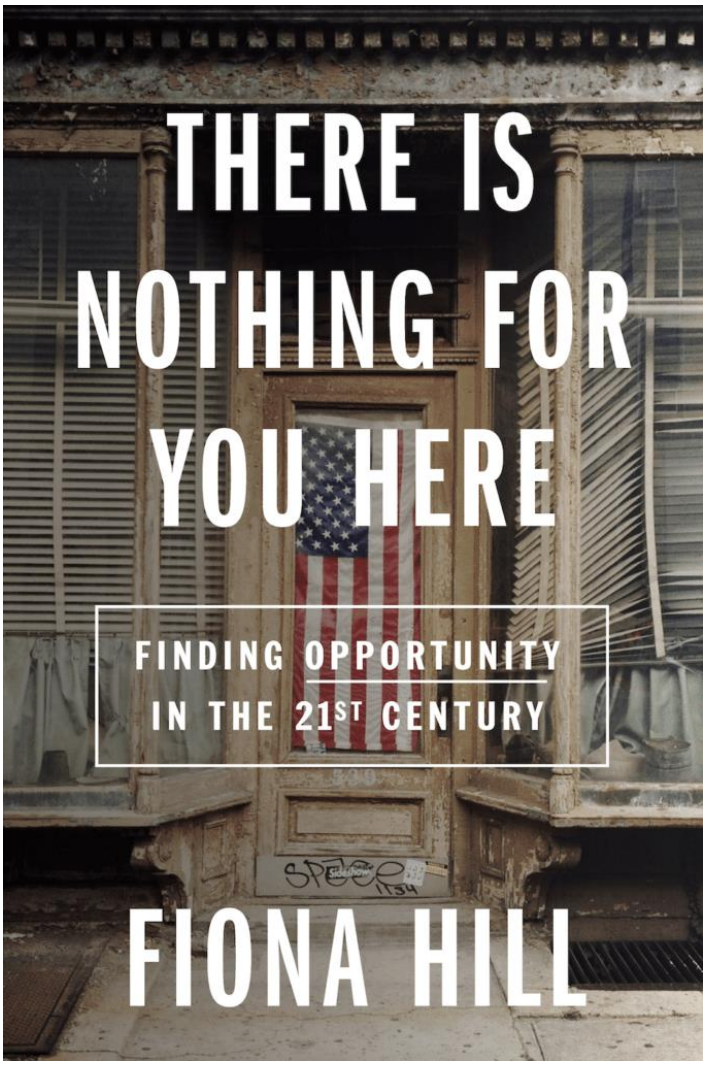
Carol Bujeau, Spouse of Jon Holmes

Click on icon to see publisher and purchase information)

Bujeau,
Carole-Triple Sex-Or

Reviews

Fiona Hill's Journey from a North England Mining Town to the Trumpian Vortex



There is Nothing for You Here: Finding Opportunity in the 21st Century

By Fiona Hill

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt/October, 2021.

Reviewed by Colin Robertson

October 31st, 2021

Fiona Hill went from being a relatively anonymous Washington policy wonk to front-page news when she provided riveting testimony to Congress during then-President Donald Trump's first impeachment hearing. Describing the Trump tribe's efforts to blame Ukraine for interference in the 2016 election as a "fictional narrative", Hill said it was a fabrication by Moscow to harm the United States. "I would ask" she said before the committee, "that you please not promote politically driven falsehoods that so clearly

advance Russian interests." That Russia readily exploits partisan divisions to undermine the United States from within still takes place, as Hill describes in her new book.

There is Nothing for You Here: Finding Opportunity in the 21st Century is a memoir that is by turns poignant, funny, wonky, but always informative.

It's a book in four parts. The opening chapter — "Coal House" — describes Hill's early life and the critical role of her extended family and friends in the community. She grew up in what had been the coal mining town of Bishop Auckland; in northern England's County Durham. Her father and grandfather were both coal miners who had quit school to work in the mines at 14 and 13 but by the early sixties, the mines were closing. Her father found work as a hospital porter. Her parents knew that education was the way to a better life but even with her degree from St. Andrews, in what remained socially stratified England, Hill still had the "wrong" accent, the "wrong" clothes, and came from the "wrong" class.

And so, she took the advice her father offered — to leave. Hence, the quotation marks around the title of her memoir: "There is nothing for you here". Hill moved to America for the same reasons that have drawn so many who've found a less obstructed path to success than their own countries offered them.

The next part of her life — "Divided House" — covers her studies at Harvard, where she did her PhD in history, then worked at the Kennedy School. On an exchange to Russia, she watched Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev sign the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Agreement. She was senior director for Russia and Eurasia on the National Intelligence Council, where she briefed both presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama.

Her 2013 book *Mr. Putin, Operative in the Kremlin,* co-authored with Cliff Gaddy is still a go-to source for those who want to better understand the Russian leader. As Hill writes, Putin applied the skills he learned in the KGB as being something to everybody, a populist celebrity who is now in the process of transforming himself into the father of the nation and, essentially, being president for life by extending his rule until 2036.

The third part takes us to the White House and her service from 2017-19 on the Trump administration's National Security Council, an experience she also adapted for a recent Foreign Affairs article *The Kremlin's Strange Victory: How Putin Exploits American Dysfunction and Fuels American Decline*. Hill's insider account of the Trump presidency squares with the public performance of an opportunistic and chaotic executive. He aimed for the privatization of the US government. He had no ideology beyond self-ideology and he ran government, including the military, like it was an extension of Trump Inc. For Trump, Putin was the "badass strongman" — rich and powerful and a role model for authoritarian swagger. For Hill, Trump is a counter-intelligence risk because of his vulnerabilities and the fragility of his ego.

What shocked Hill the most, with all of Trump's talk of "America First," is that it was really all about him. Even with his base, it was all about what they could do for him. She

concludes, as others have, that America risks becoming a populist country. Americans, she writes, need to wake up to the new and dangerous reality of rising income inequality and identity politics that fuel its political polarization and government dysfunction. She urges those in power, especially members of Congress, to honour their oath to uphold the Constitution and to speak up or the United States will endure another, perhaps more dangerous populist autocrat.

For Trump, Putin was the 'badass strongman' — rich and powerful and a role model for authoritarian swagger. For Hill, Trump is a counter-intelligence risk because of his vulnerabilities and the fragility of his ego.

After the While House, Hill rejoined the Brookings Institution, where today she is a senior fellow. The final part of her book — "Our House" — looks at the challenges facing America. As she told NPR, "The United States is teetering on the edge of violence here. We're already, I think, in a cold civil war…We've got a chance now to turn this around. But if we don't take it, we're heading down that autocratic path that we've seen in other countries."

Hill worries that with the fixation on China, Russia's role in disrupting events is being eclipsed. Hill warns of the continuing threat of Russian disinformation and its efforts to destabilize and undermine trust in democracies. Their goal is to undermine the credibility of the United States government both at home and abroad.

While there is plenty for foreign policy mavens, *There is Nothing for You Here* is more about social policy than national security and what Americans can do to give a hand-up to their fellow citizens. Hill writes: "The greater your wealth is, the more positional authority you have; the more free time you enjoy and the larger your personal and professional networks are, the more you can do. But everyone can and should play a role in helping to break down barriers and even the playing field." Whether you are a CEO, working or retired, Hill lays out a series of practical actions that can contribute to dealing with inequities and social injustice. In this sense, she echoes the Biden administration's conviction that foreign policy renewal now starts at home with the renewal of American democracy. Nation-building abroad has given way to restoring democracy at home.

Hill personifies the importance to democratic governments of independent, data-driven analysts with long and deep experience in policy development. Her book is also fun. It's filled with telling vignettes: sad, serious, happy and funny. Like the time she wore sneakers to the Oval Office to brief President Trump. And then Ivanka walked in.

For insights into what ails America and how it can get out of the current malaise pick up *There is Nothing for You Here*. Better still, listen to Fiona Hill read the audio book version. Her north England accent is very pleasing to the ear.