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This Changes Many Things: Post-Truth and National Security

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Introduction

In the second half of the 2010s, a small cottage industry of books, think-tank monographs, and even religious tracts proclaimed the rise of "post-truth" or "truth decay" in the United States and other liberal-democratic societies. With a few important exceptions,[1] these efforts aligned themselves on one side or the other of populist-political victories in the United Kingdom's "Brexit" referendum and the U.S. presidential election of 2016.[2] In most of these publications, post-truth was the other side's problem, and something that one's own side had to defeat with the equivalent of the decoder kits and how-to guides that pundits earnestly provided.

Even as post-truth became more pervasive across all "sides," however – essentially defining how we engaged with the COVID-19 pandemic as a society, for example – acknowledgement and discussion of the phenomenon waned. Many Americans may decry (when not participating in) post-truth's manifestations and comorbidities: the masquerading of emotions and opinions as indisputable facts, the rise of cancel culture and tribalism, mob-driven behavior of all sorts, and waning confidence in almost all forms of authority. But perhaps because it implicates so many of us and therefore makes us deeply uncomfortable, post-truth as an objective phenomenon is an analytical backwater. Post-truth may reshape how we govern ourselves and how we interact across political, social, and international boundaries alike. Yet

few educators, public-policy experts, and academic researchers even acknowledge it. This gap between attention and importance is particularly wide in national security, where both the problems and the practice of the field may be changed significantly by post-truth.

This paper is part of a series of efforts to grapple with post-truth and national security, which began with an *Occasional Paper* of the National Institute for Public Policy (NIPP) in late-2021[3] and will include other outreach, discussion, and research going forward. Already, the initial NIPP publication generated discussion about the ways in which post-truth is unique in our early-21st century setting and whether those who care about U.S. national security even should be concerned about it. This paper addresses those questions in particular.

What is Post-Truth?

Here I proceed from what is literally the (Cambridge) dictionary definition of post-truth as "a situation in which people are more likely to accept an argument based on their emotions and beliefs, rather than one based on facts."[4] Readers may respond by asking, "And what else is new?" Right. Triumphs of emotion and belief over rationality are at least as common as the reverse in human history – among individuals and societies alike. But at least three things today are indeed "new:"

The digital accelerant. First, digital technology and social media fundamentally change the scale and stakes of post-truth. These tools allow the creation and dissemination of information in previously unimaginable quantities and at previously unimaginable speeds. Of course: our smartphones, servers, and screens cannot discern fact or truth from fiction or falsehood. If anything – as P. W. Singer and Emerson T. Brooking observe – "[s]ocial networks reward not veracity but virality."[5] Fabulous disinformation or outright fabrications will be more "viral" than sober, bias-challenging truth. Just as importantly: digital technologies combine to deliver our information in resilient silos often impervious to contradictory facts and viewpoints. Complex algorithms discern our biases online and assure that we are fed a steady diet of the same. As a result, one's aunt who is an Ivy League professor may be no more skeptical of unsubstantiated ideas and no less hostile to alternative explanations and viewpoints than is one's "drunken uncle" who never completed high school. Their respective information silos make it so.

The bridge to action. The post-truth condition is intrinsically worrisome but becomes much more vexing when misleading or false information is acted upon, as is now happening in nearly all areas of American life. Digital accelerants serve not only to disseminate information with unprecedented efficiency but also to mobilize large-scale action. In the last two years alone, emotions and unsubstantiated beliefs led a mob to storm the U.S. Capitol seeking the overturn of an election, thousands of schools to remain shuttered even after clear evidence showed that COVID-19 posed almost no risk to (or from) children, serious inquiry into the origins of the

SARS-CoV-2 virus to be placed off limits, tens of millions of people to purchase the "meme stocks" of struggling companies, dozens of prominent professional careers to be ended by cancel campaigns, and major businesses to join outraged boycotts in response to benign election-law changes in the state of Georgia.[6] And that list is by no means comprehensive.

The failing correctives. Finally, Americans and others in the Western tradition appear to be abandoning what we believed about the nature and pursuit of truth. No epistemological panaceas exist. But hard-earned institutions and mindsets dating at least to the Enlightenment and the rise of classical liberalism worked well to check the excesses of our emotions and unsubstantiated beliefs in the public square as well as in education and the progress of science. Today, many of these long-standing correctives are failing – such as mass-consumption journalism with the goal of objectivity; civics education in schools and open intellectual debate in universities; meaningful peer review; routine associations – allowing in-person conversations – with people outside one's political or social tribe, and even the ability to challenge orthodoxies through art, comedy, and satire. The decline and widespread loss of confidence in these correctives form a classic vicious cycle with post-truth.

What is post-truth not?

Glib notions of post-truth abound, which get the problem wrong by focusing too narrowly or selectively. Three mistakes in particular make post-truth seem much "simpler" than it actually is. Post-truth is not:

Something done to us by an adversary. Nefarious foreign influences certainly exist in digital and social media – but their services are neither necessary nor sufficient to drive post-truth. No credible research supports the notion that autonomous online software ("bots") and/or large number of "trolls" working for Russia or another adversary stoked the emotions or planted the beliefs that animate millions of Americans online – let alone swayed an election (only to sway the next one in the opposite direction). The truth problems of the United States and many of its allies are largely homegrown. Enabled by digital platforms we created and fed by claims we readily share with each other by the hundreds of millions, Americans made the journey to post-truth on our own.

Fake news. It is similarly tempting to equate the post-truth condition with biased media: "only fake news could get Tribe X to do Stupid Thing Y." Recent research suggests, however, that polarized news sources are closer to a consequence than a cause of post-truth. In an essay examining several large-scale studies of media consumption and opinion formation, Martin Gurri concludes that news outlets generally feed pre-existing beliefs rather than persuading large numbers of people to change their existing views.[7] The direction of social-media algorithms makes this conclusion reasonable: information is brought to us, based on what we already "like;" we are not brought to the information, which then somehow converts us. For

example, if there is a single news or online information source that changed its basic risk orientation on public health or its attitude on masking, social distancing, vaccine mandates and the like during the COVID-19 pandemic – let alone attempted to persuade its readers to change their views – please email the author the precious evidence immediately. This conclusion does not absolve the practice or business models of journalism of any responsibility for post-truth (see "the failing correctives") but weighs strongly against a simplistic notion of causation.

The other side's problem. America's truth problem has no partisan-political boundaries and cannot be attributed exclusively to specific people or groups. The earlier "bridge-to-action" examples should make that clear. Much as we would like the reassurance – depending on our political orientations – it is not a MAGA ("Make America Great Again") problem or a Woke problem or a Right problem or a Left problem. This is perhaps the hardest conclusion for most people to accept. Few of us go through life believing that we are dupes at the mercy of online algorithms and other forms of bias reinforcement. Instead, we believe that we have done our homework and reached correct and reasonable conclusions about what is going on in the world and what should be done about it. If only that were always so. The upshot here is neither relativism ("there is no truth") nor nihilism ("there is no right or wrong") but simply a recognition that post-truth complicates the search for knowledge and moral certitude alike.

Importantly, this is not to argue that all arguments advanced in the post-truth environment are equally fallacious or misleading. Post-truth narratives may include facts, to a greater or lesser degree. This is to suggest, however, that in today's post-truth public square, competing positions often are based more on their fealty to a preferred narrative than to their factual veracity, and are embraced as such.

How did we get here and what else is going on?

The post-truth conditions described earlier as "new" – the digital accelerant, the bridge to action, and the failing correctives – are new in comparison to the much longer span of human history. No switch just flipped, however. These conditions appeared over the course of the last two decades and have not reached a resting point. We are experiencing what Gurri calls the "Fifth Wave: . . . the earliest stages of a colossal transformation from the industrial age to something that doesn't even have a name yet," marked by "a tsunami of information that has battered the institutions that sustain modern society and the elites who control them."[8]

My Figure 1 provides a deliberately simplified map of the path that information has taken to post-truth, and some of the associated conditions. In nutshell: The sophistication and ubiquity of digital technology made the dissemination of information across large distances, potentially to large numbers of people, much easier that it had ever been in human history. This allowed a massive proliferation in our sources of information – "democratizing" data and ideas by making anyone a potential source but also diversifying – for good or ill – the frameworks and

goals of the purveyors. Previous gatekeepers of information – editors and publishers, professional journalists, credentialed scientists, intelligence analysts, etc. – naturally became weaker. Norms governing information – "journalistic ethics," "scientific method," "peer review," etc. – were redefined, i.e., muddled, and/or became more difficult to enforce. And consensus-driven notions of truth – or even the aspiration to reach them – largely evaporated.
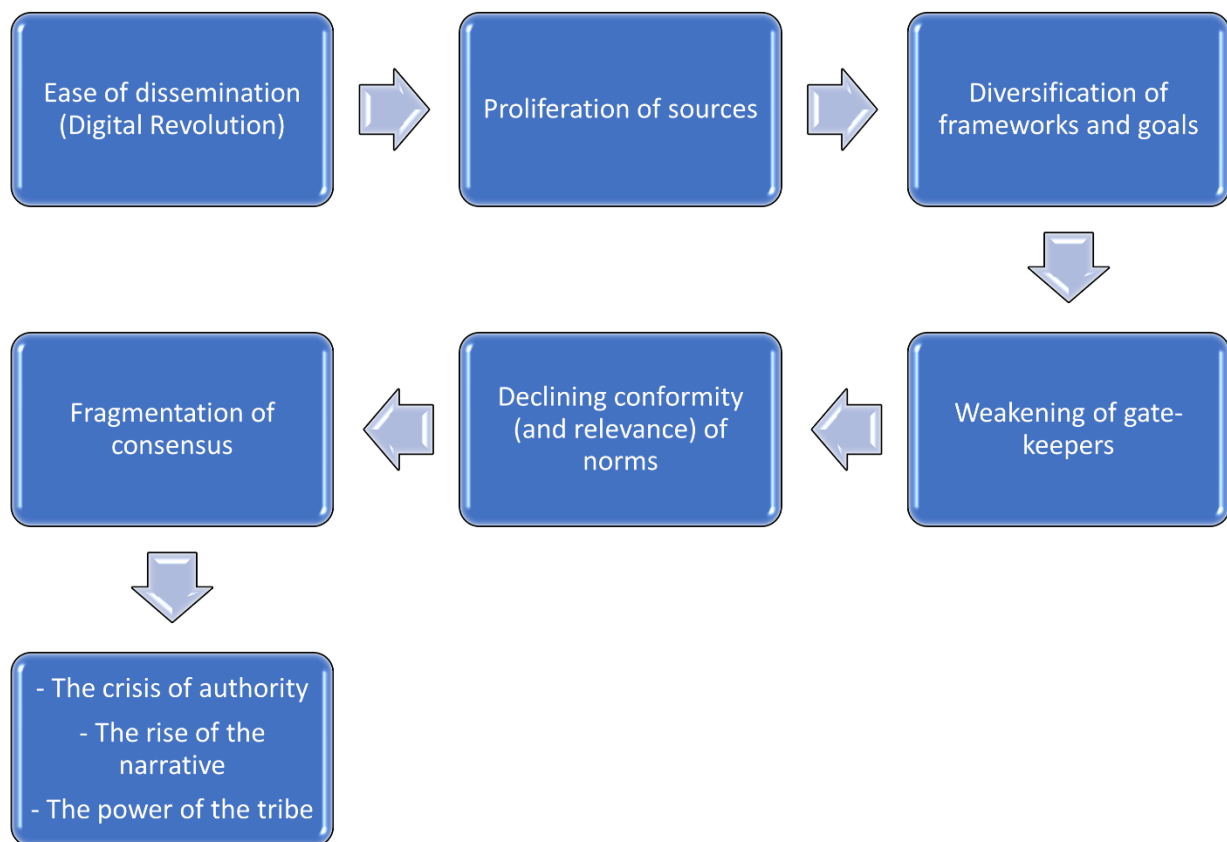

Figure 1: Information on the Path to Post-Truth

In sociopolitical versions of a double helix, closely related conditions now grow and intertwine with post-truth:

- First among these is the "**crisis of authority.**"[9] This is political populism on steroids and describes a far more enduring empowerment of individuals and groups – at the expense of traditional elites – to self-determine not only what is "true" in the epistemological sense but also what is plausible in politics and society. As Gurri writes, the crisis of authority "has eliminated the possibility of a story being accepted by the public at large on any subject,

science very much included. The mass audience has shattered into a thousand sectarian perspectives, which in turn has resulted in a constant churning of distrust, negation, anger, and revolt. Truth itself is up for grabs."[10]

- Meanwhile, the declared realities and plausible futures alike now emerge in "**narratives,**" which have risen to become – as much as party-political platforms, corporate objectives, or scientific hypotheses ever were – the drivers of action in public arenas. Without offering judgments about any of them: the anti-vaccination/mandatory vaccination, climate change, masking/anti-masking, stolen elections, systemic racism, and transgender narratives represent nearly the sum total of U.S. domestic "discourse" and action in the last two years. Election outcomes have and will continue to hinge on them. All share the same characteristics: they offer no standard definitions and share no fact base (indeed they avoid both to maximize adherence); stand as all-or-nothing propositions (treating nuanced views or questions as tantamount to heresy); involve rituals and totems of a quasi-religious nature (masks, obligatory donations, pronoun declarations, etc.), and evolve seamlessly without even the acknowledgement that this is occurring.

- And the loci of power in a post-truth world now are the "**tribes,**" amorphous sources of affiliation and community that accumulate power in nearly the opposite way that this has been done in the past. Precisely because they lack governing bodies, meaningful paper trails, or rules – let alone accountability in any legal or practical sense – informal tribes are the ideal constructs in which to share information, secure fealty to ever-evolving narratives, and prompt action in a post-truth society such as America's. Tribes can wield power regardless of whether they actually could demonstrate power in the light of day – as no membership dues are collected, no roll calls are taken, and no identification is required (quite the contrary). To listen to their opponents, the MAGA and Woke tribes are very large and monolithic. Are they? No one really knows. But are they powerful? Clearly. Ask an arts-group leader, corporate non-conformist, or college professor "canceled" at the hands of an anonymous online mob – which somehow never appears when it is invited to reveal itself and take part in the reconstruction.

What are the implications for national security?

To first establish a larger and perhaps more objective frame of reference, this paper so far skirted its declared subtitle of "national security." Post-truth took its time to arrive at the doorstep of the national-security field – but it has arrived and now demands attention. Taken from the events of recent weeks alone:

- *Stopping the war that isn't*. Perhaps to the surprise of many who see only the partisan divide of Washington, old-guard leftist and conservative opinion leaders quite frequently find common ground in the same narratives and tribes. Lately they have rallied as if with a

single voice against a war that does not exist and is advocated by no one in national office (least of all the Commander in Chief): direct U.S. military engagement against Russia to defend Ukraine. In Tweets, digital columns, and mass-market cable news shows, millions of Americans have been urged to resist the "familiar drumbeats" and "work-from-home MacArthurs" calling for U.S. military action in Ukraine.[11] Except that no such drumbeats or calls exist.

- *Ignoring the investigation that is.* Perhaps to the surprise of many who do not read the opinion pages of the *Wall Street Journal* or a handful of online conservative websites and newsletters, a Special Counsel of the U.S. Department of Justice implied in February 2022 court disclosures that Internet data involving the White House and the private residence of the 2016 president-elect may have been exploited for partisan political purposes and turned over to the FBI under false pretenses.[12] If this proves true, then the scandal would rival any in American political history. Yet almost all of the nation's top newspapers and television networks treat the work of the Special Counsel as if it did not exist. These journalistic outlets could seek to debunk or verify the emerging leads through their reporting – partisan fealty should be irrelevant – but instead they simply disregard the information.

- *The retired general in the churches.* The retired lieutenant-general who 10 years ago served as the head of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency, and later became the U.S. National Security Advisor, Michael Flynn, today headlines the "Reawaken America Tour" – events filling large churches across the country and confirming the worst fears of an American tribe roughly known as "conservative Christian" about the nation's future.[13] Prior to January 6, 2021, Flynn advocated military intervention and the use of martial law to affect the final disposition of the 2020 presidential election.[14]

- *The retired generals warning of the retired general in the churches.* In late-December 2021, three other retired U.S. Army generals, representing a different tribe, took to the opinion pages of the *Washington Post* to decry "the potential for lethal chaos inside our military, which would put all Americans at severe risk" following the 2024 presidential election.[15] To demonstrate the seriousness of their concerns about a military coup and the need to head it off, the generals wrote that:

> all military branches must undertake more intensive intelligence work at all installations. The goal should be to identify, isolate and remove potential mutineers; guard against efforts by propagandists who use misinformation to subvert the chain of command; and understand how that and other misinformation spreads across the ranks after it is introduced by propagandists. Finally, the Defense Department should war-game the next potential post-election insurrection or coup attempt to identify weak spots. It must then conduct a top-down debrief of its findings and begin putting in place safeguards

to prevent breakdowns not just in the military, but also in any agency that works hand in hand with the military.

- *The narratives creating the terrorists, maybe.* On February 7, 2022, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued an updated "Summary of Terrorism Threat to the U.S Homeland" that flagged (in its first sentence) "an online environment filled with false or misleading narratives and conspiracy theories, and other forms of mis- dis- and mal-information (MDM) introduced and/or amplified by foreign and domestic threat actors."[16] Another agency of the U.S. Government has defined "MDM,"[17] and DHS states that it is "working with public and private sector partners, as well as foreign counterparts, to identify and evaluate MDM . . . that endorse or could inspire violence."[18] No details are provided on how the U.S. Government proposes to do this amid the information tsunami of the digital age or the political biases it will bring to the exercise.

So: Millions of Americans now understand the arguments against a U.S. military action that will not occur (leaving open the question of how many have considered actual U.S. options and stakes in eastern Europe). Millions of Americans do not know that the accusations of foreign influence that hobbled a previous president may have been nearly the opposite of what actually occurred. Retired generals grab spotlights variously to convince large numbers of Americans that their elected government is illegitimate or that a military coup is likely in 2024 absent domestic-surveillance efforts against active servicepeople (overshadowing the views of many other current and retired officers who believe that both claims are bunkum). Meanwhile, U.S. counter-intelligence services articulate a terrorist threat (stemming from "an environment filled with false or misleading narratives") that could place most Americans under suspicion – while offering no meaningful detail on what the government might do about it.

Welcome to post-truth and national security. And that is a selective set of examples, covering barely two months.

To move from the specific to the general, at least three categories of concerns should be grappled with by national-security professionals and observers of the field:

Post-Truth and Information. Reliable and widely trusted information is the cornerstone of analysis and policy recommendations in national security. As notions of truth and the institutional guardians of objective information wobble in our larger society, however, distinguishing between facts and opinions or between truth and emotions in U.S. national security affairs will become as difficult as it is in other arenas.

The so-called "fog of war" – describing the lack of definitive information that often exists on a live battlefield – may soon become a much more pervasive "fog of reality" if national security professionals sacrifice evidence standards, lose trust in their sources, or simply succumb to

narratives in the wider society. The results could include manipulated or neglected analyses as well as irresistible pressures to act against exaggerated threats, or conversely to ignore manifest threats.

A fog of reality already obscures efforts to prioritize national security threats in a rational way. For example, in the face of obvious and severe security challenges from China, Iran, North Korea, and Russia – directly in the wheelhouse of a military organization – the Pentagon recently labeled climate change an "existential threat to our nation's security"[19] and issued a 30-page "Climate Adaptation Plan" committing the Department of Defense among many other things to "climate literacy," "environmental justice" and the application of "climate intelligence."[20] The degree to which climate change is a problem is the subject of legitimate debate. Compared with many other entities of government and civil society, however, the Pentagon has no brief to carry on this subject and little ability to take meaningful action. If narrative-driven priorities nevertheless dominate (and to how many other threats would Pentagon leaders affix the adjective "existential"?), then the U.S. response to actual military challenges may be degraded proportionately.

Previously, the relative openness and rationality of U.S national security analysis could be considered an American strength in comparison with our authoritarian adversaries. We sacrifice this advantage at our peril.

Post-Truth and Decision. National security decision making will be less effective and decision execution will be less reliable if post-truth mindsets and behavior gain ground anywhere along the chain of command – or even if they are perceived to exist by Americans, our allies, or our adversaries.

Whether or not the views of Michael Flynn about the 2020 elections are widespread in the U.S. military, and whether or not the warnings and recommendations of the other retired U.S. Army generals are overblown, seeds of doubt about the loyalty of the armed forces and the reliability of the chain of command have been planted widely. At the same time, neither the current nor previous U.S. Administrations provide comfort for a belief that national security is off-limits to alternative realities on consequential matters. President Trump's claim that the 2020 election was "stolen" reportedly inspired fears extending to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the president might augment his chosen reality by starting a war with China.[21] For his part – during and after the U.S. military withdrawal from Afghanistan only a few months into his Administration – President Biden made numerous, reportedly false claims about the military situation in Afghanistan, U.S. preparations for withdrawal, the options he had been given as Commander in Chief, and other issues.[22] Top military commanders testifying under oath attempted to correct the record in some cases, offering another post-truth spectacle to Americans and their adversaries alike.[23]

Post-Truth and Resilience. The U.S. in the years ahead will be a test case of whether a nation divided into competing "realities" can maintain its resilience and ultimately its unity, the foundational requirement of national security. With growing urgency, sober legal analysts and scholars with diverse political backgrounds have published warnings since at least 2020 that irreconcilable political divisions, secessions, and even a civil war are at hand.[24] In a recent *Washington Post* essay, historian Robert Kagan went so far as to contend that a U.S. constitutional crisis already is underway in slow motion, likely to culminate in civil unrest and a presidential legitimacy crisis after the 2024 election.[25] Kagan assigns blame primarily to former President Trump and predicts that the unrest will arise on the Right when Trump is defeated (in Kagan's view, inevitably) for re-election. As other observers were quick to point out, however, a mirror-image scenario is no less likely to arise if Trump or an acolyte is legitimately elected (as early polls suggest is quite plausible) and progressive activists put their earlier "resistance" back into play.[26] The potential for cyber-driven meddling by America's adversaries in situations of this nature will be very high.

Warnings of civil unrest leading to disunion variously attribute the problem to charismatic and social-media-savvy leaders such as Trump or Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, to extreme gerrymandering that has eliminated most incentives for political compromise and paralyzed the U.S. Congress, or simply to the pervasive tribalism of "red-versus-blue" America. These conditions certainly have not helped matters. Post-truth, however, undergirds all of them. Unprecedented political-personality cults, irrational legislative meltdowns, and the willingness to believe anything of one's fellow citizens could not be sustained if millions of Americans did not inhabit separate information universes with no shared understanding of truth.

Is there anything that we can (or should) do about post-truth?

This author's earlier paper on post-truth outlined initial categories of possible responses by the national-security community – focused on norms, learning, and alliance considerations[27] – requiring considerably more development and reflection. At an even more basic level, however, it is important to consider if responses should take the form of trying to hold back post-truth or of accommodating it and perhaps even turning it to U.S. advantage.

Given the technological underpinnings of 21st century post-truth, the notion of overcoming or reversing it has much in common with post-Hiroshima notions of overcoming or reversing the existence of nuclear weapons. Post-truth likely is a genie that will not be forced or lured back into a bottle. Indeed, as early atomic weapons gave way to vastly more powerful hydrogen bombs, the technologies encouraging post-truth are poised to evolve in ways that will blur and multiply "realities" more profoundly than the humble internet ever could. Immersive virtual technologies and the rise of what already is called the "metaverse" soon will permit almost all people's lives to be lived in places and scenarios of their (or their employer's or their government's or their tribe's) choosing. How protection of national security and competition

between nations occur in an amped-up condition of post-truth powered by virtual-reality systems are the most open of questions. Answering those questions – to carry the analogy to the early nuclear age further – will require a broad range of iconoclastic thinking reminiscent of the "Wizards of Armageddon" who offered theories and strategies to leaders newly in authority to control nuclear weapons.[28]

If there are at least two such thinkers already at work, they are the social philosopher Steve Fuller, author most recently of *A Player's Guide to the Post-Truth Condition*,[29] and the polymath and former Portuguese diplomat Bruno Maçães, who recently put forward a "Manifesto of Virtualism" appropriately in the form of a non-fungible token (NFT) sold for 10 Eth in crypto-currency.[30] Both clearly regard post-truth as an established and largely irreversible condition better mastered than fought. In Fuller's take:

> Authority is finally being devolved from a vanguard class of 'experts' with a monopoly of moral and political force to some yet-to-be-defined organization of independent self-legislating individuals. In the coming years we should expect that such modern 'establishment' institutions as the 'state' and the 'university' will be subject to the same shakedown that the 'church' has periodically undergone. ... The ultimate prize in the post-truth condition is to name the game you play, even if you turn out to be the loser.

For his part, Maçães argues that the historical options of a "traditional state" that "pursues a conception of the good life that is always and everywhere true" or a "liberal state, which refrains from affirming the truth of any specific way of life," will give way to "the post-truth state." He writes: "Like the traditional state, it pursues a specific view of the world or rather a number of specific views, but it does this with no illusions about their truth and without taking them too literally. It is fragmentary and composite, a vast stage where different possibilities may be concurrently staged."[31] In his recent manifesto, Maçães takes the intellectual hand-off from Fuller and offers 15 of what amount to rules for the game of "Virtualism" that he expects will be played widely – and no place more so than in the United States. Elsewhere, Maçães notes that a Chinese think tank recently published what may have been the first study on the national-security implications of the metaverse, concluding that "it could have deep consequences for the global distribution of power."[32] He sees a possibility that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) might benefit from using the metaverse to create "a vision of the world from which certain elements have been excised." But in general, Maçães views the United States. – always more focused on the possible and excited by change than most societies – as the greatest potential beneficiary of global competition in a post-truth metaverse.

Conclusion

Post-truth by nature is an amorphous condition, vexing to any of us who "grew up" as analysts, policymakers, or political leaders in a public arena that operated in very different ways. Post-truth can appear by turns banal, farcical, overwhelming, or trivial. The intent of this paper has been to distill the essence of post-truth further, distinguish it from the more general human condition, consider some of its current manifestations and its implications for national security – and finally to argue for a great deal of further thinking and discussion by professionals concerned with the security, global influence, and viability of the United States in the 21st century.

[1] Though they offer diverse conclusions and recommendations, the following are politically even-handed and likely to be intellectually enduring: Steve Fuller, *Post-Truth: Knowledge as a Power Game* (London: Anthem Press, 2018), Jennifer Kavanagh and Michael D. Rich, "Truth Decay: An Initial Exploration of the Diminishing Rose of Facts and Analysis in American Public Life," RAND Corporate Research Report RR-2314-RC (2018), and Jonathan Rauch, *The Constitution of Knowledge: A Defense of Truth* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2021).

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[3] Gary L. Geipel, *Post-Truth and National Security: Context, Challenges, and Responses*, Occasional Paper v. 1 no. 12 (Fairfax, VA: National Institute for Public Policy, December 2021), available at https://nipp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Geipel-OP-12-for-web.pdf.

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[5] P.W. Singer and Emerson T. Brooking, *LikeWar: The Weaponization of Social Media* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018), p. 20.

[6] For references on these and other examples, see Geipel, op cit., pp. 2-4.

[7] Martin Gurri, "What's the Connection Between News – Fake and Real – and Opinion?," *DiscourseMagazine.com* (January 24, 2022), available at https://www.discoursemagazine.com/culture-and-society/2022/01/24/whats-the-connection-between-news-fake-and-real-and-opinion/.

[8] Martin Gurri, "Welcome to The Fifth Wave," *DiscourseMagazine.com* (October 21, 2021), available at https://www.discoursemagazine.com/ideas/2021/10/21/welcome-to-the-fifth-wave/.

[9] The term must be credited to Martin Gurri in *The Revolt of the Public and the Crisis of Authority in the New Millennium* (Stripe Press, 2018).

[10] Gurri, "Welcome to The Fifth Wave," op cit.

[11] Noah Smith, "Last War Brain," substack.com (February 13, 2022), available at https://noahpinion.substack.com/p/last-war-brain?r=16y30&utm_source=url and David French, "Burning Straw

Men by the Bushel," TheDispatch.com (February 16, 2022), available at
https://frenchpress.thedispatch.com/p/burning-straw-men-by-the-bushel?r=8bh1&utm_source=url.

[12] "Trump Really Was Spied On," *The Wall Street Journal* (February 15, 2022), available at
https://www.wsj.com/articles/donald-trump-really-was-spied-on-2016-clinton-campaign-john-durham-court-filing-11644878973.

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[19] Department of Defense, Press Release on the Climate Adaptation Plan (October 7, 2021), available at
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