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Winter of our Discontent

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

In 2011, we were witness to a wave of revolutions that swept across the Middle East. After largely peaceful protests, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali conceded to the masses and stepped down. This continued to Egypt, where over 100,000 people participated in protests that led to Hosni Mubarak's resignation. There were similar movements in Libya, Syria, and Yemen. Of note, a contributing factor to these protests was faltering economies in all of these countries.

Despite the absence of authoritarian regimes, we see similar frustrations in the Western world. Recent events in Europe—specifically, the debt crises in Greece and Italy—have called the future of the eurozone into question. Several member states have instituted severe austerity measures that have been met with stiff public opposition. Citizens are frustrated with poor leadership and ill-conceived policies. Silvio Berlusconi's resignation is the best example of these quickly changing times.

We see that irrespective of how entrenched a regime, tradition, or institution may be, popular will has the potential to force drastic change, no matter what country.

This brings us to our title, "Winter of our Discontent." Although these events come across as unrelated, public discontent is the commonality linking them together. In this issue, several of our articles reflect this sentiment. In "Kashmir: The Case for Freedom," our writer documents the frustrations of living under heavy military surveillance. "Economic Nationalism's Threat to the Euro" discusses the rise of political parties with platforms that reflect dissatisfaction with the status quo. Another article provides the readers with a personal perspective of the M-15 protests in Madrid, Spain.

Our prior issues have addressed uprisings, changes in conventional wisdom, and unaddressed issues in world politics—all of which are still relevant today. It is in this issue that we explore the root of these themes: discontent, previously not given full consideration, is the driving force behind uprisings and the change that ensues. In our biggest issue yet, we discuss the impact of discontent on both a large and small scale.

Michigan Journal of International Affairs,
Editorial Board

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Libya's Missing Missiles:

How Disarming a Regime Could Arm a Region

— Michael Clauw

On October 20, 2011, the capture and killing of Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi by Libyan rebels effectively ended the NATO mission in Libya. During that mission, NATO forces, with the assistance of rebel groups and the National Transitional Council (NTC), destroyed more than 5,900 targets including six hundred armored vehicles and four hundred artillery and rocket launchers. Although this operation successfully crippled Qaddafi's military strength, a vast number of the weapons stockpiled over Qaddafi's forty-one-year reign still remain. Currently, the NTC, the Libyan interim government established shortly after the revolution began, is in control of these weapons. But with many stockpiles still unsecured in the wake of the conflict, the international community is scrambling to secure these weapons before they slip through the cracks.

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Afghan Mujahid firing a surface-air man portable missile similar to the Strela 2.

On October 31, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a measure to urge the NTC to secure known weapons stockpiles, and investigate those that have gone missing. While rebels used many of the thousands of weapons taken from stockpiles to fight Qaddafi loyalists, others have possibly fallen in the hands of other groups. Some of the groups in question have been associated with terrorist activities. For instance, Mokhtar Belmokhtar, the leader of the Al-Qaeda Organization in the Islamic Maghreb, recently announced that his Algerian-based group has benefited from these weapons.

Perhaps most troubling about this diffusion of Libya's weapons is their destructive capability; these are not merely small arms. Stockpiles include shoulder-mounted, surface-to-air missiles, capable of bringing down low-flying aircraft. These weapons can be extremely dangerous in the hands of terrorist organizations. In 2002, two Strela 2 missiles, the same type stolen from many Libyan stockpiles, narrowly missed a targeted Israeli passenger plane in Mombasa, Kenya.

While the fear of terrorist groups acquiring such weapons is the primary reason for the push to secure these stockpiles, some still doubt the NTC's ability to produce a viable democratic state. The risk of an unstable government filling the power vacuum in Libya has made many weary of these weapons and their possible use in an aftershock of violence. They could change the power-balance, allowing a heavily-armed insurgent group to match the NTC's firepower and mount a significant military challenge. The presence of such potent weapons in the hands of non-official forces could severely undermine state power. Worse still, some even fear a return to authoritarian governance; these weapons would give a dictatorial regime the tools it needs to resist international efforts and oppress its people.

Despite these fears, the reestablishment of a dictatorship or an unstable government is unlikely. Although many did take notice when the leader of the NTC, Mustafa Abdul-Jalil, expressed his desire to establish an Islamic government based on Sharia Law in Libya. Nevertheless, one must consider the specifics of the government's plans before making hasty assessments. The NTC has assured that both religious freedoms and the rights of women will be a part of their constitution. The charter was outlined in a Constitutional Declaration released this August. Currently, four members of the 63-member Council are women. While this clearly under-represents the women of Libya, it should be noted that these current council members were appointed, and the number of female representatives should rise after the first election cycle. Abdul-Jalil also asserted that because further NTC appointees will be chosen based off of expertise rather than tribal connections, regional violence over governmental disagreement will be unlikely.

While fears of Libya's weapons being turned against its own people seem unwarranted, the threat of terrorists using them should not be taken lightly. Advanced weapons technology such as those mentioned radically diffuse power, allowing small and disjointed groups to punch above their weight. Even the most unorganized terrorist organization could inflict massive casualties if they were to successfully use these shoulder-mounted missiles. For these reasons, the NTC should make securing these weapons a top priority. However, they should be careful not to stray away from international assistance in completing this task. Self-determination is key as a new government builds confidence and asserts itself, but the problem of unsecured weapons is simply too grave to take on alone.

Passing the UN Resolution on these weapons is a good start, but continued international support is necessary as the NTC finds their footing. As the new government builds goodwill and trust among its citizens by establishing a constitution and maintaining order, they would slowly transition into a lead role. Ultimately, a buy-back program would have the dual benefits of disarming the population while also engaging them and strengthening the relationship between the young government and its people. Once the Libyan people see the new administration as an ally and partner, rather than a threat, they would likely accept that Libya's future does not lie in her weapons but rather her democratic potential.

Negotiations to Come in Khartoum

— Malcolm Scott

In early October 2011, President Salva Kiir of South Sudan and President Omar Hassan al-Bashir of Sudan negotiated for two days in Khartoum. Those negotiations ended on October 9th with little concrete progress. However, the governments of Khartoum and Juba can scarcely afford to wait for an agreement to materialize. The two nations are bound together in an unwanted relationship of mutual dependence. Moreover, a growing sense of urgency in both countries will require their governments to reach agreements over petroleum revenues and border demarcations sooner rather than later. These nations will most likely grow independent of each other with time, but in the short-term, their leaders have few alternatives outside of cooperation.

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President Salva Kiir of South Sudan and President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan: A struggling president and a desperate junta leader.

The greatest areas of contention for the Sudanese governments are disputed border arrangements and the distribution of revenue benefits from South Sudanese petroleum. However, more fundamental differences also inform the negotiations. As of now, the government in Khartoum and the population of South Sudan are mortal enemies. The regime led by Bashir marginalized peoples such as the Fur in southern Sudan for decades and attempted to eradicate local cultures to foster Arab dominance. Omar al-Bashir attempted the systematic extermination of Darfuri people and encouraged resettlement of razed areas by Arab Chadians. When South Sudan was part of Sudan, Bashir regarded many of those peoples as simply unworthy to exist.

Even though Bashir now has his Arab Sudan, his contempt for black Sudanese remains a pervasive obstacle. Dealing with a despot who regards South Sudanese inhabitants as innately inferior and expendable has been a great hurdle for the South Sudanese government in negotiations. With this most basic barrier in place, fruitful dialogue seems hopeless.

South Sudan seems to have additional disadvantages aside from Bashir's prejudices. The government relies on Sudanese pipelines and Red Sea ports to export petroleum, and the Khartoum government has charged $22.08 fees per barrel of petroleum. This figure seems egregious compared to the desired price of $0.41 per barrel sought by Juba and another assessment recommending $5-10.00 per barrel. With such pricing power, the Bashir government could charge almost any price for pipeline use, even economically strangling the young government to the south.

The South Sudanese government is also struggling to establish internal unity and contain vestigial rebel groups. This differs sharply with the more homogenous, centralized government in Khartoum. The South Sudanese are also coping with strained food supplies, as thousands of northerners have flooded South Sudan to escape violence. Facing numerous challenges, even an unfair revenue deal could be essential when compared with no revenues at all. The South Sudanese government may be forced to accept high pipeline fees and to concede oil-rich border regions, such as Abyei, that have long been desired and often occupied by Sudan.

Due to the 2005 peace agreements and 2011 secession, the Bashir regime faces its own perils. When South Sudan separated from Khartoum, the Sudanese government lost approximately 75% of its petroleum revenues. This resulted in 20% inflation rates in September 2011, soaring food prices, and severe revenue shortages. The Sudanese government's plan to reduce 2012 security funding due to budgetary shortfalls are an encouraging result for the region. Additionally, this leaves Bashir more vulnerable to internal turmoil within Sudan. Events in Khartoum suggest that Bashir is desperately scrambling to retain power. His National Congress Party attempted to negotiate with opposition parties, the National Umma Party and the Democratic Unionist Party, to share power in the government. When talks fell through, all opposition parties continued to oppose Bashir, suggesting considerable weakness in the Bashir regime. Since Bashir will have more difficulty retaining power coercively, he may be trying to build inter-party connections to gain political support. Opposition parties seem to have anticipated this maneuver and have only increased political pressure.

Facing a difficult domestic situation, the Bashir regime has looked abroad to secure financial support but the response has been limited. Traditionally, the Chinese and Russian governments have been willing to block UN resolutions because of Sudanese exports, but without the oil, Bashir is probably not worth the effort. The Bashir government wants to develop mineral resources, but this development demands large capital investments that may not yield returns until far into the future. As a result, alternative revenue streams cannot match petroleum losses overnight.

In order to establish internal security and maintain international support, Bashir needs the cooperation of the South Sudanese nation that he holds in contempt. He needs to export petroleum long enough to maintain international alliances, to fund security forces and to placate enraged Sudanese citizens. At least temporarily, Bashir must either swallow his pride or face the wrath of his own people. Both governments must come to an agreement about oil revenues, but the Sudanese situation is particularly fragile. This is why the Bashir regime is clinging to Abyei; Bashir needs any oil supplies he can muster.

Any future negotiations are tenuous. The South Sudanese have wearied so much of Sudanese price gouging that they are considering pipelines through Kenya. The decision to pursue this avenue seems obvious since the status quo requires continued cooperation with the hostile Sudanese government. However, for the immediate future, both Sudanese regimes must reach an agreement to maintain power and preserve their countries. Kiir needs to stabilize and feed South Sudan, and Bashir must save himself from popular fury. Both leaders' fates will depend on their ability to reach the begrudging realization that, at least for now, they need each other.

The Price of Peace in Uganda:
Amnesty, Justice, and the LRA

— Michael Clauw

At what point should a country put the need for peace and stability over the inherent desire for justice? For the people of Uganda, that point came in 2000, thirteen years after the formation of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebel group. That year, the Ugandan government passed the Amnesty Act, sweeping legislation that granted amnesty to all former LRA members who turned in their arms and renounced rebellious ideologies. After seventeen years of violence and thousands of deaths in Uganda and surrounding countries, many questioned why Ugandans would let the militants walk free. For them, justice was not simply about punishing past atrocities; it also meant ensuring future stability.

By the end of 2008, over 24,000 ex-members of the LRA had taken advantage of the Amnesty Act and renounced past allegiances to the group. While many in Western countries, who carry a more punitive understanding of justice, view this as the freeing of thousands of human rights violators, the people of Uganda view it differently. In 2005, the Ugandan Refugee Law Project conducted a public opinion study of the law and found it to be overwhelmingly popular. Ugandans view it as a vital step in the reconciliation process, one that allows fighters a viable alternative to rebellion and a means to leave a violent lifestyle. In times of civil unrest when human rights violations are rampant, foot soldiers are often easily forgiven, as it is common for them to have been coerced to commit violent acts. However, when applying the Amnesty Act to former leaders of the LRA, public opinion in Uganda and around the globe is split.

In July 2011, the Ugandan government placed Thomas Kwoyelo, a former LRA commander, on trial for 53 crimes that included multiple counts of murder and kidnapping. Soon after his arrest, his lawyers argued that under the Amnesty Act, his arrest was illegal. In September 2011, the Ugandan courts agreed and set the former commander free. While this decision reinforced the Ugandan government's commitment to the Amnesty Act, many international institutions, including Amnesty International, decried this action. In response to the decision, Amnesty International released a statement saying it was a "setback for justice," and that "neither Thomas Kwoyelo, nor others accused of committing war crimes should be granted amnesty." While everyone can agree that those who commit war crimes should have to answer for them, the issue of violating the Amnesty Act in order to prosecute Kwoyelo and others is much more ambiguous.

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A fire breaks out in an internally displaced persons camp in Parabongo, Uganda. These vulnerable camps are a common target for LRA rebels.

The Refugee Law Project's examination of the Amnesty Act clearly indicated that the Ugandan people want their government to stand behind it. If the public is willing to firmly commit to reconciliation, the government must also defend the law and show consistency in its decisions. This means that the government cannot be selective in whom it deems eligible for amnesty and that they must offer it to all who fought for the LRA, soldier and commander alike. While it is only natural to desire the prosecution and punishment of Kwoyelo, the Ugandan government made the most prudent possible decision in this situation.

Uganda's leaders signaled their commitment to creating stability and peace, even when faced with difficult decisions. With elections forthcoming in 2016, a united front in the face of this controversy could alleviate the chances of electoral violence. Any major disagreement could create a rift in public opinion and, when coupled with past violence and an uncertain future, produce disastrous results. While Kwoyelo is now a free man in the eyes of the Ugandan government, it is clear that the international community will not be content to sit back and allow the LRA such sweeping amnesty.

Although Kwoyelo was not among the four LRA leaders targeted by the International Criminal Court in their ongoing investigation, his case is nonetheless significant. The decision to grant him amnesty signaled to the international community that further punitive action against ex-LRA members requires enforcement by a third party. Uganda has stood firm in its decision, despite pressure from abroad, but others have not hesitated to take the mantle on this issue. On October 14, US President Barack Obama announced that he was dispatching one hundred US troops to central Africa to assist in the efforts to combat the LRA. This international co-operation enables the Ugandan government to stand firmly behind their Amnesty Act, while signaling to their people that they will not simply sit idly by as the LRA continues operations.

In the last three years, the LRA has weakened in both numbers and morale, and experts assert that many soldiers continue to fight out of fear, not rebellious ideologies. The Ugandan government's two-pronged strategy of offering Amnesty to those who come forward and cooperating with US military officials to hunt down remaining LRA leaders capitalizes on this weakness and remains the best strategy for the people of Uganda moving forward.

Dark Days to Come for the Arab Spring

— Malcolm Scott

For the past year, the Arab Spring has seized the world's attention; many see its outgrowth as a new opportunity for democracy in the Middle East. However, the Arab Spring is much more than a simple rejection of autocratic politics. The currents driving the Arab Spring run seamlessly across the continent of Africa, albeit more quietly. In fact, the call to protest actually began in Mozambique. This has been the result of newfound frustration with age old economic hardships that have driven millions of people to the edge of survival in the past. African countries and other nations are undergoing unique iterations of a harsh economic and environmental climate that goes back decades.

Tunisians did not spontaneously wake up one morning and decide to reject the regime of Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali. Many Tunisians had been driven to the point through poor employment and drastically increasing food prices that spanned many years. Food prices did not simply increase more than usual during December 2010 and January 2011. The prices were on par with those seen during 2007 and 2008, years in which The Economist Food Price Index had a record peak not seen since its inception in 1845. Tunisians had years of progress interrupted, but they had a relatively lighter burden than some other African countries.

The nations of Mozambique and Cote d'Ivoire both felt the abrupt change in world supply even more acutely. The civil war in Cote d'Ivoire was not directly related to food access, but it must have entered the minds of many Ivoirians given their country's instability. Only two years prior, when food prices began increasing drastically, thousands had amassed around the home of then President Laurent Gbagbo to protest those developments. With poverty and unemployment rates in Cote d'Ivoire at 44 percent each at the time, and a tense atmosphere of exclusionary politics at hand, the situation was ripe for unrest. In light of these circumstances, then, attacks between supporters of Gbagbo and opposition leader Alassane Ouattara in the civil this year come as no surprise.

Protests in Mozambique a year ago are even more transparent in laying out this trend. In early September 2010, 400 Mozambicans were arrested when riots broke out in the capital city of Maputo. The riots were a reaction to a thirty percent increase in bread prices. The backlash was strong enough that Planning Minister Cuereneia reversed the price hikes and arranged for subsidies for utilities. In hindsight, this outbreak was the first rumbling of the Arab Spring and an indication of the severe strains in the international food distribution system. When Mozambicans protested their circumstances that September, commodity prices had not yet attained record peaks. The protests in Maputo, however, were a clear omen. This could be seen in Egypt and Libya, where now-fallen regimes raced to manage expensive food supplies; numerous other African countries felt this pressure as well. However, food prices alone cannot determine a country's political fate; the unique dynamics at play in each case decide why some regimes fall victim to the system's weaknesses while others do not.

> **"African nations have borne the brunt of the world's recent troubles. Yet, they serve as a beacon, warning of universal vulnerabilities rather than examples of inverted exceptionalism."**

Given the universal nature of the Arab Spring's underlying causes, it is important to understand why certain regimes fall while others endure. The nations of North Africa along the coast were among the most wealthy and literate on the African continent when the uprisings began. Stronger social ties and a more advanced political culture left these nations more capable of successful revolt. Legitimacy is also a key factor; Gabon and South Africa enjoy similar wealth and literacy, but these governments have a stronger democratic tradition. While food prices imperiled ways of life and garnered unrest across the board, higher expectations and greater capacity for mobilization combined with weak legitimacy led certain countries to rebel while others did not.

The security landscape, particularly the possibility of foreign intervention, also plays a role in a population's willingness to lash out. Algeria's military regime, for example, was less vulnerable to the civil-military leadership divides that were the demise of regimes in Tunisia and Egypt. Furthermore, French intervention in Cote d'Ivoire provided opportunities that were not available for Algerians, as was the case for NATO in Libya. Looking forward we see similar factors in play elsewhere in Africa. In Sudan, the loss of oil revenue has forced president Omar al-Bashir to cut both relief and security spending. This could merge the twin factors of unrest and opportunity that might open the door to a significant rebellion.

Uganda provides what is probably the starkest picture of the interaction between a specific setting and the global situation at large. Yoweri Museveni's regime has managed to contain ongoing uprisings over food prices and overall inflation of living costs since April of this year. Despite this acute awareness of the dangers of troubled global systems, Museveni will likely retain power unlike Ben Ali and Gbagbo. His forces have shown a willingness to fully suppress protest movements in their infancy, unlike the regimes of Ben Ali and Mubarak. Moreover, unlike Gaddafi or Gbagbo, he need not worry excessively over Western opposition; the United States military has a policy of attempted good relations with his government for counterterrorism purposes. Indeed, Museveni has made a point to oblige Western powers with token reform gestures, as he needs the aid to fund his government.

While large increases in food prices do not account fully for each regime's fate, the prominent role that increased food prices played in the Arab Spring merits an inquiry into their causes. Moreover, an analysis of their causes reveals the truly global, systemic nature of the issue at hand, as the connections extend deep into the first world. The recent surge in food price indices for the past year can be traced to ethanol production, Western monetary easing, and investor speculation. The latter is not particularly mysterious and can be attributed to recent deregulatory reforms. What is striking is how deep the roots of modern problems run, as recent moves are part of a deregulation regime that originated thirty years ago in the United States and UK. Ethanol subsidization presents a more tangled and complex back-story.

Heightened ethanol production in the United States and, to a lesser extent, the European Union was a response to rising oil prices over the past decade. Moreover, increasing fuel prices are an independent contributor to the costs of agricultural products. Protests in Kenya and Uganda levied against both fuel and food prices suggest that this circumstance is still relevant. It is crucial to note two underlying factors for these rising fuel prices: the weakened US dollar (barrels are usually bought and

Gbagbo
Deposed

Ben Ali
Exiled

Gaddafi
Died

Mubarak
Deposed

Bashir
Imperiled

Museveni
Survived

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sold in the currency) and growing commodity demand across developing economies. The two causes existed in tandem with investment speculations, and each has its own special circumstances.

The US dollar had been weakened for years by deficit trade and inflation initiated by the Federal Reserve, which former chairman Greenspan admitted was a misstep based on flawed assumptions about economic structure. As economies across the world have grown, various commodities, not merely oil, have boomed. The fact that many commodity markets are interconnected through their use as agricultural inputs merely exacerbates the problem. The September 2008 recession likely prevented what would have otherwise been massive, wholesale, consumer price inflation. The recession and the weakness of the dollar raised serious questions about the viability of traditional strategies aimed at preventing the conditions high unemployment and inflation that delivered the Arab Spring. Yet, the recession may have also disguised more subtle, but deeply entrenched inflationary trends in consumer-pricing that beget those same dangerous circumstances.

The unsound economic policies that derive from fundamental truths of how American policymakers see the world have created a crisis that extends across the globe. In addition to these quagmires, several natural developments further erode our defenses against untenable prices, inflation and the civil strife that accompanies them. Increasingly extreme weather conditions and climate change have weakened food production in many regions, such as Australia and Ukraine, for the past decade. Likewise, mounting world populations will disproportionately increase demands for food supplies by an expected 70 percent over the next few decades. A neo-liberal worldview that arose with the recessions of the 1970s, combined with poorly-designed economic practices has, at least momentarily, pushed millions of people across the world to the brink of survival. Sub-Saharan and Northern Africa were merely the most susceptible, the weakest link in the global chain due to a unique vulnerability to drought and famine. As such, African nations have borne the brunt of the world's recent troubles. Yet, they serve as a beacon, warning of universal vulnerabilities rather than examples of inverted exceptionalism.

When people look to the Arab Spring, they are observing merely the most distinctive manifestation of what is a strained world political and climatic system. The discontent that has stirred the global south is palpable, but it has extended even to the United States and Britain. The world should pause when celebrating the Arab Spring. Even if countries gain democracy, democrats must eat. One does not survive on conviction alone. The same circumstances that drove so many across the African continent to fight for their survival have not ended with the Arab Spring, and springtime has yet to come to much of Africa. For those living in the Maghreb and south of the Sahara to be truly free from ever-present fear and instability, the entire world must face its collective demons.

Stop the SlutWalk:

Changing the Paradigm of Rape Culture in South Africa from the Bottom Up

— Andrea Shafer

Since April, numerous cities in North America and worldwide have been host to a phenomenon known as SlutWalk. Incited by anger over a Canadian police officer's remarks that women were less likely to encounter rape if they avoided "dressing like sluts," women have taken to the streets to combat victim-blaming. Often dressed in revealing attire, these women affirm that a woman is never "asking for it" by the way she dresses. The movement represents an attempt to shift the paradigm of rape culture. However, serious questions remain on how the movement will play out across vastly different social and cultural environments such as in South Africa.

In August and September, women crowded the streets of Johannesburg and Cape Town, South Africa, asserting the message of SlutWalk. South Africa's sexual assault record, however, is vastly different than the records of Canada, the United States, and other western nations. The incidence of rape is among the highest in the world; men and women reported 55,000 cases of rape and indecent sexual assault between 2009 and 2010, with tens of thousands more unreported. These sexual crimes face far less stigmatization and condemnation than in Western societies, and even enjoy tacit approval in some arenas. This attitude is likely a primary cause for the disquieting prevalence of rape in South Africa. These incongruities in rape culture mean that SlutWalk's attempts at a paradigm-shift may work well in the Western world, but not so much in South Africa, where wholesale cultural changes must begin in early childhood.

In a comparably more conservative country than the United States or Canada, the concept of SlutWalk can be highly inflammatory. Without the baseline acknowledgement that rape is unacceptable, a crowd of women marching down the street in lingerie is unlikely to dramatically alter the mindset of young men. In a country where thirty eight percent of men find wife-beating normal, it is probable that onlookers took SlutWalk as more of an opportunity to objectify the provocatively-dressed women, rather than reevaluate their attitudes toward them.

The concept of SlutWalk simply loses its meaning in a country where rape is not a crime centered solely on feminine sexuality. South Africa has one of the world's highest incidences of child and baby rape, with 67,000 cases reported in 2000. Since children may be threatened or unable to fully comprehend offenses against them, the actual number of child rapes is almost unquestionably higher. These children and infants are not sexual beings; no one can argue that they were raped "because they asked for it" through behavior or attire.

> **"In a country where a woman is more likely to be raped than she is to learn how to read, educators must take significant steps to remedy this crisis."**

For young South African men, the social acceptance of male supremacy and power over women begins at a very young age. This is the primary explanation for the prevalence of gender-based violence in the country. In an interview of a thousand elementary-age children in Soweto Township, a quarter of the boys said that "jackrolling" was fun. "Jackrolling" is slang for gang rape. Themes of sexual autonomy and recapturing agency through one's appearance and behavior lose their relevance in these cases. While this subset of victims is not representative of SlutWalk's core message, it does expose rape for what it is: a crime driven by power and dominance rather than sexual impulse.

For these reasons, SlutWalk is an insufficient means of changing the perception and paradigm of South Africa's rape culture. Elementary-age boys are not necessarily committing acts of gang rape, but they do not learn that rape is an unacceptable crime. The South African Medical Research Council found that one in four South African men admit to having raped a woman at least once. It seems unlikely that this indicates some sort of unusually ravenous, sex-craved male population. Likewise, South Africa's females cannot be that much likelier to endanger themselves by "asking for it" than the rest of the world's female population. Rather, this speaks much more about societal attitudes and the education system that shapes those views. Instead of SlutWalk, South Africa needs educational reforms for young men who lack positive role models or a framework and value system that puts women on equal footing.

Wholesale educational reform and SlutWalk are not mutually exclusive. Both have their strengths and weaknesses; in fact, the two can complement one and other. The latter is less demanding, simply hoping to send a message, and it costs the administration nothing. Education reform, on the other hand, requires public funds and maneuvering through the bureaucracy, but it would produce durable, system-wide benefits. In order to make any kind of an impactful change, in a country where a woman is more likely to be raped than she is to learn how to read, educators must take significant steps to remedy this crisis. Law enforcement has attempted to instill more stringent punishment on offenders, but that is not sufficient to change the attitude of a majority of males. Helping young men understand why rape simply cannot occur and enforcing this through adulthood will make for tremendous long run effects that the provocative, fleeting SlutWalk demonstrations cannot deliver.

Legacies and Pitfalls in Liberia:
Will Liberia's Citizens Win Come Election Day?

— Mick Adkins

Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has won the world's respect. In October, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her role in helping resolve the Liberian civil war and for her efforts to champion women's rights. Yet, the high praise and endorsements of the global community have fallen on deaf ears in Liberia's capital city of Monrovia. Mired in poverty and weary of the ever-looming possibility of civil unrest, Liberian citizens are reluctant to fully embrace Johnson Sirleaf, despite her recent accolades. Her ongoing campaign for re-election underscores the complexities of Liberian internal affairs, where even an incumbent, Nobel Peace Prize winning president faces stiff opposition. Moreover, it is the legacies of a turbulent past that underlie these issues and inform contemporary Liberian politics.

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Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf visits US President Obama.

Johnson Sirleaf's principal rival is Winston Tubman of the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) party, who recently won 27% in the first round of elections to Johnson Sirleaf's 45 percent, forcing a run-off. One major issue in the campaign has been Johnson Sirleaf's connection to former rebel leader and President Charles Taylor, who is currently facing war crimes charges at The Hague. Her support for the rebellion in the early 1990s has led the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to recommend barring her from political office for 30 years, a charge she has so far sidestepped in her bid for re-election. To further complicate the issue, Tubman, whose party includes Charles Taylor's ex-wife, told the UK's Independent newspaper that he would welcome the former leader back into Liberia and perhaps even consider him for a political post. Both candidates seem unable or unwilling to escape the controversial former leader, who looks to once again play a prominent role in Liberian politics.

Taylor is not, however, the only relic from Liberia's tumultuous past that has resurfaced in time for November's scheduled run-off election. October's third-place finisher and former rebel leader Prince Johnson recently endorsed Johnson Sirleaf. Johnson, who was also listed as a Taylor supporter by the TRC, was previously outspoken about his role as "kingmaker" in the run-off. While Johnson's twelve percent of votes from the preliminary round of elections could prove decisive for the incumbent, his potential impact on the overall health of Liberian politics is less clear.

Johnson mentioned Winston Tubman's running mate, former footballer George Weah, as one reason why he supported Johnson-Sirleaf. "He (Weah) refused to be my second simply because I am on the TRC list. And he went to join Winston. He refused to join me," said Johnson. This smacks of the sort of vindictive, self-serving politics that won the day in previous elections. Johnson, who was famously taped drinking a beer as his forces executed former strongman Samuel Doe in 1990, has played both sides throughout the process. He has, at once, claimed corruption and challenged NEC results while also pledging support to Johnson Sirleaf, all the while maximizing his own leverage in hoping to sway the results.

To make matters worse, National Election Commission (NEC) chief James Fromayan recently stepped down amidst opposition threats to boycott the run-off, alleging fraud and ballot box tampering. Fromayan denies any wrongdoing and said he stepped down "for Liberia" and "so that the CDC would not have an excuse not to participate." However, it remains to be seen whether this move will have positive effects or simply legitimize Tubman's claims and further undermine the electoral process. Even if the allegations are untrue, the notion that cheap political finger pointing can unseat government officials and seriously alter voting procedures is still profoundly troubling.

Liberian politics is in a state of limbo. Despite praise and optimism heaped from outside its borders, Liberia cannot seem to escape the ghosts of its past. Both major candidates find themselves tangled in potentially toxic relationships with a man many consider a war criminal. The TRC and National Election Commission, institutions designed to instill unity, have proven contradictory, weak and malleable in the face of even the slightest political pressure. Dubious tactics and unsavory figures linger, reminding voters of the sort of political culture that has arisen from a generation of brutality and civil strife. Yet, the greatest legacy to overcome might just be simple poverty and extreme unemployment. Twenty percent of Liberian children were estimated to be malnourished in 2007, and the civil war destroyed 95 percent of the country's healthcare facilities. Liberian citizens, more than anything, need work to put food on the table and reliable government services such as healthcare. They also need the sense of voter efficacy that can only be generated through mature discourse and universal trust in the system. The former can only be addressed if politicians handle the latter, shedding the baggage of a complex past and positing something new for their country.

The Inglorious Buccaneers:
Unwarranted Piracy in Somalia

— Bala Naveen Kakaraparthi

> **"We marry pirates! Otherwise we'd go hungry. We need someone who can feed the family. Right now it's only pirates who can do that."**
>
> **-FEMALE VILLAGER (AFBARWAARGO, SOMALIA)**

Throughout the 21st century, Somali pirates have terrorized the waters off the Horn of Africa, costing billions of dollars annually to the global shipping trade. Unlike the quixotic swashbucklers of the past, these modern-day marauders demonstrate a sinister, unsympathetic brand of criminality. Amidst the lawlessness of the Somali Civil War, the pirates have flourished, while almost half their compatriots suffer from malnourishment. The problem is compounded further by the pirates. Various philanthropic agencies, including the United Nations' World Food Program, International Committee of the Red Cross, and CARE International, have stated that pirates have stolen humanitarian relief, since eighty to ninety percent of food aid to Somalia arrives by maritime means. Attempting to counter these attacks, CTF-151, a multinational naval task force, and other anti-piracy deterrents were established to protect shipping lanes. This vigilance enraged many Somalis, who defended piracy as retribution and reimbursement for lost fishing grounds by European and Asian vessels. Yet, a deeper inspection at the origins behind this malefaction reveals an unwarranted justification that disguises the turmoil within Somalia as the source of the piracy. As long as these roots remain misunderstood, international efforts combating Somali pirates will be misguided and ineffective.

For years, the cause behind this surge of piracy has been debated. Eventually, UN reports concluded that illegal fishing by foreign vessels have destroyed Somalia's fishing supply and forced native anglers to resort to apprehending extra-local ships and stealing the resources onboard as a vindicated defense of their waters. Upon examining the role of fishing in Somalia, however, it is dubious source for the explosive increase in piracy. Prior to the Somali Civil War and during the stable Siad Barre regime (1969-1991), a 1982 Foreign Fishery Information Release (FFIR) mentioned that although Somali fisheries possessed considerable potential, they played "only a minor role in the nation's economy." According to the report, "Foreign aid to Somali fisheries exceeds 22 million dollars. The government, however, has not assigned a high priority to the fisheries sector and has not yet implemented a coordinated fisheries development program." In a time when few individuals worked as fishermen, NGOs tried to persuade Somalia to create a feasible and possibly lucrative industry that failed because few wanted to participate in the trade, even if it was financed internationally. The FFIR declared, "The traditionally low status of fishing in Somalia impedes fisheries development. Few Somalis have ever fished and most consumers prefer other types of meat." Thus, it appears unmerited to claim that the majority of Somali pirates were originally fisherman who did not make enough profit to make their business a viable source of income.

When the Siad Barre regime collapsed in 1991, Somalia plunged into civil war, leaving the nation's coastline unguarded. European and Asian fleets, seeking new fishing territories, illegally entered the Horn of Africa and allegedly exhausted a noteworthy portion of the fishing supply. The absence of a secure, capable administration left Somali authorities unable to regulate the coast. This allowed for unlawful foreign exploitation and generated the chaotic vacuum from which piracy arose. In a land where the best armed and best connected rules, a collateral consequence such as piracy proved an unsurprising outgrowth.

Somalia's relatively small population of fishermen and the fishing industry's lack of societal importance, makes the number of individuals who undertook piracy seem unreasonable, and begs for consideration of other reasons why large numbers of Somalis turned to piracy. This "give-us-back-our-fishing-ground" narrative merely serves as a convenient masquerade for the pilfering of East African organized crime groups. However, who is to blame if a country lacks the cohesion that it cannot even manage its own territories? As the woman in the opening quote expressed, piracy has become a lamentably valued, profitable profession, compelling many Somalis to take the leap of fate into piracy.

The instability of the Somali government has been a breeding ground for piracy. Rather than being former fishermen whose livelihoods were damaged from the international free-for-all that occurred in Somali waters, the vast majority of pirates are impoverished civilians pursuing quick fortune. Somali piracy has transformed into a booming enterprise, spearheaded by warlords, pirate bosses, and militant Islamist factions such as Al-Shabab who coordinate hierarchical gangs to conduct these operations. The nationwide destabilization across Somalia has allowed these powerful forces to function without disruption. Somali civilians are easy prey for their appeals, offering profits much greater than any other occupation; even in exceptional fishing conditions, the finest hauls never beget millions of dollars. The decision to become a pirate is based on the dire calculation that a criminal life in piracy brings greater success than a regular life toiling in war-wracked cities such as Mogadishu. The chaos in modern Somalia prompted piracy, not the sapped fishing grounds by European and Asian fleets.

Today, innocent sailors gamble their lives against corsairs who are increasingly desperate to acquire wealth from their crooked, but fruitful trade. While replenished fishing stocks may slightly diminish piracy, only fundamental reforms can enact lasting changes. Despite demanding the influx of billions of dollars, CF-151 and other impediments merely check piracy, but do not rectify the underlying criminality motivating these transgressions. Hence, the formation of an enduring Somali state becomes the only approach that would permanently cease the lawlessness that induces piracy. Until the international community actively assists Somalia in ending its internal conflict, and effectuating a new stable regime, inglorious buccaneers will continue to engage in illicit and destructive operations in the waters off the Horn of Africa.

To Govern the Lawless:

Oil, Accountability, and Blame in the Niger Delta

— Mick Adkins

The Nigerian people know the price of black gold, and it cannot be expressed in the dollar per barrel value of light crude. Nigeria's oil industry trades in a currency of environmental degradation, economic strife and pervasive violence. Since extraction first began in the 1950s in Nigeria's southern Delta region, oil has been a profoundly destabilizing force in Nigerian society. Spills have been pervasive over the past half-century, and some environmentalists estimate that the equivalent of one Exxon-Valdez has been spilled each year. With drinking water tainted and farmlands and fisheries destroyed, thousands have been placed in peril, At the same time, their economic lifelines have been cut out from under them. The United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) recently completed a report analyzing the situation in Ogoniland, a sub-region of the greater Delta that has seen repeated spills over past decades. Whereas its findings are grounded in rigorous investigation, the report's tone clearly echoes popular sentiments, placing disproportionate blame on energy giant Royal Dutch Shell, and failing to acknowledge domestic shortcomings. Fundamentally, Nigeria's present oil crisis is a consequence of failed security.

The report comprehensively details the social and environmental damage that has incurred as a consequence of these oil spills and the failure to successfully mitigate its hazards. Public health concerns for the dangers of polluted water are accompanied by accounts of degraded vegetation and dwindling wetlands. Furthermore, as the report indicates, contamination had depleted fish populations and severely damaged crops, rendering them unusable. The situation is so dire that it may very well take an initial one billion dollar investment and perhaps thirty years to mitigate the social, economic and environmental scourges the Delta region has experienced in recent decades. The report also cites a number of regulatory and institutional failures that might explain the paltry response from the Dutch Shell to these crises. To help remedy the present situation, the report recommends the creation of a recovery fund, the establishment of a restoration authority and an awareness campaign for to address illegal activities. In light of Dutch Shell's role in the causing the current crises in the Delta region, its illegal activities warrant greater public and international scrutiny than they are accorded in the report.

> **"... the price of lawlessness is not merely the presence of crime, but also the inability to prosecute it."**

In November 2010, rebels from the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) overran an oil rig in the Gulf of Guinea, forty miles offshore, taking several foreign workers hostage. The attack represents just one instance of organized criminal activity that has surged in the oil-rich Delta in recent years. In September 2011, an American diplomatic cable was released to the public estimating that "between 100,000 and 250,000 barrels per day or as much as 91 million barrels" are stolen by local criminals and "rebel" groups every year. Stolen oil accounts for between five and ten percent of national production. The environmental impact of illegal drilling and the deployment of artisanal refining techniques by these illegal outfits is significant, to say the least. For its part, Shell has launched an investigative website in which it claims that less than a fifth of all oil spilled in the past year was a result of operational errors or ruptured pipelines. Even without accurate figures, it remains all but certain that oil theft and vandalism are at least a major cause of the disastrous spills in question.

As American Consul-General Donna M. Blair observes in this cable: "…oil bunkering [illegal theft] is not a global phenomenon readily susceptible to international deterrence, but a largely Nigerian development that requires domestic resolution." Oil companies such as Shell operate all over the world, yet it is the Nigerian Delta region that experiences the greatest number of spills and losses unprecedented amounts of official revenue.

Without serious improvements in security to combat these illegal activities, oil spills are likely to continue for the foreseeable future. The region's ongoing insecurity has left miles of oil pipeline unguarded, open to attacks and illegal extraction, As a consequence of these shortcomings, the UNEP report calls for a campaign to foster "…an awareness component highlighting the disproportionate environmental footprint of artisanal refining" that would include "training and livelihood incentives."

In addition to the prima facie rationale behind engaging with the root cause of many of the spills, there are also ancillary reasons that argue for serious action on the part of Nigeria's security forces. Sustained, coherent security policy in the Delta would demonstrate good faith to foreign investors and international watchdogs, in addition to allaying Shell's reservations on pumping millions of dollars into recovery operations.

It has been said that capital follows stability; that money flows to those environments in which a durable system can guarantee its security. In addition, responsibility usually follows stabilization. Shell is acting as any rational agent would in its situation. Executives have made token gestures of restitution to isolated communities, but have resisted public outcries to take responsibility for broader social, economic, and environmental problems.

Instability in the Nigerian Delta region has not only discouraged foreign investment (Shell negotiated a deal to sell four major oil blocs to domestic producers earlier this year), it has also made corporate responsibility unenforceable. Without changes at the most elementary levels, recovery for affected communities and meaningful reform going forward seem a mere pipe dream.

Hot or Not?:

Brazil's Struggle to Control Its Economy

— Austen Hufford

Brazil has South America's largest population, its biggest GDP, and is preparing to host both the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics. It already seems to be the dominant force in South America. Perceptions, however, can be misleading: the country is struggling to control its economy. The Brazilian government and its central bank cannot decide whether high inflation or negative global economic trends is their biggest problem. Since January 2011, Brazil has raised its interest rate five times and lowered it twice. The country has to decide if slowing down its inflation is worth severely hampering its growth. In order to explore what it should do, one must first look at what has happened so far this year.

Although Brazilian real GDP grew by more than seven percent in 2010, inflation was at 5.9 percent and rising. At the same time, the GDP growth is falling while inflation is staying high, which complicates things. In January 2011, the central bank predicted similar rates of inflation but real GDP growth of only 4.5 to five percent for 2011. The Brazilian government has been very wary of inflation ever since it faced hyperinflation in the as high as 3,000 percent in the early 1990s. The government acted swiftly at the time to reduce the risk. At the beginning of 2011, the Brazilian central bank raised interest rates by 0.75 percentage points to 11.5 percent. The government also altered its fiscal policy to reduce inflation. In February, Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff agreed to fifty billion reais (thirty billion dollars) of spending cuts. She acknowledged that inflation was growing too high, too quickly. Popular infrastructure and social spending would not be cut and the government only agreed to get rid of the one-time stimulus package, once again avoiding a chance to engage in structural reforms that could help modernize the economy. From January to August 2011, the government raised the interest rate four more times. Brazil's fiscal and monetary authorities should be commended for their quick action to prevent inflation.

The global economy is a temperamental monster of its own. In the second half of 2011, many people became concerned that a second global recession was beginning with the debt crises in Greece, Spain, and Portugal. Another global recession could prove catastrophic for many of the world's economies, including Brazil. It would, however, end inflation by reducing commodities and food prices.

FABIO POZZEMBOM/AGENCIA BRASIL

Brazilian Central Bank President Alexandre Tombini at a press conference.

As the year progressed, Brazil's expected economic growth for 2011 fell to 4.1 percent while inflation remained high, at 7.1 percent. Faced with rising inflation and falling growth, the Brazilian central bank faced a dilemma: either raise interest rates to stop inflation or decrease them to spur growth. On August 31, the growth path won, and the interest rate was cut by half a percentage point to twelve percent. This surprised investors who were worried by the continuously high inflation rates. The central bank claimed that it had to lower rates because of the turbulent global economic climate. It seemed, however, to have forgotten Brazil's history of inflation. Low economic growth is the last thing to worry about when inflation is very high.

Scarily, inflation has continued to rise while economic growth has continued to fall. In September, the inflation rate reach 7.31 percent, the highest in six years, while the expected GDP growth fell to only 3.5 percent—less than half of the 2010 rate. In response to lagging growth, the bank again cut the interest rate half a percentage point to 11.5 percent.

The recent moves signal that the central bank has changed its goals from reducing inflation to stimulating the economy, but the bank seems to be ignoring a crucial factor: a very volatile inflation rate is bad for investors and causes instability. It makes them nervous about what to expect; stability is of the utmost importance. Instead of giving a half-hearted effort to both goals, the central bank should focus only on keeping inflation to a minimum. It is a much easier issue to control than attempting to jump-start an economy through monetary policy alone.

Hyperinflation devastates an economy much more than does a simple downturn. Brazil should use fiscal policy, not low interest rates, to encourage economic growth. While another stimulus package might be unwise in these high inflationary times, Brazil has other options.

In order to restart growth, Brazil can liberalize its economy. It should reform its old-fashioned and complex labor laws. These laws were supposedly designed to protect workers. Instead, they keep old-timers in their jobs and keep young people away. Brazil's main labor law, the "Consolidation of Labor Laws," has over 800 articles regulating everything from water fountains to adjustable seats. Workers have strong incentives to be fired rather than resign, and mandated severance packages encourage workers to frequently change jobs. These complex laws restrict employers' abilities to hire and fire employees, leaving the businesses less flexible and make them less inclined to grow and hire more workers. The Brazilian government needs to simplify these laws if it wishes to encourage job creation.

Brazil also has many protectionist and anti-competitive tariffs. A heavy tax is imposed on almost anything made outside of Brazil. Because of these taxes, producing a car in Brazil is approximately sixty percent more expensive than producing one in China. But because companies are essentially forced by high import duties to produce cars in Brazil, everyone loses as these taxes pass to the consumer as higher prices. These tariffs reduce the efficiency of the country's economy in the long run and exacerbate its inflation problems.

If Brazil wants to thrive during the next couple of years, it needs to focus both its economic and fiscal policy. The central bank must concentrate on reducing inflation if it wishes to improve the country's situation. The government must liberalize Brazil's labor and import laws in order to strengthen the underlying economy. Together, these changes can help Brazil enjoy fast growth and moderate inflation for years to come.

Fixing Colombia:
FARC is Just One Problem

— Amanda Bourlier

In June 2011, the Colombian government approved a law honoring the victims of the country's ongoing civil war against the rebel group the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). At that time, the government also outlined a strategy to provide its citizens and internally displaced persons (IDPs) with reparations. With this law, known as the Victims Law, came promises to end the conflict and drug violence, in addition to resettling people affected by the violence by 2014. The law has been met with a mixture of hope and skepticism. However, the Victims Law is a bold and daring plan, especially since the conflict is still active.

With the death of FARC leader Alfonso Cano in November, the group's future became uncertain. While an end to the FARC conflict would be a crucial step towards normalcy, other factors such as a lack of funds, a rise in drug-related violence, and a lack of regional cooperation may still impede these efforts.

The violence between rebel groups and the government began in the 1960s and has continued ever since. Former Colombian president Álvaro Uribe made fighting FARC a priority and is credited with significantly weakening the rebel group. Prior to Cano's death, the current government, led by president Juan Manual Santos, was accused of being too soft on FARC.

Since the beginning of the conflict, thousands have been kidnapped or killed, and an additional three to five million Colombians are considered IDPs. IDPs are people who have been forced to flee their homes to live in other places within their home country. They frequently live under very poor conditions, have few education and employment opportunities, and are entirely dependent on the government for support. Colombia's IDPs have been forced off of an estimated seventeen million acres of land due to the threat of violence, extortion, and in some cases, corruption.

IDPs present an enormous challenge to governments, especially when they exist in such enormous numbers. One of the main goals of the Victims Law is to restore people to their land. While this part of the plan is acknowledged to be immensely important, some have been critical of it from the beginning. It is estimated that the plan will cost around twenty billion dollars, which may be more than the already burdened Colombian government can afford. More important, however, is the fact that an estimated forty percent of the land the government wishes to restore to its citizens is held by armed groups. This will make it even more challenging to reclaim the land, and could lead to even more violence.

> **"The problems these countries face are international; the responses must be also."**

Wrapping up the conflict in just three years might seem like too ambitious of a project, especially considering Colombia's limited resources. Alfonso Cano's death, however, may be the first step towards meaningful progress. While there are FARC members prepared to fill his role within the organization; however, for the moment, the rebel group is off-balance and vulnerable. His death might pave the way to ending the conflict.

Despite FARC's weakening, many parts of Colombia continue to see violence due to increased numbers of drug trafficking groups. The Colombian think tank Indepaz suggests that these traffickers have replaced rebel groups as Colombia's main source of violence. The country's role in the international drug trade is significant: Colombia produces eighty percent of the world's cocaine and a significant amount of heroin. The promises made in the Victims Law are important to ending the conflict and returning Colombia to normalcy, but the likelihood of the Colombian government succeeding within the stated time frame remains doubtful. Even if FARC were disbanded and the civil war was over, the threat from drug-related violence would still be present.

Colombia is not alone in experiencing an increase in the amount of drug-related crime. Countries throughout the region, including Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador, have seen crime rates skyrocket because of drug trafficking. Drug violence can easily spill over the border of one state into another, rendering domestic efforts meaningless if neighboring states do not coordinate their policies. For example, experts attribute the rise in drug in violence in Guatemala to the Mexican crackdown on cartels. As it has become more difficult to operate in Mexico, traffickers have developed a larger presence in Guatemala, which was ill-equipped to deal with a problem this severe and now faces extremely high murder rates. Efforts to reduce the violence in Guatemala could push traffickers even further south; similar efforts in Colombia might encourage them to move farther north. Unilateral initiatives have proven themselves to be ineffective and only temporarily push the problem over their neighbor's border.

The only way to successfully combat this serious issue is through stronger regional cohesiveness. These problems are international in nature; responses to them, therefore, must also be international. By presenting a unified front, especially if this included the support and resources of larger American countries such as Argentina, Brazil, and the United States, the region might actually stand a chance at resolving its problems. Such an effort would certainly be challenging, but not unheard of. Regional Latin American initiatives do exist; prominent examples include Union of South American Nations and Brazil's internationally-accessible National Bank for Economic and Social Development. Latin American countries must take steps to coordinate their responses to the drug war to make meaningful progress. Unless resolved, a lack of regional cooperation to combat new security problems may ultimately render Colombia's reconciliation efforts ineffective.

Don't Cry for Cristina, Argentina

— Greg Brown

When Argentine President Cristina Kirchner's husband died of a heart attack in October 2010, many believed that all of her influence and power disappeared with him. Popular opinion held that she acted as a front for her husband, a former president himself, that it was he who ran the country. In October 2010, few believed that she could win another election, let alone run. She proved all of them wrong one year later. On October 24, Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner won a second term as president of Argentina, garnering a staggering 54 percent of the vote, more than three times as much as her nearest opponent. In doing this, Kirchner solidified her position and reputation in Argentine politics, and proved that she was a powerful player.

Argentina has a notoriously unwieldy political system; the choice of Kirchner, who has proven herself a savvy politician and has made strides in improving the economy and fighting poverty, will benefit the Argentinian state over the long term. But although Kirchner won the election with an overwhelming share of the vote, her first term was frequently marred with controversy.

FABIO POZZEMBOM/AGENCIA BRASIL

Kirchner and her late husband celebrate her presidential win in 2010.

Almost immediately after taking office, opponents accused her of being a stand-in for her husband, Nestor Kirchner, whose presidential term ended just before hers began. Public support for her dropped drastically. Many believed that the couple had skirted the law by essentially trading places with each other, thus avoiding running in the same race. The Kirchners were often referred to as "the Clintons of the south," and it was widely assumed that Ms. Kirchner would step aside at the end of her first term so that her husband could run again. That possibility ended when he died.

Early in her first term, Kirchner upset the powerful agricultural lobby by introducing export quotas. One of the products affected was soy, exports of which had helped Argentina recover from a disastrous economic collapse in the early 2000s. The outraged farmers' union, one of the country's most powerful lobbies, staged large protests throughout Buenos Aires.

Critics also accused President Kirchner of trying to silence her critics in the media by making it illegal to own numerous broadcasting licenses. The law was a direct attack on the Clarin Media Group, Argentina's largest and most prominent media company. Relations between the company and the president had been sour for years. Clarin often criticized Kirchner, and Kirchner has responded that the company's owner adopted babies taken from their biological parents during Argentina's Dirty War. The claim has gone to the courts, which have yet to issue a ruling.

Even as she has proven controversial, President Kirchner has led the country to an economic prosperity few thought possible after the economy collapsed ten years ago. Because she increased prices for commodities and developed a strong trading relationship with Brazil, Argentina's economy has been growing at an explosive, yet steady, rate for years. Her popular social program, the Universal Benefit for Children, has lifted scores of children and families out of poverty.

Her most significant achievement while in office has been handling the legacy of the Dirty War. President Kirchner has doggedly sought out and brought to justice former military officers and others who committed crimes during the conflict that rocked Argentina in the late 1970s and1980s. The most prominent human rights group in Argentina, Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, has lauded President Kirchner's efforts in bringing those responsible for horrific crimes to justice. She has even proposed laws demanding that DNA samples be taken when the criminal charge involves crimes against humanity. This is a crucial step in identifying victims and stolen children of the Dirty War.

Despite President Kirchner's work to benefit Argentina, a dark cloud looms over the country. Argentina's inflation rate is the second highest in South America, behind only Venezuela's. The Argentine peso is getting weaker, and the president recently enacted a law making it difficult to convert pesos to US dollars–a popular way of protecting assets following the collapse of the currency ten years ago.

Despite a darkening situation, Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner seems to know what she is doing. She has seen and handled tough economic times before: both she and her late husband were credited with saving the Argentine economy after its last collapse. President Kirchner shows no sign of letting up in her quest to bring abusers of the Dirty War to retribution, which will bring long-sought justice to countless Argentines. The Republic of Argentina, it seems, is in good hands for another four years.

Can a Soldier Stop the Violence?

— Austen Hufford

On November 6, 2011, Otto Pérez Molina, a former general, past head of the intelligence service, and founder of the conservative Patriot Party, was elected to the Guatemalan presidency. His campaign promised that, if elected, Pérez would crush crime with a "mano dura"—an iron fist.

There is little question that Guatemala needs to do something about its seemingly never-ending drug violence. At 45 murders per 100,000 people and more than fifteen murders per day, it has one of the highest murder rates in the world. According to the United Nations, more than 95 percent of these crimes do not get punished. Citizens are fed up with the violence.

Pérez intends to lower crime rates by hiring 10,000 police officers, expanding surveillance, using more soldiers to combat drug violence, and lowering the age at which criminal charges can be brought against people. Essentially, he intends to stop the violence by doing what he knows best: military methods and intelligence. While this approach will appeal to an increasingly angry and afraid population, it is not the correct way to stop the violence. "Drug wars" simply do not work.

FLICKR

Pérez promotes police action.

In Mexico, Felipe Calderón's "War on Drugs," which started in December 2006, may have succeeded in defeating some major drug lords, but it also increased the overall level of violence. In 2010 alone, there were more than 15,000 drug-related deaths, compared to 2,119 in 2006. Calderón's ideas were similar to Pérez's current proposal: he heavily increased the military presence and targeted many of cartels with military action. If an increased military presence had such a negative effect in Mexico, it similar, if not worse, consequences in Guatemala.

Guatemala was embroiled in a bitter and violent 36-year civil war that ended in 1996. While both sides committed many atrocities during this conflict, the UN believes that 93 percent of the human rights violations were committed by the Guatemalan military. Pérez was a member of the army in the closing years of the war and has been accused of committing war crimes. However, no actual evidence has been presented on the subject. During the war, the military controlled the government. After a new constitution was established in 1993 and peace was achieved in 1996, precautions were taken to ensure that civilians would control the government. The army was forced to reduce its size by one-third and both the president and Congress agreed to keep the military focused solely on external matters. Pérez's predecessors have successfully managed to keep the military and the government as separate entities.

Pérez's promise to increase the military presence, the uncontrollable violence, and the gangs' increasing power will make it very difficult for him to not use the military as a major weapon. This will create a scenario directly at odds with what his predecessors have tried to accomplish. In a country that was under military rule less than twenty years ago, the boundary between the civilian government and the armed forces must be kept clear. The Guatemalan military should remain a non-political entity with responsibility for external matters only.

Guatemala does need to become more security focused; however, Guatemala does not need a "War on Drugs." Instead, it should focus on finding alternatives solutions. A better approach would be to focus on a stronger and more efficiently-run internal police force. Pérez's idea to increase the police force will ensure that more crimes will be reported.

Pérez should institute a form of "community policing." This is a type of localized policing where the officers police the areas in which they live. They become part of the community and they have the opportunity to build good relations with local leaders. This type of policing allows both residents and leaders to see that the police are really trying to protect the interests of the community as a whole. In Nicaragua, community policing has been a national initiative since the early 1980s. Nicaragua's police force tries to recruit from within the community and it focuses on building trust with the local population. While hard data is hard to come by, many area experts believe that its policing model is more effective than the policing systems in nearby countries. Opposition to drugs must start locally: community leaders need to recognize that the drug trade hurts citizens in the long run.

All of these initiatives, however, will cost money. The Guatemalan government must increase tax revenues, which currently remain at eleven percent of GDP, one of the lowest in Latin America. While this may not have much popular appeal, more revenue is needed to fund these initiatives. Guatemala's citizens have spoken: security must be first. Pérez must fix the problem through non-military means. Though he may be a former soldier, he must now be a president first.

@Mexico:
Social Media's New Role

— Lissa Kryska

Imagine living in a world where local media are unable to report on violence in your area. Newspapers, radio stations, and TV stations have learned the hard way that when they report about certain topics–often the ones that people most want and need to know about–they end up dead or missing. Between those who self-censor out of fear and those who are actively being threatened and have no choice but to comply, reliable sources of information have all but disappeared. Shoot-outs, murders, and piles of bodies left under bridges are all things that people now have to face regularly with no warning from their local media.

Welcome to Mexico.

The lack of information from reliable news sources in Mexico is alarming. The drug cartels have established control of most media through intimidation and threats, and official media reports on cartel-related violence and activities have become rare.

However, nature abhors a vacuum, and there is something stepping in to fill the information void: social media. Twitter, blogs, and Facebook have become tools that people use to get safely through their day-to-day lives. According to the Mexican Internet Association, Internet use in Mexico is now double what it was in 2005, and the number of people using Twitter in Mexico has grown to 2.5 million. The Internet offers the relative safety of anonymity, and posts are often written and reposted by average citizens. The posts are usually tagged with the name of their city or area, or a tag they have created to represent their vicinity. Recently, tweets warning people to avoid a certain road, where gunmen stopped traffic to dump 35 bodies under an overpass, appeared hours before the local media reported on the event. This is exactly the kind of information that people are most desperate for: information that affects their lives directly and can save lives by letting people know when to avoid certain areas.

This new media is not without its pitfalls, however. Unlike newspapers and other traditional media outlets, online social media is not regulated. There is no one to check the facts, and the results that a false tweet or online post can cause are catastrophic. This happened in August, when two people tweeted and posted on Facebook that there were drug cartel attacks on local schools. Panicked parents flooded the roads and there was general chaos and pandemonium, with 26 car accidents reported. No such attack had taken place. The government arrested Maria de Jesus Bravo Pagola, 34, and Gilberto Martinez Vera, 48, who had allegedly put up the posts, on charges of terrorism. Human rights groups and other groups concerned with online freedom of expression protested the arrests, and the charges were later dropped. The two will now most likely be charged with the newly created offense of "disturbing public order."

> **"Twitter was not invented to become a security device or a substitute for traditional media."**

Another fear is that the drug cartels could use online forums to spread false reports or to increase their influence and power. Already, cartels have been known to post videos of beheadings and other activities that they want to incite fear and build reputation.

Although posts with false information are a risk, laws that prevent people from posting because they fear legal trouble should not hinder new uses of social media. While the ultimate goal is to free local media to report on what they need to, the government should act to protect this alternate form of information sharing. This new crime, "disturbing public order," should not be used to censor online freedom of expression or to persecute well-meaning citizens, especially when these posts can save lives. With such an unstable daily situation, the more information people have the better. There are many more cases of social media helping people than harming people in these scenarios. Recent studies have shown that most false tweets were actually ignored and were far less likely to be reposted than true stories. It seems that in many cases people can accurately judge for themselves whether a given report is true or not.

However, drug cartels are catching on to this new form of communication, and the methods used to silence local media are also being used against those who post online. In September, two mutilated bodies, belonging to a man and a woman in their early twenties were found hanging from a bridge in Nuevo Lerado. They were identified as bloggers who had posted about the cartels on well-known drug-related blogs like "Blog del Narco". The bodies both showed signs of torture and gruesome deaths, similar to bodies left elsewhere by drug cartels. The note was signed "Z," indicating that the Los Zetas cartel was responsible. There was also a note warning against future cartel-related postings: "This is what happens to people who post funny things on the Internet."

The government should strive to protect the online environment, despite drug cartel insiders and intense corruption efforts to inhibit it. Blogging and Twitter enable people to keep each other informed and safe. The government must do what it can to protect those who post and those who read about drug cartels, although it will always pose some sort of risk.

Twitter was not invented to become a security device or a substitute for traditional media. The Mexican government and international community need to work together to end the cartels' reign and restore some measure of peace and order to Mexican society. One step in this process is ensuring that newspapers are able to publish articles freely without fear of punishment or death. When Twitter is the most reliable source of information available, there is clearly a bigger problem that needs to be dealt with.

A New Direction:

Guatemala's First Step Toward Accountability

— Caroline Bissonnette

Between 1960 and 1996, Guatemala was rocked by a civil war in which over 200,000 lives were lost. Ninety-three percent of these deaths were attributed to state forces and paramilitary groups. The UN-sponsored Historical Clarification Commission later labeled the conflict as genocide. Piecing together the remnants of a country that has been ravaged by conflict is a process that takes time, dedication, and cooperation. Fifteen years after the war's end, the arrest and proposed trial of Guatemala's 81 year-old former army general, Hector Mario Lopez Fuentes, has the potential to be the landmark case that finally relieves the country of its misery. That the government has yet to prosecute those within its ranks deemed responsible for the genocide detracts from its own legitimacy. Without coming to terms with this conflict, Guatemala will have a tough time successfully making its way into the future. Citizens cannot be expected to back and support a system of government that committed such atrocities and has yet to implement any form of retribution.

General Hector Mario Lopez Fuentes served as the Chief of Staff for Guatemala's military from 1982 to 1983, under the dictatorship of General Efrain Ríos Montt. Of the 32 massacres that took place in the Ixil Triangle in the Quiché region of Guatemala, fifteen of them occurred in 1982, while Ríos Montt was President.

Ríos Montt has thus far managed to avoid facing any legal repercussions for his role in the conflict by serving in Guatemala's congress from 1990 to 2004 as all members of Congress are given political immunity unless a court suspends them from office. After a highly controversial and ultimately unsuccessful presidential bid following his time as President of Congress, General Ríos Montt was again elected to his Congressional seat in 2007. Some have tried to bring him to justice: in 2005, Spain ordered an international arrest warrant against Ríos Montt and several other military commanders for genocide and crimes against humanity. Guatemala's Constitutional Court, however, denied this attempt.

Allowing Ríos Montt to serve in public office without any accountability for past actions has led to a rift between a stalled government and a population that demands action. Public frustration at General Ríos Montt's continued public service erupted during his 2003 presidential campaign. Widespread pre-election riots and violence were attributed to Ríos Montt and an organized group of his supporters. As he arrived at a polling station, the crowd showed their disapproval by greeting Montt with boo's and cries of 'Assassin!'" The population's views were ultimately reflected in the election results: Montt received only eleven percent of the vote and came in third place. Four years later, however, he was re-elected to Congress, backed once again by a strong ruling party composed largely of supporters of Montt's past presidency. For a time, the spirit of justice grew quiet until General Fuentes was arrested in Guatemala City in June 2011 for his part in the massacres at the Ixil Triangle, which ended the lives of more than 300 indigenous Mayan civilians. Fuentes' trial marks a unique moment in the American court system: it is the first genocide case ever to be tried in either North or South America. After his initial hearing, Fuentes' trial was postponed four times on the grounds that his health was too poor to stand trial. Recently however, a judge ruled that the trial would proceed. This case represents a step in a new direction for Guatemala. It is a continuation of the frustration that surfaced during Montt's campaign, though this time it has gained legal legitimacy.

> **"Without coming to terms with this conflict, Guatemala will have a tough time successfully making its way into the future."**

To regain a sense of normalcy and peace, it is important for the Guatemalan citizens to see the men who caused great suffering and unrest stand trial. The country is trying to move away from its bloodied past, but to do this it must overcome this great obstacle: holding people responsible for their past actions. If the Guatemalan government does not continue to seek justice for victims of the genocide, it will never fully gain the support of its people.

The Road to Environmental Ruin?:
Bolivia, Brazil, and the World

— Amanda Bourlier

What began as an innocuous highway project between Bolivia and Brazil to boost development and regional ties turned into a political nightmare for Bolivian president Evo Morales. Protestors spent much of the summer and early fall working to convince the government to cancel construction of the road because it would have caused countless violations of indigenous rights and widespread environmental destruction. They succeeded in late October. This situation serves as a reminder that meaningful environmental protection efforts can only be made when a state chooses progress towards goals benefiting the environment rather than personal economic growth.

The proposed highway would have provided Brazil with easier access to the Pacific Ocean and Asian markets, in addition to creating a boost for the Bolivian economy. The planned route for this road, however, cut directly through the large TIPNIS indigenous territory and rainforest preserve. Under Bolivian law created by President Morales, indigenous people must be consulted when a potential policy would affect them. Because the people were not asked about the highway, large protests erupted, and Morales' popularity dropped sharply. These people, who would have been most affected by the road, were opposed to its construction because of concerns regarding the development, deforestation, and contamination the highway would inevitably bring to their preserved land.

The protests themselves were handled badly, with national police at times using tear gas against demonstrators and beating protestors. But even more troubling than the initial government response to the protests was the decision to build the road in the first place. Since coming to power, Bolivian president Morales has championed indigenous rights, scoffed at ineffective US environmental efforts, and implemented groundbreaking policies protecting nature. Thus, violating law regarding indigenous peoples in a way that would be damaging to the environment seemed an almost impossible scenario.

But, the promise of economic growth—especially if it would also have meant stronger ties to powerful Brazil—must have been too attractive to pass up. The fact that Bolivia initially agreed to the project in spite of its environmentally protective track record demonstrates just how tempting economic growth can be. Fortunately, the people of Bolivia spoke up for their rights and the rights of the environment, and the government was persuaded to cancel the project.

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Bolivian President Evo Morales, center.

Evo Morales caught a considerable amount political flak for the highway fiasco, and rightly so. His actions alienated much of his staunchest supporters and were borderline illegal. Bolivia, though, is not the only state that faced a choice between the environment and the potential economic growth to be gained by building the road. Brazil arrived at the same conclusion as Bolivia initially did, before Bolivian citizens rose up against the project. Indeed, Brazil was so in favor of the project that the Brazilian government would have covered more than half of the costs of the highway. In this case, as in many others throughout Brazil's recent history, Brazil chose GDP over environmental wellbeing.

The events in Bolivia provide an encouraging exception to the rule that, in instances where policy becomes a matter of selecting between economic development and environmental concerns, the environment nearly always loses. Economic growth is certainly very important; indeed, it is one of the strongest contributing factors to increased human security. And, in light of the global recession, it is incredibly easy for governments to choose to pursue economic growth over just about any other sort of national benefit.

But in order to achieve the sort of significant environmental progress the world claims to desire, efforts to achieve this progress cannot stop when times are hard. The events in Bolivia are a perfect case study in this lesson. The issue must be seen as a priority, not a luxury. It is no less important to have clean water and strong ecosystems when economies are shrinking than when GDP is on the rise.

The cancelation of the highway project, then, is a victory for the people of Bolivia, and a positive step forward in the battle to protect the environment worldwide. Even if Bolivia had consulted with the indigenous people affected before beginning the project, as they should have under Bolivian law, the design should never have been chosen. If a road had to be built, it should have been planned so that it passed through land that was not protected. While this would require the road to follow a less direct route that would cost drivers time and money, it would amount to a mild inconvenience compared to the risks of continuing to choose environmental concerns last. Fortunately for Bolivia, its residents realized this even when their government did not. It can only be hoped that citizens and governments throughout the world will start making the same choice when it comes to the environment.

Brazil Falls on Its Face

— Seth Soderborg

FIFA, international soccer's governing body, is not pleased with Brazil. Preparations for the 2014 World Cup, to be held in 13 cities across the country, are behind schedule. They are unlikely to be on track anytime soon.

On November 8, FIFA's general secretary told a Brazilian congressional committee, "We are late; we cannot lose one more day." With less than three years left, Brazil has yet to begin improvements in five of the thirteen airports that will handle World Cup passengers. Work on the São Paulo stadium that will host the opening ceremonies only began in May, and renovations to Rio de Janeiro's Maracanã stadium, which will host the tournament final, slowed to a crawl after a worker strike.

Brazil faces a daunting task. The Getúlio Vargas Foundation, a prominent Brazilian think tank, estimates that the country will need to spend 11.4 billion dollars to improve transportation, security, and telecommunication infrastructure to successfully host the tournament and the 2016 Summer Olympics. The government agencies and state-owned companies responsible will have to overcome peculiar legislation, legitimate labor grievances, and their own substandard business practices if they wish to succeed.

Most worrying of all are the airports. São Paulo's Guarulhos airport, the country's principal international hub, already receives two million more passengers than it can handle. The dank facility is difficult to navigate, with fewer terminals and less space than the Johannesburg airport that welcomed soccer fans to South Africa in 2010. In 2008, Forbes magazine ranked Guarulhos third worldwide among major international airports with the greatest number of delayed flights. That was. In April, a government-affiliated think tank estimated that rapidly increasing domestic demand for air travel would exceed even planned capacity for at least a year before the tournament. The same report suggested that most of the planned airport expansions will not be finished by kickoff.

The current situation at Guarulhos reinforces the report's findings: Infraero, the government monopoly that runs most of Brazil's airports, has been planning a third international terminal since 2001; work has yet to begin.

One of Infraero's few steps forward came in April 2011, when the company announced that it would award airport building and operating contracts to private firms. The contracted firms would front a share of the investment expenditure. Expansions at Guarulhos are expected to cost more than 3 billion dollars.

But reforming Guarulhos won't be enough. Infraero announced a 5.65 billion dollar plan to renovate Viracopos airport in Campinas, a major Sao Paulo suburb, in an effort to relieve Guarulhos of some tournament traffic.

ANTONIO CRUZ/AGENCIA BRASIL

Ricardo Teixeira, left, president of the Brazilian Football Association, and Jerome Valcke, right, secretary-general of FIFA, testify before the World Cup Preparations Committee of the Brazilian congress.

These renovation projects may get off the ground. Or, they may go the way of another host city's plans: Brazil's third largest city, Belo Horizonte, had hoped to add a second passenger terminal to its small but crowded international airport. After Infraero failed to move forward for well over a year, the city had to scale down the proposed improvements. It will now use temporary facilities to handle tournament traffic. The delay likely cost the city its bid to host the tournament's opening ceremonies.

The poor planning, lack of foresight, and limited capacity on display in São Paulo and Belo Horizonte can also be seen in other host cities. Rio de Janeiro's airports lack the terminals needed to handle its current traffic, let alone the crowds of fans arriving for the tournament final. And, although renovations to the city's storied Maracanã stadium have begun, striking laborers demanding better pay and improved working conditions have stopped progress several times.

None of the construction plans take into account the very real possibility that strikes could derail projects for weeks and raise costs. Several companies won construction contracts with lowball bids that deliberately understated worker costs. Now, underpaid workers are going on strike at tournament projects across the country. Companies facing strikes and deadlines have made costly concessions that might not have been needed had the original contracts been honest: a strike at the National Stadium in Brasília ended after the construction company offered bonuses, a monthly grocery package, an end of year vacation, the right to only make up half of the days missed due to the stoppage, and, of course, an orthodontic plan.

FIFA should be worried. Progress has been slow on projects that are underway, and many planned improvements still exist only on paper. The New York Times noted that, as of September 2011, only five host cities had begun work on non-airport infrastructure, and only nine of fifty planned transportation projects had actually started.

As plans languish and FIFA grows restless, Brazil's congress is doing nothing to help. Instead, lawmakers call FIFA's requests unreasonable impositions on Brazil's sovereignty. The association's general secretary was in the National Congress most recently to ask that it finally pass a law exempting tournament events from a ban on alcohol sales at sports arenas—something the assembly was supposed to have done in 2009.

Romário Faria, a congressman and member of Brazil's 1994 world champion soccer squad, called FIFA's requests an attempt to create "a state within the state."

Time is running out, and almost everything is behind schedule. The culprits are the planners at state-owned monopolies who failed to plan, lowball bidders who figured they could solve labor contracts later, and the politicians who blame FIFA while failing to approve rules that a country accepts when it agrees to host the tournament. The officials who insisted that Brazil would put on the best cup in history should have followed their boasts with hard work. They didn't. Brazil may pay dearly for electing (and reelecting) such useless leaders.

Corruption Reduction:
Peru's Necessary Purge

— Julia Jacovides

In recent years, Peru has become the darling of Latin America. When Ollanta Humala was sworn into office in late July, it reported an average annual growth of seven percent and inflation of less than three percent. Despite this positive growth, one out of every three citizens remained in poverty. A central cause of this painful statistic is the level of corruption in the country. Nearly half of those responding to a poll stated that the police force was the nation's most corrupt institution. In mid-October, President Humala forced nearly two-thirds of the force's generals into retirement in response. Some have criticized this move, calling it a purely political effort to reward his supporters. Humala, however, should be applauded for his drastic attempt to make Peru less corrupt and for following through with his campaign promises.

Before he was elected, Humala promised to better the living conditions of Peru's poor by redistributing the country's wealth. Since his inauguration, he has stated that he wishes to do so by equalizing the system by which profits from the export of natural resources are distributed. Humala linked poverty, which affects a third of Peru's population, to the country's economic progress. Reuters reported that if he is able to minimize poverty, Humala would be able to resolve social conflicts that affect oil and mining projects valued at about $40 billion. The most standout solution to minimizing poverty was to reduce corruption, which is clearly linked to poverty levels: the more one has to pay to bribe an official, the less one has to feed one's family.

Too often during a campaign politicians try to appeal to as many people as possible by promising them things that are not feasible. Humala, however, made a great leap in overcoming this habit: he extended his promises beyond his inauguration in a genuine attempt to better the country's most harmful customs. In the few days after the police purge, his approval rating held steady in the 60 percent range. Humala's success is due, in part, to the broad appeal that corruption reduction has to the entire Peruvian population. He has the majority of the country in his favor, and this act should be seen as an attempt to keep them in his favor, not as one aimed at fluffing his police force with supporters.

This is the largest staff purge in Peru's history, and it has diminished a grossly overreaching police force. Before the removals, the system included 55 generals, 900 colonels, and over 2,000 commanders. Today, only 25 generals remain. A USAID report from 2007 explicitly states that larger bureaucratic organizations with large assets easily become sources of corruption. It goes on to detail an event where thirty million dollars were found to be missing from the Peruvian police pension fund. Not only did this deprive elderly workers of money during their retirement, it also minimized the police force's ability to operate at satisfactory levels. In addition, the USAID report found that there is significant corruption in both possessing and handing out gasoline, as well as in distributing housing and medical benefits. Based on a 2001 report compiled by the Peruvian Interior Ministry, police officers view the "personal profit" that corruption brings as an expected advantage of their position.

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Peruvian President Ollanta Humalla in 2011.

In mid-October, one of the country's vice-presidents, Omar Chehade, was accused of asking a police general to help him in a convoluted scheme that would profit a wealthy company. Mr. Humala has supported investigations into this matter, saying that if the courts decide that Mr. Chehade is guilty, then all involved parties will take responsibility. This signals a clear break with Peru's past, and is an obvious attempt to move the country and its government to a more transparent future.

By minimizing the number of high police administrators, Humala is attempting to purge from society's mind the idea that public officials and corruption are synonymous with each other. He is also directly following through on his campaign promise to improve living conditions in Peru. The country's police force, often described as "bloated", is now smaller. This provides less room for mistakes and a greater scrutiny for those who dabble in corruption. The poor, who have suffered the most because a great deal of their income goes to bribes, will be able to emerge from the strangling hold corruption once had on them. With time, Humala's initiative will succeed in increasing the level of respect between officials and the Peruvian poor.

Dilma's Cabinet:
Another One Bites the Dust

— Seth Soderborg

More than half-a-dozen members of Brazil's cabinet have lost their jobs since June. The papers say that President Dilma Rousseff is "cleaning house"—throwing out crooked administrators inherited from her predecessor's administration. Dilma, who enjoys approval ratings above seventy percent, says that the phrase, "cleaning house" is too simple. "Cleaning house is something that begins at six in the morning and ends at eight at night. And you can't end corruption like that, once and for all," she told an interviewer in September. Corruption is so engrained in Brazil's political culture that a single day, or a single summer, of firings will do little to change the way politicians do business. And she's right. It is one thing to acknowledge the depth of the problem, and quite another to take it on.

So far, the president has benefited from a popular perception that the corrupt ministers were allies of the previous president—not Dilma's picks, but well-connected operators who pushed the president's Workers' Party to appoint them. As the scandals continue, that sentiment is likely to fade. Unless Dilma can change the culture of the cabinet, the endless scandals may bring her down. The accusations are serious and broad, and reach officials in nine ministries: sports, agriculture, tourism, communications, transportation, cities, environment, mines and energy, and agricultural development. Some may not be true, though most have already led to resignations and, in a few cases, arrests.

In June, Dilma's chief of staff, Antonio Palocci, resigned after a reporter discovered that his net worth had increased from 250,000 to five million dollars during the four years he served in congress. The earnings came from his political consultancy, but there was little doubt that the fantastic returns were proof of influence-peddling.

Shortly thereafter, Veja, Brazil's most widely-read periodical, revealed that Transportation Minister Alfredo Nascimento had agreed to contracts in return for secret donations to his Republic Party. Then Rio de Janeiro's leading daily, O Globo, reported that the income of Nascimento's son had increased 87-fold between 2009 and 2011. The minister resigned on July 6. In some countries, that might have been the end of Alfredo Nascimento's political career. Luckily for him, it is quite hard to remove an elected official from office. So Nascimento, who had vacated a senate seat to serve in the cabinet, simply returned to that seat, where he enjoys the protection of laws that shield members of congress from most criminal investigations.

A few weeks later, Veja published a series of stories describing improprieties in the agriculture ministry, run at the time by Wagner Rossi of the patronage-hungry Democratic Movement Party. The story that cost Rossi his job began in 2010. A representative from a company bidding on a government contract told a committee that a competitor had paid the minister's office 1.3 million dollars for special consideration. After a committee member who heard the accusation raised it to his superior, the member was summoned to the office of a higher official and told to take no stance on the accusation. Rossi, whose Sao Paulo home is estimated to be worth six million dollars, resigned on August 17. As the agriculture ministry imploded, federal officers moved against another government corruption scheme. They arrested thirty people connected to the tourism ministry, including its second highest-ranking official, on embezzlement charges. The tourism minister resigned on August 14.

After a brief, welcome respite, the scandals began anew. Orlando Silva, Brazil's sports minister, resigned October 26 after a series of embezzlement schemes around sports-related nonprofits unraveled. The stolen money was entering the coffers of Silva's Brazilian Communist Party, and the embezzlers turned out to be Silva's friends. In November, a new and potentially more damaging scandal emerged from the labor ministry. According to Veja, Labor Minister Carlos Lupi had required companies and non-profits doing business with the ministry to pay five to fifteen percent of the value of their contracts to his Democratic Labor Party. If they failed to do this, they risked being investigated for labor law violations.

If the scandals prove one thing, it is that far too many Brazilians enter public life intending to enrich themselves. Palocci's influence-peddling consultancy was only one example of a common practice among Brazilian lawmakers. Many of them become quite wealthy within a few years of leaving high office, if they fail to make fortunes while in office.

Most disturbing of all is the way Nascimento, Rossi, Silva, and perhaps also Lupi treated their ministerial appointments as opportunities to enrich their parties. For them, the government was simply another pawn in the electoral game, one whose ample resources they exploited to the fullest. Scholarly wisdom holds that this is exactly how Brazilian politicians have always behaved. The high cost of campaigning (Brazilian elections are the second most-expensive in the world after the US) forces party leaders to seek funding wherever they can find it.

Perhaps the primary cause of corruption is that the penalties associated with it remain light, almost perfunctory, compared to the vast sums of money that seem to be available. Until last year, lawmakers awaiting trial for corruption could still stand in national elections. Parliamentary privilege allows them to be tried before the Supreme Federal Tribunal, where a backlog of cases ensures they can act freely for years before facing punishment. Few lawmakers ever go to jail, and a surprisingly large number of congressmen under investigation managed to win reelection until the law changed.

Corrupt politicians have succeeded in Brazilian elections because voters are often willing to overlook theft when they believe the accused has improved their communities. It is common for Brazilians to say of corrupt politicians: "Rouba, más faz"—"he (or she) steals, but gets things done." The open-list proportional representation electoral system encourages this mindset by allowing individual members of congress to win the votes of a small slice of the electorate. Unfortunately, they usually live in a handful of towns that the member showers with government money.

When Dilma says that corruption cannot be ended in a day, she is referring to the electoral incentives that reward corrupt practices, as well as the cultural norms that let politicians get away with wrongdoing. Electoral reforms and further changes to immunity laws will be necessary, but congress is unlikely to support any such effort. Dilma has punished the ministers who have been caught—in other words, cleaned house—but she has yet to express support for the kinds of changes that might end the culture of corruption in Brasília. Until those reforms happen, expect to see more of the same.

Economy versus the Environment

— Caroline Bissonnette

In May 2010, Chile's government approved plans to build a series of five dams on the Baker and Pascua rivers in the Patagonia region, which is known for its unique and diverse landscape. The dam project was originally suspended to allow time to consider seven objections that had been filed in court against the project by environmental and social activists. These activists argue that, should dams be built on the two rivers, irreparable damage could be done to the region. The dam project would flood nearly 60 sq km of land, disrupting the area's delicate ecosystem by altering the natural flow of nutrients along the river system.

The Center for Research on Ecosystems of Patagonia has calculated that the intricate system of fjords in Patagonia absorbs the same amount of carbon dioxide as is emitted by the entire country. Worryingly, this system depends on the health of the rivers that have been scheduled for damming.

HidroAysen, the company behind the dam project, hails it as "represent[ing] a cost-effective, sustainable, reliable, and ecologically viable source of energy." They project that Chile will need nearly three times more energy by the year 2030 than it requires today. The dam project would undoubtedly help satisfy the needs of an increasingly energy-hungry nation.

However, the argument that this project is necessary to help fill the demand for power in Chile will not appease environmentalists opposed to the dams' construction. A key factor in Chile's growing need for new energy sources are the vast and profitable copper mines found in the Northern Atacama Desert. These mines are unpopular in Chile because they require huge amounts of power to operate, and they sap Chile's already dwindling energy supplies.

The Chilean government continues to support the mines because they provide jobs and tax revenue. The mining industry was a major contributor to the 6% growth in Chile's economy last year. The new dam project itself would inject over $3 billion into the Chilean economy. Despite public outcry and aggressive protests, in early June a Chilean court voted 2 to 1 in favor of lifting a suspension another court had placed on the dam project. Their decision fueled angry protests, some of which have led to violent encounters with security forces. Protests continue as opponents to the massive project plan to take their complaints to the Supreme Court.

As the case progresses through the Chilean court system, it continues to raise questions about the long-term consequences of continually choosing economic advantage over environmental protection. Countries across the globe are facing similar questions. Can a nation, struggling to make ends meet, choose the well-being of the planet and its global inhabitants over its own business interests? If governments consistently choose profitability over preservation, the global community will continue to suffer dramatic environmental harm. Short-term problems must be examined closely and the farther-reaching consequences of actions need to be taken into account.

As the global economy continues to struggle, governments face tough decisions. Budgets are shrinking while populations grow. The need to balance growing economic and energy needs with environmental preservation is as urgent as ever, but no obvious solutions are available to newly cash-strapped policymakers. Short term responses like turning a blind eye to public protests or enacting legislation that harms the environment may be the most popular courses of action, . But continually prioritizing the success of the industry over environmental conservation has negative repercussions for local governments and the rest of the world.

WIKIPEDIA

The Baker River in Chile.

Kashmir:
The Case for Freedom

— Maya Ragsdale

Kashmir is an occupied land. This is my first impression as my plane makes its descent. An endless field of red and green army barracks litters the land around the airport, and replaces the rolling greenery I admired from just below the clouds: Loops of barbed wire form barricades around the barracks, making the distinction between occupiers and occupied strikingly clear. As I wait to deplane, a sense of anxiety is prevalent: there is a possibility that we will not be allowed to enter Kashmir. My uncle, an outspoken filmmaker whose pro-Kashmir azaadi (freedom) views are widely known, is here to launch the book he edited: "Until My Freedom Has Come: The New Intifada in Kashmir." His views are not ones supported by the Indian or Kashmiri government. Luckily, we are allowed to enter.

Outside the airport, the charm of the capital city of Srinagar, with its low, colorful buildings, array of wildflowers, and the friendly faces of locals, brings a smile to my face. At the same time, the ugliness of the military occupation horrifies me. A road is blocked with a muddy sign that says, "Road is closed. Compliments of the CRPF [Central Reserves Police Force]," This is nothing if not ironic. Our taxi is sandwiched between two army vehicles. The sight of men hanging out the backs and tops of their trucks, nonchalantly wielding large rifles, is unnerving. There is netting on the back of the vehicles to protect security forces from stones. Kashmiri protesters are equipped with only protective layers of skin and thin clothing to shield them from tear gas and bullets.

There are three types of security forces here: army officers in camouflage gear, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) police and CRPF men in crisp tan gear. They line the streets; it is impossible to move more than ten feet without seeing one. Militarization invades every part of life. The political atmosphere is marred with corruption, making a free and democratic election impossible. The civilian atmosphere is scarred by repression. During times of curfew, even those not directly involved in the protests are too scared to go out because stray bullets and tear gas have killed many innocent people.

I reach my uncle's ancestral home and am once again struck by Kashmir's splendor. My masi's house is full of memories. It is nearly eighty years old with rickety, dark wooden stairs, ghostly pictures hanging on the walls, and a big lawn that the sunlight dances off of. We—my uncle, cousin, grandmother, and I—settle down on the balcony. Immediately the stories begin about Kashmir's news. The talk is always of Kashmir: about her people, her history, and her future. My masi tells the story of a 65-year-old woman who questioned the killing of a man in Lal Chowk, a city square in Srinagar, on Facebook. The J&K police filed a report against her a few days ago simply for questioning how the man was killed. Dissent is limited here.

> **"Kashmir is the head of India. India cannot survive without Kashmir—what is a body without a head? Why do they abuse us so? They will always occupy Kashmir, ignoring our cry for *azaadi*."**

The discussion then shifts to my uncle's book launch. He tells us that it is a miracle that it is being allowed—to have a gathering that criticizes the government and supports the azaadi movement is nearly impossible. Before we arrived, the police spread a rumor that the book launch had been cancelled in an attempt to divert people from coming to the event. There is also talk that the government will use it to identify people active in the dissent. My uncle's phone has already been tapped: when I call him, a strange clicking sound greets me before his voice does. I try to send my grandmother in Delhi a text message, only to find that the government banned pre-paid text message services here. I wonder how Kashmiris living with such little freedom avoid their spirits being crushed. It becomes obvious that, far from subduing them, the hostility has only fueled their struggle.

I spend an hour talking to my masi. She is a Kashmiri Pandit—a member of the Hindu Brahmin community originating in Kashmir. She says that because Srinagar is a tourist city, the police try to keep it peaceful, so they arrest those who could cause unrest. Villages are another story entirely, where security forces round up young boys and rail them, accusing them of being militants. One was tortured for three days in an attempt to force a confession, and he said that if he had been tortured another day, he would have given the false confession that they were aiming for. These boys are not militants before being arrested, but after being jailed and tortured, some of them become so. People can only take so much suffering before they crack, and now the Kashmiri people have suffered so much that any little thing becomes something to protest about. How can they be expected not to pelt stones when they have experienced so much pain? My masi says Kashmiris want a fair election and a right to decide their fate, but the government is too afraid to let them. The J&K government is a puppet government, and the Indian government, the puppet master.

At the book launch, I masquerade as a Kashmiri Muslim girl, covering my hair with a white dupatta. The women are beautiful—fashionable in their flowing, brightly-colored attire and matching headscarves. The men are even more attractive, with chiseled features and piercing eyes. A good-looking man, not older than 30, stands up and thrusts his hand into the air, revealing a twisted stump where his thumb used to be; it had been blown off by a grenade. His voice is full of passion and distress as he exclaims, "How can you tell a mother whose son has been killed not to be angry, to not want revenge, to not pelt stones?" A panelist tells him to channel his anger. Anger and grief alone cannot win the struggle. Rage fuels the government's propaganda that Kashmiris are animals, terrorists, whose cries for independence can be ignored. He emphasizes that Kashmiris must not let the government divide them into different factions, split by religious differences or different visions of the future. For all, there is the common goal of an independent future, a goal of azaadi from the repressor.

Later, we drive to a village outside of Anantnag, Kashmir. We meet two young boys, 10 and 11 years old, as we are climbing up a hill. They dart down the hill to meet us, sweetly sucking on fruit they picked from an apricot tree. My uncle wears a black and white checkered scarf wrapped around his head and neck to shade him from the strong sun, and one of the boys promptly tells him to take it off; a CRPF officer will shoot him because he looks like an Afghani. They ask us where we are from and hand us two apri-

cots each when they are satisfied we are a group of Kashmiris and Americans. Their generosity extends only to non-Indians. They run up and down in front of us on the path like mountain goats, the sounds of their feet softened by a layer of pine needles. They tell us that there are CRPF camps all around us, and someone says he saw two armed CRPF officers in the trees watching us. The valley is set up so that at all times, there is a CRPF camp within fifteen minutes.

We learn that both boys are stone pelters. The younger boy has red cheeks, almond shaped eyes and an impish look. He isn't more than three and a half feet tall and his eyes are filled with laughter as he tells us a joke. He says that there are two types of dogs living on the hill: The feral dogs and the CRPF dogs. My uncle reminds him that CRPF officers are people too, they are not animals. The other boy with his hard, light eyes and thin lips succinctly replies, "If we consider them humans, what does it say about humanity?" He tells us story after story about CRPF officers. Last summer, he was pelting stones and four officers captured him and beat him up. He tells us that he had a bullet lodged in his leg and says, "Kashmir is the head of India. India cannot survive without Kashmir—what is a body without a head? Why do they abuse us so? They will always occupy Kashmir, ignoring our cry for azaadi." The banter of the two boys is filled with political acuity—they are part of a whole generation of youth whose childhood was robbed by the occupancy, whose political discourse is grounded in experiences of limitation and pain.

I learn that Kashmiris are a unified people with a unique identity. They are not Indians, nor do they want to be. Their hatred of India is grounded in their hatred of abuse and subjugation. India is the largest democracy in the world. In an ideal democratic government, equality and freedom are the underlying principles. Kashmiri people risk their lives for equality and azaadi from the repressive and brutal nation that has occupied their land for six decades. What they want is freedom: freedom from their oppressors, from misunderstanding, from the human rights violations that occur all too frequently, from the censorship that is imposed on them. They will not stop fighting until Kashmir's freedom comes.

The "New Silk Road":

The Antiquated Trade Route is Never Coming Back

— Rohit Vyas

The collapse of the Soviet Union brought about the independence of fifteen new states. Of these, the five states of Central Asia – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – have faced particularly overwhelming challenges.

Since 1991, these countries have made significant strides in establishing governments and national traditions. Political stability in the region has mostly been maintained, with the exception of the Tajik Civil war that lasted from 1992 to 1997. The 2005 Tulip Revolution led to the peaceful ousting of Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev; this was followed by the peaceful transition of power from Roza Otunbayeva to Almazek Atambayev. The Central Asian states have also managed to establish foreign relations and have joined international bodies, including the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Despite these positive developments, the economic performance of the region remains mixed. Central Asia contains some of the largest reserves of natural resources in the world, but transporting them is difficult. This is due to the fact that the region lies further from the ocean than anywhere else in the world. Adding to Central Asia's difficulties is the fact that its southern borders have remained closed for decades, so the main trade routes and pipelines run through Russia. Consequently, Russia still exerts more influence over the region than in any other former Soviet republics. Nevertheless, the rising energy importance of the Caspian Sea has led to greater involvement in the region by the US. Given Central Asia's proximity to Afghanistan, the US has started to take note of the potential role the region could play after US troop withdrawal.

At the Istanbul Conference for Afghanistan held in early November, US diplomats put forth an ambitious plan for the future of Central Asia. Dubbed the "New Silk Road", the US State Department's strategy aims to link the infrastructure of Central Asia southward through Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. The State Department would work with the region's governments to reduce legal and bureaucratic impediments to trade. The goal of this plan is an expansion of East-West trade via land. As the title suggests, this would be similar to the original Silk Road by which China traded with the Middle East via Central Asian trade centers like Kashgar, Bukhara and Samarkand. This comes with the benefit of economically integrating Afghanistan into the region.

On the surface, it appears that the region's governments are ready for a regional solution. For example, in 2010 Turkmen officials secured an agreement to build a natural gas pipeline through Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India (the TAPI pipeline). In another positive development, the Uzbek government inaugurated a rail line that connects northern Afghanistan to Uzbekistan. Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari has also proposed developing a fast cargo train line connecting Pakistan to Iran via Afghanistan. There is also the Pakistan-Afghanistan free trade agreement (AfPak FTA), which former special envoy Richard Holbrooke personally brokered.

The State Department has highlighted many of these existing projects as a premise on which the New Silk Road could be modeled. Unfortunately, many of these projects have been simple gestures and have failed to develop into meaningful partnerships. For example, the AfPak FTA has yet to be implemented. With relations between the two countries already suffering, the FTA may never happen. Similarly, the TAPI pipeline has been under consideration since the 1990s, but security issues in Afghanistan have scared away potential investors. For years, Pakistani intelligence agencies have fomented disorder in Afghanistan to maintain leverage against its regional rival India.

The State Department's hopes for a regional "multilateral grand bargain" to economic integration are misguided—too many political barriers and competing interests are at play for the strategy to be successful. As George Gavrilis, an expert on Central Asian affairs, notes, many of the countries in the Central and South Asia regions have persistent difficulties with their neighbors. Uzbekistan has its issues with Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, stemming from the explosion of Kyrgyz-Uzbek ethnic clashes in June 2010.

The United States clearly hopes to bring some semblance of order to the region. With it's withdrawal from Afghanistan quickly approaching, it must enlist the help of Central and Southeast Asian countries to maintain the stability of the region. However, as these states have shown, encouraging cooperation between them will be difficult. Ultimately, engineering a favorable solution may lie in pursuing bilateral initiatives with the more "agreeable" states in the region. As Gavrilis states, "Resuscitating region-wide approaches is a fool's errand that will not save Afghanistan. It is time for the international community to dump diplomatic niceties and work with those neighbors whose policies could be molded to Afghanistan's benefit."

A Step in the Right Direction?:
China's Evolving Stance on Foreign Policy

— Sana Kagalwalla

China has long condemned interference in other nations' internal affairs. First articulated in the 1950s by Premier Zhou Enlai, this policy of non-intervention intended to differentiate China from Western powers whose policies he portrayed as insolent and domineering. Since 1971, when the People's Republic of China regained a seat in the United Nations, China has maintained an approach to UN peacekeeping that stressed the superiority of non-intervention, while declining to participate in UN peacekeeping actions. In recent years China's position has softened, though the doctrine still influences policymakers today. Sometimes, that position puts China on the opposite side of international sentiment: Chinese ambassador Li Baodong recently stated that the international community should "respect the sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity" of Libya.

But the Libyan civil war has challenged China's stated preference for nonintervention. During other Arab uprisings, China remained on the sidelines, only recognizing opposition groups after dictatorships collapsed. The Libyan civil war posed a unique problem: more than 35 thousand Chinese citizens were working in the country, and the Chinese public supported action to guarantee their safety. Moreover, Chinese-allied Arab countries supported action against Qaddafi. Finally, China had major economic investments in Libya, which Chinese policymakers feared would be in danger if they declared support for the losing side.

As a result, the Chinese approach to Libya has taken an atypical course. Chinese attempts to engage with the Libyan conflict have been slow, contradictory and rapidly shifting, suggesting that Chinese policymakers find it difficult to reconcile the competing pressures that have already pushed bilateral relations beyond their normal range. In February, China voted for UN sanctions against Qaddafi, a rare move from a country which has typically avoided punishing other nations for actions taken inside their own territory. Shortly afterwards, China undertook a massive operation to evacuate its citizens from Libya. These actions reflect China's realization that a doctrine of non-interference will conflict with other imperatives created by its growing global economic presence. Some observers have suggested that the vote for sanctions was a sign that China is beginning to accept some norms of international conduct. It is worth reiterating, then, that China's decisions are the result of domestic considerations, not a desire to be in line with Western powers. Qaddafi's political control appeared to be slipping and Chinese lives were at risk; the Communist Party lacked a persuasive reason not to act.

> **"For China, the Libyan struggle was about more than the toppling of a dictator."**

In March, China walked its policy back, abstaining from a vote on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973, which established a legal basis for military intervention in Libya and authorized "all necessary measures" to protect Libyan civilians. The Chinese government also condemned the NATO air strikes and avoided any proclamations of support for the rebels' cause. However, China's abstention—when it could have vetoed the resolution—was crucial in giving UN backing to the largely European-led intervention in Libya. It was the first time China chose not to obstruct UN security council-backed military measures against a government for humanitarian causes. Many see this as a symbol of China's shift from a non-aligned power to a global one with sizeable investments in the international community.

In June, the Chinese government was drawn deeper into the Libyan conflict. Mahmoud Jibril, the Libyan opposition leader, embarked on a two-day trip to Beijing. He soon revealed that China had reinforced the status of the anti-Qaddafi movement by purchasing 160 million dollars of oil from the opposition. Chinese foreign ministry officials publicly proclaimed their willingness to host additional Libyan opposition leaders shortly afterwards. China has rarely sought to confer with opposition movements in other nations; their choice here was likely a result of Beijing's significant investments in Libya: last year, China purchased 4.5 billion dollars of Libyan crude.

Shortly thereafter, China demonstrated its uncertainty regarding the most favorable course of action,when it received Qaddafi's foreign minister and other representatives on a weapons-buying mission. These measures further reveal that China's evolving international priorities are centered on the domestic sphere—the need to protect investments and citizens living abroad—and showing minimal concern for the country's role in the global community. Ultimately, their efforts to play both sides of the Libyan may have backfired. China was the last major economic power to recognize the Libyan National Transitional Council, and some of its leaders later denounced China for its failure to quickly oppose Qaddafi.

For China, the Libyan struggle was about more than the toppling of a dictator. Indeed, domestic debates over the country's role abroad have sparked a re-evaluation of foreign policy priorities. China can no longer assume noninterference will guarantee security. With an ultimate objective of securing the resources needed to fuel its economy, China will need to take a more nuanced approach as it chooses whom to favor. If the past is any guide, China will likely remain cautious in their international involvements even as it discards a non-intervention doctrine that no longer fits.

Chinese 101:
How to Deal with China

— Peter Han

Rana Foroohar, an editor at Time Magazine, recently commented, "I wish there were a class called China 101 that every member of Congress had to attend." She was referring to the US Senate's most recent bill whose aim was to pressure the Chinese government to allow the Chinese yuan to appreciate. The overwhelming support for the legislation in US Congress amply demonstrated the increasing American frustration with the Chinese government's manipulation of the yuan.

The charge is familiar: the American government, invested in protecting western manufacturers, accused Japan of similar manipulation thirty years ago. Such criticism was, and remains, questionable. After all, the United States itself devalued the dollar during the financial crisis to protect its exporters. Moreover, imposing punishing tariffs may violate World Trade Organization regulations. Finally, economists are still debating whether the appreciation of the yuan will benefit the US Economy. Even if the value of the yuan increases, domestic businesses will still have to compete with emerging markets across the world.

In contrast, the Chinese response was crystal clear. In an unusually harsh statement, the spokesman of Chinese Foreign Ministry criticized the Senate bill as "protectionism" and stated that Chinese government is "firmly against such actions." The Chinese state-run Xinhua news agency said, "The US Senate planted a ticking time-bomb that may ignite a potential trade war between the world's two largest economies." Even US policymakers and economists are worried that tensions between the two countries may further hurt the already fragile global economy.

While the United States may disagree with China on issues like human rights and economic policy, China's political and economic power is impossible to ignore. In the midst of one of the worst financial crises in history, we must cooperate with China; to do this, Americans need to first respect them. Passing a bill to publicly criticize a country as influential as China is simply unwise.

Americans must also recognize that the era of American dominance in all major economic sectors is long gone. Our manufacturers are not as competitive as those in the Philippines, Malaysia, Brazil and China. However, there is no need to panic. On the back of every iPhone and iPad, just above "assembled in China," are the words "designed by Apple in California." One of the central tenants of capitalism is efficient allocation of production; in this case, that means letting countries work on what they are good at. If the Chinese can more efficiently and cheaply produce a product, so be it. They deserve to benefit from trade, and so does the United States. The United States should focus on what it can still do well. American institutions of higher learning are still the best in the world. The government needs to work to drive down their price and make them more affordable. American entrepreneurs are still among the best in the world. They need encouragement to remain in the United States, start their business, and create the next Apple product by offering lower taxes, more affordable loans, and better infrastructure. Last but not least, politicians in Washington must show their leadership and their willingness to compete and negotiate, rather than impose, in the new era. The Great Depression led to the emergence of fascism and a world war. We failed to stop it last time. We should do better this time.

> **"It's a cliché to say that we don't understand the Chinese. Some might add that neither do they understand us. Either way, it's becoming a problem."**

Hazare Rises:

India's Most Popular Anti-Corruption Activist has Got it All Wrong

— Rohit Vyas

Over the last few years, the Indian government has been rocked by several scandals, leaving the impression that it is corrupt beyond repair. The most prominent of these scandals has been the telecom ministry scandal of 2008, in which government officials granted mobile network contracts at below-market prices. The dealings resulted in losses of 39 billion dollars. The fact that the United Progressive Alliance's (the current governing coalition) Communication Minister, Andimuthu Raja, was sacked and jailed for direct involvement in the scandal only further highlights how deeply rooted corruption has become in Indian politics.

Unfortunately, there have been many more scandals. For example, the 2010 Commonwealth Games, while largely successful, were marred by cost overruns due to the fact that top officials inflated the costs of various types of exercise equipment and cost the government 24 million dollars. Adding to the list of scandals is the group of politicians accused of taking over a Mumbai apartment block intended for war widows. These apartments were sold for 130,000 dollars each, while local media estimated their value at 1.8 million dollars each. Understandably, protest movements have emerged in response to the "culture of corruption" that has become so pervasive in Indian politics.

For more than 40 years, reformers have campaigned for the creation of an independent anti-corruption agency, but it has all been for naught. This changed in April 2011, when Kisan Baburao Hazare, a longtime anti-corruption activist, began his first "fast unto death" in New Delhi. The sight of the 74-year-old Hazare, in plain white cotton clothes and a cap, made for a powerful statement. His demands were simple enough: the creation of a Jan Lokpal, or an anti-corruption ombudsman, which would serve as independent body to inquire into allegations of wrongdoing by government officials. On August 29, 2011, Hazare ended his second fast when the Indian Parliament debated and accepted the core demands of Hazare's anti-corruption movement.

India currently ranks 87th in Transparency International's 2010 ranking of nations based on the level of corruption. Also, according to a report released by Global Financial Integrity, the country has lost a total of 240 billion dollars in "illegal outflows of funds, largely the proceeds of corruption, bribery, kickbacks, tax evasion and crime, between 1948 and 2008." Indian citizens have every right to be disappointed with the current state of their government, and it makes sense that there is so much support for the creation of a Lokpal. However, the drafting of this bill begs the question: will this proposal, if implemented, achieve its goal of reducing government corruption? Adding another layer of bureaucracy to a system riddled with some of the most stifling bureaucratic practices in the world is not the answer.

The Hazare movement claims that by making it easier to investigate illegal behavior, it would reduce the temptation to make corrupt decisions. What the Lokpal bill misses is that the incentives for illegal behavior through bribe-taking and giving will remain unchanged. For example, consider the following: with high taxes and excise duties, the incentives for tax evasion and smuggling will remain unchanged. Both the bribe-giver and taker will have the incentive to keep the transaction secret. The problem with the creation of a Lokpal is that it would treat the symptoms of this corruption, rather than deal with the structural issues that allow politicians to make these corrupt decisions.

Hazare's campaign is tinged with a longing for a golden age before economic liberalization when the government was, in their view, significantly less corrupt. This is wishful thinking. The fact of the matter is that the economic reforms of the last 20 years have decreased the scope of corruption, not increased it. In particular, the dismantling of the "License Raj", which refers to the elaborate regulations that were required to set up businesses before the 1990s, have reduced the amount of red tape that businesses used to have to deal with. However, the current states of India's labor laws and business regulations have left much room for improvement.

Although the anti-corruption movement may have its flaws, it has served an important purpose: it has begun a national conversation on governance reform. Unfortunately, the Indian peoples' frustrations will not be addressed through solutions that only deal with problems at the surface. As such, Prime Minister Singh and the UPA need to agree with the basic premise of the Hazare movement—reform is necessary—but at the same time they must resist the pressure to opt for the politically expedient solution of creating an anti-corruption ombudsman. To paraphrase the political activist Arundhati Roy: the solutions to the problems faced by ordinary Indians lie in addressing the structural inequalities that are inherent to the system, not in creating another power structure that people will have to defer to.

WIKIPEDIA

Hazare: The man of the hour.

Addressing the Underlying Causes of Female Feticide in India

— Annie Devine

India's 2011 census has revealed a striking change in gender ratios over the last few decades. Among children less than six years old, the census indicates, boys outnumber girls by 7.1 million, a marked increase from the already significant gap of 4.2 million twenty years ago. The Center for Global Health Research (CGHR) points to the selective abortion of female fetuses—increasingly referred to by activist groups as "female feticide"—as the primary culprit.

After adjusting for excess mortality rates in girls, the CGHR estimates that the abortion of female fetuses in India rose from less than two million in the 1980s to six million in the 2000s. There is no doubt that this trend is symptomatic of the broader devaluation of women that continues to manifest itself in a variety of ways across the world. Current restrictions on sex-selective abortions in India are ineffective "band-aid" solutions that do little to combat a misogynistic system in which women are kept subordinate and denied personal agency. India needs to develop a multifaceted solution in order to counter the growing trend of female feticide. It must focus on existing economic structures and the cultural restrictions placed on female sexual and reproductive autonomy.

WIKIPEDIA

Woman protests female feticide in India.

Abortion is currently legal in India until the twentieth week of pregnancy, or if there is a case where the physical or mental health of the mother is at stake. This includes pregnancies resulting from rape or failed contraception. In 1994 the Indian government passed the Preconception and Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques Act (PPDTA), outlawing sex-selective abortions. This law, though, has been practically unenforced since its inception.

Under the PPDTA, any person who seeks a prenatal diagnostic test for the purpose of sex selection can receive up to three years in prison and a fine of up to 1,130 dollars. The punishment cap increases to five years and 2,260 dollars for subsequent convictions. Medical practitioners who perform such tests receive a fine of up to 225 dollars, up to three years in prison, and the removal of their name from the register of the State Medical Council for five years. Subsequent convictions earn up to 1,130 dollars in fines, up to five years in prison, and automatic permanent removal from the SMC registry.

The primary weaknesses of the PPDTA lie in their rules about monitoring and enforcing the law. It is difficult to determine the extent to which procedures like ultrasounds and amniocentesis are being used to determine the sex of the fetus. Some might be used to monitor fetus health. The act also mandates that doctors submit to the government a photocopy of every sonogram administered, but many can easily avoid doing this in cases where they decide to illegally determine the sex of the fetus for their patients.

In addition to diagnostic tests, preconception gender selection (PGS) is an increasingly prevalent technique used to ensure that the fetus is male in the first place. This renders sex-selective abortions practically unnecessary for those who can afford such types of medical procedures. Moreover, a study of the implementation of PPDTA in South Delhi by the International Humanist and Ethical Union uncovered major flaws, including widespread corruption in clinics and scant knowledge of the Act's provisions among clinic workers and patients alike. One survey showed that only forty percent of male patients and thirty percent of female patients were even aware that tests that determine sex are illegal.

India's dowry system is often cited as a major reason that families prefer boys to girls; they can usually anticipate major financial strain once their daughters get married. Although dowry practice is currently illegal, it is nevertheless widespread in most socioeconomic classes. According to an article by the Women's News Network:

"The daughter's parents must fulfill any demand of dowry – money, jewelry, furniture, vehicles, etc. – made by the son-in-law and his family before and after the wedding. If the demands are not fulfilled, then the girl is often tortured. Eventually the girl is forced to end the marriage and return to her parents or end her life."

It is estimated that dowry deaths occur every 102 minutes in India, and this has disproportionately affected low-income families for two reasons: they are more likely to have difficulties fulfilling dowry requests, and they are more capable of carrying out sex-selective abortions in the first place.

The CGHR found that female feticide is much more common if the mother has had ten or more years of education than if she has had

none whatsoever. It also discovered that feticide happens more frequently in wealthy households, even though the preference for a son does not vary significantly by socioeconomic status. Trends are also stronger in urban rather than rural areas, further undermining the misconception that the spread of affluence and education alone will eliminate misogynistic practices such as female feticide.

Other significant socio-cultural factors are also at play. Concerns over sexual abuse and rape are common considerations when parents express hesitancy over having a daughter. Yet, a society overpopulated by unmarried men may aggravate these very issues. As the International Humanist and Ethical Union notes, "More women are likely to be exploited as sex workers. Increases in molestations and rape are an obvious result. The sharp rise in sex crimes in Delhi has been attributed to the unequal sex ratio." Similarly, the trafficking of young girls to be sold for sex, labor and/or marriage has been attributed by numerous studies to the decline in eligible brides. Just as rampant sexual violence against women delivers a severe threat to their autonomy, so, too, does the social and cultural acceptance of sex-selective abortions a further attack on their personal abilities.

Moreover, it is misleading to assume that just because a woman consents to a sex-selective abortion, she must have had full choice in the matter. There is often intense pressure from husbands, parents and friends for a woman to abort a female fetus, regardless of whether the woman herself is physically or emotionally prepared to do so. Nevertheless, a blanket ban on sex-selective abortions has shown itself to be extremely ineffective thus far, and some fear that such measures might lead to further legislation limiting women's physical and reproductive rights.

India has far to go before it can truly begin to reverse the economic and cultural trends that promote female infanticide. "Band aid" policies like the PPDTA have proven to be largely unsuccessful, but there are a number of activist grassroots programs that are currently trying to develop better solutions. Non-governmental organizations like Snehalaya and Population First are fighting to reduce female feticide by elevating the status of girls and women in India. Other NGOs are implementing local programs to initiate community dialogue. For instance, Shri Bhuvaneshwari Mahila Ashram has started the Mountain Children's Forums. This allows girls and boys to discuss gender relations and emphasizes the familial value of girls, who contribute extensively to domestic chores and often sacrifice their own dreams so that parents are able to invest in their sons.

Additionally, India's Haryana state government offers free education for girls, as well as grants to families who are living below the poverty line at the time of their daughters' weddings. Similarly, the Uttarakhand government's 'Nanda Devi Girl Child Scheme' entitles every girl born after January 2009 in families living below the poverty line to a fixed deposit of 105 dollars that can be withdrawn with interest once the girl reaches 18 and graduates high school. Even though a 2011 poll by the Thomson Reuters Foundation ranked India as the fourth most dangerous country in the world for women—primarily due to female feticide and human trafficking—the growing presence of voices advocating for women's rights are an encouraging sign that abuses like female feticide are gradually being addressed and challenged within the country.

Joint Burmese-Chinese Dam Project Cancelled

— Andrew Grazioli and Leslie Teng

In September of 2011, Burma shocked international observers by abruptly cancelling the construction of a hydroelectric dam on the Irrawaddy River. The project, known officially as the Myistone Dam, was the latest in a series of joint ventures with the People's Republic of China. After widespread opposition from the Burmese public that the dam would unfairly benefit China while damaging surrounding areas, Burma's government cancelled the project.

President Thein Sein went so far as to make a rare public statement that he had to "respect the people's will"—hardly a routine proclamation from a military dictator. Compounding this abnormality was its stunning departure from typical Chinese-Burmese relations; the latter nation has seldom asserted itself in bilateral dialogue, due to Burma's almost complete political, economic and military dependence on China.

China initially took interest in Burma, known officially as the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, for the small nation's natural resource wealth and its strategic location in Southeast Asia. China's rapacious hunt for new energy sources to power its expanding economy has brought the country into conflict with a number of nearby states, including India, Malaysia and the Philippines. In light of these strained relations, Burma seemed a natural ally in an increasingly polarized region. After the military junta seized power in 1962, the international community placed sanctions on Burma in response to alleged human rights abuses. Nevertheless, China has continued its commercial ties with the military regime, making it Burma's only meaningful international partner.

Despite close ties between the two governments, the Burmese public has been generally suspicious of the regime's wholesale reliance on Chinese largesse. Protests against such dependence have at times become violent, as in June 1967, when demonstrators attacked the Chinese embassy in Rangoon. While the 1980s and 1990s saw increasing economic and military cooperation between the two nations, including Chinese investments in Burmese infrastructure and the sale of military hardware, the protesters may finally be winning out.

As analysts at the International Crisis Group think tank have recently noted, the nationalist Burmese leaders "do not take orders from anyone, including Beijing." Widespread public opposition to Chinese influence over Burma's domestic affairs, led by a new generation of youthful and headstrong leaders, has facilitated the adoption of more independent policies. Recently, the Burmese government has gone so far as to approach the governments of India and Russia to explore the possibility of opening bilateral trade relations, an unprecedented move from the historically isolationist regime.

Burma's willingness to directly defy China's wishes may also be a testament to China's changing role in Asian affairs. As the growth of the Chinese economy begins to slow, its influence in Southeast Asia will lessen in kind. Moreover, the booming economies of countries such as Vietnam and Taiwan has diminished China's formerly crucial role in maintaining regional stability. In recent years, Burma has exemplified this sea change in regional geopolitics, as it is evidently confident that a defiant stance towards its powerful northern neighbor no longer conjures major repercussions.

Kashmir's Forgotten People

— Maya Ragsdale

According to the Enquiry Report of Unmarked Graves in North Kashmir, at least 2,730 bodies were dumped near the military line dividing Kashmir between India and Pakistan. At least eight thousand Kashmiris have disappeared since the insurgency began in 1987, according to the Association of Parents of Displaced Persons. For decades, the Indian government's official version of the story has been that most deaths were attributed to encounters between foreign militants and security forces. As more information emerged, it became obvious that this is a blatant misrepresentation of the truth. According to the State Human Rights Commission of Kashmir, at least 574 bodies were identified as Kashmiri locals and most civilian deaths have been identified to be victims of false encounters. In August, because of increasing pressure from humanitarian organizations, the Indian state was forced to acknowledge for the first time that there were more than 2,000 unidentified people, mostly youths, buried in mass graves. Hopefully India's recognition of atrocities against Kashmiri people signifies a changing tide towards taking responsibility for their actions. For too long, Kashmiris have lamented the disappearances and deaths of loved ones, only to have their claims ignored or dismissed by the Indian government.

Kashmir's bloody history is as widely misrepresented and misunderstood as its struggle for independence. Following the conclusion of Britain's rule of India in 1947, Kashmiri rebels began a revolt against oppressive taxation by Maharaja Hari Singh, the ruler of the Princely States of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Protestors took to the streets to proclaim their support for Kashmir's absorption into Pakistan. In response, villages were burned and innocent people massacred as the Maharaja brutally attempted to silence dissent. On October 24, 1947, Kashmiri rebels declared an independent government of Azad Kashmir (or Free Kashmir).

Around the same time, Pakistani rebels invaded Kashmir, angered by the massacre of Muslims in the region. The Indian government offered the Maharaja military assistance in quelling these attacks in exchange for J&K's integration into India. Indian soldiers then drove Pakistani militants out of Kashmir, and India accepted Kashmir's accession, though it recognized the area as a disputed territory.

The Pakistani government contested the accession, proclaiming that it was fraudulent. They claimed that the Maharaja had entered the agreement when there was a standstill arrangement between J&K and Pakistan. On January 5, 1949, a UN resolution stated that integration must be "decided through a free and impartial plebiscite." Such a plebiscite was never conducted, and eventually there were three wars over Kashmir in 1965, 1971, and 1999.

> **"India's actions have incited many to demand independence."**

There was a period of violent insurgency during the early 1990s, which transitioned into the present approach of peaceful protests. These are meant to distance Kashmiri youth from the label of "terrorist" that is so often assigned by the Indian government and citizens alike. This labeling makes it difficult for Kashmiris to leave their homeland, and increases their risk of being arrested if they decide to visit any other Indian state. Many Kashmiris, in fact, feel safer staying within their state's boundaries than venturing outside into the country that has occupied their land for decades—a country they are supposedly equal citizens of. By labeling Kashmiri youth as "terrorists," the Indian government has effectively discredited their struggle for independence, alienated them from the rest of the country, and trapped them in a state where their rights are constantly infringed upon.

Those who criticize the Indian government or expose embarrassing information are threatened and silenced. Close to seven hundred key activists were in jail last summer, locked away under the Public Safety Act, which allows police forces to jail citizens for two years without a court order. Additionally, the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) allows armed forces members to shoot, to kill, to destroy property, and to arrest people without warrant; they are allowed to do all of this without fear of prosecution. This impunity is disturbing, as it gives security personnel free reign and allows many cases of rape, disappearance, and torture to go unreported without consequence to the perpetrator.

The General Secretary of the National Conference, the dominant political party of Kashmir for many decades, stated that there is "only residual militancy in the Valley now. So there is no reason for the AFSPA to stay." The state government has a policy of keeping boys in adult jails; if they are above the age of sixteen they are treated as adults. In India, under law, youth are treated as adults only when they reach the age of eighteen. But, in Kashmir, even boys younger than sixteen are jailed, and have told stories of being beaten and tortured. Most of these boys are imprisoned for throwing stones at security forces or for shouting anti-India slogans. Though Omar Abdullah, the Chief Minister of J&K, recently announced that amnesty would be given to those not facing serious charges, this appears to be a façade to appease international groups; in fact, the policy of jailing boys under the Public Safety Act has continued. These draconian laws erase the line between militants and peaceful dissenters, and are used against both in an attempt to gag the population.

Some argue that if Kashmir were granted independence, Nagaland, Assam, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, and Manipur would also demand independence, and India would be effectively wiped off the map. This concern neglects a broader focus on the fact that India's actions have incited whole portions of the population to demand independence. India cannot be considered a democracy if it refuses an opportunity, when given the choice, to grant north and northeastern India independence. The brutality that has occurred in Kashmir has been swept under the rug for too long, silenced because the picture it paints of India is not one that the Indian government wants to claim responsibility for. It is time for the Kashmiri people to finally be given a say in their fate, and for the international community to take notice of their plight.

The EU and its Spirit of Fair Tech

— Kevin Mersol-Barg

Over the past two decades, the United States has led the Internet revolution and dominated international technological policy. In the fury of technological innovation, the US and its companies have dragged Europe along in its quest to maintain dominance over the international tech industry. The European Union has played into the hands of the US tech industry and its policies with seldom an exception. The EU needs to take a more active role in drafting and enforcing technology policies that meet its ethical standards; otherwise, it risks allowing the US to marginalize the EU tech industry and sweep aside its vision of fair and open tech policy.

> **“The EU needs to take a more active role in drafting and enforcing technology policies that meet its ethical standards.”**

The United States looks to the EU to validate its patent laws and its struggles to control patents around the world. In April 2011, US-based Apple Inc. filed its first of many lawsuits against South Korean Samsung. The two companies produce mobile devices, among many other technologies. Apple disputes that Samsung violates much of its intellectual property related to the Apple iPhone and iPad. The iPhone maker has opened up a European front in its legal war against Samsung. In August 2011, Dutch and German courts ruled that Samsung infringed upon design patents held by Apple under the EU Community Design registration. While the EU strengthens its legal power, it forwards the agenda of US tech companies. The EU needs to tread cautiously and discourage international patent wars. Next time, one of its tech companies, such as Nokia in Finland, could be in the crosshairs of a US rival.

The US-backed Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) poses another threat to the EU. The international agreement imposes much of the US patent regime on the international community; in particular, it regulates patents related to “internet distribution and information technology” around the world. ACTA caters to bigger actors in the tech industry, and in an October 2010 report, the EU voiced concerns that “it is politically very important to emphasize balance and fairness, to mention culture and individual creators and not only industry.” In October 2011, the US and many other countries signed the agreement, and the EU will sign it once all its member states approve it. Instead of supporting smaller actors, the EU deferred to US leadership, which favors big industry.

However, the EU demonstrated that it can and will punish big industry actors that pursue anti-competitive tactics. For example, the European Commission of the EU ruled against US tech giant, Microsoft, in a 2004 antitrust case. The commission held that Microsoft unfairly profited from its near ubiquitous computer operating system, Windows. The commission pointed to anticompetitive practices such as packaging free software with Windows and exacting high royalties from third parties that sold the operating system. Between its initial ruling and non-compliance, the EU fined Microsoft a record two billion dollars and forced the company to adopt more competitive practices. The EU continues to fine US tech companies for anti-competitive behavior, such as the 1.45 billion dollar fine to Intel in 2009, and filed a complaint against IBM in September 2011. The EU is flexing its muscles against anti-competitive behavior within Europe but fails to lead on the issue on the international stage.

The EU remains mum on anti-competitive behavior outside its borders. Through its inaction, the EU is enabling a US wireless telecommunications provider, AT&T Mobility, to establish anticompetitive practices in the US market. In early 2011, AT&T Mobility made a 39 billion dollar bid for T-Mobile USA and it’s more than sixty million subscribers. T-Mobile USA is a mobile network operator owned by German telecommunications company, Deutsche Telekom (DT). The US Justice Department filed an antitrust lawsuit against the AT&T merger. DT supports the bid because it can focus more on business in Europe while profiting from an eight percent share in AT&T across the Atlantic. If the EU wants to see a world that maintains competitive markets, it should intervene and demonstrate leadership on the issue. Otherwise, it again lets the US determine the standard for international tech policy.

The US determines more than the policies relating to patents and antitrust in the tech industry; it also controls international Internet policy. The Internet pervades state borders and therefore an international body should regulate it. Historically, the US government controlled the underlying Internet protocol and domain registry. In 1998, the US spun off the responsibilities to a private US-based organization, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). In effect, the US still dictates the layout of the Internet. Verisign, an American company, offers services related to Internet infrastructure; most notably, top-level domains (TLDs) including .com and .net. In the early 1990s, the US government granted a US company an exclusive contract to register the TLDs, and Verisign bought this company in 2001. Since then, Verisign has controlled the top-level domains because ICANN continually renews its contract. With the Internet infrastructure firmly entrenched in the US, foreign states, including those in Europe, have remained at the mercy of Verisign and ICANN.

Because Verisign controls two of the most used domains, any European who subscribes to a .com or a .net domain is subject to US laws. Therefore, if the US finds issue with a website, it can unilaterally remove it. For example, in November 2010, the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) shut down hundreds of domains that promoted piracy and counterfeit goods. In addition, Europeans must pay royalties to ICANN for each website they register. ICANN has progressively increased the royalties and can continue to do so because it lacks international oversight. However, ICANN has loosened restrictions on Internet domains. Today, ICANN licenses 22 general TLDs and about 250 country-level TLDs. In January 2012, ICANN will allow consumers to buy an unlimited number of new general TLDs—even those in non-Latin characters.

As ICANN shows signs of moving toward a freer Internet, it approaches an ideal mark for the EU. The EU seeks fair and transparent regulations of the Internet. The Internet, intellectual property, and competition, in the context of the tech industry, are currently shaped by the US. If the EU wants to see its values in the industry, it needs to push back against US influence.

Serbia:
Haunted by the Past

— Michelle West

As it vies for membership in the European Union, Serbia is confronting the legacies of the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s. Memories of mass rape, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity left a mark on the European community that has yet to fade. The persistence of the same ethnic tensions that sparked wars a decade ago have justly proven to be an obstacle to Serbia's inclusion into the EU. And, as the European economic crisis deepens, the Union should approach further expansion cautiously. The risk of continuing internal turmoil makes Serbian membership in the Union an unpromising proposition.

The causes of conflict in former Yugoslavia lie in the tensions between the ethnically Slavic, Eastern Orthodox Serbs, and ethnic minority groups such as the Muslim Croats, Bosnians, Albanians, and Kosovars. Following the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1990, the state of Serbia incorporated a heterogeneous ethnic population. As nationalist sentiments grew over time, the minority community demanded independence while the Serbs attempted to create a homogenous, harmonious state by targeting minority communities for extermination.

After the wars with Bosnia and Croatia had ended, the autonomous Serbian province of Kosovo demanded independence in 1998. The Serbian government was attempting to create a nation state based on the supremacy of the Serbian race while suppressing the social and political rights of Kosovars. The war lasted until 1999, when a NATO bombing campaign forced Serbian troops to withdraw.

Kosovo claimed independence from Serbia in 2008 and has received recognition from 87 countries. Serbia, Russia, Slovakia, and other former allies who refuse to acknowledge the breakup of the Serbian state are notable exceptions. Many in Serbia claim that although they do not want to reintegrate the entire state of Kosovo back into Serbia, they want the four ethnically Serbian provinces of Northern Kosovo granted the same right to self-determination as the state of Kosovo itself.

There are communities of ethnic Serbs located in four different provinces across Northern Kosovo who remain loyal to the government of Belgrade rather than Pristina. According to Dragisa Milovic, the Serb mayor of a Northern Kosovo municipality of Zvecan, "We want to be part of Serbia—nothing more, nothing less."

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Map of Northern Provinces.

The communities remain loyal to and dependent on the Serbian state, which provides economic and social assistance the Kosovar government cannot match. The population continues to depend on imports from Serbia, despite an embargo put in place by Kosovo.

This hardening of political ideology comes at a time when Serbia has been asked by Stefan Fule, the EU expansion commissioner, to "re-engage in the dialogue with Kosovo," a tall order for a country that previously called for the severing of all ties with the remaining Serbian population in Kosovo. The Kosovo Serbs fear retribution, oppression, and a lack of representation if Kosovo is left completely independent of the Serbian government. According to the AFP, the Kosovo Serbs will reject any EU-brokered peace deal because they consider the region an "integral part of Serbia."

This has left Serbia in a difficult position. To achieve EU membership, it must abandon its co-ethnics in Kosovo. But this year is an election year, and for the Serbian people, ethnic loyalty is particularly important. A choice to cut ties with Kosovo Serbs would no doubt be used by the political opposition against the current government.

Russia, too, may be trying to push Serbia away from the EU. In 2009, Russia loaned Serbia 1 billion euros, and Russian oil giant Gazprom, which bought the Serbian oil monopoly, announced plans to build a pipeline connecting Serbia with the rest of Eastern Europe and Russia.

Russia's ambassador to Serbia, Aleksandar Konuzin, has cautioned Serbia against joining the EU, on the grounds that the Union intends to act "against Serbia's national interests." The Russians point to an EU directive that Serbia settle a border dispute with Kosovo and Germany's insistence that Serbia dismantle "parallel structures" —Serbian government-like institutions in Kosovo. In a move that some fear will create a new economic bloc, Russia has pitted itself against the European Union as a more understanding, less-hostile, and equally valuable ally.

In confronting the remaining tensions of the past decade, Serbia finds itself questioning the merits of joining the European Union. Although the Union claimed that it would not consider EU expansions finished until the Balkans were completely integrated, it has been slow to accept the Western Balkan states. France and Germany especially have repeatedly cited the need for further economic and political reforms.

The Union should refrain from giving Serbia membership given the country's emerging reliance on Russia and its failure to solve lingering ethnic strife. Although the emergence of Russia into the region is worrisome, the possibility of increased Russian influence in Serbia is not a sufficient reason to overlook necessary criteria that must be met for full membership. Only when Serbia has proven its dedication to promoting regional and national harmony should the European Union consider granting full membership.

Social Media and Social Unrest

— Caitlin Miller

In the wake of the riots that shook London this past August, many blame social media as a catalyst for youth violence. Facebook, Twitter, and BBMs – like the example above – were all used to orchestrate attacks across London and elsewhere in Britain, attacks which resulted in destruction of property and loss of life. The issue prompted a meeting between British officials in late August to discuss the potential limitation of social media websites in the hope of deterring future disturbances. Although Britain's home minister, Theresa May, clarified that the aim of the meeting was not to restrict Internet access, but rather to "crack down on the networks being used for criminal behavior," passage of such measures in the future may yield negative repercussions. On the surface it may seem that new communication technologies like Twitter and BBM play an integral role in amplifying social unrest, but many argue that restrictions on social media would further fuel the violence, rather than hinder it.

The move to restrict access to social media is not unprecedented. On January 28, the government of former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak made the decision to shut down all Internet and cell phone service, a move that came at the height of the protests in Tahrir Square. Paradoxically, the disruption of social connectivity did not quell the unrest, but instead spurred protests in Cairo and around the country, contradicting the widely held belief that social media was a stimulus for violence. In his work entitled "Media Disruption Exacerbates Revolutionary Unrest," Yale graduate student Navid Hassanpour explores this phenomenon. He writes: "The disruption of cell phone coverage and Internet [in Egypt] exacerbated the unrest in at least three major ways… It implicated many apolitical citizens unaware of or uninterested in the unrest; it forced more face-to-face communication, i.e., more physical presence in streets; and finally it effectively decentralized the rebellion on the twenty eighth through new hybrid communication tactics, producing a quagmire much harder to control and repress than one massive gathering in Tahrir."

In light of this provocative thesis, Britain's recent discussions as to whether a clampdown on social media is appropriate seem hasty and poorly informed. As England recovers from the riots and begins to focus on how to prevent such violence in the future, the government should carefully consider the consequences of an absence of social media during social unrest.

"Everyone from all sides of London meet up at the heart of London (central) OXFORD CIRCUS!! Bare SHOPS are gonna get smashed up so come get some (free stuff!!!) fuck the feds we will send them back with OUR riot! >:O Dead the ends and colour war for now so if you see a brother... SALUT! if you see a fed... SHOOT!"

-LONDON, ENGLAND

Why the Spanish Uprising Can Change a Country Standing Still

— Elizabeth Deschaine

Open any guidebook to Madrid and Puerto del Sol will be listed as the number one attraction in Spain's capital. This plaza, where the ground is uneven with ancient cobblestone, is the heart of historic Madrid and the geographical center of Spain. Puerto del Sol has a new face now. It is still bustling with tourists, but it is also home to 15-M, a movement protesting against the Spanish government. The plaza is home to a tent-city where 15-M has been encamped for months. Hundreds have migrated to the city center, where a makeshift village has been built to house protesters. Meals are provided daily, there is a garden to grow food, and there is even a daycare equipped with a children's library. The buildings surrounding the plaza are covered in banners and posters, and the Metro stations are littered with signs for the movement. I had the fortune of living in Madrid during the height of the movement.

ELIZABETH DESCHAINE

A protest camp in Madrid.

The name "15-M" comes from the date on which the movement became official: May 15th, 2011. However, the idea had been stewing for months, as evidenced by talks of dissent and murmurs of an uprising. The 15-M protests now span 58 cities across the country, and come from a deep resentment over Spain's political and economic system. Indignados, or "the indignant ones," are protesting against the twenty percent unemployment rate (forty percent for Spain's youth), corruption in the political system, welfare cuts, and Spain's two-party political structure. They believe that neither party represents the views of the people. In fact, the start of the movements preceded elections on May 22, where the Indignados urged people to not vote at all.

Just as the Occupy Wall Street movement is often criticized for being overly ambitious, members of 15-M are also teased for their demands. After the encampment began, people flooded to Plaza del Sol to push their own agendas. This has yielded a disjointed, fractured assortment of groups, all jockeying for position and hoping to capitalize on the momentum behind 15-M. Women's rights groups were found near one side of the plaza with animal rights groups just a few feet away. The Indignados are not happy with either political party, but have not offered suggestions or presented a platform they might desire in a replacement party. They do not appear to set list of demands in mind. Instead, they hope to provide a sharp rebuke of the status quo.

This is because 15-M considers themselves a pressure group, not a political group. The current two-party system of government is ineffective, and deep distrust in each political party keeps 15-M from wanting to contribute to the government through a formal medium. Instead, they are using pressure from the outside to enact change.

For three months I watched the movement grow and evolve, dissipate and start anew. The expatriates I met liked to laugh at the protesters. My tour guide, who was from Wales, introduced Puerta del Sol with a jest, "Ask one of these people what they are fighting for and you may be here for a few hours." It was not that she disagreed with the cause, but that without a successful outcome and a set of priorities, the protests were pointless.

It was the madrileños (a Spanish resident of Madrid) who understood what the movement really meant. The head of the IT department at an international bank became quite solemn when we discussed the movement one day. In her best English, she spoke slowly: "This is very, very important what is happening." A coworker of mine, a shy post-graduate, surprised me when she revealed she had protested every day until violence erupted in early August. My roommate, quite reserved with his feelings on the encampment, led a march from his barrio, or neighborhood, to the Puerta del Sol. "Por supuesto!" he called back at me, as he hurried out the door to the march. He signaled that of course he would march with his barrio, how could he not?

I quickly understood that 15-M had awoken Madrid's residents from dormancy. Under Franco, just 36 years prior, the entire nation was silenced during his dictatorship. Madrid serves as a barometer for Spain's political evolution under its new democracy, and the youth leading this movement are shaping the future of Spain. Staying silent against massive corruption is a dangerous path, the consequences of which Spaniards are well aware. The 15-M are, if nothing else, ensuring that the people of Spain have a voice, even if the content of its message cannot match its volume. This is why my friend told me what was happening was so important. This is why my roommate had to march.

Revolutions spanning the globe are characterized as disorganized and unfocused. 15-M is the embodiment of that criticism. But the energy that 15-M brings to Madrid overshadows these claims. Stationed outside the regional government office of Madrid, in Puerta del Sol, the government cannot ignore the cries of an indignado. The 15-M's merits lie in its raw expression of political agency. Regardless of their success in specific policy matters, 15-M has made its mark in Madrid, stirring and awakening the dormant political energy of an entire nation.

The Fight for a French Identity

— Kylee Stair

For more than a century, France has been notorious for its belief in laicité. This notion, known in English as "secularism," dictates the separation of church and state. Although at its core, this only forbids the church and the state from interfering in each other's affairs the modern French interpretation of laicité creates a more strict division: private life, with the utmost religious freedom, is held contrary to the public sphere, in which each individual should appear as an equal citizen devoid of religious particularities. Even in response to recent challenges, an increasingly multicultural France has shown its devotion to laicité.

Laicité was established with the 1905 Law on the Separation of the Churches and the State, notably forbidding the declaration of a state religion. Over time, a diversifying population highlighted the increasingly public religious divisions within the country, threatening the coherency of a French national identity. Current estimates show that the Muslim population alone has multiplied by a factor of six within the last twenty years. Today, Muslims comprise approximately 8.5 percent of the French population. In 2004, the government banned any conspicuous religious symbols in French public schools. Despite initial controversy, the equal application to any and all religious groups served as its redemption. A new controversy arose when a previous law forbidding the concealment of the face in public areas was extended to include the traditional Muslim veil in April 2011. Women of Islamic faith were forbidden to wear both the burqa, a veil covering the body and face and the niqab, a full body covering with an opening for the eyes. This policy drew international attention because it specifically targeted a minority religious group. French officials responded that the law was necessary for public safety and consistent with religious neutrality. Eight months later, France continues to move forward.

In September 2011, a ban on street prayer came into effect, specifically targeting Muslim worshippers on the streets of Paris. Faced with overcrowded mosques, some members of the burgeoning Muslim population had been forced to perform their daily prayers on mats in city streets. Complaints within the last few months escalated until the city banned street prayer as a safety hazard. Although old fire barracks were offered and used as an alternative, the acts have raised questions about the morality of laicité, which now seemed to encroach on religious freedom without encouraging equality.

> **"A desire to create a fundamentally French identity inspired and reinforced the French Revolution, and its ideals continue today."**

In a country with as many as 5.5 million Muslims, these infringements on religious expression have not gone unnoticed. Beginning with the ban on the veil earlier this year, Muslim groups disputed the legal sanctions that accompanied the ban, which included a fine, mandatory enrollment in community courses, and a police record, calling them blatant discrimination against Muslims. Sixty-one members of a pro-Islam group, Unicite Tawhid, were arrested for a planned public demonstration against the banning of veils. Other Islamic movements condemned the legalization of persecution, comparing the new regulations to those of the Nazi regime Others heaped scorn on the policies, calling them President Nicolas Sarkozy's attempt to gain support from the National Front—a far-right, nationalist party that defends secularism and openly opposes Muslim immigration and influence.

Yet, despite the protests, it seems that the vast majority of French citizens--Muslim or not—respect the new regulations. Though the protest movement is strong and passionate, it represents a minority at best and is certainly the exception rather than the norm. The ban on street prayer was met with overwhelming compliance, not heavy protest or hostility. President Sarkozy continues to defy critics who claim the measures target foreigners and, along with his Union for a Popular Movement party, continues to promote secularism.

Ultimately, this response hints at a fundamental understanding of the nuances of laicité in French society: the motive is not to isolate and persecute certain religious minorities, but instead to maintain a particularly French identity. And perhaps in such a globalized world, it is only fitting that the nation-state attempts to maintain a strong national identity. A desire to create a fundamentally French identity inspired and reinforced the French Revolution, and its ideals continue today. The perseverance of a national identity through two centuries of tumultuous history is not only remarkable, but an example to be followed. It seems that only with an unbreakable sense of national identity, mingled with an understanding of the global community at large, can France hope to move forward.

Economic Nationalism's Threat to the Euro

— John Schoettle

Every few years, European far-right parties like the Netherlands' Freedom Party and France's National Front, receive media attention due to their controversial statements, xenophobic legislation, or bursts of ethnic tension. Without fail, speculation of a final political prominence for the far right runs rampant but never comes to fruition. In the midst of a sovereign debt crisis stoking tensions throughout the region, many are making the same conjectures. This time, however, they may be right. Present-day Europe is far removed from the golden years of prosperity propelled by a single currency and liberalized trade. As a result, broad approval of the monetary union has become increasing anger and disappointment. The general European public in the strong northern economies resents bailing out their perceived lazy and irresponsible southern neighbors.

Taking the cue, fringe parties around the continent have moved quickly to channel this anger to their benefit. Long relegated to the margin, the far right parties are now seizing the opportunity to exploit a more lucrative and concrete issue: Euroscepticism. While immigration's effects on society are harder to define, Eurosceptics can point to the billions of euros unilaterally taken from fiscally strong countries with little chance of repayment. This paradigm shift has the power to destabilize the monetary union that until now has been a powerful economic force throughout Europe. As a result of this shift, far-right parties in Austria, Germany, Finland, and France have gained momentum.

Recent events in Finland epitomize both the far-right threat to European unity and the delicate balance that centrist European leaders attempt to strike. The previously fringe Finns Party, on an anti-European platform, has disrupted not only Finnish politics but the broader European bailout effort. In the May parliamentary elections, the conservatives received the majority of the vote with 20.4 percent, and the Finns Party, led by Timo Soini, barely finished third at 19.1 percent. Talks led by conservative leader Jyrki Katainen to form a parliamentary coalition were tumultuous, and the Finns Party opted for opposition instead, despite electoral victory.

Throughout the summer and almost in lockstep with Greek and Irish support packages, the Finns Party grew increasingly powerful. By the end of the summer, polls indicated that the Finns Party was now the largest in Finland, at 22 percent. With the Finns Party threatening to dissolve the government, Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen reluctantly demanded a collateral guarantee on another round of bailout money to Greece in late July. Considered fatal to the bailout package, the demand for physical collateral left many other EU partners such as Austria and Slovakia angry and demanding the same terms, which would, in effect, defeat the purpose of the bailout. Any sign of weakness by Prime Minister Katainen would have ensured dissolution of the government with the Finns Party, opposed to any and all bailouts, poised to lead. Under European laws, every member country must approve of any aid packages. As a result, any member country can hold up the bailout process, no matter how small.

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Finns Party Leader Timo Soini.

While publicly lambasted by other European leaders, Finnish demands struck a chord with many of the fiscally prudent euro members. Finland's export driven economy is far more similar to Germany than Greece, and their demands were well-received by the Germans, who were suffering from the same bailout fatigue. A September poll showed half of German citizens would welcome a Eurosceptic political party. German leadership does not have the same luxury to put its foot down because of its size and integral membership in the monetary union. Any wavering of Germany's commitment would cause upheaval in the markets. Because of its size, then, Finland's collateral may look like just a blip in the radar. Its 1.4 billion euro share of the last Greek aid package looks paltry in comparison to the hundreds of billions on the table. More ominously, however, the call for bailout guarantees and the mainstream success of the Finns Party portends greater risk to the monetary union.

Most speculation of an exit from the euro has revolved around crisis-plagued countries like Greece and Portugal that may opt out of forced austerity. Countries with huge trade deficits, like Greece, would find it nearly impossible to exit the eurozone and create its own currency because it needs to borrow from other countries to fund its trading gap and fiscal deficit. A state with a current trade surplus, like Finland, would not face this problem. Finland, like many countries in the North, runs a healthy current account surplus which exceeded 3.3 billion euros last year. A far cry from the underwater Greeks and Irish, Finnish residents' total assets exceed liabilities by 28 billion euros. If it were to exit the euro, the Finnish government would have no problem accessing the financial markets with its AAA credit rating. Such an exit would also provide much needed help to a Finnish economy that has struggled to maintain growth above one percent in the past year. While not yet an imminent possibility, Finland's exit and reintroduction of the markka would lead to currency appreciation, making imports cheaper, and increasing the value of the country's overseas investments. At the same time, it would not contribute to the billions inevitably required to recapitalize the banking system when Greece finally defaults.

If Soini and his ideological counterparts in small, low-debt countries like Austria and the Netherlands are able to clearly present the math to angry voters, the eurozone may find itself in more trouble than just having to bailout the periphery.

Georgia:
A Democratic State?

— Emily Meier

Since the 2008 military conflict between Russia and Georgia, the Georgian government has worked hard to build up the country's morale. Many Georgians hope to eventually attain European Union member status by forming a more democratic state. But Georgia's president, Mikhail Saakashvili, has his eyes set on one thing: retaining power, even if that means creating an authoritarian regime. If Saakashvili continues to harass opponents and consolidates his power further, the EU and Western allies should reconsider plans to strengthen ties with Georgia.

President Mikhail Saakashvili was elected in 2004 after leading protests that forced his former mentor, Eduard Shevardnadze, out of office. According to opposition leaders, Saakashvili has not much better than his predecessor. He has been criticized for his role in starting the 2008 conflict with Russia, and many have suggested that his use of riot police against opposition protesters was unethical. Regardless, Saakashvili has built strong relations with the Western powers and was even praised for suggesting more democratic constitutional amendments at the beginning of his term.

While Saakashvili has preached a democratic message since his election, his actions have been anything but that. During protests staged earlier this year, more than 10,000 people demonstrated outside Georgia's parliament. In response, Saakashvili's officials tried to silence the people with violence, ignoring the Georgian constitution, which protects freedom of speech. The protests quickly turned into fights as police beat and injured journalists and peaceful demonstrators two of whom died.

In an attempt to appease the Georgian people, Saakashvili government allowed for amending of Georgian law to shift some presidential power to the prime minister. Although this appears to be a step away from an authoritarian regime, the change actually helps Saakashvili hold onto power. The president's second term in office will end in 2013, and instead of stepping down completely from political office, it is speculated that Saakashvili will simply move from the presidential office to the now-strengthened office of the prime minister. Saakashvili has failed to comment on the possibility that he might become prime minister, saying he would like to focus on Georgia today and not his "future career."

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A 2008 Georgian campaign ad mocking President Saakashvili.

Yet Saakashvili's actions indicate he is focused on just that, as he relentlessly tries to snuff out future competition. In October 2011, Bidzina Ivanishvili stepped forward as a possible replacement for Saakashvili. Ivanishvili, who was mainly known for funding the arts, announced that he had plans to overthrow President Saakashvili's party in next year's elections. He stated that his overall goal was "...to save my country." In response, Saakashvili ordered that he be stripped of his citizenship, arguing that, according to Georgian law, it is illegal to hold dual or triple nationalities without the president's approval. Ivanishvili has Russian and French citizenship as well. Without Georgian citizenship, Ivanishvili is ineligible to run in the 2013 elections.

Adding insult to injury, Ivanishvili was also accused of being a Russian pawn. According to Georgian authorities, Ivanishvili, whose businesses are mainly in Russia, is trying to "buy Georgia's future with Russian money." Georgia has had historically bad relations with Russia, and a connection to Russian money could discredit Ivanishvili in the eyes of the Georgian people. According to Georgi Khutsishvilli, director of the International Center on Conflict and Negotiation, this is the goal of Saakashvili's administration. Khutsishvilli said, "They want to send the message that anyone not in the government's team will be destroyed, and that this will be done in a way which has nothing to do with legal correctness."

Furthermore, it is evident that Saakashvili is hindering the Georgian people from making educated voting decisions. The Georgian government has been criticized in the past for "curbing media freedom." All major news sources in Georgia show a surprisingly united pro-Saakashvili stance. When discussing the Ivanishvili case, the media reported that Georgian officials were following the law. When claims surfaced that the same law would require Saakashvili's own Georgian citizenship be taken away, the Georgian media were resoundingly silent.

It is clear that Mikheil Saakashvili is tightening his grip on power in Georgia. He appears to be pushing away competition and pushing down his people's voices. It is unlikely that anyone in Georgia's parliament, after what happened to Ivanishvili, will take a strong stance against him anytime soon. Thus, it is now up to other states to hold Saakashvili accountable. A first step would be to withhold EU membership from Georgia until Saakashvili and the Georgian government change their ways.

The problem might solve itself if a new, non-authoritarian leader were elected, someone like Ivanishvili. However, it is unlikely that he will be able to run. The former-Georgian recently offered to give up both his Russian and French citizenship and sell all his businesses in Russia in hopes of regaining his Georgian passport. But Ivanishvili is aware that this may be in vain, saying, "we are living under an increasingly authoritarian government now, one in which Saakashvili is above the law. In fact, he is the law."

A Time for National Inquiry:
Spain's Stolen Babies

— Kevin Mersol-Barg

Beginning in the late 1930s, nearly 300,000 babies went missing in Spain. Doctors and nuns abducted the children of parents deemed 'undesirable', and the Catholic Church played a prominent role in selling the babies to other parents. The Francisco Franco's dictatorship, which lasted from 1939 until his death in 1975, encouraged abducting potentially subversive elements in Spain. After General Franco's death, his successor, President Suárez, granted amnesty to the criminals of the Franco regime in an attempt to ease the transition to democracy. However, this meant that victims under the former regime could not establish a tribunal, effectively denying them justice for the crimes committed against them. Because the nation shunted murmurs of scandal, doctors and the Catholic Church continued to abduct babies through the 1980s. Each day, more and more Spaniards realize that the people who raised them are not their biological parents. The abducted children, now adults, look for a way to discuss their collective wound in a national conversation. For Spain to move past this dark part of its history, it must officially investigate and prosecute the people who abducted Spanish babies and hold a tribunal on disappeared persons.

A similar episode in Argentine history can be used to predict the effects of beginning a dialogue about Spain's disappeared persons. On June 6, 1976, Jorge Videla, General Commander of the Army in Argentina, declared a coup d'état against the Isabel Perón's government. Videla led the first junta of the military-controlled government, called the National Reorganization Process (NRP). During the Dirty War, which lasted from 1976 to 1983, the NRP brutally repressed its opposition and individuals who allegedly sympathized with the opposition. As part of the Dirty War, the state abducted its opposition and tortured them. An estimated thirty thousand Argentines were killed or disappeared. Many children followed their abducted parents or were born in their detention site. The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, an association of mothers whose children disappeared during the Dirty War, campaigned against the Argentine disappearances during the Dirty War and long afterward. The campaign resulted in the formation of the National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons (CONADEP) in 1983. CONADEP found the military regime at fault. However, CONADEP could not hold the military regime to account because the subsequent democratic government passed an amnesty law in 1986. Afterward, the abuses that occurred under the NRP regime bubbled beneath the surface of national discourse. After decades of sustained pressure by organizations such as the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, the Argentine Supreme Court overturned the amnesty law in 2007. Courts now hear increasingly more trials against leaders of the military regime during the Dirty War. In 2010, a federal court sentenced Videla to life in prison for murdering numerous Argentines, stealing babies, and committing crimes against humanity.

> **"The healing process can begin when the state will recognize that it stole more than 300,000 babies."**

Argentina let its memories and scars from the Dirty War fester for decades. Today, its wounds have begun to heal because it is confronting the horror of its past head-on. Spain should follow Argentina's example and repeal its amnesty law. However, Spain must also address other factors that contributed to the abduction of children. Unlike in the Dirty War, the Catholic Church and hospitals played crucial roles in abducting babies in Spain.

Additionally, the Church's reasons for abducting babies changed over time. In the beginning, it separated babies from their mothers on ideological grounds. As time passed, the Church began to take babies from parents who did not fit its vision of a morally and economically sound family. Beyond the immediate ethical questions, Spaniards should reflect on what it means for the Church to profit from abducting their babies. The Catholic Church forms a core part of Spanish society and the abductions severely traumatized much of its population. Because Spain needs to review all harmful actors, Church and hospital officials should be held accountable for their actions. A national inquiry into the injustices of its past can allow Spain to move forward. The healing process can begin when the state will recognize that it stole more than 300,000 babies—it stole their families.

It's Time for Euro-TARP

— John Schoettle

In a rare moment of candor, a European diplomat courageously pointed out what everyone already knew but no one wanted to admit: the real problem that threatens to escalate the Euro crisis and throw the world economy is not a possible Greek default but the systemic risk of frozen worldwide credit markets—like what happened in late 2008, but worse. While Christine Lagarde, newly-appointed chief of the International Monetary Fund, has been called an irresponsible alarmist for her comments at a Jackson Hole, Wyoming meeting hosted by the US Federal Reserve Bank, her push for a substantial recapitalization of Europe's major banks shows an uncommon frankness that has been sorely needed in Europe since the debt problems began. The consequences of a likely Greek default threaten European banks with insolvency and could halt lending throughout the continent, all but ensuring a world recession. The clearest way out may be to imitate what the US did during the 2008 banking crisis: an unprecedented large capital infusion into Europe's banks; in other words, a Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) for Europe—Euro-TARP.

European banks own about 45 percent of Europe's government bonds. Many of these bonds act as collateral or capital against the loans that banks make and count towards their capital ratios. Any Greek default that requires a substantial cut in the value of this debt threatens to decrease the value of capital on these banks' balance sheets. In general, a bank must respond to such an asset decline by halting all lending and accumulating as much capital as possible to meet regulatory standards and stay solvent. While this poses a serious threat to bank balance sheets, repeated stress tests by European bank regulators have expediently ignored the vast majority of bonds that are held to maturity. This gives a sense of false security by implying the impossible, that Greece and others will pay back their debt in full. In reality, confidence in Greece's creditworthiness has plummeted and Greek debt has not traded on the markets in months. The only lender left has been the European Central Bank.

While European leaders have successfully pushed back any serious efforts to get the crisis under control, perception may catch up to them. For any highly leveraged financial entity, solvency is always a product of perception. Market anticipation of insolvency has cut the Greek government off the public debt markets. Meanwhile, the rising interest rates demanded of Italian debt resulted from perceived government dysfunction (courtesy of former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi) rather than market fundamentals. Italy, after all runs a government deficit of less than five percent. But Lehman Brothers did not collapse in 2008 because of the experienced delinquency of its loans; rather, the market and its lenders, who it relied on for overnight loans, deemed it insolvent and so it became. Right now, perceptions of the solvency of European banks like Societe Generale and Deutsche Bank are getting worse. Every major international bank relies upon many other banking partners to finance its operations. Any perceived weakness in a bank could cut off others' access to financial capital. Societe Generale's stock fell 20 percent in one day simply because one Asian bank cut credit lines to major French lenders on a rumor that France's AAA credit rating would be downgraded one notch. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown warned in September that Europe's fast-escalating crisis is more dangerous than the Lehman Brothers collapse three years ago. Amid all this fear, global stock markets have fallen and risen violently on speculation about European policymakers' future actions.

> **"The clearest way out may be to imitate what the US did during the 2008 banking crisis: an unprecedented large capital infusion into Europe's banks."**

Merely insisting that the banks are strong has not worked, though many leaders have tried this tactic. Another route must be taken. The TARP program in the US put an effective floor on rampant market speculation of bank insolvency. A large capital infusion—in effect a financial shock and awe campaign to recapitalize–would quell market discontent. Any sign that European policymakers are willing to act quickly and with large measures would change the broader perception of the crisis in general and might allow peripheral countries like Greece and Portugal some breathing room when trying to access the financial markets. Additionally, worldwide stock markets would likely stabilize in the face of some certainty. Such stabilization would encourage investment and contribute to economic growth.

Critics counter that forced recapitalizations are not without dangers, with moral hazard being the largest among them. Public opposition to any such bailout is also pointed to as a non-starter. However, these criticisms fail to consider that many of these banks are already being bailed out. As the bonds they hold come due, they are repaid by Athens, Dublin, and Lisbon with funds provided by the EU and IMF in past government bailouts. Moral hazard is not just a possibility; it is already real. A European TARP program would promote transparency as banks are bailed out through the front door rather than the back. This transparency would also allow moral hazard to be mitigated. In the spotlight of public scrutiny, bank executives can be fired, shareholders would incur large losses, and creditors would be given a haircut on their debt holdings.

A direct recapitalization would also accelerate the process of bank recapitalization. It would, in effect, resolve the crisis much sooner and allow European economies to begin growing again as strong banks became willing to lend. With increased bank lending and economic growth, valuable tax revenues would increase in the weak European periphery. To prolong the crisis by offering only nebulous small-scale solutions spurs bankruptcy speculators to target countries like Italy, which, as the third largest bond market in the world, may be impossible to bail out. If the crisis is to be abated, European policymakers must think big, work fast, and act now.

The Hidden Global Health Costs of Distressed Denim

— Annie Devine

A number of apparel manufacturers recently announced their commitment to end denim sandblasting, a manual process by which the material is made to look worn by roughening it with high-speed jets of sand. The technique proliferated in factories around the world as vintage-inspired jeans became increasingly popular over the past decade. Until recently, though, most consumers weren't aware of its dangerous effects on the workers who have to do it: by introducing crystalline silica into the air, sandblasting leads to silicosis, a deadly and irreversible lung disease. This triggers lung inflammation that severely reduces lung capacity, lowers blood oxygen levels, and sometimes even causes lung cancer. Publicity is, without a doubt, a crucial way to enhance awareness for any public health issue. Clothing brands involved with such campaigns, though, including Versace, H&M, and Levi-Strauss & Co., must actively reform their global supply chains; only then can the public take their pledges seriously.

European authorities outlawed sandblasting in the 1960s. The International Textile, Garment & Leather Workers' Federation, though, claims that the process still kills dozens of workers each year in countries like Turkey and Bangladesh. According to the Solidarity Committee of Sandblasting Laborers (SCSL), about 600 workers were diagnosed with silicosis in Turkey over the past decade. They estimate that rates could rise to 5,000 in a little as five years if sandblasting bans are not properly enforced. Various directives issued by the European Union have attempted to control the conditions under which sandblasting could occur. Most recently, the organization required that the abrasive materials contain less than one percent silica. But, the SCSL has reported that sand used in Turkish factories still contains up to 80 percent silica. Even though the Turkish Ministry of Health officially banned the practice in March 2009, many apparel brands have allowed it to go unreported within the country's factories. Other labels, meanwhile, have simply transferred their production to less regulated countries like Syria, Egypt and Pakistan.

Unfortunately, denim sandblasting allows for more intricately distressed designs, which means that it creates very high retail prices and very cheap labor. Sadly, this process' profitable nature has overshadowed awareness of its distressing health consequences within the textile industry for a very long time. Knowledge of its damaging effects did not fully enter mainstream consciousness until earlier this year, when the American College of Chest Physicians published an eight-year study on silicosis rates among male Turkish factory workers. They examined the amount of time that elapsed between the worker's initial exposure to sandblasting and his diagnosis of silicosis. For each of the 32 men observed—each with an average age of 31.5 years and an average workweek of 66 hours—doctors at a hospital for thoracic diseases in Istanbul discovered that it took about 5.5 years to spot the disease. Their mean survival time was 6.5 years, and the chances of surviving five years for those diagnosed with silicosis were only 69 percent. These shocking statistics combined with the fact that silicosis has no known cure are potent reminders to global apparel manufacturers: they need to push for more proactive reforms of their supply chains instead of simply paying lip service to the issue. Considering the relatively rapid onset of silicosis and the seriousness of its physiological effects, companies who truly want to eliminate further damage to their workers need to act quickly and transparently.

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Workers sandblasting denim in Bangladesh.

A number of global organizations recently began working to improve the conditions of garment workers. Their goal is to eliminate processes like sandblasting and to work towards reforms on local, national and international levels. The Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) has partnered with the SCSL to stress the importance of transparent enforcement methods and the state of supply chains on the part of clothing manufacturers. According to the New York Times, both organizations are also petitioning the governments of jeans-producing countries to "outlaw denim sandblasting, ensure that occupational health and safety rules are enforced, and provide disability pensions to sandblasters who contracted silicosis." The provision for a disability pension is crucial because the majority of workers employed in sandblasting factories are done so illegally, mainly because of their age or citizenship status. As a result, they have no formal contracts and are not covered by social security. Lawsuits must be filed if these workers want to demand disability pensions. In January 2010, though, after much campaigning by the SCSL, the Turkish Ministry of Health established a bylaw that would supply silicosis patients with free health care regardless of their social security status.

Silicosis from denim sandblasting currently affects thousands of workers all over the world in areas like Turkey, Bangladesh, China, Egypt, and Syria. The practice will only continue if apparel manufacturers do not seriously begin to reform their supply chains and maintain a very public commitment to the cause. While some clothing brands have taken a step in the right direction with their public pledges to stop sandblasting, many others have remained silent on the issue. These brands, unfortunately, include prestigious labels like Prada, Diesel and Dolce & Gabbana. Even those that are publicly involved in the campaign have yet to exhibit substantial reform. It is interesting to note that many brands, such as Versace, only address the issue once various activist groups have made it clear that they plan to boycott the company if it doesn't end its sandblasting practices.

But profit cannot be the sole driving force of these changes. Apparel companies need to undergo a genuine transformation in their infrastructure, corporate culture, and belief systems before there can be long-term, sustainable change. In the meantime, boycotting are an effective way for consumers to drive home the idea that dangerous practices like sandblasting should not and will not continue to be profitable for the denim industry.

The Women's Revolution

— Raya Saksouk

With the news in September that, four years from now, Saudi Arabian women will be given the rights to vote in municipal elections and to hold office in the consultative Shura Council, it was clear the prospect for change in the Middle East would not be restricting itself to the rallies of the Arab Spring. Saudi feminists hailed the news as another step forward for the nation's women, celebrating what they could in a country where gender inequality remains enforced by law. In the words of one well-known and hopeful Saudi activist, Wajeha al-Huwaider, "Women's voices will finally be heard." And yet, since Sharia law still keeps a woman bound to her home and husband—where a woman cannot so much as drive herself to the polls—it becomes doubtful her voice will ever truly be heard.

It remains to be seen whether or not the decision will serve as much of an indicator for the future advancement of women's rights. For one thing, the municipal elections in which women are now allowed to vote in are infrequent. Saudis have gone to the polls a total of two times in fifty years. Serving primarily as consultative boards for the King, municipal councils hold relatively little power to begin with, and a mere half of their members are elected by the people. One common complaint among Saudi women surrounds the issue that suffrage will not go into effect until 2015. This is especially salient in light of the fact that the second and most recent election took place in September four days after suffrage was announced. Four years in the future and hardly much of a stretch, the law's true clout remains too distant to be felt.

Thus the gain in suffrage comes to be little more than a glib and teasing symbol. If anything, the excitement surrounding it has served as a distraction from the much more dispiriting reality at hand: in more ways than one, Saudi Arabian women remain second-class citizens. They comprise 58 percent of graduates but make up only fourteen percent of the national workforce. In 2007, the female victim of a gang rape was sentenced to two hundred lashes and six months in prison for violating gender segregation laws. With the recent death of Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, conditions show little hope for improvement. King Abdullah's newly appointed heir, Prince Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz, is a social conservative and, in all likelihood, averse to the sudden liberation of any pent-up female power.

Rather quickly, it became clear the reform would herald no tremendous change. Just two days following the King's announcement, a woman was sentenced to ten lashes for defying the country's ban on female drivers—the first ever to receive a sentence so harsh. Some wonder if it was doled out expressly to counter the female triumph, in an effort to pacify domestic opposition. The same might be said of the expansion of suffrage itself—that the King's reform is no more than an effort to garner popular support and appease international pressures.

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Gender segregation at a Marriott Hotel in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

This glass ceiling is hardly unique to Saudi Arabia. Even while the Arab Spring has yet to descend on Saudi Arabian streets themselves, the situation of the Saudi woman reflects wholeheartedly on the anomaly of women's roles in the recent tumult across the Middle East. The female voice has no doubt been present in protests and marches from Tunisia all the way to Bahrain, but efforts to forge a Women's Revolution in line with the upheavals of the Arab Spring have repeatedly been thwarted. Women are in one moment present, active, and important, in the next moment pushed all together from the center of the revolutionary tide.

Nowhere is this clearer than in Egypt. Day after day, thousands of men and women marched together, shoulder to shoulder, and yet still, with time, equality wore thin. Female protestors were vilified as "loose" or "vagrant" by Egyptian press. Nearly a month and a half after protests began, the Million Woman March—achieving only the smallest fraction of its intended turnout—took place in Tahrir Square amid a storm of male and female opposition. Men countered their wish for the possibility of a female president with the supposed hadith, an ancient teaching in Islam ascribed to the Prophet Muhammad, that men should not take orders from women. One woman criticized them for what she saw as their inappropriate conduct. The few hundred who showed up to march were dealt the disheartening blow of having to defend their very right to be there, demanding female leaders and an end to sexual harassment. Suddenly, the countless voices adding strength to the revolution's cause were dashed from any hopes of partaking in the nation's future.

It is not impossible to maintain hope that women have made concrete strides closer to equality, however. In October, Yemeni women publicly burned their veils in outrage at President Ali Abdullah Saleh—refusing to be silenced even after dozens were injured when a march held in honor of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Tawakkul Karman was attacked by pro-government thugs. Last summer in Saudi Arabia, the Women2Drive protest against the female-driver ban was organized and carried out despite the significant risk of arrest. Even in Afghanistan, the term "Islamic feminism" has cropped up as a means of identifying women who have sought to reinterpret the Quran and remove Islam as an excuse for misogyny. The art of protest seems only to thrive in the face of opposition, and it is in the bravery of these women that hope refuses to hide its face.

"The Sacredness of Security":

Why Israelis Can't Stop Worrying and Love an Iranian Bomb

— Sam Spiegelman

In recent weeks, Israeli society has been engaged in an intense national discussion over the merits of a military strike against Iran's nuclear program. From cabinet ministers in Jerusalem to beachgoers in Tel Aviv, the idea remains highly controversial. Proponents argue that, while drastic, military action is both viable and necessary, while opponents suggest that even if the strike were to succeed, it would cost the Jewish state far more than it could afford.

For almost a decade, the Israeli military and political establishments have maintained that Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons, barely disguised as a civilian energy program, constitutes the greatest existential threat presently facing the Jewish state. Although this assertion might sometimes be overstated, it is certainly not without merit. Since the inception of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979, successive leaderships have maintained an overtly hostile stance towards the Jewish state. But for all intents and purposes, Iranian disdain for what they call the "Zionist entity" has become a truism of contemporary international politics.

At issue is lingering uncertainty over whether the Iranian leadership might seek to realize their anti-Israeli sentiments. In light of a recently published IAEA report suggesting the country's nuclear program could facilitate weapons production it would be naïve to continue taking Iranian leaders at their word. With the publication of this new IAEA report and cabinet-level discussions regarding the military "option" being leaked to the press, Israelis have found themselves discussing the Iranian threat in an entirely new light.

Over the past few years, the threat of a nuclear Iran has been discussed within Israel and the international community with an almost artificial sense of urgency. For the most alarmist Israelis, it could spell the physical annihilation of the Jewish state. Cooler heads have suggested it could foster deep anxieties within Israeli society, or perhaps, mass emigration As the IAEA report percolates in Israel's cabinet chambers, the likelihood of an Israeli military strike grows more likely by the day. But the influence of the IAEA report does not by itself explain why the threat of a nuclear Iran has once again taken center stage in Israeli national discourse.

Unlike in previous years, the intense national debate over how to best prevent Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons is presently imbued with a genuine sense of urgency. Were Israel to launch a military strike against Iran's nuclear program, the strike would most certainly result in a limited proxy war between the Jewish state and Hamas and Hezbollah, both of which are essentially satellites of the Islamic Republic. If striking Iran would merely embroil the Israeli military in a series of low-intensity conflicts in Gaza and Southern Lebanon, many Israelis would argue that this would be a reasonable price to pay. But if Defense Minister Ehud Barak's predictions that, in the case of an Iranian retaliatory strike, "there will not be 100,000 dead, not 10,000 dead and not 1,000 dead," were wrong. Few Israelis would be willing to pay such a price.

> **"The influence of the IAEA report does not by itself explain why the threat of a nuclear Iran has once again taken center stage in Israeli national discourse."**

For Israelis, threat has always been an accepted facet of life. Subject to perennial international criticism and terrorism from groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah, Israeli society has, through successive generations, integrated rather than sought to negate, the claustrophobia and siege mentality that are inherent characteristics of a state born into conflict and devoid of strategic depth. As a consequence, Israelis have always relied on their own ingenuity. From a series of hostage rescues and targeted assassinations in the 1970s and 1980s to the crippling air strike on Iraq's nuclear reactor at Osirak in 1982, Israel has demonstrated its willingness to protect itself from external threat, even if that meant defying international conventions.

As recently as 2007, an Israeli air strike was allegedly behind the destruction of what was believed to be a planned nuclear reactor in Syria. If Israel were to attack Iran, without the Islamic Republic responding in kind, the story would dominate world news for weeks, but would not drastically alter the geopolitical balance that has been precariously maintained in a Middle East rocked by the Arab Spring. Discussions among Israeli leaders are only beginning; it remains uncertain how the government will react to Iran's growing nuclear capacity. Currently perceptible, however, is how powerfully the notion of a nuclear Iran has influenced discourse among and between the Israeli leadership and people.

With a powerful military, a strong economy, a national cause célèbre that perennially transcends political differences, and a nuclear arsenal of its own, Israel is by every indicator a formidable nation-state. Nevertheless, Israeli society is imbued with an existential anxiety that no degree of economic prosperity or political stability could dispel.

Were Iran to acquire nuclear weapons, they would almost certainly use them as an instrument of diplomatic leverage. In most instances this would not affect Israel's regional military predominance. If the Iranians intended to use nuclear weapons as a weapon of psychology against the Jewish state, they have already won half the battle. Were Israel to successfully strike at the source of Iran's psychological offensives, such an action would greatly diminish the heightened sense of anxiety currently permeating Israeli society. If Israeli leaders are intent on striking and disabling Iran's complex network of nuclear installations, it would be better to take action sooner rather than later, before the Islamic Republic's nuclear facilities can be further diffused. And if Israel were to carry out such a strike, whether it might include air and missile strikes, or even the limited deployment of special forces, it would have to succeed. Anything less would not only embolden the Iranians, it would produce amongst Israelis a sense of hopelessness not seen since the early days of the 1973 Yom Kippur War when Israel's defeat seemed all too possible.

"Two Roads Diverged":
Shifting Paradigms of the Arab Spring

— Sam Spiegelman

Nearly every country affected by the Arab Spring has fallen somewhere between the Libyan paradigm of sectarian civil war and the Egyptian paradigm of unified public protests

As its first anniversary approaches, the Arab Spring appears indefatigable. A diversity of intranational manifestations of the Spring, ranging from civil strife to outright revolution, has revealed deep divisions between state and society in countries across the Middle East and North Africa. Instances of regime change and administrative reform have elicited strong responses from the international community, from strong rhetorical and even material support for popular protests, to, in Libya's case, active military intervention.

The gravity and extent of the Arab Spring leads many to observe that it is an inevitability of history, another instance of Fukuyama's "end of history" coming to fruition. Others argue that the Spring is a purely Arab affair, and in its various forms, reflects social, economic and cultural inequities peculiar to the Arab world. It remains to be seen whether the Spring marks a genuine sea change in the nature of state and society in those countries caught up in the revolutionary whirlwind. Although its future remains uncertain, the Spring has already elucidated parallels and distinctions between affected nations, and has changed how both governments and ordinary people perceive their relationship to one another.

Although the Tunisian revolution sparked subsequent upheavals, it was in Egypt that the Arab Spring came of age, and in Libya that it bifurcated into two paragons of popular opposition. The character and style of these two countries' Springs have produced the parameters that characterize the subsequent revolutions and popular protests.

For Libya, Qaddafi-era tribalism, Arab ethnocentrism and the suppression of Berber culture (and not, as the former dictator claimed, the legacy of Western imperialism) created tremendous disparities in the quality of life and the availability of social services between Kaddafi's native Tripolitania along the western coast, and Cyrenaica in the east. It is unsurprising, then, that active dissent against Kaddafi's regime quickly descended into a civil war with distinctive ethnic and regionalist overtones.

Egypt's revolution, by contrast, was a far more peaceful affair, devoid of overtly ethnic and religious dimensions. Although Egyptian society has experienced tensions between its Muslim and Coptic communities, their effect on the course of the revolution were marginal. Popular opposition to the Mubarak regime emerged in a time-honored trajectory: an aging dictator refuses to confront a youthful, increasingly assertive population reeling from years of economic stagnation and decades of intolerable police brutality.

"The gravity and extent of the Arab Spring leads many to observe that it is an inevitability of history, another instance of Fukuyama's "end of history" coming to fruition."

Ongoing upheavals in Syria and Yemen respectively reflect the Libyan and Egyptian paradigms, while at the same time demonstrating the influence of national idiosyncrasies. For over four decades, the Assad regime has permitted the minority Alawite sect to hold the reins of power at the expense of the Sunni majority. Chants of "Christians to Beirut, Alawites to the coffin," have painted the Syrian uprising with a blunt and troubling sectarian hue. Popular protests have emerged in Yemen against President Ali Abdullah Saleh, in office since 1978. These demonstrations have followed the Egyptian paradigm: among the overwhelmingly Arab population, ethnic and religious tensions have thus far remained marginal.

The Arab Spring has thus far caused the fall of three regimes, in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, the twilight of two others, in Syria and Yemen, and major political disruptions and reforms in every country from Mauritania to Oman, with liberal, democratic Israel being a notable, but unsurprising, exception. The removal of Jordan's prime minister by King Abdullah II, the promising of female enfranchisement in future elections in Saudi Arabia, the resignation of the Kuwaiti cabinet, and other far less dramatic consequences of the Arab Spring have nonetheless transformed the political landscape of the Middle East and North Africa.

While nearly every country affected by the Arab Spring has fallen somewhere between the Libyan paradigm of sectarian civil war and the Egyptian paradigm of unified public protests, cultural and societal differences between countries inevitably channel them in distinctive directions. Although political, social and cultural distinctions differentiate individual states' Arab Spring experiences, the Libya and Egypt paradigms have served as important parameters that reveal, to both emboldened dissidents and besieged regimes, the extent to which the Arab Spring can transform the relationship between state and society.

Whether or not the Arab Spring ultimately results in a flowering of political democracy and liberalism across the Middle East and North Africa, paradigms such as those that emerged from the Egyptian revolution and the Libyan civil war serve as watersheds in the political history of the Arab world. These, along with other paradigms that may very well emerge in the coming months or years, will serve as important reminders of the limits to both state power and popular passivity.

The Haqqani Network:
Scourge of NATO and Tool of Pakistan

— Zach Habermas

After ten years of conflict in Afghanistan, most Americans believe that their country is at war with the Taliban. Though not incorrect, this belief paints an incomplete and simplified portrait of the enemy. The Taliban, estimated to include around thirty thousand fighters, remains the most substantial force, but it is by no means the only group fighting against NATO. Other groups such as Hizb-i-Islami led by Gulbiddin Hekmatyar, a prime minister of Afghanistan during the period of Taliban rule, still pose a threat, albeit one not as significant as the Taliban. Another group, the Haqqani Network, has been the most troublesome for NATO forces, and thus the largest barrier to a more peaceful Afghanistan. The only leverage against them is the country that aids them: Pakistan.

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An MQ-9 Reaper drone takes off in Afghanistan.

The Haqqani Network has been blamed for some of the more sophisticated terrorist attacks within Afghanistan, most recently the bombing of the US embassy in Kabul that wounded 77 Americans, and two foiled assassination plots against Afghan President Hamid Karzai. Their attacks seek to attract press coverage in order to generate fear among the Afghan population. While aligned with the Taliban, they often act independently. Unlike most militant groups, they are consistently successful in Kabul, which is generally considered a safe city. Their trained fighters assault the city using gunfire and suicide bombings, besieging government buildings and leaving the police force in disarray.

Despite its success, the Haqqani Network is still relatively unknown. There are a few reasons for this. American and NATO forces were historically concentrated in southern Afghanistan, in the provinces of Helmand and Kandahar, the Taliban's birthplace. While the majority of international troops fought against the Taliban, the Haqqanis were able to carry out intimidation attacks, kidnappings and extortions from bases in the east. The network also forced US-funded construction sites to pay protection money.

With NATO's mission in southern Afghanistan more or less completed, their focus has turned to the Haqqanis' domain in the East. However, years of neglect have allowed the network to become a primary source of instability. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen called the Haqqanis a "veritable arm of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Agency (ISI)." American military and intelligence officials routinely claim that the ISI is helping the Haqqani Network, which has further strained relations between the two countries. As trust between the US and Pakistan has diminished, the US has been forced to strike at the Haqqanis unilaterally. With hideouts in the mountains and help from the ISI, many US intelligence officials believe the Haqqani Network can outlast the American presence.

The Haqqani Network can only truly be defeated with the help of Pakistan. While US drone strikes have killed some senior Haqqani leaders, they are insufficient to completely dismantle the group, and often anger Pakistan. The Haqqanis' headquarters are located in the town of Miranshah in North Waziristan, a lawless territory in Pakistan that the Pakistani army has refused to send forces to patrol, citing a shortage of troops. A full-scale offensive in North Waziristan by the Pakistani army would force the Haqqani leadership to scatter and disrupt their capacity to coordinate attacks. Pakistan, however, sees the Haqqanis as a way to maintain its influence Afghanistan after US troops leave. But Pakistan's use of militant groups to further its goals is unsustainable. Pakistan has already become a target of a ruthless suicide bombing campaign by militants it once saw as an asset. A more stable Afghanistan means a more stable Pakistan, and cutting off support to the Haqqanis would be a big step towards stabilizing the region.

While the Haqqani Network is still relatively unknown, its growing press coverage is a testament to its growing power. The opportunity to defeat it may have already passed, and negotiations for peace have so far proven fruitless. The hope now is that when US troops are gone by 2014, the Afghan government will be stable enough to hold off any advances the Haqqanis make, but that outcome looks less likely every day. As Marc Sageman, a former CIA officer who served in Pakistan during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, put it "whoever is in power in Kabul will have to make a deal with the Haqqanis. It won't be us. We're going to leave, and those guys know it." But this may not be necessary. Because the main source of the Haqqanis strength is that Pakistan sees them as an asset, if the US were to convince Pakistan that the Haqqanis are a threat to Pakistan, the network will lose its safe haven in North Waziristan and, along with it, their ability to plan coordinated attacks. The Haqqani Network is only as strong as Pakistan allows it to be; as soon as the US proves they are more dangerous than useful, Pakistan will render the network nothing more than a bad memory. So far the US has been unable to do this. If the past is any indication, Pakistan will stubbornly hold on to whatever leverage it thinks it has until the investment turns on its benefactors.

Democracy Deferred

— Meg Scribner

As part of the larger Arab Spring movement in the Middle East, Egypt's February revolution is generally thought of as an egalitarian movement, ushering democracy into a formerly autocratic nation. Images of ordinary citizens storming city streets in protest dominated news channels and newspapers, contributing to the perception that this was an effective revolution of the people. And indeed, this was the intention. However, the installation of a democratic government in Egypt cannot occur as rapidly as did the downfall of the previous regime. As Egypt attempts to build a democratic state, the fate of the government is currently in the hands of the military. Supported by foreign governments, this military coalition is slowly tightening its grasp on Egypt. As a result, the emerging government is anything but democratic.

After Hosni Mubarak resigned on February 11, 2011, the military assumed control of the government in the form of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) led by Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi. The military government was not intended to be a long term solution to the political vacuum in Egypt. The original intent of SCAF was to function as a transitional and stabilizing entity to move Egypt towards democracy in a time of political upheaval. In accordance with these intentions, a national referendum in March approved several constitutional amendments to modify the democratic process, establishing a commission to draft a new constitution after parliamentary elections. The SCAF intended for the development of a democratic government to be a civilian-controlled process.

Defying the citizens' desire to begin the long-awaited democratization of Egypt, the military declared its intention to remain in control of the government even after parliamentary elections this fall. SCAF will assume presidential powers, appointing a prime minister and cabinet, and will hold presidential elections only once a new constitution has been ratified. Such a process could take years, ensuring the military's monopoly on power.

Given SCAF's recent actions, Egyptian revolution appears to be moving farther away from its original democratic goal, and closer towards the repressive regime that existed under Mubarak, this time in the form of a military dictatorship.

The SCAF is already oppressing citizens in a manner reminiscent of the Mubarak government. On October 10, 2011, soldiers outside of a government building killed 25 Coptic Christian protestors. Over three hundred others were wounded. This violent encounter was the inevitable result of a military government; when the means of force controls the leadership of a country, it is impossible to separate violence from governing in the event of dissent. Thus, a totalitarian government has emerged in Egypt while the democratic ideal of free speech has diminished.

> **"Egypt has waited too long for democracy to see it overpowered in the hands of yet another dictatorship."**

The SCAF is clinging to Mubarak's legacy with the retention of the emergency law which has enabled the government to arrest suspects without a trial for the last thirty years. In fact, it has been expanded as a result of the September 9, 2011 attack on the Israeli embassy in Cairo. New restrictions include impeding traffic and interfering with the freedom to work, which are obvious attempts to squash protests. Amnesty International has referred to this censorship as the "greatest erosion of human rights since the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak earlier this year."

Further complicating the democratic process in Egypt is the fact that this authoritarian regime enjoys the support of prominent foreign governments, including the United States. Western countries have expressed approval of Egypt's current schedule for federal elections, largely due to the fear of an Islamist government assuming power. Although the Muslim Brotherhood was not the organizing force of the revolution, it remains one of the strongest parties in Egypt and would inevitably be a dominant player in Egyptian politics. Fearing a government controlled by the Brotherhood or other religious groups such as the Salafists, the SCAF replaced Mubarak rather than holding immediate elections to ensure the secular nature of Egypt's new government. Foreign allies fail to recognize that while a close relationship between religion and government is undemocratic, military regimes are equally oppressive.

In order to promote democracy in Egypt, western nations such as the United States must end their support of the SCAF that has been a major source of its legitimacy. With the public approval of global leaders, the military has no incentive to loosen its monopoly on political power, nor does it face retribution for its unwarranted human rights violations. Rather than hypocritically supporting the SCAF out of fear that a new Egyptian government could threaten American interests in the Middle East, the US should promote the democratic ideals it espouses by facilitating the advancement of elections. It is becoming increasingly clear that in order for democratic elections to occur in Egypt, an entity powerful enough to challenge the emerging military dictatorship must support the process.

The Egyptian revolution began with young, educated, secularists seeking change in their government, and they have been rewarded with a government that strikingly resembles the one they tried to remove. With the help of established democracies like the United States, the Egyptian people must organize again to challenge the SCAF and ensure that the democratic measures that the people voted for are carried out. Egypt has waited too long for democracy to see it overpowered in the hands of yet another dictatorship.

"Zero Problems" Takes a Holiday:
Political Opportunism and Turkish Foreign Policy

— Nicholas Grisham

In recent months the Turkish government has stepped-up its role in regional affairs, something previous cabinets have been loath to do. A tour by Prime Minister Erdogan in early September 2011 of Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, all states affected by the Arab Spring has been the political high-point of a very active year for Turkish foreign policy. In the same period, relations with Israel and the European Union have chilled. This sudden activity may mark the end of Turkey's "Zero Problems" (with the neighbors) policy, the operating doctrine for nearly a decade. The question is why Turkish policy has suddenly lurched in this direction. The answer most likely lies in opportunism.

The Zero Problems policy was originally promulgated by the current foreign minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, in his book Strategic Depth. The book argued that Turkey, due to its cultural and strategic location, was in a key position to act as a mediator in geopolitics, and to benefit from warm relations with many different states. From this geopolitical high ground, Davutoglu imagined that Turkey could both guide and lead their "near abroad," countries in Turkey's immediate vicinity. They set out to accomplish this in as non-abrasive a manner as possible. Recent activities call into question whether this doctrine still guides Turkish foreign policy.

Turkey's shift is likely an attempt to garner greater influence among its neighbors at the expense of weakened regional competitors. Erdogan's strong criticism of Israel reflects a popular sentiment in much of Turkey—stirred up in response to the Israeli raid on the Turkish aid ship Mavi Marmara, in which several Turkish citizens were killed. Eighty-four percent of all Turkish citizens, according to a 2011 poll by Hürriyet Dailey News, disapproved of Israel's handling of the Mavi Marmarra incident, while 48 percent approve of the current government's policies cool stance toward Israel. That said, the sudden downgrading of diplomatic relations and fiery rhetoric reflects not so much a true political shift as a chance to court nearby states in the midst of political transition.

The Turkish government also seems to be taking advantage of economic turmoil in the European Union. In recent months Turkish leaders have grown bolder when dealing with the EU. In an October 2011 diplomatic spat, the Turkish government threatened to freeze relations with the EU and send warships to the Cypriot coast. Both moves seemed to be aimed at punishing the EU for its Cyprus policies, a perennial foreign policy frustration. The threat to freeze relations was a response to EU plans to give Cyprus the rotating presidency late next year, while the threatened military deployment was part of a dispute over oil reserve claims in the Eastern Mediterranean.

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The EU and Turkish Flag.

This recent stretch of activist foreign policy does not seem to reflect a general shift away from prior governments' alignment with the West; mutual security and economic interests will keep them closely aligned in the long-term. The policy of "Zero Problems" was an amiable goal Erdogan's government sought to pursue, but a tumultuous political landscape has made Turkey relatively strong and led the government to seize on favorable circumstances. Turkish foreign policy doctrine is predicated on the country's strategic depth and a desire to control the affairs of its near abroad. Although the "Zero Problems" policy has been sidelined in the short term, it is unlikely that this shift indicates a greater long-term change in Turkish national interests and policy.

Beggar Kings:

The Real Reasons for Israel's Social Inequality and the Summer "Housing" Protests

— Danny Koningisor

This summer, thousands of Israeli citizens took to the streets to protest rising housing costs. In contrast to recent upheavals in neighboring Arab states, protests in Israel have found support across religious, political and socio-economic lines. These protests have been able to attract a diverse base of support by focusing on transcendent social issues while remaining largely apolitical,

Israelis have legitimate reason to be frustrated, as rising housing prices have not been accompanied by an increase in income. As a result, a common bond has emerged across a notoriously divided Israeli society, illustrated most prominently in that these protests have engulfed both Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, the Jewish state's social and political polar opposites.

While the protestors' calls for subsidized housing might alleviate hardships in the short term, it would not effectively target the roots causes of the issue at hand; the origins of which lay in the very foundations of Israeli society.

The most prominent elephants in the room are the increasing burden of the ultra-orthodox, or Haredi community on the welfare system and the ever-rising costs, in both political and economic terms, of the occupation of the Palestinian territories. Failing to address these issues, these protests gloss over the deeper, more important issues at stake. By focus solely on social issues, housing protests thereby preserve a number of fundamental inequities in Israeli life that must be confronted sooner or later.

The dependence of the ultra-orthodox community on governmental welfare began upon the country's founding in 1948, at which time Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion allowed four hundred young Haredi men to forego compulsory army service in order to attend religious schools. Since then, what began as an exception became the rule, as a significant proportion of ultra-orthodox men reaching military age remain exempt from compulsory service. Furthermore, the Israeli government provides social and economic welfare to the Haredi community, allowing its members to continue their religious studies and remain on the peripheries of the economy. While these measures were originally intended to help preserve Jewish culture and history once so integral to the maintenance of Jewish identity in the Diaspora, in recent decades such measures have given ultra-orthodox Jews in Israel a blanket of security allowing them to make paltry contributions to a society that sustains them. Presently, Haredi Jews make up ten percent of the population of Israel, while roughly 65 percent of those capable of work are unemployed, and remain perennially dependent upon the welfare system. And if current trends continue, the ultra-orthodox community in Israel is projected to double within eleven years. One can only imagine the economic and cultural difficulties this would have on Israeli society.

DANNY KONINGISOR

Israel soldier protect a group of Orthodox Jews.

In addition to the strains that the Haredi community places upon Israeli society, the ongoing occupation of the Palestinian territories has created significant difficulties as well. While peace with the Palestinians is far from certain, a concerted effort would further alleviate strains in Israeli society, as the costs of security, in both economic and psychological term, would significantly abate. Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories especially exacerbate economic difficulties, as they are expensive to maintain and necessitate perpetually increasing military expenditures.

In light of these more deeply rooted dysfunctions in Israeli society, Israelis must compel Prime Minister Netanyahu to help restructure society in such a way that the ultra-orthodox and settler communities are not accorded benefits at the expense of secular Israeli Jews, who work, serve in the military and are not in any way, and obstacle to the peace process. Now is the time for a new leadership prepared to address these fundamental difficulties permeating Israeli society.

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