

Summaries

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Caught Red-Handed: How States Wield Proof to Coerce Wrongdoers
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States frequently acquire proof of other states' norm violations, from nuclear proliferation to harboring terrorists to interfering in elections. Existing theories do not fully explain how states that catch others red-handed wield a form of coercive power over the wrongdoers. Discoverers may conceal proof of wrongdoing, share such proof with other actors privately, or reveal their proof to the world. States with more leverage over wrongdoers have two incentives to conceal proof of wrongdoing. They can blackmail wrongdoers by threatening to go public with proof of their guilt, and they can simultaneously allow wrongdoers to save face. States that possess proof of wrongdoing but have less leverage are more likely to share that proof with others. If a discoverer distrusts the intentions of states with more leverage, it will reveal evidence publicly, catalyzing others to act. Publicizing proof weaponizes the prospect that other states will pay reputation and hypocrisy costs if they do not follow through on punishing norm violations. Four case studies of nuclear proliferation (Taiwan, Libya, South Africa, and North Korea) probe this novel theory.

51–90

The Subversive Trilemma: Why Cyber Operations Fall Short of Expectations
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Although cyber conflict has existed for thirty years, the strategic utility of cyber operations remains unclear. Many expect cyber operations to provide independent utility in both warfare and low-intensity competition. Underlying these expectations are broadly shared assumptions that information technology increases operational effectiveness. But a growing body of research shows how cyber operations tend to fall short of their promise. The reason for this shortfall is their subversive mechanism of action. In theory, subversion provides a way to exert influence at lower risks than force because it is secret and indirect, exploiting systems to use them against adversaries. The mismatch between promise and practice is the consequence of the subversive trilemma of cyber operations, whereby speed, intensity, and control are negatively corre-

lated. These constraints pose a trilemma for actors because a gain in one variable tends to produce losses across the other two variables. A case study of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict provides empirical support for the argument. Qualitative analysis leverages original data from field interviews, leaked documents, forensic evidence, and local media. Findings show that the subversive trilemma limited the strategic utility of all five major disruptive cyber operations in this conflict.

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Arms Control as Wedge Strategy: How Arms Limitation Deals Divide Alliances

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Strategic arms control is in crisis. The United States and Russia have retreated from agreements that formed the framework for post-Cold War arms cuts and strategic stability, such as the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. The only strategic arms control agreement between the United States and Russia (i.e., New START) expires in 2026. The political forcefield that sustained the old framework has been altered by major technological revolutions and China's rise. Motives for strategic arms control are conventionally framed in terms of their potential to enhance stability by limiting certain weapons, avoiding costly arms races, or preserving military advantage. But states can also use strategic arms control to divide adversaries. Wedge strategy theory explains how arms control can do so by affecting adversaries' threat perceptions, their beliefs about the costs and benefits of formal commitments, and their degree of trust in one another. Three landmark strategic arms control negotiations (the Five-Power Treaty and the Four-Power Treaty at the Washington Naval Conference, the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) show how the wedge motive informed these negotiations and influenced great power relations. The wedge logic remains relevant today. For example, the United States may employ future arms control agreements to drive a wedge between China and Russia, and it must be cautious about arms control deals with North Korea that would negatively affect its relationship with South Korea.

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Opportunistic Repression: Civilian Targeting by the State in Response to COVID-19

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Across the globe, states have attempted to contain COVID-19 by restricting movement, closing schools and businesses, and banning large gatherings. Such measures have expanded the degree of sanctioned state intervention into civilians' lives. But existing theories of preventive and responsive repression cannot explain why some countries experienced surges in repression after states in Africa initiated COVID-19-related lockdowns. While responsive repression occurs when states quell protests or riots, "opportunistic repression" arises when states use crises to suppress the political opposition. An examination of the relationship between COVID-19 shutdown policies and state violence against civilians in Africa tests this theory of opportunistic repression. Findings reveal a large and statistically significant relationship between shutdowns and repression, which holds after conditioning for the spread and lethality of the disease within-country and over time. A subnational case study of repression in Uganda provides evidence that the increase in repression appears to be concentrated in opposition areas that showed less support for Yoweri Museveni in the 2016 elections. Opportunistic repression provides a better explanation than theories of preventive or responsive repression for why Uganda experienced a surge in repression in 2020 and in what areas. The results have implications for theories of repression, authoritarian survival, the politics of emergency, and security.

NOTE TO CONTRIBUTORS

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