

# GLOBUS MUNDI

DEPARTMENT OF  
POLITICAL SCIENCE  
& GLOBAL STUDIES  
JOURNAL – VOL. III



# DEDICATION

My very good friend and colleague, Mathilde Mukantabana, was recently appointed Rwandan Ambassador to the United States. Her portfolio will expand to include Mexico, Brazil and Argentina.

Words can't do justice to the sense of loss we all feel at her departure. The hallways will miss her hearty laugh, her sense of fun and her smile. I will miss the opportunity to discuss world history and to learn from her. Students will be deprived by her departure, too: Mathilde was an exemplary teacher who took the time to teach her students, to meet with them and to address their needs both in and beyond the classroom.

*Bon chance, mon amie.*

*Y como dicen los porteños ... Vuelve de visita de vez en cuando. Dale !*

MARTIN F. MORALES

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WELCOME TO THE THIRD ISSUE OF  
“GLOBUS MUNDI,” THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION  
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND  
GLOBAL STUDIES AT COSUMNES RIVER COLLEGE.



**T**his year’s edition of *Globus Mundi* marks a change in editorship. **Holly Sanderson**, my former Teaching Assistant and winner of the 2012 O.J. Durand Award for Academic Excellence and Leadership, transferred to UC Berkeley to pursue her first loves, literature and journalism. We are in her debt for establishing *Globus Mundi* as the only academic journal of its type within the California Community College system. Holly served as Editor for volumes one and two.

**Jordan Chaffin** attended CRC 2005-2007 and transferred to George Washington University (Washington, DC) where she earned a BA in International Relations. Not satisfied with this, she continued on to earn her Master’s in Global Communication with a Concentration in International Development & International Law/Organizations; Jordan will be interning with UNICEF’s Office of Emergency Programmes in Geneva this summer. Her article, “Reducing Vulnerability & Stigma for Post-Conflict Survivors of Gender-Based Violence,” focuses on reducing vulnerability for survivors of sexual violence in armed conflict, using Syrian girls as an example. We are proud of this alumna and thank her for her generous contribution.

**Michelle “Milo” Clark** succeeded Holly in the role of Editor and she writes of the problems associated with GMO’s in “Genetically Modified Organisms.” It is an eye-opening article on the dangers inherent in allowing food organisms to be genetically modified. Milo is an International Relations major who presented a piece of original ethnographic research at the 2012 WSCA Undergraduate Conference in Reno, Nevada, through the CRC Honors Program. Her summer plans include taking courses in mathematics at CRC, traveling the California coast, and studying herbal medicine. Milo will transfer this coming year.

**Randi Pratt** writes about the link between consumption and waste. In her article, “US Involvement in the Global E-waste Dilemma,” she focuses on the long term health and environmental consequences of electronic waste. Randi leaves CRC for the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs where she will major in Geography. She intends to pursue a graduate degree after college to become a professor and continue her mission of increasing environmental awareness. While at CRC, she served as Teaching Assistant to my colleague Debra Sharkey (Geography), as Secretary for Students for a Sustainable Future and published two

articles in the “CRC Green Scene.” Randi also helped found “Green Hawks.”

A consequence of immigration not commonly discussed is remittances. **Gabriela Castillo’s** article, “Remittance to Mexico: A Case Study,” focuses on the social, political and economic aspects of remittances. Gabi is an International Relations major transferring to UCLA (with a full scholarship) to continue her studies and prepare for graduate school where she’ll study political communication in Latin America. This summer, Gabi will intern for the San Francisco Democrats through alumna **Ally Hergenraeder**, Executive Director of the SF Dems.

**Matthew Akin** writes of a new and very disturbing danger soldiers face in Afghanistan: “green on blue violence.” Green on blue violence is defined as attacks on NATO soldiers (wearing blue helmets) by Taliban infiltrated Afghan military and police forces (wearing green helmets). Matt served in the USMC in Afghanistan and his article, “Alarming Increase of Green on Blue Violence Threatens Successful Turnover and Stability in Afghanistan” has insights only a serving soldier can provide. We thank him for his service and wish him well as he relocates to Southern California where he will continue to study International Relations at either UCLA or USC next year.

This year marked a significant change in military policy in the US: women are now able to serve in combat positions alongside their male counterparts. **Emily Bills** notes this change and analyzes its significance in “Women in Combat: US Policy Catching Up With Reality.” Emily will continue her studies at CRC next year and serve as Co-Editor for *Globus Mundi*.

**Timothy Doty**, currently serving as Teaching Assistant to the Global Studies Program’s co-founder, my esteemed colleague and friend, Rosalie Amer, analyzes the impact of secularism in the Middle East in “A Covenant with Secularism: Islam in Transition.” Tim will continue his studies in the LRCCD next year.

For forty two years, the US and the USSR engaged in a cold war. The demise of the Soviet Union brought about the opportunity for change but it seems that we are back in the Cold War again. **Taylor Martin** analyzes this strange phenomena in her short commentary, “A Different Type of Red, White and Blue.” Taylor is an IR major and will serve as my Teaching Assistant next year; additionally, she will also be Co-Editor for *Globus Mundi*.

**Bruna Cunha**, in her article “Ethanol: An Alternate Fuel Source,” discusses the potential of ethanol. Bruna is an International Relations major who will return to CRC in the fall to complete her studies.

**Malika Miller**, currently serving on the CRC Literary Journal’s review board, discusses “Poverty in Rural China” in her article. Malika, an English major, attends CRC and hopes to transfer to the University of California next year. She plans to continue her education beyond a BA and earn a Masters degree in Children’s Literature.

**Joseph Johnson** expects to transfer Fall, 2014. During the upcoming academic year, Joseph will serve on the ASCRC Student Senate as Senator. His article, “The New Era,” focuses on the changing nature and dynamics in the US-China relationship.

Future editions of *Globus Mundi* will follow, yearly. Alumni, students and faculty will be asked to submit papers and literature reviews for consideration on topics from international relations, economics, history and theoretical issues as they concern global affairs.

Inquiries regarding *Globus Mundi* should be directed to **Professor Martin Morales**, Chair of the Department of Political Science & Global Studies, at (916) 691-7114 or, via email, at [morale@crc.losrios.edu](mailto:morale@crc.losrios.edu)

We look forward to your continued readership.



# ALUMNI NEWS

MARIUS IORDACHE

**G**REETINGS! This new feature in *Globus Mundi* is an opportunity for me to report on recent alumni news and encourage you to join the **CRC Global Studies Alumni Chapter**.

This past year has seen noteworthy events and news as it relates to alumni. First, Professor Morales was able to establish this chapter. My class (last year) represents the first wave of members. Ideally, this year will see the chapter grow.

While I was a student at CRC, Professor Morales invited **Almudena Bernabeu** to campus to discuss her work in connection with the murder of six Jesuit priests in El Salvador during the 1980's. I see that her work continues in the Rios-Montt prosecution in Guatemala and that her organization, CJA, continues its efforts to bring perpetrators of human rights abuses to justice.

**Ryan King** ('06-'08) served as Professor Morales' TA while attending CRC. He transferred to UC Berkeley and graduated as a double major (Political Science and History – with Honors); thereafter, he attended Cambridge (UK). Ryan returned to Washington, DC, where he worked at the

UCDC campus and began an internship with the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund. From there, he catapulted into Nancy Pelosi's office and, a little over a year later, was named as Ms. Pelosi's Press Advisor. Ryan has hired as his intern my classmate **Ryan Neach** (currently studying IR at SFSU).

**Ally Hergenraeder** was named Executive Director of the San Francisco Democratic Party (August, 2012). She was in Ryan King's class ('08-'09) and left CRC to UC Davis where she earned a BA in IR. As Director of the SF Dems, she hired Ryan Neach as an intern and recommended him to Ryan King for this summer. This year, Ally is interviewing several of Professor Morales' students for potential internships in San Francisco.

**Giovanni Martinez** ('09-'11) transferred to UC Santa Cruz and graduated with a BA in Film and Digital Media. He will apply to graduate school year after next.

**Rich Floyd** ('09-'11) transferred to CSU Bakersfield and graduated with a BA in Political Science. He will be applying to graduate school next year and hopes to become a professor of history.

**Frank Smiley** ('10-'12) transferred to University of Montana at Bozeman to continue his studies in IR. This spring, Frank was chosen for the US Army's Leaders Training Course (LTC). While at LTC, Frank will learn basic officer orders and execution as a prelude to LDAC (Ft. Lewis). Frank will graduate prior to LDAC and be commissioned an officer. His plans, subject to Army needs, will see him running Company A, BOBCAT Battalion. This will be Frank's introduction to running a company size element.

**Kathleen Soriano** ('10-'12) transferred to UC Davis and is currently interning at the Greek Embassy in Washington, DC, as part of her "Semester in Washington" where, among many other things, she is working for the cultural division of the embassy researching the idea of using culture to help with economic progression.

My good friend and study partner here at UC Davis, **Myles White**, has just been given an internship with Governor Brown's Office of Legislative Affairs. Myles will assist the Deputy Directors of Legislative Affairs, serve as liaison between the Senate and Assembly and help coordinate Governor Brown's legislative agenda.

My good friend **Vania Klee** transferred to CSU Chico to study IR. This year, Vania participated in the Model United Nations team Chico fielded and did very well in her committee assignment. Vania will be inducted into Pi Sigma Alpha Political Science Honor Society (May, 2013) and is set to be its President next year.

Speaking of CSU Chico, **Fernando Estrada**, band leader of La Noche Oskura and the only person awarded a Global Studies Certificate (Latin America), is transferring there this coming fall.

**Jordan Chaffin** ('05-'07) transferred to George Washington University in Washington, DC to study IR. She earned a BA and continued on to earn an MA in Global Communication with a Concentration in International Development & International Law/Organizations (this year). Jordan will be

interning with UNICEF's Office of Emergency Programmes in Geneva this summer.

**Kirsten Mize** ('07-'09) transferred to UC Berkeley and graduated with a BA in Political Science.

**Lena Brewster** ('03-'05) is at graduating from the Texas State University San Marcos with an MA in International Studies. Professor Morales was able to help her with her thesis on the use of drones. Lena will be looking for work as an Adjunct Professor of Political Science while she prepares to enter a doctoral program.

My classmates, Myles White and Holly Sanderson, came to Professor Morales' annual student dinner with me. We were happy to see that Professors Morales and Huffman found new students who are interested in IR and already contributing to both the department and this journal. I look forward to joining them at events next year and welcoming them into this Chapter as they transfer on to the UC's.

I will send out emails to Chapter members in connection with events as soon as Professors Morales and Huffman let me know what they'll be hosting this coming year. I hope to see you at one of them. If you have any news you wished published, please send the information to Professor Morales and he'll forward it to me for a future issue of *Globus Mundi*.



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# VALETE

THIS SECTION OF ALUMNI NEWS IS DEDICATED TO IDENTIFYING THOSE WHO ARE TRANSFERRING.

MATTHEW AKIN (POLITICAL SCIENCE; UCLA/USC)

GABRIELA CASTILLO (IR; UCLA)

FERNANDO ESTRADA (IR; CSU CHICO)

STANISLAV FOMENKO (IR; UOP)

LISBET HERNANDEZ (IR; UOP)

CANDI MORENO (IR; UC IRVINE)

MICHELLE NOLAN (POLITICAL SCIENCE, UCSC)

RANDI PRATT (GEOGRAPHY; UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT COLORADO SPRINGS)

ANGELICA TORRES (IR, COMMUNICATIONS; SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY)



# OPPORTUNITY IN A SECOND TERM

MARTIN F. MORALES

“Ah. . . . That happened. That really happened. We are not going to have a Supreme Court that will overturn Roe versus Wade. There will be no more Antonin Scalia’s and Samuel Alito’s added to this court. We’re not going to repeal health reform. Nobody is going to kill Medicare and

make old people in this generation or any other generation fight it out on the open market to get themselves health insurance. We’re not going to do that. We’re not going to give a twenty percent tax cut to millionaires and billionaires and expect programs like food stamps and kids’ health insurance to cover the cost of that tax cut. We’re not going to make you clear it with your boss if you want to get birth control under the insurance plan that you’re on. We are not going to redefine rape. We’re not going to amend the United States Constitution to stop gay people from getting married. We’re not going to double Guantanamo. We’re not eliminating the Department of Energy or the Department of Education or Housing at the federal level. We’re not going to spend two trillion dollars on the military that the military does not want. We’re not scaling back on student loans because the country’s new plan is that you should borrow money from your parents. We’re not vetoing the Dream Act. We’re not self-deporting. We’re not letting Detroit go bankrupt. We’re not starting a trade war with China on Inauguration Day in January. We’re not going to have as a President a man who once led a mob of friends to run down a scared gay kid, to hold him

down and forcibly cut his hair off with a pair of scissors while that kid cried and screamed for help. And there was no apology, not ever. We’re not going to have a Secretary of State John Bolton. We’re not bringing Dick Cheney back. We’re not going to have foreign policy shop stocked with architects of the Iraq war. We’re not going to do it. We had the choice to do that if we wanted to do that as a country—and we said “no.”

—RACHEL MADDOW, Host, “The Rachel Maddow Show,” MSNBC; election night, 2012

President Obama’s second term victory has freed him, on so many levels, to pursue the challenges facing America in international relations. While it would be too easy and fun to focus on the significance of the President’s victory in terms of domestic politics, the US role in foreign policy warrants analysis.

When Barack Obama took the oath of office in January, 2009, America stood unusually alone in the world. The former system of alliances, predicated on the leadership of American ideals, was fractured and the world suffered for it. In addition to the huge task of fixing a destroyed economy, the President had to restore America to the role of leadership the world had come to expect and sorely missed. In an effort to send a clear message to our allies that we would seek to reverse the damage of the Bush years, President

Obama appointed Hillary Clinton as his Secretary of State, kept Bob Gates on as Secretary of Defense and appointed Susan Rice as US Ambassador to the United Nations. In the national security arena, the President appointed a team led by Leon Panetta (CIA) and General James Jones (NSA). In addition, the role of counter-terrorism would increase significantly in importance under President Obama's administration. His advisor in these affairs, John Brennan, would also come to play a significant role in how the US deals with terrorism. Each of the appointments sent a clear signal to the world: the US will no longer seek to dominate through fear or power projection but rather seek leadership through dialogue, negotiation and respect. It bears mention that Secretary Clinton has, for a long time, been well respected for her ability to listen, reason and negotiate. Rather than demand and dictate, the US would engage in diplomacy anew. Bob Gates, a holdover from the Bush Administration as Secretary of Defense, provided the element of continuity thus assuring allies that the US would not change its policy and radically alter the balance in foreign relations. Susan Rice, formerly with the Brookings Institution and a member of the Clinton Administration, with an extensive academic background in international affairs and international consulting experience, made it clear that the US would seek to regain its stature at the UN. The CIA would be brought back to its original charge of gathering intelligence and no longer engage in torture or rendition. As perhaps the most visible element of America's wars on terror, it needed to recast itself both domestically and abroad. Leon Panetta was tasked with image control. Clearly, the Obama Administration had its work cut out for it.

The first and most significant component in the Obama Administration's foreign policy was its inheritance: Iraq and Afghanistan. The invasion and occupation of Iraq begun in 2003 would last until 2011. The budget surplus left by the Clinton Administration was replaced with massive debt, the death, dismemberment and dislocation of countless thousands of Iraqis, the loss of thousands of US and allied soldiers and irreparable harm to thousands more. America's go at it alone posture, fueled by cowboy rhetoric and a "sexed-up" British intelligence memo (the "Downing Street Memo") had caused near irreparable harm to American leadership in the world and, by extension, damaged America's long term policy interests in the region.

The Arab Spring should have provided the US the opportunity to come to the aid of those seeking to overthrow the authoritarian regimes in the region. Instead, the Obama Administration had to proceed cautiously due to the perception of "America as invader" or America as an occupying power. Additionally, the US had to be careful in what was one of Europe's traditional spheres of influence. Libya is a prime example of such a problem for the Obama Administration. The US role in helping liberate Libya had to be weighed against negative perceptions of America as well as French and Italian interests. The US supported NATO attacks demonstrate a muted American policy but, overall, the proper strategy when

contemplating these variables. This action showed that America was still willing to support liberty and democracy but would do so in a logical, respectful way.

Syria, fighting a civil war since 2011, has also presented the US with a difficult policy choice. Should the US rush in and trust that its hand-picked rebels will adhere to democratic principles? Or, should the US wait for a more clear and defining moment to intervene? Unlike the Bush Administration's "invade and deflect questions later" policy in Iraq, President Obama's "wait and see" posture has been more than that: the US is the largest donor of non-lethal aid and contemplating a stronger role due to the use of chemical weapons. At press time, the Obama Administration is waiting to establish proof, via chain-of-custody evidence, before it steps up its aid to the Syrian rebels or intervenes militarily. This posture shows respect for law and also an understanding of regional dynamics. Indeed, the questions "How will Iran react?" "What impact will heightened US involvement have with NSA's such as Hezbollah and Hamas?" and "How does this all affect Israel?" are being considered prior to committing to any action.

Israel, the largest recipient of American foreign aid, has long proven to be a hindrance to US objectives for peace in the Middle East. The Palestinian Question, once a seeming priority for US presidents, has been degraded in importance and placed further down the list of priorities. Settlement construction, violations of international law and human rights by the Netanyahu led coalition government has only caused problems for the US. Not since James Baker III was Secretary of State has the US been willing or able to exert leverage against Israel to make it stop fueling the fires of resentment and terrorism. Palestine must be moved to the position of prominence on the presidential agenda that it warrants; President Obama should not wait to push for a peaceful settlement in Palestine. Failure to do so will only continue to cause problems for the US in the Middle East.

The Palestinian Question has taken a back seat to fears of a nuclear Iran. The Netanyahu government has successfully manipulated discussion of events as they pertain to Israel away from Palestine and onto Iran. While Iran's development of nuclear weapons is a serious issue, it is not—and should not be—the primary focus of US policy interests in the region. Early in his first term President Obama proposed dialogue with Iran rather than obfuscation or circumspection. How novel would this be? The opportunity for dialogue and constructive engagement was there for the taking following 9/11 (Iranian President Khatemi and the mullahs in Iran condemned the attacks and prayed for America) but vanished with Iran being labeled a "member of the "Axis of Evil" by George W. Bush in his 2002 State of the Union speech. Rebuffed, the Iranians elected a hard-liner as president and we've had no real momentum on nuclear (or any other) policy since then. Hopefully, the little diplomacy surrounding Iran is kept alive and Iran's new president (elections are this summer) is both a moderate and willing to dialogue with President Obama and/or Secretary of

State John Kerry. If this were to happen, it would be a strong signal to Israel that the US can't be manipulated and that there may be a way forward for peace in Palestine as this issue would once again achieve the importance it once had for the US.

In sum, the US policy in the Middle East is in transition. The Obama Administration took concrete steps during its first term and is now poised to change issues and outcomes. The President is likely mindful of these opportunities and now free to pursue a more determined policy.

The European Union, some of whose members represent the US' oldest and strongest allies, is in desperate need of American engagement. The US walked away from Europe in the lead up to the invasion of Iraq. Both France, on the Security Council, and Germany opposed the US invasion and because of it were denied bidding rights on reconstruction projects. Given the slow pace of development, the early acts of terrorism directed at allied construction projects and rejection of American efforts, France and Germany came out ahead. Realistically, we looked spiteful and stubborn and our relations with Europe went awry. Adding to the damage was then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's comments about "old Europe" and the way in which the EU worldview about the US was misrepresented.

Europe has had two other major issues which the US should focus on as it seeks to repair US-EU relations. These issues are financial and strategic; both offer the Obama Administration a tremendous opportunity to rekindle the close relationship that existed prior to 9/11.

Financially, the EU is going through a similar crisis. Early on in the US version of the economic crisis, the EU supported the US by and through Central Bank loans to the Treasury. As the EU became ensnared in the Greek financial crisis and, thereafter, watched it spread to Portugal, Italy, Ireland and Spain, the US should have done more. It was given the opportunity to do so post November as the President signed a new and expansive trade deal with the EU to help bolster both economies. This treaty should have been implemented sooner than it was but, again, in his second term, President Obama is now in a position to do more for the EU.

In an interesting juxtaposition of political ideologies, both the President and Prime Minister David Cameron find themselves having to address the third rail of politics: the social safety net. Both heads of government should seize this opportunity to mutually support each other and tout the benefits of self-imposed budget reductions as it relates to social services rather than fight, solo, the left wings in their legislatures and the public. President Obama should seek PM Cameron's moral support as he seeks to reduce payments to social services programs the same way PM Cameron should point to President Obama's cuts. Clearly, these policies are not popular on either side of the Atlantic but mutual support will benefit both leaders and, hopefully, facilitate US leadership in Europe within those states facing similar austerity measures.

Strategic concerns in Europe still tend to be dominated the role Russia plays. President turned Prime Minister—elected President again—Vladimir Putin's vision of Russia's role in the former East-European countries ("FEEC's") and Western Europe provide the US an opportunity to assert itself to the EU's advantage. This opportunity has been present since 2001 but not fully acted upon. As President Obama told President Putin at a recent summit, "... wait until after the election; I'll have more room"—well, now's the time! The US can pursue meaningful arms control reductions while at the same time countering Russian influence in the EU. Trade, soft power and democratic kinship will go a long way in off-setting Russian influence particularly in FEEC's. President Obama is in an unique position to pursue an agenda with these two goals in mind and will likely do so in the near future.

Another area of commonality that should be emphasized is the role France has taken in Mali. The "war on terror" now has a visible ally in Africa deployed to counter extremists in the northwestern portion of Africa. US Special Operations Forces have been quietly operating in the region since before 9/11. Given that former French President Chirac was against the US invasion of Iraq and was blocking US efforts in the Security Council, President Obama should capitalize on French efforts as a way to strengthen US-EU ties.

Africa, particularly because of the President's Kenyan heritage, provides the Obama Administration a very special opening. The problems facing Africa on all levels (economics, government, healthcare, development, security, etc.) warrant American consideration. Ever conscious of being labeled neo-colonialist, the US should seek to capitalize on initiatives that would extend American influence, diminish China's influence and access to vital rare-earth resources. The Obama Administration would gain the strategic position the US never really had in Africa during the Cold War and set the stage for American business in the decades to come.

Much closer to home, in the Americas, the Obama Administration will be able to address the multitude of issues which frame US-Latin American relations. The President's overwhelming Latino support should see him push for true immigration reform. The Gang of Eight's proposal fails from inception on the idea of reforms being tied to border security. The President should seize the moment and really drive immigration in the way that Ronald Reagan did in 1986. It's time for immigrants to come out of the shadows and incorporate into American life. Immigration reform should be the President's domestic policy legacy and, being in his second term, is achievable particularly if the House of Representatives comes under Democrats' control in 2014.

The President, at his April 30th press conference, revisited the issue of Guantanamo Bay and pledged to reengage on closing the extra-territorial prison/torture center. The public seems to have forgotten that the President signed an executive order the

first month of his first term to close it but was prevented from doing so due to Congressional reluctance and public outcry. The remaining prisoners have been held since the “war on terror” began, denied true due process and subjected to torture. At press time, the majority of these prisoners are engaged in a hunger strike. President Obama should close Guantanamo and affirm America’s commitment to justice.

The island of Cuba is facing tremendous changes in the near future. Raul Castro will not serve as the island nation’s leader after his term ends in 2018. It’s time for President Obama to redefine the US’ relationship with the island state after fifty years of embargo and set the stage for meaningful relations with a people who want to have a relationship. This idea, in its simplest form, was not possible during his first term but now can be broached. President Obama can and should pursue dialogue with Cuba. The impact this would have in Latin America is immeasurable and would be a major foreign policy legacy. The political climate of Florida has changed dramatically as evidenced by the President’s victories in 2008 and 2012.

Asia presents an interesting set of challenges to the Obama Administration. The “Pivot to Asia” policy announced by the President last year will refocus America’s attention on Asia, a region the US has not paid significant attention to since the 1990’s. The issues faced in Asia include North Korea’s belligerence and aggressive nuclear posture, South Korea’s security in light of Kim Jong-Un’s actions, the still anemic Japanese economy and, of course, China’s rise.

The passing of Kim Jong-Il did not bring change to the Hermit Kingdom’s people. North Korea continues isolated and its economy is stuck in reverse. Worse, the propagandization of the masses continues and any chance of change seems beyond the realm of the possible. In terms of regional policy, rhetoric seems to be accelerating events to possible confrontations and, of course, the results would be catastrophic. The US is committed to South Korea and Japan’s security but our policy does need recalibration. A second term initiative to meet face-to-face with Kim Jong-Un, conditioned on concrete proposals as listed in a public agenda could open the door to meaningful dialogue and, hopefully, a normalization of relations. The toll the Kim family’s rule has had on the people in North Korea demands it of us. If not the US, then who? The seeds of democratic reform would take time to bloom in a country like North Korea but America, under this President, is likely the best hope they’ve ever had. With no reelection to worry about, President Obama should pursue dialogue. The effects on the US-China relationship would be immediate: China would be on notice that the US is willing to compete for ideological leadership in China’s backyard.

Japan’s economy—and likewise the Asian Tiger economies— all fell prey to the various problems in the international political economy in the 1990’s. Currency over-valuation, real estate speculation, the US dot.com bubble bursting and the recession of

the early 2000’s all contributed to economic decline in Asia. Japan, a key US ally in the region, did not go far enough in stimulating its economy since it collapsed and today finds itself unable to fully recover. The consequences for the US, particularly as it pivots to Asia, are that it has no economic equal in the region. Without Japan’s economic assistance, the “pivot” will be made harder. President Obama, as the executive mandating this change in policy doctrine, should take advantage of his second term and push for revision in trade pacts with Japan and an expanded military role in order to make the “Pivot” possible. Only if Japan is as strong as it can be will this new policy work—particularly in the face of increasing Chinese hostility and bellicosity.

China’s rise is the most visible and logical reason why the US needs to refocus its foreign policy away from the Middle East. As a consequence of the bad economic decisions made by the Bush Administration, the US finds itself in serious debt to China. Additionally, the US, because of its unfounded pathological obsession in Iraq, lost a decade to maintaining its global leadership. China took advantage of this void and now has projected far out of Asia and into Latin America and Africa. Inroads have also been established into Europe and the Middle East.

China’s efforts have been focused on gaining access to natural resources. There have been no incursions into areas of security nor any form of aggression to date. Except in Asia—against Japan. Could China change posture and become bad for US economic or strategic concerns? “Youbetcha!” Could an aggressive set of policies hurt American interests? Obviously and that is why the “Pivot” makes sense. President Obama need not worry about Congress so long as this change in policy is characterized in business terms nor should he worry about the Senate if he enters into newly revised treaty relationships with countries in Asia. It all hinges on his ability to drive this new policy.

Ideally, whatever components to the “Pivot” there are should include a concerted effort in soft power projection. The President must seek to extend the world’s appreciation for American values and ideals. His first four years in office accomplished a turn-around in global opinion. This term should see an extension of soft power in conjunction with policy.

While this article is merely a review of the world’s various situations as they pertain to American foreign policy interests in the context of a second Obama term, the point has been to show how the first term’s accomplishments have left the door open to new efforts to extend American influence to those places where it was lost, indeed a rekindling of an American led world. President Obama, by winning a second term and not having to worry about another election, is free to aggressively pursue strategies designed to mutually bolster American and allied economic and security interests. And, in the process, lead the world along the same path.



# GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

MICHELLE CLARK

**B** iotechnology and genetic engineering now rank among the most pervasive and enigmatic industries of our time. Genetically engineered crops comprise the majority of agricultural outputs across the globe, despite the fact that this type of genetic modification is very new to the agricultural industry. The United States has become the single largest producer of genetically engineered crops, followed by Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Chile, and Mexico. Most of these countries specialize in genetically modified versions of soya, corn and cotton. Genetically engineered crops have several advantages over their non-enhanced counterparts, including increased heartiness, resistance to pests and herbicides, and a unique capacity to supplant populations of non-genetically modified organisms. These crops comprise more than 70% of all agricultural exports produced in these countries.<sup>1</sup> As a major cornerstone of local and international economies, genetically modified organisms generate billions of dollars in profit. A large percentage of these profits are spent on extensive genetic research and development, primarily of seeds, and the large line of support products like specialty fertilizers that have been developed to accompany them.<sup>2</sup> There are a number of benefits that genetic modification can provide for farmers and agricultural markets; achieving a higher yield is a dependable way for most farmers to increase their profits, and a crop with fewer pest and weed problems is likely to produce better. On the negative side, the rate at which these genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are spreading poses a serious threat to existing biodiversity in many regions of the world. These diverse biological systems have long protected agricultural industries from vulnerabilities to drought, crop blight and populations of invasive pests.<sup>3</sup>

There is also some evidence suggesting that these genetically engineered plants are not as safe for consumption as many farmers, consumers and officials have been led to believe.<sup>4</sup> At the heart of this matter lie a number of influential players: GMO giants like

Monsanto, the United States Food and Drug Administration, the national governments of several Latin American countries, and the farmers who are raising GMO crops with or without their knowledge. An introduction to this subject merits an examination of the nature and influence of biotechnology companies utilizing genetic modification. Quintessential to the discussion of GMOs is the somewhat infamous Monsanto, a multinational corporation responsible for the development and production of RoundUp herbicide, the chemical weapon known as Agent Orange, the bovine growth hormone rBGH, and an increasingly large product line of genetically engineered foods.<sup>5</sup> As a Fortune 500 company, it has been the single largest producer of genetically engineered seeds in the world since 2006.<sup>6</sup> Monsanto has become controversial in recent years, largely due to the negative public reception of its genetically modified crops in many parts of Europe, Asia and the United States. These genetically engineered products are developed using implanted DNA from other plants, animals, viruses and bacteria, and many of these modifications have never been tested or examined outside of Monsanto labs.<sup>7</sup> With possession of legal patents that make independent research on existing GMOs illegal, as well as Monsanto's aggressive legal actions against private farmers, and the appearance of a revolving door between Monsanto and the Food and Drug Administration, there is an almost impenetrable fog of suspicion and propaganda surrounding the safety and viability of genetically modified organisms. This makes it difficult to find information on the subject that comes from any source other than Monsanto, itself, or its alleged victims. Independent scientific research or any form of legitimate investigation are virtually non-existent due to Monsanto's gene patents preventing universities and other organizations from researching Monsanto products or trying to replicate their results. The FDA does not conduct its own research on GMOs, leaving it up to Monsanto itself to report any possible safety hazards.<sup>8</sup> Free

from public scrutiny, it is impossible to know whether Monsanto has sufficiently guaranteed the safety of their products or accurately assessed the risks of distributing them; as a result, American and international populations are required to trust this corporate giant without any external verification.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to freedom from external safety and risk management standards, Monsanto has a reputation for vicious lawsuits against farmers for patent infringement which, in many cases, occurs by complete accident through seed contamination or cross pollination of non-GMO crops by those that are genetically engineered.<sup>10</sup> Holding a patent on a living gene, Monsanto has legal ownership rights over any organism in which that gene is found, whether the company intended for that gene to be there or not. In the well-known case of *Monsanto v. Percy Schmeiser*, Monsanto sued Schmeiser for patent infringement when RoundUp Ready canola seeds had blown across the road and contaminated his fields without his knowledge. Eventually, Monsanto settled out of court in favor of Mr. Schmeiser but the legal grounds for lawsuits like these are still troubling because they tend to absolve Monsanto from the responsibility of unintended contamination.<sup>11</sup>

Brazil outlawed genetically engineered soybeans and efforts were made to stop them from being imported, purchased or sown within the country's borders. Allegedly, a number of RoundUp Ready soybean seeds were smuggled into the country from Argentina and planted by a number of farmers looking for a competitive edge in the industry. This did not appear to be a widespread problem, initially, but as Monsanto began pressuring farmers and the Brazilian government for licensing agreements and right to collect royalty fees, it became apparent that in just three years, over 85% of Brazilian soya was either deliberately planted RoundUp Ready soy or it was non-GMO soy that had been contaminated by the RoundUpReady gene.<sup>12</sup> Following this revelation, the Brazilian government was forced to change the laws about genetically engineered crops and royalty fees were paid to Monsanto starting in 2005, even by farmers whose fields had been accidentally contaminated. Brazil is the second largest exporter of soybeans, making this a significant financial victory for Monsanto, giving them the legal ability to collect profits from farmers for seeds, herbicides and by charging a 2% royalty on all soybeans sold. However, these increased costs to the farmers threatened the security of their land and livelihoods, prompting over 5 million small and medium-scale soy farmers to bring a suit against Monsanto in 2009. The plaintiffs claimed that by purchasing the seeds and then paying the royalties, they were effectively paying twice for the same seeds. On June 12, 2012, Brazilian Justice Giovanni Conti ruled against Monsanto, stating the company must pay back a minimum of \$2 billion to the plaintiffs for royalty fees which were unjustly collected. Though Monsanto filed a counter-suit last year, it was thrown out of the Brazilian Supreme Court.<sup>13</sup> By protecting the interests of these farmers, this legal victory is likely to help the already precarious forward progress of agriculture

in Brazil to take the next step with more stability.

Chile has had similar problems with patent rights since 2010 when Monsanto began lobbying for the Chilean government to acknowledge Monsanto's intellectual property rights over their genetically engineered seeds. In May of 2011, the Chilean Senate passed a law known as UPOV '91 which legally recognized Monsanto's creation of GMO crops and the accompanying patent rights which give the company total control over distribution and use of their product. This decreases the options farmers have when it comes to purchasing seed: they will not be able to trade seed with one another, buy from small seed firms or save their own seed for later use. Farmers will be required to purchase seed annually from Monsanto or one of its subsidiaries because most of the existing seeds in the country have already been contaminated.<sup>14</sup> In Chile's climate of social and political unrest, some resistance to these measures is expected from indigenous communities surrounding many of these farms because these restrictions are considered unfair and exploitative.<sup>15</sup> The Chilean Transparency Council is standing its ground against GMO distributors on some issues by passing an initiative that protects citizens' right to know about the spread of genetically engineered crops.<sup>16</sup> The law makes the locations of GMO farms, use of pesticides and potential cross pollination risks a matter of public knowledge so that Chilean citizens can protect their own farms and families from any real or perceived risk associated with genetically engineered agriculture. Chile has also outlawed the use of genetically engineered crops for internal consumption; farmers may only grow GMOs for export. This technique of compromise has not been well-implemented in any other parts of the world; most nations seem to respond to genetic engineering with hostility or total compliance, but the results of these attitudes are yet to be seen.

Mexico presents a very unique case study in the ongoing developments regarding GMOs because of the enduring pressures of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on the Mexican economy and the inevitable conflict with the vibrant indigenous cultures surrounding the farming communities in the region. As the site of the original "green revolution" which introduced modern chemical agriculture, Mexico would be expected to embrace advancing technology in crop production. Surprisingly, many maize farmers in the nation are rejecting genetic engineering, favoring the time honored techniques they have used for centuries which rely on fewer chemicals and greater biodiversity.<sup>17</sup> Most farmers save their own seeds, which they have carefully developed over generations, even though it is often more costly do so than to buy US-subsidized GMO corn.<sup>18</sup> These traditional methods were initially expected to fail in the face of growing climate change and population increases but that hypothesis has been reversed with the discovery that this natural biodiversity includes dozens of maize varieties which are suited for as many micro climates, drought tolerant varieties being among the most common adaptations.<sup>19</sup> This is

extremely significant because it demonstrates the independence of these farms from large companies and food networks which are struggling to provide for the growing population; these farmers are likely to fare better in extreme climate change than most other agricultural communities. NAFTA continues to exert pressure on the Mexican economy as the country slowly begins to import increasing quantities of subsidized GMO corn from the US. This case presents a strong argument against the monoculture model that is embraced by industrial scale agriculture and companies like Monsanto. However, in the face of genetic contamination caused by genetically engineered crops, many of these corn varieties are at risk, especially in the Oaxaca Valley which is renowned for its robust and diverse corn production.<sup>20</sup> In response to this threat and the moves made by Monsanto to profit from it, many farmers are organizing against the company's influence. Significantly, there was a swift and effective mobilization of Mexican farmers against a bill proposed to extend plant exclusivity rights within the country from 15 to 25 years, dramatically increasing the lifespan of GMO patents held by Monsanto and others. Other provisions in the bill included the legal acknowledgment of GMOs as distinct plant varieties, as well as expanding the authority of the National Service for the Inspection and Certification of Seeds to include random inspections and the ability to sanction farmers for policy violations of "plant breeder rights".<sup>21</sup> Though these measures may not immediately appear to be negative or extreme, their inclusion would promote the economic exploitation facilitated by NAFTA, and international seed distributors would receive the greatest benefit. The bill has not been defeated but its presentation has been postponed; it is likely that Monsanto will push for its passage in the future.

Small farming organizations in Mexico are seeking the creation of community seed banks in order to preserve existing biodiversity, and increase the overall food security of the nation. This strategy has been highly successful for the Navdanya community of India, an organization committed to creating and preserving food democracy in the face of ecological destruction, and many organic and heirloom farmers in the United States currently advocate for a similar system in the United States, as well.<sup>22</sup> Historical examples demonstrate that monoculture can be a major contributor to instances of famine, suggesting that greater sustainability and food security could be obtained through variety in cultivation methods and species. These strategies seem to be not only sane but vital to our prosperity as a civilization. However, due to the fact that large scale organic and bio-diverse systems are not in place in the modern agricultural world, the prospect of feeding the world in a sustainable manner seems distant. This fact, more than any other, is highly responsible for the acceptance of industrial and GMO agricultural models, especially in Latin America where staggering numbers of people are still severely malnourished. In this vulnerable region, the questions surrounding genetic engineering and industrial food production become much more important, yet

answers remain elusive. In order to find a remedy for the problem of food scarcity, more information, more transparency, and more investigation into the factors in play are needed. Perhaps, when the necessary facts have come to light, it will be possible to make better decisions for the present and the future.

Genetically modified foods present unique benefits and challenges globally, both politically and economically. Addressing one among many of these issues, Ian Murnaghan writes, "The concern that developing nations have become too dependent on GM products is another political issue that has gained attention. Some people fear that the self-sufficiency of developing nations is threatened by huge North American biotechnology companies who obtain sweeping profits from these countries." When a large market share of crop seed production is taken from a group of many and given to a few, the power and wealth is concentrated presenting a threat to smaller farms or organic operations. This enables companies like Con Agra and Monsanto to shut out competitors and charge higher prices for their products, reducing profit margins for farmers, and/or increasing food costs for consumers. In a developing nation, this can mean the difference between nourishment and extreme hunger. In market competition, Monsanto has a multifaceted advantage, as it produces the herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers and hormones that make up the cultivation suite accompanying their seeds. RoundUp remains one of the most widely used herbicides around the world, for both private and commercial use. This makes Monsanto an industry giant even among other biotechnology firms, further broadening the economic influence that it holds over the global market.<sup>23</sup> On the subject, Ian Murnaghan states, "At the present time, more focus needs to be placed on resolving the issues relating to the economical impact of GM foods. In turn, this can help countries to successfully grow GM crops and allow for economic prosperity at every level of the production process."

Agriculture is arguably the most important sector of any economy, providing the calories needed to keep everything else in working order, and it is easy for us to forget this in an industrialized nation where food is rarely hard to come by. The United States and other developed nations would do well to investigate these matters further, increasing the odds for the global population overall.



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# REDUCING VULNERABILITY & STIGMA FOR POST-CONFLICT SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

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## BACKGROUND

Every survivor of sexual violence faces a variety of challenges in their physical and psychosocial recovery. Seeking justice and the ability to carry on with their lives involve a different process for each victim. Those who experience sexual and gender-based violence in conflict settings face compounding vulnerability.<sup>1</sup> Their communities have been ripped apart, support structures torn down, loved ones abused and killed. Their individual experience is intensified by the collective fear and insecurity pervading the community. The external circumstances make these survivors increasingly vulnerable to more violence and social stigma that can inhibit them from reintegrating in their families and societies once the conflict is over.<sup>2</sup> In post-conflict settings, care providers, communities, and families can play a vital role in reducing stigma and vulnerability of GBV survivors. Exploring the different stages and aspects of conflict settings will enable us to analyze the challenges faced by GBV survivors and how interventions can best support their healthy, holistic rehabilitation.

## ACUTE CONFLICT

In acute phases of conflict when communities are moving and security systems breakdown, the most common form of gender-based violence is sexual violence.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the trauma of their experience, female survivors often face serious health implications from physical injuries and potential pregnancy to psychological responses such as suicide attempts.<sup>4</sup> In active conflict settings, women often lack access to medical assistance

and are hesitant to disclose their experience even when services are available because of the stigma associated with it.

Beyond the immediate health concerns, female survivors in most societies experience a stigma tantamount to complete social exclusion.<sup>5</sup> They are dismissed from their families and communities as a result of the sexual violence committed against them, and this segregation leaves them more vulnerable to future violence and self-harm. Furthermore, survivors who are female heads-of-household bear the economic burden of caring for relatives, children born of rape, and may be abandoned by their spouse/caregiver.<sup>6</sup> In some cases, the stigma of sexual violence is so strong that victims are murdered by their own family members in so called “honor killings”<sup>7</sup>

This early stage of conflict-prevalent GBV is particularly difficult to address because of the instability and insecurity of the communities where the violence is taking place. First responders often cannot arrive on the scene until after widespread sexual violence has already taken place and survivors have already begun to experience the compounding vulnerability associated with their trauma and marginalization. Thus, it is vital that the first care providers in conflict settings establish a coordinated, cooperative effort across sectors in order to assist survivors with their immediate critical needs.<sup>8</sup> Minimum guidelines have been written by the UN agencies that emphasize the immediate need for protection, water and sanitation, food security and nutrition, shelter and site planning and non-food items, health and community services, and education.<sup>9</sup>

All of this we know and yet offering assistance to survivors of sexual violence remains a challenge. The difficulties of actually

implementing a coordinated, multi-sectoral strategy go without saying. Since we are discussing the compounding vulnerability of sexual violence survivors, I would like to focus instead on the challenges of *finding* these survivors and assisting them in a manner that mitigates the effect of stigma rather than increasing it.

Rape as a tactic of war is about exercising power and using it against women (and to a lesser extent men) to systematically deconstruct communities. Sadly, this method is incredibly effective at isolating women and girls—particularly those that are most vulnerable. Sexual violence survivors that remain within groups, whether escaping a conflict zone together or remaining in communities, are more likely to have a support structure that can assist them in getting the services they need from providers. Those that are isolated from family and friends as a result of their experience are the most vulnerable and the most difficult to find. Surely, it is not realistic to demand that first responders offer assistance to every single survivor of sexual violence in a conflict setting. Even women that have access to services may choose not to receive them. However, it is crucial to remember that often times the ones that are most in need of support are likely also the most isolated.<sup>10</sup> Understanding the cultural context of the conflict—whether it targets a certain ethnic group, what the status of women, girls, and disabled individuals are in that society—can be an important step in identifying the most vulnerable groups and seeking them out.

Not only does the stigma of sexual violence often make survivors difficult to locate and support, it also complicates intervention efforts. One important consideration in gathering data on sexual violence in conflict is that survivors who speak out can face marginalization and reprisals from their communities.<sup>11</sup> They are often too afraid to speak out because of the consequences they will face for doing so. Thus, training for interviewers and protection for those who choose to share their stories is critical. Furthermore, programs that deal exclusively with victims of sexual violence have the potential to further isolate and stigmatize women. For example, when offering health services and HIV testing, asking everyone in the community to come receive assistance and take the test can help mitigate the potential for survivors of rape and sexual violence to feel or appear out of place or marginalized.

Immediate response in support of survivors of sexual violence in conflict settings is complicated and challenging. However, at the forefront of all intervention efforts should be the remembrance of the unique vulnerability and stigma that these survivors face. In order to promote future community reintegration and holistic healing, first response programs should be inclusive—seeking to identify and assist the most vulnerable while not increasing the stigma that they experience.

## DISPLACEMENT

In many conflicts, sexual violence leads to mass displacement. Women leave their communities in pursuit of a safe region for themselves and their children. Such is the case with the thousands of Syrian refugees now residing in Jordan and other neighboring countries. As previously discussed, we know that survivors of gender-based violence are increasingly vulnerable to further violence and marginalization. In this context, the use of rape against thousands of women and girls in Syria (by both the government's military and the rebels) has resulted in severe consequences. Fleeing their country has not resulted in safety for these survivors. Abject poverty is driving parents to sell their children as brides to the highest bidder, and older Arab men are eagerly willing to purchase a young Syrian "wife."<sup>12</sup> Sometimes this results in a legitimate marriage while most times it delivers girls directly into sexual slavery.<sup>13</sup>

The plight faced by Syrian refugees represents the next phase of vulnerability for survivors of sexual violence in conflict. These displaced families (75% of whom are women and children)<sup>14</sup> fled a conflict in pursuit of safety and security. Instead, their daughters face a future of even more violence and abuse. In the phase of displacement, women and girls experience higher rates of other types of gender-based violence (in addition to sexual violence) resulting from the fact that they are often forced to choose between protection and survival.<sup>15</sup> The increased vulnerability of women and girls stems from the fact that they have access to almost no resources and lack the security provided by their communities and social structures. As in the case with Syrian refugees, young girls are becoming victim to sexual slavery, committing them to long term abuse and violence. Displacement settings that are the result of conflict can often last for several years, leaving women and girls continually vulnerable to abusive and violent experiences and relationships.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to the foundational recommendations for how to set up displacement camps, offering food supplies to female heads-of-household, and establishing security for women and girls in these settings, there is one suggestion in particular that should not be overlooked. What we are seeing in Syria with the growing practice of marrying off/selling young girls reinforces the fact that the role of men in combating gender-based violence is vital. The Women's Refugee Commission writes that "men should be engaged as participants and allies, and ultimately as change agents."<sup>17</sup> We know that there are generally fewer men than women in displacement settings. These men and boys may feel useless or stifled as they are separated from their communities and have suffered the loss of their homes and familiar roles in society.<sup>18</sup>

One important way to engage these men can be to give them a purpose as security-providers in their new displacement setting, encouraging them to direct themselves toward protecting the women and girls around them instead of taking out their anger

and frustration on them. In a setting of extreme vulnerability, men can be encouraged to think differently about their wives, daughters, and sisters. If fathers and brothers in Syrian refugee camps are engaged as participants and allies in the future of their families and community members—no matter how dire the circumstances—they can become agents of change by protecting the most vulnerable.

## RECONCILIATION

Despite the fact that gender-based violence is rampant in conflict and post-conflict settings, the tumultuous nature of displacement and the resilience of survivors often create an opening for lasting change as reconciliation begins. Over the past few decades, we have learned that peace processes that include women are more effective than those that do not.<sup>19</sup> The United Nations agenda for Women, Peace, and Security has garnered 39 national actions plans from countries around the globe—including the United States.<sup>20</sup> This recent global commitment is promising for peace and reconciliation efforts around the world. The more that women are included in preserving, maintaining, and establishing peace, the more lasting it will be.

Beyond the macro scale of including women in leadership roles during post-conflict reconstruction, it is vital for communities to establish relevant and appropriate justice mechanisms for gender-based violence experienced during the conflict. As the Yugoslav conflict revealed, GBV survivors are still vulnerable in the very end and aftermath of a conflict. They face stigmatization and marginalization in the communities they return to, and fear of reprisals from the perpetrators they testify against.<sup>21</sup> Protecting those who choose to tell their story is a key aspect to bringing them justice.

With recent international legal provisions, sexual violence in armed conflict can constitute a war crime, crime against humanity, act of torture or an act of genocide, depending on the context.<sup>22</sup> The movement of the international community to apply these provisions for survivors of gender-based violence reveals a promising commitment to reduce their vulnerability and stigma. The more these provisions are applied, the more cases are tried, the more communities will embrace the knowledge and practice that sexual violence in conflict is unacceptable and survivors must be cared for and included in society.

As communities endeavor to rebuild after conflict, the reintegration of survivors of gender-based violence is crucial. The potential for additional stigmatization and marginalization open the door for renewed acts of violence.<sup>23</sup> Should women have children as a result of being raped, they are often left without access to resources such as land and loans.<sup>24</sup> Due to the nature of the violence they have experienced, reintegration programs specific to survivors of sexual and violence are essential to their inclusion in the overall reintegration process. Without targeted intervention

at this phase of post-conflict reconciliation, sexual violence survivors are at risk of facing entrenched forms of gender-based violence—from forced prostitution to human trafficking and domestic violence.<sup>25</sup>

From international legal provisions to national action plans and community-level interventions, the need to reduce stigma and vulnerability of survivors of gender-based violence is critical. It is during these reconstruction efforts that new norms are established and the groundwork is laid for prevention of sexual violence. Teaching communities to welcome and integrate survivors also teaches them to protect and value the women and girls in their midst. It can change the tide of future conflicts through the precedent that it sets.

## CONCLUSION

Survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict/post-conflict settings face compounding vulnerability and stigma. Immediate responders can mitigate these effects by providing inclusive programming, encouraging the integration of survivors in communities, and seeking out the most vulnerable sexual violence victims that may not be easily found. In times of displacement, engaging men to support and protect women and girls can be a positive method of both empowering them and giving women a sense of security for themselves and their children. Finally, seeking justice and reconciliation in the post-conflict setting can help integrate survivors of gender-based violence as well as turn a new corner that prevents future violent experiences from occurring. There is no catch all method for combating GBV in conflict, but focusing on the added vulnerabilities of survivors in these settings can enable governments, security forces, NGOs, community leaders, and families to consider their part in reducing the stigma of sexual violence.



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# U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE GLOBAL E-WASTE DILEMMA

BY RANDI PRATT

The link between consumption and waste is fairly obvious but often goes unnoticed. As products were intentionally designed to be tossed, an inflated waste-stream was inevitable. Unfortunately, the introduction of electronics into the waste stream has caused a number of consequences to emerge. Electronics contain toxic materials that can cause long-term harm to human health and the environment. With under-regulated laws and money to be made, companies who claim to recycle electronic devices often send the scrapped electronics to poor communities in less developed regions of the world creating unimaginable toxic wastelands. Even with knowledge of its contributions, the US continues to govern the exportation of electronic refuse with trivial laws. Over-stimulation of the electronics market has resulted in the improper disposal of billions of obsolete hazardous electronics thus increasing the risk of environmental ruin and human suffering.

Consumerism has become the cornerstone of American capitalism largely due to an economic strategy termed “planned obsolescence.”<sup>1</sup> The phrase was coined in 1932 by Bernard London, a New York real estate broker, when he released an article proposing that consumption was key to stabilizing the Great Depression’s dying economy. He believed that buyers should be encouraged to purchase more goods by intentionally shortening the life span of merchandise upon assembly. Products would be designed for single use, premature malfunction, lack of adaptation, and continuous stylistic changes.<sup>2</sup> The principles of planned obsolescence exploded in the ‘50s<sup>3</sup> and the average American now consumes twice as much as they did then.<sup>4</sup> Proving to increase consumption and thus enlarging revenue, London’s concepts have infiltrated the majority of business practices.

Electronics companies have perfected the system, most often relying on stylistic modifications.<sup>5</sup> Take Apple, for example, a successful American multinational corporation that incessantly provides mini makeovers to their gadgets. The latest on their

product runway is a modified iMac personal computer; its nip-n-tuck of a mere five millimeters gives it a new sleek and slender appearance, enticing people to replace older models sooner than necessary. Executing other planned obsolescence tactics, manufacturers also revise essential hardware so previous editions can’t adapt, consequently forcing patrons to ultimately upgrade.<sup>6</sup> Apple also recently changed the port of their well-known iPhone. The port is smaller thereby making previous edition accessories incompatible,<sup>7</sup> and as a result owners will need to replace more than their iPhone upon upgrading. Consumers comply with such superfluous marketing schemes simply because electronics have become exceedingly necessary in modern life.

Every day, millions of Americans utilize electronic devices such as desk and laptop computers, cell phones, mp3s, printers, and television sets to name a few. In 2009 alone, 438 million consumer electronics were sold in the US.<sup>8</sup> Whether an upgraded product is purchased due to faulty design or the desire to have the latest look, the end result is typically the same—as people buy new electronics they throw the replaced item out.

Skyrocketing consumption and speedy lifecycles have created unintended consequences in the waste stream. When these machines are dumped they become known as electronic waste, or e-waste. Every year, across the globe 20 to 50 million tons of electronics find their way into the waste stream.<sup>9</sup> With such a hefty load and given that electronics contain up to sixty different elements,<sup>10</sup> many challenges have developed. Reclaiming valuable elements requires expensive technology. Also, many dilapidated devices are laden with elements like lead, antimony, arsenic, and beryllium, all of which shouldn’t be dumped into the environment because they can leach from the refuse threatening numerous living entities. Drinking water near dumping sites has been linked to lead poisoning.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, heavy metals like lead never decompose and will therefore always remain a threat to human

health once unethically discarded.<sup>12</sup> Burning electronics to rid the aesthetically displeasing and potentially leaching devices is common, however, in doing so, polybrominated dioxins, one of the most poisonous emissions, are released. Brain damage, miscarriages, kidney disease, and numerous other health problems are linked to the toxins embedded in electronics being released through leaching and combustion.<sup>13</sup>

Realizing the dangers of electronic waste 25 states have opted to invest in disassembling e-waste through recycling efforts. States like Maine<sup>14</sup> and Indiana,<sup>15</sup> have passed laws mandating manufacturers pay for recovery and recycling of obsolete electronics, also known as e-cycling. In California, citizens are taxed per electronic product purchase in effort to provide e-waste recycling programs.<sup>16</sup> Nationwide, states' efforts have diverted 25 percent of e-waste from landfills<sup>17</sup> and in doing so are preventing poisons from reaching waterways and toxic emissions from circulating in the atmosphere.<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately, a Greenpeace study revealed that in the United States 80 percent of recycled e-waste is not handled properly.<sup>19</sup> The mechanical rubbish is instead exported and dumped onto less developed countries where technology is inadequate to disassemble the material safely. One's best intention to recycle responsibly has become the gateway to electronic graveyards piling sky-high in the backyards of the world's poorest communities, where poisons spew from the obsolete garbage. The health and environmental risks we fear are simply being shrugged off of our shoulders and placed onto someone else's.

Exports are ultimately an international trade issue which only Congress can regulate and therefore the states supporting e-cycling programs have minimal control over shipments.<sup>20</sup> Enacted by Congress, the EPA manages waste exports<sup>21</sup> and although international and domestic agreements and initiatives have been made, they are often inadequate.

Since 1961, the US has been a member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), an international organization intended to "promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world."<sup>22</sup> The EPA claims that OECD aims to minimize waste generation, improve recycling efforts, respect the environment during waste management processes, and control exports and imports of hazardous waste and recyclables.<sup>23</sup> However, there are numerous other topics of interest including competition, tax, and innovation that OECD focuses on. In other words, although they express concerns with movement of hazardous waste, it is only a small portion of their main objective. With only 34 members, most are developed nations<sup>24</sup> not experiencing the impacts of the e-waste crisis. Agreements for shipping hazardous waste to a non-OECD country differ from member countries. The rather minimal obligation an exporter must oblige to export to a non-OECD country is a simple notice of intent. Information such as the final destination of the waste and the amount of hazardous wastes expected to export over a 12-month period must be included in the

report.<sup>25</sup> Other important information such as the type of waste is also submitted, however, inspections are not mandatory. The US describes its OECD membership as a bilateral system to the Basel Convention, yet there are notable differences.

The 1988 Basel Convention was prompted by a load of foreign electronics comprised of over 3,500 tons of toxic waste, including polychlorinated biphenyl that was dumped in a port in Koko, Nigeria.<sup>26</sup> Provoked by such a detrimental act, the goal of the Basel Convention is much more specific than that of OECD. Its sole aim is to protect human health and the environment, especially in developing countries. The Basel Convention puts responsibility on the source of shipments judged to be illegal. When the State of export is found "guilty," they must ensure that the wastes are taken back or safely disposed of. If the illegality resulted due to actions made by the State of import then they become responsible for ensuring that the wastes are disposed of in an environmentally sound manner. When responsibility cannot be determined, the States concerned, along with other members, must cooperate on finding an environmentally sound solution.<sup>27</sup> The convention currently has 153 participating countries,<sup>28</sup> more than four-times as many constituents as the OECD. Although the Basel Convention is one of the most prominent international regulations of trans-boundary movements and disposal of hazardous waste, the United States has yet to ratify it.<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, there are currently no federal laws on management of e-waste recycling. The EPA enacted the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) in 1976, and, to this day, it remains to be the principal federal law governing the disposal of "solid waste" and "hazardous waste."<sup>30</sup> Although electronics contain toxins, only a few specific items, such as computer monitors, televisions, and cell phones, are regulated under hazardous waste mandates. However, such items are subject to exemptions. For instance, a business disposing of less than 2640 pounds of hazardous waste per year is not required by federal law to handle the material as hazardous. Businesses producing more than this quantity can claim the rest of their products as donations to further avoid regulations.<sup>31</sup> Donations and items intended for reuse are not regulated since they are sent overseas to allegedly "bridge the digital divide", yet only one-quarter of the items shipped to Africa's largest port are in working order. Inspections of donated machines to ensure operability are not required therefore material sent to developing nations is often deliberately mislabeled as a donation.<sup>32</sup> Cathode ray tubes, or CRTs, are the most regulated electronic hazardous waste, but still undergo minimal requirements and receive exemptions.<sup>33</sup>

CRTs consist of the glass video display components of an electronic device such as a computer monitor. A CRT device can contain four to seven pounds of lead. Nevertheless exportation to underdeveloped countries is permitted. Shippers of used CRTs exported for recycling must notify the EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assistance of an intended shipment. Notification

includes contact information, frequency and rate of export, means of transport, total quantity of CRTs, and information about transit countries. The exporter may not ship the CRTs until he receives the consent of the receiving country. However, if a person exporting used CRTs wanted to offset some of these regulations they could claim that reuse was intended for reuse rather than recycling. When exporting items for reuse the exporter must submit a one-time notification with their contact information and a statement that they are exporting the CRTs for reuse to the appropriate EPA Regional Administrator, with a copy to the Regional Import-Export Coordinator (see 40 CFR 261.41). To avoid all regulations, an exporter can claim that the shipments CRT glass had been sorted or that it was unused.<sup>34</sup> RCRA regulations mostly maintain documentation; it does not enforce prevention of unethical waste exportations.

It is obvious that existing US regulations and initiatives are not enough. Therefore, in 2010 and 2011, US Representatives Gene Green and Mike Thompson introduced legislation called “The Responsible Electronics Recycling Act.”<sup>35</sup> The Act would stop US “recyclers” from dumping e-waste on developing countries<sup>36</sup> but the bill was not passed. Other bills have been introduced in the House and Senate to enforce responsible recycling of e-waste, but were also dismissed. Insufficient US actions are apparent when compared to other developed nations’ e-waste laws. For instance, Europe has already banned lead, cadmium, and several other materials still permitted in US products.<sup>37</sup> The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) openly acknowledges that US laws and regulations have come short of their goals.<sup>38</sup>

The agency also confirms US e-waste is irresponsibly being exported overseas. An accurate calculation of the total amount of e-waste being exported would be difficult since numerous e-waste exports are regularly unaccounted for or falsely documented. However, an estimate of regulated items would be possible given that RCRA documentations provide details of the exported items, including weight, yet the EPA state it is impossible to do such calculations.<sup>39</sup>

In one year Hong Kong alone returned 26 illegally exported containers back to the US,<sup>40</sup> but it is likely that other illegal containers were overlooked considering China’s lax laws and the hundreds of containers that arrive in the Port of Hong Kong every day.<sup>41</sup> Since millions of containers are shipped to the US from Hong Kong each year, some of the containers are loaded with e-waste upon their return. This is cheaper than disposing of the waste safely. Some try to trick customs officers by diluting hazardous wastes or deliberating mixing them with non-hazardous wastes. However, since China has banned e-waste imports, it is their responsibility to see that it does not enter their nation. Yet China remains a major e-waste dumping ground for developed countries. Although hard evidence is difficult to come across, the government seems to be involved in electronic smuggling.<sup>42</sup>

The majority of the junk that China imports will end up in

Guiyu, otherwise known as the “e-waste capital of the world”. Here one can find over 60,000 laborers sorting through mountains of trashed electronics stretching for miles and miles. Workers toil away recovering trace amounts of precious metals such as gold and silver. The profiteers of this backyard recycling system pay extremely minimal wages knowing the desperation of these destitute people. Poorly educated about the real hazards they live and work in, these people understand the risks of dismantling 21st century equipment in a 17th century fashion because they face the consequences every day. The burns they receive from passing circuit boards through red-hot kilns and acid baths, and the toxic fumes they choke on while melting plastic are no mystery.<sup>43</sup> They constantly endure the dangers of such an environment since not only do they work here, this is their home. Their water has become undrinkable and 70 percent of children suffer from lead poisoning. Furthermore the town has the highest level of cancer-causing dioxins in the world.<sup>44</sup> Sadly, Guiyu is not the only place facing the consequences of the first world’s electronic fervor.

Other popular e-waste destinations include Brazil, the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Ghana, and Nigeria just to name a few.<sup>45</sup> At these dumps, people also scavenge through toxic pools of junk for any valuable components in exchange for a meager salary. The low-tech recovery process could expose workers and the local environment to cadmium, mercury, and other hazardous materials used to build electronics. Approximately 45 percent of Nigeria’s e-waste is shipped from the US.<sup>46</sup> After it’s sorted, many of the contents of the container will be dumped at a burn site where workers are exposed to carcinogenic compounds called dioxins that are byproducts of incinerated plastics. Traders in places like Lagos are willing to receive this cast-off junk, though many of their governments officially forbid it.<sup>47</sup> Lack of enforcement of existing laws also exists in the US. A recent GAO report stated that even when the GAO provided the EPA with the names of 43 US companies demonstrating readiness to illegally export cathode ray tubes (CRTs), only one violator was penalized.<sup>48</sup>

Documentaries and non-governmental investigations have put e-waste dumping grounds like Guiyu and Lagos in the limelight. A 60 Minutes episode entitled “The Wasteland,” released in 2008, cleverly traces a shipping container belonging to Executive Recycling Inc., a recycling company in Englewood, Colorado. Before beginning their journey, the documentary displays thousands of Coloradans entrusting the company to recycle their used belongings responsibly, particularly since they promised they would. In an interview, Executive’s owner acknowledged the tragedies third world countries face from poor practicing e-cyclers and touted the company as not being a contributory source. However, the truth unfolded as 60 Minutes followed Executive’s shipment to Hong Kong, China. The container was packed full of discarded laptops, keyboards, printers, TVs, and other equipment. Justice was delivered to these e-waste exporters in December, 2012, four years after the release of the documentary. The two

administrators of Executive made \$1.8 million; they were found guilty of federal charges of fraud, environmental crimes, smuggling and obstruction.<sup>49</sup>

Environmental crimes and fraudulent exportations are not the only offenses brewing in the backyards of developing nations. Sitting in an e-waste graveyard thousands of miles away is personal information still lingering in those once adored devices. The previous owners of laptops and computers have most likely forgotten about their chucked machines; however, computers are not as inclined to disregard your prior relationship. Containing endless amounts of personal information, salvaged hard drives are often sold at open-air markets where criminals can buy them for around US \$35. Private financial data such as credit card numbers and account information, among other confidential records, can be accessed and used in scams. Individuals are not the only ones who should be concerned given that information on Government contracts from military contractors, the defense intelligence agency, NASA, Transportation Security Administration, and Homeland Security can also be obtained.<sup>50</sup> To prevent cyber crimes on itself and its people, the government should take adequate measures in assuring proper e-cycling. Until then, corporations and individuals alike must seek honest recyclers on their own.

The Basel Action Network (BAN) has decided to help individual consumers, as well as companies that generate e-waste, identify responsible recyclers. Jim Puckett, executive director of BAN acknowledges that, “Unfortunately there are hundreds of fake recyclers out there that are loading up containers full of our old toxic TVs and computers.”<sup>51</sup> BAN was encouraged by leaders in the recycling and asset recovery industry to launch a truly rigorous, internationally compliant certification program. The result was eStewards, a one of a kind program enforcing strict e-waste export bans, as well as other environmentally sound and humanly safe electronic recycling practices.<sup>52</sup> In Colorado, where the Executive Recycling incident took place, a new law takes effect July 1 that requires state agencies to arrange for the disposal of electronics with certified recyclers.<sup>53</sup> Colorado’s initiative is one step closer to safer e-waste practices.

Countries can turn challenges from e-waste into an opportunity according to a recent United Nations Environmental Program report. Development of e-waste facilities would generate employment, cut greenhouse gas emissions and recover more valuable resources than backyard recycling.<sup>54</sup> Such a shift would make electronics more expensive in the short term,<sup>55</sup> but when considering predictions that in South Africa and China computer e-waste alone will jump 200 to 400 percent from 2007 levels by 2020, inaction would be catastrophic. Other countries are also expected to have exponential growth, including India, which is why an e-cycling plant in Bangalore is attempting to make money spinning the waste into gold watches and jewelry in a safe environment.<sup>56</sup> The report also suggests that as many toxic

compounds as possible should be banned in the fabrication of new electronics. UNEP forewarns that if current methods are left intact countries will face rising environmental damage and health problems.

With such lacking enforcement and minimal regulations, companies are not discouraged from outsourcing their hazardous waste. It is necessary to foster the development of recycling opportunities and mandate laws so that obsolete gadgets can be reborn in a safe manner. Citizens of developing countries, where environmental and human rights laws are lax, should not have to choose between poverty and poison.



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# REMITTANCES TO MEXICO: A CASE STUDY

GABRIELA CASTILLO

Whether we are ready for it or not, globalization is real and it is happening now. Globalization in this case refers to an increasingly popular open trade system. This trend facilitates the free flow of goods, ideas, and people between states. As the world becomes smaller, migration becomes easier and more common. The most recognized emigrational tendency has been a move by migrants from underdeveloped or developing countries to more developed countries. The most efficient way to calculate the effects of immigration on a state's economy is by measuring remittances. Generally, organizations such as the IMF have defined remittances as funds sent by migrant workers to individual residents (especially family members) in their home country.<sup>1</sup>

Immigration is a controversial issue with implications that are all at once political, economical, and social. It is an issue that can evoke strong emotional reactions and passionate arguments both for and against it. From an academic perspective, there is no clear consensus on the ultimate consequences of immigration. Economists have, in the past, looked at more general trends of remittances as a focal point in their studies. Now researchers are taking a more regional approach to the subject in the hope of discovering the developmental effects of remittances so as to more fully comprehend and measure the outcomes of mass migrations of people.<sup>2</sup> If they can accurately predict immigrational trends and the effects on the developed and underdeveloped countries involved, experts hope to better advise policy makers in the future on the most appropriate manner to deal with the matter of immigration.

Although by far the most accurate, remittance measuring is not without its flaws. First, it is impossible to get an exact value of total remittances since not all money going into the home country is sent through traditional channels such as bank transfers that can easily be tracked. In many cases, because of a country's

restrictive immigration policies, immigrants will reside in a state illegally. These migrant workers are virtually invisible in their host country and must send money to relatives left behind by and through unconventional means that are impossible to track. It is estimated these unrecorded funds are about fifty percent larger than those recorded.<sup>3</sup> Second, the study of remittances has only recently regained attention. There is little recent in-depth research to references. Last, there is the issue of national security. Many countries do not release any information to the public on the flow of money across borders unless said money is identified as a personal transaction. These personal transactions are classified as "net private remittances and other transfers."<sup>4</sup> This excludes any funds sent by a collective group of immigrants that, for example, might be for the construction of social infrastructure to benefit the residents of their home country. For these reasons, this article will focus on the personal monetary funds sent by migrant workers with legal residency in a host country.

A case that is frequently revisited for such studies is that of migrants from Mexico in the United States. Mexico receives the highest amount of remittance funds from the United States. In 2009, twenty billion dollars were sent to Mexico via personal transactions.<sup>5</sup> In Mexico, remittances make up the third largest source of revenue, behind only oil and tourism, which makes the relevance of remittances undeniable. In 1994, Mexico and the United States, along with Canada, entered what is the North American Free Trade Agreement.<sup>6</sup> This was an agreement meant to lower or eliminate tariffs on exports and allow for the free flow of goods and capital across the countries' borders. Proponents of NAFTA argued that the new business and foreign investment in Mexico would lower poverty domestically and reduce the immigration rate to the United States. What happened was that corporate subsidies and relaxed trading regulations depleted Mexican agricultural business which killed many small businesses

and devastated many more independent farmers causing a rise in unemployment and underemployment. This in turn caused a notable rise in Mexican emigration,<sup>7</sup> especially to the United States. These factors created a larger gap between the very poor and immensely rich in Mexico and shrank the middle class to almost nonexistence.

Statistically, Mexico is now a developed state with a vibrant economy, in fact it is considered to have the twelfth highest GDP in the world.<sup>8</sup> Mexican administrations have fully embraced the trend towards globalization. The state enjoys the benefits of free trade and has created free-trade agreements with more than fifty countries worldwide, placing over ninety percent of its trade under such agreements.<sup>9</sup> Mexico has cultivated and operates a very export oriented economy. The largest of its trading partners is the United States with about seventy-eight percent of all its exports going to the US. Despite some short periods of decline (specifically, during the 2008 crisis which caused various countries to import less from abroad) under these new trade policies, Mexico has been experiencing an annual increase in revenue for the last fifteen years.<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, not everyone in Mexico is benefiting from these new gains. Because the country's industrialized economy is focused primarily on the exportation of its goods, domestic prices for these goods are kept at a price above the main population's purchasing power rate. The poorest ten percent in Mexico can barely afford a purchase power rate of about 1.5 percent. By contrast, the country's top ten percent hold a purchase power rate of about 41.4 percent.<sup>11</sup>

The gap between the rich and poor in the country is alarming for a country so rich in resources. The causes for such a gap includes governmental corruption, lack of proper infrastructure, and the ever-present threat of internal terrorism brought on by Mexico's notorious drug cartels. The majority of citizens live below the poverty line despite the fact that Mexico has a low unemployment rate of about five percent.<sup>12</sup> Of the forty-nine million employed in Mexico about twenty-five percent are considered to be under-employed. This indicates that Mexico currently has a larger labor force than it can accommodate for and many earn an income much lower than the cost of living.<sup>13</sup> This surplus of workers makes migration to the United States necessary, not only for the survival of the individual but for family members as well.

There are approximately 11 million Mexican born immigrants living in the United States. Of these 11 million, sixty percent regularly send remittances to relatives still residing in their home country. There is a definite trend in regards to the distributions of remittances to Mexico. As would be expected, those Mexican states with the highest outflows of migrant workers report receiving the highest amounts of remittances. The four states reporting the highest amounts of funds are from the same southwestern region of Mexico: Michoacán, Guanajuato, Jalisco, and Zacatecas.<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, these same states are reported as receiving the

least amount of aid from their government. This correlation is undeniable and has dramatic implications. The annual remittances reported by Guanajuato, for example, are fourteen times greater than the total governmental aid received.<sup>15</sup>

According to a study by the World Central Bank, migrants dedicated ten percent of their annual income to remittances sent to Mexico. In many cases, the need for these funds is quite significant. The fact is that remittances make up anywhere from sixty to eighty percent of the income of the family members receiving these funds. Remittances function as a form of immediate relief for the poor in Mexico since most of the funds are used for basic consumption.<sup>16</sup>

Some studies have also shown that remittances as a form of aid are not usually affected by sudden decreases in the migrant's income due to slumps in the United States' economy. It appears as though the migrant simply absorbs the loss making the remittances not only a greater contribution but also a more reliable source of relief than government aid that corresponds countercyclical with the fluctuating market.<sup>17</sup> Another factor that affects the social relief distributed by the government is political conflict. In any country with a large economical gap between social classes, exploitations of the poor and corruption of the societal top tier is a reality. When this occurs, remittances become a lifeline for the country's poor.

On the other hand, scholars fear that a welfare perspective, though positive in the short run, might ironically have negative long-term effects on the home country. The biggest fear is that Mexico will develop an irreversible dependency on these remittances. Some argue that the crutch these funds provide might actually be stunting the Mexican economy. With the availability of these funds the Mexican government is virtually absolved of ever truly addressing its lack of a developed social safety net. Remittances also have a possibility of weakening the incentive to work by those receiving them.<sup>18</sup>

Just like the home country, the host country, in this case the United States, also acquires both positive and negative consequences due to the out flow of remittances to Mexico and other underdeveloped countries like it. People are quick to point out the negative outcomes. This is because of the widely held presumption that migrants are a drain on their host country's social services.<sup>19</sup>

There is something to be said about the fact that the states from which most remittances come from are states with the highest quantities of Mexican immigrants. These states also happen to have the largest economies in the United States. These states are California and Texas and they have the two highest populations of Mexican born migrants in the United States. In fact, more than half of all Mexican born migrant workers reside in California and Texas.<sup>20</sup> The question from the point of view of the United States is whether the money leaving in the form of remittances can be offset by the savings acquired with the hiring of cheap labor provided by the migrant workers.

Despite the United States's own financial troubles, the

government still manages to secure fifty billion dollars annually for foreign aid worldwide. Last year Mexico received about three hundred and seventeen million dollars of aid money. This is the second largest amount paid to any one country by the US.<sup>21</sup> This aid covers costs such as medical expenses for the poorest in Mexico. These are expenses that, because of the remittances sent, more and more of the poor in Mexico are finally able to afford. By 2009 foreign aid to Mexico totaled approximately sixty-four million dollars. The hope is that the remittances sent annually will help decrease the amount of foreign aid from the US government.<sup>22</sup>

As already mentioned, remittances are primarily used for the personal consumption of those receiving them. The vast majority of Mexico's imports come from the United States and because of the high prices of domestic goods in the export oriented market Mexicans end up buying mostly American made goods. By this logic, the United States is essentially getting that remittance money back.

The most obvious advantage for the United States however, is access to cheap labor. The United States has a highly skilled work force but runs a deficit of laborers in low skill level sectors found especially in agriculture and construction. The cheap labor provided by migrant workers allows the United States to produce products cheaply that it would otherwise be forced to import.

On a global scale, immigration makes sense and is essential to the success of international integration and the establishment of a truly free global market. According to the liberalist perspective, people must be free to move wherever jobs are available. An immigration reform facilitating such migration would allow for a more cost-effective distribution of labor that could potentially lead to a global gain of about three hundred and fifty-six billion (US) dollars by the year 2025.<sup>23</sup>

That the states of the international community will ever act beyond self-interest disregarding national borders appears unlikely at this point. In order to answer such a question further research is needed, research that is not available either because it has been deemed too sensitive for disclosure to the public or simply because such research has yet to be conducted and published. The fact is that the study of remittance trends can give us an economic perspective on the consequences of opening up national borders for the sake of job opportunities. The arguments made, although concise, are far too general to draw definitive conclusions from regarding social and political aspects of immigration. They do, however, open a dialogue for peaceful and impartial diplomacy that potentially benefits all parties involved, so that all may reap the benefits of globalization.



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# ALARMING INCREASE OF GREEN ON BLUE VIOLENCE THREATENS SUCCESSFUL TURNOVER AND STABILITY IN AFGHANISTAN

MATTHEW AKIN

The war against terror is complex and difficult. In a region with a complex tribal history that has been exacerbated by British and Russian conflicts, Afghanistan is not keen to foreign intervention of any kind. Terrorists use propaganda as well as threats and acts of violence to intimidate and influence civilians. After eleven years of war, the United States' military death toll in Afghanistan reached two thousand in September of 2012.<sup>1</sup> The enemy does not wear a uniform, but instead blends in amongst the local population. These conditions have led to an extremely difficult war with an unclear distinction between success and failure.

In the past two years, United States and NATO forces have encountered another growing problem in the war against terrorism: green on blue violence. Green on blue violence is an act of violence by the Afghan military and Afghan police forces against NATO forces. In 2011, there were 15 green on blue attacks that led to 33 coalition deaths.<sup>2</sup> As of November 1, 2012, the number of green on blue attacks had skyrocketed to 40, resulting in 59 casualties. Green on blue comprises 16% of all coalition forces deaths in the region.<sup>3</sup> With green on blue violence increasing at an exponential rate, it is imperative to identify the conditions that led to the rise of these attacks, while addressing the actions undertaken to combat future attacks. By analyzing the causes and acknowledging the preventive measures, it may be possible to use acts of green on blue violence to predict future stability in the region, as well as the ultimate success of the war on terror in Afghanistan.

Green on blue violence is rising at a time when the United States is suffering from war fatigue. The war on terrorism abroad has lasted over a decade. With an economic recession, high unemployment rates, and an increasing national debt, most Americans are far more

concerned with resolving domestic issues than foreign nation building. Public support for the war continues to decline as both sides appear locked in a stalemate. Neither side appears willing to surrender or claim defeat and as a result the war in Afghanistan could last many more years.

On May 21, 2012, President Obama devised an exit strategy from Afghanistan that was agreed to by NATO leaders and supported by Afghan President Hamid Karzai. The plan ends combat operations in 2013 and hands over security responsibilities to Afghan forces, with United States' led NATO forces leaving the country by the end of 2014.<sup>4</sup>

Prior to the NATO withdrawal plan, green on blue violence wasn't a concern. In 2008, there were two incidents of green on blue violence that resulted in the deaths of two coalition forces.<sup>5</sup> Double digit attacks didn't occur until 2010,<sup>6</sup> when serious talks of United States' and allied forces withdrawal from the region began. Although there appears to be a clear correlation between the NATO withdrawal plan and increase of green on blue attacks, there is much debate concerning the meaning of these attacks and why they are occurring at such an alarming frequency.

One theory suggests that the impending withdrawal of NATO forces in Afghanistan has led to more intimate working conditions with the Afghan military and police forces in order to facilitate a smoother and ultimately more successful turnover in 2014. However, as a result, the Taliban has recognized this scenario as an opportunity to infiltrate Afghan forces and carry on terrorist acts against NATO forces. In a closely fought war, withdrawal is generally perceived as the equivalent of surrendering. It is reasonable to assume the Taliban views the pending NATO

withdrawal as a Taliban victory in the war. Viewing the withdrawal as a sign of weakness, the Taliban has infiltrated Afghan forces and disrupted the security turnover, while also warping public perception and disrupting the balance of power in the region.

Marine Corps Commandant General James Amos disagrees with the notion that the rise of green on blue attacks signifies coalition forces are losing the war. In a letter to commanders in Afghanistan on August 14, 2012, General Amos wrote “When faced with the stark reality of what has just happened, it would be easy to give in to the belief that these attacks indicate we are losing the fight. In fact, the opposite is true. These attacks are occurring because we are winning the fight in [regional command southwest]. Over the last four years, we have steadily improved the security situation in Helmand [province]. Historical casualty levels have steadily declined. Afghan security forces have made dramatic improvements in dependability, capability, and performance.”<sup>7</sup>

According to General Amos, withdrawal of NATO forces does not indicate surrendering, but instead exemplifies a victory. By his assessment the United States and coalition forces have improved the security of the region, and the impending withdrawal and turnover to Afghan forces is a sign that they have been successful in their mission. General Amos believes these green on blue attacks are out of desperation, and that they offer proof that coalition forces have rattled the Taliban. Amos’ optimistic view of the reasoning behind green on blue attacks could be biased: a General of the military is unlikely to admit his troops are losing a war as it nears its conclusion. While Amos seems to credit the Taliban for being responsible for acts of green on blue violence, not all NATO leaders and officials agree with his assessment.

Initial NATO analysis in August, 2012 showed that only one in ten green on blue attacks could be directly tied to insurgents and that the remainder stem from personal disputes or cultural clashes.<sup>8</sup> However, in September, 2012, NATO commander Marine General John Allen noted that 25% of green on blue attacks were insurgent related. General Allen stated, “It’s less about the precision of 25 versus 10 than it is acknowledging that the Taliban are seeking ultimately to have some impact in the formation.”<sup>9</sup> A 15% rise in estimation of Taliban related attacks in just over a month does, however, greatly diminish the credibility and accuracy of NATO’s analysis.<sup>10</sup> Although cultural conflicts could explain green on green violence (violence amongst Afghan forces), it is more difficult to use them to explain acts of green on blue violence. The United States military, specifically the United States Marine Corps, has undergone pre-deployment cultural training since 2006 as a result of challenges being faced in the Iraq war. In an article from “The Los Angeles Times”, Lieutenant Colonel George Robinson, an operations officer at the Center for Advanced Operational Cultural Learning, explained the details of the Marines cultural training prior to deployment. Colonel Robinson stated “The vast majority of Marines in Afghanistan today are deploying into the southwest of Afghanistan, most to Helmand Province. So we usually are

exposing them to the Pashtun population, not exclusively, but they’re the majority of people they’re working in and around. We talk about the values held by Pashtun people in general, what social activities are appropriate and accepted by the Pashtun people. We expose them to a cultural code of behavior called Pashtunwali that helps us understand what the Pashtun people value, how they conduct their personal relations with other people, what their concept of honor is and what that means to Marines who are living and working with them as partners every day.”<sup>11</sup> It is difficult to explain increased green on blue violence as a result of cultural quarrels with the implementation of cultural training and awareness received by the troops. It could have been expected for cultural differences to play a role in attacks early in the war, when military personnel weren’t as efficiently trained in the culture of the Afghan people. However, in 2008, there were only two green on blue attacks in Afghanistan.<sup>12</sup> It would be reasonable to assume cultural awareness increased as a result of more in-depth training, thus lessening the likelihood that these attacks are driven by cultural misunderstandings. As green on blue violence continues to occur at an alarming rate, a more plausible explanation is the Taliban are playing an active role in these attacks.

Although there is disagreement about whom and what is to blame for an increase of green on blue violence, what can be agreed upon is the negative impact these acts are having on the security turnover between NATO and Afghan forces. Before explaining security measures to mitigate future attacks, it is important to understand the Afghanistan region as a whole, while attempting to explain the initial rise of terrorist organizations and their current impact on the security turnover to Afghan forces. According to information compiled by the United States’ Central Intelligence Agency, Afghanistan is an extremely poor and landlocked country, with much of its population suffering from shortages of housing, clean water, electricity, and medical care. As a result, Afghanistan’s living standards are amongst the lowest in the world. Afghanistan also suffers from a 35% unemployment rate (as of 2008), a literacy rate of 28.1% (as of 2000), and no education expenditures. Criminality, insecurity, weak governance, and the Afghan Government’s difficulty in extending rule of law to the entire country poses challenges for future economic growth. Afghanistan is also the world’s largest producer of opium, which serves as a key source of revenue for the Taliban, as widespread corruption and instability impede counterdrug efforts.<sup>13</sup> When examining the cause of increased green on blue violence, a possible explanation is the same instability in the region that led to the emergence of large terrorist organizations, is reemerging due to the pending withdrawal of coalition forces.

In 2010-2011, Afghanistan received \$15.7 billion of foreign aid.<sup>14</sup> The question remains, what impact will the withdrawal of NATO forces have on the amount of foreign aid Afghanistan receives? Unfortunately, although it is presumably less, this question has yet to be definitively answered. On December 2,

2009, in her opening remarks before the House of Foreign Affairs Committee, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton spoke of the United States' future involvement with the Afghan and Pakistani governments. Secretary of State Clinton stated "We will help to stabilize a region that is fundamental to our national security. And we will develop long-term, sustainable relationships with both Afghanistan and Pakistan, so that we do not repeat the mistakes of the past. The duration of our military presence may be limited, but our civilian commitment must continue even as our troops will begin to come home."<sup>15</sup> Three years later, the amount of commitment to the Afghan Government remains in question. Afghan President Hamid Karzai stated, following the NATO approved withdrawal plan, "We have finalized plans so 2014 will be a year in which the United States will not be spending as much money in Afghanistan as it is spending today. It will save money and we will be providing security ourselves."<sup>16</sup> The same conditions that led to terrorist organizations finding a safe haven in Afghanistan appear to be resurfacing with the pending withdrawal plan. With a decrease in foreign funding, it is unclear how Afghanistan will be able to sufficiently fund their security forces. The Taliban has used the withdrawal plan in their propaganda campaign to further their belief that they have won the war. The Taliban is able to utilize their financially successful opium trade to facilitate large amounts of revenue, which they use to recruit civilians. With the impending reduction of foreign aid, for many civilians in the region the Taliban is their only option when attempting to escape extreme poverty and hunger. The heightened success of Taliban infiltration into Afghan security forces would signal the organization is getting stronger and gaining momentum, and the perception of weakened stability in the region as a result of the future withdrawal of NATO forces could be a driving force in the emergence of green on blue violence.

Despite rapidly increasing green on blue violence, NATO countries have been divided regarding the situation. When addressing the effects of green on blue violence, Pentagon press secretary George Little stated "While some partnered operations are temporarily suspended, many continue, and regional commanders have the authority to approve more."<sup>17</sup> British Defense Secretary Philip Hammond downplayed the effects of green on blue violence when he insisted "There has been no change of policy in Afghanistan."<sup>18</sup> Hammond's assessment is not entirely accurate. Partnering and advising of Afghan forces is now being relegated at the battalion level and above. Hammond went on to defend his position by stating "The change does not mean that there will be no partnering below that level. The need for that will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and approved by the regional commanders."<sup>19</sup> NATO appears to be more concerned with the political implications of these attacks than of the death of their personnel. NATO recognizes that the failure to prevent future green on blue attacks would incite outrage amongst NATO country populations, with severe political consequences. However,

a perceived over-reaction to these attacks could create hostilities between NATO and Afghan forces, consequently affecting the success of the turnover while inciting future attacks. Due to this political dilemma, NATO has attempted to downplay the effects of green on blue attacks by portraying the NATO-Afghan relationship as relatively unchanged. However, the United States has exercised great caution as a result of the attacks by no longer permitting Afghans to be armed on United States' bases and requiring United States' military personnel to be armed at all times. In October, 2012, joint operations in some Afghan districts were put on hold as Afghan forces were subjected to fingerprint scans, iris scans, and photographs used to build a database while simultaneously performing more intricate background checks.<sup>20</sup> Despite NATO's best efforts to undermine these changes, they have in fact shown a level of distrust for Afghan forces. Although this doubt and the changes made to policy are clearly warranted, these changes could have detrimental effects on the proper turnover of security in 2014.

In addition to becoming a very serious threat to NATO forces, green on blue violence in Afghanistan may also serve as a way to foreshadow the future of the region. The approval of the 2014 NATO withdrawal led to increasing green on blue violence, but the real causes of these attacks can be attributed to improper planning. Despite receiving billions in foreign aid, Afghanistan's economy remains in the same dire condition it was prior to receiving aid. Along with creating doubt amongst the Afghan civilian population concerning the success of the war on terror, the withdrawal plan also raised doubt about the future of the Afghan security forces without foreign funding. In a rushed political decision, the United States and NATO forces failed to properly formulate conditions concerning their withdrawal. They failed to properly assess the abilities of their Afghan security counterparts and did little in the way of ensuring economic stability upon their departure. Similarly, policy changes in how the war was fought created an environment where the Taliban could thrive. In an effort to fight a war with the goal of winning over "hearts and minds" of the civilians in Afghanistan, strict rules of engagement were enacted in an attempt to reduce civilian casualties. Afghan security forces weren't subjected to intricate background checks thus allowing for easier Taliban infiltration. In an attempt to befriend and not offend Afghans, NATO forces left themselves vulnerable to external and internal attacks. What politicians and military officials seem to have miscalculated is the way in which you win over the "hearts and minds" of Afghans. This is not done through accommodation with little accountability; it is done by winning the war on terror by weakening the Taliban hierarchy and simultaneously creating a stronger economy through the elimination of corruption in the government. By failing to attack and restructure conditions that initially existed in Afghanistan that facilitated a Taliban stronghold of the region, changes made by coalition forces are simply not sustainable. The winner of the war on terror in Afghanistan won't be determined the day NATO troops are withdrawn. It will be



determined in the future, and will be dependent on economic conditions and corruption levels in the government. Currently, the only way to stop green on blue violence while simultaneously facilitating a smoother, more successful turnover, is to reassess the terms of the NATO withdrawal date as well as policies that dictate how the war is fought and by implementing a plan that strives to ensure future stability in Afghanistan without foreign assistance.



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# WOMEN IN COMBAT: U.S. POLICY CATCHING UP WITH REALITY

EMILY BILLS

Women in the United States began making sacrifices, along with risking their own lives, for this country beginning with the American Revolutionary War, and they have done so in every war since. While men appear to be the recipients of nearly all credit that has been given in fighting war, women's contributions have been overlooked and unrecognized. As time goes on and our country battles with inequalities that exist within the United States military, we have seen tremendous change and acceptance for all; however, it hasn't been anything short of a grueling battle. The contributions women have made in American military history are many, and the time has finally come where they will legally be permitted to show their outstanding strength and true potential. Women have continually tried to break the gender barrier within the United States Armed Forces, but they have never been able to break through the ceiling, which prohibits them from participating in direct ground combat, until now. This article discusses and analyzes the recent plan to repeal the 1994 ban on women serving in combat roles in the armed forces and the impact women have on foreign policy and our warfighting ability particularly against other countries that have already taken these steps.

American women played significant roles in World War I, when there were more than 35,000 women serving as either nurses or were taught skills in order to free the men of their duties at home to allow them to fight the war.<sup>1</sup> In World War II, over 400,000 American women were assigned vital non-combat roles; the Japanese held sixty-seven Army nurses as prisoners of war (POWs) for over two and a half years.<sup>2</sup> There were many changes after World War II for women serving in the military including the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, signed by President

Truman in June 1948, allowing women to enlist in the regular Army and no longer being restricted to the Woman's Army Corps.<sup>3</sup> Year by year, women expanded their presence within the armed forces. By 1970, the first two female general officers were promoted in the US armed forces, and by 1978, the WAC was officially decommissioned, allowing men and women to begin training at the same basic training units.<sup>4</sup>

In 1994 Secretary of Defense Les Aspin announced a new policy, the "Direct Combat Definition and Assignment Rule," and declared, "Service members are eligible to be assigned all positions for which they are qualified, except that women shall be excluded from assignment to units below the brigade level whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground."<sup>5</sup> The 1994 policy limited direct ground combat for women, however, it did overturn the "risk rule" that had been implemented in 1988, which "excluded women from noncombat units or missions if the risks of exposure to direct combat, hostile fire or capture were equal to or greater than the risk in the units they supported."<sup>6</sup> With intentions of rescinding the previous 1994 ban, on January 9, 2013, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin E. Dempsey, sent a memo to the Secretary of Defense with the subject heading, "Women in the Service Implementation Plan."<sup>7</sup> General Dempsey begins by writing, "The time has come to rescind the direct combat exclusion for women and to eliminate all unnecessary gender-biased barriers to service," and follows with guiding principles that will be the forefront of the integration plan in order to ensure the success of our armed forces while making sure all service members have "the opportunity to succeed and are set up for success with viable career paths."<sup>8</sup>

Soon after, with support from both the military and President

Obama, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta announced his decision to overturn the 1994 Pentagon rule that prohibits women to serve in combat roles.<sup>9</sup> In a statement issued by the President supporting Panetta's decision, President Obama honors those women who have fought hard and admirably in Iraq and Afghanistan and states his belief that this decision will "strengthen our military, enhance our readiness, and be another step toward fulfilling our nation's founding ideals of fairness and equality."<sup>10</sup> Along with his support for this policy, during his time in office President Obama has proven his dedication for equal treatment within the military via the repeal of the "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy, which allowed gays to serve in the military as long as they did not make their sexual orientation known, and for others to not ask about sexual orientation. During WWII, homosexuals were restricted from being in the military all together, causing the number of gay service members to plummet. It was not until 1993 that President Bill Clinton, who wanted to repeal the ban completely but was unable to, signed the Military Personnel Eligibility Act, or better known as the "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy. And in September of 2011, that policy finally came to an end, allowing gays to serve openly in all aspects of the armed forces, bringing the US one step closer to creating an equal and fair military.

As America's society becomes increasingly equal with women breaking the stereotypes of the typical female gender role, in addition with the support coming from within the military itself, it was only a matter of time before women were given the opportunity, by law, to serve in direct combat roles. With the most prevalent motive seeming to be the fact that women are already facing combat, and have been for years, this policy is merely catching up with the realities of war. The US utilizes female helicopter pilots who must fly through combat zones, as well as medics whose duty is to treat the wounded wherever they happen to fall. Army Staff Sgt. Keesha Dentino, who served in both Afghanistan and Iraq, was quoted as saying, "Every deployment I've done combat missions."<sup>11</sup> In Afghanistan, she would go on combat missions and also talk with civilians. She explained that many of the local women were "pleasantly surprised to find women in these roles" and "they're a lot more willing to converse with you"<sup>12</sup> Women have been very beneficial in the process of gaining information from civilians; in fact, the Marines have built all-female groups, called "lionesses," in order to speak to Afghan women who would otherwise never speak to male soldiers.<sup>13</sup>

General Dempsey and Secretary Panetta describe the policy as an "affirmation of what they had seen was occurring on the battlefield, where women have frequently found themselves in combat over the past decade of war in Iraq and Afghanistan—although not officially recognized for it, and therefore held back in a military in which combat experience is crucial to advancements."<sup>14</sup> Combat duty is usually considered mandatory for a soldier to qualify for senior staff positions. Denying females the opportunity to fight and by not recognizing their combat

experience, women could not rank higher in the military. There have only been two four-star female generals in the history of the United States' military, the first being promoted in 2008.<sup>15</sup>

The harassment and discrimination females have suffered in the military environment has also become a concern for both sides in this debate. Some believe this will lead to more harassment; others think it will do the exact opposite. Anu Bhagwati, a former Marine Captain and the Executive Director of the Service Women's Action Network, was interviewed by the New York Times and stated she believes the ban legalizes discrimination and contributes to the mistreatment of women.<sup>16</sup> After trying to advance into positions that were not available to her due to combat exclusion and with the sexual harassment she faced, Bhagwati left the Marine Corps after five years.<sup>17</sup> It is anticipated that if women in the military are equal to men by law, it will lead to a shift in attitude and culture allowing women to be treated with respect by their peers, just as we have seen occur in other workplaces.

While making their top priority the military's warfighting capability and overall readiness, Panetta and Dempsey are prepared to review about 53,000 positions now closed by unit and around 184,000 positions now closed by specialty, all of which will be opened to women who meet the standards developed for each position.<sup>18</sup> Each military department is said to provide detailed plans for this policy by May 15, 2013, and the entire process is to be completed by January 1, 2016.<sup>19</sup> Also, if any department feels that women should still be excluded from a specific position, they will need approval by the Secretary of Defense.<sup>20</sup> The two men stated at a Pentagon news conference, "We'll also integrate women in a way that enhances opportunity for everyone. This means setting clear standards of performance for all occupations based on what it actually takes to do the job."<sup>21</sup> Hence, there will not be separate standards for women and men but one standard that will have to be met to ensure the individual, regardless of sex, can do the job.

As women start to advance positions within the military, the overall environment will change. One question remains: "Will women damage unit cohesion?" There is often little to no privacy while deployed on combat missions and women may not feel comfortable sharing that kind of intimate space when so outnumbered by men, potentially affecting the bond between soldiers. Another question arises: "Will men feel a biological instinct to protect women on their teams instead of being focused on the mission's objective?" Women have been viewed as vulnerable and should always be protected during war, thus a culture was created to think that women are weaker than men and are incapable of taking care of themselves. Throughout history man has been expected to be the heroic soldier, going out to fight to keep his wife and children safe, leaving women at home, fragile and in need of protection. This is, however, a myth that could possibly be causing harm to our national security. War has been defined and controlled predominately by the male sex, and as women and men are biologically different in the ways in which they think and

act, we are possibly missing out on assessments and insights that maybe only women can provide. Unless more women are involved in the decision-making processes and participation in war, then we will not be using our resources to the highest potential. We risk our national security by excluding women. With women now expanding their roles and creating a more diverse atmosphere, both women and men will be contributing to all aspects of the military, which will provide further examination and observation that could not have been offered by only men. We will only be able to know the true outcome of the policy once it has truly been applied. For now, we can look to other countries that have already taken this step and learn from their mistakes and triumphs in order to ensure the best possibility of success.

A few countries, Canada, Israel and Germany, have allowed women to serve in combat roles. Canada began opening up combat jobs to women in 1989, and although they have reported both negative and positive consequences of the decision, there have been no substantial repercussions from the policy.<sup>22</sup> The responses from Canadian women who have served in combat are varied and dependent on the specific individuals and their experiences. For example, Infantry Cpl. Katie Hodges, who served as part of a two-person heavy machine-gun team in Afghanistan, who often carried 80 pounds of equipment and would occasionally patrol for up to four days at a time, said, “It was great.”<sup>23</sup> Other female Veterans felt that they were excluded from combat once they arrived in Afghanistan, even though they were capable and went through training.<sup>24</sup> Women make up only a very small percentage of combat troops in Canada’s military, which will in all probability be the same outcome here in the US. Therefore, it is in the United States’ best interest to see how Canada has integrated women into their military, analyzing the experiences of specific women and also the men serving alongside those women. It is true, there are many differences between the two countries and their military involvement.

Differing from both the Canadian and United States militaries in many ways, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) started putting women into combat units in 1985.<sup>25</sup>

Israel has been integrating women into their military for a much longer time, and men are accustomed to fighting side by side with women and seeing them in higher positions. The Israeli and American defense forces have different needs and cannot be operated the same. The IDF has a larger demand for women simply because they need more bodies to ensure national security. In fact, all women and men who are eligible are drafted at the age of 18, and women must serve two years and men for three years.<sup>26</sup> Recognizing the differences between the two militaries, retired General of 32 years, Yitzkah Gershon, advises the US not to act too quickly when integrating women into combat roles by suggesting that we should start by incorporating women into instructor positions where they can gain experience, along with allowing the military to adapt to women in senior roles.<sup>27</sup> “It brings them to be

equal, to ask for more, to stand for their rights,” Gershon says.<sup>28</sup> As Israel continues to break through gender barriers, they are exemplifying what it means to be an “army of equality” and are able to “better use the human resource at hand.”<sup>29</sup> Israel is an example of what women can accomplish in the military, and it is not a model that the US can duplicate, but it is one we can learn from.

As a part of the IDF, women and men are serving alongside each other in units, protecting the borders of Israel. In 2011, a soldier spoke about his experience in a coed battalion, tasked with protecting Israel’s southern border. He said, “All the soldiers in the battalion eat together, train together and laugh together. We help each other with everything, regardless of gender. True bonds were forged between the male and female soldiers, and any differences evaporated long ago.”<sup>30</sup> These combat units are not only successful in a social and ideological manner, but they confirm that their fighting and protection skills are up to par as well. As one battalion was protecting the Israel border, a female corporal saw a terrorist with the intent to detonate his explosives near them, and with no hesitation she engaged, fatally shooting him with just one shot, in order to protect herself and her unit.<sup>31</sup> Just as they have done in the Israeli Armed Forces, American women have shown this same courage and skill, but they are not recognized nearly as often as they deserve.

Germany faced this debate in 2000, when they overturned their ban on women in combat as a result of one woman who argued that her application to join the Bundeswehr, the German Armed Forces, was rejected on the grounds of gender rather than qualifications. She then took it to court, and they ruled in her favor saying that Germany was breaching European Union equality legislation.<sup>32</sup> Women began signing up in greater numbers once the ban was overturned. Germany is struggling, however, with sexual harassment and abuse. “Individual cases of misogynistic behavior, including comments by comrades or superiors, or sexual harassment have been reported,” Hellmut Königshaus, Parliamentary Commissioner to the military, wrote in an annual report.<sup>33</sup> Still, he remains positive about the situation and states, “Aside from these individual cases, in areas with a high percentage of women the tone has become more respectful.”<sup>34</sup>

If attitudes concerning women’s roles in the military are evolving to see women in combat roles as a result, the consequences of this decision must be analyzed in the light of the terrible consequence of women soldiers captured—indeed of women serving as POWs. The question of legality surrounding the capture of soldiers during battle and how it will fare legally needs to be dealt with on a global scale. Simply put, there must be consequences if a combatant is captured as a POW and treated unfairly. Those who commit such acts need to be prosecuted and brought to justice. That said, in 1929 the Third Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War was convened to discuss the treatment and legalities concerning POWs and has laid out general provisions for such individuals.<sup>35</sup> Even so, it seems

these rules should be universally applied and enforced, whether it be a country's military or a terrorist group, because if we want our soldiers to be protected under the Geneva Convention, the enemy must also be protected. The world—and war itself has undergone drastic change since 1929 and with more countries allowing women into combat roles it may be time to update the terms that were written more than 80 years ago to fit the needs of all soldiers. Some of the general provisions that were outlined in the convention include that the prisoner will be “humanely treated and protected,” and they are “entitled to respect for their persons and honour,” and “woman shall be treated with all consideration due to their sex.”<sup>36</sup> Even though the United States has consented to the Geneva Convention's provisions the fear of illegal and abusive treatment of our soldiers is always present. Afghanistan may pay lip service to the Third Geneva Convention, but many testify their actions prove otherwise. Also, Iraq, while under occupation, has no organic law, therefore, feels no responsibility to uphold the international law.

Many countries in which we have had, and are currently in, conflicts with are home to cultures that are dominated by men and where women are thought of as unequal, both in social aspects and by law. Regarding our most recent conflicts, Iraq and, largely, Afghanistan are both guilty of inhabiting a society that has put women's rights last. Often, when a woman is sexually assaulted or a victim of violence, it goes unreported because the woman or their family believes it brings disgrace and they want to avoid public embarrassment. This makes it difficult to get an accurate statistic for the number of victims. According to the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), 2,765 cases of violence against women, including 130 rapes took place in Afghanistan in 2010.<sup>37</sup> Just as men are at risk for being captured and possibly tortured when they are in combat roles, women will be at the same risk, but they may suffer a greater cost. If the odds of an Afghani women being able to bring their abuser to justice are small, the chances of an American soldier doing so will be rare. That is not to say we should give up on fighting for justice and to prosecute the guilty or keep our women out of combat roles, but we must do everything we can to provide the optimum training and knowledge to avoid these situations, and if caught in such a devastating predicament, to handle and resolve it to the fullest extent of the law.

The verdict concerning women in combat remains controversial with people fighting for and against the new plan. One thing is certain, women are getting their voices heard. The extensive battle some have fought in the US for this day to come has finally reached its peak. Women have come an extremely long way in the United States' military, and this would not have been possible if women everywhere hadn't persevered and fought to reach equality. Undeniably, as Senator John McCain states, “The fact is that American women are already serving in harm's way today all over the world and in every branch of our armed forces.

Many have made the ultimate sacrifice, and our nation owes them a deep debt of gratitude.”<sup>38</sup> It is not a question of whether women should be in direct combat anymore, it is now an issue of US policy reflecting the reality of modern warfare, and giving those women already facing combat the recognition they deserve. As the United States undergoes this transition, we will see the changes it will entail here on American soil, as well as what possible roads it could lead to in other parts of the world for women in other militaries.



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# A COVENANT WITH SECULARISM: ISLAM IN TRANSITION

TIMOTHY DOTY

There is a schism between the West and Islam on the manner in which a people should be governed. Human rights have been protected and maintained through many different secular and religious methods and both have been noble attempts at securing the values and norms inherent within us. Islam, as the traditional foundation of society in the Middle East, was replaced by secularism and as a result the political and economic security of Muslims was neglected by the secular authoritative dictatorships left behind by the legacies of Western colonialism. Democracy, unfortunately, did not follow suit behind secularism; consequently, an event such as the ‘Arab Spring’ naturally came to fruition in order to satisfy Muslims’ appetite for political freedom.

Despite historical legacies and the monotheistic partnership, Europe and the Middle East have apparent differences in their societies and cultures; consequently, the main focus will be on secularism and its application into Muslim society, which “had for decades maintained unequivocally that development of modern states and societies require westernization and secularization.”<sup>1</sup> With the elimination of Islam as the foundation for Muslim society, Islamism became a backlash religious revivalist movement against secularism. In order to study this more effectively, identification of an Islamist political movement in Turkey will be addressed along with a look at the revolution in Egypt during the Arab Spring. A concise and driven inquiry into the political aspects of the Islamic faith, for example Shari-ah law, must be addressed in order to understand the difficulty of the transition Muslim society has made from Islam to secularism.

Secularization Theory, according to a British-Czech philosopher and social anthropologist, states:

“In the social sciences, one of the most commonest thesis is the secularization thesis, which runs as follows. Under conditions prevailing in the industrial-scientific society, the hold of

religion over society and its people diminishes. By and large this is true, but it is not completely true, for there is one major exception, Islam. In the last hundred years the hold of Islam over Muslims has not diminished but has rather increased.”<sup>2</sup>

Secularism is designed to eliminate the hold religion has over its people and restricting religion’s influence into the private sphere. Secularism, a European idea, was born out of socio-economic historical contexts exclusive to Europe. The concept of political representation and social justice replaced authoritative dictatorships and repressive religious institutions such as the Roman Catholic Church. European society became modernized with the Enlightenment and the installment of secularization as the foundation of its society. The ‘European’ suddenly became an individual, with all the rights and privileges that coincide with this title; “individualism threatened the communal basis of religious belief and behavior, while rationality removed many of the purposes of religion and rendered many of its beliefs implausible.”<sup>3</sup> This ideology became a marketable product that was forcibly implemented in the Arab Muslim world.

With the end of the Great War came British and French colonization of the Middle East; the defeat of the Ottoman Empire left a gaping power vacuum. This was filled by Western colonial influence and power which began as a systematic implementation of societal changes. The political division of the Middle East left by the French and British empires left the Middle East disenfranchised; Muslims had no unifying identity and were politically disorientated. This disenfranchisement is represented in the wide political spectrum that exists in the Arab world today. The colonial hijacking of the Middle East was solely in the interest of profitable economic gain at the expense of the Muslims, an act in accordance with the Realpolitik theory. In order for this exploitation to take place, the foundation of secularism had to be laid for which the methods of commercialism and capitalism

could thrive. The Middle East now had a new foundation to rest their society into; however, democracy does not necessarily follow secularism and the political rights of Muslims, which were formally protected under the Islamic faith, were in serious jeopardy. After the Second World War, European powers gradually withdrew from their colonial obligations in the Middle East, consequently, “the post-independence period witnessed the emergence of modern Muslim states whose pattern of development was heavily influenced by and indebted to Western secular paradigms or models.”<sup>4</sup>

The forced acceptance of secularism led to two significant effects: one is the counter-secularist movement known as ‘Islamism’ and the other ‘Militant Secularism’. A reform movement in the 19th century, by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, developed the idea of Salafi, an ideology that gave root to Islamism and eventually political Islam; “he strove to reform Islam in order to adapt it to the challenge of colonization and westernization.”<sup>5</sup> Eventually, this concept developed into the idea of returning to the cultural and religious roots of Islam, so as to bring order, stability, and identity to the Middle East. Salafism was “more concerned with imposing Islamic norms among Muslim societies and minorities,”<sup>6</sup> “Islamists see Islam not as a mere religion, but as a political ideology that should reshape all aspects of society”<sup>7</sup> Unlike Christianity, Islam is a religion that encompasses all aspects of life. With the marginalization of religion, the Salafi ideology developed into political movements which represent the entire spectral meaning of its ideology. From the left to the right, we start with the liberal secularist, then the moderate Islamist, and finally the extreme fundamentalists. Liberal secularists are characterized as a group coinciding with the demand of secularism and the marginalization of Islam in society. As we work toward the right we fall in the middle ground where sympathy for secularism gives way to Islam as the primary factor in society. This is where the majority of Muslims fall: a compromising outlook on society that involves aspects from both Islam and secularism. The conservative Islamist seek to revive the Medieval Islamic Orthodoxy and re-establish Islamic values and norms in society. The far right is labeled as violent international extreme fundamentalists; Al-Qaeda is a prime example of this group.

Most Islamist groups are also political parties within a nation state attempting to coincide with secular procedures, the exception being Neo-fundamentalism, a borderless international movement. It is primarily a youth movement taken residency in Western countries and “these Muslims do not identify with any given nation-state, their goal is “imposing Islamic norms among Muslim societies and minorities and fighting to reconstruct a universal Muslim community, or ummah.”<sup>8</sup> The media has labeled them ‘Islamic Fundamentalists Terrorists,’ however, a more academic title would be ‘international militant jihadist fundamentalists.’ There is one common theme among these competing concepts and it is that an identity must be established for the Muslim people

because it is paramount in maintaining the existence of Islam as a religion and the Arabs as a people.

One of the multiple identities of the Muslim world is the ideology represented by the conservative fundamentalists. This is an extreme movement that contributes to the lack of political momentum for the Islamic peoples. This movement is powerful and praised by a small contingent of Muslims. The conservative fundamentalists Islamists are not too enthusiastic in adapting to Western culture and society, instead they want to re-establish the Medieval Islamic Orthodox, falling back on the lessons and perfection of the ‘Rashidun.’ After the passing of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad, four political leaders followed his legacy and this period of time was a Golden Age for Islam. It is revered by all Muslims as the perfect example of what a society should be for all mankind. This completely conflicts with the development and progressive theme of a modernized society. Conservative fundamentalists are keen on establishing a perpetual state of ‘standing still’ under the guise of a permanent and unchanging divine will. Western democratic societies are interested in competition and adjusting to changing times. The difference between the two ideologies can be described by basic characteristics of both societies. A Western nation with a constitutional parliamentary government can express itself through performing acts of ratification, legislation, and democratic elections, while a Medieval Islamic Orthodoxy will remain stagnant, allowing the Shari-ah, and numerous other religious scriptures of varying divine caliber to guide society with a set of unchanging and unyielding laws. Within the Islamic religion, the Qur’an is the highest form of law which has a meaning and value that goes beyond the scope of this article.

The Shari-ah is the most important scripture in Islamic societies in regards to politics and government, and it plays a major part in the secularization of the Middle East. Shari-ah is the basis for Islamic political thought and theory and it encompasses God as purveyor of reason and logic. Some themes within Shari-ah include “ideas of equality between men and women, God as the supreme legislator, and divine law embraces every aspect of life.”<sup>9</sup> The marginalization of religion in Muslim societies has left the importance of Shari-ah insignificant. To every Muslim, Shari-ah dictates life, and “to live according to the Shari-ah in both form and inner meaning is to live an ethical life in the fullest sense.”<sup>10</sup> This plays a detrimental role in converting Muslims into cooperative citizens of a secular society because of the devaluation of Shari-ah.

Examples of this cultural transition between Islam and secularism in the contemporary Middle East and recent Turkish history give a great insight into ‘militant secularism.’ In Turkey, during the 1980s and 1990s, the Welfare Party lead by Dr. Necmettin Erbakan, sought to implement Islamic ideals and values back into Turkish society through the democratic processes. This was achieved and the conservative



Islamist agenda was quickly installed which included religious instruction in state schools, taxpayer support for construction of Mosques, and increased Islamist seats in parliament.<sup>11</sup> However, in Turkey, the government is not the highest power—the military is and they are referred to as the ‘guardians of secularism.’ The Turkish military is a prime example of militant secularism which has been an obstacle for Muslim societies achieving political rights and representation within Turkey. Now a semblance of an Islamic state, the guardians felt the “government had betrayed Atatürk’s principles of secularism.”<sup>12</sup>

What followed was a systematic, authoritative and undemocratic retaliation against the Islamists and their agenda. In May, 1999, a “petition of the Constitutional Court by Turkey’s chief prosecutor to ban Welfare for violating the Turkish constitution’s articles on secularism.”<sup>13</sup> The military bullies Parliament, manipulates the media and strategic political assets were seized. There was a military backlash against public displays of religious affection and a purge of the officer corps. Despite the success of the Islamists in Turkey, it showed that “Erbakan and the Welfare Party’s short-lived government proved to be a lightning rod for militant secularists contributing to the increased polarization of society.”<sup>14</sup> Just as there is radical Islamist Fundamentalism, secularism has a nasty reputation for extremism and irrational violence: “the forces of secularism often opt for greater authoritarianism rather than democratization in order to retain their power and privilege.”<sup>15</sup> Although the Turkish military was successful, the Islamists were in fact voted into power by the people and the populace has not lost the heart and will for democracy that the Islamists helped Turkey rediscover. In 2001, the Justice and Development Party, a conservative Islamist movement in Turkey, won power through political democratic process. This party was voted in under the merits of fixing Turkey’s economy which has been accomplished. Now Turkey is a major player on the regional and global table. Yet, the Justice and Development Party has still enforced Islamist ideals and values into Turkish culture, eliminating the secular bureaucratic composition.

Given recent events in the Middle East with the ‘Arab Spring,’ the progress of human rights and political representation has taken a front seat to secularism, particularly the revolution that transpired in Egypt. Egypt is in a similar situation where the majority populace is in desperate need of educational, financial, and physical security which its historically secular authoritative government hasn’t provided. Mohammed Morsi, a member and advocate of the Muslim Brotherhood, has been elected to bring stability to the country and Egyptians want their elected “president to succeed in addressing the real, numerous issues facing the nation, including the stagnant economy and the reforms needed in education and health care.”<sup>16</sup> The Egyptian economy, since the revolution, is in rapid decline. Foreign investments have declined, the value of their currency is declining and unemployment is on the rise. Unemployment amongst the youth of Egypt is the largest

concern for the progress of the country. Amongst 20 - 24 year old citizens, unemployment is 33% for males and 52.8% for females: this youth contingent is important in stabilizing the chaos and distractions diverting the democratic transition in Egypt.<sup>17</sup>

Aside from economic problems, political identity is another obstacle facing Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood currently holds power, however, with growing dissent, the upcoming parliamentary elections, in April, could swing power to a different party that may more properly represent Egyptians. Analyzing the political party spectrum in Egypt is difficult as there is no central authority which can sweep the nation together and drive toward a common goal. Instead, the disenfranchised political elite rely on selfish motivations and agendas, demonizing competitors in order to gain votes and power for their own party. There seems to be no attempt at establishing a collective political conscience.

Morsi has an opportunity to sign a deal with the International Monetary Fund to bring in a loan \$4.8 billion, with a reasonable interest rate, however, there are fiscal requirements and these include cutting subsidies and social programs. It would get worse for the populace before it would get better.<sup>18</sup> Other requirements for the IMF loan include eliminating any legislation and policy on the Muslim Brotherhood’s Islamist agenda, consequently holding off a possible Islamic cultural revival. “President Mohammed Morsi would have the political will to implement unpopular economic reforms that could hurt his Muslim Brotherhood at the polls.”<sup>19</sup>

In order for Egypt to transition out of an authoritative dictatorship and into a nation which values democracy, economic reform and progress must be successful. “Persistent high unemployment rates among youth, the increasing deterioration of the quality of jobs available with no social protection and the growth in employment informality are central policy challenges in Egypt.”<sup>20</sup> The IMF loan may be out of reach for the time being in Egypt and that leaves the government responsible for generating revenue to provide services and employment. Avoiding cutting energy subsidies and commodities for the poor is key in stabilizing the security of the nation in order to focus on political momentum.

Contemporary Egyptian history is a microcosm of Islam’s relationship with colonialism and secularism. It is clear that the power vacuum left by the absence of the previous authoritative government has not been filled by a legitimate political presence. This is the cause and root of all of the economic and political problems facing Egypt today. The cultural transition of Islam to secularism is not complete and this can be detrimental in establishing a collective identity which a political body can rally behind and carry the Egyptian nation forward.

The proper perspective on the issue of the Islamic secular transition is that the “battle is not between tradition and modernity but between two competing alternate sectors of society and their visions or models for development.”<sup>21</sup> Europe has an extensive history, one that absolutely defines its character and identity. The Arab World is dependant upon the same processes as all other

civilizations and it is a victim of “religious traditions established and developed in historical, political, social, and economical contexts.”<sup>22</sup> The political spectrum, which represents the competing ideologies of a transitioning religion in a modern world, is so complex that it has become a subtle symbol of a people in a monumental struggle for identity and progress.

Secularism has been the anvil for which modernization is the hammer of Western Civilization, beating change and progress into the very heart of the Middle Eastern world, but while the iron is hot, it is up to the Arabs to shape their own future. The political aspects of the Islamic faith will not disappear but rather adapt to the demands and foreign methods of Western dogmatic secularism. As we see today in Egypt and Turkey, the precedence of economic security and political representation is not unlike the level of importance it has in the Western world. The elimination of militant secularism and international radical Islamism is important to the security and progress of the region and world. Finally, we cannot blame the Arab world for its reluctant enthusiasm for incorporating secular methods into the political spectrum of their society, for it “makes no sense to hope that Muslim societies might undergo the same process of secularization as did the Christian societies of the West, because the everyday relationship between religion and politics is different.”<sup>23</sup>



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# A DIFFERENT KIND OF RED, WHITE & BLUE

TAYLOR MARTIN

**“We learn from history that we never learn anything from history”**

—GEORG WILHELM FRIEDRICH HEGEL

## INTRODUCTION

Imagine a time of uneasiness. Countries have eliminated face-to-face combat and replaced it with heated debates and arguments of conflicting values and plans. Poor, underdeveloped countries revolt against their long-time leaders and spark controversy on the world stage. Meanwhile, the issue of nuclear arms intensifies. Two of the most powerful countries are at the forefront of every dispute, constantly testing the limits of their rocky relationship. It sounds like something from the past, reminiscent of the Cold War, however this is currently appearing again in the 21st century. The United States of America and Russia have not been on the best terms since the Cold War ended and, in recent meetings and conferences, these tensions are still present. “The US and Russia appear stuck in the 20th century...” says CNN, “...rehashing old disputes and consistently missing opportunities to change the terms of engagement.”<sup>1</sup> How will these continued diplomatic battles staged in the United Nations, NATO, and the international stage impact the US and the rest of the world? Understanding the past of this enigmatic country is critical for Americans to prevent any further altercations, for American “hypocrisy and entitlement” has resulted in these ongoing tensions with Russia. Respecting the dramatic shifts that Russia has endured throughout its past and understanding the mentality of the role of authority in the country could inform of how Russian politics will never operate as they do in the United States.

## SOVEREIGNTY, AUTHORITY, AND POWER

To begin to understand why Russia has a strong, autocratic rule, its history must be reviewed.

Beginning with absolute Czarist rule for 370 years, then warped variations and interpretations of a “communist regime” for another 74 grueling years, it is safe to say that Russia has always been ruled with an iron fist. The Communist Party leaders ruled with unchallenged leadership, but expedited their power in order to live luxuriously at the expense of the unquestioning and loyal public. Throughout its history, Soviet and Russian leaders stressed the importance of a centralized regime to ensure that the large state was kept strictly compliant to prevent chaos: it also served to preserve the leadership of those in power.<sup>2</sup> When the future of the U.S.S.R. appeared grim, General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev knew that he had to begin to transition his people to an open market system, otherwise the fate of the Union would be tragic. At that point in the country’s development, anything reminiscent of egalitarianism and democracy could not thrive like it could elsewhere. Citizens had no experience with individual liberties and democracy in general. An eye-opening example of the Russian people’s inability to accept political reform came with Gorbachev’s glasnost program. The plan sought to increase openness and transparency of government institutions and actions within the Soviet Union. Glasnost, paired with the new decentralized economic program Perestroika (translated as “restructuring” of the economy), allowed people to freely express their opinions and work hard to earn rightful pay. However, the idealistic plan did not so effectively unfold as Gorbachev intended. The people were furious: their pessimism toward the political and economic future was palpable as never before. The public’s opinion was that Gorbachev had failed them and further empowered the strong and corrupt political leaders who strengthened their hold on the country.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 saw Boris Yeltsin become Russia's first president while the former leaders of the communist party took office as the new democratic representatives with an unchanged philosophy on sovereignty.<sup>3</sup> Three years into his presidency, Yeltsin used force to thwart an attempted coup by parliamentary opponents of radical reform, after which voters approved a new constitution establishing a powerful presidency and a bicameral national legislature, the Federal assembly.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, new Prime Minister Vladimir Putin proved to the Russian people that he was willing to attack Chechnya if that is what needed to be done to punish the Chechens for the alleged apartment bombings in Moscow. When Putin ordered bombing raids against the Chechen capital, ordering Russian troops to retake the small country, his popularity skyrocketed.<sup>5</sup> The huge public upset with Yeltsin's "shock therapy" method of immediately shifting to capitalism, instituting constitutional reform, and his near impeachment proved to be too much for the President to handle, leaving his prime minister, Vladimir V. Putin, to become acting President on December 31st, 1999. Claiming that structure, consistency, and strength was the legitimacy behind his rise to power, Boris Yeltsin's heir had no problem winning the presidential election with 53% of the vote.<sup>6</sup>

Putin had no opposition when he began to lead his country back into a more centralized style of leadership in 2000 as the President of Russia.<sup>7</sup> Putin, as former head of the Soviet secret intelligence and internal security, the KGB, was no stranger to ideas of discipline and did not hesitate in forcing desired results. Putin did not fear criticism or disputes from the people. Putin put his power to work, nursing the ailing economy, fighting terrorism, dissolving all rebel resistances, and passing new parliamentary election laws that gave him broad powers. His popularity continued to trend upwards and fast.<sup>8</sup> To keep public morale high, Putin changed the national anthem back to the original Soviet anthem. Playing upon Russia's past sacrifices and glory days, the song reminds people of the strength that lies within them. The anthem's symbol of unity and respect for the past brought with it a revived confidence and pride which Russia had been lacking for many years and this gave Putin even more legitimacy. This display of positive recognition ultimately led to his reelection in 2004. Hosting the G8 summit in St. Petersburg in 2006, it became evident that this beloved and dominant man was driving his country towards becoming a key global player. With all this confidence and a revived pride with its Soviet past, Russia had no problem reclaiming its old foreign policy ethic of preserving peace and strengthening relations with all countries, declaring that Russia is a safe haven for foreign capital.

## WHEN THE SLEEPING BEAR WAKES

America looms much larger in Russia's mind than Russia ever did in America's. Mr. Putin had no problem claiming that "the trust in America as the leader of the free world and free economy is blown forever."<sup>9</sup> This anti-American mindset, after all these years, stems from not only the unreformed communist party member but the confrontation between Russia and the West over different financial and geopolitical interests. Igor Shuvalov, the first Deputy Prime Minister and Putin's right-hand man, spoke out defending his country saying: "Friends are only friends until you start splitting the money. These [Western] countries need to have access to oil and gas, and to get it they are prepared to use any means, including accusations that Russia has a different system of values. All...Russia is doing is defending its interests. We want to live peacefully, but the West cannot tolerate the idea that we are an equal partner, that we are the same. Now there is no more time for niceties."<sup>10</sup> Under the conviction that Russia is no different from America and that the West's values are no stronger or better than Russia's, any public criticism by Western leaders of Russia's behavior is therefore seen as deeply hypocritical.<sup>11</sup> Yet, from an American standpoint, Russia's governance does not completely coincide with the values of the West. High levels of corruption, authoritarian rule, and a "rent-seeking elite" help define them as an illegitimate democracy that does not deserve the same respect the US has, therefore undermining Russia's power.<sup>12</sup> This mentality, undoubtedly, contributes to the shaky relationship with Russia. Both US initiated decisions, such as the invasion of Iraq, and contrasting opinions of plans of action for countries in turmoil and the Arab Spring have driven the US and Russia further apart. In addition to the numerous conflicts and philosophical debates, the fact that the US marginalized Russia in its foreign policy only served to strengthen Putin's hand. President Obama pushed Russia to the sidelines, indirectly admitting that the vaunted "reset" represented more of a political liability than a major foreign policy success. Instead, Obama looked to withdrawal from the Middle East and the "Pivot to Asia" as the most pressing issues for his administration.<sup>13</sup> Although two-thirds of Russia's territory is in Asia, it is assumed that Russia will theoretically be a part of that distant future discussion. However, the Moscow News had a very thought provoking opinion on the matter by recalling the past presidency of George W. Bush to support the idea that Russia should not be pushed aside and disregarded as superpower and a potential threat. Moscow News reporter, Fyodor Lukyanov, wrote, "This (presidential election) again brings to mind President Bush, who started his first term saying essentially

that Moscow doesn't matter. His lack of a sound policy toward Russia cost everyone dearly, and by the time America decided that Russia should be taken seriously, bilateral relations were at their lowest point in decades..."<sup>14</sup> From the Russian point of view, America's entitlement will not allow them to solve all the issues of the world through promoting democracy, aiding the weak, and fighting the unjust. What America does not realize, is that without a clear and respectful stance on Russia, any chance of rekindling the relationship will remain elusive. Underestimating this prideful, powerful, and unforgiving country has led to years of cold war in the past and if history does not fail us, it will happen again.




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# ETHANOL AS AN ALTERNATE FUEL SOURCE

BRUNA CUHNA

Ethanol is a new alternative fuel that has been in the United States but not fully developed. The replacement of gasoline with ethanol as an alternative biofuel raises many concerns as to costs and risks for America. The main question is: Should the United States invest in the development of alternative fuels such as ethanol? Or should the US continue to use oil only? The investment in developing alternative automobile fuel would be beneficial for American society. This process would be a long term investment that would benefit the environment by reducing toxic gas emissions as well as reducing health risks to citizens. The production of ethanol would significantly affect the economy by creating jobs and supporting rural communities as well as increasing tax revenue. By developing alternative fuel on American soil, the United States would be capable of limiting its dependence on foreign oil. This is all possible with the help of laws and incentives supporting alternative fuels that will benefit America in the long run. This article examines the topic by presenting the benefits and revealing the negatives of ethanol. In order to do so, an understanding of Ethanol must be established beforehand. Ethanol is a renewable fuel made from various natural materials. More than 95 percent of United States gasoline contains a minimal amount of ethanol which serves to oxygenate the oil and reduce air pollution.<sup>1</sup> Ethanol is available in multiple blends that include different percentages of ethanol with gasoline (E10, E15, E85). Ethanol has many beneficial aspects especially since it can be made from natural sources on American soil. The development of ethanol can be a great investment for America if approached in an appropriate manner.

Ethanol is a renewable, environmentally friendly fuel that is cleaner than gasoline; it reduces harmful emissions of carbon dioxide and other ozone-forming pollutants. Ethanol has become one of the most safe and clean alternative fuels available today. As reported by the US Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory, in 2010, there was 13 billion gallons of corn ethanol

fabricated, which minimized greenhouse gas emissions from automobiles by 22 million tons. This meant that replacing gasoline with ethanol in 2010 was equal to reducing the emissions of approximately 3.5 million vehicles.<sup>2</sup> Replacing gasoline with Ethanol helps the environment by reducing gas emissions released into society's breathable air. A heightened consumption of ethanol blends would considerably minimize the emissions of aromatics causing cancer as well as harmful toxins. According to American Coalition for Ethanol, aromatics are created throughout the procedure of refining unprocessed oil into gasoline; aromatics, such as "benzene, toluene and xylene are combusted by motor vehicles," which result in a principal origin of toxic pollution.<sup>3</sup> Ethanol production does not produce these dangerous toxicants, which means that it is not only beneficial to the environment but also for the peoples' health. Gasoline, on the other hand, has a proven history of risking citizen's health as well as continuously and slowly destroying the ozone layer with emissions. By adapting ethanol blends as an alternative fuel, there will be a reduction in the negative environmental impact from gasoline consumption.

Even though ethanol seems like the ideal alternative fuel in comparison to the use of gasoline, some may argue that its production in high volume may have a negative impact on the environment. According to a 2007 study by the US National Academy of Sciences, cultivating corn consumes "200 times more water" than the amount used in the process of ethanol production.<sup>4</sup> The United States is already vulnerable to water shortages due to the high quantities required to process irrigated crops such as grains, sugar and corn. Water usage for growing such crops worries scientists as indicated in the 2003 US Government Accountability Office report that stated: "water managers in at least 36 states" anticipate shortages by the year of 2013.<sup>5</sup> "Erica Gies also reported in the New York Times that modern plants consume around three gallons of water to fabricate one gallon of ethanol. The National

Academy of Sciences report approximated that a plant fabricating 100 million gallons a year consumes as much water as a city of 5,000 citizens.<sup>6</sup> Another concern is the large numbers of acres needed for the production of ethanol. A 2007 study by the US National Academy of Sciences noted that to substitute 10 percent of gasoline in the United States with ethanol would require 43 percent of United States land.<sup>7</sup> Using this information, America would use land disproportionately and cause deforestation and destroy habitats. The production of ethanol may seem easy and beneficial, however, growing crops for its production would damage the environment.

All alternative fuels have positives and negatives, nevertheless production of ethanol is less damaging to America in comparison to continuing with gasoline usage which release toxicants into the air. Ethanol production is a brand new way to establish smarter choices that will benefit America in the long run. With strict regulations and the new developed production, America will be able to distinguish better ways of producing fuel effectively as well as keeping the environment in mind. According to the Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory, since 2001, ethanol producers have minimized overall energy consumption 26 percent and have reduced water consumption by 21 percent.<sup>8</sup> Another concern addressed is the usage of acres for the production of crops used to make ethanol. In 2009, corn farmers calculated 165 bushels per acre to produce the biggest corn crop in the United States' history, totaling 13.2 billion bushels. This production account was achieved on 7 million fewer acres than was required to fabricate the second largest corn crop in 2007.<sup>9</sup> If there are such significant arguments against increasing the production of corn, ethanol is the answer due to its ability to be produced from a variety of agricultural crops. An alternative to the use of corn would be using sugar. The USDA released a study in July, 2006, that found that by observing the current prices of ethanol, it would be profitable to use sugarcane, sugar beets and molasses in the conversion to fuel.<sup>10</sup> More than half of the world is producing ethanol as an alternative fuel. As confirmed by James Jacobs, Agricultural Economist for USDA Rural Development, sugar beets are an annual crop already cultivated in 11 states across America with a variation of climate conditions, from hot climate in California to colder areas like Montana and South Dakota.<sup>11</sup> Ethanol is the best alternative fuel America could adapt because of the benefits it brings not only to citizens' health but also to the environment. Additionally, its production is domestic.

The investment in ethanol would benefit America, economically. Simply by developing ethanol production plants, jobs would be created thus decreasing unemployment rates. Ethanol production in America would also support rural communities and their development. Rural America could benefit significantly from the biofuel revolution when "ownership is held on Main Street rather than Wall Street" as stated by John M. Urbaneuk, director of LECG; he also referred to ethanol as an "engine" to revive the

rural America. Biofuel production is bringing new interest to American rural towns and may even be helping attract back young workers who have moved away for jobs.<sup>12</sup> Urbaneuk believes the investment in ethanol as a biofuel would expand local economies by \$110.2 million, which would lead to an additional \$19.6 million in household income. He also estimated that it would help with the creation of 694 permanent new jobs—opportunities for newly graduate students.<sup>13</sup> The US economy has just begun to grow back and the unemployment rate is decreasing. Investing in ethanol would truly help the economy.

A very important concern that must be kept in mind is how will the rise in demand of ethanol affect the prices of food. Many agree that ethanol production would mean sacrificing crops used as food which will increase food prices overall. Donnie Johnston, in his article "Ethanol Takes Food from the Hungry to use as Fuel," affirms that in the past "three years, corn prices have increased from two dollars a bushel to six dollars a bushel". That is a three hundred percent increase in price compared to the increase in cost per barrel of gasoline during the same period. Johnston also argues that food companies that manufacture products that utilize such crops will compete with ethanol companies for its cultivation.<sup>14</sup> Crop prices will significantly increase, which will consecutively cause all food prices to change as well. Lester R. Brown, President of the Earth Policy Institute, explains that America's corn harvest is remarkably tied to global food economy. Redirecting crops to the production of fuel rather than food will affect an already capricious food economy. With the growing demand of fuel distilleries, nearly thirty percent of American grain cultivation will be consumed as fuel for automobiles. He also confirms that American corn harvest account for forty percent of global harvests; additionally, US corn represents seventy percent of the world's corn imports.<sup>15</sup> This escalating dispute over crops for food or fuel production leaves a question as to the true benefits of such investment and any benefits to the US economy.

As the price of fuel increases so does the price of food. Jacqui Fatka, (Iowa State University) Feedstuffs Staff Editor, illustrates that ethanol made by corn is one an economical alternative to gasoline. He explains that farmers are producing more corn than ever before to accommodate to the high demand. Statistics show that US farmers have grown "13.1 billion bushels of corn on 85 million acres"; which of, 22% went to the production of 7 billion gallons of ethanol. Evidently there is plenty of corn supply for the domestic market. There was even a record of increase in exports and 10% surplus.<sup>16</sup> Food prices will always vary based on different reasons—not just ethanol demand. Domestic food inflation was at 4.5% in 2010, while globally it was 43%. Fatka reported that White House Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, Ed Lazear, estimated ethanol's contribution to food inflation "at only 0.25% and 2-3% world food inflation increase."<sup>17</sup> By making efficient and reasonable decisions in production, ethanol may be an exceedingly beneficial investment for the economy. Ethanol production could

generate nearly \$1.2 million in tax revenue for state and local governments. It could also generate revenue for local farmers, approximately 5 to 10 cents per corn bushel.<sup>18</sup> John Urbanchuk, later in 2009, also reported that with the full effect of annual spending, transportation and construction has added \$65.6 billion to the nation's Gross Domestic Product in 2008. Construction of ethanol distilleries have also created new jobs and increased economic activity by creating 494,000 jobs in all sectors in 2008.<sup>19</sup> Ethanol production supports rural economies as well as creates new jobs on American soil. Food inflation may occur, however it won't be caused simply because of ethanol demand. Ethanol distilleries must make efficient choices in balancing the usage of crops for ethanol and for food supply. The US economy will benefit with new tax revenue from additional ethanol plants.

Since 2011, ethanol produced in America has provided more volume than imported gasoline oil imported from Saudi Arabia, Iraq and other nations.<sup>20</sup> United States ethanol has accounted for 6 out of 10 barrels of American produced fuel since 2005. As ethanol use has grown, the Renewable Fuels Association has reported that dependence on foreign oil products has decreased from 60 percent to 41 percent. Without ethanol, America's dependence on imported petroleum would have been at 48 percent in 2012.<sup>21</sup> According to the Energy Information Administration, the US' net imported petroleum dependence reached its highest in 2005 at 60 percent, the year the federal Renewable Fuels Standard was ratified. Just 7 years later, foreign oil dependency dropped under 50 percent.<sup>22</sup> As reported by International Energy Agency in "World Energy Outlook 2011 Fact sheet," global fossil fuel subsidies have reached nearly half a trillion dollars in 2010—which is \$110 billion dollars over 2009; it may even reach \$660 billion by 2020.<sup>23</sup> The US relied heavily on foreign oil which includes many hidden costs—money that could be spent here to the benefit of the American people. Milton Copulos asserted that in 2007, all oil-related outside costs were approximately \$825 billion per year.<sup>24</sup> Ethanol investment is the solution to decreasing America's dependence on foreign oil.

Specific ethanol blends have very limited availability which creates a burden for consumers to find appropriate stations for a car's intake. Currently, there are only about 3,000 stations across America that carry E85 and they are mostly clustered in the Midwest; this is compared to gas stations, estimated to number 150,000 stations across the nation.<sup>25</sup> Ethanol availability is also questionable when considering investment in increased production. The costs of adding more ethanol stations throughout the nation and making it available to all must be considered. However, even adding stations, not all citizens would benefit from this investment. There is still uncertainty over the long-term effects specific ethanol blends in regular vehicles. The new blend E15, which contains 15 percent ethanol and 85 percent gasoline, has only been approved for cars built before 2001, since the alcohol could potentially break down rubber seals as well as damage engines.<sup>26</sup> Many carmakers even advise against the use of

E15 in their automobiles. Some may even invalidate the vehicle's warranty should engine show damage as a result. As reported by Robert Bryce, in "The US Corn Ethanol Subsidy is Harmful," the United States contains nearly 250 million motor vehicles, which of only 7.5 million are capable to consume gasoline containing more than 10 percent ethanol. He claims that there is evidence that even 10 percent of ethanol fuel may be harmful to the rest of the 242.5 million vehicles. In 2009, Toyota recalled over 200,000 Lexus vehicles due to internal corrosion originated by ethanol blends.<sup>27</sup> Consumers may soon realize the damages ethanol fuel may cause to their vehicles as well as the limitations it has in its availability across the United States. This investment could involve too much spending and unsuccessful results.

According to US Department of Energy Alternative Fuels Data Center, as of 2013, there are 2,339 ethanol stations across the United States.<sup>28</sup> This number will continue growing every year if America chooses to support investment in ethanol production. Car manufacturers are always thinking of innovations and improving their cars in ways that will attract consumers. Conventional gasoline cars can be converted to flexible fuel vehicles which consume E85 or gasoline. There are multiple incentives and laws passed in favor of ethanol. The Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Tax Credit was put into place by allowing fueling station owners that have installed equipment for alternative fuels between January 2006 to December 2013 to be eligible for a 30 percent tax credit which may be used as credit for each location. Advanced Energy Research Project Grants was developed within the US Department of Energy to fund projects that reduce the America's dependence of foreign oil. Biodiesel Education Grants was created to educate the public on the benefits of biodiesel fuels. The Biomass Crop Assistance Program supplies financial assistance to landowners as well as operators that contribute to the production and advancement of biofuels.<sup>29</sup> The government has also had some significant involvement in the production of ethanol. Reported by the New York Times on June 23, 2008, Larry Rohter interprets Mr. Obama's stance on ethanol, "that is what has always motivated him on this issue, and will continue to determine his policy going forward."<sup>30</sup> President Obama also stated his concerns regarding dependence on foreign oil with alternative fuels. He stated in his 2010 State of Union Speech that "with more research and incentives, we can break our dependence on foreign oil [...] we need to get behind this innovation."<sup>31</sup> By making this investment in alternative fuels, it might be costly, however with the appropriate legislations and support, America will be capable of eliminating some of its dependence on foreign oil.

The United States has relied of gasoline as a fuel for many years. With the help of new technology available, America has now the chance to invest in a new alternative fuel. By changing the primary fuel from gasoline to ethanol, America will have developed a successful investment that will be less harmful to the environment and its citizens. This new production would open



up many career opportunities to new graduates as well as support rural communities. Keeping production on American soil will build independence from foreign oil and help the nation's economy with tax revenue. The United States needs to achieve energy independence. America's ethanol industry now has the ability to reshape the nation's energy policies and create a future of energy innovation. It's up to Americans to support these changes and make it happen.




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# POVERTY IN CHINA

MALIKA MILLER

From an aerial point of view, China looks to be nothing more than a mass of glowing lights. In fact, cities seem almost to sparkle in welcome. But if you travel beyond this façade there's a place where the sparkle stops; the immaculate store front shops give way to dilapidated roads, forgotten mountain paths, and a group of people so poor, they give new definition to the word. Welcome to China's dark side: where the cost of living is so high it forces farmers to leave behind their families in order to seek low paying, and often times, dangerous jobs in the cities, access to education and healthcare is limited, and government support is little to none.

The majority of China's poor are small farmers who live isolated and cut off from the rest of the country. If they are lucky, they live in houses made of wood, if not, crude structures made of patted down mud suffice. There is no running water; it has to be extracted from an external source, and wet washcloths are used as bath substitutes.<sup>1</sup> Education is expensive, often times requiring children to migrate to cities, and parents to have to struggle to find ways to pay tuition. Medical care varies from location to location and depends largely on how close the farm is in relation to the city. Those who live further out have to walk miles to receive it, the end result of which is that help often times arrives too late. The conditions being experienced in China are for the most part rectifiable, but it will take action on the part of the government and a heightened sense of awareness on the part of the people to change things.

## THE EFFECTS OF MECHANIZATION AND TECHNOLOGY ON FARMING

There are two main types of farming in China: high end productivity, and low end productivity. High end productivity farmers use either factories, or large scale equipment such as

tractors, while low end productivity farmers work the land by hand, without the aid of machines.<sup>2</sup> Low end farmers are not mechanized enough to keep up with the production rates necessary to profit in an economy where inflation and the cost of living are both on the rise. In addition to that, the government chooses not to allot money to farmers who have not proven themselves to be successful in the past.<sup>3</sup> In an annual report on agriculture, Dr. Shenggen Fan, Director General of the International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington D.C., points out the redundancy in such a system. "Millions of poor, smallholding farmers struggle to increase their output on tiny plots of degraded land, far from the nearest market. Lacking access to modern tools, quality seeds, credit and agricultural extension, and being highly susceptible to the vagaries of weather, they work hard but reap little."<sup>4</sup> There is no question that all involved would profit from an increase in productivity, but the means to achieve such goals are not being provided, ironically enough, by the very ones such an action would benefit.

## THE EFFECT OF DWINDLING RESOURCES ON CHINA'S POOR

As of 2012, there are an estimated 1.3 billion people living in The Peoples Republic of China, and of this number, nearly 40 percent are employed in agriculture.<sup>5</sup> In comparison to other countries this number is unusually high, but due to China's policy of self-sufficiency it is absolutely necessary.<sup>6</sup> With little to no agricultural imports coming in from outside sources, the burden of feeding so many people falls mainly on farming communities. As the population begins to rise, so does the demand output that is expected of them.

Water plays an important role in agriculture in any region. For irrigation purposes alone, it is without a doubt, a farmers' most

precious commodity. However, with global temperatures on the rise, water has in recent years become a farmers' most unstable commodity. In Northern China alone, nearly 400,000 people are without a consistent supply of drinking water because of severe droughts.<sup>7</sup> While the weather cannot be held accountable for its actions, the government can be held responsible in how they do, or in this case don't, deal with the situation. The government offers very little compensation in the way of safeguarding farmers against naturally occurring incidents such as droughts. Instead, they attempt to allocate water to each province. Even then, people still go without, because the coal factories, which require enough water to take care of the needs of several villages, take priority.<sup>8</sup> This uneven distribution of water is very revealing as to the priorities of the Chinese government. Their concern rests not with the people they are in charge of caring for, but with the corporations that bring money into the country.

In Southern China, where high end farming operations exist, a different problem occurs. They enjoy the comforts of having a rich harvest, but they do it at the expense of the environment. The Heilongjian province, for example, utilizes nearly 75 percent of the region's water supply, while at the same time empties 3.81 million tons of ammonia and nitrogen into nearby rivers.<sup>9</sup> Some of these rivers run right into poor farming communities where contaminated water contributes to major health issues. Those in charge are well aware of what is happening but do nothing to prevent it and it is in their silence that they contribute to the suffering of their own people.

## CORRUPTION

A lack of knowledge amongst poor peoples in any country comes automatically with those willing to exploit it. The majority of China's small farmers cannot afford luxury items such as televisions or computers, so they are very limited in the way of receiving outside information. They do not have access to marketing statistics, so they instead rely on speculation to predict when they should and shouldn't plant or buy certain things. Speculation, defined as *"the engagement in business transactions involving considerable risk but offering the chance of large gains, especially trading in commodities, stocks, etc., in the hope of profit from changes in the market price,"* is something farmers rely heavily on to inform them of when to buy and sell crops.<sup>10</sup> The problem with this kind of guess-work unfolds on two levels. The first is that it is an estimate, which is dangerous because if something goes wrong there is no compensation given. Second, speculation is highly susceptible to manipulation. Farmers have no choice but to believe what the speculators tell them because they have no way of finding out if the information they are being given is true or not. In recent years, speculation has resulted in losses so substantial that several men have committed suicide. Still, the government makes no attempts at regulating such activity.

In 2011, Jinxiang County, one of the largest garlic manufacturing operations in China experienced a market crisis. Operating under speculators' advice that the demand for garlic was going to rise, farmers invested everything they owned.<sup>11</sup> What they did not expect was for the price of garlic to decline, and instead of gaining money, farmers found themselves facing substantial losses.<sup>12</sup> In a statement made to China Business, a Chinese Newspaper, Professor Liu Shiqi from Shandong Agricultural University, addressed the problem, pinpointing the major issue as the spreading incorrect information.<sup>13</sup> Had there been more of an effort to ensure that farmers were well informed about fluctuating garlic prices, an economic catastrophe could have been averted.

Unfortunately, what occurred in Jinxiang County is not an aberrant occurrence. In the same year, the farming community of Sijiazhuang fell victim to a similar course of events, this time involving cabbage. When farmer Han Jin, heard that the price for cabbage was going to soar, he ceased all efforts to plant other vegetables.<sup>14</sup> Unbeknownst to him, several hundred other farmers had the same idea.

"Rising food prices helped push China's measure of inflation to a 28-month high in November. That month, China's central planners appealed to farmers to plant more vegetables, (Cabbage) especially because poor weather was compounding the nationwide shortages. Han heeded the call, planting about 3 tons of cabbage, far more than ever before. Thousands of other growers did the same. When it came time to harvest, wholesale prices had tumbled to an unthinkable 2 cents a pound. The government did not compensate farmers."<sup>15</sup>

What happened in Jinxiang country, as well as what happened to Han Jin, are merely the opening acts for a much larger problem, one that is repeated time and time again throughout nearly all of rural China. Those who are higher up in the industry take advantage of a situation, the poor suffer, and the government acquiesces.

## THE GROWING GAP

As previously established, the hardships China's rural communities face are numerous. As the gap between classes widens and dissidence grows amongst the mistreated, China struggles with how best to manage the problem. In 2002, an effort was made to eliminate fees and taxes used to pay for the services of local government officials.<sup>16</sup> Called the TFR, (tax-for-free reform) it helped alleviate some of the burdens placed on farmers. Initially a brilliant idea, it did not come without repercussions, some of which continue to be felt today.

Within each farming community there are smaller systems of governments designed to deal with the basic services necessary in order to maintain any community. With fees gone and taxes

reduced, the payroll of local officials took a significant cut and authority shifted upwards to the main county.<sup>17</sup> This meant that community generated funds designed with the intent of improving services such as health care, education, and general construction would have to come from the county, therefore pre-approved before any action took place. Though the intentions behind the TFR were good, it greatly slowed down societal progress and ultimately helped contribute to the current conditions experienced by Chinese farmers today.

The most recent attempt at changing the living conditions of China's poor comes in a more subtle form. Citizens are being encouraged by the millions to evacuate the countryside and move to the cities. The idea behind it is simple: move the people into the cities where they will be able to make more money and the land they leave behind will be made into large industrialized farming operations. At first glance it seems a surefire plan. The villagers want to go and the officials want them to. But what about the city they are moving to? There are a couple of issues to be considered here. The first is the household registration system; the second, the not so improved living conditions.

Since the 50's, China has relied on a household registration system often referred to as Hukou, a program which serves to regulate the flow of movement between the countryside and the cities.<sup>18</sup> Under the Hukou system, citizens coming from rural China must first register with authorities, then work for eight years before they can be considered as full citizens of that particular county. In the mean time they pay three times the amount of taxes as regular citizens, work low paying jobs, sometimes for twenty-four hours at a time, and are denied healthcare as well as access to any sort of social programs. Their children are mostly excluded from public education higher beyond elementary school, and in the event that they want to attend anything higher than middle school they cannot apply while living in the city. Instead, they are forced to go back to the countryside to learn.<sup>19</sup> In recent years several of these restrictions have been lifted in order to allow more immigrants in to work in the factories, but Hukou is still in place, and class discrimination persists.

In short, it does not matter where China attempts to relocate its poor population, because the cause of their situation lies not with geographical location or a few outdated laws, it rests with the institution that created it, the Chinese government.

## CONCLUSION

By rolling back some of the sanctions brought on by Hukou, bringing more health care facilities to the poor, and rebuilding houses, the Chinese government shows that they are at least aware of the problem. Still, these are improvements, not solutions. The poor population will not cease to suffer, they will simply do it in a different place at a different time. This is not to suggest that perfection is what is being sought after. It is more a case of

confronting the problems at hand rather than sweeping them under the rug. President John F. Kennedy once said, "...If a free society cannot help the many that are poor, it cannot save the few that are rich..."<sup>20</sup> If China does not do something about its poor community things will eventually get to a point where glittering lights are no longer sufficient enough to hide them. China's recent move towards capitalism is not an excuse for poverty, and it is not an excuse for those with the power to enact change to do nothing. These conditions exist because of a severe lack of action on the part of the Chinese government, and it is this same inaction that has overtime led to the stagnation of the poor population. If the situation is not brought under control soon, the number of citizens living in poverty will continue to grow and eventually lead to China's collapse.



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# THE NEW ERA

JOSEPH JOHNSON

## THE OLD ERA

The end of World War II brought about an era where two global economic and ideological powers stood atop the world and dictated world order. Both superpowers dominated global politics and controlled the internal politics of any given country with money or force; this was the Cold War Era from 1946 to 1991. During the Cold War, the United States and Soviet Union were the two single superpowers who were aggressively trying to acquire footholds and allies that would sustain or help empower their geopolitical goal of checkmating the other wherever possible and by any means necessary. The Cold War was also a battle for dominance of political and economic ideology between communism and democracy. This was an interesting era for the world and a simple one.

We are in a new era and it will certainly be as interesting as the last. This new era will move its focus toward a different region of the globe and we see that shift with recent United States foreign policy changes. This new era will be dominated by a rapidly growing China and the declining current hegemon, the United States.

## WHY CHINA?

It's a known fact that China will be the only economic and military power able to challenge the hegemony of the United States. "China will surpass America as the world's largest economy as early as 2016."<sup>1</sup> China's economic growth has been significant over the last decade averaging 10 percent a year since 2000, making it second only to the United States and outpacing other economies such as Germany's and Japan's.<sup>2</sup> China has received a significant amount of attention from global investors and that further catapulted its economy with foreign investments into its economy. During this decade, the Gross Domestic Product per Capita, which is the total

sum of the GDP of a country divided by the size of the population within that country, has tripled from \$2,800 in 2002 to \$9,100 in 2012. You can also see similar growth in China's trade, which, after China's entry into the WTO in 2001, boomed with 30 percent growth. China has also helped the growth of their economy by investing \$586 billion in infrastructure such as highways, railroads, airports, communication networks, energy infrastructure,<sup>3</sup> and water infrastructure ; this significantly improves China's ability to facilitate further rapid economic and urban growth.

China's foreign policy has also seen faced some dramatic changes over the last decade. China's leaders are employing a tactic called "Soft Power", which is an approach to foreign policy that uses cultural and economic influence over military force. China is using this method particularly in the developing world and it is seen as a replacement for sources of financial and cultural investment in regions where the west (Europe and the United States) has fallen back. In Southeast Asia for example, China is a challenger to the United States' dominance. "As the United States pivots from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and re-engages with the 10 countries of ASEAN, the Association of South East Asian Nations, much of the focus at the summit will be on Washington's ability to revive its flagging diplomatic influence."<sup>4</sup> While the United States' attention was turned to conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, China was working to gain influence: there was no challenger. "After investing tens of billions of dollars in Southeast Asia, China has now decided that its vaunted economic power, which has bought it significant influence with regional governments, is not enough. Beijing now wants to be loved, too."<sup>5</sup> By adopting a set of different policies toward developing countries, China is seeking to change its appearance to the world as it seeks to increase its influence with its neighbors and the world. A perfect case study of China's efforts is Cambodia, where China is the largest source of foreign investment at \$1.9 billion,<sup>6</sup> ten times the amount the United States invests. This

is important because it gives China significant influence over the Cambodian Government, currently head of ASEAN. China's new foreign policy goals are best described by Yang Baoyun, a Southeast Asia expert at Peking University in Beijing: "The government has realized that people are important, and that cultural exchange can supplement traditional diplomacy."<sup>7</sup> The West is alerted by this growth of Chinese influence globally because China is a wild card for their plans.

China is not a typical country in today's modern world considering it is the only functioning Communist State since the fall of the Soviet Union. "The Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) more than 80 million members make it the biggest political party in the world. Its tight organization and ruthlessness help explain why it is also still in power."<sup>8</sup> The CCP is still strong in its structure and discipline and that has allowed the party to remain in control over much of the daily life of the citizens of China. Being a party member in China isn't easy, "To join, applicants need the backing of existing members and to undergo exhaustive checks and examination by their local party branch. They then face a year's probation, again involving assessments and training."<sup>9</sup> However when you join, the benefits outweigh the cost of joining. Party members enjoy privileges and networks that get them into high level posts within the party, regardless of ability.<sup>10</sup> But these benefits are only there if you don't go against the party; "It is also obsessive about control, regularly showing itself capable of great brutality in suppressing dissent or any challenge to its authority."<sup>11</sup> China has a top-down power ladder. In theory the National Party Congress, which is supposed to be the most powerful ruling mechanism in the state as designed by China's 1982 Constitution, is supposed to act like a parliament and run the government. Nevertheless, the majority of its delegates are CCP members who put party before state and the NPC functions as a rubber stamp to party decisions. The CCP is the most powerful organ in the country; it is the only political party in the nation. It is ruled by a small group of party leaders called the Politburo; they meet frequently and decide the direction of the country's policies. Members of the Politburo are also in posts such as General-Secretary of the Party (The Chairman of the Party), Premier (similar to a Prime Minister), Chairman of the National People's Congress (similar to the Speaker of the House) and head of the Central Discipline Inspection Committee (this committee handles discipline within the party).<sup>12</sup> When thinking of "Who Controls China?" it's best to remember that the Chinese Government and the CCP are one in the same, and this isn't liked by the West. It is also best to keep in mind that the military is also under the Party's control.

The Chinese military is receiving the most attention and worry from outside observers. The People Liberation Army (PLA) is currently modernizing its forces with a significant increase in investment from the country; this is the world's largest military buildup.<sup>13</sup> China, in 2012, spent \$160 billion on its military and if current trends continue, China's military spending will overtake

the United States military spending in 2035 in dollar terms.<sup>14</sup> The PLA is the largest army in the world with 2.3 million active troops and with its new, lavish budgets, the PLA has invested in technologies that will prove to be a challenge to foreign militaries. "But China's real military strength increasingly lies elsewhere. The Pentagon's planners think China is intent on acquiring what is called in the jargon A2/AD, or "anti-access/area denial" capabilities. The idea is to use pinpoint ground attack and anti-ship missiles, a growing fleet of modern submarines and cyber and anti-satellite weapons to destroy or disable another nation's military assets from afar."<sup>15</sup> This is threatening to a nation's navy and projection strategy. Considering the only country in the world able to project real constant power is the United States, China's new technological investments are seen as threatening by the United States. American diplomats have recognized the growth of China in the region, "China has the ambition—and increasingly the power—to become a regional hegemon; it is engaged in a determined effort to lock America out of a region that has been declared a vital security interest by every administration since Teddy Roosevelt's; and it is pulling countries in Southeast Asia into its orbit of influence "by default."<sup>16</sup> Seeing China's new assertiveness in the region, President Obama and former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta have declared a new "strategic guidance" which states that "While the US military will continue to contribute to security globally, we will of necessity rebalance towards the Asia-Pacific region."<sup>17</sup> The United States is going to shift its focus to Asia with this pivot by the Obama Administration's shift of 60 percent of United States naval fleets to the Pacific. The move is mostly symbolic in nature given that more than 50 percent of the United States navy is already in the Pacific region. However, this symbolic move sends the message that the United States isn't going to leave the region to China without a fight.

## WHY IS CHINA'S RISE SEEN AS A PROBLEM?

The United States has enjoyed a period of single hegemonic dominance in the world, giving it unparalleled access to every region on the globe. It has also given the United States significant influence in the domestic affairs of foreign countries. But the direction of the current world is not in one favoring the United States foreign policy of global policing. The United States is in decline and its global hegemonic role is also declining. The West's economic share in the world is in decline while the developing world's share is growing. Countries like China, Brazil, India, and Turkey are becoming more economically powerful and are in better positions to become regional hegemony in the near future. The United States is faced with growing fiscal issues and faced with decisions that will force it to look at its commitment to the world as the global police. The United States has established a military presence in regions it has been to in previous conflicts. As an example, the US has 37,000 troops in Japan, 53,000 troops in

Germany and 28,000 troops in South Korea from US involvements in World War II and the Korean War.<sup>18</sup> The United States Defense Department is already asked to make \$500 billion in cuts over the next ten years and more could be cut from the Defense budget in the future. The growth of developing countries, like China, contribute to the change in the global order. Japan is recognizing this change and the uncertainty in the status of guaranteed defense from the United States. Yoshihide Soeya, director of the Institute of East Asian Studies at Keio University, states “We want to build our own coalition of the willing in Asia to prevent China from just running over us.”<sup>19</sup> The Asia-Pacific region will become the new center of global attention; this is a significant move away from the Middle East. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated in a speech that the United States is recognizing the growing importance of the region. “It is becoming increasingly clear that in the 21st century, the world’s strategic and economic center of gravity will be the Asia Pacific, from the Indian subcontinent to the western shores of the Americas. And one of the most important tasks of American statecraft over the next decades will be to lock in a substantially increased investment—diplomatic, economic, strategic, and otherwise—in this region.”<sup>20</sup>

China is asserting itself militarily in territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas with Japan, Vietnam, South Korea and the Philippines. These incidents are significant in terms of ongoing diplomacy and further increased tensions between neighbors. Japan is the closest to military conflict with China over a disputed chain of islands, known as the Senkaku in Japan and the Diaoyu in China. These islands are claimed by both countries for the resource rich waters around them. Consequently, the Japanese government has decided to increase its military budget for the first time in 11 years.<sup>21</sup> India is also planning to spend \$80 billion over the next three years on defense spending, an increase of 17 percent,<sup>22</sup> South Korea is planning to increase defense spending by \$431 billion by 2020,<sup>23</sup> and Vietnam, since 2003, has increased its defense spending by 82 percent, spending \$2.6 billion today.<sup>24</sup> This indicates a trend of increasing defense spending, not just in these countries, but around Asia as a whole.

In comparative terms, China is in the lead in army size and capabilities that are second to none, except the United States. India is spending its money to modernize its military technology and industries to end its reliance on arms imports from other governments. South Korea is spending to “...transform its military into a smaller, but increasingly networked, balanced and digitized standing force with independent surveillance and reconnaissance platforms, real-time integrated C4I (command, control, communications, computers and intelligence) systems, and long-range precision strike capabilities.”<sup>25</sup> Japan is capable of matching China in technology and defense capabilities with its modern navy and air force but it’s behind the curve due to its anti-military constitution and near zero increase in military spending. In light of current issues, the United States is moving into an era

dominated by China and rekindling its weakened relations with its Asian allies as a way to “contain” a rising China. To those ends, the United States has talked with Burma, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Australia, the Philippines and Vietnam in its new “Asian Pivot” strategy to deal with China. Another significant factor in a deterrent of a conflict would be military comparisons. The Chinese Peoples’ Liberation Army have made significant gains in technology and assets improvements, but they have a long way to go before they can be a match for the United States’ advanced naval forces. “Many experts who’ve looked closely at the matter agree that China today simply does not have the military capability to challenge the United States in the Pacific, though its modernization program has increased its ability to engage the United States close to Chinese shores. And the US military is still, for all its troubles in Iraq and Afghanistan, the most capable fighting force on the planet.”<sup>26</sup>

## WHY THE RISE OF CHINA ISN’T A PROBLEM

Fears of a rising China are unwarranted. China becoming the number one economy in the world isn’t a bad thing, in fact the average American would still be wealthier than the average Chinese citizen. “If you’re an American feeling down about losing top economy status, go take a holiday in Guizhou, a poor western Chinese province where incomes are about one-fortieth as high as the US average. You’ll feel a lot better.”<sup>27</sup> Also the United States and China have economic ties that would discourage any form of real conflict. The United States and China also share a very deep trade relationship. China is the third largest importer of United States goods, second only to Canada and Mexico, at \$61.4 billion in the first seven months of 2012;<sup>28</sup> United States imports from China were \$235.8 billion over the same period.<sup>29</sup> The volume of trade has increased by 7.8 percent and created a trade deficit of \$174 billion for the United States. China’s economy is reliant on exports as a main source of wealth; this has caused the Chinese economy to be interdependent with global partners. China and the United States both also have domestic issues that would restrict any possible hostilities. The United States has approximately \$16 trillion of debt; China owns \$1.5 trillion of it. The United States military is stretched thin around the world and will have just finished two wars from the last decade that put a mental strain on its soldiers. China isn’t free from debt worries either. “But this week the Chinese government announced the results of a nationwide audit of 31 provinces and hundreds of municipalities which found that those local governments are now carrying some \$1.6 trillion worth of loans. And a large portion — as much as 20 percent — may have to be written off as bad debt.”<sup>30</sup> China is also experiencing other issues such as debt laden infrastructure projects, empty highways, near empty high speed rail cars. Demands for higher wages are sending jobs to its neighbors, such as Vietnam, and people in the western portion of the country are still very poor while the coastal



portions of the country experience all the growth and attention. Chinese growth is mostly propped up by large amounts of government spending, which may be proper in the short term, but are problematic in the long-term if the private sector can't replace the public spending and curb higher inflation. "Beijing's massive spending spree poses another threat to China's long term economic stability. Pumping more money into infrastructure projects may help prop up growth. But that cash infusion raises the risk of a sustained bout of higher inflation."<sup>31</sup> A rising China has issues to deal with internally and the United States isn't in a better position. There are more important things for the two powers to focus on other than a possible military conflict.

## CONCLUSION

The United States has been the hegemon since the end of World War II and the largest global economy since the 1890s. We have led this world on many fronts and have contributed to the safety of various allies over time. We have also had competitors to the hegemonic role: first the Soviet Union and now China. Both represent completely different types of challenges. We had no ties to the Soviet Union, so when it fell and disappeared, it didn't hurt us, while the exact opposite can be said about China. We are living in an increasingly interdependent world and it is moving away from the idea of a single hegemon. It is forecasted that the world will break into regional alliances and hegemons by the year 2030, and that it is due to the growing importance of regional powers such as Turkey, Brazil, India, and China. Instead of fearing a world without the US being able to have an absolute advantage on the global stage, we should fear a world that stagnates. In order for the US to survive in this new world, we must find a way to properly position ourselves that goes beyond fear of the unknown. "It is better to be second in a growing world, than first in a stagnant world." And this is becoming very apparent as we continue to move forward into this new world.



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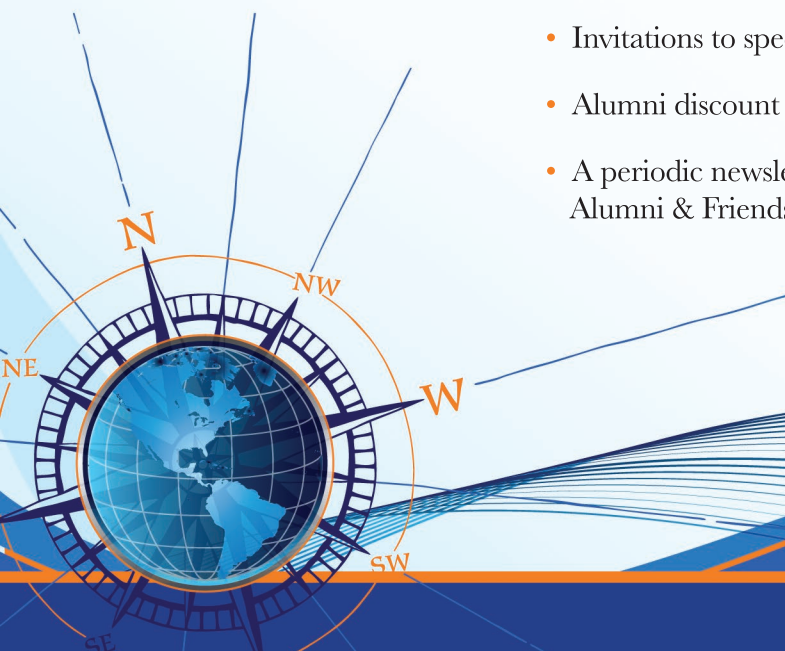
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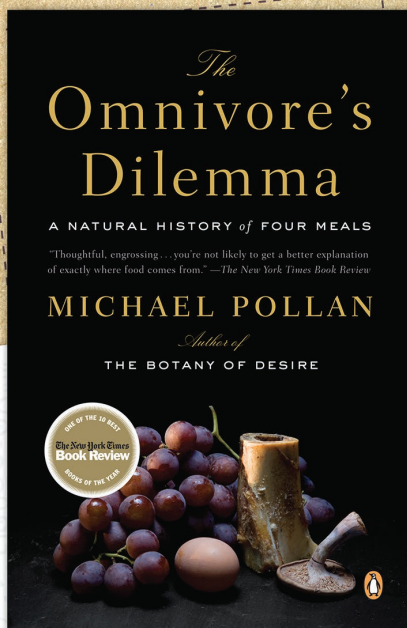
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### AUTHOR'S CORNER

#### Michael Pollan

Michael Pollan is the author of five books: *Second Nature*, *A Place of My Own*, *The Botany of Desire*, which was recognized as a best book of the year by the American Booksellers Association and Amazon, and the national bestseller, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, and *In Defense of Food*. A longtime contributing writer to *The New York Times Magazine*, Pollan is also the Knight Professor of Journalism at UC Berkeley. His writing on food and agriculture has won numerous awards, including the Reuters/World Conservation Union Global Award in Environmental Journalism, the James Beard Award, and the Genesis Award from the American Humane Association.



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