**1AR – !! – Critical Infra**

**Critical infra collapse causes extinction by escalating every emergency to its worst-case scenario. Structurally unsound construction output guarantees cascades, that’s Pescaroli & Alexander.**

**1AR – !! – Deportation**

**Kill GDP by 7% greater than Great Depression, reduce jobs by 2 million, cause 9% inflation, wreck small businesses, make healthcare expensive, and erode civil institutions, that’s Krieger.**

## Adv CP

### 1AR – Status

#### Hoffman makes immigration status relevant at an earlier stage of litigation, which uniquely chills claimants.

Kati L Griffith 09 - Jean McKelvey-Alice Grant Professor and Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Diversity, and Faculty Development at Cornell's ILR School, associate member of the Cornell Law Faculty, Research Fellow affiliated with NYU’s Center for Labor & Employment Law. “U.S. Migrant Worker Law: The Interstices of Immigration Law and Labor and Employment Law,” Fall 2009, Comparative Labor Law & Policy Journal 31(1), pp. 125-162.

While a growing number of courts have generally limited the reach of the U.S. Supreme Court’s Hoffman decision, Hoffman undoubtedly affects undocumented workers’ incentives to bring lawsuits and enforce their workplace rights.188 For instance, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit reasoned that probing immigration status during litigation may dissuade both undocumented and documented workers from bringing legal actions against their employers.189 Undocumented workers may fear detention or deportation and documented workers may fear that the immigration status of their friends and family may be called into question or that their own recently-acquired immigration authorization may be jeopardized in the lawsuit.190 Suggesting that such a probe would damage the efficacy of Title VII’s main enforcer, the employee, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals stated that “Congress intended to empower individuals to act as private attorneys general in enforcing the provisions of Title VII.”191

The ambiguity about the full effect of the Supreme Court’s Hoffman decision allows the fight over the relevance of immigration status to play a role in earlier stages of the litigation, before remedies are awarded. During the discovery phase of litigation, when the parties exchange relevant documents, request answers to interrogatories, and conduct depositions, many employers argue that they have a right to know the immigration status of the plaintiff. The Hoffman decision, they contend, made immigration status relevant to the question of which remedies are available and therefore relevant to the litigation. Undocumented worker legal advocates have successfully countered these arguments on a number of occasions. So far “[c]ourts have overwhelmingly decided to prohibit the disclosure of immigration status in the context of employment-related civil litigation, often citing the highly prejudicial impact of the disclosure compared to its relatively small probative value.”192 Nonetheless, the threat of Hoffman during these earlier stages of litigation has a profound effect on the process and can limit the assurances that plaintiff attorneys can provide to their clients. It can dissuade workers from making complaints even in the face of some of “the strongest claims for workplace violations.”193

## FDI

### 1AR – No Link

#### They’re 4.6%

Statista 25, "Infographic: Where Undocumented Immigrants Work," Statista Daily Data, 3/10/2025, https://www.statista.com/chart/34074/us-industries-highest-share-of-the-workforce-undocumented-immigrants/?srsltid=AfmBOooO7Bp7w7jxHz9mAPyVnRgxrRbRVYC2daoYyPnYQB7Sz2\_jwfUQ

More industries with a high share of undocumented workers include wholesale trade, transporting and warehousing as well as manufacturing, among others. Overall, the U.S. is estimated to have 7.5 million undocumented workers, or 4.6 percent of the country's workforce. As undocumented immigrants are more likely to be working due to their age makeup, this is despite the fact that they make up only 3.3 percent of the population.

**Fissured economy makes worker power impossible.**

**Whitney 16** — Bigelow Teaching Fellow and Lecturer in Law, University of Chicago Law School. J.D. from Harvard Law School. Former clerk for Chief Judge of the Seventh Circuit. Heather M. Whitney, “Rethinking the Ban on Employer-Labor Organization Cooperation,” 37 Cardozo Law Review 1455 (2016), https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=12438&context=journal\_articles

Whether one supports unionization or not, the NLRA was originally intended to protect “full freedom of association [and] selforganization” for workers.43 As Benjamin Sachs, Professor of Labor and Industry at Harvard Law School, has pointed out, most scholars believe it has failed to do this for one of two reasons: the statute is too weak, and thus unable to do the necessary protecting, or the statute is too rigid, unable to keep pace with changes in the composition and nature of work.44 An examination of modern company-worker relations speaks to the latter reason.

NLRA-style unionization is premised on the notion of a single company that acts as a stable employer of long-term, full-time employees.45 But a number of transformations to the nature of work have rendered anachronistic this conception, and with it the possibility of 1935-era unionization, increasingly impracticable.

Perhaps most significantly, the modern workplace is fissured.46 “Employment is no longer the clear relationship between a well-defined employer and a worker. The basic terms of employment—hiring, evaluation, pay, supervision, training, and coordination—are now the result of multiple organizations.”47

Supply chains and outsourcing more generally provide one example of this. A basic question a company must answer is whether a particular activity it needs done (be it manufacturing, marketing, or inventing) occurs within the corporation itself.48 This choice may be influenced by a variety of considerations, but for corporations with the exclusive goal of maximizing shareholder value, the answer will be straightforward: which is cheaper? In the past, the direct costs of producing a cell phone in China or a lower-cost area in the United States might be far lower than those associated with producing it in house at the company’s headquarters in Silicon Valley; other transaction costs, like those associated with transportation and monitoring, were sufficiently high that cheaper labor did not always translate to cheaper production, all things considered.49 Today, however, those transaction costs are going down. Flying to China to check on manufacturers is cheap and email and surveillance technologies make monitoring farflung factories cheaper.50 Additionally, by contracting out a particular project or job, companies can take advantage of the downward pressure facing smaller companies that compete to win bids for those jobs.51 If a hotel is looking to outsource its room-keeping, it can create a bidding war between vendors, who in turn cut worker wages or risk losing the contract.

Supply chains makes traditional unionization ineffective, if possible at all. With outsourcing, even if the workers are able to successfully unionize the supplier, the supplier itself is intensely competing for bids against other, non-unionized competitors, in low-margin markets.52 The result will often be that the unionized workforce simply does not win contracts for work at all. And in cases where suppliers win and workers subsequently unionize, there is simply not enough money to go around, and the lead company is always free to choose a cheaper (typically nonunionized) supplier during the next round of bidding.53 Thus, unionization of a single low-level supplier is not an effective strategy for workers looking to better their position Franchises are another method of fissuring.54 As one way to lower costs while increasing profits, companies focus on creating and developing a brand while outsourcing day-to-day business operations to franchisees.55 Companies like McDonald’s use this strategy; they create strong brand identities and then sign franchise agreements whereby franchisees agree to abide by strict quality standards.56 In exchange, the franchisee gains access to a consumer-trusted brand while starting their business.

The franchise arrangement used by companies like McDonald’s render traditional unionization difficult and ineffective. First, the nature of franchisee-franchisor relation often puts downward pressure on wages, which results in low-wage and part-time work, as a means to avoid triggering additional benefits.57 This combination, in turn, leads to high turnover and workers juggling multiple jobs, both of which leave them with little time and motivation to unionize a bad but ultimately short-term workplace.58

Moreover, franchisee workers can typically only unionize on a franchisee-by-franchisee basis, since the franchisee of each in particular location traditionally stands as the sole employer of the workers in its particular establishment. This is a problem for workers who want to use collective action as a way to negotiate for improved conditions, since the inaccessible franchisor can maintain significant control over rules about employee scheduling and human resource activities and yet are not at the bargaining table.59 Thus, even if unionization efforts are successful, the franchisor’s control means franchisees have little room to meaningfully negotiate on issues like wages and working conditions.60 While the answer here may be that the franchisors that exert substantial control over the terms and conditions of work most salient to workers should be held a joint employer, the litigation required to achieve that outcome is time-consuming and costly.61

As a result of globalization and new technological developments, companies have also moved further away from long-term employment promises.62 In the June 2013 issue of the Harvard Business Review, Reid Hoffman, co-founder of LinkedIn, and co-authors argued that globalization and the Information Age had eroded stability, put adaptability and entrepreneurship front and center, and “demolished the traditional employer-employee compact and its accompanying career escalator in the U.S. private sector.”63 In this world, they recommended workers think of themselves as “free agents” and the development of a new employer-employee compact based on “tours of duty,” where employees are hired for a specified number-of-year “tours,” typically two to four, with specific and tangible goals.64 While commentators often assume this shift to a “gig economy” is a bad thing, not all workers are opposed. Younger workers especially embrace the role of freelancer in the knowledge economy.65 But regardless of one’s views on long-term versus short-term employment, the less time workers expect to spend at a particular company, the less likely they will be willing to organize to improve the terms and conditions of working there.66

#### No link. FDI isn’t influenced by US domestic policy.

Pettis '25 – Nonresident Senior Fellow @ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. (Michael Pettis. (7-7-2025). "Foreign Capital Inflows Don't Lower U.S. Interest Rates." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. https://carnegieendowment.org/china-financial-markets/2025/07/foreign-capital-inflows-dont-lower-us-interest-rates?lang=en; Neo)

It helps to understand the effect of net capital inflows on domestic interest rates by considering the origins of these capital inflows. According to most mainstream economic understanding, foreign savings are “pulled” into the United States as Americans import capital to fund a domestic shortfall of saving. For those who subscribe to this view, the fact that net foreign inflows are by definition equal to the excess of American investment over American saving can only be explained in one way: net inflows must be pulled into the United States by the need of American businesses to fund investment.

But this denies the agency of foreigners. Countries such as China and Germany are not simply passive victims of American domestic imbalances. On the contrary, the fact that China fully controls its banking system while maintaining strict trade controls and even stricter capital controls—unlike the United States—should suggest that it is more likely to be the originator, rather than the absorber, of global saving imbalances. The reality is that countries such as China and Germany have purposely adopted economic models that suppress domestic consumption in favor of a more rapid expansion of manufacturing. As production grows faster than consumption, the saving rates in these countries automatically rise—leading to, in the case of China, the highest saving rate in history.

But supply needs demand. To avoid the rise in unemployment that would result from being forced to cut back on excess output, these countries must export their production surpluses, acquiring foreign assets in payment for exporting more than they import. Therefore, excess domestic saving in these countries is more likely to be “pushed” abroad by internal policies that boost production relative to consumption than be “pulled” abroad by conditions in deficit economies.

The United States is the main recipient of this exported capital. Foreign governments and investors purchase American Treasury bonds, corporate bonds, equities, factories, real estate, and other assets mainly because the United States has the deepest, most liquid, best-governed, and most open financial markets in the world. Surplus countries export their excess saving to the United States primarily for their own domestic reasons, whether or not U.S. businesses need the inflows to increase productive investment.

The key issue here is the direction of causality. The inflows are not responding to a shortage of saving in the United States. Rather, they are the result of saving surpluses generated abroad by policies that repress household consumption.

### 1AR – Small Business Competitiveness

### 1AR – FDI Low

#### 1. FDI Low. Trump chilling effect.

Riley '25 – master’s degree in economics @ University of Southern California. (Bryan Riley. (6-27-2025). "Foreign Investment in U.S. Plummets Amid Trade Uncertainty". National Taxpayers Union. https://www.ntu.org/publications/detail/foreign-investment-in-us-plummets-by-625-amid-trade-uncertainty; Neo)

New foreign investment in U.S. equities plummeted by 62.5% from the final quarter of 2024 to the first quarter of 2025, according to recently released statistics from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA).

New foreign direct investment (FDI)—consisting of foreign ownership of companies in the United States—fell from $88.5 billion in the last quarter of 2024 to $58.7 billion in the first quarter of 2025, a 33.7% decline.

New foreign investment in U.S. equities purchased via the stock market and investment funds fell from $167.8 billion to $23.2 billion, an alarming 86.2% plunge.

Total foreign investment in U.S. equities fell by $174.5 billion, a 62.5% reduction from the fourth quarter of 2024.

Without attempting to draw too many conclusions from a single quarter’s changes, it is reasonable to question whether the administration’s policies are deterring the growth of new foreign investment in the United States.

According to Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, “President Donald Trump is committed to bringing in trillions of dollars in new investment into the United States.”

Unfortunately, Trump’s advisors do not seem to share that goal. Peter Navarro, Trump’s senior counselor for trade and manufacturing, says foreign investment in factories like BMW’s in South Carolina is a “scam” that “doesn’t work for America.” Such factories are responsible for more than half of all vehicles assembled in the United States.

If they remain in place, Trump’s tariff hikes will continue to be a big roadblock to foreign investment. Tariffs on raw materials and imported components drive up the cost of producing goods in the United States, discouraging new international investment here.

More fundamentally, U.S. tariffs and quotas that restrict imports leave our trading partners with fewer dollars to invest in our economy and to purchase U.S.-made exports. The more we import, the more dollars our trading partners have available to invest in the United States. The less we import, the less international investment we receive.

As long as the Trump Administration clings to its misguided view that trade deficits are a national security threat, it will deter U.S. businesses and Americans from attracting foreign investment. No one in the Trump Administration seems to understand that, when someone buys a U.S. export, Americans benefit, but if they buy a share of Apple, we also benefit, even though the purchase of Apple stock causes our trade deficit to increase.

The Trump Administration’s unprecedented actions regarding Nippon Steel’s purchase of U.S. Steel will also have a chilling effect on foreign investment. Trump refused to allow Nippon Steel to merge with U.S. Steel without subjecting several business decisions to a presidential veto. For example, there can be no changes to the location of the company’s headquarters, no salary cuts before 2030, and no acquisition of a U.S. business that competes with U.S. Steel or its supplier without the written consent of President Trump or his designee. Reports are already circulating that these moves may scare off future investment.

The Trump Administration’s trade and investment strategy resembles the failed approach utilized by some developing countries in the 1970s: erect high trade barriers in an attempt to force people to make things here if they want to sell things here, and subject new foreign investment to micromanagement by government officials. It is wishful thinking to believe those policies will work any better here than they have in other countries.

### 1AR – Impact D

#### Finishing Thrall

U.S. strength in unconventional sources, and potential energy independence, further reduces the likelihood of a conflict. Even in a future with vastly inflated hydrocarbon prices, these costs pale in comparison to those associated with a Sino-American war, the economic costs of which likely fall more heavily on China than the United States.7 Global hydrocarbon resources are distributed via a fungible global market, with many stakeholders and moderate diversity of supply. This enables importing states to buy a predictable supply of hydrocarbons at reasonable and competing prices over long contracts. African sources do not constitute a majority of this supply chain, and supposed victory in a theoretical great-power resource war would not guarantee security of resource supply. In sum, the potential for either China or the United States to be willing to enter war with a nuclear adversary over African oil, let alone other, less valuable resources, is extraordinarily small.8

### Africa War – AT: Great Powers – AT: China

#### Trade isn’t pacifying – reverse causality and empirics.

Jakub Grygiel 24, PhD, professor of politics at the Catholic University of America, "Three Illusions of US Foreign Policy," Orbis, Volume 68, Issue 2, 03/19/2024, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2024.02.011

Hence, China was encouraged to join the WTO and not to change its domestic regime. Membership in the WTO would do that work effortlessly—a growing commercial interdependence would de facto convert a Communist dictatorship into a geopolitical actor committed to maintaining the international order. China would automatically understand it was in its own best interest to become a “responsible stakeholder.”23 Western policy, in other words, was based on a bet that participation in global trade would overcome ideological differences and political rivalries. That bet proved wrong.

The trouble with the belief in the primacy of economics is that it is based on the wrong causation. Wealth and trade are not the causes, but the products of peace.24 They are also correlated to peace: it is easier to become wealthy when not under an artillery barrage, and to prosper from commerce when trade routes are open and secure. But the danger of basing policy on this mistaken causation—wealth/trade ergo peace—is that we expect highly unrealistic outcomes, ultimately undermining the security of the state. This is a costly intellectual mistake.

This fallacy raises three risks. First, people like wealth but often not as an end in itself. In fact, men and states work hard to become wealthy not to be at peace but to prevail over others. A wealthy China deeply enmeshed in global commerce, for instance, is not automatically a peaceful China with no aspirations to extend its authoritarian reach abroad or to expand its territorial and maritime possessions.

Similarly, historically, commercial republics such as Venice did not always seek peaceful relations with its rivals—such as Genoa or the Ottoman empire. On the contrary, it was willing to incur commercial losses in order to inflict defeat on the enemy. As Jacob Viner has put it, “plague, war, famine, harvest failure, in a neighboring country was of economic advantage to your own country.”25 Mercantilists thought that wealth was necessary for power and that power was necessary to acquire and keep wealth. It is political calculations—whether seeking domination over others to achieve imperial glory or for a sense of security—that trump economic ones. Russia with Europe since Peter the Great, the Soviet Union with the West during the Cold War, and China with the United States in the twenty-first century are all examples of states pursuing trade to accrue advantages over their commercial partner.26 They thus acquired new technologies to compete more effectively or made the trading counterpart dependent on a product or resource and hence vulnerable to pressure. Neither the goal pursued, nor the unintended consequence of trade, was peace.

The liberal faith in the transformative power of economics, and of trade in particular, is an unrealistic faith that can only end in disappointment. Trade might not alter the political nature of states, but it may actually increase incentives to build military power, resulting in ever more assertive foreign policies and even greater rivalries. Numerous great powers in history that engaged in trade—and that grew economically because of it—developed large power projection capabilities, most often navies. Venice in the eleventh century, Britain in the seventeenth century, Germany and the United States at the end of the nineteenth century, and China in the twenty first century are all examples of states that have sought to strengthen their commerce with powerful navies. Their goal was to protect not trade per se but their own ability to control trade, and to enjoy continued access to markets and goods. Interdependence is not independence, and states prefer the latter.

Second, believing that economic factors drive politics risks an overreliance on economic levers in foreign policy. Specifically, economic and financial sanctions have become the first tools many Western states adopt in response to a threatening rival. This choice is driven partly by the Western democratic reluctance to use, or even to threaten to use, military force. Sanctions provide the appearance of serious action at very low cost and risk.27 But behind sanctions is the recurrent hope that economic pressures suffice to alter the behavior of the enemy, redirecting their behavior toward a more propitious purpose.

And yet, sanctions rarely change the political calculus of the targeted states. The United States has imposed sanctions on Cuba since 1961, on Iran since 1979, and on North Korea since 1950, all with no tangible strategic effect. While poor and decrepit, these countries continue to be threats. Some have even acquired (North Korea) or are on the path to acquire (Iran) nuclear weapons. Similarly, current sanctions on Russia, imposed after its 2014 attack on Ukraine and expanded and invigorated after the 2022 renewed invasion, have not diminished Moscow’s will or ability to continue a brutal war of aggression on its neighbor. Moscow has clearly not ceased its offensive war and will not withdraw from occupied lands unless forced to do so by Ukrainian forces.

Third, this faith in the power of economics risks mistaking the veneer of commercial harmony for the political reality of peace. This temptation was present at the birth of the American republic, most notably in the ideas of Thomas Paine. He went so far as to advocate for the “renunciation of all political alliances” because an independent America would be a “free port to serve the commercial interests of all nations.”28 Geography and commerce, not a strong military force, were, in his view, the best guarantees of security. If economic wellbeing through trade is seen as an alternative to the use of military force, the risk is that the state turns out to be wealthy but quite vulnerable. It may survive, but its independence becomes a function of the decisions of those others who possess military power.29

#### No great power involvement

Robert Barrett 5, Ph.D. Student in the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary, “Understanding the Challenges of African Democratization through Conflict Analysis”, 6-1, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\_id=726162

Westerners eager to promote democracy must be wary of African politicians who promise democratic reform without sincere commitment to the process. Offering money to corrupt leaders in exchange for their taking small steps away from autocracy may in fact be a way of pushing countries into anocracy. As such, world financial lenders and interventionists who wield leverage and influence must take responsibility in considering the ramifications of African nations who adopt democracy in order to maintain elite political privileges. The obvious reason for this, aside from the potential costs in human life should conflict arise from hastily constructed democratic reforms, is the fact that Western donors, in the face of intrastate war would then be faced with channeling funds and resources away from democratization efforts and toward conflict intervention based on issues of human security. This is a problem, as Western nations may be increasingly wary of intervening in Africa hotspots after experiencing firsthand the unpredictable and unforgiving nature of societal warfare in both Somalia and Rwanda. On a costbenefit basis, the West continues to be somewhat reluctant to get to get involved in Africa’s dirty wars, evidenced by its political hesitation when discussing ongoing sanguinary grassroots conflicts in Africa. Even as the world apologizes for bearing witness to the Rwandan genocide without having intervened, the United States, recently using the label ‘genocide’ in the context of the Sudanese conflict (in September of 2004), has only proclaimed sanctions against Sudan, while dismissing any suggestions at actual intervention (Giry, 2005). Part of the problem is that traditional military and diplomatic approaches at separating combatants and enforcing ceasefires have yielded little in Africa. No powerful nations want to get embroiled in conflicts they cannot win – especially those conflicts in which the intervening nation has very little interest.

#### No US/China conflict over Africa

Dr. Lloyd Thrall 15, PhD in War Studies from King’s College, Analyst at the Defense Intelligence Agency, MA from the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, “China's Expanding African Relations: Implications for U.S. National Security”, http://www.rand.org/pubs/research\_reports/RR905

There is little credible potential for a Sino-American conflict over resources in Africa. Contrary to popular and perennial assumptions about resource wars, industry and energy analysis sources project adequate supply of conventional hydrocarbons beyond 2035.6 Given reservoir depletion curves, any tightening of supply would be gradual. The adequacy of supply is further augmented when tertiary production and unconventional sources are considered (such as shale and tar sands). U.S. strength in unconventional sources, and potential energy independence, further reduces the likelihood of a conflict. Even in a future with vastly inflated hydrocarbon prices, these costs pale in comparison to those associated with a Sino-American war, the economic costs of which likely fall more heavily on China than the United States.7 Global hydrocarbon resources are distributed via a fungible global market, with many stakeholders and moderate diversity of supply. This enables importing states to buy a predictable supply of hydrocarbons at reasonable and competing prices over long contracts. African sources do not constitute a majority of this supply chain, and supposed victory in a theoretical great-power resource war would not guarantee security of resource supply. In sum, the potential for either China or the United States to be willing to enter war with a nuclear adversary over African oil, let alone other, less valuable resources, is extraordinarily small.8

### Africa War – AT: Horn of Africa – 1NC

#### Horn of Africa is stable and outside influence is declining.

Bronwyn Bruton & Ashish Kumar Sen 18, Bruton is Director of Programs and Studies at Atlantic Council; Sen is affiliated with Atlantic Council, "Finally, peace in the Horn of Africa?," Atlantic Council, 7/9/2018, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/finally-peace-in-the-horn-of-africa/

The leaders of Ethiopia and Eritrea on July 9 signed a declaration ending the state of war between the two countries.

The summit between Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki and Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in the Eritrean capital, Asmara, on July 9 marked the first time that the neighbors’ heads of state have met in nearly two decades.

Nearly 100,000 people were killed in a border war between the two Horn of Africa neighbors from 1998-2000. Ethiopia and Eritrea had been in a state of “no war, no peace” ever since.

Bronwyn Bruton, director of programs and studies and deputy director of the Atlantic Council’s Africa Center, discussed this important development in the Horn of Africa with the New Atlanticist’s Ashish Kumar Sen. Here are excerpts from our interview.

Q: What have the leaders of Ethiopia and Eritrea agreed to and why is it significant?

Bruton: The peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea in some sense is completely shocking because it has taken so long to get to. But it is important to bear in mind that the reason it has taken so long is entirely because of a small group of people inside Ethiopia—the old liberation fighters from the Tigrayan ethnic minority—who have refused to make peace in violation of international law since 2002.

Ever since an international boundary commission ruled in 2002 that flashpoint territories belonged to Eritrea, Ethiopia has put up one excuse after another to avoid giving that territory back. This refusal to surrender the territory has been partially pragmatic and partially a matter of pride. After fighting alongside Eritrea to liberate Ethiopia from the communist Derg party, the leaders of the revolutionary movement felt indebted and consented to Eritrea’s independence. But then the Tigrayans were blamed by the majority tribes for “losing” Eritrea and, along with it, Ethiopia’s only access to the sea. It was considered to be one of [the late prime minister of Ethiopia] Meles Zenawi’s greatest failure—a black mark hanging over his and his party’s head. So the Tigrayans have always conspired to get Eritrea back and it has been a matter of national pride.

Q: How after years of stalemate has this declaration happened so quickly?

Bruton: Since the Tigrayan elite has lost power, sanity has simply prevailed. Once you take the issue of Tigrayan pride out of the equation, the plain logic of this situation is that both Ethiopia and Eritrea stand to gain immeasurably from peace—not only in terms of the massive economic benefits, which will accrue to both sides, but also in terms of regional peace and stability. Both Eritrea and Ethiopia have pursued proxy warfare in the absence of a regular armed conflict. Now that that’s done, the entire Horn of Africa region stands to benefit.

Q: What specifically does this mean for Ethiopia and Eritrea?

Bruton: It is not entirely clear what it means right now. Events have unfolded at breakneck speed, and it appears that many of the details have yet to be determined. What the leaders of both Eritrea and Ethiopia have jointly stated is that a full normalization of relations will occur, and in the short term that will involve opening the border, giving Ethiopia access to the ports, reopening the embassies that have been shuttered since 1998, and resuming flights between the capitals. People will apparently be able to cross the border at will—and no mention has been made of any tariffs on goods. (That was one of the sources of conflict before the war.)

Q: What does this development mean for the United States?

Bruton: For the United States it presents some challenges. In the first place, it is a magnificent opportunity because it will allow for increased stability. On the other hand, the United States has set up a kind of alternate reality in the Horn of Africa for many years, in which Eritrea was a “spoiler,” and was sanctioned, while the Tigrayan minority regime in Ethiopia was held up as a model partner and the shining white knights of US counterterrorism efforts. Now the Tigrayans have been thrown out of power, and overnight, democracy and peace seems to be spreading magically across the Horn of Africa—showing what might have been achieved so much earlier, if only the United States had not fought so hard to keep the old authoritarian regime in power. Neither the Eritrean government nor the Ethiopian people are likely to forget the US role in their long years of suffering, so Washington has some real repair work to do. In this one respect, it may actually be helpful that the Trump administration has put so much distance between itself and the Obama administration’s approach. They can try to disown the old policies and get a fresh start. But it may or may not work. By all appearances, Abiy intends to be a truly democratic, populist leader, and as such he may or may not be interested in courting US favor by pursuing Washington counterterror objectives across the region, at the risk of Ethiopian soldiers’ lives. That remains to be seen.

Washington will also have to contend with a newly invigorated Eritrea, which is poised to take a leadership role on the regional stage. There’s a strong upside to that: Eritrea could be extremely helpful in resolving the conflict in South Sudan, for example, and could help the United States make progress in Somalia. But Eritrea is likely to seek progress by pointing out how badly US policy has performed in those countries, and by suggesting entirely new approaches that the United States may or may not find palatable. Eritrea, for example, has always talked about the importance of negotiating with all the actors in the Somali conflict, not just the pro-government actors—including parts of the terrorist group al Shabaab. That is the right approach to take, in my view, but something that the United States has fiercely resisted, and may continue to resist now, even in the face of an overwhelming lack of progress in resolving the conflict in Somalia.

The bottom line is that a partnership between Isaias in Eritrea and a true democratic leader in Ethiopia will allow for the creation of a more authentic regional voice to counter American assumptions about the Horn. Washington is likely to find itself out of the driver’s seat at a time when it’s already worried by the growing Arab influence in the Horn. This is a reality that’s evident in the peace process itself: it’s something that Ethiopia and Eritrea sorted out completely by themselves, with precious little reference to the United States. To the extent that any outside actor is receiving credit for massaging the peace process along, it’s Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates that people are pointing to. That is unfortunately the “new normal” that Washington is going to have to contend with—it used to be the only game in town, and now it’s not even the biggest game in town. In terms of influence, it’s lining up behind China and the Gulf States.

Q: How should the United States respond to this development?

Bruton: The United States will certainly celebrate the end of the border conflict, but I fear that it is poorly positioned to capitalize on the development because the Trump administration is so distracted by other events.

The United States is going to be challenged because a lot of the newly empowered actors in the Horn of Africa—including the Ethiopian opposition that is now in power and the Eritreans—have long regarded it as a malign influence. The United States has put all of its military, political, and economic weight behind the Tigrayan elite and this Tigrayan elite has brutalized the Horn of Africa. They have robbed the Ethiopian people, they have kept Eritrea in a state of emergency for twenty years, they have imprisoned journalists and democrats as terrorists, they have invaded Somalia. They have done a whole host of awful things that the United States has either actively supported and condoned.

Now that the balance of power has shifted, the United States has to come to terms with what it has done. It is going to have to envision a new way forward that is much more constructive and much more collaborative than the strategy that it has used in the past. It now doesn’t have an authoritarian regime doing business with it [in Ethiopia].