
THE MAREN BRIEF · RECOMMENDED READING

The Global Chokepoints Series

Recommended Reading

The Ten-Vector Reader-Community Companion

"Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the LORD."

— Proverbs 20:10 (KJV)

Approximately Fifty Curated Volumes
Across the Ten-Vector Framework

Respectfully.

Elias Maren

July 2026 · Companion to the Global Chokepoints Educational Sprint

Publisher's Note

This companion volume — the Global Chokepoints Series Recommended Reading — accompanies the five-day educational sprint the Maren Brief walked from Monday, July 13 through Friday, July 17, 2026. That arc walked the fifteen-volume Global Chokepoints Series across the ten-vector analytical framework the publication operates within, culminating in Friday's capstone (The Weaponized Trade) with a comprehensive synthesis and the Watchman's fullest editorial position stated in seven numbered positions.

The reading list operates within the Watchman Protocol methodology. The approximately fifty curated volumes across eight categories represent the credentialed analytical range the serious reader may engage — the Principle Three (Two Voices methodology) discipline extended across the full reading architecture. The reader will encounter the defenders of the American strategic architecture alongside the credentialed critics; that range represents the analytical honesty the Watchman ethos requires.

The categories organize the reading around the ten-vector framework: Category One (Vector 1 · Iran/Hormuz) · Category Two (Vector 2 · Suez/Red Sea/Levant) · Category Three (Vectors 3–4 · Great-Power Waters) · Category Four (Vectors 5, 8 · Frontier Domains) · Category Five (Vector 6 · Economic Warfare) · Category Six (Vectors 7, 9, 10 · Cross-Cutting) · plus Additional Foundational Grand-Strategy Texts and Additional Covenantal Framework Readings.

The reader is not charged with reading every volume; the reader is invited to select the volumes matching their own analytical priorities across the vectors they engage most substantively. This reading list is the analytical map, not the comprehensive syllabus. The Watchman documents. The reader concludes. The reader-community walks forward with the analytical instruments in hand.

Respectfully.

Elias Maren

CATEGORY ONE · VECTOR ONE

Iran and the Hormuz Architecture

Foundational and contemporary readings on the Iranian regime, the Persian Corridor, and the Hormuz chokepoint architecture. Bracketing voices from the credentialed analytical range walked in Monday, July 13 · The Persian Corridor.

Reading Khamenei: The World View of Iran's Most Powerful Leader

Karim Sadjadpour · Carnegie Endowment for International Peace · 2008

The foundational monograph on the Supreme Leader's worldview drawn from three decades of speeches and writings. Sadjadpour (one of the Two Voices in Monday's brief) delivers the analytical foundation for reading the Iranian regime's structural strategic behavior — required baseline reading.

Guardians of the Revolution: Iran and the World in the Age of the Ayatollahs

Ray Takeyh · Oxford University Press · 2009

The comprehensive analytical treatment of the Iranian regime's revolutionary trajectory from 1979 to the contemporary architecture. Takeyh (Council on Foreign Relations) operates within the credentialed analytical framework the Vector One reader must engage.

The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future

Vali Nasr · W.W. Norton · 2006

The structural analytical framework for reading the Sunni-Shia geopolitical restructuring the 2003 Iraq intervention accelerated. Nasr's framework operates as the broader analytical architecture within which the Iran-Hormuz question sits.

Unthinkable: Iran, the Bomb, and American Strategy

Kenneth Pollack · Simon & Schuster · 2013

The structural analysis of the Iranian nuclear question walked through the American strategic response framework. Pollack (Brookings, then AEI) delivers the analytical rigor the nuclear-weapons dimension of Vector One requires.

Revolutionary Iran: A History of the Islamic Republic

Michael Axworthy · Oxford University Press · 2013

The comprehensive historical treatment of the Islamic Republic from 1979 to the contemporary architecture. Axworthy (Exeter) operates within the historical framework the analytical reading requires.

Iran's Political Economy since the Revolution

Suzanne Maloney · Cambridge University Press · 2015

The structural economic analysis of the Iranian regime — required reading for engaging the Vector Six weaponized-trade architecture as applied to the Iranian sanctions regime. Maloney (Brookings) delivers the credentialed economic framework.

The Twilight War: The Secret History of America's Thirty-Year Conflict with Iran

David Crist · Penguin Press · 2012

The comprehensive treatment of the American-Iranian confrontation from 1979 through the contemporary architecture. Crist (senior historian, U.S. Department of Defense) operates within the documentary archive the analytical framework requires.

The Iran Wars: Spy Games, Bank Battles, and the Secret Deals That Reshaped the Middle East

Jay Solomon · Random House · 2016

The journalistic treatment of the 2015 JCPOA architecture and the broader Iran-American negotiations. Solomon (former Wall Street Journal) delivers the documentary framework the contemporary reading requires.

CATEGORY TWO · VECTOR TWO

The Suez, Red Sea, and the Cedar Coast

Readings on the Suez Canal, Bab-el-Mandeb, and the broader Levantine architecture — the reading foundation for engaging Tuesday, July 14 · The Southern Sea.

Beirut 1958: How America's Wars in the Middle East Began

Bruce Riedel · Brookings Institution Press · 2019

Riedel (one of the Two Voices in Tuesday's brief) delivers the analytical treatment of the first American military intervention in the Middle East. The structural analytical framework applies directly to the contemporary Lebanese and broader regional architecture.

The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power

Daniel Yergin · Simon & Schuster · 1991

The foundational treatment of the global oil architecture the Vector Two Suez chokepoint operates within. Yergin (Pulitzer Prize) delivers the historical framework the analytical reading requires — essential baseline reading.

The New Map: Energy, Climate, and the Clash of Nations

Daniel Yergin · Penguin Press · 2020

The contemporary analytical companion to *The Prize* — Yergin's treatment of the contemporary energy-and-geopolitics architecture including the Middle East, the Russian architecture, and the broader energy transition.

A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East

David Fromkin · Henry Holt · 1989

The foundational historical treatment of the post-1918 restructuring that established the contemporary Middle East state architecture. Fromkin's framework operates as the structural backdrop the Vector Two reading requires.

Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East

Michael B. Oren · Oxford University Press · 2002

The comprehensive analytical treatment of the 1967 restructuring — foundational for reading the contemporary regional architecture. Oren (former Israeli ambassador to the U.S.) operates within the documentary framework the analytical reading requires.

Tested by Zion: The Bush Administration and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Elliott Abrams · Cambridge University Press · 2013

The insider treatment of the Bush administration's engagement with the Israeli-Palestinian architecture. Abrams (former Deputy National Security Advisor) delivers the credentialed analytical framework.

CATEGORY THREE · VECTORS THREE AND FOUR

The Great-Power Waters — Russia, China, and the Contested Seas

Readings on the Russian and Chinese great-power architectures Vectors Three and Four operate within — the reading foundation for engaging Wednesday, July 15 · The Contested Waters.

The Strategy of Denial: American Defense in an Age of Great Power Conflict

Elbridge Colby · Yale University Press · 2021

Colby (one of the Two Voices in Wednesday's brief, currently at the U.S. Department of Defense) delivers the structural analytical framework the Indo-Pacific prioritization operates within. Foundational text for reading contemporary American grand strategy.

Putin's World: Russia Against the West and with the Rest

Angela Stent · Twelve · 2019

Stent (the other Two Voice, Georgetown) delivers the comprehensive analytical treatment of the Putin-era Russian foreign policy architecture. Foundational text for reading the Vector Three Russian great-power architecture.

Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin

Fiona Hill & Clifford Gaddy · Brookings Institution Press · 2015 (rev.)

The analytical treatment of the Putin worldview from the structural intelligence-formation perspective. Hill (former NSC Russia director) and Gaddy (Brookings) deliver the analytical foundation the credentialed reader requires.

The Long Game: China's Grand Strategy to Displace American Order

Rush Doshi · Oxford University Press · 2021

The comprehensive analytical treatment of the Chinese grand strategic architecture from Deng through Xi. Doshi (former NSC China director) delivers the documentary framework the Vector Four reading requires.

Getting China Wrong

Aaron Friedberg · Polity · 2022

The structural analytical treatment of the post-1990s American engagement architecture with China and the structural failures the engagement framework produced. Friedberg (Princeton) operates within the analytical rigor the Vector Four reading requires.

Unrivaled: Why America Will Remain the World's Sole Superpower

Michael Beckley · Cornell University Press · 2018

The analytical treatment of American structural power in comparative perspective. Beckley (Tufts, AEI) delivers the credentialed analytical framework the balanced-assessment reading requires.

Danger Zone: The Coming Conflict with China

Hal Brands & Michael Beckley · W.W. Norton · 2022

The analytical treatment of the Davidson Window closing (~2027) and the structural reasons the China challenge concentrates across the coming decade. Foundational text for the Vector Four Taiwan Tripwire reading.

By More Than Providence: Grand Strategy and American Power in the Asia Pacific Since 1783

Michael J. Green · Columbia University Press · 2017

The comprehensive historical treatment of American grand strategic engagement with the Asia-Pacific region across two-and-a-half centuries. Green (CSIS, then U.S. Studies Centre Sydney) delivers the structural historical framework.

CATEGORY FOUR · VECTORS FIVE AND EIGHT

The Frontier Domains — Arctic and Cislunar Space

Readings on the Arctic opening and the cislunar competition — the reading foundation for engaging Thursday, July 16 · The New Frontiers.

Original Sin: Power, Technology and War in Outer Space

Bleddyn Bowen · Hurst Publishers · 2022

Bowen (one of the Two Voices in Thursday's brief, Durham University) delivers the comprehensive analytical treatment of the space-power architecture. Foundational text for the Vector Eight cislunar reading — required baseline.

War in Space: Strategy, Spacepower, Geopolitics

Bleddyn Bowen · Edinburgh University Press · 2020

Bowen's companion volume delivering the structural strategic analysis of the space domain — the analytical companion to Original Sin.

Astropolitik: Classical Geopolitics in the Space Age

Everett Dolman · Routledge · 2002

The foundational text applying the classical Mackinder-and-Mahan geopolitical framework to the space domain. Dolman (U.S. Air Force School of Advanced Air and Space Studies) delivers the structural analytical framework the credentialed reader requires.

The Politics of Space Security

James Clay Moltz · Stanford University Press · 2019 (3rd ed.)

The comprehensive analytical treatment of the space-security architecture across the American, Soviet-Russian, and Chinese frameworks. Moltz (Naval Postgraduate School) delivers the structural analytical foundation.

The Future History of the Arctic

Charles Emmerson · PublicAffairs · 2010

The foundational analytical treatment of the Arctic opening architecture and the structural implications for the great-power competitive framework. Emmerson (Chatham House) delivers the credentialed analytical foundation.

The New Arctic Handbook

Kristian Åtland, Klaus Dodds, et al. (eds.) · Various · Contemporary

The comprehensive scholarly treatment of the contemporary Arctic architecture — governance, security, economic development, indigenous questions, and the great-power dimension. The reader engaging Vector Five at depth requires the institutional analytical framework.

CATEGORY FIVE · VECTOR SIX

The Weaponized Trade — Economic Warfare Architecture

Readings on the economic warfare architecture twenty-first-century American statecraft operates within — the reading foundation for engaging Friday, July 17 · The Weaponized Trade.

Chokepoints: American Power in the Age of Economic Warfare

Edward Fishman · Portfolio · February 2025

Fishman (one of the Two Voices in Friday's capstone, Columbia University Center on Global Energy Policy) delivers the comprehensive analytical treatment of the American economic-warfare chokepoint architecture. The most consequential recent single volume on Vector Six — foundational reading.

No Trade Is Free: Changing Course, Taking on China, and Helping America's Workers

Robert Lighthizer · Broadside Books · June 2023

Lighthizer (the other Two Voice, former USTR 2017–2021) delivers the structural analytical treatment of the post-1990s American trade architecture and the structural response the China challenge requires. Foundational text for the Vector Six reading.

Underground Empire: How America Weaponized the World Economy

Henry Farrell & Abraham Newman · Henry Holt · 2023

The structural analytical treatment of the American weaponization of the dollar, SWIFT, and technology export architectures. Farrell (Johns Hopkins SAIS) and Newman (Georgetown) deliver the credentialed analytical framework.

Chip War: The Fight for the World's Most Critical Technology

Chris Miller · Scribner · 2022

The comprehensive analytical treatment of the semiconductor architecture the October 7, 2022 export controls operationalized. Miller (Tufts Fletcher School) delivers the structural framework the Vector Four-Six intersection requires.

The Economic Weapon: The Rise of Sanctions as a Tool of Modern War

Nicholas Mulder · Yale University Press · 2022

The historical analytical treatment of the sanctions architecture from the post-World War I League of Nations origins through the contemporary architecture. Mulder (Cornell) delivers the historical framework the structural reading requires.

Shutdown: How Covid Shook the World's Economy

Adam Tooze · Viking · 2021

The analytical treatment of the 2020–2021 economic architecture including the structural implications for dollar dominance, supply chain restructuring, and the broader economic warfare architecture. Tooze (Columbia) operates within the credentialed analytical framework.

CATEGORY SIX · VECTORS SEVEN, NINE, AND TEN

The Cross-Cutting Vectors — Cyber, Western Hemisphere, Domestic Foreign Influence

Readings on the cross-cutting vectors the ten-vector framework operates across — Vector Seven (Cyber/Information), Vector Nine (Western Hemisphere), and Vector Ten (Domestic Foreign Influence).

The Perfect Weapon: War, Sabotage, and Fear in the Cyber Age

David Sanger · Crown · 2018

The foundational analytical treatment of the contemporary cyber-warfare architecture. Sanger (New York Times) delivers the documentary framework the Vector Seven reading requires.

The Hacker and the State: Cyber Attacks and the New Normal of Geopolitics

Ben Buchanan · Harvard University Press · 2020

The structural analytical treatment of the state-cyber architecture. Buchanan (Georgetown, formerly NSC) delivers the credentialed analytical framework the Vector Seven reading requires.

China Engages Latin America: Distorting Development and Democracy?

R. Evan Ellis · Palgrave Macmillan · 2022

The comprehensive analytical treatment of the Chinese Belt-and-Road expansion into the Western Hemisphere. Ellis (U.S. Army War College) delivers the structural analytical framework the Vector Nine reading requires.

Ill Winds: Saving Democracy from Russian Rage, Chinese Ambition, and American Complacency

Larry Diamond · Penguin Press · 2019

The structural analytical treatment of the foreign-influence architecture across the contemporary democratic landscape. Diamond (Stanford Hoover Institution) delivers the credentialed analytical framework the Vector Ten reading requires.

Chinese Communist Espionage: An Intelligence Primer

Peter Mattis & Matthew Brazil · Naval Institute Press · 2019

The structural analytical treatment of the Chinese intelligence architecture including the united-front-work architecture. Mattis (former CIA China analyst) and Brazil (former U.S. Foreign Service) deliver the credentialed analytical foundation.

Hidden Hand: Exposing How the Chinese Communist Party is Reshaping the World

Clive Hamilton & Mareike Ohlberg · OneWorld Publications · 2020

The comprehensive analytical treatment of the Chinese Communist Party's global influence architecture. Hamilton (Charles Sturt University) and Ohlberg (German Marshall Fund) deliver the structural analytical framework the Vector Ten reading engages.

ADDITIONAL · FOUNDATIONAL

Grand-Strategy Texts — The Historical Framework

Foundational texts the reader engaging any of the ten vectors may hold as the structural analytical framework the great-power competitive architecture operates within.

World Order

Henry Kissinger · Penguin Press · 2014

The foundational analytical treatment of the international order architecture across the Westphalian, European, Islamic, Chinese, and American frameworks. Kissinger's final major grand-strategic treatment — required baseline for the serious reader.

Diplomacy

Henry Kissinger · Simon & Schuster · 1994

The comprehensive historical treatment of the diplomatic architecture from Richelieu through the post-Cold War order. Foundational reading for the structural analytical framework any vector-reading requires.

The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives

Zbigniew Brzezinski · Basic Books · 1997

The foundational post-Cold War analytical treatment of the American strategic architecture across the Eurasian chessboard. Brzezinski's framework remains substantially operative across the contemporary reading.

The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660–1783

Alfred Thayer Mahan · Little, Brown · 1890

The classical foundational text of the sea-power grand-strategic framework. Mahan's analytical framework operates as the structural foundation the chokepoint reading rests upon — required baseline for the maritime reader.

American Diplomacy

George F. Kennan · University of Chicago Press · 1951

The classical analytical treatment of the American strategic tradition. Kennan's structural framework — the containment doctrine's intellectual foundation — remains substantially operative across the contemporary great-power competitive reading.

ADDITIONAL · COVENANTAL

The Framework Readings — The Dual-Dimension Foundation

Readings on the covenantal foundation the American tradition rests upon — the dual-dimension discipline the Watchman Protocol operates within (Principle Five). The analytical work operates simultaneously within the structural strategic dimension and the covenantal foundational dimension.

The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism

Michael Novak · Simon & Schuster · 1982

The foundational treatment of the covenantal-and-structural framework the American democratic-capitalist architecture rests upon. Novak (AEI) delivers the integration of the structural analytical dimension and the covenantal foundational dimension the Watchman ethos operates within.

Land of Hope: An Invitation to the Great American Story

Wilfred M. McClay · Encounter Books · 2019

The comprehensive historical treatment of the American Republic within the covenantal-and-structural framework. McClay (Hillsdale) delivers the analytical narrative the reader may share with the broader reader-community.

A Free People's Suicide: Sustainable Freedom and the American Future

Os Guinness · IVP Books · 2012

The structural analytical treatment of the covenantal foundation the American Republic's sustainability requires. Guinness delivers the framework the dual-dimension discipline the Watchman ethos operates within.

The Global Public Square: Religious Freedom and the Making of a World Safe for Diversity

Os Guinness · IVP Books · 2013

The analytical companion to A Free People's Suicide — Guinness's treatment of the religious-freedom architecture the covenantal framework produces in the contemporary global operational hour.

A Time to Build: From Family and Community to Congress and the Campus

Yuval Levin · Basic Books · 2020

The structural analytical treatment of the institutional architecture the American Republic depends upon. Levin (AEI) delivers the framework the reader operates the institutional dimension within.

The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Eliot

Russell Kirk · Regnery · 1953

The foundational treatment of the conservative intellectual tradition from Burke forward. Kirk's framework — the six canons of conservative thought — operates as the structural intellectual foundation the reader may engage.

The Watchman's Close

"And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment."

— 1 Chronicles 12:32 (KJV)

The reading list closes here. The approximately fifty curated volumes across the ten-vector framework represent the analytical map the reader operates their own analytical work within. The covenantal template the 1 Chronicles 12:32 sons-of-Issachar scripture names — men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do — represents the archetypal vocation the reader-community operates within across the succeeding operational hours.

The two hundred sons of Issachar were not the majority of the tribe of Issachar; the two hundred were the credentialed core the structural moment at the transition from Saul to David required. The reader-community that walked the two-week educational arc operates within the same structural template — the credentialed core the American Republic requires across the chokepoint architecture the fifteen-volume Global Chokepoints Series documents.

The reader who engages the reading list operationalizes the Watchman Protocol methodology delivered in Saturday, July 18 · The Watchman's Discipline: Verify before testify (Principle One) · Document without demonizing (Principle Two) · The Two Voices methodology (Principle Three) · The ten-vector framework (Principle Four) · KJV covenantal anchoring (Principle Five) · The Watchman documents, the reader concludes (Principle Six). The methodology belongs to the reader-community.

The vocation continues. The wall stands. The watch continues.

The reader-community walks further into the operational hour the inheritance requires.

VIGILATE.

Respectfully.

Elias Maren

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