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Laurier-hosted ACUNS welcomes award-winning journalist Cleo Paskal for public lecture on 'Kaplan's Coming Anarchy'

WATERLOO – In 1994, journalist Robert Kaplan argued that the world's social fabric was being destroyed. In his influential article, "[The Coming Anarchy](#)", published in *The Atlantic*, Kaplan predicted that the experiences of failed states facing turmoil and chaos served as a warning of what could become an increasingly common phenomenon across the globe.

Now 20 years later, the Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS)—which is hosted by Wilfrid Laurier University—is examining the extent to which Kaplan's grave predictions have (or have not) come true.

As part of a workshop program on the legacy of Kaplan's analysis, ACUNS, in association with the Balsillie School of International Affairs and the Laurier Centre for Military, Strategic and Disarmament Studies (LCMSDS), will present a public lecture by award-winning journalist Cleo Paskal on Feb. 7 entitled, "How Geopolitical, Geoeconomic and Geophysical Changes are Redrawing the World Map."

"My work is ludicrously broad; I try to understand the world's major, shifting winds of geopolitical and geoeconomic change," said Paskal, an associate fellow at the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London, U.K. and adjunct faculty in the Department of Geopolitics at Manipal University in India. "I look for clues at the edges, where the strongest winds still ripple. And so politics in the Kingdom of Tonga whisper secrets about Chinese foreign policy and U.S. 'rebalancing.' And Iceland tells us about the collapsing EU financial system and Russian Arctic strategy. It's like trying to put together a constantly morphing jigsaw puzzle, from the outside in."

Paskal's lecture will discuss how geopolitical, geoeconomic and geophysical changes can combine to have a dramatic effect on states' foreign policy and international relations. For instance, China's growing geopolitical and geoeconomic strength, combined with geophysical changes in the far North, have resulted in the new dynamic of China as an emerging Arctic power. Paskal also will discuss similar situations involving the "three geos" in the Indo-Pacific, the United States and Europe.

"Cleo Paskal brings us a challenging view of large-scale changes in the world at different levels and across widely differing planes, which she argues intersect to have potentially critical implications in very specific policy contexts," said Alistair Edgar, executive director of ACUNS. "Anyone who wants to hear about 'the big picture' in global affairs and how that translates into immediate challenges, will find her ideas and arguments fascinating."

The lecture is free of charge and will take place at the Balsillie School of International Affairs (67 Erb St. West) on Friday, Feb. 7. There will be a reception at 6:30 p.m., with welcoming remarks at 7 p.m. To RSVP, email rsvp@acuns.org. For more information, visit acuns.org/kaplan.