

GPR

GEORGIA POLITICAL REVIEW
fall 2014

THE INFORMED STUDENT'S GUIDE TO ———

The Medical Amnesty Act

How a Georgia law will help reduce alcohol deaths

The Country Who Cried Wolf

The responsibility of the United States to finish what they started

Ebola

Are we all at risk?

Race Relations

How the President balances his double consciousness

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THERE WERE
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

ISIS is swallowing the Middle East, race relations continue to embitter the country, and the stock market is soaring and plunging faster than performers in a Blue Angels airshow. These are tumultuous times, and the smart analysis GPR provides is needed now more than ever.

Since everything can be commoditized nowadays, all successful ventures must create unique experiences to thrive in the new "experience economy." GPR is distinct in both of its roles as a publication and as an organization. With daily online contributions from our most diverse staff yet and the largest and most innovative magazine we have ever printed, our publication has never been better. Our organization is also the strongest it has ever been, having held the third most successful college voter registration drive in the nation and "The Great Debate" in late October.

This fall, we have improved upon our traditional model of success in a few ways. While still admitting the best writers on our campus, we have established a dedicated marketing staff and have expanded the responsibility of our layout staff. As a result, we are excited to present the public with original marketing campaigns, layout content, and infographics. We can now point to our short, but impressive alumni list as indication of the quality GPR attracts. We

have placed past writers in top law schools such as Yale, firms like Goldman Sachs, and venerated government agencies including the U.S. Department of State.

The state of Georgia is in the national spotlight as one of the most heavily contested battleground Senate races. Loyal GPR followers from our university, our state, our country, and cities abroad such as Shanghai, Sydney, Monte Carlo, Barcelona, and Prague frequently read our original analysis, especially as it relates to Georgian or university affairs. This edition features extensive election coverage, including our cover piece on each Senate contender's stances and a fascinating piece on why we should all vote. Other exciting topics include an important university piece on the new medical amnesty law, a cultural article on race relations, and articles demonstrating different perspectives on ISIS and its prospects.

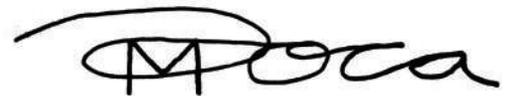
After voting in the midterm elections, be sure to keep up with GPR by following our daily updates at georgiapoliticalreview.com, liking our Facebook page, and following our Twitter handle @gapolitical. I encourage you all to join the conversation by submitting freelance pieces on our website, commenting on our online material, and responding to the content of this magazine.

The number seven is frequently associated with luck and prosperity. Therefore, it's



Marco Roca

fitting that Georgia Political Review has flourished in its short history and in the seventh edition of its biannual magazine. On behalf of GPR, I would like to personally thank each reader for the support that has made our remarkable growth possible. This magazine has been a labor of love by all of GPR's staff, and it demonstrates what happens when passion meets dedicated work. I wish you all the same good fortune that has privileged us.



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Reporting Rapes and Road-blocking Rapists

Kathleen Wilson
Staff Writer

In 2013, University of Georgia students reported 16 sexual offenses, including six incidences of rape, to the University of Georgia Police. One-third of these rapes were reported within the first month of the 2013 school year. In 2014, five rapes were reported within the same time frame, marking a 150 percent increase from last year. If this reporting trend continues, UGA students will report at least fifteen rapes within the next year.

Although exact numbers of rapes perpetrated will always remain unknown because some victims may be unwilling to report the crime, one can assume that rape trends remain relatively constant from year to year and that there has not been a sudden influx of rapists to Athens. Thus, before speculations of faulty UGA safety and calls for rape whistles and pepper spray spiral out of control, it is important to examine alternative explanations

knowledgeable about the resources available to them and gaining trust in the university's dedication to fighting against sexual assault.

This initiative to stop sexual assault is not just occurring at the University of Georgia; across the United States, efforts are being made to change conversations about student safety, consent, and rape. In April, President Barack Obama's White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault launched the Not Alone campaign, providing resources and data on how to prevent and respond to sexual assault on college campuses. In September, Obama launched the It's On Us campaign, an effort to encourage all students to join together to take some level of responsibility in finding a solution to sexual assault. In addition to the White House's efforts, nongovernmental organizations such as Know Your IX have undertaken more responsibility in empowering students as well.

In the two days after the video of Ray Rice knocking his fiancée unconscious surfaced, the National Domestic Violence

“ Nearly 20 percent of female college seniors report having experienced some type of sexual assault since entering college, according to the National Institute of Justice.

for this increase in reported rapes. Is it possible that a 150 percent increase in the number of rapes reported is a good thing?

This increase is reflective of not a large increase in criminal activity but rather a shift in the campus dialogue surrounding rape and sexual assault. Within the past year, University of Georgia students and administration have joined to launch the Women's Resource Initiative, an initiative aimed to make UGA's female students more aware of the resources available to them through a single web page. Among these resources is the newly formed Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention program housed within the University Health Center. RSVP provides free support, information, advocacy, education, and outreach for students impacted by sexual violence in its various forms.

In addition, UGA's Women's Studies Student Organization continues to host its yearly Take Back the Night event, which empowers victims and survivors to share their stories of sexual assault. Furthermore, the UGA Police Department has implemented an anonymous reporting option, so victims of sexual assault who may not yet feel comfortable pressing charges can still report the act. The increase in sexual assault reports within the last year would indicate that the combined efforts of these programs are clearly making a difference. Students are becoming more

Hotline experienced an 84 percent increase in phone calls. The number of violent domestic partners did not skyrocket overnight; rather, having seen domestic violence garner such national attention, victims began to feel empowered to step forward, share their stories, and ask for help. In the same sense, the increasing numbers of reported rapes at UGA is indicative of a powerful cultural shift. Having seen the recent local and national attention given to sexual assault, students realize they do not have to deal with this crime and its effects alone.

Nearly 20 percent of female college seniors report having experienced some type of sexual assault since entering college, according to the National Institute of Justice. When applied to the University of Georgia's student population, this means that nearly 3,900 female students will be victims of sexual assault during their time in college; yet, given the history of reported rapes at UGA, only a small portion of these will ever be reported to campus police. As the University of Georgia and the White House continue to explore strategies for ending sexual assault, the overall amount of incidents of sexual assault will hopefully begin to decline. At the same time, as knowledge about resources available and a culture of zero-tolerance for rape grows, the trend of more students coming forward to report these crimes is likely to continue.

ALCOHOL & AMNESTY



Max Wallace

Assistant Senior Editor

In 2010, the Princeton Review ranked the University of Georgia the No. 1 party school in the United States. Although the 2014 rankings saw UGA fall to No. 11, UGA students still know how to have a good time. This atmosphere makes for spectacular gamedays and weekend celebrations, but it can also lead to tragedy. Underage college students have opportunities to consume staggering amounts of alcohol, but when binge drinking leads to immediate health concerns, students frequently refrain from seeking medical attention because of their fear of legal repercussions. To combat this problem and prevent student deaths, the Georgia State Legislature passed a law last year dubbed the “Georgia 9-1-1 Medical Amnesty Law.”

The medical amnesty law was originally designed to address the rising rate of heroin abuse in the United States and its associated health concerns. Stephen Cardiges and Randall Brannen were Georgia residents and Eagle Scouts who overdosed on heroin and died in 2012 and 2013 respectively. Both were with friends who were capable of calling for medical assistance but chose not to when faced with the risk of prosecution for drug possession. These two cases are part of a much larger trend, where drug users die because they or their friends fear prosecution when seeking medical care. The most recent Georgia law is far from the first; 14 other states had already established similar medical amnesty laws, and the Massachusetts law is already credited with saving 120 lives over the past two years.

State Sen. Bill Cowsert, an attorney whose district includes UGA, came across many cases of accidental death in his work as a lawyer, but none of them were due to a heroin overdose. From Cowsert’s perspective, alcohol poisoning is an ever-present danger in Athens, and if medical amnesty is provided to heroin users, it should also be extended to college students who sometimes go overboard and drink too much.

During 2011 orientation for instance, every UGA student was subjected to a presentation by the Athens solicitor general, informing incoming freshmen that choosing to drink while

underage in Athens can have dire consequences. In other Georgia counties, underage drinking results in a simple ticket for a fine usually less than \$300. In Athens, it results in a pair of handcuffs and a mugshot.

To date, the solicitor general has been true to his word. Nearly 1,000 UGA students each year are arrested for underage drinking, and a minor in possession charge leaves a stain on any permanent record. In spite of efforts by the UGA and Athens police departments to discourage underage drinking from occurring, there will always be 18-, 19-, and 20-year-olds that choose to drink when the opportunity is presented to them. That is when the university’s harsh stance on underage drinking has tragic and unanticipated consequences.

UGA students are naturally hesitant to call for medical aid when doing so could result in waking up the next morning with a citation from the UGA Police Department sitting on their chest. When making a phone call for an ambulance can result in jail time, there is a natural tendency to downplay any injury resulting from illegal alcohol use. A nasty fall onto the concrete gets treated as a little knock on the head, and instead of seeking actual medical attention, friends give a prescription to “walk it off.” To them, a student who has drunk so much that they are having trouble breathing doesn’t need a doctor, they just “need a minute.” This type of thinking is a result of students trying to avoid criminal records, but sometimes what should have been a trip to the hospital the night before becomes a trip to the funeral home the next morning.

As a result of the Medical Amnesty Act, any person calling for medical aid is granted immunity from prosecution related to the medical call, regardless of whether the call was for themselves or another individual. This means students no longer have to choose between helping a friend and protecting their own future. For that reason, Cowsert refers to the act as the “Good Samaritan Bill.” Underage drinking is not something to be encouraged, but Georgia’s Legislature should be applauded for taking steps to ensure that attempts to enforce the law don’t result in unnecessary deaths. Everyone makes bad choices at times, and college students might make them more often, but choosing to have a few too many drinks shouldn’t cost someone his or her life.

“Sometimes what should have been a trip to the hospital the night before becomes a trip to the funeral home the next morning.”

An Informed Nonvoter

Tony Raubenheimer
Staff Writer



You won't catch me at a voting station this November. Not because I hold a green card, but because I'm afflicted with a deep, perhaps perverse, rationality. Voting is pointless.

The economic argument is simple. Individuals face transaction costs to voting; traveling to a polling station requires time and effort. Weighed against the almost nonexistent benefits voters receive, it's remarkable that anyone casts their ballots. Economically, the costs should overwhelm the minuscule chance that a single vote could decide an election. Of course, companies also face costs from employees who miss work to vote, while governments and societies obviously receive benefits from a voting public. However, the tradeoff between private benefits and costs dictates private choices.

The answer to this economic conundrum lies with hidden benefits. Economists have long pondered why people choose to participate in the political process. After all, the odds of dying in a car crash on the way to go vote outweigh the imperceptibly small chance of casting a deciding vote. Emotion, the bane of economics, provides the probable explanation — constituents gain gratification from exercising suffrage.

This satisfaction makes the righteousness of many voters strike a hypocritical note. Voters often cite social benefits, alluding to altruism or a social duty higher than oneself. To illustrate, many voters claim they vote to improve an electoral outcome for everyone's benefit. While society may benefit from a voting public, constituents vote for the same reason I won't — they act selfishly. Voting allows them to feel like

engaged members; "performing your civic duty" offers the appropriate buzz phrase and accompanying squishy feelings.

But I consider myself an informed member of the public who deeply cares about this government's policy choices. Informed citizenry doesn't prove mutually exclusive with voting. I read (and write) without casting my opinion into a sea of ballots which quickly overwhelm mine, reducing it to irrelevancy. As an informed nonvoter, this is how I choose to participate; this is how I practice civic duty. Undeniably, this proves the more difficult option. Understanding domestic and international events demands more consistent effort than driving to a polling booth once every two or four years.

Yet I face mockery and scorn for my voting apathy. Common themes include such gems as "if you don't vote, you can't complain about politicians." Of course I can. I personally reject voting on rational grounds. Similarly, I disapprove of policies and dislike politicians on a reasoned platform. Yet, unfortunately, the conversation often degrades to these ad hominem attacks. Another typical remark is that without voters, democracy would fail, a valid assumption. But democracy has worked fine without my individual vote so far; I believe it will continue to survive.

Often, an election's result is known before any votes are recorded. Few states or districts are even competitive; the outcome is already decided. Most House districts are gerrymandered to an extent that leaves primary elections determining the seat. Presidential elections are often similarly pre-determined. States that have

voted Democratic in each of the past six presidential election reflect 242 electoral college votes, while the GOP's respective tally embodies 102 electors. The balance of probabilities suggests that most or all of these states will continue their trends during the next election, and other slightly less one-sided states besides. Only about 10 states could be argued toss-ups for the presidential election, about 20 House races in 2014, and perhaps five Senate seats. This adds another layer to my apathy towards voting and annoyance at those who scorn me for it: casting an uninformed vote when the result is already known is still somehow glorified.

Simply, I am dismayed by the prospect of casting a well-researched and educated, but ultimately meaningless, vote of confidence in a candidate. Holding an enlightened opinion remains at least as important as merely casting a ballot, and I should not be forced to answer to the moralizing of some voters. If ticking boxes tickles you, vote. But I receive no great joy from voting, and I reserve the right to remove myself from the democratic system unabated by the sanctimony of those who claim the moral high ground. Ultimately, I see voters cast unimportant ballots in pre-determined elections in gerrymandered districts based on corrupted campaigns designed to win a glorified popularity contest. And that is not a process I want to participate in.



A Rational Voter

Alex Edquist
Operations Director

Will your vote count in the November elections? The answer to that is, well, probably not. It is the rare election that is decided by just one vote. Most close, competitive elections are still decided by thousands of people. So why would you bother voting in the upcoming elections?

Economics is often used to argue the irrationality of voting. Going to the polls takes time, and if a person's vote will have no influence on the outcome, then it doesn't make sense for someone to incur that time cost for zero benefit. However, that simple model makes two large assumptions: an individual's vote never influences the outcome, and the only benefit of voting is deciding the election.

The first assumption has been proven wrong multiple times in U.S. history. A one-vote margin of victory is not an impossibility: it happened as recently as 2010 in the United States, when Mike Kelly defeated Karl Kessel by exactly one vote to win a seat in Alaska's House of Representatives. In 1974, Louis Wyman won the New Hampshire Senate race – a race in which almost 250,000 people voted – by only two votes.

Even if the second assumption – that being the decisive ballot is the only benefit to voting individuals – is valid, voting can still be rational if it has a small cost (going to a polling place and voting can take as little as 20 minutes). Someone voting has a minuscule chance of a huge benefit (deciding the election) and a good chance of zero benefit (the election is decided by more than one vote). If people value deciding the election highly enough,

voting is still economically rational. It's like playing the lottery: When the jackpot gets big enough, a player's expected value is positive even though the chances of winning are negligible.

It is impossible to predict ahead of time whether a close election will be decided by a margin of one or 1,000. Lately, it has been difficult just to predict the winners of elections – even when polls showed a hearty lead for one candidate or the other. In June, Dave Brat upset Eric Cantor, previously House Majority Leader and the second most powerful House member in Virginia's Republican primary election. He won by 11 percentage points, even though polls had shown him losing the election by as much as 34 percentage points. In July, David Perdue won Georgia's Senate primary run-off for the Republican nomination over Jack Kingston, who had been favored in the polls by five percentage points beforehand (less than 5,000 votes gave Perdue the victory). This means that even in supposedly uncompetitive elections, the voter still has a chance of deciding the election.

A person's vote does not just have a chance of influencing the results of the election; it also has a chance of influencing that person's family and friends to vote as well. A study by researchers at the University of California San Diego showed that for the 2010 elections, 240,000 new people voted because they saw on Facebook that a friend had voted.

But is deciding the election the only benefit of voting? Clearly not, otherwise no one would vote for candidates like libertarian Gary Johnson (who won less

than 1 percent of the vote when he ran for president in 2012). Voting has to have benefits other than deciding the election, or Charles Darwin would not have gotten 4,000 write-in votes in 2012 against Rep. Paul Broun (R-Ga.), who famously said evolution was a lie “straight from the pit of hell.”

So, why do people vote for unwinnable tickets? What intangible benefits does voting have? For one, voting seems to bring the right to complain about one's politicians, which is practically an American pastime. Some do it (although they probably won't admit to it) for the recognition of having done something good, and they will proudly wear their “Georgia Voter” sticker or collect likes on their “I voted” post on Facebook.

Moreover, people are acting socially rather than individualistically when they vote. For most people (those who will never be soldiers or volunteer firefighters, for example), voting is the main avenue available to fulfill a patriotic or civic duty. Large numbers of voters make our democracy work, and people get satisfaction from contributing to democracy even if their individual vote does not matter much.

Clearly, our earlier model predicting that voting has some costs and no benefits doesn't hold up. There are plenty of reasons for the rational individual to vote, which is a good thing because this year's elections are important, with seats in the U.S. Senate and the Georgia's governor mansion up for grabs. So, make sure to show that you're a rational citizen this November, and get your ballot in the box. I know I will.

THE LONE STAR?

“Texanomics”

A Bastion of Conservative Success

Marco Roca
Editor in Chief

To many, Texas conjures images of arid desert and thrill-seeking cowboys. Others might think of it as a boomtown with an independent, lawless streak. Few, however, appreciate the Lone Star State as the flourishing beacon of prosperity it is.

Simply put, Texas is a desert rose. Sure, it has a few thorns, but according to the Alec-Laffer State Economic Competitiveness Index, Texas is the metaphorical flower of them all. Texas has no state income tax and no estate tax, and it is a right-to-work state where employers can hire individuals regardless of union status. It is a hotbed for the conservative economic machine, resulting in a state with lower business costs, higher workforce flexibility, and more economic opportunity than anywhere in the United States. The state’s business-friendly atmosphere has allowed Texas to take advantage of its natural resources to become the country’s strongest energy sector. Companies trying to avoid inefficient government bureaucracy elsewhere are defecting to Texas with their billions in investments each year, as they strive to produce their goods quickly and cheaply.

On the authority of the U.S. Department of Commerce in 2014, Texas was named the top exporting state for the 12th year in a row. Texas’ export rate grew by 5.5 percent, easily exceeding the country’s overall rate. Along that same vein, Global Trade Magazine recently named Texas the top state for global trade. For many, however, these impressive statistics aren’t tangible in light of the economic issue that most intimately faces American households — employment, or lack thereof. Texas excels here as well. Three out of every ten U.S. jobs created over the past decade were in Texas, and the unemployment rate sits at 5.1 percent, lower than the 5.5 percent that the Federal Open Market Committee views as the healthy long-run normal rate. Between 2011 and 2012, Texas ranked second for personal income growth by state, behind only North Dakota during its fracking surge.

In the words of Rick Perry, Texas’ polarizing governor, “No doubt our record makes states that overtax, overregulate, and over litigate nervous. It should.” One’s own political affiliation notwithstanding, there is no denying Texas’ vast economic success. Perry recognized this, and his 2012 presidential primary campaign was largely based upon bringing prosperity to the entire country with the principles that have made the Lone Star State an economic epicenter in the United States. Although Perry’s campaign has long since ended, the narrative of Texas as an economic model for the United States should remain.

Even Wendy Davis, the Democrat running for the open 2014 gubernatorial seat, supports Texas’ economic model. Cal Jillson, a political science professor at Southern Methodist University, argues “[Davis] and most Democrats haven’t challenged the conventional narrative on Texas’ success — that it stems from low taxes and limited regulations. She won’t argue against the Texas model.” Instead, Davis is focusing on social policies such as education and women’s issues. It is no wonder that the Democratic Party is heavily invested in capitalizing on Texas’ diverse demographic background and turning Texas purple. It is a huge blow to the Democratic Party that the country’s “economic miracle” is a heavily Republican state,

and Democrats are doing all that they can to change the way the state votes to seize some of the credit.

Since Texas’ economic record speaks for itself, liberal policy makers and economists seek to make the argument that Texas’ model would be unsuccessful elsewhere. Detractors make the points that Texas’ unique geographic position, energy industry, and population size give it advantages no other state has. However, a simple comparison to California might serve to quell this myth.

California and Texas are cut from the same cloth. They are our two biggest states by population, both have coastlines, both have large immigrant populations, and both share borders with Mexico. However, the two states’ policies could not be more different. California is liberal nearly to the point of one-party governance, and Texas is decidedly conservative. While Texas has no income

THE FACTS:

CONSERVATIVE POLICIES

- No income/estate taxes
- Texas takes advantage of its wealth in natural resources

tax, California has the highest in the nation. While Texas embraces its energy industry, California’s liberal government limits oil extraction despite having the largest shale reserves in the United States. Furthermore, California’s electricity prices are 88 percent higher than Texas’, which limits industrial capacity. From 2000 to 2013, Texas added one new job per every three people, and California only added a new job for every 11 people. Perhaps it’s telling that our politically moderate nation created one new job for every seven people. Since California is the country’s largest economy, has a coastline, and also shares a border with Mexico, geography doesn’t give Texas an advantage over California in maintaining its status as the country’s top international exporter. Additionally, liberal states like New York with easy access to Canada, the United States’ number one trading partner, should actually be best positioned for the title of the country’s strongest economy. Finally, Texas adapts to innovation in ways that liberal states have failed to do. For example, Texas is the country’s No. 1 wind energy producer. While it may only be a nominal accomplishment, the recent slew of corporate relocations from California to Texas serves as a powerful microcosm for Texas’ national economic ethos.

After familiarizing themselves with the arguments, readers’ personal analysis should be guided by two colloquial expressions. First, “if you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em.” Texas has been outrageously successful, and the country would find emulating “Texanomics” a remunerative exercise. Second, “don’t mess with Texas.”

Texas is the nation's economic powerhouse. According to Texan economic tradition and the administration of Gov. Rick Perry, this can be attributed to no income tax and limited regulation, but there are detractors to the argument. Are Texas' conservative, business-friendly policies an archetype for the United States, or are there more factors at play?

The Caveats to the Conservative Texas Success Story

Bruce Li
Webmaster

When Toyota announced that they would be moving their headquarters from Torrance, California, to a Dallas suburb, it seemed like yet another indicator of Texas's economic supremacy. As Texas Gov. Rick Perry gears up for a potential 2016 presidential bid, he has been quick to point to his conservative policies as the causes of this surging economy. Considering the polar opposite policies in California, the Japanese automaker's move seems to support Perry's assertion: A small-

- Texas' unemployment rate is 5.1 percent
- Cumulative GDP grown is fourth in the nation (2002-2012)
- Texas adds more jobs per capita than the national average

...OR OTHER FACTORS?

- Number one producer of oil and Natural gas
- Abundant supply of land, affordable housing, and population growth
- Despite the mass funding, the Texas Enterprise Fund isn't responsible for the majority of Texas' job growth

government approach, with low taxes and public spending, is the key to economic prosperity. However, it is hard to draw a causal link between Perry's policies and Texas' economic growth. In fact, there are several other factors to consider before modeling the nation's economic policy after the Lone Star State's.

Let us consider the obvious: Texas has oil. As the nation's leading producer of oil, Texas benefits greatly from spikes in oil prices, translating each 10 percent increase in oil prices to a 0.5 percent increase in the state GDP. The high oil prices that prevailed during the start of the recession only added to the woes of most states, but Texas and other natural-resource-laden states actually benefitted. Even as the economy diversifies, new developments of shale deposits of oil and natural gas in the towns Eagle Ford and Barnett have given the energy sector a boost.

Another big factor in Texas' economic growth is its population growth. Texas boosters attribute this growth to so-called business-friendly conditions like right-to-work laws and the absence of a state income tax, bringing in migrants and workers from other states. However, a breakdown of the data shows there may be more to the story. First, Texas simply has an exceptionally high birth rate, second only to Utah. Also, when taking into account the international migration influx — over 50 percent of net migration to Texas came from Mexico and other countries between 2000 and 2009 — the percentage of population growth due to migration from other states shrinks to only around 27 percent. Even then,

it would be hard to prove that Perry's business-friendly policies have been the cause of this domestic migration.

For instance, one of the biggest and relatively unsung contributors to Texas's success is their resilient housing market. With a huge supply of land — Texas has the second-biggest land area in the nation, most of which is flat and readily available for development — the cost of building homes is much lower than the national average. Take New York for example; housing costs are about 60 percent higher in metropolitan New York than in Houston. And in the wake of the housing bubble burst, Texas' foreclosure rate stayed much lower than the national average and only about one-third the rate in California.

In fact, this overlooked area is one that Texas has excelled in. Unlike New York and California, Texas refrains from tight housing regulations that restrict building heights and suburban development, keeping the supply of housing elastic and the prices relatively low. This incentivizes migration and also makes it easier to start businesses. Furthermore, Texas has strictly regulated borrowing, being one of the last states to allow homeowners to use equity loans to borrow against their homes and regulate borrowing. By avoiding the foreclosures that other states faced, Texas skirted the inevitable negative shock to the local economy that comes with people losing their homes.

There are arguably also certain pitfalls of Texas' conservative approach. The state has the highest percentage of minimum-wage workers of any state. Also, with less tax revenue and a desire to cut spending, Texas invests very little in its education and healthcare compared to the rest of the nation. In 2011, the Texas Legislature cut over \$5 billion from education, and according to the U.S. Census Bureau, one in four Texans is uninsured. While it is important to note that Texas's comparatively low costs of living mitigate some of the uglier statistics (when unadjusted for cost of living, Texas has the 11th highest poverty rate in the nation), there should be a closer look at the other side effects of the current policies.

With this in mind, it is an important question to ask: Are the business-friendly policies the real hero here? It is true that Texas has outpaced the nation in job growth, but can the current administration really take all the credit? Perry has spent over \$487 million in taxpayer dollars through the Texas Enterprise Fund initiative to woo companies to set up shop in Texas, but in a 2010 report from watchdog group Texans for Public Justice, the group found that close to two-thirds of the projects were failing to meet employment goals, effectively delivering a bad return on investment of tax revenue. In fact, the net gain of jobs in Texas from the relocation of companies was only 0.03 percent each year. By all accounts, enticing companies to move from one state to another "is not where job creation happens," says Greg LeRoy, the executive director of the Good Jobs First think tank. "Job creation happens at home."

In this context, the Toyota development is put into perspective. The move will bring in about 3,000 high-quality jobs to the Dallas area, and the mayor of Torrance will scramble to respond. But as a part of the larger picture, Texas' success will continue to hinge on more factors than just the current conservative policies. As nationwide housing prices begin to stabilize and Texas population density increases, Texas may begin to lose its housing advantage. As natural gas prices fall, Texas' energy industry could suffer as well. The bottom line is that while Texas is indeed an economic success story in a lot of ways, there is more to it than what Rick Perry would have you believe.



THE POLICING PARADOX

The Rising Security State and How the Roberts Court Can Counter It

Matt & Rob Oldman
Staff Writers

We live in a scary world. State security is here to protect us from terrorists, thieves, assassins, and international drug cartels. Every day, brave men and women put their lives on the line to protect the rule of law in a chaotic world. But what happens when the police state itself becomes a threat? Americans are becoming increasingly aware of the recent militarization of police. In order to protect and defend citizens, the police are now utilizing M16 assault rifles, armored vehicles, and intrusive SWAT tactics that would typically be reserved for a war zone.

Moreover, we are constantly made aware of warrantless raids in the media as well as the increased ability of security forces to wiretap telephones and spy on internet activity. Many politicians, news outlets, and concerned citizen groups oppose the rise of a security state since keeping communities safe may create excessive government intrusion, endangering dearly held constitutional protections.

Gone are the days of the amicable patrolman as the face of law enforcement. The security state nowadays is characterized by efficient and deadly warrior policemen clad in camouflage and NSA computer spies. This new image is due to the federal government's subsidization of crusades against drugs and terrorism which has increased the funding for the security state and expanded its capabilities.

On the funding side, programs such as the Community Oriented Policing Services and Department of Homeland Security anti-terror grants have distributed billions to militarize local law enforcement. They have supplied M16 assault rifles, riot gear, and armored vehicles. To maintain a watchful eye on potential criminals, funding for intelligence activities has doubled since 9/11, with \$18 billion being set aside for NSA data-gathering activities.

Local police now have access to military training and equipment, best exemplified by the proliferation of SWAT teams. They are present in 89 percent of U.S. police agencies and have increased the number of military style raids by 1,500 percent since the 1980s. In terms of data surveillance, nine major technology companies have given the NSA access to their servers to further its internet surveillance program PRISM. In 2012, PRISM was able to generate 77,000 intelligence reports for analysts to search for threats.

The consequences of an omnipresent security state that is capable of cracking down more effectively than ever before have been mixed at best. The police have been increasingly deadly in the past decade given their newfound military training. More than 5,000 citizens have been killed by officers since 2001, making it nine times more likely that a citizen will meet their end at the hands of a police officer rather than a terrorist. The consequences of the police state have unsettled many Americans, seen by the public's outrage at the militarized response to the

Boston Marathon Bombing and riots in Ferguson, Missouri.

NSA spying has also been extremely controversial after wiretapping and surveillance programs were exposed in spectacular fashion by internal whistleblower Edward Snowden. Their data aggregation programs collect private information on every U.S. citizen regardless of whether or not they are suspected of criminal activity without evidence that these programs have ever stopped a terrorist attack. There is little doubt that measures that increase the state's ability to identify and prevent acts of violence make us safer. However, there is always a delicate balance between safety and liberty. To ensure our liberties we rely on the Supreme Court to carve out limits in the law and make sure that they align with constitutional guarantees.

Up until the 2013 term, the Roberts court tended to empower the state by ruling on the side of the police when considering the limits of police activities. A 2006 ruling in *Hudson v. Michigan* allowed police to admit evidence even when "knock and announce" rules were violated. Earlier this year, *Navarette v. California* ensured that the police could utilize anonymous tips to make arrests even when there was no probable cause from their observations. This was not surprising as four current justices, including Chief Justice John Roberts himself, are official members of the Federalist Society. The Federalist Society is part of a conservative legal movement that generally supports the extension of state power, especially when it comes to security concerns. But this did not come into play in the 2014 term.

Given the Roberts Court's record, supporters of restrained state power were both pleased and surprised by the landmark ruling in *Riley v. California*. Roberts wrote the opinion for a 9-0 court decision

that generally prohibited police from searching digital data on a cell phone without first obtaining a warrant. This case is particularly important because it concerns both individual rights from burdensome police procedures and the role of the state in the digital age.

The *Riley* ruling protects individuals from invasive police procedures that have been upheld in other circumstances. The state is typically allowed to seize physical records that it uncovers in raids of suspected criminal homes without a warrant. However, because of the massive upswing in the use of smart phones and cloud storage, the Roberts Court has declared that data is different and will be subject to special rules. Because "millions of pages of texts, thousands of pictures, [and] hundreds of videos" can now be stored in a handheld device, there should be a greater expectation of privacy and the state will have to show in a warrant that there is a reasonable

coming up through U.S. Circuit Courts and ask whether or not the NSA collection programs are constitutional. In light of the *Riley* precedent it is likely that the Supreme Court may also decide these cases in favor of personal liberties.

It is possible that the court's unanimity in the case was not due to a wide agreement over rolling back the state's policing power. The case was decided in late April before opinions were to be issued and it may be that the justices simply did not have enough time to draw out more nuanced answers to the question of digital privacy. But the importance of the decision should not be overlooked. It had the dual distinction of protecting individual privacy from physical police seizures and ensuring digital security.

When citizens fear for their safety, constitutional rights are often abandoned. The executive and legislative branches of

“Gone are the days of the amicable patrolman as the face of law enforcement.

expectation that the data will provide further evidence.

The ruling is also relevant to the future of NSA spying programs because it rejects the government claim that metadata should not be subject to search and seizure protections. The qualitative characteristics of the data stored in the digital age can be highly personal in nature (e.g. internet history and location tracking services) and the court ruled that this should be protected jealously. Two cases, *Klayman v. Obama* and *ACLU v. Clapper*, are both

government often perpetuate this by promoting intrusive policies such as the militarization of the police and domestic surveillance programs. The judicial branch must step up in these situations and help de-escalate the state's rising capabilities.

Upcoming cases will help determine whether or not the Roberts court is genuinely devoted to protecting civil liberties. Until then, Americans must remain vigilant and ever wary of what we are giving up for increased security.



The **Entrenchment** of the U.S. Electorate

Zachary Bernknopf
Staff Writer

This summer was another busy one for Fox News and MSNBC. Fox News attracted an average of nearly 1.8 million viewers during primetime, and MSNBC nearly 600,000 on average. The continuing appeal of partisan cable news networks has been a key factor in the growing polarization and partisanship of the United States' electorate and elected officials. Americans from both sides of the political spectrum have become increasingly locked into their ideological worldviews and increasingly treat those on the opposite end with hostility and contempt. Why do an ever growing number of Americans now see most opinions, institutions, people, and facts that contradict their own worldview as corrupt or false?

In order to grasp the uniqueness of the current divide, it is first helpful to understand the country's historical ideological landscape. In 1994, when the Pew Research Center first began to measure ideological consistency, the number of Americans with consistently liberal views was 3 percent, while those holding consistently conservative views was 7 percent. 49 percent had a mix of both liberal and conservative views. In 2014 however the number of Americans holding consistently conservative or liberal views has grown. The latest poll now shows 12 percent of Americans identifying as consistently liberal and 9 percent identifying as consistently conservative. The number of Americans with mixed views has shrunk considerably to 39 percent. While those with moderate or "mixed" views still hold a plurality, more and more Americans are adopting ideologically "consistent" or partisan positions, and those adopting these positions are more insular, radical, and politically active than ever before.

Important drivers of this polarization have been the recent and dramatic changes in the U.S media landscape and the changing ways Americans consume news. Since 1994, the number of cable news networks has exploded. In 1996, both Fox News and MSNBC went on air, joining stalwarts CNN, ABC, NBC, and CBS. More recently, these six have been joined by Al Jazeera America and a host of other smaller networks.

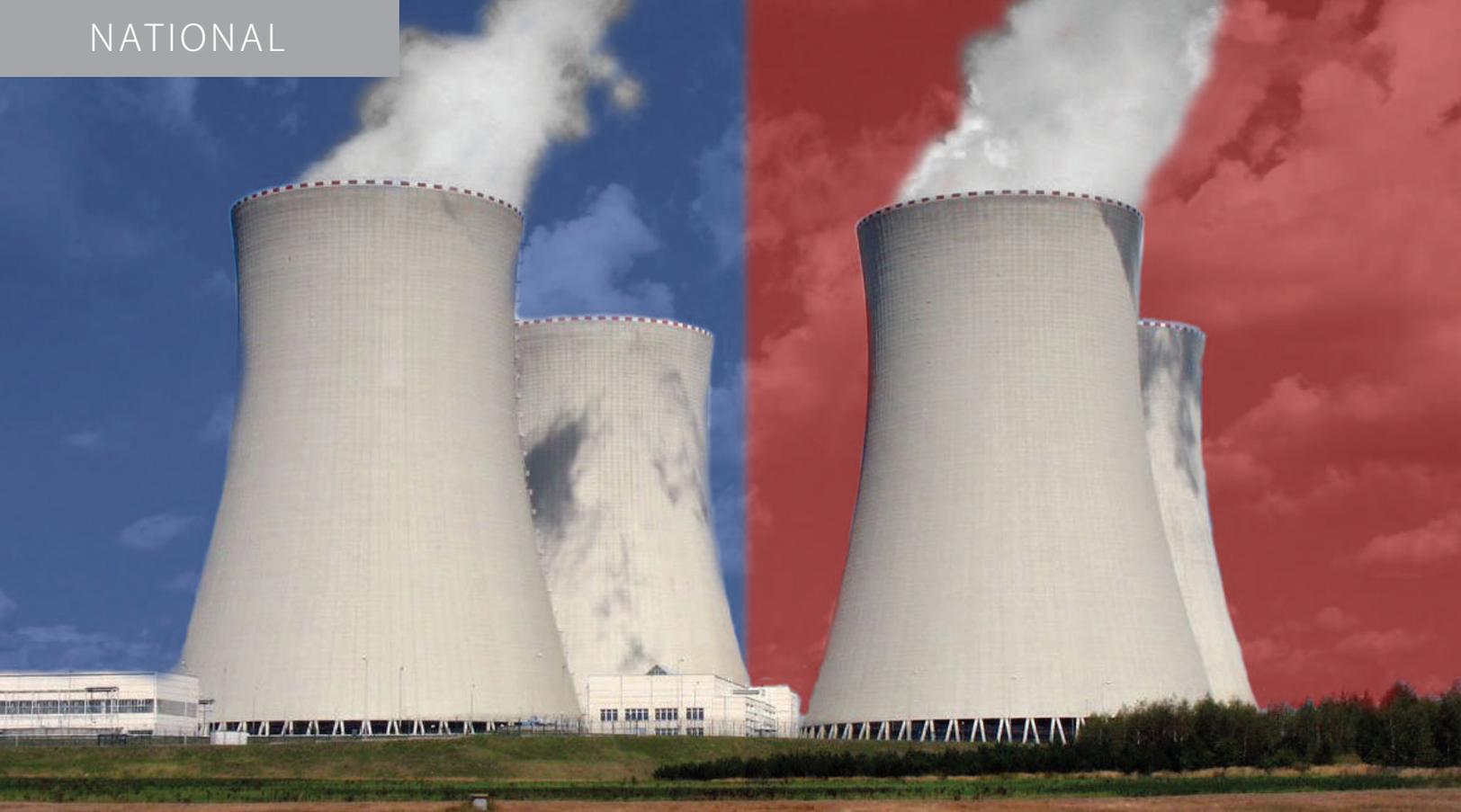
Coinciding with the proliferation of cable news outlets has been the rise of online blogs, web magazines, and social media sites. With so many niche news sources now available, it has become easier for Americans to find reporting that supports, conforms to, and confirms their already-held beliefs. In this hyper-partisan, one-sided media landscape, echo chamber radical views lacking any semblance of nuance have become the new norm. Opponents and opposing views, if presented at all, are not included to facilitate any sort of reasonable debate or challenge existing viewpoints; they are presented to be belittled, mocked, and vilified. For people living within this media environment, their beliefs become facts, moderate views become radical or reactionary, and opposing views become a threat. Immutable and certain in the correctness of their ideology, compromise or dialogue with the other side becomes increasingly unnecessary and undesirable.

The recent rise in ideological consistency within the Democratic and Republican parties and their breakdown into regionally-based entities has also led to the adoption of harder stances on more issues. Historically, geography divided the two political parties internally, with regional factions within each party at odds with each other on a host of issues. Compromise between these

different party factions, however, was commonplace and views on many issues were tempered as a result. From the 1970s onward, the two parties have sorted themselves out geographically. The Republicans monopolized power in the traditionally conservative South and Great Plains. The Democrats came to dominate the liberal Northeast and Pacific coast. Settling into their respective ideologically consistent regions, factions within the parties with any significant divergent ideologies disappeared. Lacking any moderating force, the Republican and Democratic Parties drifted further right and left, respectively. Overlapping positions on almost any issues vanished, and "reaching across the aisle" has become a dirty phrase. Dr. Keith Poole, a political science professor at the University of Georgia, commented on the uniqueness of this polarization. "On almost all issues a purely partisan divide now exists," he said. "This is the first time in American history since the rise of the mass parties in the 1820s that this problem has arisen."

Perhaps it is most important to remember that, even under normal conditions, once people have adopted a belief system, it becomes almost impossible to change it. Recent studies on entrenchment conducted by Northwestern and Yale have shown just how locked into political stances one can become. With more Americans adopting hardline positions, inhabiting regions that are more ideologically homogeneous, and consuming media with a distinct ideological slant, polarization and entrenchment are issues that will continue well into the future. As Poole puts it, "Most people when they form an opinion and lock into it, they screen out contrary information. It's very difficult to get people to change their minds."

“Overlapping positions on almost any issues vanished, and “reaching across the aisle” has become a dirty phrase.



Obama's Clean Power Plan: Environmentalists' Dream or Politics as Usual?

Robert Galerstein
Staff Writer

On June 2, the Environmental Protection Agency proposed the Clean Power Plan, which would add carbon emissions from power plants to the list of air pollutants regulated under the Clean Air Act. On June 25, President Obama announced the implementation of the rules in a climate policy speech. The plan was described as “flexible,” giving different states different goals to reduce emissions from power plants based on feasibility, which is the same approach the EPA uses to regulate air pollution. Although states are given a specific goal — a desired emission rate in pounds of carbon dioxide per megawatt-hour for 2030 — each state can independently determine the means by which that goal could be accomplished. States are given a number of potential options to regulate power plants, ranging from renewable portfolio standards and tax credits to public-private partnerships and energy efficiency initiatives. The Obama administration viewed this agency directive to be more feasible than any uniform national policy, which most likely would require congressional action.

However, the state-by-state approach previously used by the EPA also has its drawbacks. Although this model was successful in implementing regulations in the Clean

Air and Water acts, it is difficult to apply to the currently tricky political issue of climate change. Many states will have to pass legislation that keeps them in accordance with new standards. Governors and legislatures in a variety of conservative states that deny climate change and reject all regulation on fossil fuels will be forced to regulate power plants somehow. States with Republican governors and conservative constituents, like Georgia, will all need to figure out how to reduce their carbon emissions by about 40 percent by 2030.

Many liberal states have also expressed displeasure with the rule. In anticipation of feasibility concerns, the administration imposed larger requirements upon states that had already demonstrated they were capable of implementing alternative energy. Washington and Oregon are among the states facing the highest targets. Many of the states participating in the successful Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative — New York, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Maryland, and Delaware — are also regulated well above the national average. On the other hand, the states that are the least efficient energy users in the country are only required to reduce their emissions by about 20 percent.

The Republican Party's reaction is perhaps more perplexing and worrisome than the Clean Power Plan itself.

Sample State Emissions Reduction Targets for 2030:



Washington
71.6%



Georgia
44.4%



California
23.1%



North Dakota
10.6%

States with Republican governors and conservative constituents, like Georgia, will all need to figure out how to reduce their carbon emissions by about 40 percent by 2030.

Although the EPA still uses moderate standards compared to the rest of the developed world, the response by the GOP has been anything but moderate, as the party continues to obstruct the president from any potential political victory. In several congressional hearings over the new regulations, various members of the Republican Party have expressed outrage over the financial costs of acting based on what they view as a scientific uncertainty. On Sept. 17, the White House Science Advisor Dr. John Holdren and EPA Acting Assistant Administrator Janet McCabe testified before the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology about the administration's plan. Republicans asked for specific estimates of what level of carbon dioxide concentration is harmful, Dr. Holdren responded strongly by saying:

"That's a red herring. We are not interested in carbon dioxide concentrations because of their direct effect on human health, we are interested in them because of their effect on the world's climate, and climate change has effects on human health."

Hopefully climate change begins to attract more debate, be it positive or negative, so the issue can garner bipartisan support for action. There is little to no political inertia, as only eight out of the Republican Party's 278 congressional members outwardly believe in climate science, despite 97 percent of climate scientists agreeing that current changes in climate are being caused by humans. Recent reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and World Bank detail how increases in temperature are anthropogenic and are having devastating effects — causing increased scarcity of water and food, making areas uninhabitable, and forcing mass migration and violence. The climate is reaching critical tipping points that, if crossed, could lead to an irreversible, catastrophic collapse of a variety of human and natural systems. Doubting the efficacy of potential solutions simply increases the need for drastic action — the unpredictable nature of climate justifies using whatever means possible in the face of uncertainty. Although political figures are right to criticize the EPA's Clean Power Plan, they seem to be doing so for all the wrong reasons.



Statehood

Right or Privilege?

Alex Boylston
Staff Writer

In a historic referendum held on Sept. 18, the citizens of Scotland rejected the idea of full independence by a margin of 10 percent. In the months leading up to the referendum, the Scottish National Party (the largest political party in Scotland) and its leader, Alex Salmond, aggressively campaigned for Scottish independence after the referendum was approved by the United Kingdom's government in late 2013. Party leaders and the affiliated campaign "Yes Scotland" endorsed the stance that Scotland should be independent because Scotland and England had "opposite social and political views," decisions regarding Scotland were made in Westminster and not in Edinburgh, and that England secured funds from North Sea oil reserves despite the fact that those reserves are found in Scottish waters.

Although they appeared in the news less frequently than the Scottish people, the people of Catalonia, a region in northeastern Spain that includes Barcelona, were marching in the streets prior to the referendum waving Scotland's flag next to the "senyera," the national flag of Catalonia, in solidarity with another group seeking independence. Although the Scots voted to remain a part of the United Kingdom, Catalonia's leader Artur Mas said that this would have no effect on the Catalan people's desire for independence. According to Mas, the Catalan people, though not ecstatic about the result of the Scottish referendum, would like the option of having an independence referendum like Scotland. Mas pledged on Sept. 22, a mere four days after the Scottish referendum, that he would petition for his region's right to hold such a referendum after the Catalan parliament passed a law enabling him to do so. But the Spanish government in Madrid, as it has previously, stated that this was a violation of the Spanish Constitution and pledged to strike down the proposal and ban the referendum.

Catalonia and Scotland are not the first regions to demand self-determination in governance. In another notable case, Quebec, the predominantly French-speaking province of Canada, held two official referendums for independence in 1980 and 1995, both of which failed. Elsewhere in Europe, the Venetians, Sardinians, Basques, and Flemish have all petitioned for independence, but none have organized legal referendums. In Asia, the Uighurs, Tibetans, and Tamils have all petitioned for independence from their governing countries, but only the Tamils had a resolution after losing a war to the rest of Sri Lanka. Many international leaders feared that a breakup of the United Kingdom would cause it

to lose face and economic prowess, but leaders of ethnically diverse countries such as China and Spain were more concerned about Scottish independence inspiring activists in their own countries.

The question that arises from this rather common situation is simple: What must a region have in order to be declared a

“The question that arises from this rather common situation is simple: What must a region have in order to be declared a state according to international law?”

state according to international law? There are two schools of thought on the matter: the declaratory and the constitutive theories of statehood. The former, seemingly the most prominent, says that a region is a de jure state if it has a defined territory, a permanent population, a government, and the ability to enter into relations with other states. By this logic,

any one of the regions listed above would qualify as states under international law since many of them are based on ethnic ties to lands that date back centuries. However, in the eyes of the United Nations, the constitutive theory of statehood is the guiding philosophy. According to this theory, a state only exists if it is recognized by other states. The constitutive theory is generally useful in international bodies since it denies legal status to states created by force, such as ISIS or the Donetsk People's Republic in Ukraine, but it also prevents de jure status for certain countries who are not recognized by enough countries. Take Kosovo, for example, which declared independence from Serbia in 2008 due to ethnic differences. It is a fully functioning state according to the declaratory theory, meeting all four criteria and even being recognized by more than 100 U.N. member states, but is relegated to de facto status since it is not recognized by enough countries in the U.N.

It is not fair to demand that any region desiring independence should be free from its ruling country since this can be impractical or unethical, as some states are created

by force. But, after seeing a legal and fair independence referendum take place in Scotland, it is fair to suggest that legally recognized states should attempt to provide residents of these regions with a chance to choose their own paths through independence referendums. Does this mean full-fledged independence for all? No. A majority of Scots and Quebecois have accepted more autonomy from ruling bodies while countries such as South Sudan and East Timor have found amicable ways to split from their ruling countries and join the international community. The independence movements around the world, nationalistic in fervor or not, are not about independence, but instead about self-determination and choice regarding their futures.



artwork by Rachel Keane

And then there were Nunn

Eli Scott
Staff Writer

Michelle Nunn comes from a lineage of public service; her father was a notable Democratic Senator from Georgia, and she hopes that her background in empowering individuals and communities to enact change will inspire voters across the state. Nunn is well-educated, having earned a history degree at the University of Virginia and a Master in Public Administration at Harvard University. She is also heavily service-oriented, and she believes that her experience in nonprofit management will translate into successful leadership as a senator. The Democratic candidate worked with Hands on Atlanta until it merged with the Points of Light Foundation, another nonprofit organization, where she became the CEO. In 2013, the foundation was responsible for 260,000 projects and created \$635 million worth of service labor. Although she lacks formal political experience, Nunn partnered with Senators Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) in 2009 to create the Service America Act, a piece of legislation that provides competitive funding for incentivizing the efforts of volunteers.

Though Nunn's platform consists of a variety of issues, her two focal points are the economy and education. As for the former, Nunn bemoans the brinkmanship of the fiscal cliff and opposes sequestration as a matter of coping with debt ceilings. She views deficit reduction as one of her main goals, and she intends to continue with the efforts of outgoing Senator Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.) to craft a creative solution with the "Gang of Eight," a group of senators proposing drastic measures to avoid the fiscal cliff after the Simpson-Bowles Commission failed to reduce the \$17 trillion federal debt. In order to bolster economic growth, Nunn has extolled pro-growth policies centered on infrastructure development, education reform, simplified tax codes, and less government regulation in ways that occasionally resemble her Republican competitor. In fact, both candidates provide rhetoric for removing excessive and redundant bureaucracy in order to limit the federal deficit

and reform the tax code. However, David Perdue has been consistently more outspoken on both issues, insisting that tax increases are out of the question and that the Fair Tax is an appropriate model for tax reform. Nunn, while agreeing in principle, has yet to provide concise details about her plans for tax reform. Despite such general similarities, the commonalities end with Nunn's focus on education and her detailed knowledge of early childhood programs contrasts with Perdue's platitudes on decentralizing education and opting out of national standards.

Particularly, the emphasis on education has been focused on the expansion of early childhood education programs such as pre-kindergarten. Nunn claims, with support from research conducted by the National Conference of State Legislatures, that every \$1 invested in early childhood education could see returns for Georgia of \$8 or more. She seeks to include the 60,000 children in Georgia who are unable to participate in pre-kindergarten programs due to lack of funding so that the gains by 3- and 4-year-olds might be realized in the next generation. In regard to other education policies, Nunn is supportive of Common Core and maintains that the curriculum is a useful tool that will allow for a comparison of student performance across other states and countries. Such a generous view of Common Core contrasts with David Perdue's more reluctant support, wherein he expresses disdain for the rigidity of the standards and comparisons. Nunn stresses the link between investment in education and economic development, and she will likely further integrate her approach to education into her larger effort to create jobs and promote economic development in Georgia as the election nears.

Mid-September polls from Real Clear Politics show that on average, Perdue leads Nunn by 3.4 percentage points, but there are other complicating factors that may play a role in the upcoming election. A leaked Nunn campaign strategy memo discovered by National Review has stirred controversy and illuminated weaknesses in the Democratic candidate's run for Senate. Concerns have included expected challenges such as voters viewing Nunn as "too liberal" and simply "a rubber stamp for Democrats," but the memo also detailed a far more controversial issue which David Perdue has been trying to capitalize on. The claim is that Nunn's organization, Points of Light, funded Islamic Relief USA, a group whose global affiliate has been banned by Israel over its alleged ties to Hamas. Although evidence has been tenuous at best, scandal aside, history is not on Michelle Nunn's side. In past major party races where neither candidate had experience as an elected official, Republicans defeated Democrats in both Utah's 2010 elections and North Carolina's 2002 elections. Accordingly, Nunn has a tough path ahead of her, but if she can convincingly articulate the link between education and economic development, she may be able to sway moderate and right-of-center voters.

As a whole, Michelle Nunn's experience in nonprofit management and service will prove beneficial as she advocates for education reform and economic development. But in order to defeat an entrenched Republican stronghold in Georgia, she must, unfortunately, commence attacking the underlying flaws in plans David Perdue's plans. Incumbent Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) has criticized Nunn for a lack of firm stances on her platform, and Nunn will have to better articulate her policies if she hopes to claim the vacant Senate spot in Georgia.



MICHELLE NUNN
for **SENATE**

(and Perdue)

Jack Keller
Staff Writer

On Nov. 4, Georgia will have a new senator — Democrat Michelle Nunn or Republican David Perdue. Since neither has been in political office, many have broadcasted fears relating to the experience of the two candidates. However, Perdue surprised the GOP with his victory in the Republican primary against Rep. Jack Kingston. On the way, Perdue hurdled over veteran competition — Reps. Phil Gingrey, Paul Broun, Jack Kingston, and Karen Handel (Georgia’s former Secretary of State) — demonstrating Georgia’s support for the businessman’s Republican nomination. That said, let’s examine the candidate Sen. Johnny Isakson has endorsed in the upcoming election.

Born to two educators in Macon, David Perdue was raised in Warner Robbins. Perdue has family ties to the state, including his first cousin and former Georgia governor, Sonny Perdue (R-Ga.). Perdue attended Georgia Tech for his undergraduate degree in industrial engineering and his graduate degree in operations research.

Throughout the senatorial race, Perdue has emphasized his experience as a businessman, and for good reason. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported that Perdue is “known on Wall Street as a turnaround specialist who helps revive brands and reap rewards for investors.” In terms of international experience, Perdue served as the senior vice president of Asia operations for Sara Lee as well as president and CEO of the Reebok Brand. Perhaps his biggest claim to fame is his tenure as the CEO and chairman of Dollar General, where he oversaw a 144 percent expansion of the corporation nationwide.

Perdue’s two focal points during the Senate race have been balancing the budget and establishing term limits for politicians. Addressing the \$17 trillion national debt, Perdue does not want to raise taxes and is an advocate for the Fair Tax. Perdue noted the U.S. debt falls on each American family at a rate of \$148,000 per household, citing that federal spending surpasses annual GDP, which forces over one-third of our federal spending to be borrowed. The businessman believes that social reform — repealing Obamacare coupled with other social spending — as well as revitalizing U.S. manufacturing will get the country’s budget back on track.

Perdue admitted that failures in energy policies, education, and punitive taxes are crippling to the national debt, not to mention the lack of American manufacturing in comparison to international rivals such as China and Latin America. Nevertheless, Perdue emphasizes U.S. exports as part of his platform, stating, “the best opportunity for long-term economic growth is to boost our exports to emerging economies worldwide. In fact, I have started my own exporting business where we ship American-made products overseas. They have an increasing demand for American goods, both quality manufactured products as well as other needs such as agriculture products.”

Perdue has taken a hard stance on career politicians, and he blames them for the majority of the problems facing the country. Spotting his own business background, Perdue has mentioned that 10 senators in office have business backgrounds, while 36 senators have held office for over 30 years. Perdue contends that this has led to Congress’s 14 percent approval rate, which is Gallup’s lowest in 70 years. Yet, Americans reelect 92 percent of incumbents because D.C. lobbyists, PACs, and special interest groups help them raise vast amounts of money. To combat this problem, Perdue wants to impose term limits — three terms in the House and two terms in the Senate.

As the son of two educators, Perdue has openly spoken out against the country’s education system, specifically regarding the budget. “Today, we spent \$71 billion in our Department of Education in Washington. In 2009, we only spent \$32 billion,” he said. Consequently, Perdue supports the Common Core initiative, which sets high-quality academic standards in mathematics and English literacy across the country. Additionally, Perdue’s website insists, “true innovation starts at the local level, not in Washington. We should dismantle unnecessary federal bureaucracy,

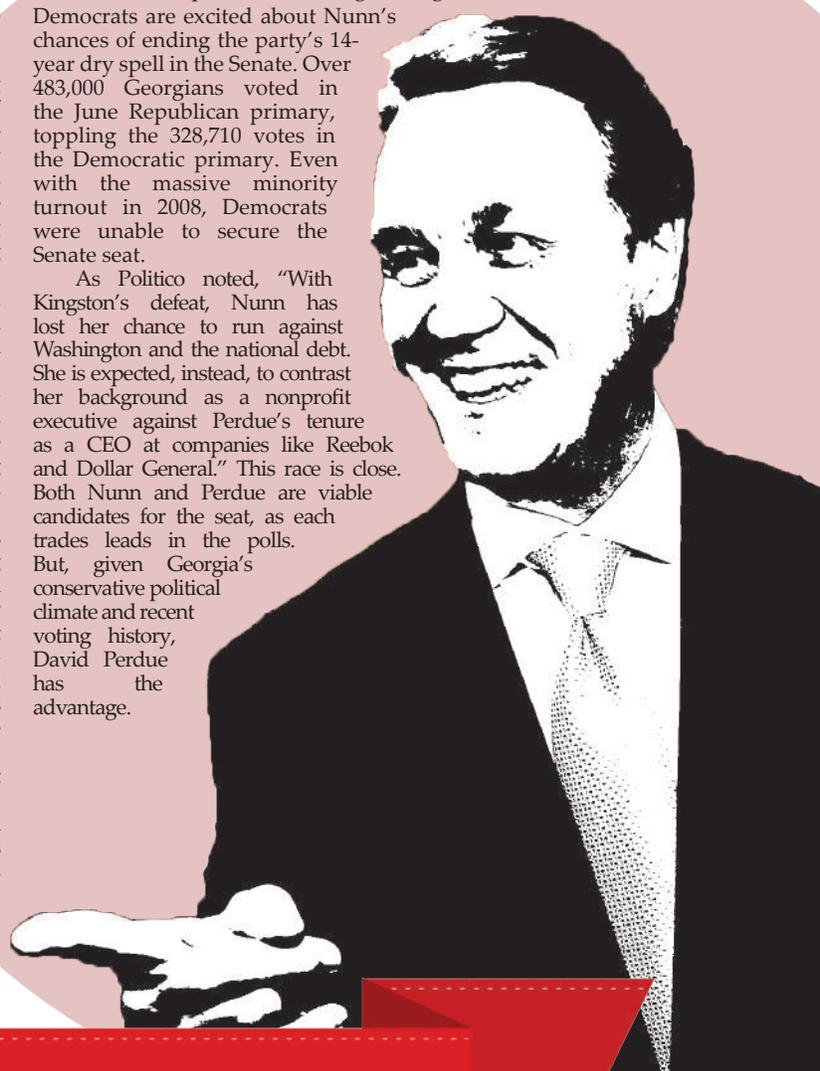
including the push for Common Core, and get that funding into the classrooms.” The Senate hopeful believes the solution is not throwing more money at schools, although Perdue does believe teachers deserve a competitive salary to attract the best and brightest.

In terms of energy, David Perdue questions our nation’s dependency on foreign oil. Perdue has used hostility toward domestic energy producers to express his disagreement with governmental limits on energy options. In the process, “they force us to rely on energy resources from countries that wish to do us harm. With the right leadership, we can finally have a domestic energy policy that is environmentally responsible in the long-term while meeting our current needs.” Given rising tensions in the Middle East, Georgians should expect to hear a stern stance on energy in the coming weeks.

Additionally, Perdue supports the Second Amendment’s right to bear arms. Perdue reasons on his website that “[The Founders] crafted a Constitution that has only been amended 27 times in over 225 years. Ten amendments were their own, designed to explicitly protect certain rights. The Second Amendment is clear. We have ample gun laws on the books now, and I believe we should focus on enforcing them.” The NRA backed up his stance and has endorsed Perdue’s campaign.

According to early-October polls, Perdue leads Democratic challenger Michelle Nunn 46 percent to 42.6 percent. Georgia’s voting history favors the moderate Republican. Although Georgia is a red state, Democrats are excited about Nunn’s chances of ending the party’s 14-year dry spell in the Senate. Over 483,000 Georgians voted in the June Republican primary, toppling the 328,710 votes in the Democratic primary. Even with the massive minority turnout in 2008, Democrats were unable to secure the Senate seat.

As Politico noted, “With Kingston’s defeat, Nunn has lost her chance to run against Washington and the national debt. She is expected, instead, to contrast her background as a nonprofit executive against Perdue’s tenure as a CEO at companies like Reebok and Dollar General.” This race is close. Both Nunn and Perdue are viable candidates for the seat, as each trades leads in the polls. But, given Georgia’s conservative political climate and recent voting history, David Perdue has the advantage.



DAVID PERDUE
for **SENATE**

Al-Qaeda's Blessing in Disguise

Bert Thompson
Staff Writer

For the first time since the Sept. 11 attacks, al-Qaeda is not the world's premier jihadist organization: they have been eclipsed by another extremist group, the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham. Global headlines decry the horrors of ISIS' beheadings and public executions while al-Qaeda sits on the sidelines, a shell of its former self. The public split in 2013 between ISIS – formerly known as “al-Qaeda in Iraq” – and al-Qaeda's Senior Leadership has provided AQSL with time to reinvent itself and rebuild itself as the once-dominant jihadist organization.

AQSL, which is primarily based in the Northern Waziristan region of Pakistan, has faced turmoil since the United States expelled it from its former sanctuary in Afghanistan in 2003. AQSL was faced with an important decision because of this severe structural change: Should it willingly affiliate itself with regional jihadist groups? Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda's founder and leader until his death in 2011, argued that affiliate organizations could benefit AQSL, and the core's centralized role would allow it to exert influence and provide advice to the affiliates. Bin Laden understood that international jihadist groups operate in a highly competitive environment in which they must compete for resources and recruits; regional franchises would help AQSL to expand its reach. In this vein, AQSL adopted a business franchise model for its organization. The “core al-Qaeda” would act as the parent company, allowing regional groups to adopt its

“brand name” and act as franchises of the organization. These franchises diversified al-Qaeda and helped the organization to survive assaults against AQSL along the Afghan-Pakistani border. AQSL affiliated with three major groups under bin Laden's leadership: al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula in 2003, al-Qaeda in Iraq in 2004, and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, centered in North Africa, in 2006.

Al-Qaeda ramped up its affiliation strategy following Ayman al-Zawahiri's assumption of power. The acceleration of this policy may represent Zawahiri's past experiences leading the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, which merged with al-Qaeda in June 2001. The merger of the EIJ and al-Qaeda benefited al-Qaeda, giving it increased reach and capabilities; further expansion through the affiliate strategy could allow the organization to replicate previous successes. Thus, AQSL announced mergers with several regional groups: al-Shabaab, the Somali terrorists who carried out the Kenyan Westgate Mall attack in September 2013; the al-Nusra Front, al-Qaeda's official affiliate in Syria; the Islamic Emirate of the Caucasus in 2011; and al-Qaeda in Kurdistan, which broke away from ISIS and swore allegiance to Zawahiri.

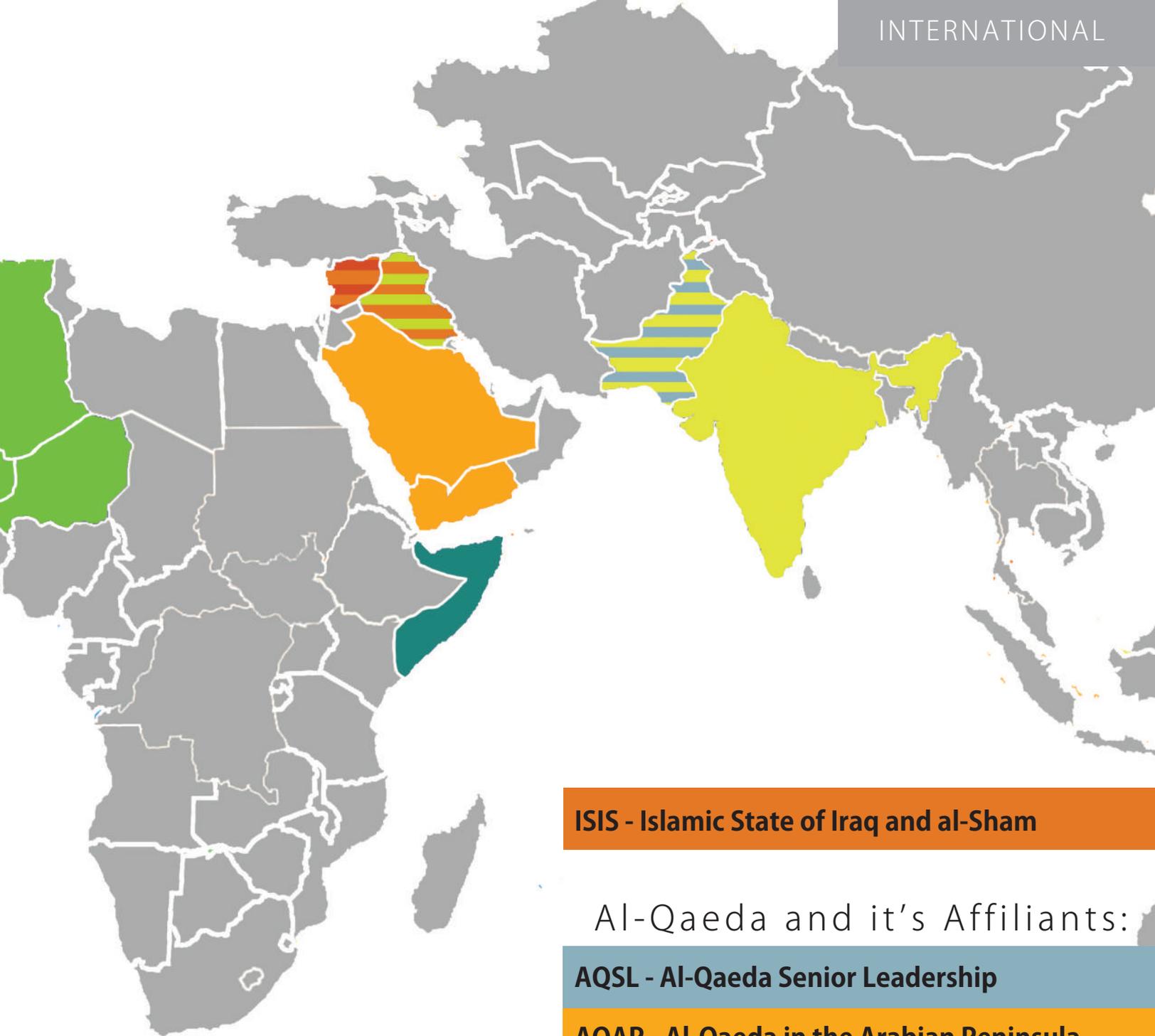
At first glance it appears that AQSL's affiliation strategy backfired with ISIS; by splitting with ISIS, Zawahiri decreased the group's capabilities, not increased them. ISIS pulled the spotlight away from al-Qaeda and drained it of resources. Some members of al-Qaeda affiliates in the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa left their franchises to fight for ISIS. This is due

in part to the each organization's tactics. Whereas al-Qaeda demonstrates a fear of failure and plans individual attacks over the long term, ISIS relies on speed and mass executions to scare populations before an attack. Some U.S. intelligence officials fear that ISIS' successes may exacerbate the situation. As they gain control of new territory and solidify their hold on their region, they attract more fighters and resources, similar to al-Qaeda following the 9/11 attacks.

But ISIS' rise presents an opportunity for al-Qaeda's Senior Leadership to rebuild. As the world focuses its efforts on stemming the advances of ISIS and knocking it back, al-Qaeda is taking advantage of being out of the spotlight. This is not to say that al-Qaeda does not currently pose a threat – they certainly do – but they are not the world's top priority at the moment. They can use this period to replenish their drained resources and infrastructure.

In the wake of ISIS' rise, al-Qaeda's Senior Leadership has expanded its business and “brand name” to the Indian subcontinent through a new franchise. In early September Zawahiri announced the formation of al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent, which combines elements of the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban and many other groups in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. According to a video translated by the SITE Intelligence Group, Zawahiri claims that this new group is “the fruit of a blessed effort for more than two years.” While this may





ISIS - Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham

Al-Qaeda and it's Affiliants:

AQSL - Al-Qaeda Senior Leadership

AQAP - Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

AQIM - Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

AQIS - Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent

Al-Shabaab

al-Nusra Front

al-Qaeda in Kurdistan

be the case, AQSL picked an opportune moment to appeal to Indian extremists, many of whom are also being courted by ISIS.

If al-Qaeda uses this opportunity to recruit new members, replenish its coffers, and reestablish its role in the hierarchy of Islamic extremists, it may come back more capable than before. It has not receded into the pages of history, as much as the international community may have hoped. Instead, the emergence of ISIS may bring al-Qaeda the break it has needed since 2003 and a chance to reinvent itself.

Capitalism and the Limits of Love

Carson Aft & Melani Kent
Managing Editor and Staff Writer

The scene is rural Kenya, in the rolling hills dotted with baobab trees, lush with vegetation and sprinkled with straw-thatched huts. In the distance are the shining metal rooftops of the border town where business intersects with the marginalized poor. Struggling areas of the world such as this one have been left behind by globalization and pilfered by agents of capitalism. It is this setting that attracts the charitable aid of the West for its ragged children, uneducated mothers, and AIDS-infected fathers. Helpless without international aid, these victims of disease, famine, and conflict need the benevolent and neutral aid of the messianic West. Left in the shadow of commerce and growth, sorrow blooms.

Modern corporations are portrayed as a blight. Infinitely hungry and insatiably expanding, they seem to seek profits baptized in exploitation, groping blindly from country to country. Hefty dividends cannot differentiate between the efforts of unions and children. The toils of freemen are the same as the indentured. The citizens of the world only see the harsh juxtaposition of the Congo's mighty green forests being carved for the mighty green dollar, and it does not sit well with them.

Compared to dollar-hungry corporations, nonprofits lie at the opposite end of the spectrum. Nonprofits, charities, and foreign aid organizations exist for the generalized purpose of making things better, whether that means entertaining the masses, feeding the poor, or saving lives abroad. Relinquishing greed, they argue, allows for focus on the important things, thereby maximizing the good that can be done. Rather than worrying about how large the profit margin is, these groups can worry about how many people they are helping. There are no shareholders for charities. But, despite their altruistic intentions, do charities truly provide all the help they intend?

To call nonprofits angelic is, many times, an overstatement. Real halos are fragile, and frequently these companies can betray the good to which they have sworn. The strong rhetoric begins to break down when the actual results of all of this altruism are examined. There is a massive difference between the great intentions and perceived great outcomes

of charities and foreign aid.

Both disaster relief and many types of developmental charity have side effects that can mean life or death for both individuals and economies. On the extreme negative end, humanitarian aid can prolong violent conflicts by providing care and resources for the warring parties. As an example, both developmental and emergency aid have fed armies and supported warlords in Ethiopia and Cambodia. The prospect of receiving aid has in some cases caused the deliberate creation of humanitarian disasters. In Sierra Leone, rebels and government soldiers intentionally created "cut-hands gangs" to attract foreign attention through the press coverage of amputees. In Somalia, food aid was attracted through political instigation of localized famines.

Aid can also flood markets by "dumping" goods, which can undercut local production. In areas where corn is produced, for instance, large donations of the grain cause prices to drop locally; this in turn destroys the ability of local growers to compete. More indirectly, outside provision of goods and services can prevent those capacities from ever being developed on the ground. For example, physicians who fly in to provide medical care and bring supplies with them make local production of those goods and services unnecessary in the short term. Native professionals aspiring to work in medicine or community building leave for more fruitful locations, preventing sustainable indigenous services from developing. Even outside of an assisted region's market, large inflows of donated goods can artificially cause prices (and exchange rates) to increase across the economy in what is called the "natural resource curse" or "Dutch disease." Other sectors of the economy lose productivity as well. In the spirit of giving, charity too often takes.

Aid may be given in monetary form to national governments as well. These large donations, in many cases, do not end up aiding the intended recipients, however, because of corrupt governmental practices. Officials court aid organizations for financial assistance and, many times, put the fruits of this labor into their own pockets. Even into the 21st century, governments in developing countries are overwhelmingly funded by foreign aid (up to 70 percent for



“ The demonized straw man that is the modern corporation deserves redemption.

some including Rwanda, Mali, and Sierra Leone). Many of these countries are ruled by despotic and inept dictators who, by using foreign money for their own ends, further drag down the nations they lead.

Consequently, the practice of placing foreign aid directly into the coffers of corrupt governments undermines good governance. Leaders receive their pay not from the taxes of citizens to whom they are accountable, but from donations. As a result, politicians are not accountable to their citizens because their governmental positions and own financial security are not contingent on the satisfaction of their constituents. Aid destroys the proper functioning of a democratic system much like oil funds in petroleum-rich countries support the autocrats in power.

The demonized straw man that is the modern corporation deserves redemption. In contrast to the caricature so often thrust upon businesses, it is impossible to generalize the motives of all firms around the world. Even if every single company only sought profits, that quality would still fall short of sin. Although it is easy to characterize them as such, earnings and the corporations who seek them are not evil, even though it seems they are playing the role of villain in a Disney movie. The archetypal conglomerate is always polluting the environment, bullying children, or tearing down the homes of adorable old men. Interestingly, fiction is fake.

Detractors point to the use of children as labor abroad. On the surface, this issue is black and white; obviously it is terrible that children would be working rather than be in school. Miniature hands threading shirts break even the coldest of hearts. However, those hurt the most by outlawing child labor are children.

On an anecdotal level, there are many cases where child labor was detrimental, but these instances do not speak to the whole issue. If the United States allowed child labor, children would most likely forsake their education for low-paying jobs. That would be terrible. The difference is that abroad, not everyone is afforded the opportunity to stay in school. Education in the United States is free and effective, and to pretend that experience is the same abroad is ignorant. Given the standard of

living in the United States, no child in school will go hungry. In actuality, a poor child might find their only meal of the day in the school cafeteria. For orphans in other countries, the contrast is greater: Either they can work to buy food or they go hungry. These are the sad questions that only they can decide.

Capitalism also provides opportunities that charity cannot. Malaria, the great scourge of the tropics, is now curable. Thanks to innovation and invention, the worldwide mortality rate for that pestilence has fallen 42 percent since 2000, according to the World Health Organization. The infrequently lauded hero of this trend is business. While people like Bill Gates (who was a wealthy corporatist before he was a philanthropist) have wielded the mighty dollar to provide preventative care for those susceptible to the disease, it cannot be ignored that the cocktail of medicines and nets used for treatment were developed largely by businesses. These treatments are expensive, especially for the poor who need it most, but this is not without reason. The price to produce one malaria pill may be cents, but the cost to produce the first malaria pill was millions. In addition to this huge initial cost, breaking into a market thousands of miles away is difficult, and it is wrong to ignore all of the efforts involved. While making a profit on medication is morally questionable, without corporations, there would be no malaria medicine.

Throwing hundreds of fish at a man does not make him a fisherman, but it does hurt everyone selling fish. To call a job a social program may seem callous, but that does not make it any less accurate. To profit off pills may raise an eyebrow, but it does not bury a child. It is only through a combination of charity and capitalism that these deep problems can be solved.

Poverty and hunger are heart breaking, and a response is obligatory. But grief and overwhelming concern are better channeled into thought, not just dollars. Harvard law professor David Kennedy writes, “Humanitarianism tempts us to hubris, to an idolatry about our intentions and routines, to the conviction that we know more than we do about what justice can be.” The biggest barrier to effective aid is our own ignorance. As Rwandan President Paul Kagame puts it, Westerners should “have a heart for the poor. But they also need to have a mind for the poor.” Through the combined efforts of commerce and compassion, light can shine even in the Heart of Darkness.



The Silk Crossroads

Succession in Central Asia

Megan White
Staff Writer

All roads lead to Samarkand — or at least they used to. Once a bustling Silk Road metropolis, the UNESCO World Heritage Site was recognized as a center of Eurasian culture and scholarship. Now, the dusty city in southern Uzbekistan finds itself at the center of something else: one of the most politically and economically isolated regions of the world.

Central Asia, land of the “–stans,” has more or less been on the international system’s backburner since the Age of Exploration. Landlocked and impoverished, the five states of Central Asia emerged from the rubble of the Soviet Union with hardly a peep. Though these five countries — Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan — have received substantial development assistance from the United States and others since 1991, they have rarely entered into high-level foreign policy discussions and have, for the most part, been ignored. As Herman Cain famously pointed out in 2011 during his presidential campaign, most people cannot name the president of “Ubeki-beki-beki-beki-stan.”

Within the next two decades, all that could change. Nestled amongst rising international powers Russia, China, and India and hotbeds of diplomatic activity in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran, Central Asia is waiting in the wings for its moment, and it could take the global stage at any time. With the exception of the Kyrgyz Republic and Turkmenistan, the countries in Central Asia have not seen a peaceful transition of power in their short time as countries. Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan have remained virtually unchanged since even before the fall of the Soviet Union, answering to the same authoritarian leaders. However, despite science’s best efforts, no one lives forever, and these old party chairs are beginning to show their age. Still, none has indicated any plans to step down in the near future, and all have continued to run in superficial elections on the “President for Life” platform. With no known succession plans in place, uncertainty is in the air.

Like its weather patterns, Central Asia’s two examples of post-Cold War succession outcomes have tended toward the extremes: democracy and totalitarianism, turbulence and calm, spontaneity and design. Other than their successful power transitions, the Kyrgyz Republic and Turkmenistan do not have much in common. The former endured two revolutions before building a shaky democracy, while the latter seamlessly slid from one totalitarian cult of personality to the next. Still, these two countries are alone among their peers in terms of peaceful power transitions. While the other three countries of Central Asia share common geography, Soviet history, and economic isolation, they face a diverse array of succession outcomes,

some of which could radically reshape the Asian geopolitical landscape in the 21st century.

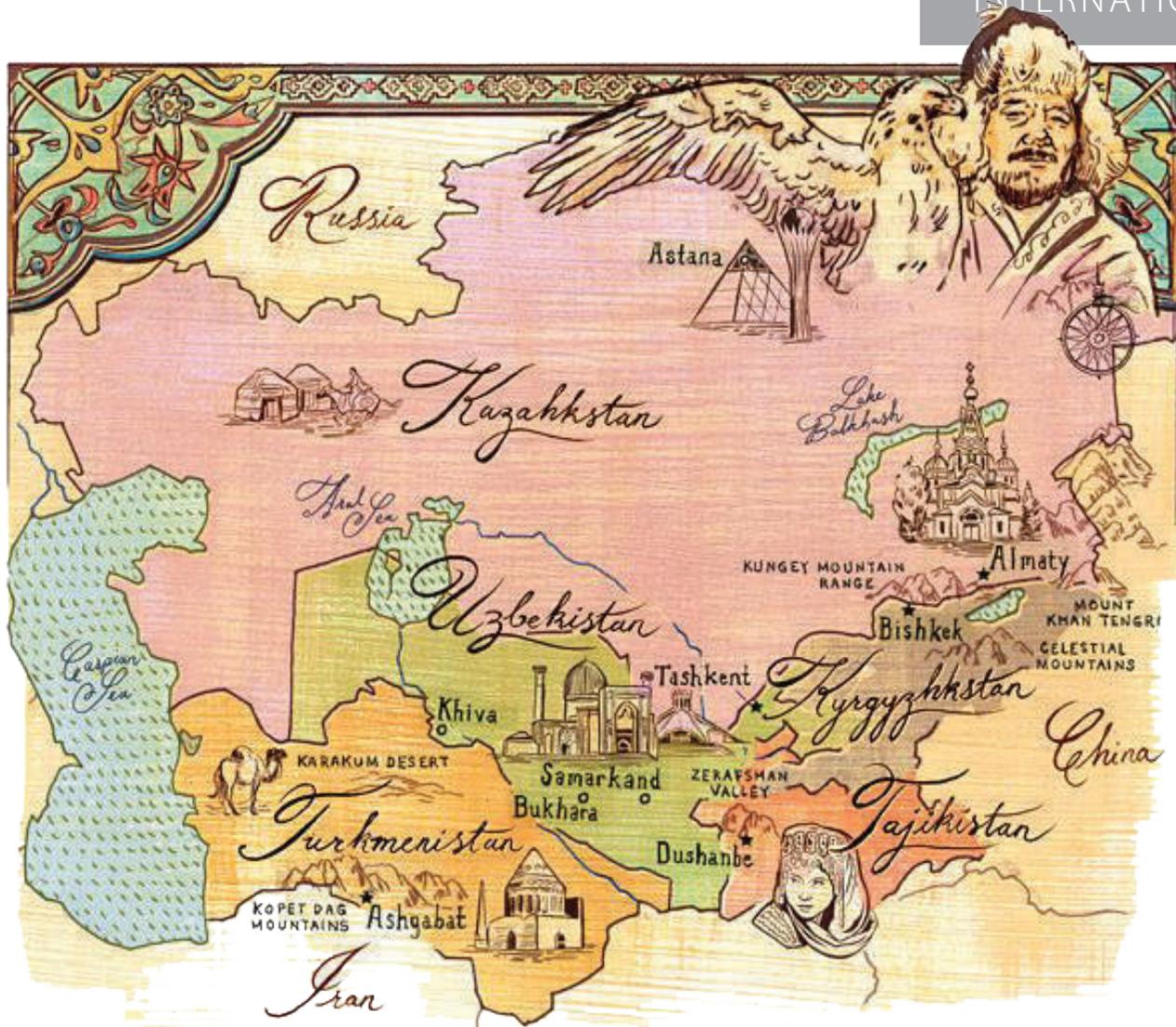
Kazakhstan

In 1989, two years before Kazakhstan declared independence from the Soviet Union, Nursultan Nazarbayev was appointed head of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan. He has been in power ever since, winning each of Kazakhstan’s four presidential elections in a landslide. Despite being elected “leader of the nation for life” in 2010, Nazarbayev is, at 74 years old, no spring chicken. A recent hospitalization raised questions about his health, and what Kazakhstan might look like without him.

Still, Nazarbayev has avoided announcing a succession plan, though speculation has divided possible candidates into two distinct groups. On one side is the current political and business establishment, which includes Timur Kulibayev, the country’s third-richest man and the president’s son-in-law; Imangali Tasmagambetov, the current mayor of Astana, Kazakhstan’s capital, and former prime minister; and Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the chairman of the Senate. On the other side are those who have run afoul of the president, including Akezhan Kazhegeldin, an exiled former finance minister; Aron Atabek, a dissident poet who sentenced to 18 years in prison in 2010; and Vladimir Kozlov, an opposition leader who was imprisoned for inciting a large-scale protest in western Kazakhstan. Though Kazakhstan has arguably been the most politically and economically stable of the Central Asian states, beneath Nazarbayev is a system of weak institutions who will be tested when the “leader of the nation for life” is no longer in charge.

Tajikistan

The Republic of Tajikistan had a more violent start. Almost immediately after declaring independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, the country was plunged into a five-year civil war that claimed 20,000 lives and devastated the economy. From the turmoil emerged Imomali Rahmon, a member of the Communist elite who quickly seized the reins of power and hasn’t let go since. Though Rahmon’s government signed a peace accord with the main rebel group, the United Tajik Opposition, in 1997, the country continues to be dominated by warlord politics. Frequent clashes with Islamist rebels and drug lords along the Afghan border helped Rahmon further solidify his authority, which he has used to imprison and exile opponents. At 62, Rahmon is relatively young, and the succession question is further on the horizon. Like Nazarbayev, Rahmon will leave behind a system of weak, untested institutions. But unlike Nazarbayev,



Rahmon will not have a large political elite from which to draw his successor; warlord politics have left Tajikistan with a narrow and fragmented ruling class. As the poorest country in Central Asia, with a GDP per capita on par with that of sub-Saharan Africa, Tajikistan cannot afford a succession crisis.

Uzbekistan

The oldest of Central Asia's autocrats is Islam Karimov. The 76-year-old "president for life" rose to power in the 1980s, attaining the post of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union's First Secretary of Uzbekistan in 1989. After becoming president of a newly independent Uzbekistan in 1991, Karimov immediately banned opposition parties and expanded the powers of his office. His regime has repeatedly been accused of human rights abuses, including torture, in its response to ethnic unrest in the Fergana Valley and in its campaign against the extremist Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.

Despite his firm grip on power, Islam Karimov will not live forever, a reality that was made apparent after he was rumored to have suffered a heart attack in 2013. Since then, the succession question has loomed over Uzbek politics, and four names have emerged as potential replacements: Rustam Inoyatov, the National Security Service Chief; Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the current prime minister; Rustam Azimov, the deputy prime minister and finance minister; and the international favorite, Gulnara Karimova, the president's daughter. Karimova, more affectionately known as Googoosha, is a pop idol turned fashion mogul turned U.N. ambassador. She is also currently under house arrest and appears, for the moment, to have fallen from favor.

Due to its history as a police state, its limited political elite, and its struggle against religious extremism, Uzbekistan perhaps faces the greatest uncertainty. Having announced plans to run for reelection in 2015, Karimov either does not see the need for a succession plan or is attempting to quell speculation.

Central Asia is a ticking time bomb. As the region's strongmen weaken with age, their plans for succession, or lack thereof, will have lasting geopolitical implications. Vladimir Putin's recent power grabs in Ukraine and Georgia have turned a few heads toward Central Asia, which is rumored to be Russia's next arena of influence. The United States has dedicated considerable economic growth assistance and has promised to strengthen its relationships in the region after withdrawing troops from Afghanistan. China, too, has thrown its hat in the ring, seeking to expand its energy trade with the region. A wave of instability resulting from succession crises in the region could pour rocket fuel on the already burgeoning "Great Game: Round Two," nearly two centuries after Russia and Britain competed to colonize Asia in Round One, and could open a new frontier for extremist groups in Afghanistan and northern Pakistan. In addition to the security threat, people already living on \$1.75 a day in one of the poorest regions of the world could suffer further economic setbacks. As this Central Asia approaches an imminent transition, this strategic, oft-forgotten region deserves a second glance. Age may only be a number, but what a difference a few years can make.



A Responsibility to *Respond*

Shaun Kleber
Staff Writer

Just before dawn on Dec. 30, 2006, Saddam Hussein hung from a rope in a military base in Kazimain, Iraq. People around Iraq and the world celebrated the death of a man, but few looked beyond the obvious to what was really captured on the grainy video of the event: the execution of a government.

The United States had accomplished one of its goals in Iraq, but next came the harder task of rebuilding a country. The current state of Iraq speaks volumes about just how difficult it has been for the country to reestablish itself. As the United States stands at the precipice of another major military initiative in Iraq and the Middle East, there is plenty of finger-pointing to go around to explain how they got there. With the endearing short-sightedness that only Americans can seem to pull off though, the last people they want to blame for the recent rise of ISIS are themselves.

George W. Bush was the president who cried wolf. By 2007, American citizens and Washington elites alike were war-weary, and pressure to bring American troops home from Iraq was mounting. By this point, the CIA had already acknowledged that the intelligence community's estimate on weapons of mass destruction in Iraq was far off the mark — an unprecedented move from an agency and community that surely misses the mark often. The original justification for the Iraq War had fallen flat, and Americans saw that as reason to

withdraw troops. It was at this point that Bush issued a prophetic warning on July 12, 2007: "I know some in Washington would like us to start leaving Iraq now. To begin withdrawing before our commanders tell us we are ready would be dangerous for Iraq, for the region, and for the United States. It would mean surrendering the future of Iraq to al-Qaeda. It would mean that we'd be risking mass killings on a horrific scale. It would mean we'd allow the terrorists to establish a safe haven in Iraq to replace the one they lost in Afghanistan. It would mean increasing the probability that American troops would have to return at some later date to confront an enemy that is even more dangerous."

Fast-forward seven years to July 12, 2014. ISIS had just taken control of large swaths of land in northern and western Iraq. The country's political parties were still struggling to form a government after elections three months earlier. A terrorist group that had been a mere blip on the radar screens of intelligence agencies in 2007 as "al-Qaeda in Iraq" had become a household name and existential threat to Iraqi security.

Seven years to the day after Bush made his prediction about the future of Iraq, CNN posted a headline questioning, "Could ISIS make a 'dirty bomb'?" Bush may have been wrong about the presence of WMDs in 2003, but it seems he was right in predicting the future of Iraq if American troops withdrew too soon. Now the very threat he foretold is potentially capable of producing the very weapons we originally feared. Bush had been wrong about Iraq in such a major way that Americans were no longer willing to listen to his cries of "wolf" just as the wolf was showing up on the scene.

As the United States and the rest of the world consider how exactly to deal with what Bush predicted in 2007 as the "enemy that is even more dangerous" than what we saw in the early 2000s, we are faced with two questions: Do we get involved? And if so, why? Days after the United States began its first airstrikes in Iraq

and Syria to “degrade and ultimately destroy” ISIS, a Gallup poll found that 60 percent of Americans supported the military action — down from the 76 percent who supported the invasion of Iraq in 2003. It is clear that Americans are still ambivalent on whether or not to get involved, but given that the United States is in fact proceeding with involvement, the question then becomes: why?

Some argue the United States should help in the name of human rights to protect the Yazidis and others facing extreme persecution at the hands of these terrorists. Others argue the United States should act to protect their national security interests by eliminating the threat before ISIS militants turn their sights on America. Still others claim that the United States, as the most powerful nation in the world, must act to protect those with fewer resources than themselves — the cliché “with great power comes great responsibility” argument.

But the question of whether to get involved in the conflict in Iraq is about more than altruism over human rights concerns or a need to protect national interests — it is about responsibility. The United States withdrew from Iraq during a transitional period — a period they started and did not finish. U.S. troops found them with a dysfunctional government and military and left them with a different, but equally dysfunctional, government and military. The man the United States supported to replace Saddam Hussein, Nuri al-Maliki, formed an equally oppressive and sectarian government. The military was operationally and organizationally inept, trained just well enough to manage the Iraqi population during relative peacetime, but woefully inadequate for handling the advances of ISIS.

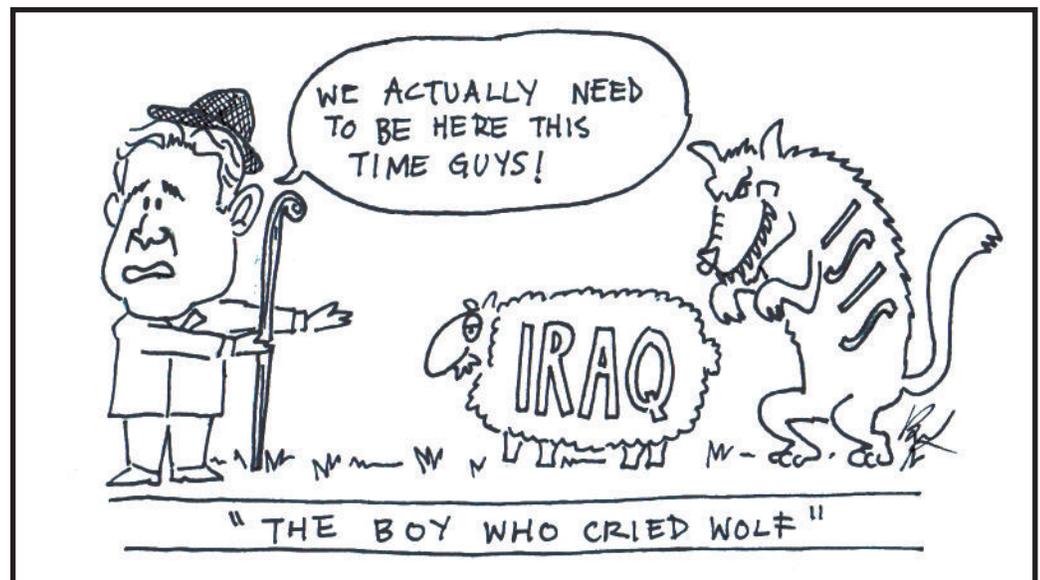
It is clear now that Iraq never had WMDs and that the United States had no justification for invading. But they did. They invaded a country that posed no immediate or

legitimate threat to them, removed their government, and withdrew before ensuring that the new government was stable. For the United States, that was no problem. America can always come back to its stable democracy, cherished freedoms, vibrant economy, and dominant military protection. Iraq did not have those crutches. They had very little to lean on, and much of what they did have depended on the United States during their transitional period. It is no wonder that when U.S. troops withdrew, their country collapsed into chaos.

The United States has a bad habit of tearing down governments and building up new ones as they see fit — the Philippines and Nicaragua also come to mind — and as long as they continue to do that, they need to be prepared to clean up the messes they play a role in creating. As Obama noted in his address to the United Nations and the world on Sept. 24 about this very issue, “Resolutions must be followed by tangible commitments, so we’re accountable when we fall short.”

ISIS capitalized on the political turmoil that came as a result of U.S. withdrawal from Iraq, and now the United States is sending troops and aid there again as if it were a favor. The debate over whether to take action against ISIS should not hinge on whether ISIS poses a direct threat to the United States, whether America wants to act as the global police force, or whether American citizens can look past their anger over the fact that their country should have never invaded Iraq in the first place. This debate comes down to whether the American people are willing to take responsibility for a conflict they are largely responsible for and whether they can bring themselves to finish a job that they regret starting in the first place.

“ The United States has a bad habit of tearing down governments and building up new ones as they see fit...



artwork by Bruce Li



A Tale of One Family: How the Assad Family Has Maintained Power in Syria

Shuchi Goyal

Assistant Senior Editor

Like a spiral of dominos succumbing to gravity, political regimes toppled one after the other in the Middle East in 2011 following the eruption of the Arab Spring. As civilian-led coups ousted governments first in Tunisia, then in Egypt, and then in Libya, the international community waited with bated breath to see which political leader would face his downfall next. For many people, the bet was on Bashar al-Assad, who was then in his 11th year of power as president of the Syrian Arab Republic and facing mass demonstrations of dissent in his country.

Three years later, however, Assad's administration, though somewhat shaken, remains intact in Syria. During this time, Western news media have reported numerous human rights violations carried out on Assad's orders, focusing in particular on the allegedly brutal methods used to suppress protesters. Yet, in spite of these accusations, Assad has outlasted many of his Middle Eastern counterparts, a feat that no one, least of all the population in the Arab Peninsula, had anticipated when he came to power in 2000. Libya's Muammar Gaddafi and Egypt's Hosni Mubarak had maintained control of power in their countries for 42 years and 30 years respectively before their deposals in 2011. Both governments crumbled quickly, demonstrating the vulnerability of even long-established regimes. It seems counterintuitive, therefore, that Assad is the one still standing.

Ascent to Power

Although politics run in his blood, Bashar al-Assad never expected to become the president — that title was supposed to go to his older brother, Bassel. Bashar's father, Hafez al-Assad, had helped establish the one-party system in Syria during the 1960s as a novice politician. In 1971, following a bloodless coup, he became president and the new head of the leftist Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party. Hafez had come from a poor village and was raised in an Alawite family, making him a religious minority in Sunni-dominated Syria. Therefore, as a politician, he was initially insistent that political parties be open for membership to everyone, rather than just the socially elite or privileged. Once he became president, however, Hafez took control of many powers previously distributed across the state and effectively instituted a new elitist system. Nepotism was an omnipresent force in Hafez's administration and by the 1980s, the president was grooming Bassel, his oldest son, as his successor.

When Bassel was killed in an auto accident in 1994, however, Bashar was recalled from his ophthalmology studies in London as substitute. He immediately began training in political and military affairs, but the Syrian people viewed Bashar as a lanky, bookish man with weak leadership skills. When Hafez passed away in 2000 and Bashar took his father's place, he was expected to lack both the charisma and the political cunning of his father and older brother.

On the contrary, Bashar al-Assad has so far continued his father's legacy quite well. He is an outspoken world leader just as his father was, and he has continued Hafez al-Assad's practice of employing family members in high-ranking positions. Bashar's younger brother, Maher, is in charge of the Syrian secret police and protecting the capital city, Damascus. Maher is believed to be the second most powerful man in Syria, and holds even more notoriety than his brother for using cruel methods to subdue demonstrators. Bashar's mother and sister allegedly have significant influence on how the president runs the state, and his brother-in-law was in charge of Syria's armed forces until his assassination in 2012.

Hostile Relations

Nevertheless, the global political climate since Bashar became president and the challenges he faces in his country differ significantly from those of his father's time. During the late 20th century Syria was still reestablishing itself post-World War II, and Hafez intended to unify the country and also build its economy, both with marginal success. Despite tension resulting from Syria's official opposition to the existence of the Israeli state, Syria and the United States maintained a cordial, if somewhat cool, relationship during this time.

When Bashar came to power in 2000, the United States, like many other countries, believed that he would be easily swayed and hoped to build a political alliance with him in order to promote their goals in the Middle East. This notion was corrected very quickly during the War on Terror, when Syria did not support the United States as expected during the invasion of Iraq. Instead, the Syrian military allegedly trained jihadist soldiers during this time for unknown reasons; these soldiers then went to Iraq and became guerrilla fighters.

The relationship between Syria and the United States has meanwhile evolved into one full of bitterness and threats of hostility. President Barack Obama has accused Assad of using chemical weapons against civilians engaged in peaceful protests, something Assad has vehemently denied. In an interview with 60 Minutes last year, Assad claimed that the riots of the Arab Spring had been "imported" from foreign nations including the United States. This, according to him, justified the brute force used to put down the revolution since the protestors were no longer civilians, but terrorists.

Additionally, both countries blame the other at least in part for the formation of ISIS, the new terrorist group in the Middle East that is an enemy of Syria and the United States. Syria states

that the United States' involvement in Iraq without paying heed to consequences resulted in factions forming within a weakened Al-Qaeda, which in turn led to the birth of ISIS. The United States believes that Syria secretly provided financial support and training to extremist members in the Muslim Brotherhood in the past, and that those members formed the basis of ISIS.

A Dictatorship by Any Other Name

As indicated by the protests during the Arab Spring and continued public outcry, there has been backlash in Syria to Bashar al-Assad's regime. Yet the overall opinion of Assad among Syrian citizens is difficult to assess. When Hafez al-Assad became president in 1970, he used propaganda to create a "cult of personality" within the country and create an image of his family to appeal to the populace. His son has largely continued this effort, and he has been accused of censorship of local television and newspapers.

While public protests may indicate cracks appearing in this carefully constructed image of the Assad family, it is unclear exactly how large these cracks are. In response to international pressure, in June Syria held its first multi-candidate election since the 1960s. Bashar al-Assad was re-elected for a third seven-year term with 88.7 percent of the popular vote, but various foreign political unions questioned these results and the election's veracity. The country officially known as the Syrian Arab Republic sounds suspiciously less like a republic and more like a dictatorship.

What the Future Holds

During the 2008 presidential election in the United States, one of Obama's primary campaign platforms was his promise to withdraw all troops from the Middle East. That promise, however, was made before anyone anticipated ISIS. In the months following the Arab Spring protests, Americans shifted uncomfortably in their seats as they heard news about the alleged human rights abuses taking place in Syria, but they were also exhausted by war. Despite threats from both the United States and the United Nations to forcibly remove Assad from his post, no one actually followed up. The opportunity has now passed, and the United States and Syria face a common enemy, one that is a direct threat to American homeland security.

But how many enemies can the United States fight at once?

Support for airstrikes has increased rapidly among Americans as the danger of ISIS becomes clearer by day. Currently, the Obama administration has made it clear that it will not coordinate with Syria to destroy ISIS but will start conducting airstrikes nevertheless. While ousting Assad from presidency remains a long-term goal, the present aim is to achieve some political stability in the region.

Some people still hope that the United Nations can find a way to combine forces with Assad. Most analysts argue, however, that political stability will never come as long as Assad remains in power. At the same time, the passage of time will make defeating ISIS all the more difficult, and the support of as many countries as possible, including Syria, may be required. The United States' first priority therefore should be the removal of Assad from power. Once a temporary government is established in Syria, the country can join the coalition of nations fighting ISIS, thus giving direct access to ISIS' primary breeding grounds. This is obviously a huge commitment though, and decisions must be made quickly because ISIS is such an urgent issue.

In any case, it is important to understand the fortitude of Bashar al-Assad's government to explain why it cannot simply be ignored in the fight against ISIS. As of now, Assad shows no signs that he will surrender power, and it is unlikely that he will be deposed from his presidency without an external force. That force, however, must come from a large body such as the United Nations so that the task of setting up a new government does not fall solely on the shoulders of one country.

DEMYSTIFYING DISEASE

THE ETIOLOGY OF AN EPIDEMIC

Aashka Dave & Hammad Khalid

Senior Editor and Staff Writer

“A masked ball was in progress. Suddenly the gayest of the harlequins collapsed, cold in the limbs, and, underneath his mask, ‘violet-blue’ in the face. Laughter died out, dancing ceased. Soon the public halls were filled with dead bodies sewed in sacks for want of coffins” –Heinrich Heine, Paris, 1832

In an ideal world, epidemics would never happen. Barring that impossibility, epidemics would be resolvable, and sources would be identified and contained, as was the case in London 160 years ago.

Great Britain in the 1850s was a conflict-heavy nation. Indian citizens had started revolting against British colonial rule, which would eventually lead to the dissolution of the Mughal Empire. The Crimean War was about to begin. In the United States, Bleeding Kansas had just begun, and Abraham Lincoln was rapidly rising from small-town lawyer to prominent politician.

On the home front, Britain was struggling with a new scourge: cholera. Dr. John Snow, an obstetrician with an investigative bent, had long believed that contaminated water was the source of cholera outbreaks. Politicians and peers were less than receptive to these claims, despite the fact that cholera spread worldwide in the 1800s, causing a pandemic of the worst sort. Snow consequently sought a way to prove his detractors wrong, and became the father of epidemiology, or the study of diseases, in the process.

Cholera first reared its ugly head in Britain around 1831, when Snow was fresh out of medical school. Between 1831 and the 1854 outbreak in London, tens of thousands of people died. Most doctors at the time believed that cholera was caused by breathing a “miasma in the atmosphere,” or inhalation of noxious, disease-carrying air. As such, cholera would have been impossible to

contain, much less eradicate. While it is true that some diseases are airborne, it is decidedly not the case for diseases such as cholera and Ebola.

Snow began to investigate the differences between those people afflicted with the disease and those without it. He contrasted the habits of the afflicted and the healthy, and cross-referenced those habits with his own hypothesis about water contamination. Eventually, having established that diseased individuals obtained water from a pump on Broad Street, and that individuals without the disease obtained water from a pump in Soho, Snow was able to take his research to town officials. He convinced them to take the handle off the pump on Broad Street (believed to have been contaminated when a mother washed her baby’s diaper in a town well). Since no one could use the contaminated pump, new cases of cholera abated. Snow had set his reputation in stone.

The technologies and research methods in the employ of modern epidemiologists far eclipse those available to Snow. However, both Snow and epidemiologists of the 21st century are concerned with the etiology, or origins, of any given disease. Diseases are classified based upon their prevalence in any given community. A disease is therefore endemic to a region when it exists permanently in a region or population. It only reaches the level of an epidemic when the number of actual instances of a disease far outpace the expected occurrence of that disease. The pandemic level is reached when a

disease is spread on a global scale. The Black Death, which killed a quarter of Europe’s population during the 1300s, is likely the most famous pandemic to date. The 2003 outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome is also considered a pandemic, as it spread from Hong Kong to several other countries courtesy of international travel.

Today, the world stands in awe of a different disease: Ebola. Unlike SARS, Ebola is not an airborne disease. Rather, Ebola is spread through physical contact with body fluids including, but not limited to, saliva, sweat, and tears. If you have a cut on your hand, and shake hands with a sweaty Ebola victim, it is entirely possible to become infected. As such, it is easy for Ebola to spread, particularly in those regions with poorer sanitation practices.

Yet, that a February outbreak in the small West African nation of Guinea could spread so far so quickly has taken the world by surprise. By all accounts, this is the deadliest Ebola epidemic ever recorded.

Ebola hemorrhagic fever is a human disease caused by the Ebola virus. The disease is usually acquired when a person comes into contact with the blood of an infected animal such as a monkey or fruit bat. Once a human is infected, contagion is highly likely through direct contact with bodily fluids. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the virus can take anywhere from two to 21 days to incubate and cause symptoms. Therefore, an infected individual may not know that he or she has been infected

until a future date. Symptoms typically include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle pains, and headaches, while the fever and internal bleeding attendant to the disease cause death.

Over 5,300 cases of Ebola have been reported in Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and Senegal, including over 3,000 deaths, according to the World Health Organization. This particular strain of Ebola virus, known as the Zaire strain, originated in Guinea and has a 90 percent mortality rate. While there have been other Ebola outbreaks in the past, this case seems especially perilous for multiple reasons. Even though Ebola does not have a cure or vaccine, mortality rates drop dramatically with early medical intervention. However, in countries like Guinea, where medical infrastructure is poor, the spread of a disease can be rapid and devastating.

The international attention bestowed upon West African countries afflicted with Ebola is bringing deeply-rooted societal problems to light, including a lack of healthcare education, as evidenced by a widespread fear of Ebola and subsequent refusal to accept medical care from international relief organizations. This refusal of medical aid is caused by a variety of factors. Some are mistakenly associating the appearance of foreign medical professionals with the presence of Ebola. In other words, they are falling prey to the common logical fallacy of “correlation proves causation” by believing that health workers are somehow causing the Ebola virus to spread.

Fear of health workers is perpetuating the rapid spread of the disease, creating a second crisis. When villagers flee at the sight of a Red Cross truck screaming, “Ebola, Ebola!” as they run, it is no surprise that health workers are having trouble enforcing the containment of the disease.

In fact, the hostility against foreign medical professionals has grown so much in West Africa that workers say they are now battling resentment and aggression in addition to the deadly Ebola virus. Medical professionals from organizations such as Doctors Without Borders and the World Health Organization have been threatened with stones and machetes. Vehicles are surrounded by hostile mobs.

Log barriers across dirt roads block health workers from reaching villages where medical attention is needed.

Some West African social and cultural practices may also be expediting the spread of the virus. For instance, the stigma associated with contracting Ebola discourages patients from seeking medical attention that can help them overcome the infection in its early stages. Furthermore, certain funeral practices that involve touching the deceased may be accelerating the spread of the disease.

Although medical care is urgently needed, it is also crucial to address the relevant public health aspects of the outbreak, such as informing Africans about proper prevention methods. After all, the best way to survive the disease is to avoid infection in the first place. The Ugandan government has made efforts to address the stigma of Ebola by creating a network of survivors to educate the

“Today, the world stands in awe of a different disease: Ebola.

public about the disease. Hopefully, with additional similar measures that replace fear and misperceptions with concrete knowledge, the outbreak will have a greater chance of successful containment.

The recent Enterovirus 68 outbreak in 45 U.S. states has proven that the developed world is not immune to epidemics, though. While strains of enterovirus circulate every year, this year has seen a spike in the number of children affected. The first cases were reported to the CDC last month in Kansas City and Chicago. Since then, over half of all confirmed cases in those two cities have been children with a history of wheezing or asthma, according to Anne Schuchat, the director of the CDC’s National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. The virus has likely been spreading quickly as children go back

to school and mingle with thousands of their potentially-infected peers. Since its symptoms mimic those of an intense cold, parents are unlikely to notice the severity of the disease for some time.

Even though there is no antiviral treatment or vaccine for Enterovirus 68, the good news is that early September is peak season for enteroviruses. Consequently, physicians expect the number of infections to begin leveling off. As of this writing, there have been four deaths linked to the virus, according to the New York Times. Regardless, parents can prevent the virus from spreading by reminding their children to practice standard hygienic procedures such as frequent hand washing.

Unlike Enterovirus 68, Ebola does not spread easily in regions with high sanitation practices and prolific health communications. For one thing, Ebola can only be passed on by an infected individual who is exhibiting symptoms. Given that an infected person with symptoms in the United States would be isolated almost immediately, the chances of the disease spreading are minimal. Furthermore, the U.S. population is receptive to the advice of healthcare professionals. Suggestions made by organizations like the CDC are likely to be adhered to. Quite frankly, the chances of catching Ebola in the United States are far slimmer than the chances of dying on a rollercoaster. Cases of Ebola will appear in the future. However, Ebola will not become an epidemic in the United States.

Diseases cannot be eradicated under most circumstances. Smallpox is the only disease to have been completely obliterated to date, a testament to the scale of the task at hand. That being said, the outbreak of any given disease, and the potential it holds to become an epidemic or pandemic is a daunting prospect on its own. Diseases carry with them grim prospects and portend fear far and wide. Health promotion and communication are therefore of the utmost importance in preventing and containing epidemics of all kinds, ranging from cholera to Ebola.

Doubling Down on the *Double Consciousness* of Race Relations

Kellie Fields
Staff Writer

You can't win for losing.

It can be argued that President Obama has done a rather poor job of tackling the subject of race in America, but the reasoning behind this dissatisfaction may actually be rooted in racial contentions themselves.

The recent unrest in Ferguson, Missouri, is a hugely relevant example of racial contentions being brought to the surface in a fashion that the general public largely misinterprets.

Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois coined the term, "double consciousness," to define the duplicity of identity that lies at the heart of simultaneously being an American and an African-American. This terminology can be used to explain the events unfolding in Ferguson, Obama's reaction to them, and his presumably passive responses to the topic of race in general.

A double consciousness is neither inherently good nor evil. Rather, it can be taken as an ambivalent concept, mutable to the situation in which a racial discussion is taking place. Some individuals, for example, may believe that a black person who is in tune with his or her double consciousness is simply trying to appeal to and appease white people. In reality, it might simply be the case that the black person in question is trying to balance two identities concurrently.

The phenomenon of double consciousness typically results in an identity crisis of sorts for many African-Americans, myself included. Black people, despite their African lineage, are expected to identify with American culture and ultimately assimilate into a mainstream white society along with its cultural traditions.

I, for one, cannot help but notice that "Caucasian-American" or "European-American" are not terms codified within the U.S. Census Bureau. While "African-American" has its own American delineation, the terms "white," "Caucasian," and "European" do not. In America, "African-American," is treated as a subgroup, while the opposite on the racial spectrum is the norm for racial identification.

"Two or more races" is listed. However, it is an ambiguously presented option, as I am sure the president has noticed as well.

Nonetheless, the fact remains that members of the black community possess a dual identity that is accompanied by a deep inner tension. On the one hand, black people may feel an urge to identify with pro-black causes. On the other hand, we are reminded each day that our American identification is not effortlessly separated when deemed convenient, nor is it easy to carry out such a separation in the first place.

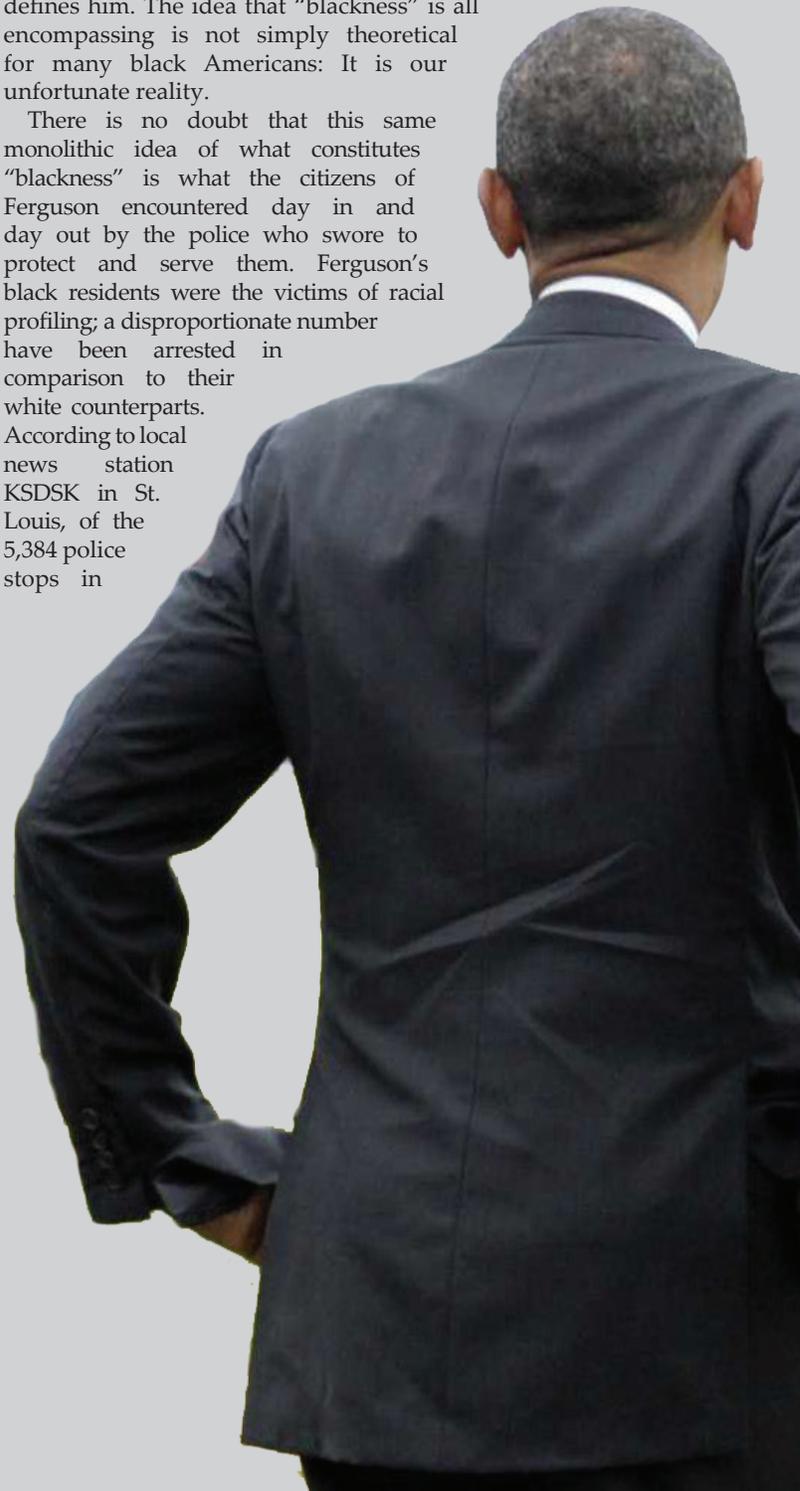
The difficulty of this duality is something Obama has confronted head on in his presidency, and I am sure he has dealt with similar issues in his personal life. For Obama, his double consciousness is aggravated even further by his biracial heritage.

Black and white people alike place Obama into a monolithic

racial identity despite his biracial background. His so-called "blackness" is the only racial feature that defines him. The idea that "blackness" is all encompassing is not simply theoretical for many black Americans: It is our unfortunate reality.

There is no doubt that this same monolithic idea of what constitutes "blackness" is what the citizens of Ferguson encountered day in and day out by the police who swore to protect and serve them. Ferguson's black residents were the victims of racial profiling; a disproportionate number have been arrested in comparison to their white counterparts.

According to local news station KSDSK in St. Louis, of the 5,384 police stops in



Ferguson, 686 were white citizens and 4,632 were black citizens. Of 611 searches, 47 of those searched were white and 562 were black. Of 521 arrests in Ferguson in 2013, 36 of those arrested were white and 483 were black.

These reprehensible statistics are not necessarily surprising when one comes to the realization that the Ferguson police force is 94 percent white, while the city's population is 67 percent black. Clearly, the police force is not a representative one.

Given the context of aggravated race relations, it is no surprise that Michael Brown's shooting served as the catalyst from which Ferguson's racial tensions finally boiled over and onto our television screens and Twitter feeds.

Ferguson's black citizens could no longer feign the farce of black docility for the benefit of their mostly white police force. Evidently, their double consciousness experienced an irreconcilable split. Whether they wanted to or not, as a result of the police's continued utilization of excessive force and deliberate targeting of African-American individuals, black people in Ferguson were compelled to defend the humanity their blackness had been robbed of too many times before.

Of course, the very real frustrations black people in Ferguson felt does not justify the looting and rioting that took place at certain times of the unrest. However, despite the apparent criminal activities that have occurred, the racial injustice underlying those law-breaking actions must not be ignored or dismissed. Essentially, the reproachable actions of a few must not delegitimize the concerns of the many.

This is why some black individuals on Twitter took offense to Obama's emphasis on "law and order." Dr. Cornel West, professor of philosophy at Princeton University, made the following remarks in response to Obama's appeal to the law:

"[Obama] is not law and order when it comes to torture, just like he's not law and order when it comes to Israelis committing war crimes in Gaza, but he's law and order now when it comes to poor black people. You say 'well wait a minute, the hypocrisy is overwhelming here.'"

Extraordinarily bold statements like West's speak to the growing level of unhappiness the black community is feeling in response to Obama's recent talks about race, but the comparison of black and white perceptions is intriguing in its own right.

Generally speaking, members of the black community say the president is not talking about race enough, while members of the white community say he is talking about it too much, arguing that the discussion has reached the point of "race baiting."

These views are in direct opposition to each other primarily because the perspectives from which they come are so completely different. Black people may see discussing race as a healthy process that promotes healing amongst the races. Many white people say that it only serves to bring up past, now irrelevant, wounds.

As a result, many perceive the president as having abdicated from the topic of race altogether. This perception has given rise to the growing narrative that Obama is an indecisive executive lacking in bedrock leadership skills.

That being said, Obama, like many black individuals, has learned to perfect his double consciousness without leaning too far to either side at any one time. He is acutely aware of the middle ground between his blackness and whiteness, and he understands that the white side of the equation may be the more prudent facet of himself to highlight.

Although it may seem hypocritical on their parts, this is the very source of some black activists' dissatisfaction with him.

“...the fact remains that members of the black community possess a dual identity that is accompanied by a deep inner tension.

Tavis Smiley, radio show host and political pundit, has articulated his frustration with the nation's first black president. After listening to Obama's "forced," speech, Smiley stated that it was as "weak as pre-sweetened Kool-Aid." Some readers may be surprised at his criticism because his racial features are similar to that of Obama's, but Smiley's opposition to the president's commentary on race demonstrates the fact that he wants more from him.

Furthermore, despite the growing conventional wisdom surrounding Obama's temperament and leadership styles, what is missing from the conversation is his unique racial context. Obama is a biracial person of power caught between doctrines of the two races with which he is at liberty to identify. This circumstance leaves President Obama in the old "damned if you do, damned if you don't" conundrum.

Obama commented on the circumstances surrounding Dr. Henry Louis Gates, a black Harvard professor, who was arrested for breaking into his own home after traveling in China. His official statement was candid and a somewhat provocative:

"I think it's fair to say, number one, any of us would be pretty angry; number two, that the Cambridge police acted stupidly in arresting somebody when there was already proof that they were in their own home; and, number three, what I think we know separate and apart from this incident is that there's a long history in this country of African-Americans and Latinos being stopped by law enforcement disproportionately. That's just a fact."

Some members of the white community were enraged and offended.

The Gates scenario is a prime example of the president's racial quagmire on display. Also, I cannot forget the torrent of negative opinion released upon the White House when Obama said that Trayvon Martin could have been his son.

He has tried to speak on race in the past and look what it got him.

So, in a way, I can understand why Obama may be reluctant to talk about race. Every time he does, he gets hammered for it. The new "War on White People" movement is correlated to the president's willingness to candidly discuss race at times. For that reason and others, some white people now feel that the president, despite the fact that Obama is white as well, loathes them.

In President Obama's case, it might simply be a better political strategy to toe the line between his black and white convictions concerning race as a whole and Ferguson in particular. Obama has come to the realization that he cannot win for losing, so he has chosen the safer, more practical, way of dealing with race as an American politician. Only talk about race when it is impossible to avoid it at all costs, and when forced to discuss the topic, talk about it as briefly as one can. Minimize the backlash.

FIFA Must Draw a Line in the Sand

Shornima KC
Staff Writer

In light of FIFA's sudden realization that summers in the Persian Gulf are hot, international football's governing body is considering backing out of their commitment to host the 2022 World Cup in Qatar. Theo Zwanziger, a member of the FIFA executive committee, told German newspaper Sport Bild, "Fans from around the world will be coming and traveling in this heat and the first life-threatening case will trigger an investigation by a state prosecutor. And that, nobody in the FIFA Executive Committee would want to reply to." This statement comes even in spite of Qatar's promise to build temperature-controlled stadiums.

Still, this is an unexpectedly concerned sentiment coming from a FIFA executive, considering that FIFA has managed to look the other way as hundreds of immigrant workers have been laboring for almost three years to build the herculean stadiums. Since Qatar was awarded the 2022 World Cup in 2010, at least 700 Indian laborers have died. In 2013 alone, 185 Nepali laborers died in Qatar. These numbers indicate a pattern of poor working conditions in the country. Reports of young laborers arriving in perfect health only to drop dead of a heart attack shortly thereafter prove abundant. Construction for the World Cup is not solely responsible for the horde of deaths, but it has certainly exacerbated the situation by increasing demand for these workers.

These laborers work under the Kafala system, which requires all laborers to have a Qatari national as a sponsor. This allows Qatari nationals to control every aspect of the workers' lives — including the ability to leave their employer or the country. Often, they withhold workers' passports and payment.

The Qatari government has talked timidly about abolishing the Kafala system since 2010, yet there have been no major changes. Sharan Burrow, the general secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation, says that that anything short of abolishing Kafala is a sham provision designed to create a façade of change. Burrow is convinced that Qatar will abolish Kafala if FIFA President Sepp Blatter insists upon it.

These alleged abuses are not isolated incidents of mistreatment. The Guardian conducted a month-long investigation in 2013 which revealed gross and systematic abuses of laborers in Qatar. The report focused on Lusail City, a city being built from the ground-up for the 2022 World Cup. The Guardian reports are further supported by Al Jazeera investigations. They label conditions in these labor camps "spartan." Laborers for the Lusail City projects live 10 to 12 people per room, directly violating worker treatment directives from Qatar's National Human Rights Committee. In these camps, 600 laborers share two kitchens.

Reports note cases where employers denied workers access to clean drinking water. Some employees claim that they haven't been paid in months, sometimes forcing them to beg for food.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes defines human trafficking as "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt" of people through forms of coercion for the "purpose of exploitation."

The situation in Qatar embodies human trafficking. This is modern-day slavery.

The Qatari government has made promises and reassurances time and again. Qatari officials promised visiting delegations from the European Parliament that they plan to introduce reforms, but the Kafala system will likely stay.

Immigrants work as domestic servants, unskilled laborers, and servers. Given a citizen population of 278,000 and expatriate population of 1.5 million, Qatar relies on immigrants to keep up the daily grind. Thus, even Qatari officials and princes serious about reforms fear that changes will create unrest by increasing the cost of basic services that immigrants provide. Moreover, reforms may be construed by Qataris as caving to western pressures. Qatar has the highest per capita income in the world, with free education and healthcare and guaranteed jobs in the public sector. Like many oil monarchies in the Gulf, the state's first priority is keeping its people fully satisfied. Qatari citizens have very little to complain about; Qatar avoided any major uprisings even during the Arab Spring.

FIFA President Sepp Blatter echoes many voices around the world when he says, "We have some responsibility but



we cannot interfere in the rights of workers." Officials realize what is happening in Qatar, in the United Arab Emirates, in Saudi Arabia, and other gulf nations. Yet, they casually look the other way en route to the glittering malls and hotels built by forced labor. FIFA still does not cite labor violations as a cause for backing out of this deal. Their primary concern remains lawsuits from tournament-goers.

From contract workers in Afghanistan toiling on the American-led war on terror to domestic workers in Oman, forced labor and human trafficking is alive and thriving in the 21st century. It is easy to ignore because these workers don't have a voice. FIFA has a chance to bring these atrocities to light and lend a voice to these forced laborers. Instead of cowering, they should use the international stage to push for basic worker's rights.

"They have a problem and we know that, but this is not a question for FIFA," said Blatter. "It is one which the state of Qatar must handle as well as all the construction companies

who are responsible for the workers." This hands-off attitude is insufficient from an organization with immense influence and power over the 2022 World Cup. From India and Nepal alone, "More than 4,000 workers will die before a ball is kicked off in 2022," says Sharan Burrow of ITUC.

Despite these figures, FIFA is not obligated to act, but maintains that ability. And considering the deplorable circumstances and gross human rights abuses — it should. Currently, FIFA says it is monitoring Qatar's treatment of World Cup workers. However, FIFA can do more. They can pressure the Qatari government. If a FIFA exec can make a public statement about pulling out of Qatar, citing the danger of heat on tournament-goers, then FIFA can surely cause a louder ruckus regarding human rights violations.

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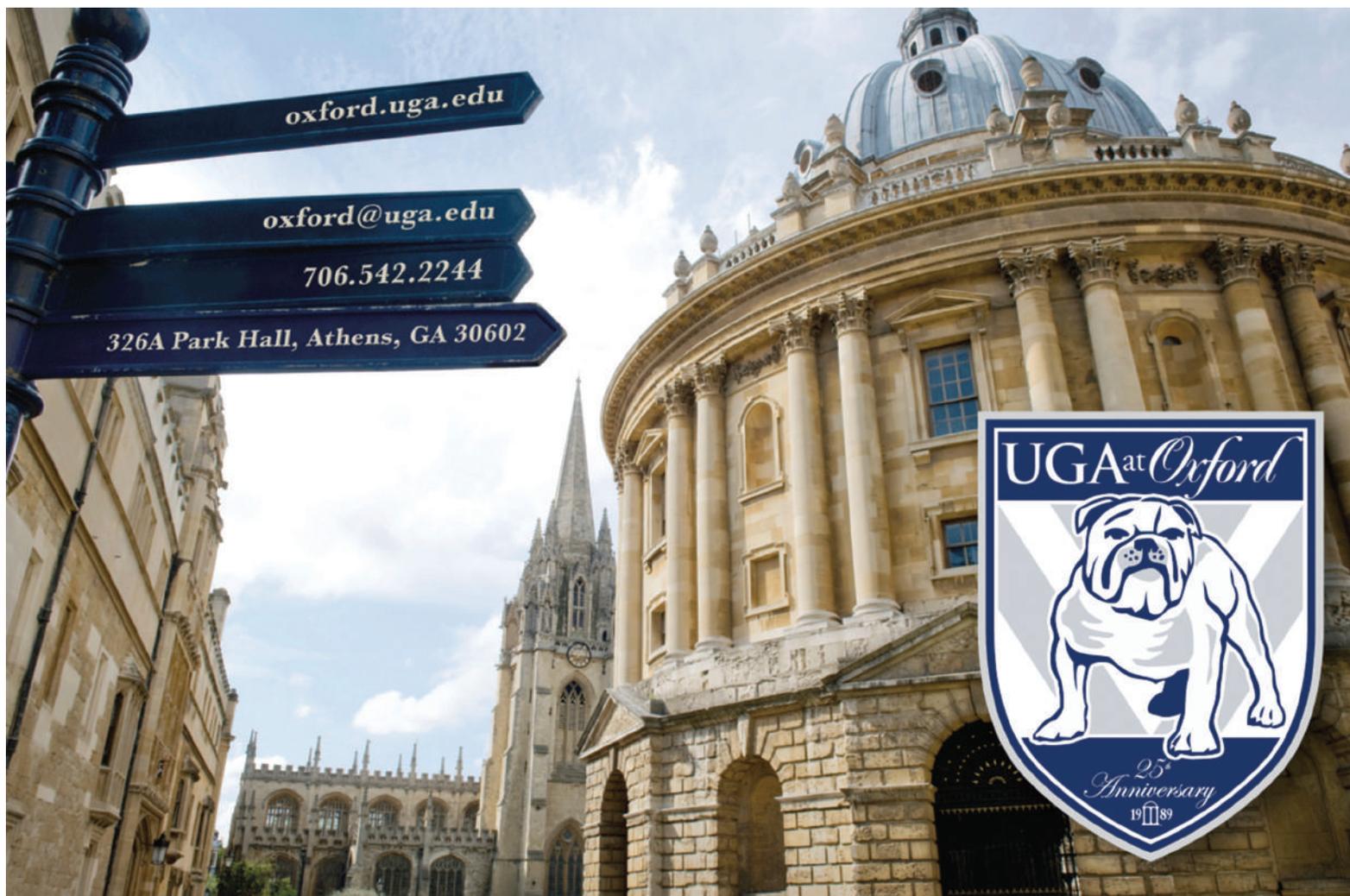


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