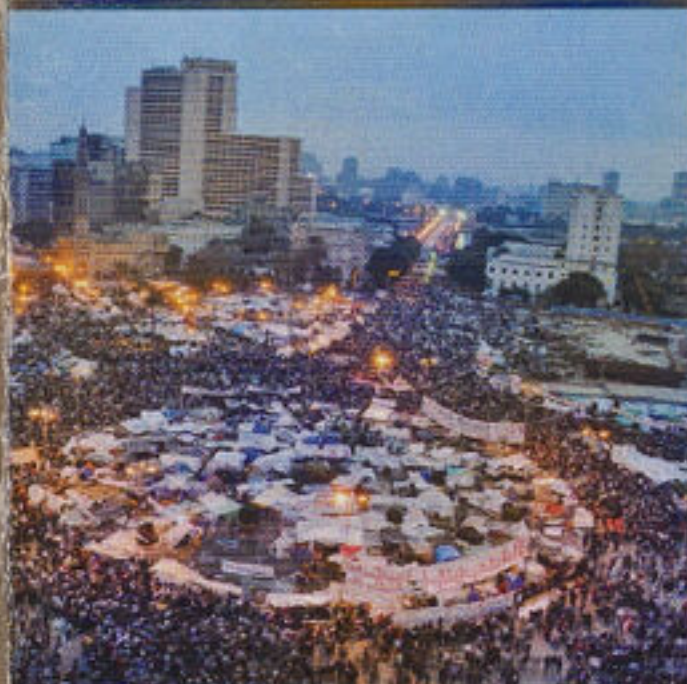




**HARVARD Kennedy School**  
JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT



# HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL REVIEW



## CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO

Challenging Power in 2010: The Year  
in Review

**Jesse Lava**

Faces of Transformational Leader-  
ship: Interviews with Ernesto Cortes  
Jr., Theda Skocpol, and Tom Perriello

**Matt Bieber**

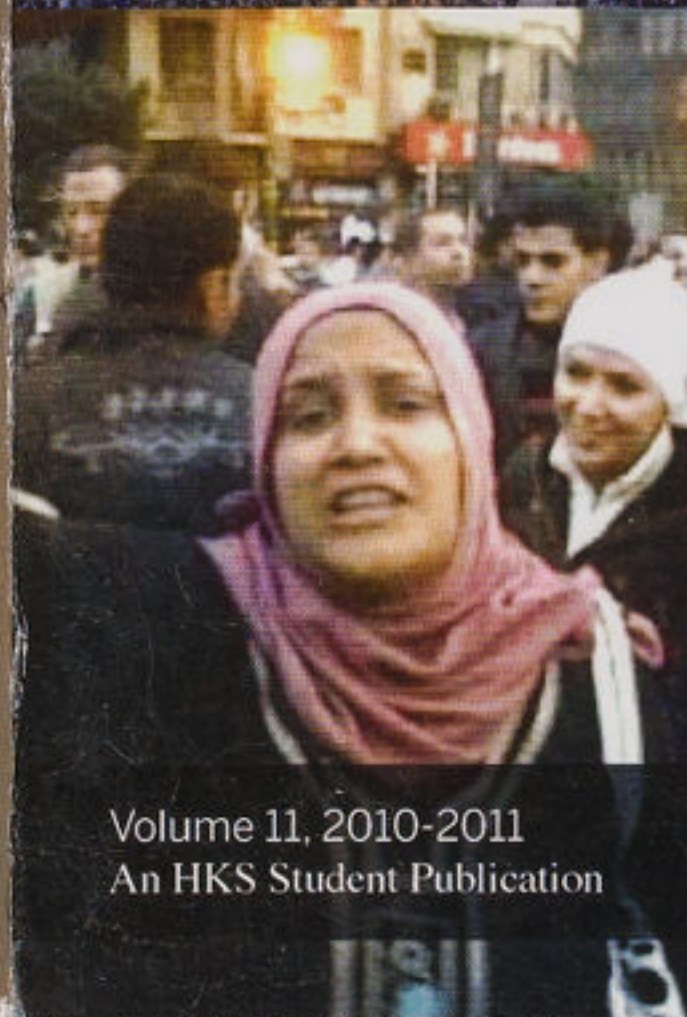
The Coming Food Crisis: Trading  
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Power to the People? Co-Production  
and Cameron's Big Society

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Volume 11, 2010-2011  
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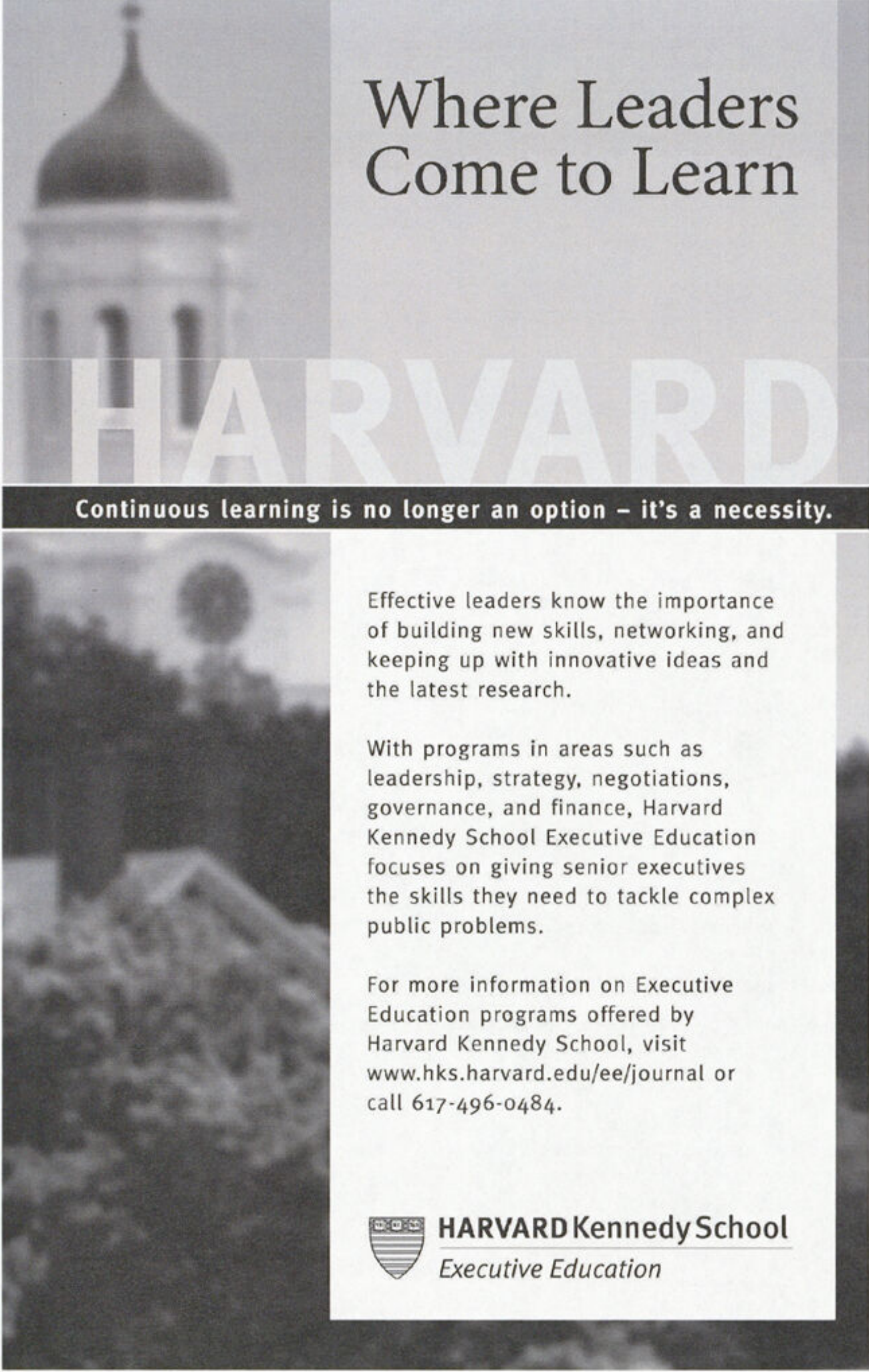
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# EDITORS' FOREWORD

The eleventh edition of the Harvard Kennedy School Review (KSR) showcases an array of thought-provoking pieces. The authors—mainly students at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government (HKS)—include emerging public leaders and seasoned practitioners in the world of public policy. Their pieces supply fresh ways of responding to many of the significant policy challenges our society faces.

The theme of the 2011 Features section is "Challenging the Status Quo." At a time when policy professionals are usually content to tweak the system incrementally, we are highlighting individuals, movements, and ideas aimed at achieving structural, transformational change. The section opens with Jesse Lava's overview of how outsiders such as the Tea Party, WikiLeaks, and Egyptian protesters have challenged the status quo over the past year. Nizar Farsakh profiles a Palestinian resistance fighter who went from militant to peace activist, and on the economics front, Ben Beachy critiques the fundamentals of global trade policy on food. These and other articles provide big, bold thinking that gets to the causal root of public problems.

Our "U.S." section offers fresh analysis of its own. Briget Ganske visits a café in Maine where waitresses have gone topless to survive the recession, and Jennifer Haugh breaks down the recycling issue to outline simple steps Americans can take to minimize waste. The "World" section is especially diverse, with articles ranging from Sileshi Woldeyohannes's personal narrative about fighting for democracy (and being imprisoned for it) in Ethiopia to Adam Heal's assessment of the problems posed by the emerging science of geoengineering.

"War and Peace" builds on such questions from a security angle. Bob Kinder, for instance, takes the reader to Afghanistan for a first-hand account of why the U.S. needs a stronger "civilian surge." Frank Pearl, for his part, describes an effort he led in Colombia to bring ex-combatants back into the social mainstream. The 2011 edition of KSR closes with "Culture," a section that includes, among other pieces, Tracey Stark's humorous take on abolishing marriage and Katherine Mazjoub's tale about a young family seeking economic and educational empowerment in the Peruvian Andes.

We hope that the fresh thinking presented in this year's edition will inspire policy makers to challenge conventional wisdom and promote positive change. As intractable as many of our world's problems seem, this set of articles offers ways to take a small step closer to achieving real results.

We thank the following individuals for their support in helping us put together this year's Harvard Kennedy School Review: HKS Dean Chris Fortunato, Faculty Advisor Richard Parker, publisher Martha Foley, and fall 2010 Shorenstein Center Fellow Karen Rothmyer.

Hummy Song

Jesse Lava

Alexandra Fielden

Editor-in-Chief

Executive Content Editor

Executive Managing Editor

Cambridge, Massachusetts

April 2011



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Image by Flickr user pchgorman



## Waiting Topless

by Briget Ganske

*Briget Ganske is a photographer and teacher. She received her Ed.M. in Arts in Education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 2010. She has worked as a teaching assistant to Marshall Ganz, Lecturer in Public Policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and currently is a teaching artist, integrating art and social change with Boston youth.*

In January 2009, the residents of Vassalboro, Maine, learned their small town would soon be home to a new business: a coffee shop with bare-chested waitresses. The great recession in America was beginning, and every social class was feeling it through pay cuts, job losses, reduced savings, and anxiety. Today, two years later, the unemployment rate remains high, and the story of this café, though unique in nature, illustrates how Americans—entrepreneurs and workers alike—have learned to adapt and be resourceful in order to survive.

Businessman Donald Crabtree, a former lobsterman, bought the old Grand View Motel on Route 3 outside of downtown and decided to transform it into a coffee shop. He installed a big sign, visible to even the fastest-moving traffic, and put out a hiring call. At that time, it had been many months since Lisa Beaudreau, 23, had been laid off from Walmart, and she had been looking for jobs all over central Maine without any success. After complaining about her bills and stu-

---

Photo 1 — Star Cunningham serves coffee to customers at the Grand View Topless Coffee Shop in the first month after it opened.

Photo 2 — Star Cunningham shrugs in front of a TV crew filming for a German network. Later she says, "Yes, I am a topless waitress, but I'm just a normal person in society."

dent loans, a friend jokingly asked her, “Why not work at the Grand View Topless Coffee Shop?” referring to Crabtree’s new venture. Lisa, surprising herself, took the question seriously. She was not the only person to do so; according to news reports, Crabtree received more than 150 applications.

As a documentary photography student living in Portland, Maine, I heard about the opening of the Grand View Coffee Shop through the local and even national news, which mostly sensationalized the nudity and local uproar, making jokes related to “cup size” and how the coffee wasn’t the only thing that was “hot.” Crabtree was quoted as saying, “The economy is so bad. Everyone’s losing their homes, everything they own. People leave here happy and can’t wait to come back. It’s nice to see people smile again” (Segall 2009). Even before the recession, Vassalboro (population around 4,500) was poorer than the national average: at the time of the 2000 Census, the per capita income was slightly above \$16,000, compared to about \$21,000 nationally (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). While most adults had a high school degree, few held a bachelor’s degree or higher (18.8 percent of the population compared to a national average of 24.4 percent). That fact put most people at

a disadvantage in pursuing the management, government, and business jobs in nearby Augusta, Maine. As the recession hit, the unemployment rate in Kennebec County rose steeply from 4.6 percent in August 2008 to 8.4 percent in February 2009, the month the café opened (Center for Workforce Research and Information n.d.).

Crabtree mentioned the failing economy as one of his main motivators for opening such a novel café, but in no news articles did he discuss how the economy was affecting the 150 people who applied for positions or the fifteen—ten women and five men—who ultimately were hired. How did these individuals, particularly the women, feel about working topless? Did they accept the job enthusiastically? At a time when the national unemployment rate was nearing 10 percent, were the individuals applying for jobs at the café part of the group of Americans—which was the highest in three decades—falling into poverty?

To try to answer these questions, I drove to Vassalboro a week after the Grand View opened. Near Augusta, I left I-95 and turned onto Route 3, where I passed a bowling alley, a Harley-Davidson store, boarded-up seasonal ice cream shops, a few small homes, and some old barns with peel-

*How did these individuals, particularly the women, feel about working topless? Did they accept the job enthusiastically? At a time when the national unemployment rate was nearing 10 percent, were the individuals applying for jobs at the café part of the group of Americans—which was the highest in three decades—falling into poverty?*



Photo 3 — Star Cunningham's son, Gavin, has a behavioral disorder. In the future, Star wants to work with children with special needs and their families.

ing paint. After reaching the crest of a hill, a one-story building appeared made of logs that looked strikingly yellow against the snow and bearing a sign that read: "Grand View Topless Coffee Shop." Inside a man wearing a leather jacket checked IDs under a handwritten poster that said, "Over 18 only. No touching. Cash only." Afternoon sunlight penetrated the closed blinds and fell on the pizza-parlor style booths and black-and-white checkered tile floor.

A young woman in her twenties, wearing only a black skirt and black boots, left a table of men sipping coffee in paper cups and approached me. I was impressed by how naturally she acted. So far, she said, the job had been good, people had been respectful, and she'd be happy to get the owner if I wanted to get permission to photograph. The coffee shop did not look too different

from other rural Maine establishments: customers in sturdy winter boots and big coats, mixing jokes and complaints. Soon, a middle-aged man with a thick Maine accent greeted me. "Donny," he said, shaking my hand. It was the owner, Donald Crabtree.

"I know what people want," Crabtree told reporters the first week the coffee shop opened. "People like nudity, and coffee is profitable" (Segall 2009). He seemed to ignore the fact that not everyone in Vassalboro took kindly to nudity in their hometown; residents had expressed outrage at the idea of the coffee shop and had tried to find legal ways to stop it from opening. However, since Vassalboro lacked regulations against such establishments, Crabtree received a business permit without much difficulty. Crabtree griped to me that a few local residents had simply overreacted. He believed



Photo 4 — Waitress Lisa Beaudreau, 23, talks with her mother, Maria.

he had found a niche in the failing economy and said the first day of business had proven it with more than 60 customers (Wolgemuth 2009).

“And the waitresses,” I asked, “could they make as much with their shirts on?” He shook his head and said last week one waitress received a \$100 tip—for a cup of coffee. It was not hard convincing Crabtree to give me permission to photograph inside. “Ask the girls, and as long as they don’t mind, I don’t,” he said. “It’d be good to show the real stories and not all the hype.”

When I returned for a second visit, I met Lisa, who was wearing a red plaid skirt and knee-high stockings and smiling nervously. She explained how happy she was to be employed, saying, “I didn’t want to go through another whole year without a job and having all these student loans.” Yet in the

back room, she admitted her reservations. “My first day on the job was very nerve-racking,” Lisa confided. “I was really shy and kind of embarrassed. I guess I was intimidated by the fact that I was face-to-face with people topless. . . . Even though I really didn’t want to, I just kind of gritted my teeth.” In addition, she said, her mother was disabled, unable to work, and relied on Lisa’s help. She confessed her mother was displeased with her child working topless but her mother agreed it was Lisa’s choice. Her mother knew what sacrifice meant, Lisa said; her mother had raised her children on her own, despite her disability. At the end of her shift, Lisa counted her tips, quickly changed into jeans and a sweater, and rushed off to class at the University of Maine in Augusta.

On a Saturday in March 2009, a film crew hired by a German network arrived to interview customers and



Photo 5 — As business slowed, Lisa Beaudreau grew discouraged and worried about paying her bills. She continued applying for other jobs while working at the Grand View Topless Coffee Shop.

staff. By this time, word of the coffee shop had reached far, and customers—men as well as women, college students, and older patrons alike—filled the tables, and a few even stood waiting for a seat. A waitress named Star Cunningham, 22, with a scar from a Caesarian section, offered more readily than Lisa that working topless bothered her. She spoke easily with the customers, all of whom she called “sweetie” in between jokes about working topless. Yet when I asked Star why she applied for the job, her reason was the same as Lisa’s: money. “I honestly don’t think in this economy right now that there is a job out there that would pay roughly the same, even though I only work for tips,” she said, confirming that Crabtree did not pay his workers an hourly wage aside from tips.

Star explained that she is a single

mother with a two-year-old son, Gavin, who has a behavioral disorder and often throws tantrums, which is just one of the challenges Star is learning how to handle. In addition, Star’s mother, who is unemployed and living with her, also depends on Star. While Star was able to joke about her new job, she admitted she hoped it would be temporary. She was studying psychology at the local community college and said, “When I think about my future, I think about working with children with special needs, a lot like my son, working with their families, helping them cope with the children’s disabilities.” Outside the coffee shop, she emphasized the normal activities in her life. “Yes, I am a topless waitress, but I’m just a normal person in society. I spend a little bit of time with friends. Most of the time I’m doing homework and studying, grocery shopping—normal things that everyone does when

they're not at work." Star invited me to her home in the subsidized housing units outside Vassalboro where I met her mother and her son. I tagged along with Star and Gavin to the grocery store, where she paid for her family's groceries in tip money, a stack of one-dollar bills.

I also spent time with Lisa outside the coffee shop. She introduced me to her mother, Maria, in the apartment near Augusta where Lisa had grown up. Lisa explained that despite her mother's disability—born without limbs from prenatal complications—Maria used to be able to work. Due to increasing pain, though, Maria has been confined to a bed and a wheelchair. "I help my mom out all the time," Lisa told me. "I've been helping her since I was four. I learned to change diapers when I was four, because my brother is four years younger than I am. I've been her helper ever since." Maria expressed concern about Lisa working topless. Maria said that this wasn't the life she had ever imagined for her daughter. If she could work anywhere else she would, Lisa told her mother, pointing out that she had been sending applications to other employers. "I just put one in at the Cumberland Farms in Fairfield, which is 45 minutes from where I live, just to work at a gas station," she said. "That's desperation right there."

After a few months or so, business at the Grand View Topless Coffee Shop seemed to subside. The novelty had died down; fewer new customers were coming out of curiosity, and most were regulars who knew Star and Lisa by name. "We have good days, and we have bad days," Star said, confirming that business waxed and waned. "The lowest I've made was \$39, and

the highest I've made was over \$200." Lisa was exasperated by working whole afternoons with only a few customers and also uncomfortable with many of the regulars—men who obeyed the "no touching" rule but gave comments and looks that made Lisa cringe. She asserted again that the job was "just a temporary solution for me to make ends meet."

As it turned out, the Grand View Topless Coffee Shop was more temporary than Lisa (or anyone) had imagined. Shortly after midnight on June 3, 2009, less than four months after opening, the coffee shop burned down. I returned to the site of the café to find that the yellow log cabin was now a charred heap. Through the police tape, Lisa and I could see the now-melted coffeemakers and pages from a packet of order slips flapping in the hot breeze. Crabtree walked around the ruins shaking his head, wondering aloud who had caused the fire, and asserting he wouldn't let this stop business.

Weeks later, the topless coffee shop reopened in a tent in the parking lot of the old building and then later in a trailer. Police suspected it was arson and, in April 2010, arrested a man who allegedly set fire to the establishment out of rage that a waitress and ex-girlfriend of his (not Star or Lisa) was romantically involved with Crabtree. The drama seemed reminiscent of a soap opera story line, not the routine struggle of real life in rural Maine. Such is a life filled with challenges, like those of Star and Lisa: taking care of young children and dependent parents, working and studying, and trying to stay hopeful for a future, which at the moment seemed far away.



Photo 6 — On June 3, 2009, the Grand View Topless Coffee Shop burned down due to suspected arson.

Star continued to work at the refashioned Grand View Topless Coffee Shop, while Lisa decided to put all her efforts into finding employment elsewhere. Both have continued to take college classes and support their families. Given the damage caused by the fire and the burden of reopening the coffee shop, it is unclear if the benefits of running such an unusual and controversial business have outweighed the costs for businessman Donald Crabtree. For Star and Lisa, working topless—an unconventional and often uncomfortable job—is what they could get as they waited for something better.

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# Citizens United and its Discontents: Five Hazards, Five Responses

by Chase Foster

*Chase Foster is a 2012 Master in Public Policy candidate at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, focusing on democratic governance. Previously, he spent four years as the Director of NC Voters for Clean Elections where he advocated for campaign finance reform in the state of North Carolina.*

On January 21, 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court hijacked the rules of American democracy. In a 5-4 decision in the case *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (FEC), the court made it legal for corporations and unions to spend unlimited amounts of money on political advertisements. In doing so, it enshrined all corporations, both foreign and domestic, with unprecedented rights, overturned its own precedents upholding corporate spending restrictions, and spat in the face of a century's worth of public and congressional opinion. If, for example, BP wants to spend tens of millions of dollars on a campaign to defeat a senator who supports climate change legislation, it is now BP's First Amendment right to do so.

The ruling was shocking and divisive, but it was no anomaly. It represented just one in a series of recent decisions by federal courts, led by that of the Supreme Court, that have fundamentally weakened campaign finance law in the United States. In 2007, the Supreme Court made it easier for outside groups paying for attack ads to avoid many federal campaign regulations; then, a year later, the court struck down a key part of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act that leveled the playing field for candidates facing self-financing millionaire opponents (*Federal Election Commission v. Wisconsin Right to Life, Inc.* 2007; *Davis v. Federal Election Commission* 2008). Last March, a federal court used the *Citizens United*

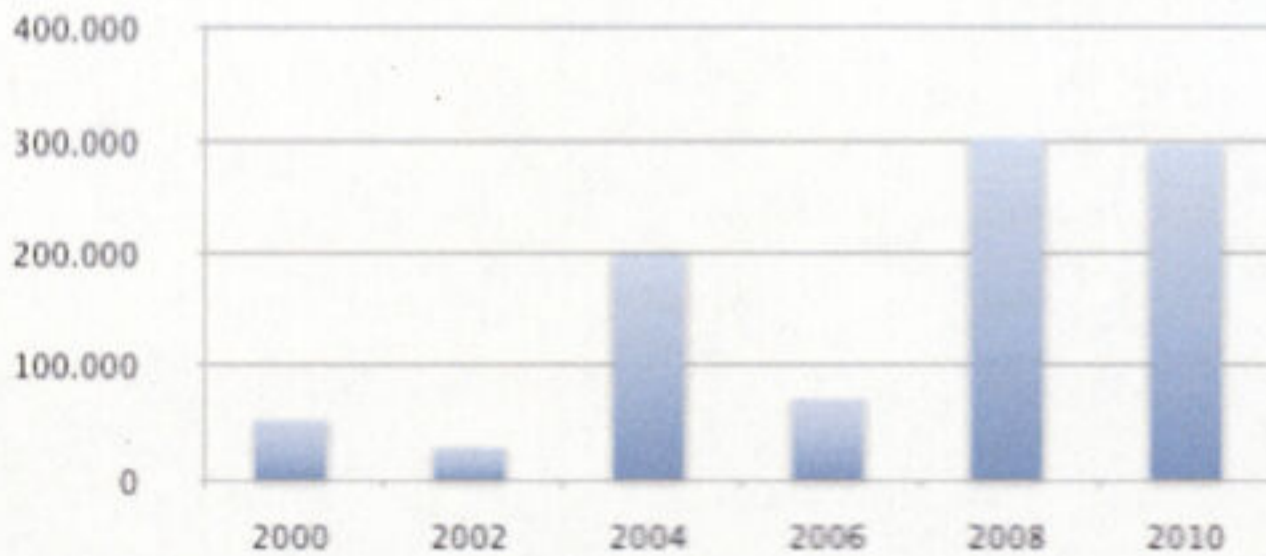


Figure 1 — Outside Spending in Federal Elections (in Millions); outside spending has increased significantly since 2000 and dramatically after the Citizens United ruling in 2010. (Source: Public Citizen 2011.)

ruling to declare unconstitutional all contribution limits for many outside political groups (*SpeechNow.org v. FEC* 2010). At the time of this writing, another case, *McComish v. Bennett*, was scheduled to go before the Supreme Court at the end of March 2011. In this case the Supreme Court may take one more step and strike down key provisions of voluntary public campaign financing systems designed to reduce elected officials' dependency on special interests.

This radical shift in jurisprudence has profoundly impacted the U.S. political process. In the 2010 midterms, new loopholes opened up by the courts helped drive up election costs to unprecedented levels and empowered business interests to play an outsized role in financing political advertisements. Using dozens of front groups with innocuous-sounding names like "Americans for Job Security," corporations and wealthy individuals spent hundreds of millions of dollars in 2010—much of it undisclosed—on advertisements in key races. The tilt of this spending toward conservative candidates helped Republicans sweep elections across the country and win a

majority in the U.S. House of Representatives.

With even more at stake in a presidential election and riding high off of their 2010 blitz, corporations will likely play an even greater role in 2012. "More and more corporations will feel emboldened to jump in with the massive amounts of money they can bring in with little accountability or disclosure," predicts Brenda Wright, director of the Democracy Program at Demos, in a personal interview. Richard L. Hasen, a professor and campaign finance expert at Loyola Law School, agrees, writing in an e-mail exchange we had that spending in 2012 will be "record-breaking." Exactly what these increased political expenditures will mean for American democracy cannot yet be known, but it seems clear that such a change will tip the balance of political power even more toward corporations and further away from ordinary citizens.

#### **What to Expect in 2012: Five Hazards**

This section discusses five hazards that may emerge from the weakening of U.S. campaign finance law.

### **1. Increased Role of Outside Expenditures**

One trend that is almost guaranteed in 2012 is the continued proliferation of third-party groups formed exclusively to take out political advertisements. During the 2010 midterm elections, spending by these groups surged 427 percent above the 2006 midterm total to a record \$294 million (Levinthal et al. 2010). (See Figure 1.) These “super PACs,” as the National Journal’s Eliza Newlin Carney has dubbed these political action committees, had an unprecedented impact in 2010, playing an “attack dog” role that is usually filled by political parties (Newlin Carney 2010).

In our exchange, Hasen also predicted that in 2012 super PACs will continue to raise and spend hundreds of millions of dollars from corporations, unions, and wealthy individuals and that they will use this money on advertisements that support or oppose the major candidates for president. According to a study conducted by the Wesleyan Media Project, ads taken out by these groups tend to be disproportionately negative, a fact that could be due to these organizations more temporary incorporations and lower accountability to broad-based constituencies (Fowler 2010). Lawrence Jacobs, professor of political science at the University of Minnesota, predicts super PACs will play an even larger role in the political process in 2012. “The candidates and party money will no longer have to do the heavy lifting on the negative ads,” Jacobs explains in an interview with the Washington Post. “It’s being outsourced to these shadowy groups” (Eggen and Farnam 2010).

### **2. Corporate Money Bonanza**

There will also be increased spending by corporations. Although corporations have been able to impact elections in the past through lobbyists and employee-funded PACs, they have been barred from paying for political advertisements since 1947 and from making direct contributions to candidates since 1907. Corporations are still prohibited by federal law from making these direct contributions, but with the Citizens United ruling, they can now spend their vast funds on independent political advertisements. “You don’t need a fig leaf anymore,” Wright explains. “The mentality of corporate involvement in the political sphere has become ‘full steam ahead.’”

With trillions of dollars of collective assets, corporations could have a profound impact on the 2012 election using just a small percentage of their profits. If the largest 100 corporations in the world, for instance, had spent just 1 percent of their 2007 profits on the 2008 presidential race, it would have quadrupled total expenditures in that race to \$6.5 billion (CNN Money 2007). In 2012, just a small fraction of this spending could determine the outcome of the presidential race. Even if it proves less consequential for the results themselves, the spending will affect the race in other ways: influencing what issues are discussed, how candidates’ biographies are constructed, and who has access to the White House after the election. And no matter which political party benefits most, the spending will expand the power of corporations and special interest groups. “The biggest threat is not that one party or the other will benefit,” Wright explains. “[It’s] that both parties

will have to dance more and more to the tune of corporate interests.”

### 3. *Anonymous, Undisclosed Spending*

We can also expect to see large amounts of secret spending. In 2010, the combination of corporate spending with new nondisclosure rules was potent, allowing anonymous dollars to play a decisive role in elections across the country. At least half of this outside spending, or \$130 million, was undisclosed before the election. This trend was in marked contrast to the 2006 midterms, which saw nearly 100 percent disclosure rates according to a report by Public Citizen (2011). (See Figure 2.) Given that Citizens United explicitly affirmed the constitutionality of disclosure laws for outside spending by an 8-1 margin, many experts have decried this shift as not only detrimental for democracy but also unnecessary.

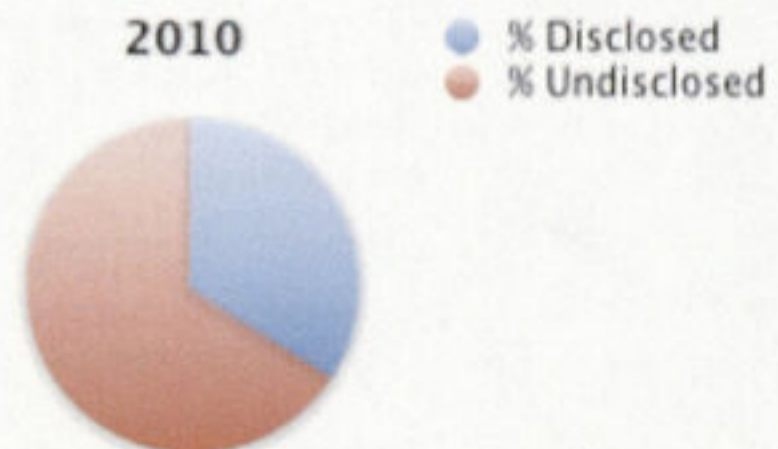
Why the change? A lot of it has to do with the FEC. Last Spring the FEC interpreted Citizens United and other cases in a way that made it easier for big political players to avoid naming their donors. The first FEC ruling allowed corporations and unions to make unlimited contributions to super PACs; the second said super PACs did not even need to disclose the names of their biggest donors, just their spending (Federal Election Commission 2010). As a result, the 2010 midterms were subjected to an

explosion of anonymous, corporate-funded ads bought via super PACs. As Hasen (2010) put it, “This system just begs political operatives to set up innocuous-sounding front groups to launder contributions for ads.” Since Citizens United, the FEC has been deadlocked, three to three, along partisan lines over adopting new disclosure rules to address these problems. In January 2011, the commission failed once again to adopt rules that would have increased disclosure requirements in the run-up to the 2012 election (Federal Election Commission 2011). Unless the FEC is able to overcome this deadlock or Congress intervenes—both of which are unlikely—we can expect the anonymous spending trend to continue unabated in 2012.

### 4. *Multiple Campaign Accounts*

The increased spending by outside groups will prompt candidates to raise even more money from individuals. As presidential contenders seek more funding earlier in the cycle, they will look for loopholes to exploit. One of these will involve leadership PACs. Intended to support the election efforts of fellow party members, leadership PACs have also been used to subsidize the cost of early unofficial presidential campaigns. The advantages of this strategy are clear: candidates can “double dip” from the same wealthy donors, exploit loopholes

Figure 2 — Disclosure by Groups Making Electioneering Communication Expenditures; disclosure of donors by independent political groups has declined dramatically since 2006. In 2010, almost two-thirds of election communication spending was undisclosed on election day. (Source: Public Citizen 2011.)



in more permissive states, and hold off on officially declaring their candidacy until millions of dollars are in the bank.

According to USA Today, at least six potential Republican presidential candidates had already created such accounts by the end of 2010 (Schouten 2010). These include former House Speaker Newt Gingrich; former governors Sarah Palin, Mike Huckabee, Mitt Romney, and Tim Pawlenty; and current Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour. Romney has raised tens of thousands of dollars from corporations through the Alabama affiliate of his Free and Strong America PAC; Barbour, for his part, has affiliates in five different states, allowing him to double or triple contributions from the same individuals.

### **5. Crisis for Presidential Public Financing**

With candidates scrambling for ever-increasing sums of money, we can expect that neither major party candidate will opt into presidential public financing. Designed to level the playing field and reduce candidate dependencies on special interests, this system has provided a public source of money to candidates since 1976. But when the cost of running for office went up dramatically in the 2000s, the program's strict spending limits made it less appealing to serious candidates. The system broke down completely in 2008 when Barack Obama became the first major party candidate to reject public financing, claiming the program no longer provided sufficient funding. Unless updated by 2012, this will happen again: neither candidate will use the program in the general election,

and it will become, as Hasen put it in our exchange, "essentially meaningless." This outcome seems increasingly likely now that Republicans control the U.S. House. Rather than seeking a bipartisan solution to salvage a bipartisan program, the new House majority has filed legislation to scrap the presidential public financing program entirely.

### **What to Do? Five Responses**

These developments pose a clear challenge to the integrity of the 2012 electoral process. As E.J. Dionne Jr. (2010) asks perceptively in a column in the Washington Post, "Could anything undermine trust in the system more than secret contributions to shadowy groups spending the money on nasty ads?" But with a Supreme Court committed to erasing a century of public interest protections in campaign finance, what, if anything, can be done?

#### **1. Increase Disclosure and Reporting**

At the very least, there needs to be more sunlight. Designed as a response to Citizens United, the DISCLOSE Act (H.R. 5175) would strengthen disclosure and disclaimer requirements for all election spending by independent entities (corporations, nonprofits, 527s, unions) and bar spending from foreign-held corporations and corporations holding government contracts of \$50,000 or more. It would directly address recently created disclosure loopholes by requiring all organizations with outside financing to disclaim their top five donors in all sponsored advertisements. In 2010, the House approved this legislation, but it fell one

vote short of overcoming a filibuster in the Senate. As Wright explains, “[this] is an example of where we could have improved the flow of information fully consistently with constitutional standards.” But despite its constitutionality—and wide popularity—the DISCLOSE Act is unlikely to be considered in the current Congress unless “there is some kind of campaign finance scandal involving Republicans,” as Hasen put it in our exchange. However, proponents hold out hope that it will be reconsidered sometime in the near future.

## **2. Exercise Better Corporate Governance**

Another reform approach would impose new requirements on corporate governance structures. As the owners of corporations, shareholders could be required to provide clear consent before a corporation makes a political expenditure. A law along these lines was passed by the United Kingdom in 2000 and has been generally seen as successful, increasing public disclosure and reducing expenditures by corporations. Last year the state of Iowa passed legislation that goes even further, requiring an annual vote by corporate boards, banning spending by foreign-held corporations, and requiring all ads using corporate money to include political disclaimers in their advertisements.

## **3. Expand Public Financing**

Many reform advocates also support updating the presidential public financing system so that it better addresses the realities of twenty-first century campaigning. Representative David Price of North Carolina has proposed legislation that would do this

in three ways: first by increasing the federal matching grant that candidates can receive on small-dollar donations during the primary; second by increasing the overall grant size during the general election so that it reflects the costs of modern-day campaigning; and third by creating a matching system that allows participating candidates to continue to raise matched, small-dollar donations and avoid being completely overwhelmed by opposition spending. Others have called for the expansion of public campaign financing to congressional campaigns as well so that these candidates are less dependent on special interest donations and more connected with average voters. The Fair Elections Now Act (H.R. 1826), which would create a voluntary public campaign financing option for all congressional candidates who proved wide, community support, was given a favorable report by a committee last year but moved no further.

## **4. Require Free Airtime**

At least 146 countries provide some form of free airtime for candidates, but the United States is not one of them. These systems are designed to reduce the need for large amounts of money to fund political advertisements as well as to increase the quality of public debate. A number of American civil society groups have pushed for free airtime for years, but they have been unable to overcome industry opposition. The 2002 McCain-Feingold Act, for instance, originally included a proposal that required broadcasters to provide free airtime to political candidates and to air town forums and candidate debates, but this section was taken out due to heavy opposition from national broadcasters. Free airtime offers a

modest and reasonable way to mitigate the growing cost of campaigns. As a centrist, bipartisan solution that costs taxpayers almost nothing, this effort should be revived.

### **5. Amend the Constitution**

Many campaign finance reform activists argue that the current court is so ideologically entrenched in its opposition to campaign finance reform that the only way forward is to amend the Constitution itself. As Lawrence Lessig, constitutional law professor at Harvard Law School, wrote in a column supporting an amendment, “We can’t build a movement to secure fundamental reform with the constant fear that an activist Supreme Court will strike that reform down” (Lessig 2010). A number of amendments have been proposed that would address the problem in different ways, either by affirming the government’s right to regulate campaign financing or de-linking the First Amendment from corporate political expenditures. All would effectively overturn the Citizens United decision and open up a national conversation about the role of money in politics.

But ratifying a constitutional amendment is a lot easier said than done. The last amendment to the U.S. Constitution, limiting changes to congressional pay, was ratified in 1992. And many highly popular constitutional amendment proposals with well-organized movements behind them, like the Equal Rights Amendment, have failed to be ratified. But this campaign may be different. The Citizens United ruling remains highly unpopular: an ABC/Washington Post poll conducted in January 2010 showed that 80 percent

of Americans disapproved, including 76 percent of Republicans. On the one-year anniversary of the ruling in January 2011, almost a million citizens signed an online petition calling for the ruling to be overturned, and anti-Citizens United demonstrations were held in hundreds of cities across the country. Some advocates argue that this ruling offers the opportunity to tap into Americans’ natural suspicion of large corporations—a distrust that has been punctuated by the economic recession. If this anger could be organized into a larger movement that combines popular anger with progressive calls for reform, a movement for a constitutional amendment might just stand a chance.

### **Pushing Back, Looking Forward**

If one thing is clear, it is that recent court decisions around campaign finance have fundamentally altered the status quo of American politics. These rulings have expanded the power of corporations and allowed a flood of special interest money into the political process. They have increased the need for fundraising and spurred the onslaught of attack ads from outside groups financed by undisclosed, unregulated donations. They helped make the 2010 elections one of the most expensive on record and will likely make 2012 elections even pricier.

But they have also inspired citizens to push back. Active reform efforts are underway on a variety of fronts. The rulings remain unpopular, and citizens are angry. The Supreme Court’s push toward deregulation has produced a definitive backlash. What that backlash looks like and what its impact will be

is still unknown. But with the balance of court opinion resting on one vote, the final chapter on campaign finance regulations still waits to be written.

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# Will a Social Movement Save American Education?

by David Shepard

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In February 2011, Teach For America's 20th Anniversary Summit convened the cast of all-star education reformers of our generation. Although these leaders left us inspired, their rhetoric raised more questions than it answered.

In the opening session, former Washington, DC, public schools chancellor Michelle Rhee initiated an ever-quickenning series of rallying cries, exhorting 11,000 Teach For America corps members and alumni to recommit ourselves to the sustained effort to provide all children with the quality education that they deserve. Rhee called on education reformers everywhere to organize ourselves, coordinate our efforts, and present a unified front in the fight for educational equity. She passed the baton to former New York City schools chancellor Joel Klein, who cautioned that incremental change is not enough; we need radical change. Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) cofounder Dave Levin gained momentum from Klein and, in a JFK-like moment, asked what we can do to serve the revolution. Finally, Harlem Children's Zone founder Geoffrey Canada reminded us that Martin Luther King Jr. told all of his followers that they should be willing to die for their cause. This is like war, Canada told us, and by committing to the revolution, we are committing until the end.

The summit took place the day after Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak capitulated his control over the country he had led for three decades. As if by design,

speakers took full advantage of the power of metaphor, calling the present our opportunity for an “Egypt moment” in the American education movement. The most poignant comment of the day, however, did not come from an education reform rock star; it came from breakout session panelist and Grammy-winning recording artist John Legend, and it came in the form of a question: simply, “Who are we revolting against?”

No speaker at the summit seemed to be able to name a villain for the revolution narrative. Celebrity political analyst James Carville named “ignorance” the enemy. Recognizing that ignorance is not a tangible target, Atlantic Monthly reporter Amanda Ripley tried to advance Carville’s argument by vilifying “vehicles of ignorance” such as “people who don’t have the right facts.”

Earlier in the day, I had also listened to other reformers’ answers to Legend’s question. But they mentioned only ideas. According to Canada, the enemies are many, including the ideas that “some students can’t learn” and “poverty determines educational outcomes.” It seems a far cry to compare Egyptians who revolted against a decades-long dictatorship to an unorganized collection of American education reformers who oppose a set of ideas. So is there really a social movement in American education right now?

I do not pose this question because I doubt education reformers’ collective capacity to make change. Regardless of what we call it, the energy that has swept the education reform community in the past five years exceeds the energy we have generated in the

previous five decades. I ask whether there is a social movement because the only way that education reformers can capitalize on the store of energy we have built up is to correctly classify that energy and to strategically target our energy through the most effective channel, which could be a social movement, a legal campaign, government-led change, or some combination of these or other channels. If we truly want a social movement, there are some things that we may want to do differently.

### **The Birth of a Question**

The question of whether a social movement will save American education became urgent for me because of my work with the YMCA (also known as “the Y”). I am proud to consider myself a member of a unique cultural clique within the YMCA movement. For decades, the Y has attracted, united, and trained young, idealistic leaders and empowered us to solve social problems creatively. I have played many roles within the YMCA, including a volunteer position student-directing a campus branch and a position on a national advisory board for young adult involvement. In November 2010, I initiated the YMCA Leadership Experience, a four-day program in which young leaders develop their leadership skills by exploring their values. Ten young leaders were chosen to attend the Leadership Experience based on their potential to step into roles that large numbers of local Y leaders from the baby boom generation are vacating as they begin to retire.

On the second day of the Leadership Experience, I took the group to see

the education film *Waiting for Superman*. After the movie we gathered in a cozy conference room in an urban Indianapolis YMCA facility to share our reactions and elicit strategies for what role young YMCA leaders such as ourselves should play in providing opportunities to children who otherwise would not have them. The ensuing conversation shocked me. Having grown accustomed to a YMCA culture of endless ideas and idealism, I anticipated a barrage of suggestions of all sorts: new programs, marketing strategies, and advocacy campaigns, among others. Instead of being energized by the possibility to tackle a new social problem, however, the inspired young adults sitting around our table seemed overwhelmed by the densely tangled web of problems that pervade urban education.

It is only natural to be overwhelmed by a problem that is, after all, overwhelming. The achievement gap between low-income, often minority, students and their more affluent peers begins early in life. By age three, children of professional parents know about 1,100 words; children of parents who receive welfare know about 525. The number of words children know closely corresponds to their IQ (Tough 2006). Fast-forward to graduation day, and, in the past thirty-five years, the gap between the high school graduation rates of White students and their Black and Latino counterparts has not converged. What's worse, official data published by the U.S. government downplays the gap by including as high school graduates the group of predominantly Black students who receive their GED while in prison (Heckman and LaFontaine 2007).

This achievement gap affects all Americans. While our nation struggles to educate minority and low-income students, nations like India and China are positioning themselves to take over as the new global economic superpowers. For example, according to a 2007 report, India and China combine to produce 135,000 engineers per year and that rate is growing rapidly, whereas the United States has stagnated, producing only 60,000 (National Center on Education and the Economy 2007). We need all of our students to become highly skilled workers if the United States is going to continue to compete in the global economy.

Considering this picture, the group of young Y leaders I took to see *Waiting for Superman* reached an unsurprising conclusion. In the consensus that emerged from the hopelessness that pervaded our windowless room in an urban Indianapolis YMCA, the young, idealistic overachievers deemed the ability to improve academic opportunities for our nation's youth uncharacteristically outside of our locus of control. Only a revolution can reform American education, they decided.

### **Academic Thoughts about Social Movements**

Since revolutionaries attempt to overthrow the government and institute a new regime, education reformers do not actually want a revolution in the traditional sense (for a more detailed description of the qualities of a revolution, see Goodwin 2001). What they want is a social movement. The idea that only a social movement can reform American education is not new. In academic circles, the notion

surfaced as early as 1982, when revered civil rights leader Robert Moses initiated the Algebra Project. The Algebra Project grounds its efforts to organize communities for quality education in the idea that algebra in middle school is the gateway to citizenship. Algebra, the reasoning goes, teaches the abstract thinking skills that students must learn in order to be able to participate in the economy during the technological age. Moses likens math illiteracy among Blacks to the denial of the right to vote during the 1960s:

Math illiteracy is not unique to Blacks the way the denial of the right to vote in Mississippi was. But it affects Blacks and other minorities much, much more intensely, making them the designated serfs of the information age just as the people that we worked with in the 1960s on the plantations were Mississippi's serfs then. (Moses and Cobb 2001)

In 2005, scholar Jean Anyon reaffirmed Moses's call for a social movement grounded in the rhetoric and lessons of the civil rights movement. Anyon argues that present-day conditions in Black communities mirror conditions before the civil rights movement in the 1960s: "The vast majority [of Blacks] have again been economically disenfranchised, this time by policies that regulate the terms of an information economy and remove opportunity from urban communities" (Anyon 2005). To end economic disenfranchisement, Anyon argues, new policies must eliminate the social forces that operate through such mech-

anisms as the housing market, which concentrates poor families in isolated geographic areas. Only then will low-income students and their families be able to access both educational and economic opportunities.

Recent research suggests Anyon may be right that only a social movement can catalyze the kind of comprehensive reform that will dramatically restructure schooling in America; less ambitious reform efforts almost always fail. The National Center on Education and the Economy (2007) likens visiting schools to practicing archeology, where analysts discover layer after layer of failed reforms that were never officially discarded. University of Chicago researcher Charles Payne (2008) explains that reforms are implemented in waves whenever new politicians are elected; new politicians, eager to demonstrate their solutions, implement new reforms before schools have the time to discern whether old reforms might work. As a result, reforms not yet out of their toddler years pile up in schools whose teachers and leaders become increasingly overwhelmed and demoralized.

Anyon (2005) notes that several aspects of the machinery necessary to mobilize citizens around education are already in place:

- Schools occupy both the physical and psychological center of neighborhoods and communities.
- There is a history in America of Blacks making the claim that access to a quality education is a civil right.
- Parents face personal incentives to press for quality education for their children.

- Teachers and administrators have access to community members that they can help organize.

The grassroots organizing tradition of the civil rights movement, after which both Anyon and Moses model their modern social movement strategies, represents a particular movement building theory, called political process theory. According to this theory, social movements form to make policy demands on the state. Leaders of social movements first concern themselves with mobilizing structures, which consist of organizers and the mechanisms by which they bring masses of people together. Anyon, for example, envisions organizers working with teachers and administrators to unite community members through a combination of meetings, rallies, petitions, and other events. Second, social movement leaders make claims on the government. Importantly, leaders derive these claims from the masses so that the claims they make represent the desires that the masses already have. Finally, social movement leaders look for windows of opportunity, like elite allies or conflicts within government, to press for their claims.

### **Mainstream Plea for an Education Revolution**

Recently, revolutionary calls have begun to come from mainstream politicians and socially oriented citizens groups with little connection to academics like Anyon and Moses. After Rhee resigned from her post as chancellor of Washington, DC, public schools, former city council member Kevin Chavous urged citizens across the country, and particularly in DC,

to internalize Rhee's sense of urgency and to mobilize. Now, Chavous argues, Rhee's often-criticized top-down leadership can no longer inhibit the masses from participating in the struggle to close the achievement gap (Mathews 2010).

Rhee seems to have learned from her mistakes in DC. She describes StudentsFirst, her new organization, as "a national movement to transform public education" in this country and recognizes that "parent and family involvement are key to increased student achievement, but the entire community must be engaged in the effort to improve our schools" (Rhee 2010). These ideas stand in stark contrast to the ideologies that guided her efforts in DC, in which she appointed an elite, exclusive force to guide reforms.

Rhee's new initiative is unlikely to become a traditional social movement in the ways that my YMCA colleagues imagined. American civil rights leaders demanded the right to vote. In South Africa, Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress demanded the right to participate in a South African democracy. In contrast, StudentsFirst makes no specific demands on the government; rather, Rhee (2010) promises to "put pressure on elected officials and press for changes in legislation to make things better for kids" and to support politicians who align with her organization's policy agenda. Social movements rally around concrete demands for a specific action; they don't rally around policy agendas. In addition, StudentsFirst does not offer people who join the opportunity to actively and personally put pressure on the government to adopt policies for children, whatever those might be, like

the characteristic meetings, marches, and rallies that have made successful social movements in history.

At the local level, organizations are beginning to engage citizens in organizing projects. Parent Revolution, for example, might be considered a combination lobby group and grassroots organizer. After successfully lobbying for a California law that allows a group of at least 51 percent of parents at any school to trigger dramatic changes at that school—including changes to the budget, teaching staff, administration, and school structure—Parent Revolution has entered its grassroots phase in which it organizes parents to pull the trigger at their children's schools (Medina 2010). It is unlikely, however, that Parent Revolution would spark a larger social movement. Since parents who become organized only make claims at the school level, Parent Revolution is not positioned to mobilize a mass of people who can make claims on a statewide or national level.

### **The New Wisdom on Social Movements**

Marshall Ganz's (2010) theory of social movements integrates political process theory with other structural theories and cultural theories. His integrated theory consists of four phases. In the first phase, organizers establish relationships of mutual trust and reciprocity with community members. It is these relationships that form the foundation of social movements. In the second phase, organizers mobilize the community through public narratives that explain why only this community can act, and why it must act now. In the third phase, organizers

outline the rights or actions that the movement will demand from the government. Organizers must construct demands broadly enough such that the organized population supports them. Finally, in the fourth phase, organizers lead the mobilized community into action through public displays targeted at public officials with the power to change unfavorable policies.

Purely macrostructural social movement theories like political process theory suggest that social movements are affected only by social and economic forces. These forces influence the extent to which a population is repressed and create windows of opportunity during which a weak state might be more susceptible to a social movement. Ganz's theory accounts for beliefs held by other social movement theorists as well. Rational choice theorists, for example, would support establishing relationships in the first phase of building a social movement, since each individual must consider the personal costs and benefits before they join. Ganz accounts for culture as well, since organizers must establish relationships and mobilize community members in accordance with the values of the particular culture of the population being mobilized. The issue itself is not enough to mobilize a population.

### **Chances for a Successful Social Movement**

Of all the theories considered in this article, Moses's model has the most potential to spawn a national social movement around education. The Young People's Project—which

Moses's son, Omo, began in the mid-1990s—recently initiated a listening tour around the idea of quality education as a constitutional right. While this initiative is still in its infancy and would take many years to develop into a full-scale civil rights–style social movement, it has all the right pieces. The Young People's Project and the Algebra Project are both committed to establishing roots in a community and empowering local citizens to make and act on demands. In Baltimore, high school students who participated in the Algebra Project organized a successful movement to receive repayment for a \$110 million deficit that the state of Maryland owed Baltimore Public Schools (Perry et al. 2010). The national movement is still in its listening phase. As Theresa Perry notes in her introduction to a compilation titled *Quality Education as a Constitutional Right* (2010), “We don't have an agreement of what constitutes quality education.” Once the listening phase is over, the Moses family and their colleagues and organizations will be in the best position to spearhead a social movement for quality education, whatever that entails.

Timothy McCarthy, director of the Human Rights and Social Movements Program at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, warns that a few additional complications might inhibit a social movement in education. First, communities often organize to make claims on government because they have been excluded from legitimate political channels for achieving the changes they desire. In the case of education, however, communities often support the powerful politicians, like U.S. Secretary

of Education Arne Duncan, against whom they would normally make their claims. Social movements cannot form if there is no one to whom a community can make their demands.

Second, Anyon makes the case that parents would face tremendous incentives to mobilize in order to fight for an adequate education for their children; however, her argument dramatically oversimplifies the situation. Communities are frequently torn between policies that promote their children's education and policies that promote the interests of adults, since school districts usually employ and award large contracts to community members. It might be more difficult than Anyon originally considered if a movement is to organize community members to support policies that would adversely affect them economically.

In early November 2010, my YMCA colleagues proposed a question: can a social movement save American education? Maybe, but it is not likely. Here is the challenge: leaders and organizers must facilitate a national dialogue in which they unite communities behind a specific demand directed toward a specific government entity that is capable of fulfilling that demand. In other words, all of the members of the education reform all-star team have to truly work as a team, with one voice. And they need to give us a voice too, not just represent our voice. With an empowered network of thousands of education reformers led by a guiding coalition with one voice, maybe we actually can make radical changes in American education, one specific demand at a time.

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**ENDNOTES**

The descriptions of social movement theories I present here come primarily from James Jasper (2010).

Chavous actually characterizes the achievement gap as three distinct gaps: “the education deficits between children of color and [W]hite children, between all low-income children and children of means, and between all U.S. children and children from other industrialized nations” (Mathews 2010).



## Beyond the Classroom: Women in Education Leadership

by Miki Litmanovitz

*Miki Litmanovitz is a 2012 Master in Public Policy candidate at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and a Master in Business Administration candidate at Harvard Business School. Prior to graduate school, she was a member of the Teach For America program, in which she taught middle-school math at a low-income school in San Jose, CA.*

Despite the fact that women make up nearly 60 percent of college graduates, they comprise only 16 percent of corporate executives. The nonprofit sector isn't much better, with only 20 percent of nonprofits being run by women.

But perhaps the most shocking gender gap of all is in the education sector, a field that is supposedly dominated by women. While women are 76 percent of teachers in the United States, they are only 50 percent of school principals; just twelve out of the fifty largest school districts have women superintendents; there are a mere seventeen women state superintendents or commissioners of education across the country; and there have only been two female U.S. secretaries of education. What's going on?

In other professions such as law, finance, and medicine, the lack of women leaders is in part explained by the until-recent dearth of women entering the profession. But that explanation does not fly in education, making the scarcity of women leaders in this field all the more disturbing.

To explore the source of this problem and derive possible solutions, I conducted a series of interviews with female leaders in education—district superintendents, state education commissioners, CEOs of education nonprofits, and U.S. secretaries of education—to see why they believe there is a gender gap in education leadership, why they were able to nevertheless succeed, and how they thought the

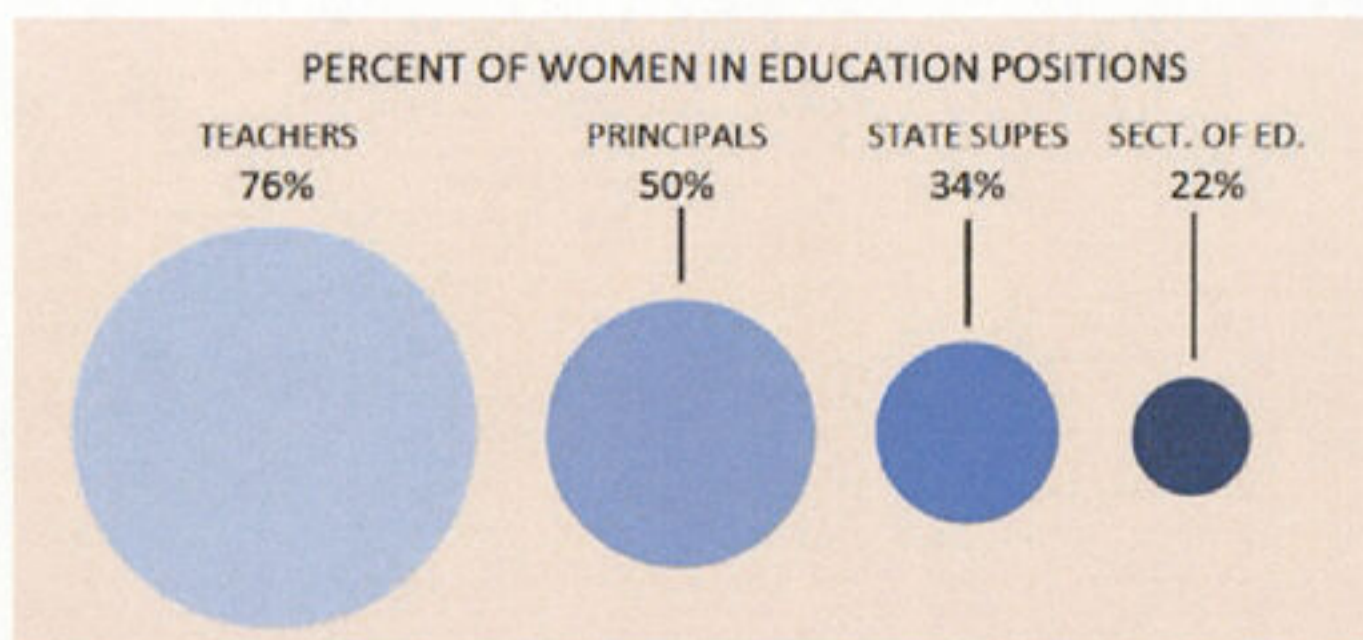


Figure 1 — Percent of Women in Education Positions

gap can be addressed.

### Why the Gender Gap in Education?

Many theories have been advanced to explain the existence of the gender gap in leadership generally, and some apply equally to education. As Shirley Hufstедler, the first U.S. secretary of education, put it, “The large gender gap in education leadership reflects the large gender gap in every other profession and business in the United States.” Some explanations, however, seemed to be unique to the field. Consider the following potential sources of the problem:

- **Lack of role models.** June Atkinson, the state superintendent for North Carolina, says education has a tradition of “women being teachers and administrators being men.” As a result of the historical roles that men and women have played, there are few female role models in administration positions for women interested in education leadership to look up to.

- **Leadership stereotypes.** Since men have dominated leadership positions for centuries, “society’s views of the characteristics of effective leaders”

often align with characteristics of men, explained Deborah Delisle, the superintendent of public instruction for the Ohio Department of Education. This is a two-way problem. First, officials do not associate character traits that are mostly possessed by women with strong leadership ability and therefore do not push them to pursue leadership opportunities. Second, Delisle explained that women who might make great leaders “may not even see themselves in a particular role” and won’t pursue leadership positions.

- **Lack of a pipeline for teachers.**

Related to the first two problems is one that Wendy Kopp, founder and CEO of Teach For America, attributes to the large gender gap. She says our current education hiring system does not have a “leadership pipeline approach to leadership development.” That is, we do not systematically identify and train exceptional teachers to become principals—or, for that matter, identify and train exceptional principals to become district officials. If a system like that were to be put in place, Kopp argues, it would go a long way toward increasing diversity in education leadership roles.

• **Work-life balance.** Atkinson contends that women are less willing to make the sacrifices required of leaders than are their male counterparts. Though traditional gender roles have shifted dramatically as more women are going to school and working, it is still the case that most women feel that if someone is going to have to be a stay-at-home parent, it should be them and not their husbands. And for women who leave the workforce for several years to have children but eventually chose to go back to work, it can be difficult to compete with men who now have those extra years of experience. Still, this latter problem is mitigated in education: teaching does not have the same kind of ladder in place that many other professions do, which makes it easy for women to transition back into the job, points out Michelle Rhee, founder and CEO of Students First and former chancellor of D.C. Public Schools.

• **Different reasons for entering education.** Lillian Lowery, the Secretary of Education in Delaware, posits that women may enter the field of education because of their desire to work with children, and they never even consider going into school administration. To some, Lowery explains, “leadership beyond the realm of teaching [is] not a desire.”

### Why Do Some Women Make It?

A number of women have been able to break through the barriers in education and attain high-level positions. The women leaders I interviewed cited several factors to explain their ability to succeed in a male-dominated world.

• **Mentorship.** Many women saw having a mentor—especially a female—who encouraged them to and pushed her to pursue higher leadership positions as critical. Brenda Cassellius, the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education, says that if her mentor, Cheryl Johnson, had not been there to push and motivate her, she would have had no one to look up to. Lowery agrees, saying that having a mentor to push her provided her with “avenues for upward mobility” she may not have had otherwise. Lowery also cites formal programs, like the Broad Academy for Urban Superintendents, as something that enabled her to climb through the ranks.

• **Support at home.** For Kopp, having a supportive husband was “without a doubt the number one factor” in her ability to focus on her work. For Cassellius, her mother’s assistance was integral in her early career, as she tried to balance raising young children with advancing her career.

• **Role models.** Like men, women need signals that achieving high levels of power, though challenging, is not impossible. For Atkinson, having a family member in “a leadership role once viewed as ‘for men only’” helped her realize that she too could beat the odds.

• **Personal wherewithal.** Hufstedler says success takes “persistence, education, talent and time.” This is amply demonstrated by Hufstedler’s experience: she worked since she was 14, was one of only a handful of women to attend Stanford Law School when most law schools did not admit women, and excelled in public service and on the judiciary before being

selected to be the first Secretary of Education.

### **What Should Be Done?**

The women who have been able to persevere despite the odds suggest the problems behind the gender gap in education leadership are not permanent. While finding policy solutions to address this problem is difficult, the women I interviewed identified a number of strategies that they thought would go a long way toward closing the gender gap.

One strategy that could be used is to institute formal mentorship programs that would target young, promising female teachers and pair them with a woman in a position of power in education to serve as a guide.

Another would be to develop leadership training opportunities for women to fix any perceived or real imbalance in leadership preparedness. Because men were historically leaders in education (as elsewhere), women may need specific training to help them overcome misperceptions regarding their ability to lead—for instance, that they would be “too soft” when tough decisions need to be made. Atkinson explains that women need to develop strong leadership skills and learn how to “sell” their core competence” as leaders.

On the family front, Kopp suggests “supports” such as complimentary day care or job share programs. Such programs would help make it possible for women with children to pursue high-level positions. Rhee agrees: When she founded The New Teacher Project, she created more flexible options for

her employees such as allowing them to work from home. “This wasn’t just to be nice or build morale,” explains Rhee, but also to allow her to hire “the most talented people in the field” that wouldn’t have been able to take the job otherwise.

Finally, Delisle points out that if we hold our female students to high expectations, we can show them that the “possibilities before them [are] attainable.” Even if this generation sees a large gender gap in education leadership, our current educators have the power to change that for the next.

### **The Bottom Line**

The female education leaders that I interviewed ascribed the gender gap in their field partly to factors all too familiar to women in all professions—lack of role models and mentors, male-centric attitudes about what constitutes leadership, and family responsibilities that tend to fall most heavily on women. Other explanations are more specific to the world of education, like the lack of a pipeline between teaching and administration, as well as differing reasons that men and women have for entering the field. Despite it all, however, some women make it to the top. Learning from their success illuminates how we might design solutions to ensure that women who so desire can go beyond the classroom.

# Fixing the Shortage of Primary Care Physicians

by Dr. Timothy Christian

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Tens of millions more Americans will have access to health care when the Affordable Care Act, passed in March 2010, goes into effect in 2014. This expansion in coverage is long overdue, but the current health care system is ill-prepared to handle such an influx of potential patients due to a severe shortage of primary care physicians. Currently, even many patients with excellent health insurance must wait long periods of time for a primary care appointment. Some travel long distances to find a provider. Some of those with means have resorted to purchasing physician access through “boutique care,” which can cost several thousands of dollars per year out-of-pocket.

The number of U.S. medical students entering family practice training programs has fallen by half over the last decade. Currently, only 2 percent of students graduating from medical school plan careers in general internal medicine, according to a 2008 article by Karen E. Hauer et al. in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. While many factors are responsible for the decline in students choosing primary care as a career choice, one clearly stands out: debt.

In 2010, more than half of all graduating medical students in the United States

*Currently, even patients with excellent health insurance must wait long periods of time for a primary care appointment.*

had debt in excess of \$150,000, according to an Association of American Medical Colleges report. This level of indebtedness is not unique to medical school, and yet while the medical field is more lucrative than most other areas of study, debt still affects the career choices of medical students. After all, even though each medical degree requires roughly the same amount of sacrifice, subsequent career pathways are widely disparate in reward. Primary care doctors are among the lowest-paid on the physician scale, earning one-third of a radiologist's salary despite a similar length of training postgraduation. Primary care is also a challenging profession that entails more sacrifice than other specialties. These physicians work longer hours, take phone calls at home, and make trips to the hospital at night. Consequently, it should be no surprise that, when saddled with significant debt and a delay in earning power due to the required training, many physicians opt for higher-paying paths with fewer personal sacrifices.

The Obama administration is considering several solutions to the primary care shortfall. The most direct approach is to increase payments for primary care visits, but this scenario will increase costs, which isn't ideal without a concurrent reduction in specialists' fees given our nation's economy. A second option is expanding the role of physician assistants (PAs) and nurse practitioners (NPs). However, PAs and NPs must be physician-supervised and cannot admit patients independently to hospitals; as a result, this would do little to relieve the physician shortage. A third option is to increase the number of medical

school slots, but this seems the least-efficient approach: if only 2 percent of graduating students want to go into adult internal medicine primary care, expanding volume will probably only produce more specialists.

I propose another approach. There are seventy-eight public medical schools in the United States with an enrollment of 79,000 students a year. The average cost of educating a medical student in a public institution is \$26,895 annually. Suppose the federal government supported these public institutions for this amount per student. This step would clearly solve the debt-burden issue for students, and the total cost would be only \$2.12 billion per year, which would comprise 0.0001 percent of the \$2.6 trillion spent on health care

*The number of students entering family practice training programs has fallen by half over the last decade.*

each year. Such tuition remission may change the career choices of students. However, rigorous studies would need to be conducted before embarking on this path.

A more focused approach would be to create a primary care physician education track into which students could be admitted directly. Students in this track would be funded for the full amount of tuition for four years in exchange for an extended period of practice in general internal medicine, family practice, or pediatrics. While this would apply to both public and private medical schools, the idea is for the govern-

*It is folly to think that reading a CT scan takes any more skill than separating out a case of lung cancer from the common cold in the office.*

ment to subsidize the medical school costs at the rate of the mean tuition for a public school; private schools would need to make up the difference since they cost more. For those whose career choices change, this track can include a buy-out clause equal to the funding received plus interest. If all U.S. medical schools dedicated 30 percent of their admissions slots to fill such a track, the total national cost to the government would be approximately \$650 million per year. This simple solution would turn out 6,000 primary care physicians annually.

One might argue that such a track would attract lesser candidates. At the University of Vermont, we review more than 15,000 applications to fill 150 slots. The difference in academic transcripts and standardized testing between those offered admission and the top fiftieth percentile of applicants is negligible. We have far more qualified candidates than positions. Therefore, a falloff in quality is unlikely.

The U.S. government spent more than \$150 billion in aiding A.I.G. and about \$50 billion to bail out General Motors over the last couple of years. In recent years we have spent approximately \$140 billion per year fighting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. As a country, we say we place a high value on the quality of health care we receive, but we have a history of being reluctant to pay for it. The proposed subsidy for medical education is a cost-effective solution that solves an ever-worsening shortfall and supports the health care reform

bill by providing doctors to the newly insured.

Should primary care physicians be paid more? As a specialist who depends on them, I say absolutely. It is folly to think that reading a CT scan takes any more skill than separating out a case of lung cancer from the common cold in the doctor's office. Getting rid of the debt problem for primary care doctors would be the most practical way to make the field more appealing. It would put dollars to action for patients and their family physicians in a way that is direct and fast.

## Decisions, Decisions: Cleaning Up America's Recycling Confusion

by Jennifer A. Haugh

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For the second or third time today, you're standing in front of a trash can, which sits next to a recycling bin. This time you're holding a paper Starbucks coffee cup encased by a cardboard cozy and topped with a spill-proof plastic cover. You've drained the last few drops of your fully caffeinated Costa Rica blend and are rushing off to a meeting, but you pause, confronting what has become a common moral dilemma for just about a millisecond: which bin? If you're like most Americans, you aren't quite sure what, if any, of this ensemble belongs in the recycling bin. So into the trash—and off to a landfill—it goes.

We're on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, a book published in 1962 that scared the living daylights out of American suburbanites across the nation and gave birth to the colicky modern environmental movement. Household recycling is one of the few consumer-oriented environmental success stories that has emerged since the 1960s. It has become the poster child of individuals' sincere efforts to curb climate change. Though constituting a relatively small makeup of greenhouse gas emissions (fossil fuel burning being at the top), recycling serves as a key starting point for most Americans to embrace the challenges we'll likely have to face with other lifestyle changes down the road. And yet, somewhere along the way, we've gotten caught up in a myopic eddy of "should we or shouldn't we?" in each confrontation with the circular file. It's time to demystify American recycling practices to free up our energies and focus on other ways to reduce our carbon footprint. There are simple steps we can take to see dramatic increases in the amount of waste that Americans recycle.



*Somewhere along the way, we've gotten caught up in a myopic eddy of "should we or shouldn't we?" in each confrontation with the circular file.*

### **Waste in Context**

We have a lot of good reasons to recycle: it promotes local manufacturing jobs, conserves natural resources, saves energy, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions caused by methane emitted from landfills. In fact, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) cites municipal solid waste landfills as the nation's second-largest human-generated source of methane emissions (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency n.d.a.). Meat lovers, take note: the number one methane emission source cited by the EPA is enteric fermentation—code for the gastrointestinal activities of domestic livestock (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency n.d.b.).

Americans overall generated 250 million tons of trash and recycled or composted 83 million tons of material in 2008, about 33.2 percent recycling overall, shy of the relatively unambitious 2008 EPA target of 35 percent (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2008). By comparison, the Netherlands, Austria, and Germany are recycling approximately 60 percent of their respective country's waste (Eurostat 2006). The EPA cites that some American cities have successfully recycled or composted up to 65 percent of average household waste (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 1999). Given the upward trend of trash generation by Americans (from 3.66 to 4.34 pounds per person per day between 1980 and 2009), the fact that

more than half of our nation's waste is hitting landfills indicates that there's a pretty big gap between what is being recycled and what is recyclable (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency n.d.c.)

The EPA published findings from its 1999 Waste Reduction Record-Setters Project, highlighting the practices of eighteen successful recycling programs throughout the United States in communities like Portland, Madison, and Seattle. Unfortunately, the report provides only illustrations of models that work and suggestions of ways to improve participation rates. What it lacks is a vision, targets, and meaningful standards or requirements for states, making it another in a series of toothless EPA policy interventions up against a crunchy issue.

### **Tackling Environmental Change at the Lifestyle Level**

Each time we stop at a trash bin, we're making a decision that affects the environment. Our overall individual carbon footprint is calculated by a number of lifestyle choices: whether we dine on porterhouses and red wine or enjoy a locally grown vegetable salad; whether we live alone in a sprawling exurban McMansion or in a small condo with a family; whether we jack up the thermostat to play the Halo video game or curl up in a Snuggie blanket to finish a tattered copy of *Flowers in the Attic* on the sofa; whether we fly first class



or carpool with our Toyota Prius from Cambridge to Key West. The road to environmentally sustainable lifestyles is a treacherous and bumpy ride; it's not easy to ask people to reconsider their creature comforts. Some might think it downright un-American. So let's start with something simple: let's recycle more.

But the trouble with recycling is that the rules of the game vary widely from place to place. Messages are mixed. For example, phone books are recyclable in Cary, NC, but not in nearby Durham, even though the cities' recyclables are taken to the same sorting facility. The resin number in the chasing arrows on the bottom of a Diet Pepsi bottle gives direction to a Pasadena, CA, recycler, but it's meaningless to folks in Minneapolis, who are directed to recycle only "plastic bottles with necks" (leading to deep thinking at the trash bin on the meaning of the word "neck"). Pizza boxes, milk cartons, and paper cups are alternately acceptable or will poison the well, depending on whom you ask. Recycling programs vary so greatly that the dizzying rules and regulations do a pretty fabulous job of discouraging participation in environmental best practices at the most basic levels. It's no wonder Americans are baffled and ambivalent, if not outright frustrated, about something so basic as recycling. The system sets us up to fail.

Consider the following potential recyclables:

- A paper coffee cup "made from 50% postconsumer recycled content"
- A grease-stained pizza box
- A plastic take-home leftovers container imprinted with a No. 5 in chasing arrows
- Unmarked semi-hard plastic packaging for small electronics and toys (the kind where it takes a small hatchet saw to get at the goods)

You may ask: what would Al Gore do? In some municipal recycling programs, we're instructed to disassemble and separate complex recyclables such as Pringles containers or milk cartons with plastic caps. In others, glass and paper refuse to get along, even after extensive couples therapy. In most cases, however, despite the majority of recyclable content in the list above, consumers usually first throw up their hands in frustration and then throw these items in the garbage.

### **Cleaning up the Process**

Given these relatively minor examples, imagine the mushrooming complexity involved in the challenge of priming folks to begin tackling the problems of sustainability. The environmental movement and the EPA need to

understand where average folks have been stuck for decades. In other words, let's put an end to this confusion at the basic waste management levels and start clarifying how we consumers can succeed at this.

As such, with the goal of higher participation rates in U.S. recycling programs, we may wish to consider a three-pronged approach:

**1. Establish a 2020 vision statement, underscored with residential recycling participation targets that provide focus to municipal recycling programs.** Again, federal recycling directives have at times been as enigmatic as a Saturday New York Times crossword puzzle, affecting both regional programming and the actions of consumers. Without a crisp, memorable, and ambitious (yet achievable) vision statement and clear directives to states, any nationwide recycling communications campaigns will lack salience. Why stop and rest at a wimpy 34 percent? Why not aspire to trounce the Dutch in the next ten years?

**2. Phase in standardized and simplified collection methods as part of a nationwide single- or dual-stream recycling model to help create uniformity and consistency for consumers.** Multiple studies have been published about best practices regarding collection methods for recyclable materials; the debate about collection methods and their varying pros and cons is fierce. The argument boils down to whether it's better to have fully commingled (single-stream) recycling collection, which is simpler for households but yields a higher rejection rate at a material recovery facility (an average of 7 percent), or segregated

(dual- or multi-stream) collection that requires more cognitive input on the part of recyclers. It remains unclear which method is preferable, either economically or environmentally. Either way, while environmentalists would like to think the public is ready and willing to spend the energy on making good decisions at the waste bin, it's perhaps an unrealistic expectation, and yet the environmental literacy currently required to sort recyclables demands precisely this level of cognition. Scott Mouw, North Carolina's state recycling program director, agrees, "In my opinion, and I think a lot of professionals feel this way, the public can't be expected to do a lot of thinking about this" (Mouw 2010).

**3. Align collection systems with clear product recyclability labeling to reduce recycling bin contamination, increase participation, and encourage environmentally preferable product/packaging choices.** The U.S. Federal Trade Commission just closed a public comment period (December 10, 2010)

*Why stop and rest at a wimpy 34 percent? Why not aspire to trounce the Dutch in the next ten years?*

on new proposed industry regulations that would increase transparency on product labeling. One pertinent component of these proposed regulations is the inclusion of product recyclability as opposed to merely suggesting postconsumer recycled content. The Sustainable Packaging Coalition has

*Recycling programs vary so greatly that the dizzying rules and regulations do a pretty fabulous job of discouraging participation in environmental best practices at the most basic levels.*

been urging new product labeling that would essentially suggest one of three categories: (1) highly recyclable, (2) possibly recyclable/check your local recycling system, and (3) not recyclable. But these proposed labels may not go far enough to aid consumers in their decision-making processes. A crucial element to labeling is the means of communication; one needs only to remember the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's color-coded security threat rating system to realize that certain messages ("orange!") get lost in translation. A main concern of the Sustainable Packaging Coalition's second option above is that it may be a return to the gray area of product recyclability according to geographic variability. The best-case scenario involves product labels that are easily visible and interpretable by consumers of nearly all stripes—regardless of English-speaking ability, age, or literacy—and aligned with recycling programs nationwide. In the long run, effective product labeling and transparency will also put pressure on industries to rethink unsustainable packaging and provide more socially responsible choices for consumers.

Transforming recycling labeling as well as the recycling system in the United States will be a tough pill to swallow for overburdened municipalities and communities already facing budget shortfalls. Let's face it: conversion costs will not be cheap, and we don't even collect enough local data to gauge

reasonable estimates. But it may be possible to create financial incentives, either by way of federal grants, commercial partnerships, or market-based solutions, to help cover these costs, particularly if efforts are rolled out over the long run. And for that, we need a strong vision. Either way, environmental leadership from the federal government is necessary to pave the way toward greater consumer and producer responsibility with respect to recycling.

### **A Place to Start**

While it's probably more comfortable to depersonalize climate change and instead focus on sweeping legislation or blaming industry practices, we have to take a look at the sum of all of our individual actions and see where we might be the culprits. We go through a lot of trash in this country because we have traditionally been blessed with abundance. The fundamental problem of American overconsumption has existed since the post-World War II era of peace, prosperity, and pink washing machines. But as the recent economic crisis and environmental trends suggest, a sea change may be required to spark a widespread culture of conservation among Americans. Good recycling policies could be a first step toward moving in this direction, as we spend less of our time and energy interpreting recycling collection rules and more energy on increasingly

ambitious consumer-related climate change targets. Perhaps then we can look at additional strategies to address other American consumptive behaviors through revitalized campaigns to reduce our consumption and reuse what we can—like a washable container for that daily cup of Starbucks coffee. It's just one less paralyzing decision to have to make every day.

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## Roots of Discontent: Egypt's Call for Freedom

by Sanjeev Bery

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On January 1, 2011, few would have predicted that Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak would soon be removed from office. But just three weeks later, thousands of Egyptians gathered in Cairo's Tahrir Square to begin the push for change. In the aftermath of Tunisia's political shakeup, Egyptian citizens called for an end to the authoritarian regime that controlled their lives. Never before had Mubarak faced such a massive challenge. After decades of torture, corruption, and fraudulent elections, the Western world's favorite "moderate" dictator was about to be removed from power.

Looking back, there were key underlying political conditions that made this popular revolt possible. After enduring some twenty-five years of dictatorship, Egyptian activists had already broken the taboo of publicly challenging Mubarak's regime in 2004 and 2005. And with the dictator's ailing health, the Egyptian public faced the specter of a 2011 handoff of power from the father to his son, Gamal Mubarak. Trapped between a dictator and the heavy U.S. investments that supported his regime, the Egyptian public was ready for the Tunisian spark that inspired them to action.



### **Thirty Years of Dictatorship**

The factors leading to Hosni Mubarak's overthrow were rooted, of course, in the three decades of his repressive rule. For thirty years, the aspirations of the Egyptian public were held captive by a government that appeared invincible through a combination of ruthless tactics at home and heavy military support from its U.S. sponsor.

At home, Hosni Mubarak used a range of tools to maintain his regime, from outright repression to the skillful manipulation of domestic opposition. The primary tools for this control were the government's state of emergency laws. Put in place decades ago, these laws enabled the Mubarak regime to ban public demonstrations, disperse political meetings, shut down media outlets, and make arrests without charges (Washington Post 2010). In addition, torture and sexual violence were commonly used against dissenters of diverse political stripes. Targeted dissenters ranged from secular democracy activists to the thousands of members of the Muslim Brotherhood who were held in Egyptian prisons (Shatz 2010).

Alongside this domestic legacy of brutality, the U.S.-Mubarak alliance also played a significant role in stifling the aspirations of the Egyptian public. That alliance began with Mubarak's rise to power in the aftermath of the 1981 assassination of his predecessor, Anwar Sadat. In the years since, U.S. military aid to the Mubarak regime rose to some \$1.3 billion a year, or 25 percent of the dictator's military budget (Cook 2009). Even nonmilitary U.S. aid strengthened Mubarak's regime

by respecting the regime's restrictions on which Egyptian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) could get U.S. funds (McInerney 2010). Though U.S. support often came with official calls for democratic reform, actual U.S. aid remained unaffected by Mubarak's continued repression.

In economic terms, this thirty-year U.S.-Mubarak relationship came at great cost to the Egyptian people. Under Mubarak's regime, nearly half of Egyptians have lived in poverty. Prior to the 2011 protests, real unemployment stood at approximately 26 percent, and 40 percent of Egyptians continued to live on \$2 a day or less (Shatz 2010). The Egyptian government had failed the fundamental test of providing its people with an economy that met their basic needs. To the extent that U.S. support for the Mubarak regime gave the government a domestic aura of permanence, U.S. policies also share some responsibility for the continuing economic suffering of the Egyptian people.

### **Egypt's Foreign Policy: No Room for the Public**

While the Egyptian public had fared poorly under Mubarak's rule, U.S. geopolitical goals historically benefited from this alliance. This promotion of U.S. foreign policy at the expense of the Egyptian public was yet another factor in the alienation of the Egyptian people from their government. It is also a significant reason why there is a great deal of criticism toward U.S. foreign policy within Egyptian civil society.

In return for U.S. military and financial

aid, Mubarak's regime gave significant diplomatic and political support for U.S. policies in the Middle East. As stated in a recent memorandum by the Council on Foreign Relations, "Cairo has historically provided Washington with political cover as the United States seeks to achieve its goals in the region" (Cook 2009). One example of this is the unacknowledged use of the West Cairo airbase as a refueling station for U.S. military aircraft en route to Iraq (Shatz 2010). Other forms of support included the U.S. rendition of terrorist suspects to Mubarak's torture-friendly cells.

The most significant impact of U.S. aid to the Mubarak regime was that it bent Egyptian policy in the direction of supporting Israeli goals. With Mubarak's border cooperation, for example, Israel could continue its blockade of Gaza Palestinians and Hamas. The Egyptian government even began building a deep barrier at the Egypt-Gaza crossing to block the tunnels through which Egyptian and Palestinian merchants evaded the Israeli blockade. The United States had approved an additional \$50 million in border security aid for Egypt, possibly to fund this wall (Shatz 2010).

Such cooperation has been lauded by Israeli officials as necessary for the moribund "peace process" with the Palestinian Authority. But in reality, this relationship with an Egyptian dictator may simply have given successive Israeli governments the freedom to continue building settlements on what is left of Palestinian land in the West Bank. Mubarak's support for Israeli policy served his regime's domestic interests as well, because Hamas is ideologically allied with Egypt's Muslim

Brotherhood, the mass-based Islamic movement that has opposed Mubarak's dictatorship. However, this support for Israeli policies was dependent on a continued Egyptian dictatorship, because Egypt's Arab majority has been highly critical of Israeli treatment of Palestinians. A democratically accountable Egyptian government would never have been able to provide such extensive support.

### **Voices of the Opposition**

Against this backdrop of repression, poverty, and disempowerment, a wide spectrum of domestic opposition voices offered competing visions of reform. The Mubarak regime long benefitted from the fractured diversity of these voices, which differed in ideology, resources, tools, and tactics. The Mubarak regime maintained power by exploiting the fault lines between the different groups. These fault lines included poor versus rich, religious versus secular, conservative Islam versus Coptic Christian, and banned organizations versus officially registered parties. When such exploitation wasn't enough, government torture and the state of emergency laws ensured that the public square could be kept empty—or at least under control.

One major source of anti-Mubarak opposition has been the Muslim Brotherhood. The organization has historically contained a range of ideological currents and occupied different roles in Egyptian society. Critics point to jihadi advocate Sayyid Qutb, who emerged from Egyptian imprisonment and torture in the 1960s to call for violence against the state. He was hung by the Nasser regime in 1966. But by 1970,

the Muslim Brotherhood had explicitly debated the use of violence and renounced it (Guttman 2011).

Officially, the Muslim Brotherhood has been a banned entity under the Mubarak regime, and thousands of Muslim Brotherhood activists remain in prison. In practice, however, the organization has a strong network across the nation's mosques and community religious institutions. Muslim Brotherhood politicians have also held seats in the Egyptian parliament though as "independents" and only in tokenized numbers that enabled the Mubarak dictatorship to point to a diversity of opposition voices. Even this token representation was eliminated in the fraudulent 2010 elections, which could be interpreted as a consolidation of Mubarak's power before a possible transfer to his son. All of this demonstrates the complex relationship that existed between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Mubarak regime (Shatz 2010). Under a potential transition to democracy, it has been estimated that the organization would win 15 percent to 20 percent of seats in parliament (Guttman 2011).

On the other end of the opposition spectrum are the officially registered opposition parties that were historically allowed by the Mubarak regime to seek and hold office in parliament. These parties, however, have been weak and proscribed in the levels of public outreach they were allowed. They include the Wafd, Tagammu, and other Nasserist parties (Elshobaki 2010). Because of the limits they faced, they were ineffective vehicles for challenging the antidemocratic nature of the state. At best, they served as small reminders that Hosni Mubarak's National Demo-

cratic Party faced opposition within the broader Egyptian society. At worst, they provided the Mubarak regime with a tool of legitimation through which it could point to the presence of opposition parties as proof of the regime's democratic character. Mubarak's careful management of the official opposition was one reason why the mass protests of 2011 were relatively organic and leaderless in origin: the official opposition has lacked a grassroots base.

Somewhere between the grassroots power of the Muslim Brotherhood and the isolated position of officially recognized opposition parties are an array of secular democracy advocates, individual opposition voices, and others. They have tended to be disconnected from Egypt's majority of urban and rural poor who grapple with day-to-day struggles for survival. As a consequence, they lacked the political firepower on their own to mobilize voters or pose a significant threat to the Mubarak regime. This was yet another reason why, when Egyptians took to the streets on January 25, they did so without the dominant banner of a preexisting movement.

### **2004-2005: A Push for Freedom**

In 2004 and 2005, leading opposition voices came together for the first time to publicly challenge the Mubarak regime. Under the banner of Kefaya—Arabic for "enough"—opposition voices ranging from Islamists to secular reformers publicly called for an end to Mubarak's government. The trigger was the looming 2005 "election" through which Mubarak was expected to renew his rule. The

Kefaya movement was a breakthrough moment in Egyptian politics because it was the first time that sectors of the public were comfortable challenging the regime directly.

To be sure, the Kefaya movement did not achieve its goals but it did lay the foundations for the bolder protests of 2011. The movement faced significant government hostility, and the regime used many of its tools of repression to silence the activists involved. Women activists were publicly raped by security forces, plain-clothed officers beat protesters at demonstrations, and the government-controlled media attempted to delegitimize the movement by accusing it of being a tool of the United States (Oweidat et al. 2008). Interestingly, the movement also faced criticism from Al Qaeda's Ayman al-Zawahiri, who publicly assailed Kefaya for pursuing a nonviolent challenge to the Mubarak regime. The Kefaya movement, including its Muslim Brotherhood members, rejected the Al Qaeda criticism (Oweidat et al. 2008).

Ultimately, the movement crumbled under both the pressures of the Mubarak government and its own internal tensions. The Mubarak dictatorship skillfully elevated issues that heightened tensions between Kefaya's secularists and Islamists, such as a government minister's criticism of hijab. Still, Kefaya opened the door to broader public criticisms of the Mubarak government. In the aftermath of the movement's decline, labor activism became a significant form of popular protest against the Mubarak regime's economic policies (Oweidat et al. 2008). At a more fundamental level, Kefaya broke open the gates of public criticism toward the Mubarak regime.

## 2010: Renewing Dictatorship

By 2010, many perceived Mubarak to be laying the groundwork for succession by his son, Gamal Mubarak. At a time when his father was widely assumed to be in the final years of his life, Gamal began rapidly advancing through the ruling structures of the dictatorship's National Democratic Party. As a relative newcomer to the circles of power, the son's rise triggered opposition from sectors of the public that openly criticized the notion of hereditary rule in Egypt. Fear of a hereditary renewal of the dictatorship was probably one important factor in preparing the Egyptian public for the direct protests of 2011. Gamal Mubarak also faced the perception that his economic liberalization agenda benefited elites while causing additional hardship for those who were poor.

The consolidation and transfer of Mubarak's power was expected to come over two rounds of elections: a November/December 2010 vote for parliament and a September 2011 vote for the presidency. If there was any hope that these elections would provide an opportunity for a democratic transition, that hope was dashed on the way to the November 28, 2010, first-round parliamentary elections. Prior to that "vote," the Mubarak regime conducted mass arrests and placed major restrictions on public campaigning (Human Rights Watch 2010a).

Following the completion of parliamentary elections, Mubarak's National Democratic Party swept most of the 508 seats in parliament, and the Muslim Brotherhood went from holding one-fifth of the seats to holding none. Mubarak's emergency law

enabled the regime to disrupt many of the basic activities necessary for free and fair elections (Human Rights Watch 2010b). In addition, the regime selectively allowed certain opposition voices to register as official parties while denying truly prominent opposition movements the ability to organize democratic challenges to the state. Generally, if a political party was allowed to be “officially registered,” it was because it was not a political threat to the regime.

### 2011: A Second Chance at Freedom

Against this backdrop, the swift popular overthrow of Tunisia's dictatorship in January inspired countless Egyptians to consider similar possibilities for their own nation. Just six years earlier, the Kefaya movement had already broken the taboo on directly challenging the Mubarak regime. With Mubarak in the final years of his life, the looming possibility of a hereditary transfer of power to his son caused further offense to many Egyptians. It was in this environment that former International Atomic Energy Agency Chief Mohamed El-Baradei became one focus for Egyptians seeking an alternative to the perpetuation of their dictatorship.

At the time of this writing, the Egyptian protesters have emerged victorious in their campaign to drive Hosni Mubarak from power, but it remains to be seen whether their interim military rulers will follow through on a meaningful embrace of democracy. The United States can help by remaining publicly committed to a full democratic transition. As described by Human Rights Watch (2011), such a transition

should be “inclusive, credible, transparent, and accountable.” Not only that, but the interim military government should also move quickly to dismantle the Mubarak dictatorship's tools of repression: political imprisonment, torture, and the emergency laws. The Egyptian people have suffered greatly under thirty years of U.S.-backed dictatorship. The end of Mubarak's regime offers both the Egyptian people and the U.S. government an important opportunity to break decisively with this past.

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## Managing Plan B: The Security Challenges of Geoengineering

by Adam Heal

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The year is 2035. Efforts to limit carbon emissions are failing. Global temperatures are soaring. Volatile weather patterns bring floods, droughts, hurricanes, and blizzards. Scientists study the Antarctic ice sheet and warn we may imminently breach a tipping point, triggering an unstoppable rise in the sea level.

In Indonesia, people of the low-lying islands threatened by inundation riot in the streets. The government determines to act. From numerous airstrips across the archipelago, a fleet of high-altitude planes, secretly readied for years, are given the green light for takeoff. They climb rapidly into the upper atmosphere. At the agreed altitude they discharge their load of climate-cooling sulphates—tiny beads that will reflect the sun's glare.

Beijing is watching. The Chinese government spots the flights on military radars. Its advisers warn the sulphur will reduce rainfall in China. The rice harvest and thus wider social stability are at risk. A diplomatic cable warns the Indonesians to stop. They refuse. From China fighter planes are scrambled to intercept and destroy.

### **Welcome to the climate wars.**

This scenario remains far-fetched, but it illustrates the diplomatic and security problems posed by the emerging science of geoengineering. We are unprepared for a future where climate-altering technology is within the reach of even small

*We are unprepared for a future where climate-altering technology is within the reach of even small states and individuals.*

states and individuals. In the past two years, the scientific, technical, and moral challenges of geoengineering have begun to rise on the agenda of scientists, activists, and policy makers. But ideas on governance are sparse and preliminary. New models of international cooperation will be vital both to protect the environment and to secure the peace.

### **Newfangled Ideas**

The world's failure to make a dent in greenhouse gas emissions is provoking interest in new mechanisms to avert the worst impacts of climate change. Urgent intervention may be needed to dodge a sudden crisis, particularly if we risk passing a tipping point. Geoengineering, the deliberate manipulation of the climate system, is one such option.

Two major proposals exist. One is to suck carbon dioxide out of the sky. Proponents of this approach envisage giant structures, similar to water towers, filled with chemical machinery "scrubbing" the atmosphere clean. Huge algal blooms seeded in the ocean could do this work as well. These technologies pose few security concerns but remain unproven and may be impractical. Also, multiyear time lags in climatic responses to carbon render them ineffective against sudden emergencies.

An alternative approach, solar radiation management (SRM), promises quicker payback. The idea would be

to boost the earth's reflectivity, sending more of the sunlight striking the planet back into space before it can warm the atmosphere. One method would involve "whitening" clouds using seawater thrown up by giant pumps. Another SRM option would be to directly inject reflective sulphur particles into the stratosphere. This would mimic the natural cooling effects of volcanic eruptions—a global chill of 0.5 degrees Celsius occurred after Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines blew its top in 1991. High-altitude planes equipped with spray tanks could do the job or even vast, snaking pipes held aloft by zeppelins.

Models predict that a single kilogram of sulphur could offset the heating effect of hundreds of thousands of kilograms of carbon dioxide. The impact on the atmosphere would be felt within months. Figures like these are exciting scientists and are attracting attention.

We remain, however, far from deployment. Jason Blackstock of the Centre for International Governance Innovation and Jane Long of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory caution that "only a handful of research groups around the world are actively pursuing projects, and in terms of the technology or development of the ideas, they are at an incredibly early stage" (Blackstock and Long 2010). Even so, much of the basic component technologies needed is already available "on the shelf." Should resources and political will become available it



is theoretically possible to proceed quickly without new inventions.

### The Security Risks

SRM is a technology of staggering potency. Geoengineering researcher David Keith has labeled SRM technologies “cheap, fast, and imperfect” (Keith 2010). They’re cheap and fast because, for perhaps only a few hundred millions dollars, we could rapidly eliminate a century’s worth of heating. Cutting emissions would cost hundreds of times this amount. The ice caps would be saved and runaway warming averted. Salvation? Maybe, but it would come at a price. And that’s where the imperfect part comes in.

*Absent an accepted international framework for applying geoengineering, the prospect of states unilaterally altering the climate becomes threatening.*

Intervention using sulphur would not return the climate to its state prior to the industrial revolution. Carbon dioxide would continue to gather in the atmosphere, worsening ocean acidification. New, unfamiliar weather patterns might emerge. Many people would benefit from the limits to overall temperature rises, but others would suffer. Low-lying coastal regions might be spared rising sea levels, and farming in temperate zones may be protected. In contrast, monsoons over South Asia and rainfall in the tropics could be disrupted, bringing drought and famine.

SRM, in other words, has tradeoffs and distributional effects across borders. The creation of winners and losers renders deployment an inherently polit-

ical choice—and a diplomatic minefield. As Stanford Law Professor David Victor et al. writes, “One nation’s emergency can be another’s opportunity, and it is unlikely that all countries will have similar assessments of how to balance the ills of unchecked climate change with the risk that geoengineering could do more harm than good” (Victor et al. 2009).

Absent an accepted international framework for applying geoengineering, the prospect of states unilaterally altering the climate becomes threatening. A climate conducive to survival is the most fundamental national security interest. No country is likely to bear the risks of acting alone unless desperate, its existence threatened. But it is

these conditions—perhaps for a low-lying state like Bangladesh—that might trigger a rash or hasty decision. Under the United Nations (UN) charter, such a state could argue that its move is justified by self-defense. But other states could retaliate if they saw their own people’s livelihoods risked.

Still, random fluctuations in heat, rain, and snowfall would make it hard for countries to blame singular local weather events, such as a drought, on specific SRM interventions. Without clear causal proof, users of SRM might deny responsibility for any particular results abroad. This opacity, however, might also make them scapegoats if other societies suffer adverse weather, resulting in loss of crops, say, or hur-

ricane damage. There would be huge political pressure to respond, perhaps militarily, if the risks were deemed existential.

The potential for action by a non-state group, corporation, or individual complicates matters further. The relatively low cost of SRM puts it within reach of large companies or even wealthy individuals. If an agricultural corporation, for instance, believed that rising temperatures threatened output, it might have an interest in cooling the climate and might attempt to deploy SRM on its own. However, this possibility remains distant as uncertainty about particular regional impacts will make decisions a hard call for individual industries.

More sinister and plausible are corporate lobbying campaigns in support of geoengineering as a cheap, cost-effective “solution” to climate change. Fossil fuel producers might push governments down this route as an alternative to wide-scale emissions reductions that would endanger profitability. In societies unwilling to make the hard sacrifices necessary to cut carbon, this vision of a quick fix could have strong appeal. The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, long opposed to constraints on business in the name of environmental protection, has already convened panels on the SRM option.

### **To Test or Not To Test?**

One response to the problems and risks of geoengineering would be to outlaw it. The risks of messing with the climate are immense, and for many the idea sparks instant revulsion. Some

environmentalists are hollering for an immediate ban, worrying that if geoengineering technologies are developed, people will inevitably want to use them. Recently, the UN Convention on Biodiversity passed a “moratorium on all geoengineering activities,” though the meaning and significance of this measure are unclear.

Banning research, however, would be irresponsible at this stage. An urgent climate crisis might require intervention through geoengineering. At the very least, more work should be done to make clear to decision makers and the public the tremendously difficult costs and tradeoffs involved. Unless research brings into focus the risks, it will be easy for vested interests to present SRM as a “solution,” obviating the need for hard decisions and sacrifices today.

Much is still not understood. For example, at the micro-level, exactly how sulphur particles would behave once released is not well-known, and how much sulphate you would need in order to achieve a given degree of cooling depends heavily on the results. We have even less of a grasp on the bigger questions about climatic impacts on different regions. Computer simulations are currently used, but Blackstock and Long note that “models are great for testing what you already know; they are not very good for predicting what you don’t know” (Blackstock and Long 2010). As Donald Rumsfeld might have said, alongside all the known unknowns, there are plenty of unknown unknowns too. Modeling can help us refine our thinking, but the idea that geoengineers fiddling with the climate will be able to pull on their levers and adjust their dials confident

of the exact outcome remains fantasy.

If testing proceeds, international understandings will need to govern it. Blackstock and Long would like to see transparency as the benchmark for any regime: “There needs to be a period of collaborative international research and governance of that research that builds the relationships, the networks, and the frameworks for thinking about how to control this technology” (Blackstock and Long 2010). As our knowledge develops, so (hopefully) will ideas on how best to make use of it.

### **A Secure Path Forward**

Beyond testing, what might an international governance regime for deployment look like? At present, that question has no answer, but consideration is beginning. The Royal Society, a British scientific organization, is currently hosting a working group that is examining international regimes for geoengineering and will report its findings in mid-2011.

This group will have its work cut out for it. We need a system that can integrate expertise in technology, climate science, economics, and security while remaining open and inclusive enough to preserve international legitimacy. There are some models to draw on, though none is wholly satisfactory. The nuclear nonproliferation regime, for instance, may give clues on how to prevent the spread of harmful technologies. The world trading system may show how complex deals can be cut involving compromise and compensation across a range of sectors. And the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) possibly demonstrates

*We need a system that can integrate expertise in technology, climate science, economics, and security while remaining open and inclusive enough to preserve international legitimacy.*

how to integrate complex science into digestible, policy-friendly scenarios for governments to use.

A first step might be to draw up a list of agreed-upon, empirically verifiable indicators for dangerous tipping points. Measurements might include ocean acidity and Siberian permafrost melt rates. These would be regularly assessed and, if breached, potentially trigger the deployment of SRM. This move would have to be combined with a system for estimating costs and financially compensating those who stand to lose even though precise impacts would be uncertain.

No existing international body is equipped to take on the challenge. A new forum may be needed, but it will have to be representative enough to secure international legitimacy. If the needs of heavy emitters, and not the world’s vulnerable, are seen to dominate geoengineering, credibility will be forfeited. Perhaps only the UN has the clout to play this leadership role. The IPCC experience, however, does not inspire confidence in the UN’s capacity to forge consensus among all members. Better prospects may lie in some kind of bottom-up process arising from the collaborations between

scientists and environmentalists. Such a process will need political guidance, though, if it is to navigate the difficult waters of international politics and public opinion.

These may seem distant problems that we have time to address. Threats from climate change are not yet existential, and war over weather remains fantastical. But we are already making geoengineering decisions today; we just don't know it yet. On human health grounds, the International Maritime Organization recently decided to require tankers to replace sulphur heavy fuels with cleaner options—a step that would be great for port-dwellers' lungs but not necessarily for climate stability, since sulphur from ships currently offsets some of the warming from carbon emissions. Here we have a significant climate-related decision being taken by an international body without a full understanding of the environmental effects. This state of affairs is dangerous and will have to change—and fast. We need to begin the process of adapting our institutions to cope or we could enter a new period of instability and insecurity. After all, the geoengineered future may be closer than you think.

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# Turning Up the Heat on Global Climate Negotiations:

Balancing Sovereignty, Environmental Integrity, and a Just Division of Labor

by Mars Hanna

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Negotiations on a global agreement to address climate change have been highly contentious and only minimally productive since the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was signed in 1992. But the collapse of a global deal at the UN Climate Change Conference 2009 in Copenhagen gave new meaning to the phrase “an impasse in negotiations.” This disappointing result, however, was born long before parties arrived in Denmark. Underneath the talks lies a much more troubling issue that hindered the two-year negotiating process. Namely, the binary division between developed and developing countries codified by the listings established under the UNFCCC fails to provide an adequate framework—either scientifically or ethically—for assigning mitigation burdens. Furthermore, the sum of all countries’ voluntary pledges under the Copenhagen Accord, the agreement reached at the end of the 2009 UN summit in Copenhagen, falls far short of the overall reduction goal stated in the agreement (see Table 1 for selected inscriptions).

Going forward, how should countries balance political sensitivities in the flexible, bottom-up pledge structure under the Copenhagen Accord while ensuring that the sum of their actions meets an environmentally adequate goal? Parties need a

new nonbinding reference tool indicating the scale of action each country should take—a tool that considers both past and future emissions, true economic capacity to achieve reductions, and urgent development needs. Such a step would ensure that actions taken at the national level are effective in aggregate so that the fate of our planet's climate system does not fall through the cracks of the global agreement designed to save it.

### An Unjust and Ineffective Divide

Discussions under the UNFCCC hinge on the divide between “Annex I” and “Non-Annex I” countries, respectively, rich countries that are purported to have a greater responsibility and capa-

bility to address climate change, and everyone else. Fractious North-South dynamics characterize the negotiations. Developing countries call for absolute, binding reductions in Annex I greenhouse gas emissions and no binding limitations on their own, rejecting what is often seen as eco-colonialism. Meanwhile, developed countries point to the rapidly rising global carbon dioxide level and insist that the developing world must take a more environmentally friendly path to industrialization. Yet it is not so easy to designate which countries are truly “developed” and which are truly “developing.” The binary, either/or structure that codifies these groupings is highly misleading and makes progress all but impossible.

Membership in the Organisation for

Table 1 — Selected Copenhagen Accord Inscriptions

Country	2020 Commitment	Base Year
Brazil	36.1%-38.9%	Business-as-usual
China	40%-45% reduction in CO <sub>2</sub> per unit of GDP	2005
European Union	20% to 30% as part of a global and comprehensive agreement for the period beyond 2012, the EU reiterates its conditional offer to move to a 30% reduction by 2020 compared to 1990 levels, provided that other developed countries commit themselves to comparable emission reductions and that developing countries contribute adequately according to their responsibilities and respective capabilities.	1990
India	20%-25% reduction in emissions intensity	2005
Japan	25%	1990
Korea	30%	Business-as-usual
Mexico	30%	Business-as-usual
Russia	15%-25%	1990
South Africa	34%	Business-as-usual
United States	17%, in conformity with anticipated U.S. energy and climate legislation	2005

*Without significant action to reduce Non-Annex I country emissions from business-as-usual levels, it is impossible to envisage an agreement that, far from being equitable, is even scientifically adequate to prevent dangerous climate change.*

Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1992, the grouping that forms the basis of the Annex I list (with the addition of several Baltic and Eastern European countries), no longer represents an appropriate distribution of world emissions or of global wealth. Indeed, there is no mechanism for updating the groupings as wealth and emission levels change. Countries with relatively high per-capita GDP like South Korea (\$27,716), the United Arab Emirates (\$38,556), and Singapore (\$51,246) are not included in Annex I, yet countries like Belarus (\$12,586), Bulgaria (\$12,337), and Turkey (\$13,123) are on the list (purchasing power parity-adjusted data). There are fifty-three countries not included on this Annex I list that have higher per-capita GDP than the poorest Annex I country, Ukraine (\$7,351). The UNFCCC calls for countries to protect the climate system “in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities” (emphasis added). Climate is a global problem requiring truly global action, particularly by countries that

are economically able to take action, and the outdated classification system divide severely perverts the notion of country capabilities.

Perhaps of greater concern is the proportion of the current and projected greenhouse gas emissions that come from Non-Annex I countries. Annex I countries, the only ones capped under the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, made up 52 percent of global emissions when the Framework Convention was signed in 1992. But today, they comprise only around 41 percent of current global emissions. An agreement capping only these countries cannot provide a comprehensive, long-term solution to the problem, particularly given the expected future growth in emissions. The International Energy Agency (IEA) projects that 97 percent of the growth in greenhouse gas emissions through 2030 will come from non-OECD countries, with China and India alone accounting for 49 percent and 17 percent of the growth, respectively. A study performed at the request of the UNFCCC projects that by the end of this century, Annex I economies will be responsible for just 35 percent of all historical greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, according to the World Bank and the Stern Review, even if all Annex I countries stopped emitting entirely by 2050, the growth in Non-Annex I emissions under business-as-usual projections would make it impossible to achieve a safe stabilization point of 2°C above preindustrial levels. Scientific assessments show that even in the context of a 100 percent cut in all greenhouse gas emissions in 2050 by the United States, European Union, Japan, Russia, and other developed nations, Non-Annex I countries

would have to reduce their emissions by 80 percent below business-as-usual trends to reach such a level. Without significant action to reduce Non-Annex I country emissions from business-as-usual levels, it is impossible to envisage an agreement that, far from being equitable, is even scientifically adequate to prevent dangerous climate change.

### **Striking the Right Balance**

It will be critical then for all countries, especially major developing ones, to strike a balance between growing the economy and minimizing emissions. It is certainly much more beneficial economically for developing countries to retain the Annex I/Non-Annex I divide and avoid taking action to reduce emissions growth; after all, this structure permits them to disregard the climate system entirely in their development path. This is not to say that developing countries should not have a right to develop; indeed, it is abundantly clear and absolutely morally just for developing countries to set economic growth and poverty alleviation as the overriding priority. At the same time, there is a physical limit to the capacity of the earth's ecosystems.

The individual carbon footprint of the typical American is unsustainable and must be reduced. Yet the climate problem cannot be solved if only developed countries act while allowing the nearly 60 percent of emissions from Non-Annex I countries to grow infinitely.

What would the right balance between growing the economy and minimizing emissions for developed and developing countries look like? Developed countries have an imperative to get moving on absolute emissions reductions below current levels, the United States first and foremost. Simultaneously, major emerging economies like China, India, Indonesia, Brazil, Mexico, and South Africa, among others, have both the domestic capacity and moral responsibility to take action as well. This does not mean absolute cuts in emissions below current levels, but rather significant deviations from business-as-usual trajectories. The climate system cannot bear developing economies taking the same carbon-intense path to development as did the West. Developed countries have committed to providing financial support—above and beyond traditional official development assistance—to aid in this effort, knowing that the prospects for environmental collapse were not imminent

*According to the International Energy Agency and the UN Environment Programme, among others, the pledges, when assessed in aggregate, do not get the world to the 2°C temperature rise scenario called for in the Copenhagen Accord. . . . The question then becomes how to enhance the pledges while balancing political sensitivities and sovereignty concerns with environmental integrity and a just division of labor.*



during their industrialization.

To be sure, both developed and developing countries took great strides following Copenhagen by committing to emissions reductions. But according to the IEA and the UN Environment Programme, among others, the pledges, when assessed in aggregate, do not get the world to the 2°C temperature rise scenario called for in the Copenhagen Accord. Rather they put us closer to a 3.5°C to 5°C rise above preindustrial levels. Permitting this level of temperature rise to occur will have devastating effects for many countries, most of all for vulnerable populations like small-island, low-lying, and Least Developed Countries. While the current pledges are a success, they will need to be strengthened if we are to meet the reductions required. The question then becomes how to enhance the pledges while balancing political sensitivities and sovereignty concerns with environmental integrity and a just division of labor.

What is needed is an innovative method that retains the pragmatic, bottom-up Copenhagen Accord structure while ensuring that national actions are both appropriate for each individual country and environmentally adequate collectively. Under the Copenhagen Accord, pledges are subject to their own timetables and domestic review processes. Critically, this structure increases political buy-in by allowing countries to set their own targets and “peer review” their adequacy through the political realm. Concurrently, though, it creates much greater diversity in the types of actions countries can take (e.g., absolute reductions, reductions below business-as-usual trends, and reductions in emis-

sions per unit of GDP). This makes an aggregated assessment of reduction measures more difficult to determine. By contrast, the Kyoto Protocol uses a top-down system that establishes an aggregate reduction target and then divides out assigned amounts to each party. The Kyoto structure puts priority on the strength of the aggregate reduction target rather than the political feasibility of achieving the assigned amounts. Such a structure overly taxes national sovereignty and, if reintroduced, will send the critical economies diving for cover. Yet the pure political peer-review of pledges in the Copenhagen Accord structure is unlikely to deliver the long-term mitigation necessary.

### **A Pragmatic Tool**

To bridge the gap between these bottom-up and top-down models, a comprehensive, nonbinding reference tool should be created to provide a “recommended” scale of action for each party. It would allow parties to take action at the domestic level—with full respect to their national sovereignty—and to inscribe their actions in the international agreement structure. At the same time, it would provide for a greater assurance of the actions’ environmental integrity in the aggregate system. Political and economic forces exert a strong pull on the scale of reduction commitments; thus, some “ground-truthing” of mitigation efforts, solidly founded in scientific assessment, will be critical to putting the world on a pathway to an acceptable stabilization point. Of course such a reference tool would only be valid if countries can be assured that its recommendations are

*The division of labor created by the reference tool should utilize the underlying principles of the UNFCCC: responsibility for emissions and capability to address them. Contrary to past notions of these principles that have taken responsibility and capability to mean “only emissions or wealth before a certain year,” this new resource must apply a holistic notion of these concepts.*

based on an “equitable distribution” of mitigation efforts among developed and developing countries. However, negotiations on how to define what is an “equitable distribution” could continue for decades given the history of the past twenty-plus years of global environmental negotiations. But the climate does not afford us that time.

Therefore, the division of labor created by the reference tool should utilize the underlying principles of the UNFCCC: responsibility for emissions and capability to address them. Contrary to past notions of these principles that have taken responsibility and capability to mean “only emissions or wealth before a certain year,” this new resource must apply a holistic notion of these concepts. The next forty years’ worth of emissions will have a major impact on whether we achieve a 2°C scenario or not. From a moral level, countries should be considered equally responsible for past and future emissions; simply because one has not yet driven a car off a cliff does not mean that one should not be held responsible for their actions when driving toward it. The understanding of responsibility should integrate both historical and projected emissions—from industrialization, around 1750, to

2100 and beyond, not just industrialization to 1990—into a reference tool to determine a recommended scale of action.

Capability should be understood in an equally holistic manner. Countries like Singapore and South Korea that have contributed little historically compared to the United States or the European Union should still be held accountable for emissions reductions based on their economic ability to achieve such reductions. The marginal cost curves of abating emissions, and the abatement costs relative to GDP, should be taken into account when assessing comparability of efforts between countries. This will serve an important equalizing function among economies when understanding appropriate capacities for action. Abatement costs per unit of GDP will be initially higher in developing countries, making early action very expensive. The reference tool should take this into account, integrating social and economic development metrics such as the World Development Indicators created by the World Bank or the Human Development Indicators developed by the UN. The scale should make appropriate tradeoffs between development needs and environmental protection without letting off the hook

those developing countries like India and China that can afford to avoid such substitutions. Clearly a great number of developing countries, including the Least Developed Countries and lower-middle income countries, should not be required to take any action to reduce emissions given their urgent development needs.

The task at hand is an extremely complex one: integrating historical emissions, projected emissions, economic capacity, and development metrics into a single holistic framework to provide an equitable, indicative recommendation for action to each country. These ideas are meant to be only a starting point. Defining the details of a non-binding resource tool will be a job requiring dozens if not hundreds or thousands of global experts in climate science, economics, environmental policy, and development—from developed and developing countries alike. A body perhaps on the scale of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change with significant political autonomy would be required, as would periodic reviews to ensure that recommendations evolve as economies and emissions grow.

Without such a reference tool, the planet's climate system risks slipping between the cracks of the bottom-up agreement structure. The political, economic, and ecological realities of the global climate debate tell us that the prospects for a more binding agreement structure are bleak. But that does not mean an environmentally sound deal is impossible. It simply requires that we apply new methodologies and new thinking to an evolving political and environmental context. Ingenuity is perhaps our greatest resource as

human beings. It is this dynamism and vision that we must employ in overcoming our differences, recognizing our common humanity, and understanding our shared fate on this planet.

## An Aborted Attempt at Democratization in Ethiopia

by Sileshi Woldeyohannes

*Sileshi Woldeyohannes is a 2011 Master in Public Administration and International Development candidate at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He is a development practitioner and a former political prisoner in Ethiopia*

I was a patriot. I was also a criminal.

After fourteen years of democratic pretension, in 2005 the Ethiopian government seemed determined to be challenged in a free and fair election. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, a key ally of the West in the War on Terror, promised to make the 2005 Ethiopian election a proof to the world that his administration was democratic. Delegations from the European Union and the U.S.-based Carter Center were invited to observe the election. The government-controlled TV and radio declared their commitment to give balanced coverage to all parties.

Why would they do this? Although I was aware of the pressure coming from the international community—including those who provide Ethiopia with economic aid—I thought the governing party, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), was also seeking some legitimacy from its own people. By that time, I had just received a master's in economics and was an active member of the Ethiopian Democratic League (EDL), one of the opposition parties in Ethiopia.

In August 2004, I met an ad hoc group of intellectuals who sought to seize the opportunity and consolidate the highly fragmented opposition into a politically tenable electoral vehicle. After holding repeated unofficial discussions with leaders of Ethiopian opposition parties, the group undertook a formal initiative in September. The EDL appointed me to be one of its representatives in this effort. For me, it was the first opportunity to work closely with the prominent leaders

*We sensed their disenchantment in seeing Ethiopia's first serious democratic contest being undone. A victory was being taken from them.*

of the opposition parties. Some were involved in the popular Ethiopian students' movement of the early 1970s, which resulted in the overthrow of the aging monarch Haile Selassie and the centuries-old feudal order. Some were returning from exile after having escaped the "Red Terror" campaign of 1977-1978 in which the military junta that snatched power following the popular revolution massacred thousands of students and intellectuals.

Although we all had a shared goal of laying the foundation for a democratic system, coming together to form a strong opposition was not as easy as I expected it to be. As products of a centuries-old hierarchical society with no history of democracy, we had a hard time reaching points of compromise. Nonetheless, we were able to overcome the challenges through two months of heated debates and tenacious dialogues. At the end of the process, we formed the Coalition for Unity and Democracy, the strongest coalition of Ethiopian opposition that had ever been created.

Having formed our coalition, we engaged in the election campaign. This task was logistically difficult. We had to traverse a nation that had few paved roads yet was just as large (physically speaking) as France, Germany, and England combined. We organized thousands of volunteers and facilitated hundreds of public rallies and meetings. In the process, we reached out to 27 million registered voters out of a

population of 80 million. Above all, it was no easy task to convince millions of poor farmers that the government could be changed via the ballot. After all, farmers live as tenants of the government; getting involved in politics was a big gamble with their livelihoods. However, they were ultimately receptive and sensed the change in environment after seeing individuals openly criticizing and challenging the government. Being immersed in this process showed me that all people, regardless of standard of living and social background, have an inherent thirst for fundamental political and civil rights.

As election day approached, it became clear that our coalition had drawn massive support. This led the incumbents to panic. The Ethiopian leaders had taken a calculated risk to appease the international community, but they had vastly overestimated their own popularity. The ruling party consequently made a U-turn and changed the course of the election process. Its rhetoric became hostile, with top government officials labeling us and our supporters Interahamwe—the militia that perpetrated the 1994 Rwandan genocide. We started to receive reports of arrests and intimidations throughout rural Ethiopia. We were able to keep the preelection momentum, though, and culminated our campaign with a historic rally drawing more than three million people from the capital, Addis Ababa, and the surrounding area.

On election day, early poll results

showed our coalition had a big lead in most of the areas where international observers were present. Particularly, we won all the parliamentary and city council seats of Addis Ababa. Given that Addis Ababa, home to four million people, is the political nucleus and business hub of Ethiopia, the result was a major embarrassment for the governing party.

In response, the prime minister instated a month-long state of emergency that night. The following day, the ruling party declared itself the winner even while admitting the fact that our coalition won all seats in the capital. We bitterly opposed the move. However, we opted against violent protest and instead tried to resolve the stalemate through dialogue. The international observer missions, particularly

*Today, the dictatorial regime appears to have been successful in reversing the evolutionary journey toward democratization. But no one can permanently stifle a nation's democratic aspirations.*

those of the European Union, declared that the election process was not free and fair, citing massive irregularities and long delays in the vote-counting process.

What followed was a political impasse lasting from May 2005 to November 2005. In roundtable discussions with

the government, we refused to accept the fraudulent results of the election outright. Instead, we broached the idea of accepting the results in exchange for the establishment of independent institutions including an election commission, judiciary, and free press prior to the next election in five years. The government refused. And over time our discussions proved to be ineffective.

While engaged in dialogue, we actively urged our supporters to remain patient. We sensed their disenchantment in seeing Ethiopia's first serious democratic contest being undone. A victory was being taken from them. Recognizing the potential for inciting violence, we refrained from organizing rallies. Nevertheless, when talks proved ineffective, we began to review the possible avenues of nonviolent resistance, preparing a package of documents and pamphlets specifying what our supporters should and shouldn't do. In this package, we called our supporters to stage a week-long general strike to pressure the government to agree to our conditions.

The release of the package prompted the powers that be in Ethiopia to come back to the bargaining table. But again they balked, and we proceeded with our call for a general strike. That's when my own life took a new course.

In mid-November 2005, as I left for lunch on a workday at the National Bank of Ethiopia, I was arrested by the security police. Before the strikes had even started, most of us in the opposition's senior leadership were jailed. We were shepherded through the costliest trial process that Ethiopia had ever had.

I still recall being flanked by American Humvees mounted with machine guns as we were moved between the courtroom and the notorious Kality prison. My colleagues and I were sentenced to life in jail under the charge of treason. Our stay in prison was, of course, horrible. The prison cells were congested and unhealthy. I was caged with three hundred prisoners, some recovering from tuberculosis, in a hall made of corrugated sheets. There was no place to exercise, play games, or even read.

Fortunately—if one can use the word—we served only two years before being pardoned. Yet the highly anticipated and promising election of 2005 had ended up with deadly conflicts and prolonged political instability while we were in prison. Ironically, this unrest only provided a further justification to the West to tolerate authoritarianism in Ethiopia.

In May 2010, Ethiopia had its fourth national election. The same ruling party “won” 99.6 percent of the parliamentary and regional council seats. Today, the dictatorial regime appears to have been successful in reversing the evolutionary journey toward democratization. But no one can permanently stifle a nation’s democratic aspirations. The authoritarian government of Tunisia, once known for its stability, has now disappeared, and the Egyptian government, which ruled the nation with an iron fist, is now shaken by a wave of civil unrest and the probability of regime change. I believe Ethiopia is no different.

## The Right to Be Born Free from HIV

by Dr. Mariam Jashi

*Dr. Mariam Jashi is an Edward S. Mason Fellow and a 2011 Master in Public Administration candidate at the John F. Kennedy School of Government. She has led the UNICEF health portfolio in Georgia, child immunizations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and HIV/AIDS partnerships at UNICEF's New York headquarters.*

Every year, 125 million women living in low- and middle-income countries worldwide are taking the journey toward motherhood. According to the United Nations (UN), as many as 1.4 million of these expecting mothers are living with HIV and are in need of special support and care from health care providers, their families, and larger communities to ensure that their children are born free from HIV. Of those 1.4 million HIV cases among pregnant women, 91 percent are concentrated in just twenty-five countries in Africa and Asia.

In 2001, the UN called mother-to-child transmission “perhaps the most tragic form” of HIV transmission. Based on the latest evidence, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that without any preventive intervention, HIV can be transmitted from mothers to their children during pregnancy, at the time of birth, or through breastfeeding—20 percent to 45 percent of cases if the child is breastfed and 15 percent to 30 percent if on breast-milk substitutes. This means that without any prophylaxis, mother-to-child transmission (also known as “vertical transmission”) can result in up to 630,000 new HIV infections in children every year among all low- and middle-income countries. Fortunately, in 2009, preventive programs reduced the number of children who are estimated to have acquired HIV from their mothers to 370,000—much lower than the overall potential risk, but still a shocking reality.

Today, developed countries have virtually eliminated vertical transmission of HIV through universal coverage of effective prophylactic interventions that include HIV testing and counseling among pregnant women and their partners, antiret-



roviral prophylaxis for mothers living with HIV and their infants, elective Cesarean section, and avoidance of breastfeeding. The HIV transmission risk has fallen to 2 percent in the developed world. With relevant policy changes and investments, the same could be achieved in developing countries, honoring the right of all people to be born HIV-free. If the status quo persists, however, hundreds of thousands more children will begin life with a devastating illness.

### **Interventions That Work**

Interventions for preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV, otherwise known as PMTCT programs, represent a complex chain of diagnostic, prophylactic, and treatment services. Accordingly, they require careful coordination of resources, policies, and institutional and community-level services. The primary responsibility for fulfilling obligations to women and children lies with the country gov-

ernments, which have been working extensively with UN agencies, academia, international organizations, and community leaders.

In 1999, eleven sub-Saharan African countries were the first low- or middle-income nations to pilot PMTCT programs. In 2009, the UN reported that more than 120 countries had national PMTCT programs reaching 727,600 women, or 53 percent of all HIV-infected pregnant women worldwide. Resource-limited countries are also continuously improving the quality of PMTCT programs to minimize the risk of vertical transmission. For example, less-effective single-drug-based regimens—such as single-dose Nevirapine—are increasingly changed to more effective multidrug or combination antiretroviral regimens.

Such prevention efforts have been remarkably successful. UNAIDS estimates that the number of children contracting HIV from their mothers globally has declined from 500,000 in 2001 to 370,000 in 2009. This shift

### **A Complex Chain of PMTCT Programs**

Preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV, or PMTCT, programs include multiple, consecutive interventions that are provided to pregnant women and their children. In its classical understanding, PMTCT covers primary prevention of HIV transmission in the reproductive-age population and reproductive health services for people living with HIV. During pregnancy, the starting point is early detection of HIV among expecting mothers. Depending on how much the virus has compromised the woman's immune system, she will need either a six-month antiretroviral prophylaxis (to prevent transmission to her child) or a life-long treatment (to both prevent vertical transmission and secure her own health). Antiretroviral drugs must be provided to mother-baby couples during childbirth and either four to six weeks after delivery or until one week after ending breastfeeding. The chain also includes diagnostic steps for assessing mothers' immune systems and early detection of HIV among their babies. The World Health Organization estimates that this set of interventions can reduce the risk of HIV transmission from mothers to their children to less than 5 percent in breastfeeding populations and less than 2 percent in non-breastfeeding populations.

is a testimony to the unprecedented gains of PMTCT efforts globally. Public health programs have rarely, if ever, attained such a scale in a mere decade, and national governments, international partners, academia, and community-based organizations are all responsible for this achievement.

But we are still far from reaching the 80 percent target coverage rate for PMTCT services in low- and middle-income countries set by the UN in 2001. Almost half of pregnant women living with HIV and two-thirds of their children in resource-limited countries do not receive the essential antiretroviral prophylaxis. The dreams of hundreds of thousands of mothers, their children, and their families remain unfulfilled. What can be done?

### **What Individual Citizens Can Do**

Mothers2mothers is a nonprofit where mothers living with HIV serve as mentors to other pregnant women within health facilities. Lindelwa Magengelele, a mentor mother with mothers2mothers, notes in a personal interview that the major challenge that pregnant women and mothers living with HIV face is disclosure within their families. “It is hard for women to tell their partners and families,” she

says. “They are afraid of being judged, isolated, neglected, and accused of sleeping around. They worry they will be treated differently once people know they are HIV-positive—perhaps being kept even from preparing meals. Worse, women worry that they won’t be able to breastfeed their baby for fear of infecting them with the virus.” Another challenge, she says, is when the partner refuses to use condoms and get tested.

We must help mothers overcome those barriers, Magengelele argues, first by providing psychosocial support to these women and empowering them to take control of their lives. “Individuals’ role is to ensure that these women have the support and knowledge necessary to be as healthy as possible and prevent their babies from contracting HIV,” she says. “We need to educate them about HIV/AIDS so that they accept their status and begin living healthy lives. We must also provide education to the wider community about HIV/AIDS and PMTCT to de-stigmatize the virus and educate health workers to ensure that they do not treat HIV-positive patients differently.”

Individuals, then, can spread the word on preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV. It all starts with individual awareness, including how

### **The Role of Mentor Mothers**

Lindelwa Magengelele is a mentor mother at mothers2mothers, one of the leading nongovernmental organizations implementing programs preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV in sub-Saharan Africa, the region most affected by HIV. She consults with pregnant women and mothers living with HIV in Cape Town, South Africa. Being on the front line of the response, Magengelele shares her experience and vision of how individuals in communities can support mothers and their families in preventing vertical transmission.

the disease can be transmitted, the importance of keeping young girls and women free from HIV, and the reality that even if infected, women living with HIV still have a 98 percent chance of giving a birth to a healthy child when they are properly educated, guided, treated, and cared for. Anyone can do this; students, school employees, health professionals, church members, blog writers, journalists, citizens writing letters to the local paper—all of these individuals can share their knowledge with family members, friends, colleagues, and the public at large. Sharing facts on HIV prevention will help build the critical mass of knowledge for making a real difference for HIV-affected women and their children.

### **What Nongovernmental Organizations Can Do**

Dr. Mitch Besser, the executive director of mothers2mothers, emphasizes that HIV is more than a medical condition. “Clinically, it infects people. But socially, it infects families and communities, generating stigma and a host of social behaviors that interfere with both HIV prevention measures and medical care. If, in addressing HIV, one attends only to the clinical condition and neglects the attendant social concerns, the best medical programs will be ineffective,” Besser says in a personal interview. He understands the role of nongovernmental organizations in recognizing the impact of social factors, since if mothers do not understand their condition and are not adequately educated about HIV and PMTCT, they cannot and will not effectively embrace the interven-

### **Founder of mothers2mothers**

Dr. Mitch Besser is the founder and the executive director of mothers2mothers. Under his leadership, the organization evolved from a single support group in Cape Town, South Africa, to a multinational nongovernmental organization with more than 700 sites in nine countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Since its establishment in 2001, mother2mothers has demonstrated and documented best practices in grassroots response to preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV, or PMTCT, programs.

tions available to them. “We know that patients living with HIV cannot be managed in a vacuum,” he says. “They need broad-based, family-oriented, community-sensitive care. Effective PMTCT care can only be delivered in this way.”

Mothers2mothers has built a unique model of institutional and community partnership, where mothers living with HIV serve as mentors to other pregnant women within health facilities. After starting with just one program site in Cape Town, South Africa, in 2001, mothers2mothers now has 704 program sites in nine countries, employing more than 1,700 mothers living with HIV. Besser explains the key to the model’s success is its simplicity, making it eminently replicable. Mothers2mothers’ staff comes from local communities and works in health care facilities where the individuals themselves received care. Only basic numeracy and literacy skills are required to undergo the two weeks of training that prepare them for their work. They are gainfully employed, which engenders a spirit of trust and

responsibility to fulfill their assigned tasks.

The sustainability of mothers2mothers sites, however, is more challenging. As Besser notes, “In the long term, the program’s success depends on whether governments recognize that this system of care is essential. Governments must be persuaded that health services driven exclusively by doctors and nurses will never be successful in the long run and that a new health service paradigm is required. This paradigm would add a tier of appropriately trained and employed health care providers to the traditional doctor-nurse team.”

### **What International Development Agencies Can Do**

International development partners are critical actors in the struggle for HIV-free generations. They have to be the knowledge leaders, searching for new scientific evidence on what interventions are most effective for preventing mother-to-child HIV transmission. International organizations are also the brokers of change, helping countries translate cutting-edge research into national health policies and programs. Lastly, they can be the guardians of a woman’s and child’s right to health. They should track progress across countries and where necessary identify and support suboptimal performance.

As an example, UNICEF, the only UN organization mandated to protecting children’s rights, has been one of the leading international agencies engaged in the global PMTCT response. In 2005, UNICEF, along with UNAIDS and other partners, launched the global

advocacy campaign *Unite for Children, Unite Against AIDS* to put a child’s face to the epidemic. The organization is playing multiple roles across 190 countries, including advocacy at high governmental levels to adopt the appropriate policies, raising domestic and global funding to integrate HIV prevention into a basic package of maternal and child health services, training health professionals, and promoting male partners’ and community participation in supporting women affected by HIV.

UNICEF is continuously encouraging innovations to deliver maximum results for children and women, and the PMTCT field has been no exception. Pregnant women living with HIV and their children need a complex mix of medicines to block HIV transmission during pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding. Every pill and dose of medicine should be taken to guarantee effectiveness of the treatment. This means that HIV-infected pregnant women and their infants need a continuous supply of medicine to simplify adherence to the treatment course. The reality in many resource-limited countries is different. Countries with weak health and supply management systems find it hard to ensure the timely and uninterrupted provision of PMTCT drugs to every mother-baby couple, especially in rural or remote areas. That’s where UNICEF stepped in with an innovative product. In 2010, UNICEF, building on the Kingdom of Lesotho’s experience and in consultation with partners, designed a mother-baby pack for PMTCT programs—a single box that includes all the medicine for mothers and their children. The pack is under field testing in Leso-

tho, Zambia, Cameroon, and Kenya. After evaluating its effectiveness, it will be implemented in other countries.

### **Conclusion**

Preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV is a daunting task. It requires a significant amount of funding and technical resources paired with a commitment to designing and implementing the right policies. A willingness to engage in continuous innovation will also be critical to any long-term effort. The good news is that “virtual elimination” of the vertical transmission is feasible, and there is a role for each of us to play in protecting the right of every child to be born free from HIV.

## Rethinking Rural India: The Changing Landscape of Malaria

by Saurabh Saluja

*Saurabh Saluja is a fourth-year dual-degree candidate pursuing an MD at Harvard Medical School and a Master in Public Policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. His previous experiences in health delivery include hospitals in the United States, India, Haiti, and Brazil. He is interested in various global health issues including child health, surgical disease, and quality improvement.*

The electricity had just gone out, and the ceiling fans overhead were slowing. Usually, I would watch the blades of the fan turn, silently hoping that the electricity would return before the blades ground to a halt. This time, however, I barely glanced up. I was too engrossed in the thick, hand-bound binder that the malaria inspector had just uncovered. The columns of numbers, some recorded in Hindi and others in English, revealed a twenty-fold drop in the number of malaria infections in the area I was visiting over the last two decades.

### **A Rural Hospital**

A few months earlier, I had arrived in Neela Nagar (whose name has been changed for the purposes of this article), a small town of 16,000 people in the Indian state of Rajasthan. I was there visiting a public hospital that my uncle runs as part of a project funded by my medical school.

Though I was no stranger to India, all my time there previously had been limited to the rapidly modernizing cities. I believed that the immense changes in India were happening only in cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Bangalore. Prior to arriving in Neela Nagar, I had imagined the rural country as an agrarian, impoverished society that had been left behind by urban India.

On my first trip to the hospital, which served more than 150,000 people, my preconceived ideas were all but confirmed. When I first arrived, my uncle—or Doctor-sahib as he is known locally—was seeing patients in the outpatient department. This “department” turned out to be a desk placed in a corridor outside of some offices. That day, like most others, the patients were crowded around the doctor’s desk, holding small slips of paper that served as their medical records. Two metal stools flanked the doctor’s chair, and whoever managed to get his slip into the doctor’s hand was allowed to sit on the stool to be examined.

Doctor-sahib quickly examined the dozens of patients, ordering tests, screening for anemia, taking blood pressures, and prescribing medications as best as he could. As I watched him turn fluidly from patient to patient, spending little more than a minute with each one, I quickly realized how different the world of American medical care was. The discussions we had during medical school about patient confidentiality, electronic medical records, and informed consent seemed distant if not irrelevant.

When he finished, my uncle came to give me a tour of the hospital. First we went to the main ward. The twenty-four-cot room was painted blue to lend an air of sterility; each of the metal-framed beds, separated by a mere meter, had a bare, incandescent bulb dangling overhead. As we walked through the ward, Doctor-sahib explained that patients are seen for a variety of reasons ranging from trauma to infection to attempted suicide. He paused to check on a patient who had recently suffered third-degree burns. I

thought about the treatment a similar patient would receive in an American hospital; no doubt he would have been placed in isolation to protect him from infection. In this ward, the patient’s only protection was a set of green curtains that surrounded the burned lower half of his body.

Doctor-sahib also checked on a patient who had been admitted in the last half-hour. The patient was a ten-year-old boy who was suspected of having neurocysticercosis, a complication that occurs when a parasite forms a cyst in the brain. Earlier in the morning, the child had several seizures and had become unable to speak. In the last half-hour, arrangements were being made to transfer the boy to a larger hospital where a proper diagnosis could be made. In Neela Nagar, Doctor-sahib could only guess and treat presumptively. Later the next day, I found out the boy died in transit to the tertiary facility. My uncle was not surprised. Many of the patients he refers for emergencies are unable to survive the four-hour drive to the referral hospital. To my uncle, the boy’s death, though sad, was routine.

After visiting the main ward, Doctor-sahib took me to the operating theater. It was similar to the other rooms of the hospital: far too small for its purposes and with the same blue walls and green drapes. The two beds in the room were efficiently placed less than ten feet from each other, allowing the surgeon to move rapidly from one patient to the next during the “sterilization camps” that the hospital sets up. Though the surgeon, like any other, was trained to perform a variety of surgeries, the lack of anesthesia facilities or a blood bank restricted him to

performing tubal ligations to prevent future pregnancies. He bragged, and I sensed at least some sarcasm in his voice, that he could easily sterilize eight women in one hour.

Doctor-sahib's tour reflected what I had read in articles and books. Rural India seemed resource-strapped and impoverished. As the urban centers grew and India's private sector expanded, Neela Nagar and thousands of other villages seemed to be being left behind. Over the next several weeks, however, I saw that there was another story in rural India that is often overlooked.

### **A New Approach to Malaria**

On my third day in Neela Nagar, I met Malaria Inspector-sahib, or MI-sahib. He described to me the area's public health infrastructure. The hospital served as a secondary facility that oversaw two primary health centers and twenty-three sub-centers. The sub-centers were community outreach posts for the hospital's public health campaigns. The field staff traveled door-to-door in the villages to educate people about birth control, encourage women to deliver their babies in a hospital, and teach people about mosquito control.

This last point interested me most. Many from my parent's generation remember the World Health Organization's extensive and ultimately unsuccessful effort to eradicate malaria by eradicating the mosquitoes responsible for the spreading the disease. Whereas previous efforts centered on insecticide use, today there is increased emphasis on providing bed nets and window screens and controlling the water

sources that serve as the mosquitoes' breeding ground. Over the course of the next several weeks I traveled to more than half of the sub-centers to witness the area's strategy for malaria prevention.

The hospital's ambulance doubled as our field vehicle. It was an old, white jeep with a red cross painted on the side. The back seats had been removed to allow room for patients, an oxygen tank (that we later discovered was empty), and a stethoscope. Every morning, the driver, MI-sahib, and I would cram into the front seat, roll down the windows, and set out to visit the community outposts.

On these trips, I saw the range of development that existed even within one district. Some villages were densely populated with concrete houses that had window screens and electric fans. Many of these houses had televisions, and on occasion I would even see a satellite dish. Other villages consisted of a series of scattered mud houses with livestock grazing just outside the unscreened windows. In these villages, the sub-center was frequently the only concrete building; electricity was never a guarantee.

At our destinations, MI-sahib would explain to the staff the vector control strategies that were to be employed. Open wells, most of which had been dry for years, were to be covered with a layer of crude oil to prevent mosquitoes from breeding; puddles around the drinking pumps were to be scattered into the dirt; and larvaecidal fish, known locally as the gambushi, were to be placed in all other open water sites.

After MI-sahib had methodically instructed the health workers, I would



ask them about the challenges they perceived in controlling malaria. The most common complaint was the shortage of staff. Most community workers were responsible for overseeing the malaria programs, the child nutrition programs, the prenatal care programs, and more. Frequently, the workers had families of their own that they were responsible for as well. But aside from the staff shortages, most workers reported satisfaction with what they were able to provide.

Early in the course of these interviews, I was skeptical of these testimonials. The government funding for insecticide spray had recently been cut and the area's residents had received no mosquito nets or window screens, yet the sub-center staff reported no major material shortages. But as I continued meeting more health workers, I got the feeling that there was some real satisfaction among the local staff. I consistently heard stories of the improvement the area had seen in recent years. The health workers told me about the newly paved roads with runoffs to prevent water from pooling; they explained how easy it had become to make it to the hospital now that there were regularly running buses; and they said people were increasingly aware of the strategies that prevent mosquitoes from breeding.

When I told these stories to the doctors at the hospital, they were not surprised. Doctor-sahib agreed that mosquito control and infrastructure development had a role in preventing malaria infections, but he suspected that treatment of malaria was the key to reducing the burden of disease. Shortly after he started working in Neela Nagar, the hospital had launched

a program to treat all patients with fever as if they have malaria until confirmed otherwise. This strategy, Doctor-sahib argued, has been useful. For one thing, if the patient is infected, treatment may occur fast enough to avoid the dangerous complications that result from the parasite entering the brain. In addition, the less time that a patient is infected with the parasite, the less chance there is of a mosquito carrying the parasite to other people.

This strategy of “presumptive treatment” is not universally accepted. In fact, the 2006 World Health Organization’s “Guidelines for the Treatment of Malaria” advises against this regimen:

A potentially dangerous practice is to give only the first dose of the treatment course for patients with suspected but unconfirmed malaria, with the intention of giving full treatment if the diagnosis is eventually confirmed.

These guidelines reflect an increasing fear that resistance to malaria medicines will continue to emerge. In fact, recent studies have found certain malaria parasites that are already resistant to the powerful new class of “artemisinin” drugs, suggesting that these fears are not unfounded.

In Neela Nagar, however, the issue of resistance is not considered. If the hospital were to follow guidelines and treat all fever patients with the full drug regimen, they would have to spend more than a thousand dollars on the cost of drugs alone. This may seem like a small price to bear, but in Neela Nagar, it would require more than tripling the current expenditure on malaria medication.

Funding restrictions in the area have made malaria prevention and treatment far from ideal. Recent withdrawal of funding for insecticides, the threat of emerging drug resistance, and the lack of bed nets are causes for concern. Even so, it is undeniable that this region has seen vast improvement in the past twenty years. The proof lay in that binder that MI-sahib had casually revealed to me during the last week of my project.

### **The Numbers Don't Lie**

Even after a quick glance through the sheets of data, I was able to appreciate how much the burden of disease has changed in Neela Nagar and the surrounding villages. In 1989, in this area there were more than 2,500 cases of malaria; of these, one in five infections was caused by the deadly falciparum parasite. In other words, 500 people in 1989 had been infected with a parasite that could stick to blood vessels, cause dangerously high fevers, and potentially enter the brain. By 2007 there were 128 cases of malaria, only five of which was falciparum infections. The annual incidence of malaria infection dropped from 3 percent of the region's population to less than 0.1 percent within two decades. Even considering all the limitations, caveats, and continued concerns, these numbers speak clearly: the burden of malaria had drastically reduced in this area.

On my final day, en route to the airport, I drove by a few of the villages that I had visited earlier that summer. When I first drove through this region, the images of mud houses and people toiling in the farm fields had defined my expectations of a neglected rural

country. While leaving, however, I noticed the mobile phone towers, electric water pumps, and children in school uniforms. I saw that rural India includes houses with satellite television and houses made of dirt, paved roads and mud roads, subsistence farming and bustling marketplaces. The villages were dynamic and heterogeneous; contrary to what I first thought, remarkable changes have taken place in the region.

The data I found on malaria underscored the dramatic changes that the area's residents have seen. It also highlighted the utility of investment in rural parts of the country: small changes to treatment regimens, a dedicated staff, and infrastructure development have contributed enormously to a new health landscape in the region.

On my next visit to India, things will surely be different yet again. I expect that Bombay will have a new metro line and that Delhi's airport will finally be "fully modernized." More importantly, though, I expect to hear that there were no cases of falciparum malaria in Neela Nagar and that the hospital's new blood bank is finally up and running. I hope this means the surgeon can brag about more than his skills at sterilization. And I hope that Malaria Inspector-sahib is able to change his title and move on to other projects.

## Cleaning the Rust:

### Reforming the Steel Frame of India's Civil Service

by Praveen Kishore

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Size matters in India. The world's largest democracy lays claim to one of the world's largest bureaucracies, with the Indian government directly employing as many as 10.5 million people at both the federal and state level. The "steel frame of India," as the late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru described the top layer of the civil service, also referred to as the higher civil service, is supposed to help consolidate India by aiding its socioeconomic development and ensuring continuity of administration in the face of political change. But there are significant concerns about whether this elite cadre is up to the job.

Inefficiency, unresponsiveness, corruption, favoritism: all are charges that have been leveled against it in recent times. There is a growing consensus that if India is to sustain its high growth and developmental story over the coming years, comprehensive administrative reforms are needed—and fast.

#### **Mapping the Frame**

Nehru, India's first prime minister, was initially skeptical of the higher civil service because it was a British legacy. But he came to appreciate that a highly qualified and professional bureaucracy could be an important factor in India's transition from a developing to a prosperous country. Although the transition has

still not been fully realized, today the higher civil service has evolved into one of the important institutions in India, divided into many branches (see Table 1). Its members run district and local administrations, collect revenue and taxes, maintain internal security, regulate the markets, manage developmental programs and foreign relations, and even run railway and broadcasting corporations. They are also policy managers—focusing on economic, social, and developmental issues—and occupy almost all the higher-level posts in federal and state ministries.

In the higher civil service, promotions are largely based on seniority, pro-

vided the civil servant has met above a minimum benchmark of performance. A civil servant can aspire to reach the highest level of government machinery just below the ministers (who are elected members of parliament). Unlike in the United States, these positions are not filled by political appointees.

As a result, the higher civil service is one of the most popular career options for bright young Indians. While other careers such as consulting, engineering, or medicine may pay more, the higher civil service attracts some of India's best talent because of the rich and diverse job content as well as the social

Table 1 — Major Branches of the Higher Civil Service in India. Source: Compiled from information from Government of India (Department of Personnel & Training n.d.)

Branches/Services	Employees	Main Functions
Indian Revenue Service (IRS)	6,400	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Revenue collection of federal government (all taxes, customs duties, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Fiscal policy, economic policy, and regulations</li> <li>▪ Two branches: Income Tax and Customs &amp; Excise</li> </ul>
Indian Administrative Service (IAS)	5,700	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ District and local administration</li> <li>▪ State-level general and developmental administration</li> <li>▪ Policies and administration in the central government</li> </ul>
Indian Police Service (IPS)	5,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Policing, investigation, and intelligence</li> <li>▪ Supervision of paramilitary forces</li> </ul>
Indian Forest Service (IFoS)	2,700	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Overseeing of environment</li> <li>▪ Management of flora, fauna, and forests</li> </ul>
Indian Railway Services: IRTS, IRPS, IRAS	2,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Management of civil functions (as opposed to technical/engineering) of railway operations</li> <li>▪ Three branches: traffic, personnel, and accounts</li> </ul>
Accounts Services: ICAS, IDAS, IPTAFS	1,050	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accounts, treasury, and financial management of federal government</li> <li>▪ Three branches: civil, defense, and post and telegraph</li> </ul>
Indian Audit and Accounts Service (IAAS)	800	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Constitutionally independent auditor of the government; central as well as states</li> <li>▪ Management of state government accounts</li> </ul>
Indian Foreign Service (IFS)	700	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diplomatic and foreign relations</li> <li>▪ In charge of foreign ministry, embassies, consulates, etc.</li> <li>▪ Responsible for protecting and advancing India's interests in the world</li> </ul>
Indian Postal Service (IPoS)	580	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In charge of India postal organization</li> </ul>

recognition and prestige. Consequently, competition to enter the higher civil service is stiff. The latest figures show that every year around 350,000 to 400,000 young Indians compete through a fair and open competitive examination process for around 600 to 800 vacancies, giving a selection ratio of approximately 1 in 600 candidates (Union Public Service Commission 2010). As a professor at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University has observed, the Indian civil service examination makes getting into Harvard look like a walk in the park (Pritchett 2009). Those lucky enough to pass the test enter an elite cadre numbering around 35,000 officers, or 0.3% of all government employees.

### **A Rusting Frame: The Problems with Bureaucracy**

The woes of Indian bureaucracy are well-documented. A recent survey of Indian higher civil servants found that, by their own admission, corruption is rife, and bureaucrats are willing to collude with political leaders (Government of India 2010). Furthermore, India's low ranking of 134 out of 183 economies in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index attests to the impact of bureaucracy on the country's investment environment (World Bank and IFC 2009). Recognizing these challenges, the Indian government constituted a Reforms Commission in 2005 to suggest a comprehensive overhaul of the civil service in general. The commission expressed concern that the civil service and administration have become wooden, inflexible, self-perpetuating, and inward-looking

(Government of India 2005).

There are several areas in particular where reform is needed and often overlooked. Institutional reforms in personnel administration have been particularly neglected and offer the potential for quick returns. Although changes are also important in the higher civil service's administrative structure, action should start with measures that relate principally to the higher civil service's most important asset: its people (see Figure 1).

#### **1. Recruitment and Induction**

Recruitment and selection process

#### **2. Performance: Meritocracy or Mediocracy?**

Performance management

#### **3. Services: Roles, Structures, and Reorganization**

Specializations into domains

Figure 1 — Proposed Reforms to the Indian Civil Service

### **First Line of Defense: Recruitment and Induction**

The system of recruitment and induction into the higher civil service is open and meritocratic—perhaps one of the fairest in the world. Success comes through hard work, without any network, nepotism, or lobbying, and irrespective of one's social, economic, ethnic, or religious background. The structure can therefore be a reasonably good guide for many other countries

struggling to introduce a fair selection process. Some ideas have arisen for improving the selection process, such as fine-tuning the nature and format of the multistage examination process and lowering the maximum age limit to get a younger age profile of new recruits. Though some of such concerns have been addressed on an ad hoc basis, the reform process needs to be institutionalized.

After the young recruits are selected, the structure is virtually a closed system, usually refusing to accept outsiders at any level. This means that the higher civil service often fails to utilize the talents and skills from fields such as academia, research, civil society, and even the private sector. Opening up the higher civil service, particularly at the senior levels, could be beneficial. Indian administrators need not look far for examples of how a successful transition can be made; Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh moved from academia to the civil service and then to politics.

First-step reforms might include allowing a small amount of lateral entry at a high management level (around twenty years of service) through an open, competitive process that creates a position-based Senior Executive Service (Government of India 2008). This idea has received a skeptical response from the service associations that aim to maintain current protections, but it would be a step in the right direction.

### **Performance: Meritocracy or Mediocracy?**

It has often been argued that the system of time-bound promotions,

which the civil service employs, does not reward excellence, fails to identify talent, and de-motivates civil servants. While some of this is certainly true, the current system also protects individuals against the arbitrary whims and fancies of superiors. However, this seniority-based system needs to be dovetailed with an objective system of performance appraisal and promotion of top performers. One possibility is a policy of medium-term permanency, giving civil servants an exit option to leave their position after twenty years (rather than continuing for thirty-five-plus years), followed by another round of open and fair selection for higher management levels—one where even outsiders would have a chance to compete and join.

A source of conflict within the higher civil service is over the issue of generalists versus specialists. Whereas most branches of the higher civil service are more or less identified with specific functions, the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) is not; its mandate covers general administration at all levels of government. The generalist IAS has a dominant position within the higher civil service, breeding feelings of injustice and resentment among the other branches. The result is interservice rivalries and power politics that hinder motivation and performance. The Reforms Commission has consequently recommended that the IAS needs to be a specialized service, too (Government of India 2008). It has also recommended that civil servants specialize in a few broad “domains,” such as public finance and taxation, industry and trade, energy and natural resource management, internal security, and agriculture and rural development

(Government of India 2008). Where possible, officers would be assigned roles on the basis of knowledge and experience in these domain areas. However, much of the discussion so far is theoretical. The sooner such change is implemented, the better off the higher civil service will be.

A related issue is the neglect of officers from “technical services,” such as education, public engineering, public infrastructure, public health, and medical services. Too often, generalist IAS officers dominate these areas, leaving very little opportunity for bright technical specialists to advance to the top. This breeds resentment and dissatisfaction among the rank and file. A structure where competent, professional, and suitable officers are given due recognition, responsibilities, and promotions is the need of the hour.

### **Services: Roles, Structures, and Reorganization**

Perhaps the most important institutional reform relates to restructuring and realigning the different branches along functional lines. Many services are quite small in size, posing various problems related to their personnel and career management, structure, and organization. Then there are services that have lost their relevance or are losing it fast as a result of the changing nature of governance, the economy, and society, with possible examples being the Indian Trade Service and Indian Information Service. Many of the officers from smaller and lesser-known services are de-motivated and frustrated, as they generally have poorer career prospects. However, outright abolition of such services may

not be administratively and politically feasible; other options like merger, absorption, regrouping, and restructuring could be more viable.

Some services simply require realignment. First, the impending introduction of a nationwide goods and services tax raises questions about the structure of the Indian Revenue Service. In addition, there is a long-standing conflict at the local level between Indian Police Service and IAS officers over their judicial and quasi-judicial powers, though in some urban areas there has been police reform with a gradual move toward functionally independent police districts. Third, the continued existence of many different accounting services demands a review of their respective roles and responsibilities and potential overlap with audit services, with a view to merging or restructuring. Finally, an open, competitive, and transparent system of appointment at the highest level of the federal government, where all branches have equal opportunity to compete, is also an overdue reform.

### **Conclusion**

Transformative structural changes are taking place in the civil service system across the globe, and they are happening in response to the realization that the civil service should be fully accountable to the community it serves. Many of the organizational design and restructuring proposals that would work for India could also be a guiding force for reconstituting bureaucracies in other countries. By cleaning the rust of the steel frame, India can serve as an example to the world of the efficacy that is possible

in even the largest and most complex structures. If successful, this effort would bring Nehru's vision of a prosperous India a few steps closer.

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## Challenging Power in 2010: The Year in Review

by Jesse Lava

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Policy makers tend to live with their noses up against the page. They swim in the minutiae of politics and public policy, seeing every tweak to the status quo—every new tax incentive, every new subsidy, every new regulatory shift—as a groundbreaking event. But an expansion of the child welfare tax credit does not a revolution make. Entrenched structures of power have a way of making themselves invisible to the naked eye, too vast to be noticed—like water to a fish. And what's usually lost in the Sturm und Drang of professional politics is a meta view of the system itself. We forget about the things that both Democrats and Republicans take for granted and rarely try to transform.

Americans, and indeed citizens worldwide, talked of transformation when Barack Obama won the U.S. presidency in 2008 and made “hope” and “change” the watchwords of the next two years of public policy. Many believed Obama's election heralded a new politics that would challenge entrenched interests and tackle long-standing problems in health care, the environment, and international cooperation, among other things. Over time, much of this ambitious agenda was pared down or abandoned in the face of corporate, bureaucratic, cultural, and ideological opposition.

This gap between hope and reality was on full display in 2010, the second year

of the Obama presidency. Efforts to chip away at entrenched structures of power met with fierce resistance. Although some major policy changes took place, genuine challenges to concentrated power (particularly corporate and governmental) routinely smacked up against walls of inertia. What follows is a brief overview of some of the ways in which the status quo was challenged this past year: the pushes from outsiders, the backlashes by established interests, and the implications of this tug-of-war for the future.

### **Domestic Policy**

Here in the United States, the battle between the Tea Party and progressive activists came to a head on domestic issues. The Tea Party had materialized the previous year as a populist, antigovernment movement favoring laissez-faire fiscal and regulatory policies. Its efforts to mobilize the right wing put a dent in progressive aspirations for universal health care, climate change legislation, and financial reform. Funded by the billionaire Koch brothers and others, the Tea Party boasted a vigorous organizing style that paired bottom-up mobilizations (including large-scale protests) with national talking points and organizational support. Meanwhile, progressive organizing had slowed considerably since the excitement of the Obama campaign, with much of the energy being absorbed or tempered by the administration. Still, unions, environmentalists, and others made their presence felt in the national debate through lobbying, think tank work, and a few public protests of their own. Thus, two visions of political transformation—one for disman-

ting the social programs and corporate regulations that the United States had begun implementing during the New Deal and Great Society, the other for broadening the social compact and welfare state—went head-to-head in 2010.

### **Health Care**

On the issue of health care, many progressives had wanted a single-payer insurance system that would provide Medicare-style benefits to every American and dramatically reduce the role of the insurance industry. But with insurance companies adamantly opposed, this proposal was a non-starter for most politicians with the exception of those in the most liberal wing of the Democratic party. Yet progressives saw a potential compromise in a public option that would give citizens the choice of entering into a government plan, thereby forcing insurance companies to compete with the public sector. Insurance companies didn't like the idea of competition, though, and the Tea Party didn't like the idea of another government program. The result was legislation that further entrenched the private sector's role in health care: out went the public option and in went a mandate that every American buy insurance on the private market, coupled with subsidies for the poor and working class. Insurance and drug companies were handed more customers, and about 30 million Americans were promised health insurance. Although a major policy change had undeniably taken place, neither the Right nor the Left was thrilled with the arrangement given that existing power dynamics were largely reinforced.

**Finance**

Financial reform offers a similar story. In the wake of the biggest financial disaster since the Great Depression, progressives saw an opportunity to pass strong regulations that would cut down the power of the financial industry and return banks to their former status as stable, even boring, community institutions. But in the face of vigorous lobbying from Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, and others in the financial industry, the legislation avoided structural reforms like breaking up big banks or even reinstating the repealed Glass-Steagall Act, which separated investment and commercial banking in 1933, to bar taxpayer-backed banks from operating in securities markets. Instead, the reform law that was passed made modest changes such as establishing a consumer protection office, increasing transparency in the financial markets, and trimming speculative activities by the banking sector. The law represented change, and it was unpopular in the financial community, but ultimately, it did little to reduce the power of Wall Street. Indeed, Obama's Justice Department never pursued criminal cases against most of the financiers who had likely engaged in fraudulent behavior that helped trigger the financial crisis. In the minds of many Americans, there could hardly have been a clearer signal that Wall Street was above the law. The question now is whether the pendulum will ever swing back to a climate conducive to more substantial regulation—though if it couldn't happen after the greatest financial crisis in eight decades and the election of a center-Left president who campaigned on holding Wall Street accountable, when could it?

**Climate Change**

The United States made little progress on climate change in 2010 despite the overwhelming scientific consensus on the urgency of the issue and the organizing efforts of environmental groups. Legislation to establish cap-and-trade, a carbon tax, or some other mechanism to mitigate global warming died in Congress, and domestic climate activists were unable to regain momentum after the disappointing conference in Copenhagen in 2009. Although a United Nations conference in Cancun in late 2010 yielded the promise for a "green climate fund" to help developing countries cut carbon dioxide emissions, there was no agreement on how to finance it and little specificity on the pollution reductions that countries were supposed to pursue. Whatever small-scale victories the conference produced did not end up translating into U.S. domestic action. So far, the corporate interests and Tea Partiers aligned against government regulation are winning this battle.

**Politics**

Unemployment hovered around 10 percent throughout 2010, which did not bode well for Democrats' fortunes in the midterm congressional elections. Moreover, Obama's tepid response to the financial crisis and corporate malfeasance meant the Democrats were starting to be seen as the party of both big government and big business—a lethal combination, politically. Amid these economic and political factors, the Tea Party and other Republicans were handed an electoral opportunity. And they were ready to take it.

Accordingly, the Right mobilized for the midterm elections by presenting

Americans with a decidedly antigovernment vision of politics. The Republican candidates that the movement backed declared many of the government's fiscal and regulatory programs of the twentieth (and even nineteenth) centuries to be not only unwise but also immoral. Many Tea Partiers, along with their media promoters, such as Fox News' Glenn Beck, charged Obama with being a tyrant who was unmooring America from its small-government roots.

Ultimately, the Tea Party's passion and organizing skill helped Republicans win control of the House of Representatives and cut into the Democrats' majority in the Senate. The Tea Party movement itself won a number of seats in the Senate, House, and governor's offices, as well as many local races. Even when Tea Partiers lost—and many of them did, especially in general elections—their campaigns often helped move the political discourse to the Right. In all, the rise of the Tea Party helped ensure that Obama's legislative agenda would be pared down or even neutralized over the next two years. The congressional change in power marked another notch against progressives' vision for a stronger government safety net while strengthening the coalition between Tea Partiers and business interests. Indeed, the 2010 Supreme Court ruling in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, which allows corporations to spend unlimited amounts of money on elections, will only further buttress this trend toward enlarged corporate power.

### **Culture Wars**

Progressive challenges to the status

quo were not entirely fruitless in 2010. Perhaps most prominently, gay rights activists' relentless organizing led Congress to repeal the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy that kept homosexuals from serving openly in the U.S. military. This grassroots pressure was supplemented by legal developments such as Federal District Court Judge Virginia Phillips's decision to declare the policy unconstitutional and unenforceable. But activists' focus was on bottom-up organizing. As a result of this work, the United States has become a bit more of an egalitarian place, overcoming the opposition of conservative religious groups and chipping into the culture's heterosexual hegemony, even if broader norms involving marriage and other legal rights remain largely in place.

Yet the grassroots failed to make any headway at all on another burning social issue: immigration reform. Forget a comprehensive overhaul; Congress couldn't even pass the modest DREAM Act, which would have granted citizenship to young illegal immigrants (mostly Mexicans) who were brought to the United States as children and, among other things, had completed at least two years of college or military service. Despite hunger-striking students and large demonstrations nationwide, the bill failed to receive enough votes in the Senate to overcome a Republican-led filibuster. On this issue, grassroots activists could not overcome the forces of cultural and ethnic hegemony.

## International Pushes on Power

### *WikiLeaks and Government Secrecy*

Perhaps the world's single-largest assault on concentrated power in 2010 came from WikiLeaks. The four-year-old Web site led by Australian Julian Assange rose to international prominence in the spring of 2010 when it published the now-infamous 2007 Baghdad Apache helicopter video showing U.S. military personnel killing two Reuters journalists and nine Iraqis who appeared to present no immediate threat. The soldiers opening fire could be heard on the video making comments such as "Ha, ha, I hit 'em" and "Look at those dead bitches." (At the time, the United States claimed hostile forces had fired on the helicopter, but the video largely discredited this account.) WikiLeaks continued its march toward becoming a pariah among governments worldwide when it shared about 250,000 U.S. diplomatic cables with established newspapers including the New York Times, Der Spiegel, and the Guardian.

As of this writing, less than 2 percent of those cables have been published, but they have revealed numerous instances of government deception and wrongdoing. These cables have shown that:

- The U.S. war in Afghanistan is going far worse (in terms of both strategic objectives and civilian deaths) than officially portrayed.
- The United States secretly conducted air strikes in Yemen and special forces operations in Pakistan.
- The U.S. government permitted Iraqi security forces to torture

prisoners through electrocution, burning, and rape.

- The Indian government has tortured Kashmiri prisoners.
- The United States successfully pressured Germany and Spain to drop investigations of American personnel who committed torture during the Bush administration.
- There have been 15,000 unreported civilian deaths in Iraq.
- U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton ordered employees to spy on U.N. officials.
- Britain trained a Bangladeshi "death squad."
- The Chinese government hacked into Google.
- Pope Benedict obstructed investigations of child sexual abuse by Catholic priests.

U.S. prosecutors have been looking for ways to charge Assange for his role in disseminating this information. Prosecutions of this nature could, in effect, criminalize investigative journalism that uncovers state secrets, changing the relationship between the state and the press and keeping the public from challenging government power.

Beyond WikiLeaks, one of the most significant investigative reports in 2010 came from Dana Priest and William Arkin. These Washington Post reporters exposed a vast American shadow government that collects information on U.S. citizens. According to the report, the National Security Agency alone collects 1.7 billion e-mail messages, phone calls, and other communications every day without judicial

oversight (Priest and Arkin 2010). The legal basis for such reporting could become shakier if the United States were to decide to make it a crime for nongovernment employees to publish classified information.

### ***Uprisings in the Middle East***

One thing that the WikiLeaks revelations have already helped spark is a democratic uprising in Tunisia. As 2010 ended and 2011 began, protesters rioted against President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, a U.S. ally who had maintained authoritarian control in Tunisia for twenty-three years. These protests were fueled in part by leaked cables showing the president's family to be corrupt and living in lavish excess. News network Al Jazeera's daily coverage of the protests also played a role, helping the early unrest to snowball into a veritable movement led by intellectuals, young professionals, and trade unionists. Ben Ali fled the country in January 2011; at the time of this writing, whether the change heralds the dawn of democracy or merely a new dictator is unclear.

Nevertheless, these protests spread across the region, with mass demonstrations occurring in Egypt, Yemen, Libya, and Jordan in early 2011. The protests in Egypt, a country of 80 million, quickly led President Hosni Mubarak to fire his cabinet and declare that he would not serve another term. These half-measures did not satisfy the thousands of protesters who had taken over Tahrir Square in Cairo and insistently demanded Mubarak's resignation. Violent crackdowns by the Mubarak government wounded thousands and left some 100 dead as of February 2011, but Mubarak himself

finally resigned in February. As this article goes to print, no one knows for now who will take his place: a status quo agent like Vice President Omar Suleiman, a pro-democracy figure such as exiled opposition leader Mohammad ElBaredei, or a representative of the pro-Islamist Muslim Brotherhood. The world is waiting to see which of these factions, among others, ends up having the strongest influence when a transitional government is named.

To be sure, not all Middle East dictatorships are at risk of being overthrown. The much-covered 2009 protests in Iran failed to produce concrete gains for democratization over the last year, as President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, consolidated their hold on power. The youthful "Green Movement" that captured the world's attention before was unable to maintain momentum in the face of violence and mass arrests from the central government. Nevertheless, the Iranian regime's appearance of legitimacy has been weakened. Given that 70 percent of Iranians are under the age of thirty—and thus potentially more sympathetic to democratic reforms—the Islamic Republic may yet face further challenges.

### ***East and Southeast Asia***

The so-called Red Shirt movement in Thailand engaged in several rounds of antigovernment protests throughout 2010. The movement, which opposes the Thai monarchy and the power of elite bureaucrats, has faced numerous instances of government suppression, including a violent crackdown in May 2010 that killed ninety demonstrators and blocked opposition Web sites.

Demonstrations to commemorate the lives lost took place in November, showing the resilience of the movement.

A flicker of light has also emerged from Myanmar, where a military junta has been in charge since 1988. The government finally released Nobel Peace Prize winner Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been a symbol for the democratic opposition, from about twenty years of detention. She quickly held a rally, attended by thousands, to promote democracy. Still, her release immediately followed an election that the military rigged to give itself control of the civilian legislature and administration. The regime thus may simply be more confident than ever of its hold on power.

At the international level, China continued to challenge the hierarchy of world superpowers. In 2010 it surpassed Japan to become the world's second-largest economy. China does not compare to developed nations when it comes to per capita income, but its large influence on global commodity prices and currencies have given it increasing weight on the world stage and challenged the power of the United States, Europe, and Japan. How this changing geopolitical dynamic will play out—and whether China's emergence as a global player makes it more or less likely to conform to international standards on human rights and other issues—remains an open question.

### **What's Next?**

2010 was a year in which structural power dynamics stayed more or less

intact in the United States despite significant policy changes like health care and financial reform. The coming years will probably be even more stagnant in this regard, as the congressional split between Democrats and Republicans will likely lead to gridlock on any transformative legislation. Moreover, if the worst of the recession is over, as many economists suspect, both the progressives on the Left and Tea Partiers on the Right may have missed the chance to push for more sweeping reforms.

The potential for more profound change has been evident in the Middle East via uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, and elsewhere. There may also be some fight left in the resilient Thai democracy movement. Yet these stories remain unfinished, as even regime change offers no guarantee of a genuine rebalancing of political or social power. Nor is it clear what will come of WikiLeaks, that transgressive champion of transparency, given the legal jeopardy that it appears to be facing from the United States. The site has revolutionary potential, but if the crackdown is effective enough, it might go the way of Napster.

Thus, 2010 saw both corporate and state power continuing to stay strong and set the parameters within which policy changes took place. As in most years, there was a yawning gap between hope and change, notwithstanding Obama's lofty rhetoric to stir the imagination. Glimmers of hope appeared, however, especially abroad. The question for 2011 is how far the forces of democracy and freedom will go to turn those glimmers into a fire.



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## Faces of Transformational Leadership: Interviews with Ernesto Cortes Jr., Theda Skocpol, and Tom Perriello

by Matt Bieber

*Matt Bieber is a 2011 Master in Public Policy candidate at the John F. Kennedy School of Government and a 2013 Master of Divinity candidate at the Divinity School at Harvard University. He hopes to help elevate the quality, rigor, honesty, and inclusiveness of our public conversations.*

Some leaders believe that addressing the problems we face as a culture and country requires more than policy tweaks; they believe it will require changes in the very structures of discourse and power that shape our national life. Community organizer Ernesto Cortes Jr., scholar Theda Skocpol, and former Congressman Tom Perriello are among such transformational leaders. The following interviews explore these figures' approaches to fostering change in the country they know and the country they're trying to help create.

### **ERNESTO CORTES JR.**

For nearly forty years, Ernesto Cortes Jr. has been one of America's most effective community organizers. His first major successes came with Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS) in San Antonio, TX, in the mid-1970s, where he helped develop a coalition of community groups from long-ignored low-income neighborhoods. In just a few years, COPS developed significant local leadership and built enough political power to win significant improvements for its members—everything from sidewalks, drainage projects, and parks to millions of dollars in capital improvements. In 1984, Cortes was awarded a MacArthur “genius grant.” Today, he is the West/Southwest Regional Director of the

Industrial Areas Foundation, a national network of community organizing groups.

This interview took place via telephone in two parts: on December 17, 2010, and on December 21, 2010.

**KSR**

*As Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF)–affiliate organizations have achieved successes and attained more recognition over the last few years, and as your foes have gotten wiser to IAF’s methods and aims, have you needed to adjust your methods, strategies, and tactics?*

**Cortes**

Oh yeah, there’s constant readjustment and rethinking going on all the time and constant analysis of how power patterns are changing and how the people who have power are changing. Some of them change in ways that are helpful, realizing that they can work with us on some issues.

We don’t look at this as just all adversarial; we also look at it in terms of who in the corporate community might be our allies on workforce development but could be our adversaries on mortgage foreclosure? Who might be our allies on mortgage foreclosure that will be our adversaries on immigration reform? Who would be our allies on immigration reform that might be our adversaries on mortgage foreclosure? You don’t deal with people monolithically or stereotypically.

**KSR**

*Let’s talk about national politics. During the 2008 presidential campaign, then-Senator Barack Obama built what was probably the*

*most effective grassroots organizing operation in political history . . .*

**Cortes**

Well, I would make a distinction between organizing and mobilizing. It was a very effective voter mobilization. It was the most effective voter mobilization drive of its kind.

**KSR**

*That’s an interesting distinction to make, because my next question was going to be about Marshall Ganz. As you probably know, Ganz helped design much of the Obama ground game. But in August 2009, when the push toward health care reform was faltering, Ganz and Peter Dreier criticized the White House in a Washington Post op-ed. They wrote, “The White House and its allies forgot that success requires more than proposing legislation, negotiating with Congress, and polite lobbying. It demands movement-building of the kind that propelled Obama’s long-shot candidacy to an almost landslide victory.” Do you think the thrust of that criticism was accurate at the time? If so, do you think it might apply today?*

**Cortes**

Well, Marshall’s a smart guy. He’s a very seasoned veteran. . . . I like him, and I respect him. Doesn’t mean I don’t have a different take on things.

**KSR**

*Sure.*

**Cortes**

My take is a little different. Obama basically won because the country was in a crisis. And he was at the right place at the right time with the right momentum, and the people wanted

change because the country was—my God—the economy was in a free fall.

**KSR**

*So you think that it would be easy to overlay how much of a real movement Obama had built?*

**Cortes**

That is correct. That's not to say that they didn't do a very, very effective and extraordinarily heroic effort. But not to look at the reality of events is also a big mistake. Now, does that mean we don't need to build? No. We need to build organizations solid. We can't overlay our hand either or not recognize how major events affect what we do.

**KSR**

*Sure. Recently, there has been a lot of dismay on the Left about the White House's agreement with the Republican leadership on taxes. Many progressives think that Obama got a bad deal, that he didn't stand up and fight. Do you think that the White House could learn from LAF—or Alinsky-style organizing—in a way that might help them press a progressive agenda forward?*

**Cortes**

Well, Ronald Reagan fought harder than this administration. Go back to Alinsky [laughing]. Just go back and look at Ronald Reagan, my God.

**KSR**

*Say more, if you will.*

**Cortes**

No, what is there to say, you know? Look at what went on after the Democrats took control of both

houses of Congress—what Reagan was still able to do.

**KSR**

*Do the lessons you've learned in community organizing seem applicable at the federal level, at the level of the White House? Or is it a different kind of game at that point?*

**Cortes**

Life has lessons for all of us. I think we all would be better served by reading Howard Thurman's *Jesus and the Disinherited* and particularly the chapter on deception. When you're negotiating, you know when you're deceiving yourself. . . . Call me back and let's talk about it.

**KSR**

*Okay, I'll take you up on that.*

**Cortes**

Particularly, read the discussion of Macbeth's soliloquy after he found out that Lady Macbeth has committed suicide.

[The conversation picked up four days later.]

**KSR**

*I was struck by the passage you recommended regarding Macbeth. At one point, Thurman writes, "The penalty of deception is to become a deception, with all sense of moral discrimination vitiated. A man who lies habitually becomes a lie and it is increasingly impossible for him to know when he is lying and when he is not."*

*So, on the one hand, you're deeply attuned to the dangers of self-deception, both personal and political. On the other hand, you prize compromise. I'm wondering what you think about the difference between a self-deceiving compromise and a compromise that represents the best of what's available and/or lays the*

*groundwork for future gains?*

**Cortes**

It's not a question of "Do you compromise?" [It's asking], "Which ones do you make?" There's a compromise of half the loaf, which is still bread and life-giving, and then there's the compromise of Solomon, half a baby—half a baby's a corpse. So the question really is trying to figure out which compromises sustain you and enable you to fight another day to get something which is real and substantive and effective versus a compromise where you fool yourself or you pretend we really got something when we didn't.

**KSR**

*How do you discern the difference? Is it always context-specific, or are there principles that you've been able to derive in the course of your work?*

**Cortes**

Does the compromise flow out of real deliberation or are you just the only one who decides for yourself? Do you take into consideration other people?

**KSR**

*Thurman also has a chapter on fear. I would imagine that you keep a keen eye out for whether fear is playing a role in these situations. Can you talk about that?*

**Cortes**

Well, it's just a question of "Are you overcome by fear?" or "Are you able to allow that which you really think is important to your grief and your anger to be able to overcome your fear?" In other words, what are you going

through? Are you willing to allow [for] that?

We're all finite beings, and part of what overcomes fear, for me, is an understanding of death. We're all going to die. So the question, then, is how many deaths do you undergo—a thousand like a coward, or do you taste it just one time?

**KSR**

*One of the ways Thurman talks about overcoming fear is thinking about your life and your action not in terms of how you're perceived by your opposition, but by God or by something larger.*

**Cortes**

Another way of looking at it is facing yourself, or the divinity in yourself. There's a core to your being, and are you being true to that?

**KSR**

*How do you teach that way of seeing yourself in the context of organizing?*

**Cortes**

There's another theologian named [Herbert] McCabe who talks about Jesus's agony in the garden. There's almost a panic which overcomes Jesus. But the question then is, "Is he going to be true to his humanity, to have some integrity about himself? Is he going to maintain his steadiness in terms of what he's about? Or is he going to panic and run?"

Is he going to be—the way Thurman puts it—is he going to be fully human? Is he going to be accountable to the dimensions of his humanity? That means recognizing that you are there not by yourself but with comrades and colleagues and you're accountable to them and you have obligations to

them. You can't just run.

**KSR**

*Do you think that same model applies to politicians? If so, does it apply straightforwardly, or does it need some tweaking? Given that politicians operate in such an absurd media and electoral landscape, do you think it's possible for them to speak with the same kind of forthrightness and honesty and avoid self-deception in ways that .*

..

**Cortes**

If they are really politicians, yes—if they're not just character-actors. Now, the problem is that most people who run for public office have become character-actors.

**KSR**

*You used the phrase "tinsel personalities" in another interview. Say a little more there, if you will.*

**Cortes**

Well, there's a kind of self-centeredness and narcissism and you're living up to some image you created of yourself, which therefore makes you incapable of really growing, developing, and learning from your own experiences.

**KSR**

*In today's environment, do you think it's possible for politicians to speak with what Thurman called "complete and devastating sincerity" and still get elected?*

**Cortes**

Well, I think that has to be held in tension, that devastating sincerity. I think there's a role for cunning in political life. It's like when you play poker: do you show your hand? No. But the rules of the game allow for that, right? We can keep a "poker face,"

if you will. So in politics, you would be stupid and pseudo-innocent, I think, to not be cunning. But that doesn't mean that you aren't maintaining some integrity.



**THEDA SKOCPOL**

Theda Skocpol is the Victor S. Thomas Professor of Government and Sociology at Harvard University. She's also a concerned citizen; in 2009, she cofounded the Scholars Strategy Network, an organization that offers a new vision of the role of academics by seeking to bridge the divide between academic research and applied policy solutions.

That bridge, of course, is politics. In what follows, we discuss new research on what kinds of taxes Americans like most and why effective policy solutions can cause political headaches.

This interview took place via telephone on December 8, 2010.

**KSR**

*Describe the ambitions of the Scholars Strategy Network (SSN).*

**Skocpol**

The idea is to bring people together to talk about how you can make connections between the research people do in universities and democratic (small "d") values and effective strategies for joining citizen politics with good policy.

**KSR**

*You identify pretty openly with a set of progressive values. As you were forming this*

*organization, did you worry about fulfilling a stereotype about academia?*

**Skocpol**

Well, I never worried about stereotypes, and I don't think most of the people who've gotten involved in the SSN projects worried about it either. I mean, all of us are scholars. Most of us are social scientists of one kind or another. We have not moved to Washington, so we are not directly doing policy advice. But we have concerns as citizens about how you can build a stronger set of public policies in the United States and how you can build a stronger democracy.

There's nothing wrong with trying to build bridges between what we do as scholars and teachers and what we do as citizens. Now, that's not to collapse the two. There's nothing about this that is encouraging the politicization of academia—not at all. This a citizen activity.

**KSR**

*On your Web site, it reads, "Taxes, deficits, and social investments are often discussed in technical terms, but there is an equally pressing need to understand social values, public beliefs, and the dynamics of building political coalitions to address the nation's economic downturn and long-term social and fiscal priorities." It sounds as if SSN believes that shifting our national conversation away from technocratic policy detail toward a broader consideration of values would be a good thing for the country.*

**Skocpol**

Yeah, I think it would. We've got a politics now in which Republicans are happy to talk about tax cuts, Democrats know that you have to have taxes for valuable public purposes but

don't want to mention the word, and citizens often do not understand what the debates are about. They're couched in highly technical terms, and they just know that in the end, something passes that seems unfair, but there's no public discussion of it.

So one of the things that we are emphasizing in this network is how we can learn to talk in regular-people language that connects values to policies, instead of treating policies as some kind of an expert realm that's obscure and highly technical.

**KSR**

*What have you come up with so far?*

**Skocpol**

Well, I think the paper that Andrea Campbell wrote [for the SSN] on taxes would talk about the reasons why the American public actually sort of supports the tax for Social Security and why that is, because they understand it's connected to something people value. So that was using a historical analogy that says, "Well, what lessons could we draw going forward?"

We weren't arriving at the conclusion that we should divide up the entire set of things government pays for and does in tiny little pieces, each of which has a separate pot of money. But we should try to make direct connections between the nature of the tax and how it's paid, because she also talked about the fact that people find it a lot easier to pay a tax that's bit by bit, rather than all in one big lump sum.

**KSR**

*It sounds like SSN is also seeking to jump-start a conversation about the ways we might live in community together, a*

*conversation that doesn't get immediately derailed into an ideological mudslinging match.*

**Skocpol**

Yeah. The Obama presidency [created] a series of openings, and it wasn't clear to many of us that university-based people were prepared to take advantage of those openings. There really has grown up a pretty big divide between people who teach and write in universities and those who get engaged in politics. So we wanted to build some bridges.

Our group has not been noticed by the Right, or by Fox News, and that's probably just as well. If we become significant, we will be, and of course, we'll be attacked. I'm not sure anybody cares. I know I don't.

**KSR**

*If that were to happen, do you have strategies in mind for pushing back? Or would you choose not to engage with it?*

**Skocpol**

Well, I mean, we're not looking to get into some kind of big fight. I did go to Washington last spring to speak at a series of dinner meetings. I was at one of the sessions with Democrats in the House. And this is just a purely voluntary activity. They come if they're interested, and I talked about the tax papers. And that was a very, very lively discussion.

There were clearly a lot of people who wanted to think about how they talk with their constituents about taxes. And I don't know that there was any immediate outcome of that, but I shared the papers and I shared the conclusions, and we had a discussion. I think it was worth doing.

**KSR**

*What's your take on President Obama's recent tax deal with the GOP?*

**Skocpol**

The entire handling of the question of what tax cuts should be removed or not has been bungled at every level in Washington. They shouldn't have left it in the White House or in the Congress until the last minute, and they should have had the courage to stand up and talk openly about some of these issues, and they didn't.

**KSR**

*It seemed like the Republicans drew a line in the sand, and rather than draw one right back or say that in a time like this, extending tax cuts for wealthy folks just couldn't be a priority . . .*

**Skocpol**

Well, it's particularly tragic, because public opinion polls—which are superficial—showed that people don't think [extending tax cuts for the wealthy is] a good idea, so that there was an opening here. And I guess that speaks to what we think in this network and why we even took up the topic of taxes. We do think that probably over a period of time, there needs to be—both inside and outside of government, among progressive-minded people—some ability to think and talk about taxes and their connection to valued public purposes.

The very word “tax” has simply been ceded inside the Washington, DC, elite. The idea is that if the word “tax” comes up, it favors Republicans. That idea is deeply entrenched even when it isn't true. It's taken about a decade or two decades to build this up. It's got partly to do with the fact that people



just don't know some of the very elementary things that we put in the papers we wrote, which is that Americans think differently about taxes if you connect them to concrete purposes than they do if you talk about them in the abstract.

But it's also got to do with reliance on very short-term information that we get from polls, rather than thinking about how a program or an issue or a political strategy will play out over time.

### KSR

*Do those two factors that you just described explain the White House's behavior on this issue?*

### Skocpol

I don't know quite how to explain the White House's behavior. I mean, I study this and I write about it, but I don't really know exactly why they've been so slow and so timid.

### KSR

*Frank Rich's December 4, 2010, essay, "All the President's Captors," in the New York Times basically accused Obama of a tendency to capitulate and compromise, even when it isn't useful—that it's sort of a temperamental instinct.*

### Skocpol

No, I don't buy these personal explanations. I think there's something to that, but I don't think that's the main thing. I think we tend to talk about presidents just in terms of their personalities, rather than what ideas they have around them. He surrounds himself with very technical economic advisers who probably see these issues strictly—I'll give you an example. I have an undergraduate in one of my

classes who's looking at this question, "How can you give tax cuts to 95 percent of working families, and yet, the polls show nobody knows they got them?"

Well, part of the answer is that they were designed by behavioral economists who come right here from Harvard University and who said to the president, "Well, we just need to put this into people's paychecks a little bit each month." I mean, it's sort of the way I describe would be good to have a tax hike. They did this with a tax cut, so people will spend it. They were thinking only of how it would work in so-called "economic stimulus." They were not thinking about whether the citizens would see that they got a tax cut. And yet, if you're going to divorce the one from the other, then you won't have a politics that's sustainable or understandable to people.

### KSR

*How do you combine those two?*

### Skocpol

Well, that's exactly what we're trying to puzzle in this network. I don't have all the answers, but I do know that we're pushing for that. Academics have a tendency to say, "Well, this would be the ideal policy. We have to educate people," and end of story. That's not good enough.



**TOM PERRIELLO**

In 2008, Virginia Democrat Tom Perriello made a name for himself by practicing what he called “conviction politics,” challenging “the conventional wisdom that we have to choose between our principles and our ‘electability.’” Perriello argued that conviction politics would make him more likely to win and more effective if he did, since he’d have a mandate for enacting his views.

After winning one of the closest House elections of 2008, Perriello represented the 5th District of Virginia from 2009 to 2011. During his term in Congress, Perriello voted for the stimulus, health reform, and an emissions trading bill, among other controversial measures. In 2010, he was narrowly defeated in his reelection bid by Republican State Senator Robert Hurt.

The interview took place via telephone on December 20, 2010.

**KSR**

*In your one-year report to the citizens of your district, you wrote, “We’ve worked hard to ensure transparency in our efforts [and] to focus on the areas of greatest need.” You also emphasized the need for “game-changing investments rather than symbolic expenditures.” It seems that you brought your conviction politics with you from the campaign trail to Capitol Hill. As a freshman congressman, did you find real opportunities for transformational leadership? And what kinds of institutional barriers did you face?*

**Perriello**

Oh, I think there are great opportunities for it, and I certainly encourage people . . . to get into politics, whether as an elected official

or serving in another capacity, and to come into that with a spirit of what I sometimes call “transformative pragmatism.” We sometimes have a false choice between whether you want to think big or think small, and whether you have to move dramatically, say, to the Left or to the Right on the conventional spectrum. [The] problems we face are not small—they’re large—and the solutions that we need must be transformative, but that doesn’t mean that you can’t think pragmatically about how to get there.

I think that’s part of what I ran up against, not just in the structure of government, but probably more significantly the assumptions of the media, where they tend to have a very narrow spectrum of understanding. You know, “Oh, that must mean you’re a liberal” or “That must mean you’re conservative” and not really understanding things outside of a very narrow spectrum. And then you can get pigeonholed in one direction or another.

So there are barriers within the media, in their understanding and wanting it to fit neatly within a story. And obviously, I think that there are political structures involved: the People’s House, which is the only one that was directly elected by the people in the original Constitution, is set up much more for pursuing real change than the Senate, which is a structure originally intended to be a brake on that impulse and has now become a full-on brick wall. So I think that there are certainly challenges to doing transformation.

The other though, of course, is that transformative change, in any meaningful sense, takes years and years to reach its full impact, or even in some cases, marginal impact. And we have a politi-

cal structure right now that's based not only on this very short two-year timeline, but now has been on a twenty-four-hour timeline. So to try to step up and fight for something like a national energy policy, which is so clearly going to be crucial for America over the next twenty-five years doesn't necessarily deliver in the next twenty-five seconds.

So I think in between those things is where leadership is required. There's also a gap between some ideas that do take, you know, thirty minutes to explain and thirty seconds to destroy. I think where you see most politicians as saying, "Well, let's go for the thing that has the immediate payoff, and let's go for the thing that avoids the issues that are easy to attack in a thirty-second spot." And I think when you get into this to change things and not to get reelected, that calculus changes a little bit.

### **KSR**

*It's interesting that you bring up the Senate. My sense is that the country is more and more familiar with that "brick wall"—with the filibuster and the single-senator hold and some of the other procedural mechanisms. I think folks are a little less familiar with the operations of the House, so I'm wondering if you could get into the nitty-gritty and talk about some of the institutional barriers and some of the institutional openings in the way the House functions.*

### **Perriello**

First, I want to challenge your premise a little bit. I think those from the Kennedy School are probably more aware than ever of the limits to the Senate, but I don't think that's true with the general public. They don't really care. I think they care about whether they have a job or not, and

whether we got something done. They don't care whether it was the House's fault or the Senate's fault.

So I think that it's important for understanding this election, where people felt like we had done too much and not enough. It had some to do with frustration with the Senate but not understanding that barrier, and I think more can be done on it.

In terms of the House procedure, you know, it's interesting because I still don't really understand the House structures and processes, so I'm not an expert on that. But certainly, this administration made a decision to give a lot of power to Congress to develop the laws, and of course, certain laws have to originate with us. But the divisions in the House . . . are sometimes seen as being Republican/Democrat, and people get into how much the Blue Dogs do this or that or the progressives. But a lot of the divisions in the House are regional as much as ideological. So oftentimes, what the disagreements are over will mean that there is a certain regional disparity on a given issue, on how hospitals are reimbursed under Medicare in that region—differences between a coal state versus another kind of state in the energy bill.

People either look at that and say that's an important part of our democratic process, because it's the way to make sure that no region in the country is left out or marginalized, or you look at it and see this as part of the problem, because you end up getting into all manner of negotiating and making special deals for, say, Nebraska. And that's where a lot of the price tags start to go up and the purity in the bill goes down.

**KSR**

*Let's talk a little about conviction politics. In 2007, you wrote, "I remain convinced that a campaign based on conviction politics is the only kind worth running." You said it would make you more likely to win and more effective if you did. Well, you won in 2008. Talk a little about conviction politics, and in particular, how running a conviction-based campaign affected your capacity to do your job as a congressman.*

**Perriello**

People sometimes talk about America being a centrist nation. I think it's an independent nation, not a centrist nation. If people want to make up their own mind, they want to look at individual issues. One thing that I believed before I got into this that was very much confirmed by my experience is that people do not expect to or need to agree with you on every issue, but they do want to know what makes you tick. They want to know why you're taking this position, how you're thinking about things, and to some extent, are willing to trust [you] as you put in the time to come up with the answer that's right.

Now, conviction politics doesn't mean that every conviction politician should be elected, because if your sense of right and wrong is not sufficiently aligned with that of your district, then maybe that representation doesn't make sense. But I think the reason [my campaign] did so much better than the national average this year—outperforming the sort of generic Democrats by fourteen points in a traditionally conservative district, despite voting for what were considered controversial issues—was because we got very high marks for integrity, for hard work, for standing up to the special inter-

est groups. So even if people didn't, say, agree with my vote on health care, they understood why I was doing it, to some extent, and that I was doing it for a set of reasons that were consistent with their values.

So it's a difficult space because you're always going to be able to justify just about any vote. There are going to be things about the bill you don't like, and there are going to be things about the bill that you do like. So when that's the case and you know one vote is an easy one and the other is a hard vote, it is easy to get the wheels of rationalization going.

**KSR**

*Did your defeat in the fall of 2010—and perhaps this year's political climate more generally—give you any pause or suggest any potential limitations to conviction politics? Were there moments where you lost faith?*

**Perriello**

Normally, in an election, you don't get the chance to know the answer to the question "what if?" "What if I had voted differently? What if I had done this differently?" You know, so many Democrats lost this year who took very different paths, but you can actually look at similar districts around the country where people did things differently, and I think [my race] did outperform those who, say, didn't take those votes or those who took them and then tried to hide them.

You know, everyone has to figure out their own path. I'm not judging members of Congress who did that, but I would say the fact that [my race] was able to get 110,000 people out and lose by only three and a half points is a testament [because for this race]

we should have lost by nine to sixteen according to the stat.

The tension, of course, is we have become an increasingly parliamentary-style system. Our elections have been nationalized, our media has been nationalized, the ability to run as an individual as such. So one of the tensions is what happens if you have a party that doesn't seem to be running on a strong sense of convictions or different convictions for different people in what is truly a more diverse partisan environment.

So for me, for example, the stimulus was not the stimulus I wanted. That's true; I've been very clear about that. I've been very critical of Harvard's own Larry Summers and others over [the fact that] our vision was an anemic stimulus but, nonetheless, if the choice was between that stimulus or not voting for it, it was pretty clearly unconscionable to vote against this, particularly for Republicans, quite honestly, in a stimulus that was a third tax cut, a third funding of unfunded mandates, and a third investments in competitive advantage.

When you look at that, it was the right thing to do, and we shouldn't be afraid to go out and talk about the fact that we created nine straight months of private sector job growth. Now, whether one leans Right or Left or what have you, the idea in January of 2009, that, by November, we would have strung together nine straight months of private sector job growth—if the Republicans had done the same thing, they would be calling it the “Obama miracle;” they would be calling it the “economic miracle of the century.” But that's not where we [as Democrats]

tend to come from.

On the energy bill, the idea of defeating a national energy policy when China and India aren't waiting for us to get our act together . . . every day that the Republicans and the spineless Democrats don't have the courage to get us a national energy policy, we're just sending a huge signal that says, “Send your investments elsewhere because we're not serious about it,” and something that says, “We will continue to fight unnecessary wars because our leaders don't have that courage.” And frankly, if you don't believe the stakes are that high, then don't support a national energy policy. But if you do—because they are—then we shouldn't be afraid to talk about how high the stakes are.

#### **KSR**

*Absolutely. I'm interested in hearing you contrast the nature and scope of your leadership opportunities in Congress with some of the positions you've held before—as a security consultant in Afghanistan, Darfur, Kosovo, and Liberia, as an employee of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and as a cofounder of online advocacy organizations. What kinds of leadership did Congress permit and encourage and what kinds did it obstruct or obscure?*

#### **Perriello**

Well, I think leadership opportunities as a freshman are limited. I ended up getting more of a role than I ever intended or wanted, and I think that was in part because I happened to represent what was seen as a swing district—I'd won the closest race. And to be blunt, our district was within driving distance of journalists in DC; it was the shortest trip to the “real America.” So for all these reasons, I

ended up probably in more of a spotlight than was intended.

I think, you know, there's some room for moral leadership, and I think if people . . . know that they should be voting a certain way based on principle but consultants are telling them to run away from that and you see someone taking a tough vote, I think . . . that helps.

The place where I think I probably pushed the most, besides on energy, was this issue of challenging the elite economic consensus in DC. . . . For all of the . . . rancor back and forth, both [parties] are essentially aligned on a pretty similar—what I'd call elite globalization platform. There's a lot of merit to that, but I think ultimately it's flawed. I think it's based on the idea that building, making, and growing things in America was what we did yesterday and it's naïve to think we're going to do that going forward. I think it's naïve to think that we can have a middle class and a working class in this country without jobs that involve building, making, and growing things. There just aren't enough other jobs out there, and we're going to start looking like the Central American economies of the 1980s, where 10 percent of people make all the money and pay all the taxes, and it's just not sustainable.

And so, I think this deeper level and the gap of the stimulus show this. If you basically are in that top 10 percent—the donors to both parties, the electeds in both parties, basically come from that space—then in January 2009, your goal is to just try to get back to 2006, when everything was all right. Well, for people in my district and for many parts of the country, getting back

to 2006 was not the goal. That was a time, too, of tremendous economic insecurity, reduced purchasing power, etc.

So part of it was because I felt like I had one foot—with, you know, a couple of Yale degrees and what have you—in that elite consensus and another foot in the Danvilles and Martinsvilles [Virginia] world, that I was in a position where I could challenge some of those assumptions and start working on a national manufacturing strategy and not be embarrassed to talk about building and making things in America. So I think there was some move back in that direction from the original space.

But the chances for leadership are limited, and I think, you know, you try to find places where you can make an impact, and that probably increases over time.

#### **KSR**

*I heard a radio interview in which you said something similar. You said, "I think there's been a tremendous selling out of the American people by the elites of this country." Were you referring to economic issues only here, or was there another sense in which you felt like the elites have sold out the American people?*

#### **Perriello**

I think it goes more broadly than that. Most empires, when they head into decline, there's a moral decay from the top down that's in part a giving up on the [res publica], or the common space. And I think . . . if you look at the way, for example, Wall Street has acted in the last couple of years, however one feels about what got us into this mess,

there was clearly a commitment, right or wrong, from the American people to come in and make sure that the financial sector did not fall apart. And frankly this president . . . has been extremely soft on Wall Street. I mean, the House and others did have the pitchforks and so were ready to go, and this president stood between and held that line. You know, the response from Wall Street and others has not been to constructively engage like statesmen, but to be part of sort of an “irrationalizing” of public discourse.

If you look through history, it's not just elected officials or academics, by any means, that step up and fill that space. It's often been our business leaders at key moments who stepped in and tried to make sure that . . . adults are there in the room to make decisions and keep this country strong over time, and instead, it seems like that impulse from the top has been to encourage sort of a downward spiral.

So again, I think if you see that “greed is good” or instant gratification culture reflected at the high end, whether that's the government or business . . . that does tend to have an effect reflected down.

#### **KSR**

*Paul Krugman said something similar in a December 2, 2010, column, “Freezing Out Hope,” in the New York Times: that by endlessly compromising with these merciless forces, the president ends up giving cover to bad ideas, like free market fundamentalism and other forms of flawed economic thinking. I wonder if the same isn't true at a broader, moral level: that in attempting to convene a civil, compromise-heavy national conversation,*

*the approach ends up failing to confront the issues we face in necessary ways.*

#### **Perriello**

Sure. My feeling, if you go back to January 2009, was that we needed to make a pretty serious commitment to one of two things. We either needed to commit to austerity and say, you know, “The parents are home. This isn't going to continue anymore, there's going to be a lot of pain for a while, but we're going to get there,” or a grand vision that says, “Underneath all of this is a complete loss in America's competitive advantage; there will be no balancing the budget or anything else until we rebuild our competitive advantage. We need to commit . . . like the Apollo mission, to ten years of rebuilding America's competitive advantage, which requires infrastructure, innovation, and education.”

Either of those is something where you inspire people to a difficult place by putting a great vision on the table that happens to be true and necessary. I think what's tough is when you do a little bit of each, you end up in the middle. We did some rebuilding of competitive advantage with the largest down payment in modern history on science, research and development, broadband, grid technology, etc. through the stimulus, but not really enough to get the private dollars coming off the sidelines because it wasn't a big enough commitment.

It's in that space between those two things that we did some austerity, which is probably why the full-on recovery that started in the spring of 2010—if you look at the numbers, the private sector job growth—continued. It was the drop-off in public

## CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO

employment that was the reason why the overall job numbers were going in the wrong direction. That was pretty directly correlated to how serious we were in sustaining that stimulus, so there's a relationship in these things.

### ENDNOTE

These interviews have been edited for space and clarity.



## The Coming Food Crisis: Trading Away Security

by Ben Beachy

*Ben Beachy is a 2012 Master in Public Policy candidate at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, focusing on international economic policy and development. He spent the previous six years working as a policy analyst in Nicaragua and a national organizer in Washington, DC, with the advocacy organization Witness for Peace.*

2011 began with fire. On January 5, Algerians started igniting government buildings to protest the teeming prices of flour and sugar. Having watched staple food prices double within a few months toward the end of 2010 (Reuters 2011), Algiers youth clogged streets with burning tires and chanted “Bring us sugar!” (Ouali 2011). In the following weeks, eight hungry and unemployed Algerians demonstrated their desperation by dousing themselves in gasoline and publicly setting themselves on fire.

The flames may signal the cusp of a larger crisis. Just hours before the first riots erupted in Algeria, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) revealed that food prices had reached their highest point on record (FAO 2011b). The current price index has even surpassed that of the 2008 food crisis, when food riots swept the developing world in response to a historic spike in the international price of staples like rice, corn, and wheat. In that 2008 crisis, as surging prices sparked protests from Dhaka to Dakar, the number of hungry people climbed to 1 billion for the first time in human history (FAO 2009).

How can food-importing countries hope to forestall another food crisis? “Stop importing,” argue some. “Trade freely,” is the retort from policy makers like Robert Zoellick, former U.S. trade representative and current World Bank president. In fact, hours after FAO’s 2011 announcement of historic food prices, Zoellick

admonished market interventions in a *Financial Times* op-ed entitled “Free Markets Can Still Feed the World” (2011). Yet free trade orthodoxy cannot rectify a crisis it helped create. Depending on food imports “has been a failure for food security,” argues Víctor Suárez, executive director of Mexico’s National Association of Rural Commercial Enterprises, in a personal interview. Indeed, many of the countries currently wary of food riots are those that have most thoroughly subjected food to free trade. Given its ignoble history, the dogma of zero trade restrictions today sounds as quixotic as the dogma of zero trade. Both must be exchanged for more grounded solutions if hungry countries are to avert crisis.

### **The Food Security Prescription**

Both Zoellick and Suárez probably agree that governments bear the responsibility of guaranteeing food security—meaning sustained access to an adequate food supply—for their citizens. “Food is a fundamental right,” argues Ramesh Singh, former CEO of ActionAid International, in a personal interview. “We’re not talking about spare parts for cars,” he quips. Noting the recent riots, Singh asserts that governments must guarantee food access not only to ensure “the basic needs of humanity, but the security of a society.” Indeed, the right to food is now enshrined in the constitutions of twenty-two countries. None are in the developed world (FAO 2011a).

Those of us in developed countries generally don’t have to grapple with food security because we already have it. We enjoy food security’s most

*Free trade orthodoxy cannot rectify a crisis it helped create.*

basic prerequisites: that food prices stay dependably low while incomes remain dependably high. In the United States, we spend a paltry 6 percent of disposable income on our basic diet. By contrast, much of the developing world spends more than 40 percent of its income on food, magnifying the impact of price hikes on one’s stomach (Economic Research Service 2008). A 50 percent increase in the price of flour might prompt grumbling from those of us in the United States if, say, the cost of a slice of pizza rose from \$2.10 to \$3.15. However, for Nicolas Castillo, a taxi driver earning 40 pesos a day in Oaxaca, Mexico, with whom I spoke, such an increase caused him to have to scale back to two meals per day when a kilo of tortillas jumped from 8 to 12 pesos in 2010.

The free trade theory commonly taught in economics classrooms promises greater food security for people like Castillo who live in developing countries that cannot produce staple foods as efficiently and cheaply as Northern trading partners. The theory suggests that if Mexico would eliminate its trade restrictions and freely import cheaper U.S. grains, Castillo’s tortillas would become more affordable. It further predicts that if Mexico would seize new export opportunities in comparative advantage products—that is, those the country can produce relatively more efficiently than staple foods—Castillo would be able to find a higher-paying job and further boost his food security. For three decades,

U.S. policy makers and lending institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have consistently sold this theoretical prescription to the developing world, finding willing buyers from Mexico to Haiti.

### **Haiti: Let Them Eat Rice**

Though rice is currently Haiti's staple grain, it held a marginal place in the Haitian diet until relatively recently. In a personal interview, Haiti's former Prime Minister Michele Pierre-Louis recalls, "In my family, we would eat corn, plantains, bananas, sweet potatoes, and sorghum. We would only eat rice on Sundays." Up until the 1980s, Haitian farmers produced most of the staples comprising this diverse diet, shielded by tariffs from cheaper imports. But since U.S. agribusinesses could produce more efficiently, the IMF advised debt-plagued Haiti to open its borders to U.S. grains and let the market refocus productive resources toward comparative advantage products such as coffee and mangoes. In compliance, Haiti began granting entry to low-cost U.S. rice in the mid-1980s and, in 1995, approved an IMF "structural adjustment strategy" that slashed rice tariffs to a nominal 3 percent, placing Haitian farmers in direct competition with U.S. agribusiness (International Monetary Fund 2001).

"How do you expect a Haitian peasant who is plowing his land with a

colonial hoe to compete with a large farmer from Biloxi, Mississippi, who is subsidized by his own government?" Pierre-Louis asks. The predictable influx of cheap U.S. rice soon altered the Haitian diet, supplanting corn and millet as the daily bread and undercutting producers of those historic grains. "It changed the way people eat," Pierre-Louis says. Unable to compete, waves of displaced farmers and field hands moved to Port-au-Prince in search of work, a process that many blame for the proliferation of the capital city's shantytowns over the past two decades. "The fact that Port-au-Prince is today surrounded by over 100 slums is a direct result of those neoliberal policies," Pierre-Louis says.

### **"Whether Natural or Man-Made"**

According to free trade theory, such farmer displacement is a short-term pain justified by the long-term gain of new jobs and cheaper food. Indeed, in the years following liberalization, Haiti's imported rice cost 10 percent to 35 percent less than domestic rice (Georges 2004). Thus, some economists conclude that free trade has bolstered Haiti's food security.

But to make that argument today, one must turn a blind eye to the last three years. Newly dependent on imports for more than 70 percent of rice consumption (Lindsay 2008), Haiti watched in 2008 as the international price of rice doubled in just ten weeks (Childs and Kiawu 2008). The 2008 global food crisis's potential causes

*To argue that cheap imports categorically improve food security for the poor is to negate a widespread developing world reality: many of the poor are farmers*



Figure 1 — Nicolas Castillo. Photo by Ben Beachy.

included increased demand for grain-based biofuels in Brazil, a devastating drought in Australia, a surge in grain price speculation on Wall Street, export restrictions in Argentina, and increasing meat consumption in China and India. Over which of these manifold determinants did Haiti exert control? Not one. Powerless against soaring prices, Haitians refused to quietly go hungry. Farmers barricaded highways with felled trees and smoldering cars, throngs of youth demolished government walls, and community leaders demanded an end to the “death plan,” a local synopsis of the IMF-pushed free trade reforms (Lindsay 2008).

Though both the price of rice and the related riots eventually ebbed, Haiti’s continued food dependency was again violently underscored last year on January 12, 2010, when the 7.1-magnitude earthquake left the country in ruins. With 1.5 million Haitians suddenly rendered homeless and scant domestic production to feed them, Haiti had to rely on international food aid, only 10

percent of which had been delivered six months later (Bellerive and Clinton 2010). Meanwhile, the international price of rice increased, exacerbating hunger. “A country that cannot feed its people will be at the mercy of any kind of turbulence, whether natural or man-made,” Pierre-Louis says. Two months after the earthquake, former U.S. president and free trade champion Bill Clinton, now the U.N. Special Envoy to Haiti, apologized to the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations for his role in Haiti’s dependency:

Since 1981, the United States has followed a policy, until the last year or so when we started rethinking it, that we rich countries that produce a lot of food should sell it to poor countries and relieve them of the burden of producing their own food, so, thank goodness, they can leap directly into the industrial era. It has not worked. . . . It was a mistake. . . . I have to live every day with the consequences



Figure 1 — Oaxacan corn farmers standing in their field. Photo by Ben Beachy.

of the lost capacity to produce a rice crop in Haiti to feed those people. (Clinton 2010)

Some analysts argue, however, that the volatility of 2008 is the exception, not the rule, and that policies shouldn't be built on exceptions. They point out that significant food price spikes have typically occurred every fifteen to twenty years, and that, in the long interims, international prices tend to be lower than tariff-protected prices for countries like Haiti. But "the going wisdom is that the boom-bust cycles are becoming much shorter than before," notes Timothy Wise, director of the Research and Policy Program at the Global Development and Environment Institute, in a personal interview.

"Most people are expecting increased volatility in international markets," adds Robert Paarlberg, a professor at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and author of *Food Politics: What Everyone Needs to Know*, with whom I also spoke. Why? The answer is, in part, because many of the factors contributing to the 2008 price spike remain intact while others may even intensify. As China and India continue to develop, for example, rising meat consumption is expected to continue driving up the price of animal feed grains like corn. The changing climate, meanwhile, threatens to bring increasing bouts of supply-sapping floods, such as those that devastated Australia, Sri Lanka, and Brazil in January 2011 alone. Denying increasing price volatility may soon become as implausible as denying climate change.

### **Mexico: The People of the Corn Imports**

Even though trade dependency subjects countries like Haiti to the increasing vicissitudes of international prices, trade-led growth in comparative advantage sectors should theoretically provide higher incomes to help consumers weather such volatility. Mexico, for example, was told that free trade with the United States would expose a comparative advantage in cheap manufacturing, allowing Mexicans to transition out of low-paying, small-scale agriculture and into better-paid assembly lines. For Mexico, the farm-to-factory prescription implied transitioning out of corn, the culinary and cultural centerpiece of Mexicans since their ancestors first cultivated the crop

more than 7,000 years ago. “Corn,” Suárez explains, “provides the richness of Mexico—our principle source of rural employment, our food, and the basis of our culture.”

A millennia-old heritage, however, does not fit neatly on economists’ graphs. Having determined the comparable inefficiency of its family farmers, the Mexican government, under IMF tutelage, curtailed historical support for domestic grain production. The 1980s and 1990s brought a steady dismantling of governmental price supports, technical assistance programs, and low-interest credit for small-scale corn farmers. Mexico sealed the deal by committing to completely phase out grain tariffs as a party to the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

The result was predictable. When Mexico granted entry to a flood of cheap U.S. grains even ahead of NAFTA’s scheduled tariff phaseout, Mexico’s campesinos—Latin American farm workers—were the first to be submerged. From the early 1990s to 2005, the price of corn for Mexican producers plummeted 66 percent (Wise 2009). By the time the NAFTA-mandated phaseout of tariffs reached completion in 2008, corn imports from the United States had quadrupled (Wise 2009) and more than 2.3 million agricultural jobs had been lost (Zepeda et al. 2009). One belonged to Nicolas Castillo. A

former corn and beans farmer, Castillo told me that his crop sales in the San Juan market used to provide just enough to get by. When decreasing prices brought increasing poverty, the only thing left to sell was the land itself. Castillo’s plight undermines a critical assumption of the “free trade equals food security” argument: that the poor, those with the least food security, are net buyers rather than net sellers of food. While this assumption holds in some countries, a 2008 World Bank report found that in eight of nine developing countries studied, net food sellers like Castillo had lower average income than net food buyers (Aksoy and Isik-Dikmelik 2008). To argue that cheap imports categorically improve food security for the poor is to negate a widespread developing world reality: many of the poor are farmers.

### **Ghost Factories**

According to free trade theory, however, NAFTA-propelled growth in manufacturing should have granted former farmers like Castillo higher-wage factory jobs and thus greater food security. Indeed, new auto and clothing factories proliferated in Mexico’s northern states, providing hundreds of thousands of new jobs from 1994 through 2000. But the promise stopped there. With factory growth beginning to taper off in 2001, NAFTA’s first twelve years brought a lackluster 600,000 new manufacturing

*While ending U.S. subsidies would help rectify hypocritical policy making and diminish the underselling power of U.S. grains, it would not erase the United States’ competitive edge over Mexico in staple foods.*

*Paved roads and rural schools would have limited impact amidst dumping-level prices from the North. Strategic tariffs, meanwhile, could provide a necessary shield while generating governmental revenue to fund the accompanying investments.*

jobs, not nearly enough to replenish lost agricultural employment much less to satisfy a workforce that grows each year by 1 million (Zepeda et al. 2009). Where did the promised jobs go? China. In 2001, China entered the World Trade Organization, the United States opened its ports wider to Chinese products, and China's share of the United States' manufacturing imports eclipsed Mexico's share for the first time (Hanson 2010). The two-country comparative advantage model had failed to account for a third player with wages low enough and productivity high enough to undercut Mexico. Like other free-trading Latin American countries, Mexico soon watched its advantage, and the promise of new jobs, erode.

Forced to leave their farms for factories that do not exist, many Mexicans now face increasingly precarious income options: informal sector jobs such as street vending, employment in the country's burgeoning illicit drug trade, or immigration to the United States. Castillo chose the last option, joining a wave of undocumented immigrants that doubled in size during NAFTA's first ten years (Hoefer et al. 2010). After several years of missing home and family, he returned to Oaxaca to try his hand at taxi driving. "But business hasn't been good," he told me. Why? "There's no one left to drive. . . . They're all in the U.S."

For people like Castillo, the supposed growing pains of the promised farm-to-factory transition have become permanent injuries.

### ***Our Daily Bread?***

While impairing the income stability of poor Mexicans, NAFTA theoretically should have mitigated this blow to food security by driving down the price of tortillas, the corn-based staple constituting more than 40 percent of nutritional intake for Mexico's poor (Roig-Franzia 2007). But paradoxically, as the price of corn fell, the price of the tortilla actually rose. Suárez explains that large grain companies like Cargill and Maseca—which posted record profits under NAFTA—used increasing market control to keep the tortilla price high while paying farmers less. Due largely to this solidifying oligopoly, the price of the tortilla nearly tripled from 1994 to 2000. Seven years later, it tripled again (Olson 2008). In addition to Cargill's price speculation, factors to blame for this "tortilla crisis" include the rising price of oil and an ethanol-pushed increase in international demand for corn. With corn import dependency at nearly five times the pre-NAFTA level, Mexico's tortilla stands transmitted the escalating international price to customers (Wise 2009). Millions of NAFTA-displaced corn farmers suddenly could not afford the very food that they and their ancestors had spent their lives harvest-

ing. Suárez recalls that the crisis “badly wounded the family economy and threw millions of people into poverty and malnutrition.” In protest, tens of thousands of former farmers, tortilla vendors, and everyday consumers crowded Mexico City’s massive central square in January 2007 and shouted, “Sin maíz, no hay país!”—“Without corn, there is no country!”

Some argue, however, that Mexico’s story of displacement and subsequent dependency is due not to free trade but to a lack of free trade. Had the United States not paid its agribusinesses exorbitant, trade-distorting subsidies, this viewpoint asserts, Mexican farmers could have stayed in business. Indeed, during the NAFTA era, U.S. corn subsidies dwarfed Mexico’s by a factor of two to one, allowing U.S. agribusiness to send its corn across the Rio Grande at 19 percent below the cost of production (Wise 2009). But while ending U.S. subsidies would help rectify hypocritical policy making and diminish the underselling power of U.S. grains, it would not erase the United States’ competitive edge over Mexico in staple foods. Throughout the world, developed countries have flexed a clear advantage in grains production, today controlling at least two-thirds of global exports in corn, wheat, and barley (Pérez et al. 2008). Even after removing subsidies from the NAFTA equation, the competition becomes Cargill’s thousands of acres of fertile land versus campesinos’ hilly half-hectares; Archer Daniels Midland’s fleet of combine harvesters versus campesinos’ handheld hoes; and Bunge’s daily irrigation systems versus campesinos’ hope for rain. Such advantages allow the average U.S. grain company to

produce a ton of corn in just 1.2 hours. For the average Mexican farmer, it takes 17.8 days (Patel and Henriques 2004). In a hypothetical world of pure free trade, Mexico-style displacement would differ in degree but not in kind.

### **The Search for Solutions**

Mexico and Haiti are not alone. A series of West African, Latin American, and Caribbean countries have found that enthusiastic adoption of the free trade model has failed to deliver either of food security’s prerequisites: dependably low food prices and dependably high income. Should these countries then close off the borders and produce all their own food in the name of security? Probably not. Robert Lawrence, John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University Professor of International Trade, with whom I spoke, points out that absolute autarky is likely to bring even more price instability than absolute free trade, given that diversified supply sources make international prices less vulnerable to localized shocks such as weather-induced calamities. Were Haiti, for example, to rely strictly on domestic production of grains, it could expect to experience a supply shortage and price spike with each devastating hurricane.

### **Food Aid: Giving a Man a Fish**

Noting the inefficacy of airtight borders, some policy makers posit that countries like Haiti should continue to rely on international prices and that Northern agricultural powers like the United States should simply provide food aid when those prices exceed affordability. Such has been U.S. policy



toward Haiti for about two decades. Pierre-Louis points out that the United States has sent Haiti repeated boatloads of free wheat and other grains not only to curb hunger but also as a means of discarding excess supply to keep prices stable for U.S. agribusiness. She explains, “The EU pays farmers to destroy their crop when there is a surplus. The U.S. dumps it in Haiti.” Regardless of the intent of the United States, the result for Haiti has been short-term reductions in hunger at the expense of long-term food security solutions. Since periodic influxes of no-cost grains tend to inhibit domestic production, both Pierre-Louis and Suárez argue that food aid dependency is as myopic as it is undignified. “We need long-term, sustained policies, not just emergency responses,” Suárez says.

### ***Domestic Production: Homeland Security***

One long-term alternative is to promote, but not rely entirely on, domestic production of essential foods. By combining domestic production with imports, developing countries can capture the gains from trade when world prices are low and use domestic supply as a strategic buffer when those prices rise. “Absolute dependence on anything is not security,” Singh says. Given that a country cannot launch a successful farming sector with the same month-to-month speed with which international prices rise, governments must cultivate and maintain domestic production before a crisis hits. But how can countries without a comparative advantage in staple foods maintain production amidst cheaper imports?

A textbook answer is to lower domestic farmers’ costs by subsidizing their

production. Lawrence argues that subsidies would prove superior to tariffs in offering food security by stimulating food production without increasing costs for consumers. Since tariffs, by design, boost domestic prices above international prices, consumers tend to pay for the farmers’ added protection. Yet Wise highlights the infeasibility of debt-ridden developing countries outlaying enough subsidy money to bring domestic producers to a price that is competitive with heavily subsidized Northern agribusiness. Neither Haiti nor Mexico, he argues, should expect to win “a subsidy arms race with the U.S. Treasury.”

Instead, Global South governments are increasingly opting to cultivate domestic production by investing in the rural infrastructure that enables farming: paved countryside roads, rural schools, access to credit, and training in diversified crop production. Such investments buttress food security not only by building a domestic buffer against price volatility but also by rebuilding the depleted income levels of small-scale farmers. After nearly thirty years of prodding developing governments to downsize such domestic farming investments, the World Bank and IMF have relaxed their ideology in the wake of the 2008 food crisis. The World Bank’s agriculture-focused 2008 World Development Report acknowledges the past decades’ regrettable “decline in attention to agriculture . . . in the face of rising rural poverty” and advocates for public investment in farming “as a pathway out of poverty” (World Bank 2007).

*“The answer to food price volatility is not to prosecute or block markets, but to use them better. By empowering the poor, the G20 can take practical steps towards ensuring the availability of nutritious food.” — Robert Zoellick*

### **Strategic Trade: Some Things Are Worth Protecting**

Some policy makers argue that this renewed interest in investment makes trade policy irrelevant to the discussion of food security. Paarlberg asserts, “Until governments invest in rural infrastructure, there’ll be a limit to what they can do with their farmers under any kind of trade policy.” Suárez agrees but argues that the converse is also true: without strategic trade policy, there’ll be a limit to the efficacy of rural investments. When asked to name his recipe for boosting Mexico’s food security, Suárez readily ticks off a series of needed farming investments and concludes with one final item: “rational administration of imports and exports.” Suárez asserts that combining rural investment with the currently “chaotic importation system” would be illogical. Paved roads and rural schools would have limited impact amidst dumping-level prices from the North. Strategic tariffs, meanwhile, could provide a necessary shield while generating governmental revenue to fund the accompanying investments. Suárez clarifies that Mexico needs such a “comprehensive, coherent policy package . . . not to return to the past” but to “foster future food security in a world of volatile prices.”

Some developing countries have attained such security through variable tariffs. Colombia, for example,

currently utilizes the Andean Price Band System: when the international price of corn, rice, and other critical crops dips below an annually established level, extra tariff protections are activated to shelter farmers. When the price exceeds the upper end of the established band, obviating the need for protection, the tariffs diminish to zero to tamp down prices for consumers. Having preserved domestic production in this way, Colombia was spared the fate of import-dependent countries during the 2008 price spike. While Haitians and Mexicans faced triple-digit price jumps, Colombian food prices increased by a manageable 13 percent (International Food Policy Research Institute n.d.).

Colombia’s creditworthy price band system, however, now faces possible extinction. The pending U.S.-Colombia free trade agreement, which Congressional leaders are pushing to ratify this year, would require Colombia to abandon its price band policies. The treaty would also oblige Colombia to grant immediate entry to a U.S. rice quota twenty-one times bigger than Colombia’s current U.S. rice imports as well as a U.S. corn quota that exceeds Colombia’s corn imports from the entire world. In addition to subjecting Colombians to the whims of the international market, the expected deluge of U.S. grains is projected to strip the 21 percent of Colombians who depend

on agriculture of up to 70 percent of their income (Garay Salamanca et al. 2009). It appears that free trade fundamentalism, thought to be languishing in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis, still survives in Washington, DC.

### Prescription: Expired

In his op-ed published in early January 2011, Zoellick argued, “The answer to food price volatility is not to prosecute or block markets, but to use them better. By empowering the poor, the G20 can take practical steps towards ensuring the availability of nutritious food” (Zoellick 2011). True empowerment means granting poor countries the space to use the policy tools they deem best for ensuring such food availability. Asking countries to erase trade intervention from the menu of tools brings neither empowerment nor security. Will trade restrictions mean higher prices for consumers when the world price is low? Yes. Will it mean concentrating productive resources on a product that could be imported more cheaply? Probably. Is cultivating domestic production therefore inefficient? Yes. Is efficiency the only rubric of measurement? Definitely not. Efficiency must share its pedestal with price stability, cultural dignity, and long-term employment. Striving for such complex and interrelated components of food security means replacing the dogma of free trade with the dogma of “what works?” The answer will not be found in another cookie-cutter model but in solutions as diverse as the poor countries asking the question.

If vulnerable countries cannot move past the tired prescription of unfet-

tered trade in food, the question is not if we will see another food crisis but when. As I write this, the price of food continues rising to record highs, more parents are putting their children to bed hungry, and malnourished youth are wondering if they should emulate the example set by their rioting Algerian counterparts. While the assurance of a well-fed belly may not fit within the free trade paradigm, it should fit squarely within policy makers’ collective conscience.

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## Power to the People?

### Co-Production and Cameron's Big Society

by Tim Cooper

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The economic downturn has increased the willingness of ordinary citizens in many countries to provide public services themselves. The United States, for instance, saw a massive increase in the number of volunteers in 2009, reflecting both the desire for the unemployed to stay productive and a determination to help the neediest in a time of crisis (Corporation for National & Community Service 2010). Meanwhile, grassroots innovations like bartering systems, complementary currencies, and time banking have sprouted up everywhere from Massachusetts to Melbourne as citizens have sought to lower costs and improve their quality of life. Might such nongovernmental activities point to an improved way of providing public services?

U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron thinks so. Through the “Big Society” project, he has invested a considerable amount of political capital in the idea of “co-production,” or the harnessing of ordinary citizens as creators of public value.<sup>i</sup> This ambitious undertaking seeks to empower communities by increasing local autonomy over budgets, decision making, and the provision of public services. However, the success of this initiative is far from certain. The key question now is whether Cameron’s use of co-production will transform the way public services are delivered in the United Kingdom or whether the Big Society will prove to be little more than a public relations exercise designed to distract citizens from the pain of government spending cuts.

## Harking Back to History

Far from a new policy fad, the origins of co-production reside in antiquity. Since the time of Aristotle, economists and philosophers alike have understood that there exists an informal economy of familial and community-based activity alongside the formal world of commerce and trade. But it was not until the 1970s that U.S. academics explored how that informal economy could be channeled more effectively to improve public services. Although the United States was the trailblazer, the United Kingdom soon followed suit. Over the last few years, increased devolution to local government and a desire for greater personalization of public services have combined to engender a propitious environment for co-production in Westminster and beyond.

Despite the classical origins and the grandiose political rhetoric, co-production is typically mundane. When you separate your recycling from your garbage, you are co-producing public value. When mothers provide prenatal advice to local mothers-to-be, they too are co-producing public value. Yet seemingly small actions like these can have a big impact. For example, a hospital in the Lehigh Valley in Pennsylvania has cut readmission rates dramatically through a system of discharged patients receiving home visits from other former patients who check in regularly on the discharged patients' living situation and health condition. In time, those discharged patients are invited to do the same for someone else (Stephens et al. 2008). By drawing on the firsthand experience of patients, health professionals are able to tap into a pool of expertise that no handbook

or training manual can match.

What co-production is not, however, is consultation. While consultation is also a key element of the Big Society, the two are not to be confused. Co-production involves opening up the provision of specific public services to volunteers, social entrepreneurs, and private enterprise, often leading to dramatically altered delivery models at the local level. Consultation, by contrast, relates to the canvassing of local citizens on what those services should look like. Important in itself, yes. But without budgetary devolution and local autonomy to make good on citizens' views, consultation can often be little more than a talking shop.

## A Challenging Context

For sure, there is significant doubt about the capacity for co-production to deliver substantive change to public service delivery in the United Kingdom. Perhaps most importantly, successful co-production requires putting your money where your mouth is. The notion that community activity will automatically pick up where the state leaves off is fallacious. Effective co-production at the local level requires budgetary devolution as well as putting in place the right governance and accountability structures, all of which cost time and money. However, the most recent U.K. budget revealed that local government funding would be cut by a quarter over the next four years from £28.5 billion to £22.9 billion (HM Treasury 2010). How are local governments supposed to do more with less? Early indications are not positive. Liverpool Council, one of four city councils chosen to pilot

the Big Society scheme, has recently withdrawn from the vanguard, citing the impossibility of supporting the initiative alongside £100 million cuts in grants for local community organizations (Boxell 2011).

To be sure, Cameron claims that the Big Society is about reducing the budget deficit as well as improving service delivery. But the example of Liverpool underlines the question of whether Cameron can really have both. While there is evidence that co-production initiatives provide value for money, research cautions against seeing such initiatives as a way of reducing costs (Boyle et al. 2006; Needham and Carr 2006). It appears that co-production is not a zero-cost option, making it difficult to imagine how it can be effectively used when local government spending is evaporating. Indeed, citizens could be forgiven for being cynical as they are suddenly expected to foster a bigger society with smaller budgets under the banner of community engagement.

Another hurdle involves public opinion. The U.K. government may be keen to enlist citizens in co-production, but do citizens really want to get involved? A survey conducted in 2008 found that only one in twenty citizens wants “involvement” in the provision of local services (Ipsos MORI 2010). This anemic figure challenges Cameron’s presumption that the public-at-large is clamoring for control. The same survey found that a far higher proportion of citizens—one in four—wants “more of a say” in the provision of local services, which means consultation rather than co-production. While consultation is of course important to strengthening civic engagement,

by itself it is unlikely to deliver radical change to the way public services are delivered. Cameron may be knocking on the door of local opportunity, but whether people will answer seems uncertain.

*Co-production can actually deliver improved societal outcomes.*

Finally, successful co-production requires an effective innovation environment to incubate and scale local success stories. But while the United Kingdom is a leader in science and technology innovation, it is a laggard in social innovation. Public agencies are often hampered by organizational cultures that discourage risk taking and shy away from change. They also suffer from limited access to financial and advisory support, further limiting their ability to scale best practices. Consequently, the local government innovation landscape is littered with the debris of unfulfilled promise.

Sophia Parker, founder of the Social Innovation Lab for Kent, sums up the innovation challenge facing local government: “Too many innovations today have the feel of a happy accident. The U.K. needs to develop a much more systematic, rigorous approach to innovation in its public and social sectors. That means investing as seriously in social innovation as scientific and technological innovation. It means addressing the current imbalance between managing risk and encouraging experimentation in the public sector, where innovation budgets are just 1% of inspection and audit budgets. And



it means focusing not only on having great ideas, but also on the difficult question of how to take your great idea to scale” (Parker 2011).

### Reasons to Be Cheerful

At the same time, there is cause for optimism. The first reason is the most fundamental: co-production can actually deliver improved societal outcomes. For example, in Darlington in the northeast of England, a group of 600 to 700 elderly people volunteer to run social activities and help other older people in the community, as well as act as a representative voice for the local council on older people’s issues (Institute for Public Policy Research and PricewaterhouseCoopers 2010). In addition to improving the quality and effectiveness of geriatric care, volunteers also receive a broader sense of well-being and community spirit. In South London, a time bank trains participants (mostly people who use mental health services) to undertake do-it-yourself projects for other members of the time bank. For every hour members spend carrying out such projects, they earn a credit to spend on a reciprocal service. Service users develop new skills as well as more effective peer-support networks that aid their reintegration into the local community (Needham and Carr 2009).

Of course, there are natural limits to the scope of co-production activity. No one would want emergency health care to be delivered by a semi-trained volunteer. Co-production is most appropriately focused on activities that rely on mutual assistance between service users or increased collaboration between professionals and service

users. But focused on the right activities, the benefits seem clear.

Second, the advent of social computing has increased the ease with which service users can share information and professionals can coordinate activity. This has made it easier to fit local volunteering into busy schedules and to reduce costs by conducting meetings and interactions virtually. Yet we ought not be too starry-eyed about the power of technology alone to transform service delivery; a Facebook page does not a revolution make. Tom Steinberg, director of mySociety, an independent organization that helps build Web sites that benefit the civic and community aspects of people’s lives, says, “The net can have real impacts, but they aren’t necessarily as sexy as we’d like them to be” (Steinberg 2010). Indeed, a recent survey suggests that governments are still very much in the early stages of exploiting the benefits of social computing. While government agencies may have been quick to use wikis and blogs to increase collaboration between their own employees, they have shown less interest in building networks with citizens and external partners (Di Maio 2008). Over-egging the technological pudding could play to the charge that co-production is all shiny means but little substantive ends. As one ingredient of success, though, it can play a useful role.

Third, as far as the Big Society project is concerned, the United Kingdom may be in it for the long term—for better or worse. By placing the Big Society project at the heart of the government’s domestic policy, Cameron seems to have staked his reputation and possibly the fate of his administration on its success. Even in the face of

concerted sniping from the sidelines, there seems little prospect of Cameron turning his back on this pet project. And with the age of austerity set to last for many years to come, it may well be that the government sincerely believes this to be an effective way of building capacity and resilience within local communities. Whether this is sustainable in the face of budget cuts, however, is doubtful.

### **From Rhetoric to Reality**

If co-production is to be successful, there are a number of lessons for Cameron's government (and, indeed, other governments looking to embark upon a similar journey) to take onboard. These include:

**Recognize money matters.** If the way public services are delivered is to change significantly, there is likely to be a price tag. As the evidence suggests, co-production is not a zero-cost option; at a minimum, maintaining current levels of funding is required to avoid the green shoots of progress withering away. If the U.K. government is to avoid further embarrassments such as Liverpool's rejection of the Big Society, Cameron will need to convince his chancellor of the exchequer to loosen the purse strings. His announcement of a £200 million "Big Society Bank" and a transition fund to help community organizations is a step in the right direction, but, as ever, the devil is likely to be in the details (Cameron 2011).

**Choose where to play.** Co-production may have a radical impact on some types of service; for others it will be largely irrelevant. By its very nature,

it lends itself to activity that involves either mutual assistance between service users or collaboration between professionals and service users. Applying this lens should help the government focus on where the most effective impact can be made and avoid mission creep into areas ill-suited to co-production.

**Support the professionals.** At the heart of co-production is the notion that professionals need clients just as much as clients need professionals. However, this paradigm shift is likely to be challenging for many professionals to manage. A doctor becomes a doctor, for instance, to treat patients, not to manage a network of volunteers with different levels of knowledge and experience. New training will be needed to help professionals manage this transition.

**Pursue opportunities from the bottom up.** A top-down, centrally driven approach to co-production is unlikely to succeed. Fostering the conditions for growth (i.e., by devolving budgets, improving access to seed capital, and investing in information technology) and increasing awareness of possible opportunities within local communities offers the most sensible approach to building capacity. In this context, local government knows best; central government needs to listen.

**Ease the grip.** The government will need to accept that some services will be delivered through informal networks of semi-professionals. For them to be successful, they will need the autonomy to call the shots. This presents a significant challenge in the United Kingdom, where a risk-averse culture in public services militates

against such freedom.

While the zealots and the cynics may continue to claim otherwise, the truth behind co-production probably lies somewhere between the two camps. Co-production is about evolution rather than revolution. It may offer significant potential to improve services in a number of specific areas, but it is not a panacea for the ills of government. And while advocates may believe its power to be transformative, the majority of the time it is likely to deliver only incremental—albeit important—change.

The problem is that small improvements do not make for big sound bites. Politicians such as David Cameron will naturally be quick to gild the lily. However, the British electorate is a cynical bunch. Overselling the concept will only help contribute to its demise. Being honest with citizens about the Big Society's potential as well as its limitations offers the most promising way for Cameron to avoid being hoisted with his own petard.

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## ENDNOTE

For more information on the Big Society, visit [www.thebigsociety.co.uk](http://www.thebigsociety.co.uk).

## From Militant to Peace Activist in Palestine: The Transformation of Abu Ala Mansour

by Nizar Farsakh

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Abu Ala Mansour has long been a Palestinian freedom fighter. Today, he is helping to lead a movement of nonviolent resistance to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. His beginnings, though, are far from those of a pacifist. As a young man, he was a militant with Fateh, the secular Palestinian freedom movement, fighting the Israeli occupation that started in 1967. He later went on to fight in Lebanon as part of Fateh's involvement in the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in the 1970s and 1980s. He wanted freedom and saw military action as the means to achieve it.

It was not until the second intifada in 2000 that he became active in nonviolent resistance in his home village of Bil'in. With a population of around 1,500, Bil'in was one of several Palestinian villages that embraced nonviolence as a tool of struggle against Israeli authorities that were building "the Wall" on Palestinian land.<sup>i</sup> This peaceful effort has since won tangible victories that speak to the power of nonviolence. Mansour's contribution to these successes—and the personal transformation that preceded it—speaks to changes that are taking place in Palestine as activists evolve new and creative ways of fighting back.

### Origins

In the spring of 1967, Mansour was a teenager preparing for his high school exams and debating with his parents about whether to attend college. His mother,

an illiterate yet determined woman, wanted him to go abroad to get a college degree. Indeed, she had already figured out which plots of land to sell in order to provide him with the necessary funds to attend college. But his father wanted him to work the land with the rest of the family and attend a local vocational school. It was hard to justify the expensive college degree when his family was barely able to make ends meet. Abu Ala was going to stay home.

The question came roaring back a few weeks later, however, when the 1967 war erupted. Israel decimated the entire Egyptian air force, captured the Sinai Peninsula, the Syrian Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem. The defeat of the Arab forces in the war had a profound impact on Abu Ala, as it did on an entire generation of young people in the Arab world, generating feelings of humiliation, ineptitude, and desperation. The war revived Palestinians' 1948 trauma of being kicked out of the land now known as Israel—a trauma that had made many Arabs suspect they were forever destined to endure calamities.

The defeat put things in perspective for Abu Ala's parents. They realized they could not continue to do things the way they had always been done. New thinking and new skills needed to be developed, and a good education was the start. They decided to send Abu Ala off to finish high school in Jordan and later to college in Baghdad, not knowing for sure whether or when they would see their son again.

While abroad, Mansour started contemplating the role he wanted to play

in the world as a young Palestinian. Friends of his noticed his potential and recruited him into Fateh. Initially he was given responsibilities over student-organizing activities in Baghdad, but he was soon asked to go back to the West Bank to operate Fateh guerilla cells. Looking back, Mansour describes the decision to return as a turning point in his life. He had left Palestine defeated, desperate, and disempowered. He was coming back a Feda'ee, or freedom fighter. Little did he know that his journey back home to fight would be his first step toward nonviolent resistance.

*Causing an explosion would be a show of anger, yes. But to what end?*

### **The Start of the Resistance**

In the West Bank, Mansour recruited friends and relatives to join Fateh. He was responsible for the group's "revolutionary" education programs and for organizing military cells for guerilla attacks in the West Bank. When the 1973 war erupted, Mansour was eager to play a role, however small, to spare himself the feelings of powerlessness he had experienced in the previous war.<sup>ii</sup>

With two friends he had enlisted in his Fateh cell, he made plans to throw Molotov cocktails on Israeli tanks. Mansour and his compatriots planned the attack, prepared the projectiles, and went to the three locations they had chosen for the attacks. As the tank approached, however, a thought occurred to Mansour: a Molotov cock-

*Mansour believed that for a culture of nonviolence to take root, it needed to come out of organic conviction. He could lead by example, but no more.*

tail would do nothing to stop the tank. Causing an explosion would be a show of anger, yes. But to what end? Before the tank arrived, Mansour aborted his plan. And in that moment, he came to realize the futility of such arbitrary displays of opposition. An effective mission was one that was deliberate and thoughtful, not reactive or spontaneous. It needed to have a reasonable chance of success and avoid unnecessary risks.

A few weeks later, Mansour's cell plotted and executed a mission in the city of Ramallah. They burned down a newly opened branch of an Israeli bank after killing the two Israeli soldiers guarding it. The cell deemed it a successful act of resistance because it directly challenged Israeli control over the city. However, the cell was uncovered a few months later, and Mansour escaped to Jordan. As a wanted man, it seemed this time he would be abroad for good.

Mansour continued his path in Fateh's armed resistance movement, joining its ranks in Jordan and later in Lebanon where the PLO started operating in the 1970s and 1980s. During that period, Palestinian political activity was mainly happening outside of Palestine since Palestinian movements could not operate openly in the occupied territory; the Israeli government would not allow it. Therefore, these movements focused on volunteer work as a channel for recruitment and political organization inside Palestine. Such

activities involved assisting education, harvesting, and social work, which in turn consolidated and enhanced social cohesion across socioeconomic strata and regional identities. Little did the movements know that this cohesion would prove to play a key role in the first intifada—the Palestinian uprising of 1987.

### **From One Narrative to Another**

Back in the early 1960s, the PLO had been instrumental in infusing the Palestinian people with a sense of agency. It championed guerilla warfare, employing the slogan “from refugees to freedom fighters” and reshaping the Palestinian narrative to give ordinary Palestinians a sense of confidence. Yet as a result of the 1973 war and the Egyptian-Israeli peace deal in 1979, the PLO was forced to come to terms with the futility of attempting to defeat Israel militarily. Instead it began the sobering process of reshaping the narrative yet again, this time working toward a two-state solution.

The intifada of 1987 and the first Gulf War in 1991 ushered in a new phase of the conflict. The intifada helped enable this change by putting the Palestinians in a stronger negotiating position and bringing world attention to the conflict. One result was the Oslo Accords in 1993, which committed the PLO and Israel to resolving their conflict through negotiations. The process envisaged two phases: first, a five-year

interim period of confidence-building measures designed to create an environment conducive to negotiations; second, a final status negotiation process that would establish a Palestinian state, resolve all remaining issues, and declare an official end to the conflict.

The Oslo process provided Mansour, along with many other Palestinian fighters, a ticket back home. Mansour and his companions were enlisted into the newly established Palestinian Authority (PA), the semiautonomous body created by the Oslo Accords to administer the affairs of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This step was part of the PLO-led transformation process designed to move Palestinian society from the freedom-fighting narrative to a state-building one. Palestinian ministries began drawing plans for what a future Palestinian state would look like—drafting legislation and a constitution for a modern state while training former guerillas in police work. Like many of his comrades, Mansour took a desk job in the PA ministry of interior, though he continued to participate in the affairs of his village of Bil'in. *Because his record in the resistance was well-known in the village, he enjoyed considerable credibility and influence.*

But as far as the peace process was concerned, all was not well. The five-year interim period protracted into seven, and the political situation failed to move toward resolution. Land confiscations, house demolitions, and arbitrary arrests by Israeli military authorities continued unabated, while Israeli settlements doubled in size and population. Killings on both sides increased. With each passing day, faith

in the peace process diminished. The final blow came when the 2000 Camp David Israeli-Palestinian talks on a permanent solution ended without an agreement. A few months later the second intifada broke out.

Born out of simultaneous disenchantment with Israeli intentions and disillusionment with the Palestinian leadership, the intifada was an attempt by ordinary Palestinians to regain their agency and roll back what many considered to be a seven-year thrust in the wrong direction. But unlike the first intifada, which was grassroots-led, this one was seized by Palestinian political parties and quickly militarized. People did support suicide bombings as a way to ensure that Palestinians were not the only ones enduring civilian casual-

*"We tried the military option. It didn't work."*

*— Abu Ala Mansour*

ties, but they did not have power to influence the decision to engage in or refrain from suicide attacks either.

In 2002, Israel began building the Wall, mentioned earlier, to keep Palestinian attackers from reaching Israeli targets. The route of this Wall was well within West Bank territory, forcing Palestinians to face further dispossession, disempowerment, and fragmentation. Disillusioned by political parties that were more preoccupied with domestic politics than with the common national interests, many Palestinians realized they were going to have to face the challenge of the Wall by themselves. Bil'in was one of those villages that organized independently in its fight against the construction of the Wall on



Figure 1 — Route of the Wall in the West Bank as of January 2011. Green: Border of the West Bank. Red: Portions of the Wall constructed or under construction. Black: Planned sections. (Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, occupied Palestinian territory.)

its land.

### The Wall and Nonviolent Resistance

The people of Bil'in were informed of plans to build the Wall on their land in April 2004. The route of the Wall was going to cut through their cultivated land, leaving more than half on the other side (see Figure 1). The village elders, including Mansour, gathered to discuss what to do. The PA had no

capacity to deal with this challenge since the threatened area of the village was under full Israeli control per the Oslo Accords. Seeing few other options, the villagers took their case to the Israeli courts.

The villagers took action on the ground as well. When the bulldozers arrived, residents obstructed their work. At first the demonstrations were spontaneous and uncoordinated, but with time the villagers learned to be more strategic and purposeful. Many of the activists had been in the first intifada and applied the lessons they learned from that experience. They also learned from villages like Budrus, which had already faced the challenge of the Wall and succeeded in forcing Israeli authorities to move it away from their land. In fact, many of the activists that had been in Budrus came to help Bil'in and proved a wellspring of ideas.

Mansour remarks today that confronting the bulldozers and Israeli soldiers presented two main challenges. First was the use of violence. The Israeli soldiers were armed and notorious for their lack of restraint when it came to using force against Palestinians. As injuries mounted—in one case a young man was killed—it became hard to restrain young activists from throwing stones or fighting back.

But Mansour remembered the lesson of the Molotov cocktail—the one he didn't throw at an Israeli tank. Along with like-minded villagers, he attempted to dissuade the youth from using violence. Yet he never tried forcing them to abide by this rule either. Mansour believed that for a culture of nonviolence to take root, it needed to come out of organic conviction. He



could lead by example, but no more.

With time, the fiery youth started to understand the wisdom of this form of resistance. Indeed, when I asked one of the young activists how he was able to stop himself from returning punches to a soldier that was hitting him he said, “We quickly realized [that] the more the soldiers beat us without us responding, the stronger we became. [Eventually] the soldiers ran out of things to do to us.”

Nevertheless, Mansour is quick to point out that this form of nonviolent resistance did not emanate from pacifist ideology but from practical experience. “We’ve tried militia warfare and got to where we are today,” Mansour would explain to village activists. “Now is a different time with different circumstances, and we need to use the tools that realize our goals. Suicide attacks have not done that.” By attacking civilian targets in Israel, Mansour reasoned, the conflict was being portrayed as Israel protecting itself from random violence rather than the Palestinian people seeking self-rule. Even if self-defense could justify these attacks, he believed they undermined the Palestinian cause. Although violence was being championed in the belief that pain would lead the Israelis to change their behavior, that was paradoxically the same doctrine that the Israeli military had been using against the Palestinians. “It hasn’t worked for them for years, why should it work for us now?” he would exclaim.

With this new focus on Palestinian rights rather than on fighting Israelis, the door opened for more people to join the Palestinian freedom struggle—including sympathetic Israelis.

This prospect of Israeli involvement presented the second challenge for Mansour and the Bil’in movement. The Israeli activists who joined were generally left-leaning believers in the two-state solution or anarchists who were fighting the coercive power of organized institutions. For these activists, Bil’in’s fight fit with their politics and felt like a natural calling, but many villagers had a hard time reconciling the Israeli activists’ participation. From the perspective of some of the villagers it was difficult to neatly separate the Israeli soldiers, officials, and contractors from the activists. After all, the Wall was being built in the name of the Israeli people.

While some villagers stayed skeptical, the dedication of the Israeli activists was becoming increasingly apparent (see Figure 2). On numerous occasions, the villagers saw them getting beaten up by Israeli soldiers. In one instance, 400 Israeli activists physically intervened to protect the village when Israeli forces attempted to storm it. Mansour also noted that these activists were more effective with the soldiers because they understood them. Mansour described one conversation that took place between the Israeli activists and the soldiers. “Why are you doing this?” they asked the soldiers directly. “You know you are only serving those big companies making tons of money from the Wall! You are supposed to protect Israel; how are you doing that by taking this land from these villagers?”

The Israeli activists also provided an important entry point for bringing the Palestinian narrative into Israeli discourse. Through speaking tours in Israel and abroad, space was created



Figure 2 — Palestinian, Israeli, and international protestors confronting Israeli soldiers on the Bil'in side of the Wall. Photo by Keren Manor. (Source: Activestills.org.)

for Palestinians to be seen by Israelis as human beings with national aspirations and hopes, not just as a “security problem.” Even more importantly, the Israeli activists were instrumental in obtaining information about land confiscations, Israeli regulations, and networks that were critical for resistance strategy. Mansour was aware of such contributions and therefore pushed for an open door policy when it came to participation in Bil'in's struggle; the only condition was nonviolence and Palestinian leadership. Although some villagers refused to participate because of the inclusion of Israeli activists, in the end, most understood the value that these activists brought to the struggle. In fact, working with them transformed their view of the conflict more than any confidence-building measure from the Oslo Accords ever could.

### A Victory, A Hope

This combination of nonviolence and collaboration with supportive Israelis paid off. After three years of organizing, an Israeli court ruled in 2007 that the Wall should be rerouted to return 250 acres back to the village. The court also mandated that the villagers receive unfettered access to their land—a departure from the policy in most other villages. Although it took three more years for that decision to be implemented, the villagers viewed it as a victory. And it was won through non-violent resistance. Bil'in's experience, which followed that of Budrus before it, inspired other villages such as Nil'in and Walajeh as well as neighborhoods in Jerusalem that had been suffering from house demolitions and evictions. It has also pushed officials from the PA to become more involved and encouraged Islamists to become more

amenable to the idea of working with Israeli activists. Nonviolent resistance has come to represent a third way—after violent resistance and negotiations with no force—transforming the sense that ordinary Palestinians had of their own agency and resources while opening up new possibilities for political activism.

Mansour's journey from conflicted militant to nonviolent resistance leader is, of course, unique. And yet it isn't. It reflects the seemingly inextinguishable longing for freedom and dignity that human beings display in all manner of form and context. The challenges that Bil'in and its inhabitants faced are the challenges, in one form or another, of all struggles to rectify vast imbalances of power. The story of Abu Ala Mansour reminds us of the nature of such struggles. While politicians and pundits and well-meaning sympathizers have long preached to the Palestinians on how to conduct their resistance by citing "international best practices," the experience of Bil'in and other villages shows that the path to freedom is rarely so methodical, transportable, or designed. Rather, it is a path of discovery and growth that comes from those most affected by it. Mansour puts it simply: "We tried the military option. It didn't work."

## ENDNOTES

The Wall is a barrier built by Israel in 2002 on West Bank territory in response to Palestinian suicide attacks during the second intifada. It is more than 700 km long, consisting of barbed wire, trenches, and in many places an eight-meter-high concrete wall. The Israeli authorities refer to it as the "Security Fence," others call it the "Barrier," and the International Court of

Justice (ICJ) referred to it as the "Wall" in its 2004 ruling. In that ruling, the ICJ stated that the Wall is illegal insofar as it runs inside West Bank territory. The Palestinians object to it not only because it is not on the border but also because it severs thousands of Palestinians from their homes and agricultural lands while *de facto* annexing around nine percent of the West Bank.

In that war, Egypt and Syria mounted a surprise attack on Israel to regain the lands they lost in the 1967 war. A superpower-enforced truce made the war look more like a draw with no clear winner. Most Arabs saw it as a victory and a reclamation of dignity, even if incomplete. In fact, many analysts attribute the space for peace talks between Egypt and Israel to that perception.

## Small Is Cute, Sexy, and Successful: Why Independence for Wales and Other Countries Makes Economic Sense

by Adam Price

*Adam Price is a Fulbright Scholar and a 2011 Mid-Career Master in Public Administration candidate at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He is a two-term former Plaid Cymru (Party of Wales) Member of Parliament where he represented Carmarthen East and Dinefwr.*

The great French moralist André Gide's last reported words were, "I love small nations. I love small numbers. The world will be saved by the few" (Kohr 1970). During the long boom of the 1990s and 2000s, that last-gasp proclamation took on an almost prophetic air. Small and nimble open economies like Ireland, Iceland, and the Baltic States became the poster boys of globalization. Countries the size of Norway topped every feel-good league table in existence from gross domestic product (GDP) per capita to indexes of innovation, happiness, and peace.

Small is successful (think Sweden), sexy (think Costa Rica), smart (think Singapore), even cool (think Iceland). Yet recently, something strange tends to happen every time there's talk of carving a new independent country out of an old colonial one. Take Québec in Canada, for instance, or my own beloved Wales in the United Kingdom. Faced with the prospect of a people choosing its own destiny and charting its own course, the champions of the status quo gravely intone that such a move would not be economically viable. Without the colonial country as benefactor, we're told, the small could never survive.

So, why the new pessimism? Well, now that economic conditions have turned, so has the tide of ideas. The travails of small countries have made big headlines worldwide in a series of Lehman Brothers–like moments. The sovereign debt

crisis in Greece, the banking collapse in Iceland, and Ireland's fall from "Celtic Tiger" grace have all led to a shift in the intellectual terms of trade. "Big is best" has replaced "small is beautiful" as the new global mantra. This was perhaps best summed up by an epithet attributed to Paul Volcker, former U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman (with a sideways nod to Roy Scheider's character in the movie *Jaws*): "In turbulent times, it's better to be on the bigger boat."

Can the small survive and thrive through the present storm? How does country size affect economic performance? And what would independence do for a place like Wales? These are more than just academic questions for me. After almost a decade at the coalface of politics in the House of Commons as a Welsh Nationalist Member of Parliament, I came to the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University (HKS) to find solid foundations for my lifelong dream. But size matters to all of us. My own continent of Europe is a patchwork mosaic of meso-economies and microeconomies. Where China and the United States are building supertankers, Europe is in flotilla formation—built to ride, not rule, the waves. Is it destined to flounder?

### **The Invisibility of Scale**

For most of the twentieth century, economics was silent on the question of country size. A single conference in 1960 was the sum total of intellectual output on this issue during most of the postwar period (Robinson 1960). By contrast, intellectual revolutions of the 1980s, represented by new growth and new trade theory, were based on

the idea of increasing returns to scale. The upshot was that large countries—where economies of scale seem more feasible—were predicted to do better. But the empirics pointed in a different direction. In fact, there is growing evidence of an inverse scale effect. As Xavier Sala-i-Martin of Columbia University—he of the leopard and zebra suits—put it some years ago, "as time goes by, the desirability of having smaller nations increases. And the economists who say so are not (I repeat, NOT) some crazy Catalan nationalists" (Sala-i-Martin 1998).

They are, in fact, mostly French nowadays: to be specific, the French Economic Observatory team headed by J-P. Fitoussi at the Parisian Institut d'Études Politiques (popularly known as Sciences Po), which has been conducting a five-year-long program supported by the French National Research Agency (ANR) on "country size and growth strategy." In a remarkable series of papers, largely unnoticed in the English-speaking world, this new school of geoeconomists claims to have discovered a "size nexus" at work in the European economy, with smaller lead countries like Ireland and Finland outperforming larger laggards like Germany and France (Laurent and Le Cacheux 2010; Alouini 2010; Napoletano and Gaffard 2010).

My own analysis (carried out with the help of fellow HKS Student Ben Levinger) confirms the French results (Price and Levinger 2011). Using World Bank data, we found that small European Union (EU) countries (those with fewer than 15 million people) enjoyed a 50 percent increase in exports per capita between 2000 and 2008, compared to a 35 percent

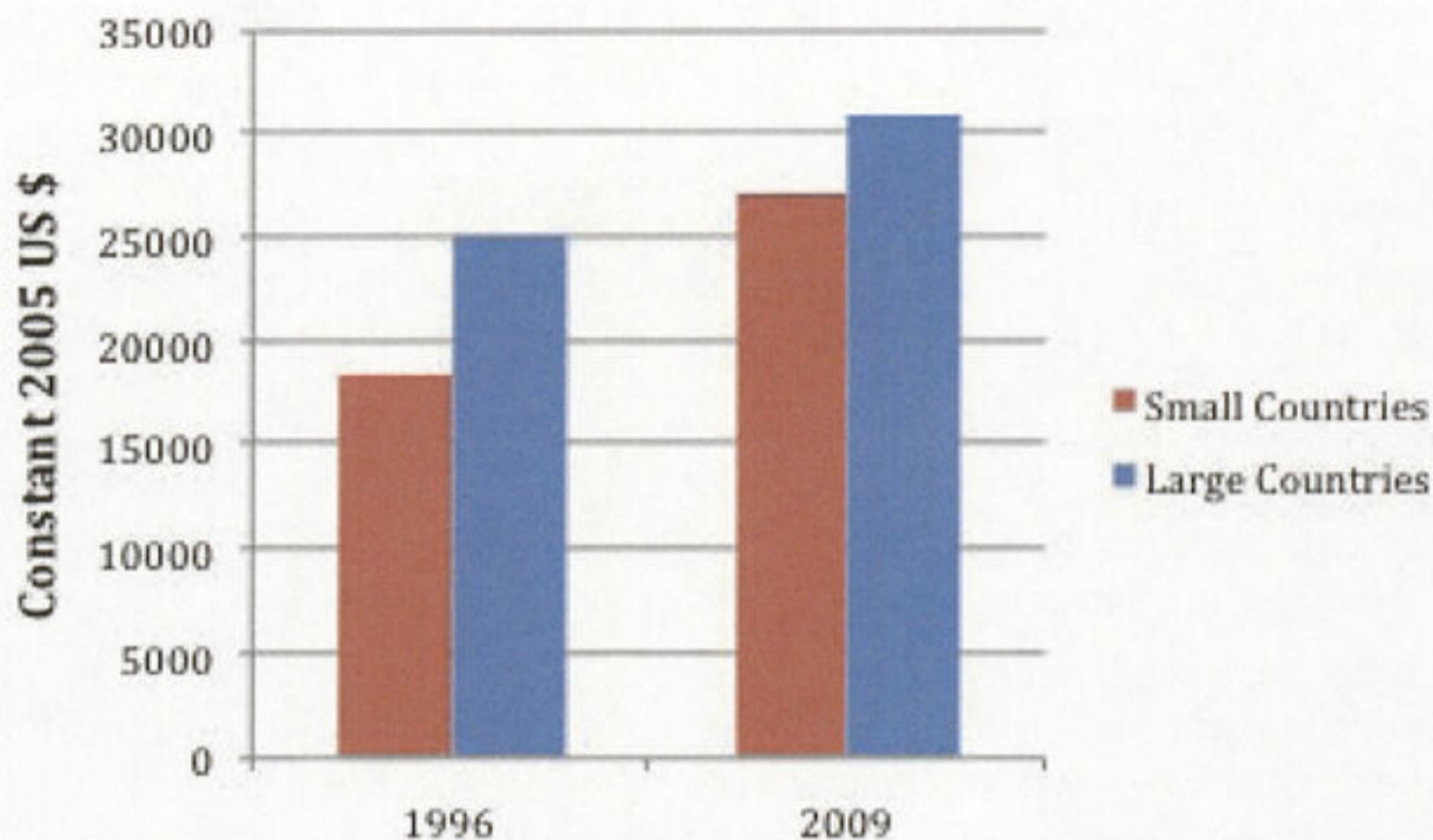


Figure 1 — Change in GDP Per Capita, EU-27 (Sources: International Monetary Fund; calculations by author.)

increase for larger states. The small, it seems, have gained disproportionately from the expansion of trade since the introduction of the euro. How has this trade bonus affected growth? Figure 1 shows small countries closing the growth gap by almost two-thirds, down from 35 percent to 14 percent, over a thirteen-year period. As Figure 2 shows, this small country premium has existed for decades, even for those countries that joined the European Economic Community at its inception.

To understand the shape and strength of the relationship between size and economic performance, we compared average country growth rates and population between 1996 and 2007—the period of relative calm between the economic turbulence suffered by Eastern Europe following the fall of communism and before the onset of the global economic crisis. What we found in general was that the larger the country, the significantly slower the economic growth. In fact, over the last

thirty years, among the Western European members of the EU, differences in population size alone (measured on a logarithmic scale) can account for 50 percent of the differences in average GDP per capita growth rates using a simple linear regression, with the mighty minnows once again outperforming the Big Five (UK, Italy, Germany, France, Spain). Following the recent economic crisis, this relationship simply broke down: from 2008 through the third quarter of 2010, small countries did no better (yet also no worse) than large countries. A rising tide lifts small boats faster, it seems, but they're no more likely to sink in a storm.

### The Big Advantages of the Small

The latest crisis aside, what might lie behind this remarkable story of small country success under normal economic circumstances? There are broadly three potential sources of small-scale advantage: openness to

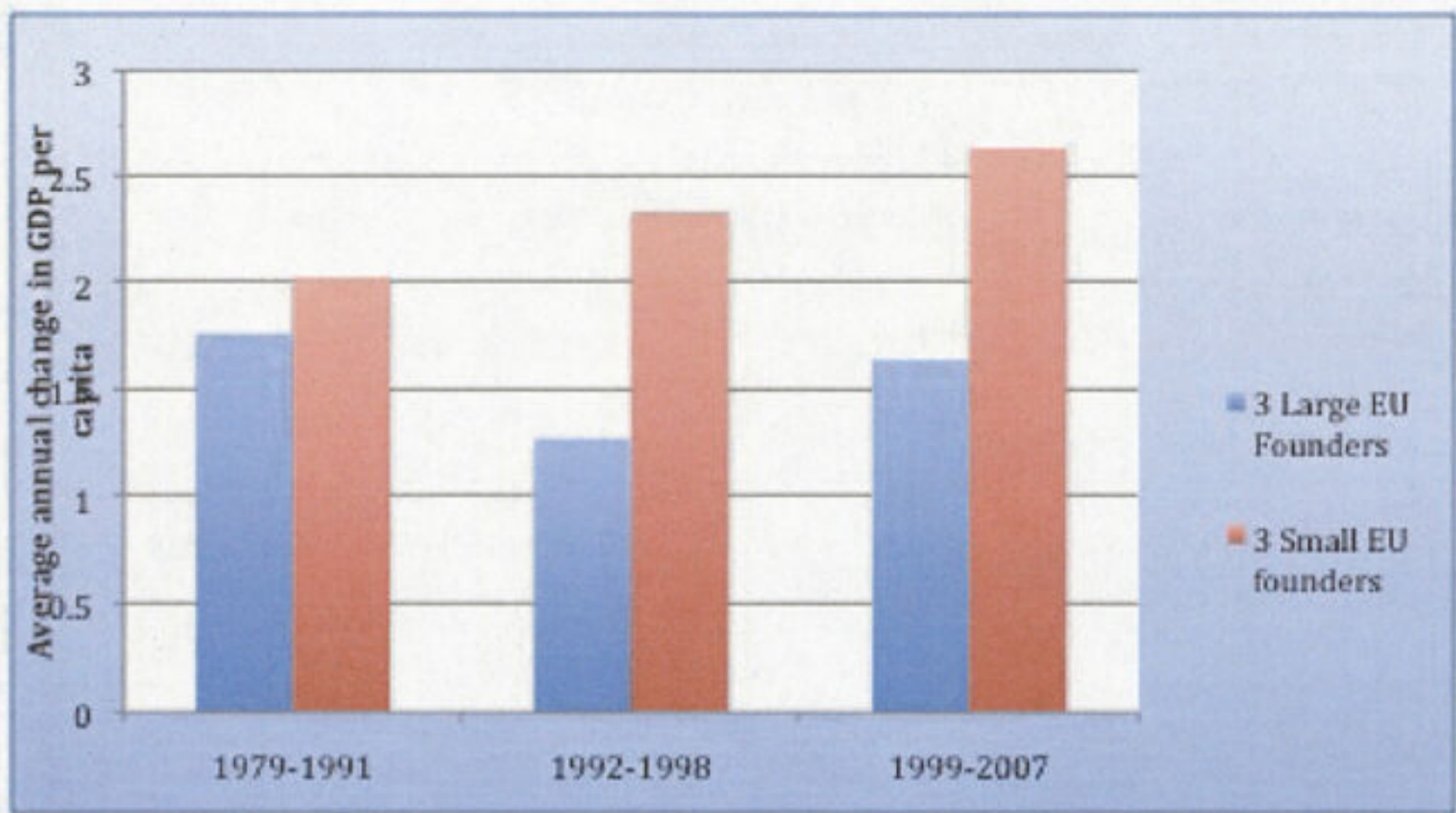


Figure 2 — Real GDP Per Capita Change, EU Founders (Sources: International Monetary Fund; calculations by author.)

trade, social cohesion, and adaptability.

### **Openness to Trade**

Due to the smaller size of their domestic market (relative to total income), small economies tend naturally to be more export-oriented than large countries (Dunning 2001).<sup>i</sup> This means they are better positioned to benefit from the expansion of trade and are more skilled in responding to changing conditions, developing specialization in niche markets and internationalizing their businesses. As Nobel Laureate Gary Becker has argued:

In fact, small nations now have advantages in the competition for international markets. Economic efficiency requires them to concentrate on only a few products and services, so they often specialize in niches that are too small for large nations to fill. (Becker 1994)

### **Social Cohesion**

Small countries are more socially homogeneous, more equal, easier to run, and therefore better governed. Stronger accountability and higher trust improve their ability to find social compromise, lowering the transaction costs and complexities of the policy-making process. This contrasts with larger countries where there often exists a disincentive to collective action.

### **Adaptability**

Small countries' vulnerability to exogenous shocks means they are better at adapting to change and implementing structural reform. Jeffrey Frankel, for example, has written of the role of small countries as global innovators (2010). This natural innovativeness also extends to science and technology: Switzerland, for instance, has more Nobel Prizes per capita than anywhere else in the world and three universities in the world's top 100 (Oswald 2008).

Country	Policy Innovation
New Zealand	Inflation targeting (1990)
Chile	Private pensions (1990s)
Singapore	Congestion charging (1975)
Sweden	Keynesian demand management (1930s)
Estonia	Flat taxes (1994)
Costa Rica	Abolition of the military (1948)

Table 1 — Great Little Innovators

See Table 1 for examples of small country innovations.

### The Flotilla Effect

There was a time when being small was a barrier to economic success. The actual problem may have been not so much in being small as being lonely—take, for example, a once flourishing Venice marooned by the sudden change in the trade routes to Asia. Today, Europe's small countries are at most two hours away from markets and minds measured in the hundreds of millions. The EU has undoubtedly provided important economic shelter for its smaller states without which the impact of the crisis would have been much graver. But with that important rider, it's clear that in Europe over the last thirty years, small size is significantly correlated with higher growth. To return to the Volcker metaphor, in turbulent times, small countries can be said to behave more like a wood chip—tossed about on the waves but difficult to sink. When good times return, Europe's flotilla of small boats may once again prove quicker and more adept at charting a new economic course than the supertankers that are all too often "too big to sail."

### The Independence Prospectus

What, then, of independence? How would newly formed small countries fare in the global economy?

We are fortunate in having at the heart of Europe a historical field trial in the economics of independence. Independent Luxembourg (population 500,000) and the neighboring Saarland region of Germany (population approximately 1 million) both have economies with roots in coal and steel. While Luxembourg was to become one of the founding members of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the EU's forerunner, the Saarlanders rejected the option of independent statehood and membership of the ECSC by two-to-one in a referendum in 1955. Both regions had to grapple with the painful restructuring of their steel industries, but while Luxembourg is now home to the global giant ArcelorMittal, the Saar steel industry is a pale shadow of its former self. The difference in growth rates for the independent nation of Luxembourg and the neighboring region that rejected independence is striking (see Figure 3).

During the last thirty years, Luxembourg has pulled progressively ahead, outstripping economic growth in the Saarland by 2.5 to 3.5 percentage points a year on average. The cumula-



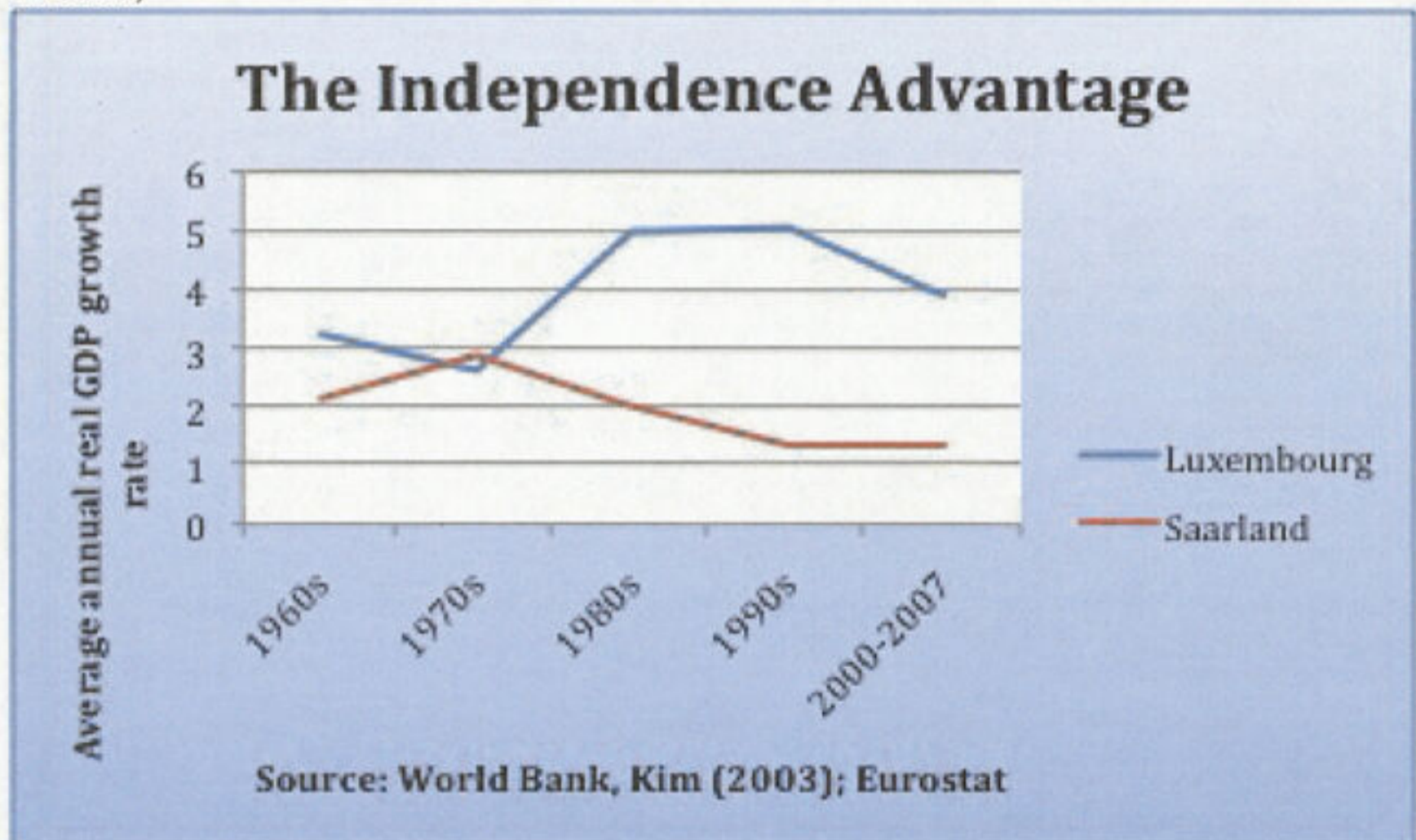
tive effect has made Luxembourg one of the richest countries in the world and left Saarland the poorest German Land in the former West. If anyone still doubts the potential economic value of independence, they should take the short drive from the Grand Duchy to Saarbrücken: it pays to be a (small) country in your own right rather than just a region of some other state.

And what about my homeland of Wales? Since 1990, its per capita real-terms growth rate has been a lamentable 0.9 percent on average. If Wales had become a small independent country when the Berlin Wall fell rather than remaining a stateless nation, it might have done much better. Indeed, the model that Levinger and I have devised—a linear regression of growth on population—would predict an average annual growth rate of 2.6 percent for a country of Wales’s size. A free Wales might do better or worse depending on its choice of policies and

the strengths of its institutions, but a growth rate similar to the current 0.9 percent would be an extreme outlier in a free-Wales scenario. Adding initial income as another variable gives our model even greater predictive power. Figure 4 shows the results of this simulation: Welsh people would be, on average, 39 percent “richer” had they constituted a small nation-state, not simply a region, over this time period, all things being equal. Wales could even expect, like Ireland and Denmark, to catch and surpass a now nonexistent “United Kingdom,” joining the ranks of the smart, the successful, and the small. There may be many plausible reasons for opposing Welsh independence, but the risk of impoverishment can no longer credibly be said the strongest.

The question of size naturally looms large in a nation of three million that thinks itself too small to stand by itself. As Julio Cortázar debagged to Paris to be a better Argentinean, I came to

Figure 3 — Real GDP Growth, Luxembourg and the Saarland (Sources: World Bank, Kim 2003, Eurostat.)



## 2009 GVA per capita (2000 US\$) of EU-15 and Wales (Actual and Predicted from Model)

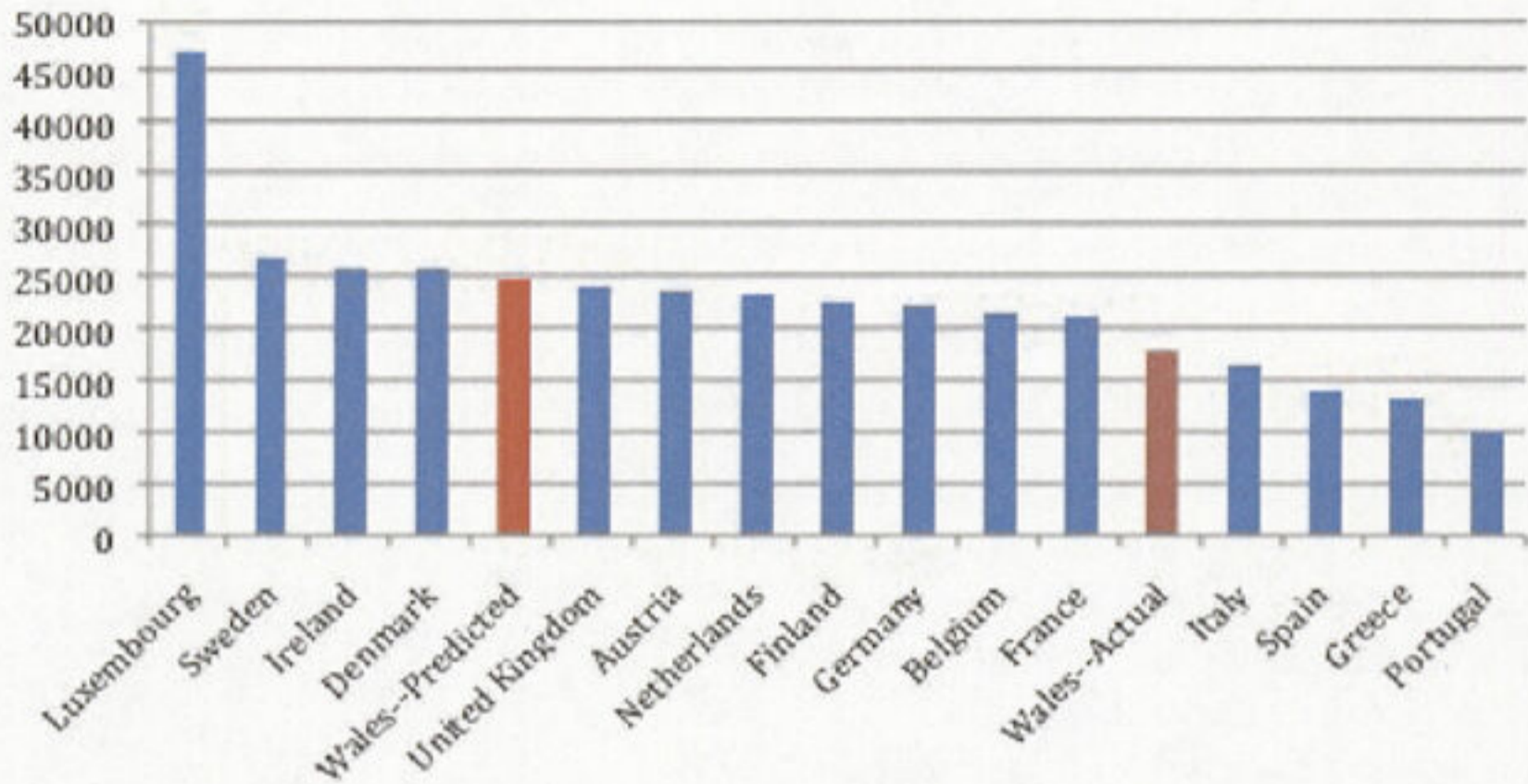


Figure 4 — The Wales That Could Be? 2009 Gross Value Added (GVA) Per Capita (2000 US\$) of EU-15 and Wales (Actual and Predicted from Model)

Harvard to be a more effective Welshman. If my compatriots cannot be persuaded that sovereignty for a country the size of Iowa is an economically viable option, then statehood for Wales may always remain a pipe dream. Yet the message I will carry home is that the facts seem to be on our side. For once, we find ourselves swimming with the tide of history.

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## ENDNOTE

John Dunning (2001), for example, found the small countries in his sample (i.e., those with fewer than 10 million people) to have a trade/GDP ratio in 1995 of 111 percent, compared to the 62 percent ratio recorded for large to medium-sized countries.

## Warning: Economics May Seriously Damage your Health

by Edmund Conway

*Edmund Conway is a 2011 Mid-Career Master in Public Administration candidate at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He was formerly Economics Editor of the Daily Telegraph and is author of 50 Economics Ideas You Really Need to Know.*

Walking down the street with a friend one day, you spot a \$20 bill lying on the sidewalk. You stoop down gleefully to pick it up when your friend, who happens to be an economist, grabs you by the shoulder.

“Stop,” he says, “That note isn’t really there.”

“What?” you say.

“If it were really there, someone would have picked it up already,” he answers, before strolling on.

It’s an old joke, one that traders and investors particularly like. The problem with economists, those folks often complain, is that they have their heads so far in the clouds that they fail to see the reality of everyday life. And they have a point.

There was certainly more than a little head-in-the-clouds behavior in the run-up to the recent global financial crisis, causing the reputation of economics to suffer a collapse as dramatic and painful as the financial system.

In particular, economists are derided for providing intellectual fuel for the credit bubble. In the United States they are under attack by the Tea Party, some of whom would like to dismantle the Federal Reserve. In the European Union they are witnessing the slow-motion implosion of the euro—the biggest economic experiment in postwar history. It is all a far cry from even five years ago, when

former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan was still regarded as a hero, when we seemed to be on course for ever-increasing prosperity, and when economists were the invisible men who ruled the world.

There are plenty of people to blame for the financial crisis and the euro's existential crisis. Bankers, politicians, homeowners, and Chinese savers are all, in their own little way, responsible for what went wrong. But no one has an overarching responsibility in quite the same way as the economics profession. This crisis—a defining socioeconomic collapse that has impoverished millions and sharply sped up the geo-

the conceit that markets were always efficient and consumers always rational was proven wrong—that analysis is far too simple. I prefer a two-part explanation.

The first premise is that the field of practical economics became unhealthily dominated by some rather niche economic ideas, such as the efficient markets hypothesis (EMH). EMH, if you haven't come across it before, is effectively the parable of that \$20 bill: markets (particularly financial markets) are hyperefficient, so the price of goods and instruments reflects supply and demand. In other words, that \$20 bill must be an apparition, because if

*The field of practical economics became unhealthily dominated by some rather niche economic ideas, such as the efficient markets hypothesis.*

political transfer of power from West to East—was a failure of the international monetary system and the regulation of the financial system. And both of these areas were in large part run, or at least influenced, by economists. It is hardly a surprise, as such, that in his book *Griftopia* journalist Matt Taibbi dubs Greenspan (whose job straddled the two) “that once-in-a-billion asshole who made America the dissembling mess that it is today.” Britain's economics profession, for its part, owned up in a letter to the Queen a couple of years ago, copping to a “failure of the collective imagination of many bright people.” (They appropriately left out the adjective “humble.”)

But tempting as it is to consider the crisis as a genuine collapse in economic orthodoxy—as a moment when

it isn't, someone else in this efficient marketplace would have picked it up. To be fair, EMH is more complex than that, but this core idea is the one that practitioners fixated on, serving as a neat rejoinder to anyone who tried to ask awkward questions such as, “Aren't house prices too expensive?” or “Why is everyone borrowing so much?” All you had to do was say that the price must be right because that's what people were paying and fob them off with an EMH equation and an out-of-context quote from 1700s *Wealth of Nations* author and economist Adam Smith.

And this brings us to the second premise: practitioners—whether in financial markets, central banks and ministries, or university faculties—lapsed into oversimplification. Like millions of

*Practitioners—whether in financial markets, central banks and ministries, or university faculties—lapsed into oversimplification.*

subprime borrowers taking out mortgages that would surely bankrupt them, everyone ignored the small print. That small print, to paraphrase Adam Smith, is that usually the price is right—but sometimes it isn't. Or as economist Avinash Dixit put it in a 2010 International Monetary Fund profile, "People actually swallowed some of the simplistic views about the wonder of markets too much without recognizing the hundreds of qualifications that Adam Smith and a number of others have told us about, and we should all have known about."

It's rather like the difference between the television series *The Wire* and, well, most other TV. In *The Wire*, the world is deeply complex: no one is entirely right or wrong. Most people mean for the best but feed their actions into a chaotic, unpredictable web of decisions and interactions, and the net result is often the polar opposite of what they intended. Most other television drama is far simpler: some people want good, others bad, and the denouement is all too predictable. It is ironic that at precisely the same juncture that many American TV viewers were choosing *The Wire*, their economic guardians were choosing the simplified version of analysis over the reality.

Unfortunately, life is like that—not because we are lazy, but because we are human. As any epistemologist will tell you, understanding stuff involves simplifying it and digesting it piece by

piece. For instance, this article necessarily simplifies the explanation for the crisis. When it talks about "economics," it conflates a multitude of sins and virtues and lumps the clear-sighted with the dull-headed. Journalism and popular books on economics and science are nowhere near the complexity of the peer-reviewed research papers.

This is fair enough when it comes to physics or chemistry, where there are definitive answers. Anyway, few households are likely to spend their time splitting atoms or constructing new compounds. Economics, on the other hand, has barely any definitive answers, but it underpins the everyday actions of millions of financial practitioners and billions of households.

The biggest sin committed by economists in the past century was not missing the financial crisis nor indeed the collapse of the "euro zone"; it was endorsing the view that economics was a predictive science.

For physics, the moment in 1678 when Robert Hooke devised the first scientific equation was a genuine watershed, converting science from a descriptive into a deductive and prescriptive discipline. By contrast, the moment economics turned from being a descriptive discipline (measuring the way people interact) into a prescriptive "science" (the "Eureka" moment is less clear-cut, happening somewhere between David Ricardo and Paul Samuelson) was the beginning of the road to ruin.

There was a fascinating paper in the Winter 2008 *Journal of Economic Perspectives* by Robert W. Hahn and Paul C. Tetlock that found that when governments attempted to use economic analysis to work out how better to regulate their economies, they failed again and again. Now, you might be tempted to dismiss this as crying over spilled milk: public policies are likely to get a subpar outcome regardless of whether they are based on economics. The problem, however, is that people are historically far more likely to trust a decision based on “economic” analysis than one taken on a whim; they invest more money in it and tie more peoples’ fates to it.

*Believing economists can be hazardous to your wealth.*

Were they to realize that economics is not really a prescriptive science, they might think twice. Yet this reality still eludes us. Economics still holds a firm grasp on policy making, whether to determine financial regulation or to set monetary policy. There is no point in pretending that it could be otherwise. The notion that economics is a science makes it electorally acceptable to delegate decision making to officials at the Federal Reserve or U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission without becoming panicked that we have descended into an unelected dictatorship. Plus, it is only human to crave certainty: imagining that humankind trundles along on a more or less predictable path helps us get on with daily life without spending most of the day in palpitations.

But more needs to be done to underline the risk of trusting economic models and predictions. Why not make it law to plaster grim warnings on the front of most economic policy documents? Just as cigarette packets are emblazoned these days with explicit warnings (and sometimes photos) of the health consequences of smoking, one should do the same with economic reports, GDP figures, and interest decisions.

I can see it now: at the top of each economic newspaper report, each federal budget, or each set of forecasts, a message in bright red reads: “Economics seriously harms you and others around you.” Or: “Believing economists can be hazardous to your wealth.” Or: “These forecasts will not come true”—a warning that has the virtue of both brevity and absolute accuracy. None of this will prevent a future crisis, but it is at least a start.

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"Nuclear Winter Recon" by Flickr user Vermin Inc.

## Nuclear Terrorism: Are You Prepared?

by Katie Frost

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### The Fear

A 10-kiloton nuclear blast in New York City's Times Square would instantly annihilate everything within half a mile. The shockwave would crumble buildings from Union Square to Central Park, breaking windows up to ten miles away from ground zero. Fires would rage for at least a mile in all directions, indiscriminately destroying hospitals, police offices, churches, and schools. These initial effects would cause a quarter of a million casualties and a trillion dollars in infrastructure damage. Those lucky enough to be outside the initial blast radius may be blinded by the flash of the fireball, deafened by the pressure of the blast, or poisoned by radiation fallout. Additionally, the electromagnetic pulse would render electronic equipment useless, making communication by telephone, Internet, radio, and TV impossible.

The horrors of nuclear terrorism are almost unimaginable, too terrible to think about, and certainly politically unpopular to discuss. Yet the nuclear threat the United States faces today is ultimately survivable. Unlike the Cold War fear of apocalyptic nuclear exchange, a single nuclear blast, as would likely be the case in a terrorist attack, would not topple the United States. Not even close. It would be a devastating, world-changing event, but the United States would live to fight another day. However, the country should have a plan on how to soften the blow, respond, and ultimately recover from an attack.

With its dense population, iconic infrastructure, and presence on the world stage, New York City is widely considered the most likely target for nuclear terrorism. From the New York Stock Exchange to the United Nations Headquarters to the Empire State Building and the Statue of Liberty, the

improve border security around the world to reduce the risk of a nuclear strike.

Although these efforts will mitigate the threat, they cannot eliminate it completely. A 2005 poll of security experts estimated the likelihood of a nuclear

*Graham Allison, director of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs and professor of government at the Kennedy School, calls nuclear terrorism “inevitable,” and many experts join him, claiming it is more a question of when than if.*

city screams of Western idealism and represents the American way of life. This target-rich environment presents particular vulnerability, and an attack on the Big Apple would cause more damage to the U.S. population, economy, and psyche than a strike anywhere else in America. So what would the world look like waking up the morning after a nuclear attack on New York City?

### **The Threat**

It is important to understand that nuclear terrorism is not just an obsession of the paranoid and conspiracy theorists. The threat of a nuclear terrorist attack has loomed over U.S. policy makers at least since September 11 and remains frighteningly possible. U.S. President Barack Obama labeled nuclear terrorism the “single biggest threat to U.S. security,” and placed a global spotlight on the need to secure fissile material (substances that can be used to make a nuclear bomb) and

terror strike within the next decade at 29 percent (Belfer Center 2007), and Matthew Bunn, associate professor of public policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, arrived at the same conclusion through a mathematical model. Even if the actual likelihood of a nuclear attack is far less than these predictions, the devastating consequences demand preventative attention.

Americans take everyday precautions for much less horrific disasters. Take driving, for example. The chance of being killed in a transportation accident over the course of a year is only one in 6,000, yet the government requires seat belts, enforces speed limits, and demands all drivers be licensed (National Safety Council n.d). These laws exist because the government wants to protect its citizens from the dangers of car accidents; surely the government could play a larger role to encourage the populace to be prepared for nuclear terrorism.

Looking beyond the bounds of a decade, Graham Allison, director of

the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs and professor of government at the Kennedy School, calls nuclear terrorism “inevitable,” and many experts join him, claiming it is more a question of when than if.

### The Preparations

The United States has spent billions working to prevent the catastrophe of a nuclear terror attack but has done little to prepare for it. On the national level, Congress created the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) after September 11 to “lead the unified national effort to secure the homeland.” The creation of the DHS caused the greatest government reshuffling in recent history, placing twenty-two disparate agencies under one roof. This gargantuan organization left many onlookers scratching their heads, unaware of who held authority, with the overlapping jurisdictions and repetitive mission statements. However, DHS made it clear that

preparedness and disaster recovery fell under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), folding the Office for Domestic Preparedness, the Nuclear Incident Response Team, and the National Domestic Preparedness Office under its wing.

The lethargic response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005 highlighted the flaws in FEMA’s national infrastructure and its capability to assist a devastated community. There is little evidence of substantive improvements since then. When questioned about the pace of FEMA’s operations, Administrator W. Craig Fugate said in a November 2010 interview with the Washington Post, “One of the big problems with FEMA is that we’re too bureaucratic. Processes are too complicated . . . dealing with the paperwork and the burden of the recovery is almost as onerous as the disaster itself” (Fox 2010). When last measured in 2007, the average time to provide “essential logistical services” to an impacted community of only 50,000 was forty-eight hours (U.S. Department of Homeland Security

### *How to Survive a Nuclear Attack*

- 1 Duck and cover. Those commercials from the 1950s may be comically naive, but their message remains important. A 10-kiloton nuclear blast will break windows up to ten miles from ground zero. Ducking under something secure and covering your head can help protect against impact injuries.
- 2 Get inside. If you’re outside the initial blast radius, the biggest threat to your health is radiation fallout. Getting indoors, preferably underground or in concrete/brick buildings, is the best way to protect against it.
- 3 Stay inside. If you’re close enough that the electromagnetic pulse has affected your electronic equipment, you’re within about five miles (assuming a 10-kiloton nuclear explosion) and should stay indoors as long as possible. Outside this range, staying indoors for twenty-four hours should outlast the most harmful fallout, but it is always best to keep inside until you hear it is safe to leave.

*The first few hours after a nuclear attack would be mayhem, reined by confusion and fear, with untested response structures falling short of objectives and an uneducated populace unable to help.*

2009). Imagine the time delay for New York City, a metropolis of eight million.

Assuming national assistance doesn't arrive in force for at least two days, the lion's share of initial response will land on the shoulders of state and local responders. So who is making sure they are prepared? FEMA. After Katrina, FEMA was empowered to develop a system to assess preventative capabilities and national preparedness. Yet a U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report from October 2010, states, "FEMA has made limited progress in assessing preparedness capabilities . . . [and it] has not yet developed national preparedness capability requirements." Apparently there is room for improvement in FEMA's oversight.

New York, however, is better prepared than most states, and New York City is perhaps the most prepared municipality in the nation. The New York Police Department has an unparalleled counterterrorism division, with a force several thousand strong, advanced radiation detection equipment, and regular "nuclear drills." Adding in the rest of the force and the fire department, New York City boasts nearly 50,000 local emergency responders. Additionally, the city and state both host volunteer programs in which citizens are trained on basic emergency response skills. Of course, more could be done, but New York City has thought of most every-

thing within reason, and budget, to prepare for catastrophic attack.

### **The Unthinkable**

Despite these efforts, even New York City is woefully unprepared for nuclear terrorism. The first few hours after a nuclear attack would be mayhem, reined by confusion and fear, with untested response structures falling short of objectives and an uneducated populace unable to help. What's left of New York's finest would undoubtedly suit up and jump into action, though they would be restrained by a destroyed transportation infrastructure, communication systems, and utilities. However, the biggest obstacle is the radiation. A 10-kiloton nuclear explosion creates a "no save" zone with a one-mile radius out from ground zero; no responders could enter this area due to the lethal radiation level, and all survivors within it would have to be abandoned. Even outside the kill zone, radiation levels would be high enough to cause serious injuries including headache, fatigue, nausea, and a heightened risk of cancer and genetic defects. First responders may even be fearful of entering the affected areas.

Survivors would panic. Without TV, radio, or Internet, the government would have no way to communicate with the populace, leaving individuals to their own devices. Hundreds of thousands would be injured, and

those able to seek medical attention would easily overwhelm the city's remaining medical infrastructure. The frantic search for family members would leave hospitals, schools, and daycare centers unattended. Others would remain trapped by toppled buildings or debris, without water and unable to signal for help.

This tragedy would also have impacts outside the immediate area. The terrorist organization claiming credit for the attack would likely say it has additional bombs in other major cities, regardless of the truth. This could cause massive exodus and havoc in Washington, DC, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Antonio, and other large cities around the United States. Those living in New York City suburbs may also evacuate, attempting to distance themselves from danger.

Assisting New York and maintaining composure in other large cities is only a small part of responding to a disaster of nuclear proportion. The financial market would collapse. Planes across the country would be grounded. All ports, embassies, and borders would close. The military would go on high alert. The president and top cabinet members would be taken underground. Citizens from around the world would call emergency services in search of friends and family members. And perhaps most importantly, Americans would demand retaliation. The United States is not terribly apt at nuclear forensics, and in the haste for a kinetic response, it could retaliate against the wrong country.

### **The Answer**

There is no easy way out of the above scenario, but there is a road forward. Citizens who know how to act have the best chance of saving themselves and assisting those around them. Fugate highlighted the issue, stating, "If you're looking for somebody else to take care of you in a disaster, there may not be somebody else fast enough" (Pelofsky 2010). In short, the single most-effective way to protect the United States against a nuclear attack is to have every citizen prepare for it. A culture of preparedness could turn the tide in the wake of nuclear terrorism.

Without basic disaster response knowledge, the populace would make the situation much worse. By trying to flee the city, residents would expose themselves to dangerous levels of radiation and cause additional injuries with traffic accidents and stampede-style trampling. Hospital and medical supply centers would be looted. There would be unreasonable expectations of information and assistance accompanying irresponsible calls for retaliation.

However, the public's response does not have to add to the problem. If properly prepared, it could be the key to recovery. Simple steps such as carrying a water bottle and an emergency kit, knowing what to do following a nuclear explosion, and having realistic expectations of the national government could save thousands. Although the government can only do so much to alleviate the need of medical supplies, hospital beds, temporary shelter, and so on, it can make substantial progress in preparing the citizenry's response to a nuclear terror attack.

A featured strategic goal on the DHS

Web site is developing a “culture of preparedness,” yet all performance measures are based on internal abilities within the first responder community. Nothing focuses on the education and knowledge of the public. I could not find a single government study or article of the state of civilian preparedness or serious recommendations on how to improve it.

Do you know what to do following the flash of a nuclear explosion? Most Americans don't. As one friend said to me, “I saw the *Day after Tomorrow* movie, but that's about as much as I know on how to prepare for a disaster.”

FEMA and other emergency response agencies need to get serious about civilian nuclear preparedness. A small section on a rarely visited Web site is not a media campaign. We need commercials, billboards, and a vast expansion of the Citizen Corps program. Tax breaks or other financial incentives should be available for individuals who volunteer and go through with the corps program or similar preparedness courses through the Red Cross or local police.

Preparedness programs should also be incorporated into high school curricula or established as a nationwide criterion for graduation. Schools should hold practice drills for terrorist attacks as often as they do for other disasters, such as campus shootings, earthquakes, fires, and tornadoes.

Hearing about what to do in a nuclear attack should be as familiar as listening to a flight attendant brief the airplane cabin on security, as automatic as buckling a seat belt in the car, and as anticipated as hurricanes in Florida.

Americans should not shy away from talking about nuclear terrorism. They should confront it, learning to live with and manage the threat. Being informed does not require being scared. No amount of preparation can prevent the horrific consequences of nuclear terrorism, but it can reduce unnecessary panic, injuries, and fatalities. Although the world will surely be a different place the morning after a nuclear attack, just how different is up to each of us.

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"Kremlin" by Flickr user Pau Bou

## Is Russia Winning the Cold Peace?

by Kleanthis Kyriakidis

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Western powers have been chasing the chimera of a strategic partnership with Moscow. Wishful thinking aside, however, Russia is neither willing nor able to be a "strategic partner" of the West, at least not in any sense that the West should accept. With Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and President Dmitry Medvedev holding the reins, the Cold War has finally been replaced by the rivalry of a "Cold Peace"—a peace in which Russia scores far more victories than its relative power on the world stage would suggest. The West would be better off viewing Russia through a lens of healthy suspicion and using its leverage to obtain better diplomatic results.

### **What the West Has (Not) Gained**

What has the West gained in its "bargains" with Russia? First, the United States' "START II" agreement that reduced strategic offensive arms was an overrated success: the Russians were always more eager to get a deal than the Americans



were, and indeed many observers believed that Russia would have reduced its nuclear arsenal anyway. The United States gave more than it got.

Then there's the War on Terror. In this area, Russia does appear to be cooperating, which is a good thing. The use of Russian air space for logistical support of American troops in Afghanistan, for instance, is invaluable. Yet this support is not just a favor to the Americans. Facilitating the deployment of Allied troops in Afghanistan and the withdrawal of those stationed in Iraq contributes to the stability of the region—a sine qua non for Russian

capitulation to the West since Russia had been supporting Iran's "civilian nuclear power projects." Even so, it is in Russia's strategic interest to halt Iran's quest for nuclear weapons. After all, a nuclear Iran would be a competitor for influence in the Caspian Sea and Central Asia. Consequently, this kind of cooperation is cost-free for Russia.

#### What Has Russia Gotten Away With?

Relations between Russia and the West, already tense in the wake of the NATO and European Union enlargements, went through an abysmal dete-

*Russia's vast energy sources largely drove the country's turn to defiance. The Kremlin has used them to both intimidate Russia's weaker neighbors and influence European politics.*

prosperity.

For Moscow, supporting these U.S.-led operations also has a more sinister rationale. Since Russian authorities argue that foreign terrorist groups in Chechnya, Dagestan, and Ingushetia are responsible for the many attacks that have been happening all over Russia, the War on Terror gives them the justification they need to use devastating force to squelch these conflicts, even though, in reality, the victims are generally homegrown freedom fighters. And it's all done with Western blessings.

Finally, Moscow cooperated in voting for United Nations Resolution 1737, which imposed sanctions on trade related to Iranian nuclear infrastructure. This vote might seem like a

rioration during the George W. Bush administration. The most important reasons for this downfall were the Iraqi invasion in 2003, the American lack of interest in renewing the Moscow Treaty regarding nuclear arsenals, unilateral politics and arrogant rhetoric by the Bush administration, and the proposed installation of American missile defenses in Eastern Europe. Yet most of these American policies have since changed in favor of Russia. Indeed, the only one that's irreversible—the invasion of Iraq—has ended up benefiting Russia anyway since it caused a rise in the price of oil, giving a massive boost to Russian oil companies and thus the Russian economy. The Russians have been doing just fine with the diplomatic hand they've been dealt.

Yet Putin, in his effort to create a

sphere of influence in the “near abroad,” has countered Western policies with even more heavy-handed ones. An escalation of challenges and provocations in Ukraine, the Caucasus, and Central Asia culminated in 2008 with the Russian-Georgian conflict. As a result, Russia de facto

against Russia” (Nichol et al. 2010).

Medvedev and Putin have been ruthless in keeping the Russian “near abroad” under their thumb. They have used different ways of attacking the Baltic States, from the disruption of energy supplies to the cyber assault against Estonia in May 2007. Armenia

*Dmitry Medvedev and Vladimir Putin have been ruthless in keeping the Russian “near abroad” under their thumb.*

annexed the Georgian provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. All of these countries were strategically significant for the United States and Europe, both as possible additions to NATO and as potential locations for military bases.

Russia’s vast energy sources largely drove the country’s turn to defiance. The Kremlin has used them to both intimidate Russia’s weaker neighbors and influence European politics. Perhaps most notably, in January 2009 the colossal Russian state-controlled gas firm Gazprom halted gas supplies flowing through Ukraine. This stoppage caused major problems not only in Ukraine but in Eastern Europe and beyond, since 80 percent of European gas imports use Ukrainian pipelines. The following year, Belarus and the Baltic states faced temporary reductions of imported energy supplies. The West’s reaction to this provocation was tepid, at best: a U.S. Congressional Research Service report suggested that the international community responded to the Russian aggression in Georgia with “few, minor, and only temporary international sanctions

and Belarus depend heavily on Russia for their economy and security, although Belarus’s Alexander Lukashenko, “president-for-life,” is a bit more independent and unpredictable. Moldova is a virtual hostage of Moscow due to a pro-Russian separatist regime in its eastern region of Transnistria. The West simply stands back and watches Russia’s quasi-imperialistic policies in the region.

To be sure, the international community did not sanction the United States for its own egregious actions in Iraq (think Abu Ghraib, the battle of Fallujah) or at its prison at Guantanamo Bay. But there’s a reason for that: the United States is the world’s leader. It cannot be sanctioned. But Russia can. And yet the United States and other Western countries have failed to push for such sanctions. Equal (or near equal) treatment from the international community project onto Russia a power that it does not really have.

Ukraine presents a fascinating case. Russians keep intervening in its domestic policies, exploiting the fact that a great part of the population is either of Russian origin or pro-Russian.

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**May 8, 2000**

"Cold Peace" begins; Vladimir Putin inaugurated.

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Terrorist attacks against New York and Washington, DC; worst terrorist attack in history; killed approximately 3,000 people.

**September 11, 2001**

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**May 24, 2002**

Moscow Treaty signed between the United States and the Russian Federation on Strategic Offensive Reductions.

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Collective Security Treaty Organization founded; Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan participate; later joined by Uzbekistan.

**October 7, 2002**

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**March 20, 2003**

U.S. invasion of Iraq and subsequent occupation; United States and allies invade Iraq on false pretenses, without firm United Nations authorization; relations with Russia stressed due to U.S. unilateral action.

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Fifth NATO Enlargement; Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, and Slovenia join NATO.

**March 29, 2004**

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**May 1, 2004**

Fifth European Union Enlargement; Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia join the EU.

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Beslan school hostage crisis; almost 400 Russians killed (most of them children) by terrorists from North Caucasus.

**September 1-3, 2004**

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**July 29, 2005**

Uzbekistan announces closing of Karshi-Khanabad (K2) Air Base; closed key air base that was used by Americans to support its missions in Afghanistan.

The recent electoral victory of Viktor Yanukovich administered the death-blow to 2004's "Orange Revolution" that had brought the pro-Westerners to power in Ukraine. Today, the Ukraine administration no longer seeks Western integration and has no NATO membership aspirations. Negotiations with the European Union have stalled, and the Russians have managed to extend the life of their large Sevastopol naval base for another twenty-five years.

Meanwhile, the Central Asian countries that once sought American protection have returned to Moscow's embrace. Under Putin's pressure, Uzbekistan shut down the famous "K2" (Karshi-Khanabad) American Air Base. The future of the U.S. base in Manas, Kyrgyzstan—the only major American base in the entire area—is in ques-

*Russia needs the West if it wants to improve its economic standing and serve the interests of its own people.*

tion. Furthermore, most Central Asian countries participate in a Russian-brokered and Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization, serving as a counterweight to NATO. Indeed, Russia, taking advantage of its virtual energy monopoly in the region, has repeatedly attempted to foment anti-American sentiments. Yet the United States and its allies see no evil, hear no evil.

### **What Has the West Given Up?**

One major concession by the West has been U.S. support for Russia's World Trade Organization (WTO) aspirations. Although Russia's accession to the WTO would help the West by increasing stability and predictability in Russia's foreign trade and investment, that should not stop America from using its support as a bargaining chip when negotiating issues like Moscow's energy policy or bilateral trade. The Putin-Medvedev dyad regards the WTO as a high priority because of the current economic crises facing Russia, including a 2009-2010 GDP decline of 8 percent due mainly to the fluctuations of oil and gas prices. Nonetheless, Russia has not changed its monopolistic energy policies, nor has it enhanced its trade with the United States. Although Russia has the world's eighth-largest economy, it ranks twenty-fifth among American trading partners. And yet the United States has not done enough, or much at all, to wrest concessions in this area.

The West has also made a concession in its unconditional abandonment of the proposed missile defense system, which would have been installed close to Russian borders (ten silo-based interceptors in Poland and a radar installation in the Czech Republic). During a period of global economic crisis, this program is probably neither in Western interests nor realistic in the near future of strategic planning. Yet actually abandoning it, rather than just postponing or altering it—indeed replacing the idea with that of a more general "European missile defense" that would now have Russian participation, as was determined during NATO's Lisbon summit—is a bridge

UN Security Council Resolution 1737 on Iran's nuclear program; resolution to curtail nuclear cooperation, demand full Iranian cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency, and freeze assets linked to Iran's nuclear program.	<b>December 23, 2006</b>
<b>January 1, 2007</b>	Sixth European Union Enlargement; Bulgaria and Romania join the European Union.
Cyber attacks against Estonia; allegedly organized by the Russian government; not conclusively determined.	<b>April 27, 2007</b>
<b>August 7-16, 2008</b>	South Ossetia War; armed conflict between Russia and Georgia.
Russian recognition of Abkhazian and South Ossetian "independence"; largely condemned by the international community.	<b>August 26, 2008</b>
<b>January 7-20, 2009</b>	Russia-Ukraine gas dispute; supply of natural gas to Europe through Ukraine halted for thirteen days.
Sixth NATO Enlargement; Albania and Croatia join NATO.	<b>April 1, 2009</b>
<b>February 25, 2010</b>	Ukrainian elections; Pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovich elected president.
START II Treaty signed; began nominal "resetting" of Russian-American relations.	<b>April 8, 2010</b>
<b>April 27, 2010</b>	Sevastopol Agreement; Ukraine ratified treaty extending Russian Navy's lease of Sevastopol Naval Base for twenty-five years (until 2043).
Lisbon Summit; "Resetting relations" declaration at NATO summit.	<b>November 20, 2010</b>

too far. Many Eastern European Allies like Poland, or partners like Georgia, are bitterly disappointed. Here we see a 180-degree change of policy with no apparent Russian reciprocity.

### **Russia the Brazen**

Russia does not even try to maintain appearances in Western eyes. It strongly supports the U.S. nemeses of Cuba and Venezuela. After the recent discovery of Russia's spy ring in the United States, Moscow did not apologize or even keep a low profile. All of its agents were decorated as heroes and most of them, like Ann Chapman, got important government and ruling party jobs.

How about the notorious WikiLeaks affair, which American officials have said damaged American diplomacy worldwide? Secret diplomacy can lead to major breakthroughs, and most of the diplomatic cables that the WikiLeaks Web site obtained contained either classified or sensitive information. Medvedev could have condemned this irresponsible behavior, bearing little political cost; instead, in December 2010 he suggested that Julian Assange be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. The Russian ambassador to NATO, Dmitry Rogozin, declared that the whole case illustrated that there was "no media freedom in the West." One wonders what would happen to a Russian journalist who exposed such secrets.

Is Russia a giant that should be able to dictate the policies of its weaker neighbors? A large chunk of its population (officially about 15 percent) lives below

the absolute poverty line. The population is aging. The economy depends mainly on energy and military industry, and investment (both domestic and foreign) is virtually nonexistent. Corruption and crime reign. Alcoholism destroys Russia's youth, already hurt by high unemployment (officially more than 7 percent). Russia needs the West if it wants to improve its economic standing and serve the interests of its own people. The leverage is thus on the other side of the bargaining table.

*Is Russia a giant that should be able to dictate the policies of its weaker neighbors?*

Nonetheless, Russia is likely to keep the same nationalistic and predatory policies without consulting, warning, or even discussing them with its Western "partners."

Still, the West should engage in measured cooperation with Russia. Going too far in exploiting Russian weakness may prevent mutually beneficial gains to be realized, and there is no need for the United States to revive Reaganite rhetoric about an emerging "evil empire." But in adopting this stance of measured cooperation, the rules of the game must be clear. The principles of the relationship should prevent Russian intimidation of allied countries. Furthermore, negotiations should be hard-nosed and result in compromises (and gains) on both sides while accounting for the fact that the West and especially the United States have much more leverage. Only in that way can the Russian-led "Cold Peace" be

replaced by an appropriate and realistic partnership.

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## Rehabilitating Peace in Afghanistan

by Natalie Black

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“Tell me this,” Mohammad says. “Why, when NATO has the best technology in the world, does it allow its bombs to kill innocent Afghan civilians?” I do not get the chance to answer. He continues, “Why does NATO go into people’s houses at night? Why does it kill people when they are cultivating their land or attending a wedding?” Mohammad is charismatic, articulate, persuasive, and Taliban.

But as a low-level member, he is a prime candidate for release from the notorious Pul-e-Charkhi prison, where I spoke with him, if the Taliban, Afghan government, and international community can come to some form of peace agreement. The problem is that incarceration has potentially made him more, not less, committed to his cause. The Afghan government and the international community are already talking about “rehabilitating extremists,” but if they truly want a sustainable and inclusive peace, they must rehabilitate the justice system itself.

Across Asia, Pul-e-Charkhi prison is second in size but first in infamy. Until recently, its reputation for torture, summary execution, and inhumane living conditions seeped through its reinforced walls. Frequently, gangs of prisoners would take over whole sections of the prison, lying in wait to slash guards with razor blades.

Today, international attention and investment have substantially improved the situation, but concerns persist that prisons across Afghanistan are incubators for violent extremists. U.S. General Stanley McChrystal, then Commander of the



*The Afghan government and the international community are already talking about “rehabilitating extremists,” but if they truly want a sustainable and inclusive peace, they must rehabilitate the justice system itself.*

International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, warned in an August 2009 assessment to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, “There are more insurgents per square foot in corrections facilities than anywhere else in Afghanistan. Unchecked, Taliban/al-Qaida leaders patiently coordinate and plan, unconcerned with interference from prison personnel or the military” (McChrystal 2009). Afghanistan’s intelligence service, the National Directorate of Security, recently admitted that Talib Jan, the jailed Taliban commander, was able to run a cell of suicide bombers active in Kabul from Pul-e-Charkhi for three years. Most recently, Jan claimed to have organized the January 28, 2011, suicide bombing of a Kabul supermarket popular with foreigners that killed fourteen people (Nordland and Sahak 2011). Yet, to date, attempts to tackle fundamentalism in Pul-e-Charkhi and elsewhere have remained limited and ad hoc—an “enlightened” mullah here, an exercise program there. While visiting the prison over the summer of 2010 as part of my work with the United Nations, the captain of the volleyball team at the prison explained to me that murders, thieves, suicide bombers, and Taliban fighters continue to mix with each other, providing ample opportunity for radicalization.

But there is a bigger problem. While international and Afghan politicians laud a democratic Afghanistan and praise the virtues of rejecting the Tali-

ban, many prison detainees experience only abandonment and corruption. I met many prisoners who had waited more than a year to have their day in court, while some of the international prisoners told me that their living conditions in the maximum security wing were dependent on how much bribe money they paid the prison guards.

Concerns regarding the radicalizing power of prisons—and their ability to undermine a peace deal by creating more Taliban supporters—are not new. In 2009, Hekmat Karzai, director of the Centre for Conflict and Peace Studies in Kabul and cousin of Afghan President Hamid Karzai, argued, “If we are going to move towards a reconciliation strategy with the Taliban we are going to have to deal with the prison issue” (Boone 2009). However, little attention is paid to the increasing role played by the ineffective justice system in the radicalization process. As Mohammad told me, “Prison is a good opportunity for education but I have not seen any justice. Justice only exists in name.”

I remember someone else I met at Pul-e-Charkhi. He did not want to give me his name since he was a former government official. He told me he had been apprehended by the British army and accused of corruption. It had taken a year for the justice system to process his case and realize that the local drug trafficking ring had framed him in order to get him removed from

his post. He was about to be released. At the time, I was suddenly very conscious of my British accent. He smiled, "I have no problem with the British people." I asked if his attitude toward the Afghan government had changed. He would not reply.

Yet experience in Iraq and other post-conflict countries shows that an effective justice system can substantially contribute to the reconstruction of society. A recent report from King's College London states, "Much of the

*As Mohammad told me,  
"Prison is a good opportunity for education but I have not seen any justice. Justice only exists in name."*

current discourse about prisons and radicalization is negative. But prisons are not just a threat—they can play a positive role in tackling problems of radicalization and terrorism in society as a whole" (Neumann 2010). The report argues for better staff training, specialized resources like translators, and more ambition in promoting positive influences inside prison. In Afghanistan, such measures should be supplemented by skills-based training to address the economic and financial needs that often drive individuals into the arms of the Taliban. Most importantly, however, significant steps must be taken to improve the delivery of justice and ensure greater use of alternatives to imprisonment and conditional release to reduce pretrial detention. These options exist on the statute books but are rarely utilized by

Afghan judges. Without such improvements, Pul-e-Charkhi and other prisons in Afghanistan will remain a hindrance to, rather than a facilitator of, peace.

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## The Exit: Why the Civilian-Military Strategy Is Failing in Afghanistan

by Bob Kinder

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In a remote, dusty village in Southern Afghanistan, a young Marine captain talked through his interpreter to a tribal elder. The large room was bursting to capacity as dozens of men from the village listened. Just two days earlier, Taliban controlled the village, but that was before a combined force of Afghan Army and U.S. Marines arrived on the scene to rout the insurgents and secure the area. The insurgents had been separated from the population, peace was secured, and now the more complicated work of gaining the trust of the villagers had begun.

As that Marine sat and listened to the long list of issues raised by the tribal leaders, he jotted notes and wondered how he could accomplish everything they asked of him. The men wanted a school to educate their children, a mosque to replace the crumbling structure they had been using, help getting their produce to a market, and myriad other projects. The captain was tired, frustrated, and confused. He had lost two Marines during the fight against the Taliban. He felt his men had done their part, but where were the people that were supposed to help him extend governance into this newly liberated village? What happened to the detailed plan to connect U.S. government civilians with the Marines to get the development projects underway quickly? The captain knew that without being

*As General Stanley McChrystal, former commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, stated in 2009, we “cannot succeed” without a civilian cadre to, among other things, ensure “alignment of resources for immediate and rapid expansion into newly secured areas.”*

able to provide some modicum of support to the villagers, he would lose them. The Taliban, though temporarily defeated, hid in the shadows and was ready to return to the village and challenge the government of Afghanistan’s legitimacy.

Can the military solve Afghanistan’s problems? Not alone. Although critical to meeting our national objectives, uniformed armed forces are secondary when executing a counterinsurgency. Civilian-political activities such as governance development and creating a functioning economy must have primacy. And on this count, the United States is failing in Afghanistan. Without quick, bold action to ramp up the civilian side of war—the side with health experts, engineers, lawyers, public administrators, and more—we may never win the peace.

### **Why Civilians?**

For me, learning the importance of civilian participation did not come easy. After serving in Iraq and Afghanistan for more than six years—both as a company commander in the Ranger Regiment and as an adviser—I’ve learned that fighting terror with force alone doesn’t work. I’ve learned that dropping bombs on compounds may kill the insurgents inside, but if it kills

three families in the process, it doesn’t work. And I’ve learned that focusing on training a fledgling nation’s security forces while ignoring that nation’s diplomats, administrators, and judges doesn’t work. That’s why as we fight violent extremism around the globe, it is essential that we integrate the tremendous capabilities of both our civilian and military communities.

U.S. President Barack Obama understands this. When announcing his first troop surge in March 2009, he said, “This push must be joined by a dramatic increase in our civilian effort.” He went on to say, “to advance security, opportunity and justice—not just in Kabul, but from the bottom up in the provinces—we need agricultural specialists and educators, engineers and lawyers.” That, he concluded, “is why I’m ordering a substantial increase in our civilians on the ground” (2009, emphasis added).

In theory, the civilian “surge” was to be the flip side of the troop surge. Just as President Obama deployed an additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan, he ordered a corresponding civilian component to implement the comprehensive civilian-military campaign plan. Yet we now have only about 1,100 U.S. government civilians working for the embassy—about 400 more than



Department of State's Provincial Governance Officer Eva Shinagel congratulates Kunar Provincial Governor Wahidi on the successful completion of the Eastern Region Peace and Reintegration Jirga, Jalalabad, Nanghahar, October 20, 2009. Ms. Shinagel, MPA2-2001, was assigned to Kunar Province from July 2009 to July 2010.

when President Obama made his call to action two years ago. Soldiers still outnumber civilians by about 100 to one (Wong 2010). Does this constitute a “substantial increase”? Not really. More importantly, is it enough? Absolutely not. As General Stanley McChrystal, former commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, stated in 2009, we “cannot succeed” without a civilian cadre to, among other things, ensure “alignment of resources for immediate and rapid expansion into newly secured areas” (McChrystal 2009).

### **Obstacles to Civilian-Military Effectiveness**

Unfortunately, simply adding more people will not solve the problem. We must get the right people. We need mature individuals with international

experience who can operate effectively with minimal guidance. We need diplomats, engineers, scientists, agricultural specialists, economists, law enforcement personnel, and health care professionals.

In a desperate attempt to meet President Obama's call for additional civilian capacity in Afghanistan, inexperienced personnel are being hired to fill the ranks in the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). If building legitimacy from the Afghan government down through the provinces to the district level is one of the most important functions, is it reasonable to task someone with no experience in the region to coach tribal elders on how to interact with the government of Afghanistan? As I traveled throughout Afghanistan in 2009-2010 as the senior

adviser for General McChrystal's Counterinsurgency Advisory and Assistance Team (CAAT), I repeatedly ran into under-resourced and inexperienced personnel from the state department.

In a 137-page report from the Department of State's Inspector General's office, the inspectors cite similar problems. When assessing the political affairs section, the report states, "The biggest challenge facing the Political Affairs section is the combination of one-year tours, inexperienced officers, and simultaneous rotation of all personnel." The report goes on to say, "As the inspection began, no officer had been in the job for longer than two months. Almost all except the counselor and deputy were on their first political reporting tour. Many had not received a hand-over memo from their predecessor, and most did not receive an orientation to the section's work although they did receive the mission's overall administrative orientation" (Office of Inspector General 2010).

In addition to experience, we need people that understand teamwork and embrace the Afghanistan custom of serving "shona ba shona" or "shoulder to shoulder." But teamwork is not always easy to achieve given the differing cultures of the civilian and military communities. Indeed, lack of a common background and experiences between these communities frequently impedes our unity of effort in the extraordinarily complex environment of Afghanistan. Both the U.S. government and the Army and Marine Corps counterinsurgency manuals address the key requirement

of attaining unity of effort for all civilian and military activities, but as an advisor who observed and analyzed our counterinsurgency activities across Afghanistan this past year, I have concluded that unity of effort is lacking.

Part of the problem is undefined civilian missions. The U.S. military executes its missions under a decentralized operational structure in which commanders give mission-type orders that include a clear statement of the superior commander's intent and present each unit's tasks in terms of operational effects to be achieved. This provides subordinates with the necessary guidance to accomplish the mission while allowing them to retain flexibility in how best to complete their tasks. Yet my experience in Afghanistan is that, by and large, the embassy and subordinate civilian interagency partners such as the Department of State, USAID, and the Department for Homeland Security, to name a few, lack a clear understanding of what they are supposed to accomplish each day. Specific guidance from the chief of mission at the embassy must be generated and standard operating procedures should be followed—across the entire organization—on how to operationalize this guidance. Vision is not enough. It must be made crystal clear for each level.

### **The Beginning of a Solution**

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton recognizes these problems and, in a recent article in *Foreign Affairs*, outlines her strategy to reorganize the Department of State to meet strategic U.S. foreign policy objectives in the

coming years. As she said in the article, “I began my tenure as U.S. Secretary of State by stressing the need to elevate diplomacy and development alongside defense—a ‘smart power’ approach to solving global problems” (Clinton 2010).

*After almost ten years, it is clear that we will not achieve success in Afghanistan simply by adding more helicopters, tanks, or soldiers.*

One of the things Clinton has done is continue to build upon former President George W. Bush’s initiative of creating a cadre of federal civilians that deploy around the globe to aid struggling nations. Two years ago, Congress authorized the building of the Civilian Response Corps. More than 100 strong and growing, this organization brings together professionals from eight different federal agencies who, like our Marines or the 82nd Airborne Division, rapidly deploy to prevent conflict or stabilize countries in crisis. An interagency organization made up of professionals from the *Departments of Agriculture, Justice, State, Homeland Security, Commerce, Energy, Health and Human Services, and USAID*, the corps will comprise 250 active-duty, 2,000 standby, and 2,000 reserve personnel in fields such as public health, law enforcement, engineering, economics, law, and public administration (U.S. Department of State n.d.).

The active and standby components of the Civilian Response Corps include federal employees, while the reserve personnel will consist of experts from the private sector and state and local

governments. Corps members deploy equipped with the skills, support, experience, lessons learned, and best practices of eight agencies in the following critical fields: security and rule of law, planning/operations/management, diplomacy/governance,

essential services, economic recovery, and force protection.

### **Toward a Comprehensive Civilian Strategy**

It is one thing to mandate the formation of these organizations; it is another to build a cohesive team while breaking down existing bureaucratic barriers between the disparate federal agencies. These same barriers existed, and to a much lesser extent continue to exist, between the separate service components within the U.S. Department of Defense. Recognizing this, Congress passed the *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act* in 1986 in an attempt to fix problems caused by interservice rivalry, which contributed to the catastrophic failure of the Iranian hostage rescue attempt in 1980 and were still evident in the invasion of Grenada in 1983 (Cole 1999).

A Goldwater-Nichols-type act, focused on our federal agencies, is an appropriate solution to encourage and enhance interagency understanding and coordination within our federal government. In the case of the military, officers are routinely assigned

to joint duty positions and are educated in Department of Defense joint professional development schools as part of their career development and progression. Additionally, in order to be eligible for promotion to flag officer rank (i.e., admirals and generals), colonels (Army, Marine Corps, and Air Force) or Navy captains must have had at least one joint duty assignment. We need to mandate similar joint duty assignments within the federal agencies and make it a requirement for promotion to the highest ranks within the civil service. For political appointees, we must use an interagency educational system and immersion to get new directors rapidly up to speed. But what can be done about the

immediate civilian manpower deficit in Afghanistan? It's time for the Department of State and our embassy in Kabul to build a team of professionals. Scour the universities. Recruit. Invest in excellence. Find the best and the brightest practitioners and academics. Make it worth their while to serve. As a current graduate student at Harvard University I recognize that there exists a great untapped reservoir of talent at our universities. During my tour last year on CAAT, I was able to solicit the support of a handful of university professors and graduate students from the almost 5,000 universities and colleges in the United States. They were helpful even when they came for just a few weeks at a time.

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Eva Shinagel, Department of State's Provincial Governance Officer, sits with other members of the Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), a Navy-led unit, and the Marawara District Governor and staff for the opening of the Marawara District Center, March 10, 2010. The Marawara District Center was constructed with U.S. government funds, managed by the PRT, to provide a seat of government in this community that borders on Pakistan and whose high mountain passes can serve as safe havens for insurgents.





As the military continues to rapidly build capacity within the Afghan Army and police to secure Afghanistan, we must shift our priorities, with the Department of State in the lead, to help develop a competent administration within the government of Afghan President Hamid Karzai. To accomplish this, it is imperative that we immediately identify, hire, train, and deploy a comprehensive, integrated team of U.S. government civilian experts, skilled in advising in the areas of governance, agricultural and infrastructure development, rule of law, economics, and other civilian functions.

Central to conducting comprehensive counterinsurgency operations is implementing a combined, balanced civilian-military strategy—one where the civilian contingent is as strong and well-supported as the military. President Obama, in his National Security Strategy this year, wrote, “Our Armed Forces will always be a cornerstone of our security, but they must be complemented. Our security also depends upon diplomats who can act in every corner of the world, from grand capitals to dangerous outposts; development experts who can strengthen governance and support human dignity; and intelligence and law enforcement that can unravel plots, strengthen justice systems; and work seamlessly with other countries” (Obama 2010).

He is right, of course, but we must act now. After almost ten years, it is clear that we will not achieve success in Afghanistan simply by adding more helicopters, tanks, or soldiers. The American public is growing weary of having U.S. troops put in harm’s way,

and support for the war is eroding. The brave men and women fighting in Afghanistan, now led by General David Petraeus, can be successful. But it’s imperative that they receive the full support of their civilian counterparts in the U.S. government. I fear that if we do not take decisive action to greatly enhance our current civilian efforts, it will be too late.

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## A New Sparta: America's Threatening Civil-Military Gap

by Charlie Lewis

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On June 7, 2010, the war in Afghanistan became the longest in U.S. history, clocking in at just under ten years. By the time the remaining troops in Iraq pull out at the end of 2011, that war will have itself lasted more than eight years. Yet in all that time, less than 1 percent of the American population has served in either conflict. This disquieting figure is but one of many indications that the gap between our veterans and the rest of America is wide and growing wider. How did we get this way? What does it mean for our society? And what can we do about it?

### **Military Matters**

The civil-military gap is one of the most serious and consequential issues facing America today, and its impacts will be felt across all aspects of society. The further removed from the military civilians become, the less they will empathize with the sacrifices service members make. Combat casualties will capture fewer headlines and be tucked away in the back pages of the *New York Times*. Military members will be viewed as mere instruments of national power, not people with spouses, partners, and children. Those currently serving in the military will in turn feel a bitterness toward civilian leadership.

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Photo 1: "8th US Army - Korea " by Flickr user US Army Korea - IMCOM

Photo 2: "NYC Financial District, 2009-02-20 - 79" by Flickr user Kai Brinker

Speaking before an audience at Duke University in 2010, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates offered a thought on America's ongoing wars. "For most Americans," he said, "the wars remain an abstraction—a distant and unpleasant series of news items that do not affect them personally" (Bumiller 2010). Gates, usually known for his discretion, was on to something.

A Cohen Research Group survey from 2010 showed that 36 percent of Americans did not know someone who had served in either Afghanistan or Iraq, a far cry from previous wars when entire communities shared the weight of defense. The poll reveals what many in the military have long known to be true and what other Americans would benefit from understanding: the gap between civilian America and the troops who go to war on its behalf is widening to a dangerous degree, threatening future battlefield and diplomatic success (Cohen Research Group 2010).

More than at any other time in our history, we are today in danger of creating two distinct classes of Americans: those who serve and those who do not. If ignored, this increasing segregation of American society will have grave implications for future military success, American national security, and American democracy.

Many factors have contributed to this rift over the past decade, among them a perpetual state of war, an all-volunteer military force, the geographic isolation of military installations, and the lack of political and media elites who have worn the uniform. These factors together are responsible for

turning what was once a small gap into a fissure.

### **Soldiers in Isolation**

The current civil-military gap is one of cultural and geographic isolation. It grew out of the military's transition to an all-volunteer force when the draft was abolished in 1973. As the years passed, it became easier for civilians to view service members as "them," different from "the rest of us." This idea, propagated in the press and Hollywood, has stereotyped typical enlistees as poor minorities or rural Whites, all of whom are uneducated.

However, this could not be further from the truth. A Heritage Foundation survey from 2008 demonstrates that the military is more similar to mainstream American than commonly perceived (Watkins and Sherk 2008). For instance, more than a quarter of all enlistees and the majority of officers come from households with an annual income level above \$65,000. Ninety-one percent of new recruits in 2007 earned a high school diploma compared to just 36 percent of the rest of the eighteen-to-twenty-four-year-old population. Sixty-five percent of those recruits in 2007 were White, and 12 percent were Black or African American, mirroring the racial demographic of the United States. Lacking interaction with people who serve only enables the myths about them, when in fact the military is not much different demographically than the makeup of the country itself.

The gap is further widened by the increased professionalization of military forces. According to political

scientist Samuel Huntington in his 1957 book discussing civil-military relations, *The Soldier and the State*, the military's willingness and ability to use violence against America's enemies was best achieved through continued education and the development of a strong professional military ethos (Huntington 1957). Today, isolated on the other side of the planet in two seemingly interminable wars, this professional ethos is more than ever

Nearly 320,000 veterans who suffered a traumatic brain injury will require treatments over their lifetime ranging from \$268,000 to \$408,000 per person (Tanielian et al. 2008). Despite only 8 percent of Americans meeting veteran status requirements, the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans estimates there are more than 106,000 homeless veterans, a staggering one-fifth of all homeless people (National Coalition for Homeless Veterans n.d.).

*The war-fighting elements of today's population are located far from where the majority of Americans would ever encounter them in uniform: major metropolitan areas.*

ingrained in the military's officer corps. This strengthened commitment to the military virtue in conjunction with the cultural isolation is in danger of creating what journalist David Wood (2010) calls a "warrior class," where military professionals see themselves as different and incompatible with the remainder of society.

Many veterans struggle to integrate back into civilian life where they no longer feel they belong. When soldiers leave the Army, they receive months of job counseling and preparation. However, once on their own, they find that a slow economy and a lack of commiserating peers presents problems. Veterans seeking employment find their skills do not translate into civilian sector jobs.

Nearly 20 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans suffer symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, according to the RAND Corporation, at a societal cost of \$6.2 billion.

Compounding this cultural split is a change in the military's geographic organization. At the end of the Cold War, the military's size decreased by a third, resulting in the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 shuttering ninety-seven bases around the globe (GlobalSecurity.org n.d.). Bases shifted away from the urban locations, effectively shielding the military from population-dense areas. This realignment fomented military service members' tendency to cluster together, even within their own communities (Bishop 2008). The war-fighting elements of today's population are located far from where the majority of Americans would ever encounter them in uniform: major metropolitan areas.

After the Vietnam War, America's universities also saw the flight of ROTC programs from their campuses as a result of high operating costs in the northeast and around other

urban areas. Large schools, like Texas A&M, provide the greatest number of military officers. This clustering diminishes the prominence of ROTC programs at many elite universities, like Harvard or Stanford, limiting crucial exposure of their civilian graduates to the military.

Finally, recent decades have seen a precipitous decline in the number of military veterans holding high political office. Continuing a downward trend, only 23 percent of the current 112th Congress served in the military compared to 75 percent in 1969, according to Veterans Campaign (2010). The lack of military expertise among elites is reinforcing a sense of moral autonomy within the officer ranks. When military policies appear immoral or detrimental to American institutions, senior military officers now may view challenging civilian leadership as an obligation to ensure proper understanding of military affairs, a norm unheard of in the past (Milburn 2010). If not corrected, this way of thinking will inevitably trickle down to the lower ranks, limiting civilian control (Nielsen and Snider 2009).

### Consequences

Civilian control of the military, among the most sacrosanct of the republic's founding principles, is at risk. This control creates a vital balance between the military and its civilian leaders, relying heavily on civilian leadership maintaining a firm grasp of military affairs (Huntington 1957). When that leadership lacks the most basic understanding of military institutional knowledge, it risks inadvertently

placing too much authority in the hands of the military leaders who control the strings of military power.

Most importantly, if this divide continues to widen, America's ability to effectively wage and win wars will become diminished. War, according to military theorist Carl von Clausewitz, is "a real political instrument, a continuation of political commerce, a carrying out of the same by other means" (Rose 2010). Military force must continue to be seen as the last political tool. Any military action requires both civilian understanding of its use and the idea that national public policy must permeate every military action through a joint political-military effort. Anything less than a joint effort will result in a transition delay from fighting to constructive development, as was seen in Iraq. The delays either result in uncertain endings or provide the enemy an opportunity to exploit our weaknesses, limiting success.

If America continues on this path, the next conflict may not end well. An urgent call must be made to prevent this from happening in the future. A large civil-military gap inhibits military leaders and civilian policy makers from coming together to determine the best course of action for any military engagement, which further threatens future military victories, American vital interests, and national security (Rose 2010).

### Closing the Gap

Closing the civil-military gap can be achieved with small policy changes that narrow the distance between the civilian and military sectors. One such

change is for the U.S. Department of Defense to improve service member involvement in the election process. Currently, many service members consider themselves to be disenfranchised voters. Multiple states have failed to meet the deadline to mail absentee ballots established by the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act, making voting impossible for deployed service members (May 2010; Pew Center on the States 2009). As a result, some military voters feel their vote does not matter as much as that of their civilian counterparts. The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP), a Department of Defense program assisting military voters, has struggled to take root. Military voters still face problems registering whenever they move to new bases.

Implementing the option to register when a service member first arrives at his or her new location enhances the already existing FVAP and eases transition difficulties. "A theater-wide effort is needed to place all ballots into priority mail transport instead of space-available, which delays shipments," says the 101st Airborne Division's postal officer when asked how to expedite the return of ballots to the states (Lewis 2010). Enforcement of absentee ballot deadlines would eliminate military voter disenfranchisement and is a simple method to better involve deployed troops.

A more controversial solution to narrowing the civil-military gap is the establishment of a policy of mandatory civil service for all U.S. citizens. Such a program would require all Americans to serve two years in

the military or opt to participate in public service programs like Teach for America or the Peace Corps following high school or college graduation. Twelve percent of seniors at Ivy League institutions applied last year for Teach for America, suggesting an existing willingness to serve (Economist 2011).

In addition, the reestablishment of ROTC programs on college campuses across the country would allow more interaction between those in uniform and their fellow citizens. The program development will open up discussions between the leadership at those elite institutions and military leadership, forging stronger relationships at the highest levels. Such early connections

*The military should promote the professional development of its officers through greater exposure to the civilian sector.*

foster understanding and could extend decades into the future professional lives of graduates.

Similarly, the military should promote the professional development of its officers through greater exposure to the civilian sector. It can do this by creating more programs encouraging officers to work toward master's degrees in civilian education programs, like at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, or through externships in both private industry and government agencies. This kind of contact with a

professionally experienced cadre of civilian peers will cultivate broader understanding between the two groups.

A nation neglectful of the lives, work, and sacrifice of those shouldering the burden of national defense could result in dire circumstances for American security. To change course, simple steps, such as improving absentee ballots and expanding military opportunities within the civilian sector, will do much to help narrow the gap and keep America from developing its own Sparta.

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## Is He Really “Our Son of a Bitch”?

by Jonathan Edwards

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There is a famous line attributed to U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt about the dictatorial president of Nicaragua: “Somoza may be a son of a bitch, but he’s our son of a bitch.” The reality, however, is that there is no evidence of FDR ever actually using the phrase. Nonetheless, this apocryphal quip reflects a doctrine that has permeated popular discussion of international relations. Since the Cold War, it has been a commonly held belief that the West supports authoritarian regimes because they best protect Western interests.

Leaving ideology aside, this claim is open to debate. A strong executive can make his or her country a useful ally in achieving other countries’ specific goals. However, the executive’s strength can impede other, more general goals. Evidence from the Middle East argues that the executive’s strength can jeopardize institutional ties, long-term relationships, and important connections to nongovernmental actors.

### **Another “Son of a Bitch” Is Born**

Events taking place in early 2011 have highlighted the difficulties of U.S. relations with a variety of its “S.O.B.s”. For example, the expulsion of President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali from Tunisia has prompted a new examination of Western strategic interests in that country and how U.S.-Tunisian relations will change under a new government. A long history of close relations exists; for instance, U.S. President John F. Kennedy was an ardent supporter of Tunisian independence. The U.S. embassy has worked hard to engage with Tunisians



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beyond Ben Ali's government and, at the time of this writing, has supported the Tunisian people's right to dissent and engage in peaceful association. Hopefully this history will enable the relationship between the two countries to continue and to grow. However, until the final nature of the Tunisian government is known, the relationship's status will remain clouded in uncertainty.

The issue, however, goes beyond Tunisia. In the wake of the USSR's collapse, the War on Terror has replaced the threat of interstate war as many countries' primary strategic concern; nowadays the focus is on the wider Middle East. There have already been many allegations that the United States and the United Kingdom have ignored crimes in that region and elsewhere in an attempt to win allies for this war.

In one example, Britain's ex-ambassador to Uzbekistan, Craig Murray, alleged that the United States and the United Kingdom refused to challenge human rights abuses by the government there in exchange for access to Uzbek bases that support the mission in Afghanistan. Murray claims that he was pressured and eventually fired for criticizing the Uzbek government over human rights.

Murray's interpretation of events is disputed by his employers; his dismissal was overshadowed by accusations of workplace drunkenness,

official reprimands, and personal problems. However, the dire situation of human rights in Uzbekistan is in little doubt and presents a challenge that is recognized by foreign governments involved in the region. The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights has chronicled "wide-scale violation of virtually all basic human rights" in that country. Uzbekistan President Islam Karimov has had political dissidents immersed up to their necks in a giant cauldron and boiled alive (Walsh 2003). His relationship with the United States and the United Kingdom eventually fell apart after the 2005 Andijan Massacre when hundreds of people died after National Security Service troops fired into a crowd of protesters.

### **A Favor from the Devil**

True, necessity, especially on security issues, sometimes forces countries to deal with questionable regimes. When considering an alliance with the USSR, former British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill summed up the sentiment perfectly: "If Hitler invaded Hell I would make at least a favorable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons."

After all, the sine qua non of engaging with a foreign nation is stability. Instability not only would be a threat to foreign interests in the particular country but also, more importantly,

would be a real danger to the lives of the local citizens. A more authoritarian style of government may well be better able to guarantee much needed stability. For example, in Rwanda, President Paul Kagame and the Rwandan Patriotic Front party are accused by Amnesty International of restricting press freedoms and opposition parties but are praised for fostering stability after a genocide.

Moreover, when parts of a country's population question foreign involvement in its country's affairs,

peaceful, and legitimate. We also do so because their success abroad fosters an environment that supports America's national interests" (White House 2010).

Yet the costs of working with an excessively strong executive are less often acknowledged. An overly powerful president sometimes makes it harder to increase intergovernmental ties. In Libya, Muammar el-Qaddafi's complete control has made the country a difficult environment for diplomatic involvement. Gene Cretz, the U.S.

*Thus, effective international relations requires a happy medium of executive power in the country in question; enough power is needed to overcome local objections, but if the ruler is the sole basis of the relationship, deep institutional ties will not develop.*

a strong executive can maintain the relationship over local objections. For instance, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said in a 2010 interview with journalist Charlie Rose that the greatest challenge facing the Syrian government was how to "keep our society as secular as it is today." This was a message designed to please Washington, not Damascus—particularly in easing U.S. concerns about the threat of Islamic terrorism.

### **The Costs**

The benefits of working with a democracy are well-known. The U.S. National Security Strategy states, "The United States supports the expansion of democracy and human rights abroad because governments that respect these values are more just,

Ambassador to Libya, said in March 2010 that further U.S. involvement would be difficult because Libya lacked "clear institutional structures" capable of fully engaging with American diplomats (Hounshell 2010). The unofficial, arbitrary nature of el-Qaddafi's control has rendered Libyan authority, and even state policy, unclear. Libyan officials have been busy hunkering down to defend their personal positions rather than executing an efficient government strategy for increased international engagement. This has left no one beyond the president to deal with, and one individual cannot be a solid basis for an international relationship.

Thus, effective international relations requires a happy medium of executive power in the country in question; enough power is needed to overcome

local objections, but if the ruler is the sole basis of the relationship, deep institutional ties will not develop.

*Even if we have a leader's support on one issue, no "son of a bitch" will ever be completely ours.*

A relationship founded on personalities is also inherently ephemeral: A "president for life" is just that—and only that. The alliance could end instantly if the leader died or simply changed his or her mind. Even worse, having supported an unpopular regime that then falls could make an alliance with the new government very difficult. In one example, at the start of the Iranian revolution, Sir Anthony Parsons, British Ambassador to Iran, wrote in a cable to London in January 1978 that "the Shah . . . will be able to govern, as he is, at present, without any genuinely dangerous opposition from any quarter" (Parris and Bryson 2010). In Iran, at that time, the United Kingdom and the United States were wedded to a regime, and the effects of supporting the shah still haunt relations today. If the president of the particular country is able to choose his or her successor, the foreign policy and relationships the country had are likely to remain in place. However, if the president is not, foreign governments with which that country was involved may find themselves having moved from their S.O.B. to S.O.L. Thus, long-term interests argue against any relationship that relies solely on any one individual.

Finally, modern Western diplomatic goals are antithetical to any kind of authoritarianism. Much of the energy of a modern foreign service goes into dealing with non-state actors: private individuals, nongovernmental organizations, and the wider citizenry. However, authoritarian actions will, by definition, suppress civil society and thus are directly hostile to many of the Western goals in the country. Such actions imperiled the United States' relationship with Tunisia in the past. The Tunisian government was suspicious of U.S. involvement, despite agreement on many issues. American government projects were blocked because clearances didn't arrive in time or permission was denied at the last minute. One embassy official reported being unable to set foot on a university campus for two years. The embassy tried to take out an advertisement in the national paper stressing the importance of human rights; it had to do so under cover of praising Tunisia's impressive women's rights record.

Elsewhere in the Middle East, other governments have also attempted to increase executive power to the detriment of their foreign relations. Elements in the Egyptian government, before President Hosni Mubarak's recent ousting, attempted to form a "Mubarak Trust Fund" with U.S. aid, giving the Egyptian government more (and the U.S. government less) connection with organizations that receive assistance. There was a popular joke in Egyptian political circles: instead of contacting aid agencies to get money, activists operating in Egypt were advised to approach the Egyptian government handler assigned to spy on them. In short, all of these examples

point to the fact that by restricting civil society, authoritarian regimes necessarily damage Western interests.

### **Conclusion**

When the new Tunisian government is formed, the West will face stark choices regarding how to deal with it as well as other Middle Eastern regimes. No international relationship is perfect. Although the support a particular country gives on one issue sometimes outweighs the costs it poses on another front, we in the West must not delude ourselves into thinking that these costs do not exist. If possible, we must predict where the costs will come from and calibrate our decisions accordingly. Even if we have a leader's support on one issue, no "son of a bitch" will ever be completely ours.

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## Think Like a Guerilla: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Sri Lanka

by Malik Ahmad Jalal

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The Roman Empire in Germania, the French in Algeria, the United States in Vietnam, and the Soviet Union in Afghanistan all conjure up the myth that insurgencies cannot be defeated. In recent years, this notion has only been reinforced by NATO's slow progress against the Taliban. Yet counterinsurgency strategies can, in fact, succeed. One of the most instructive examples is that of the Sri Lankan Army's defeat of the Tamil Tigers, one of the most violent and persistent insurgent groups of the twentieth century. The Sri Lankan military succeeded by winning democratic and popular support, isolating the insurgents diplomatically and financially, and transforming officer and soldier training. This experience offers lessons for an effective, replicable counterinsurgency strategy in future conflicts.

### **Rise of the Tamil Insurgency**

The Tamil insurgency can be traced back to ethnic tensions between Sri Lanka's majority Buddhist Sinhalese and the minority Hindu Tamils, which came to a head after the country gained independence from the British in 1948. Tensions turned violent when the Sri Lankan government declared Sinhala as the sole official language and also initiated an affirmative action policy to rectify a British-



Special Forces of Sri Lanka after capturing a post from the LTTE. Photo by Manoj Ratnayake (<http://srilankan-army.webs.com/>)

era rule on university enrollment that was seen to favor the Sinhalese. The Tamil minority subsequently demanded a separate Tamil homeland. In the midst of this political conflict, Velupillai Prabhakaran consolidated control over the Tamil liberation movement by uprooting other Tamil militant groups and unifying the remaining militant cadres under his Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

The eventual defeat of the LTTE makes a particularly interesting case study because the organization waged one of the world's longest insurgencies, lasting nearly thirty-three years. For much of this period, conventional military wisdom held that the LTTE could not be defeated. At the height of its power, the LTTE controlled 15,000 square kilometers and boasted a sophisticated military, including air and sea forces capable of defeating a Sri Lankan military offense.

The LTTE gained international notoriety for pioneering the use of the suicide belt. The group executed a total of 315 suicide bombings, more than Hezbollah and Hamas put together to date, according to the Sri Lanka Guardian. The Tigers were also the

first to launch a suicide attack by sea in January 1999, seven months before the Al Qaeda attack on the USS Cole off the coast of Yemen. In all, the LTTE perpetrated more than sixty naval attacks between 1999 and 2008. In addition, the LTTE had a formidable fund-raising network, consisting of a committed Tamil diaspora that spanned at least forty-four countries and raised between \$50 million and \$80 million per year.

The LTTE were experts in the art of mobile warfare, with a huge cadre of highly committed soldiers who mastered their guerrilla terrain. Yet they were ultimately defeated, largely due to well-crafted strategies implemented by the Sri Lankan government and military.

### **Strategy #1: Gain Popular Support**

Insurgencies cannot be defeated by the military alone; popular political support within Sri Lanka was essential to mobilize the resources necessary to fight and win. In a personal interview with Ambassador Dr. Palitha Kohona, permanent representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations, Kohona said the government held elections consistently, even in the face of spectacular LTTE attacks on key government installations. Even during the closely fought elections of 2005, when the central issue was whether to take a hard-line approach to the LTTE, the Tamil-majority provinces remained fully enfranchised. Although the electorate in those provinces was seldom able to fully participate in the elections due to a boycott enforced by the LTTE, there was at least a path available to the Tamil constituency to

pursue greater freedoms through the democratic process. The fact that the LTTE had to use threats and violence against its own community to enforce the boycott resulted in the government beating the insurgents in the fight for domestic public support.

Suicide attacks on senior Sri Lankan officials, including the defense secretary, and the failure of internationally sponsored peace initiatives helped foster public disillusionment, further draining LTTE's popular support. But ultimately it was the democratic nature of the Sri

combat insurgents. Major General Shavendra Silva, former director of military operations and commander of the 58th Division of the Sri Lankan Army, commented in a personal interview that success was the result of tapping operational commanders who had substantial warfare experience and giving them the freedom to operate independently on the battlefield.

There was a cultural shift from conventional military thinking to thinking that adopted unconventional and guerrilla methods—a shift that percolated down from the defense

*There was a cultural shift from conventional military thinking to thinking that adopted unconventional and guerrilla methods—a shift that percolated down from the defense secretary to the frontline soldiers.*

Lankan government that enabled it to successfully marshal public opinion to accept the human losses and financial costs of a sustained military campaign.

More tellingly, the government held provincial elections within ten months of capturing Sri Lanka's Eastern Province from the LTTE. This move stands in stark contrast to other counterinsurgencies, where governments have delayed democracy in favor of stabilization, thereby losing valuable time and sowing unrest amongst the population.

### **Strategy #2: Fight like a Guerrilla**

Coupled with its efforts to ensure broad-based support from the larger public, the government spearheaded a rethinking of military culture to better

secretary to the frontline soldiers.

One example of such unconventional thinking was the 58th Division's battlefield decision to use reinforced mortar casings to float soldiers across flooded fields instead of boats, which are noisy and prone to ambush. This allowed the army to regain the element of surprise.

In addition, the infantry training doctrine was revamped to constitute special infantry operations teams (SIOTs). These eight-man groups received extensive specialized training in jungle warfare, explosives, and communications, allowing them to penetrate deep into hostile territory, employ hit-and-run tactics against enemy forces, and direct artillery and air strikes. Furthermore, the placement of SIOTs alongside regular infantry units helped diffuse special warfare

skills and lift the standards of regular infantry soldiers.

The use of SIOs to launch focused attacks inflicted maximum damage on the insurgents while avoiding large-scale casualties. The surprising change in tactics had a psychological impact as well: LTTE commanders were immobilized and had to restrict their movements to safe grounds, depriving their troops of frontline leadership.

### **Strategy #3: Diplomatic and Financial Isolation of the Insurgents**

The Sri Lankan government needed to erode one additional key pillar of the LTTE's strength: its support overseas. The aforementioned Tamil diaspora provided financial backing as well as international legitimacy to the insurgents. At its peak, the LTTE's fund-raising network brought in more than \$200 million per year. The global Tamil community also promoted LTTE's cause by lobbying foreign governments, particularly the Indian government, which had a sizable Tamil population in the Southern provinces.

The Tigers were effective at defining themselves as "freedom fighters" in the eyes of the world, influencing the public narrative through media, art, and cultural activities. The fusion of Tamil identity and Tamil's cause was perhaps best embodied by the British-born rapper M.I.A., who spent much of her childhood in Sri Lanka, whose lyrics are viewed as politically inspired and supporting the Tamils in Sri Lanka. Such perceptions created a challenge for Sri Lanka's diplomats charged with curtailing the LTTE's funding and gaining international support for

disrupting its efficient arms smuggling network.

Much as the assassinations of Sri Lankan officials had colored domestic political opinion, the LTTE's 1991 assassination of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi began to change the tide of public opinion internationally. Sri Lankan diplomats took advantage of the post-September 11 anti-terror atmosphere, and through long-term initiatives such as giving foreign ambassadors tours of Tamil territory and LTTE attacks, they eventually convinced thirty-two countries to designate the LTTE a terrorist organization. The loss of foreign support and legitimacy internationally played a pivotal role in the LTTE's loss of legitimacy at home. It also rendered fund-raising more difficult.

Sri Lankan diplomats were most effective in shrewdly balancing their military's armament needs, which were fulfilled by China and Pakistan, with the cultivation of diplomatic support from India, where the LTTE had strong roots. This balancing act was done through extensive military, diplomatic, and political contacts with India to address its concerns about the future of the Tamil minority and to secure its support in disrupting LTTE's smuggling and financing network.

It is widely believed that the Sri Lankan Army withheld the final assault on LTTE's leadership until after the elections in May 2009 in India's southern state of Tamil Nadu, though Sri Lankan officials deny it. The Sri Lankan government's sensitivity to a potential Tamil backlash in India was an astute strategy. It avoided a rerun of 1987, when an Indian intervention



in Sri Lanka on behalf of the Tamils brought an end to a successful offensive operation.

#### **Strategy #4: Divide and Rule**

In addition to severing the Tigers' ties to foreign backers, the Sri Lankan government sought to incite division within the organization itself. The LTTE achieved dominance over rival Tamil resistance groups in 1986 by violently subduing or incorporating rival separatist groups. Its grasp only loosened in 2004 when the Sri Lankan government engineered the defection of Colonel Karuna, the key LTTE commander in the Eastern Province. He believed the LTTE leadership from the Northern Province was marginalizing him and Eastern Province Tamils. By offering him immunity from prosecution and protection from his former LTTE comrades, the Sri Lankan government neutralized a key operational commander and his six-thousand troops. The subsequent internal warfare weakened the remainder of the LTTE and substantially reduced recruitment from the Eastern Province.

Although Colonel Karuna had acted out of self-preservation, his credibility as a former rebel leader provided the Tamil population with a nonviolent alternative to the LTTE. His organizing of a Tamil political party—and later being named Sri Lanka's minister for national integration—added to his image of legitimacy. The most significant contribution of this breakaway faction, however, was accurate intelligence and on-the-ground reconnaissance for

the Sri Lankan military offensive in the Eastern Province in 2007. Some sources allege that Colonel Karuna's troops also fought alongside the Sri Lankan Army, which, if true, would have added an important psychological advantage for the Sri Lankan Army.

The International Crisis Group, an international nongovernmental organization committed to preventing and resolving deadly conflict, has accused both the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government of committing war crimes during the final months of the war. If true, then the actions cannot be condoned. However, in situations where political channels for resolving a conflict have been exhausted, the success of the Sri

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In a rare photo, former female LTTE leader "Bhanu" shows the Cyanide capsule she wore to commit suicide in the event of capture. Image shot for the World Press Photo Gender Project. Photo by Sriyantha Walpola. Mobile:+1 347 684 9068



Lankan Army's operation against the LTTE reveals several key counterinsurgency lessons, as discussed below.

• **Lesson #1: Democracy works. Refrain from imposing emergency controls that curtail democratic representation; ensure that legitimate local elections occur regularly in insurgent territory. Don't wait for stability; when insurgent areas are captured, devolve power to the local level at the earliest opportunity.**

Conventional wisdom holds that authoritarian regimes are better equipped to fight insurgencies due to "unity of command." It may be true that authoritarian regimes are effective in the short term, but it takes years if not decades to quell serious insurgencies. In the long term, democratic systems are more effective in managing the tensions generated by internal conflict and also in bringing disparate groups onboard. In the country of the insurgency (for example, in Afghanistan), devolution of power to the local and provincial levels is most effective in garnering public support for a protracted and deadly campaign. Quick local and provincial elections after an area has been cleared of insurgents have the added benefit of strengthening a constituency within the hostile group that seeks a democratic alternative to violence. Democratic structures are also essential in reaching a permanent peace settlement at the end of an insurgency. Of course, democratic representation need not entail a Western-style, election-based system. It could be a tribal jirga, or a system that reflects the opinions and interests of the local population. By

all accounts, the success of the Iraqi surge was largely due to ownership and participation in the fighting by the Sons of Iraq, a group that represented local interests in the Al Anbar province. The Sons of Iraq-aligned political groups went on to win the largest number of seats in the Al Anbar province in the 2009 parliamentary elections.

• **Lesson #2: Empower the military to adapt to guerrilla warfare. Create smaller fighting units. Devolve authority to independent battlefield commanders and place greater emphasis on terrain-specific training for junior officers. Employ specialized guerrilla units alongside conventional infantry.** In order to fight an insurgency, conventional armies must adopt some of the guerrilla strategies of their enemies, including small formations, deep penetration into hostile territory, and hit-and-run surprise attacks. In the case of Sri Lanka, the SIOs organized Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols to intercept and eliminate key LTTE field commanders and fortifications, thereby disorienting the insurgents. To date, one element of U.S. counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan has been to train a large number of Afghan army soldiers. As a result, the size of the Afghan National Army has increased from 1,750 in 2003 to 134,000 in 2010. However, the army is plagued by lack of discipline and desertion and has a poor track record in fighting the Taliban. The Sri Lankan experience would suggest that quality rather than quantity is most important. Therefore, a rigorous training program, such as the eighteen weeks of terrain-specific warfare training in addition to the regular infantry training, should be

instituted to create a smaller but more disciplined Afghan SIOT force that is capable of fighting in small units and conducting hit-and-run attacks deep in hostile territory.

• **Lesson #3: Engage internationally. Focus political, military, and diplomatic contacts at the highest level with key neighboring countries to build confidence. Show sensitivity to protect neighbors' strategic interests.**

Neighboring countries play a role in internal conflicts. An insurgency is unlikely to be defeated if it retains external financial or manpower resources. During the offensive, the Sri Lankan government maintained constant diplomatic and political contacts with the Indian government, providing assurances that India's strategic interests in Sri Lanka would be protected and that the grievances of the ordinary Tamils would be addressed. This outreach made the Indian government more willing to sustain the internal pressure from its own Tamil electorate to stop the Sri Lankan offensive and also participate in jointly coordinated, anti-smuggling navy missions. In the case of Afghanistan, the implementation of this recommendation is complicated by the distrust between Pakistan and the United States as well as between Pakistan and Afghanistan. But the Sri Lankan relationship with India shows us that such distrust can be overcome through comprehensive political, diplomatic, and military engagement. Confidence-building measures would be an Afghanistan-Pakistan nonaggression pact—joined under the auspices of the United States—that disallows the use of land and resources of either

country to undermine the other and provides for a final settlement of the Durand Line, the contentious border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Joint training sessions of diplomats, parliamentarians, and military personnel, supplementing existing military exchange programs, could also help build an environment of trust between the three countries.

• **Lesson #4: Co-opt at the top. Initiate defection of key operational or regional commanders rather than foot soldiers.** Capitalizing on reported ethnic fissures or power struggles within the insurgents or between different insurgent organizations to create defection of commanders has the advantage of not only bringing in their loyal troops but also providing key ground intelligence to government forces. In Afghanistan, significant military and psychological impact can be achieved from the defection of key provincial commanders, especially those that are loosely aligned with the Taliban. The coalition troops have tried to cause defections, but with only limited success given that such initiatives were seen as foreign-led. The recent creation of the High Council for Peace in Afghanistan—made up of intellectuals, tribal and religious leaders, and former Mujahedeen commanders and Taliban members—is a more effective strategy for giving an Afghan face to the reconciliation process. This council should be supplemented by provincial reconciliation committees that can tap into indigenous knowledge of tribal tensions to cut power-sharing deals with commanders at the local and regional level.



LTTE suicide bombers (Black Tigers) during a rare public display in Mullativu. The Black Tiger attacks caused heavy damage to economic and military targets. Photo: Sriyantha Walpola. Mobile:+1 347 684 9068"

### Caveats and Conclusions

To be sure, each counterinsurgency has unique dynamics rooted in the history of the conflict and the existing political structures. Each situation, therefore, must be analyzed on its individual characteristics. Particularly in the case of the United States fighting an insurgency in Afghanistan, implementation of these lessons could be complicated by the lack of consent from the Afghan government. Moreover, insurgencies never happen in a vacuum. Addressing the causes that led to the uprising in the first place will often be much more effective than any military action. In the case of the Tamils, they had genuine grievances in the 1960s and 1970s.

However, in the case of intractable insurgencies that use terror as a weapon and reject political solutions, there are important lessons from the Sri Lankan experience that other governments may be able to apply in their own counterinsurgency strategies. Specifically, governments

must treat the political war as seriously as the military one, maintaining a commitment to democracy and engaging other countries that might be inclined to back the insurgents. In the Sri Lankan experience, there was significant violence committed by both sides, and the loss of life—at least on the Sri Lankan side—could not have been sustained without broad domestic support.

On the military end of the struggle, a counterinsurgency needs a better-trained and more intelligent army that can act and fight like a guerrilla force. In addition, co-opting regional insurgent commanders and rehabilitating them into the democratic process can have a psychological impact that discourages rank-and-file insurgents.

Only by having a nuanced, multipronged strategy that uses all instruments of state power—fusing diplomatic and political strategies with military ones—can a long-lasting insurgency be defeated.

## Transcending a History of Violence: How Colombia Is Reintegrating Ex-Combatants into Society

by Frank Pearl

*Frank Pearl is a 2011 Mid-Career Master in Public Administration candidate and a Mason Fellow at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He is the former High Commissioner for Peace and Reintegration in Colombia.*

Beatriz lived in a remote village in southern Colombia and was the ninth of ten children raised by her mother. She was only seven when a guerrilla group stormed the village and kidnapped her. She lived with this group for thirteen years before entering “reintegration,” a state-sponsored process to help people associated with guerrilla and paramilitary groups return to civilian life. Today, twenty-three-year-old Beatriz is finishing high school. She runs a handcraft business, and her two children attend elementary school.

Oscar, for his part, joined combatants by choice. Born in an urban slum, he ran with gangs from an early age and joined a paramilitary group in his twenties. When he demobilized a decade later, the effort to return to mainstream Colombian society was hard. As part of the reintegration process, Oscar, at thirty-six, is finishing fifth grade and says he will never return to criminal life: “I want my three-year-old daughter to be proud of me,” he told me. “I will become a carpenter.”

Since 2002, more than 52,000 Colombians have demobilized from illegal armed groups and joined the reintegration process. About 35,000 of them demobilized as part of the government’s peace agreement with the United Self-Defense Forces in Colombia (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia, or AUC),

*Since 2002, more than 52,000 Colombians have demobilized from illegal armed groups and joined the reintegration process.*

a coalition of far-right paramilitary organizations. The rest have come from left-wing guerilla groups such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, or FARC).

The results have been encouraging. More than 85 percent of the participants have complied with the rules of reintegration and are striving to build their new, peaceful lives. Indeed, the intervention of the Colombian government, in which I held a role as High Commissioner for Peace and Reintegration in Colombia, in the 100 most violent municipalities has shown preliminary evidence that this approach could make a significant contribution. Instances of theft and murder have decreased significantly, and kidnapping has fallen by more than 90 percent. Something seems to be going right.

The reintegration process has not been easy on the families, communities, or the country as a whole. But the Colombia case demonstrates how effective social investment can decrease violence and trigger profoundly constructive social change, providing a model for how other countries with a history of internal armed conflict can do the same.

### **The Challenge**

For nearly fifty years, guerrilla groups—organized, armed insurgencies—have sought to seize power in Colombia and establish a communist regime. The inability of government institutions to slow, stem, or reverse this growth spurred some citizens to form paramilitaries to defeat the guerillas. These groups, left largely unchecked, ultimately began to exacerbate rather than resolve the rampant violence. They also contributed to the corruption that had long stymied the country's attempts to address challenges like poverty.

In 2002, the new Colombian government, with Alvaro Uribe at its head, began to amend its military strategy with a softer approach that promoted a massive demobilization of the paramilitary organizations. "Strong hand and big heart" was Uribe's campaign motto. The creation of the reintegration process posed ethical, political, and logistical challenges. How does a government foster peace amid ongoing violence by guerrilla groups, a pervasive drug culture, high and widespread poverty, government inefficiency, and corruption? How is reconciliation possible when victims or their families have legal claims against the perpetrators? How should the government honor truth and justice on the one hand while steeling against hatred and violence on the other? What incentive structure can deter recidivism and provide a former illegal group's members with economic opportunities? How do we return current members of these organizations to society and prevent young citizens from becoming new recruits?

Unfortunately, no prior reintegration attempts in other countries easily fit the Colombian experience. In developing the reintegration process, the Colombian government's reintegration team carefully considered the consequences and causes of the violence along with the values we wanted to employ in addressing it.

The reintegration process was instituted in September 2006. As a dynamic, ongoing process, the first step was to define the strategy. Then, a previous program, called reinsertion, which was short-term-driven and only worked with former combatants and not with their families or communities, was converted into reintegration. Next steps involved hiring the team and implementing it in the regions. The ongoing reintegration process is monitored and changes are made accordingly on a periodic basis.

## Values

We approached the problem by first defining the value system that would shape the strategy of the reintegration process. Broadly, we premised the reintegration process on the presence of human dignity in each individual and the ability of individuals to change. The former meant that human lives have equal worth regardless of a person's character or past actions. The latter reflects a belief in free will and a capacity to learn. These premises suggested that ending violence by changing human behavior was preferable to ending violence through the use of force. Under these premises we defined five guiding principles for the strategy of the reintegration process:

**1. Truth.** Our approach required honestly relating the atrocities that had claimed hundreds of thousands of victims. Despite the psychological pain and the logistical difficulty of such an endeavor, Colombians needed to know the full extent of the actions of illegal groups.

**2. Justice.** Ex-combatants needed to pay sentences for their crimes according to the transitional justice system established. This system looked for reduced sentences in exchange for truth and reparation, striking a difficult balance between peace and justice. If sentences were too strong, combatants would have few incentives to leave their groups; if incentives were too generous, the process would have no credibility.

**3. Reparation.** Our process had to attempt to make victims whole. It would not be fair or sustainable to neglect victims while addressing the perpetrators' needs.

**4. Guarantee of non-repetition.** While non-repetition could never be entirely weeded out, we sought to bring it close to zero, ensuring that no additional victims suffered at the hands of the same perpetrators.

**5. Transparency.** Information needed to be openly shared in order to generate constructive criticism and learning.

## The Strategy

Our next step was to focus on the details of the strategy itself. Based on Harvard University professor and Nobel Prize in Economics winner Amartya Sen's notions of freedom

and the link between development and capacity-building, we diverged from the traditional designs of reintegration processes used around the world and defined our objective as building the skills of ex-combatants.

### **Social Reintegration Strategy**

The social aspect of the strategy focuses on the psychological conditions of the ex-combatants. Within this category the team laid out four desired attributes the participants should exhibit in order to be ready to return to society:

1. Sense of achievement, defined as the capacity of attaining goals with respect toward others' rights
2. Assertiveness
3. Responsibility
4. Respectful conflict resolution

The psychosocial reintegration strategy is set to work in four complementary environments:

1. Family environment
2. Educational environment, such as a secondary school or a university; the average ex-combatant is twenty-seven years old and 40 percent are illiterate when they join the process
3. Professional environment
4. Community environment, defined as the neighborhoods to which former combatants returned

Psychological tests are administered at the individual and family level through family visits. Tests are designed to understand different family roles, how those change in response to demobilization, and whether there are any patterns of family violence or

abuse. These tests provide a starting point for identifying the gaps and the types of interventions required. Due to their psychological conditions or addictions, on average, about 2 to 3 percent of the participants are unable to enter the reintegration process and are remitted to specialized institutions.

Originally under "reinsertion," the social reintegration process contained no formal time limit and included daily or weekly activities. Weekly reports on each participant allowed the team to assess progress and identify which parts of the process were effective and which required change. The field information gathered over two years allowed the team to fundamentally change this process by splitting it into two: a basic route that lasted twenty-four months and an advanced route that took thirty-six months to complete. A team of more than 300 psychologists and social workers is currently implementing the differentiated route approach—for some, twenty-four months, for others, thirty-six months—in some 700 cities and municipalities throughout Colombia.

Experimentation has been a crucial component of program design. The team has started integrating sports and arts activities into the psychosocial program. Aimed at achieving the same four attributes described above, sports projects, such as playing guided soccer without a referee, can facilitate the transition toward being a more responsible citizen.

In the case of the arts, guided projects in which participants and communities write and represent theater scripts, stories, or songs lyrics



can help not only heal but also find common ground among victims and the community. Participants have formed music groups, distributed CDs, and launched theater and arts performances. They have written books with stories of how violence emerged and occurred in several of the regions of Colombia—books that serve the dual purpose of integrating the participant into the healing process in the art workshop and of contributing to the nation's collective memory.

### ***Economic Reintegration Strategy***

The economic component of the reintegration strategy focuses on two stages: education and jobs.

Nearly 40 percent of the members of illegal armed groups who enter the reintegration process don't know how to read and write. Those who have had some education have largely forgotten most of what they had learned. However, their participation in illicit activity has endowed them with certain skills that have helped them survive and even thrive under adverse conditions. The key related *policy questions include: What is the set of knowledge and skills former combatants need to learn and unlearn in order to compete successfully for jobs in the labor market? Are traditional educational systems suited for adults emerging from violent and illegal environments? If not, what sort of process could best utilize their existing skills?*

Our team started by seeking commitments from the regions and municipalities regarding enrolling former combatants in remedial educational programs for adults.

Testimony and evidence from the field, however, has shown that ex-combatants were participating in this process mostly because their monetary stipends were tied to class attendance. Most ex-combatants were not motivated; they advanced slowly, and some were even abusing the system. With economic and household responsibilities on the one hand, and without developed study habits on the other, most participants were either unwilling or unable to engage in the five-year education process that aimed to give them the equivalent of a high school degree.

Therefore, we needed to design an educational process that would be shorter and able to optimize participants' present skills, with the objective being attractiveness on the labor market. Under a new phase funded and supported by the Dutch government and joined by the Colombian Ministry of Education and the Institute for Advanced Technical Learning, a two-year program was launched in October 2010. The new approach aims to achieve four objectives:

1. To link education and technical learning in a way that allows participants to learn while working
2. To help students generate income sooner
3. To recognize that students enter the process with skills that may be similar to those that are in demand
4. To use less in the way of public resources

After the educational and vocational training, the major challenge is securing effective economic reintegration. We

aimed to create skills and collaborate with the Colombian private sector by creating opportunities for the ex-combatants in free market conditions. In a country in which thousands of citizens have been harmed by guerilla and paramilitary groups, members of the private sector often respond with distrust, resentment, rejection, or indifference. Our message to them has been this: "If you believe that fear, distrust, resentment, or indifference are going to be helpful in the process of building a better country, let us maintain those perspectives. If not, let us work together to change them."

We designed an approach in order to engage companies and foundations in the possibility of creating jobs. In the approach, certain criteria and business types would be used in order to identify private sector players in each region and how they could contribute to the process. The criteria were: accepted risk level, labor or capital intensive business, and business size. According to these, eight different and complementary mechanisms were created so the private sector would be willing and able to participate.

On the one side of the spectrum stood large corporations that wanted to contribute to the reintegration process. An alliance with a private equity fund (PEF) began its implementation stage in July 2010 and is now operating in its first basic stage, with the idea being that large companies would invest significant sums of money in it. The fund would then select projects to invest in, mostly projects located outside large cities, with each one providing new jobs for both victims and ex-combatants. Investment

decisions would be made through the PEF board or committees; no government official would have a say in those decisions. On the other side of the spectrum stood Colombians who wanted to contribute to the reintegration process but lacked the monetary resources. The reintegration team applied a "time bank" mechanism under which the reintegration system has been able to use these Colombians' skills. This allows reintegration to benefit from talent or time donated in three different ways. First, sponsoring companies allow their professionals to donate two-to-three hours a week to mentor an ex-combatant who is in the process of setting up a business. In this case, the sponsoring company would provide training and allow its employees to devote working time for this option. They would also purchase the resulting products or services from ex-combatants for market prices. Second, professionals can join a mentor pool for ex-combatants. Third, university students from disciplines like business administration, engineering, or law can choose to do their practices before graduation in a way that contributes to the reintegration system. In all three cases the average duration of the mentoring project has been twelve months. The follow-up of all projects is monitored by the reintegration process.

These two mechanisms have been complemented by another six intermediate ones that provide a combination of capital, talent, or the possibility of strengthening the value chain of a particular industry by supporting job creation for victims and ex-combatants. In addition, the financial sector has been willing to

cooperate and has opened more than 35,000 savings accounts so participants in the process could start having records in the financial system. From 2006 to 2010, more than 660 companies and private foundations joined the reintegration network.

In terms of policy challenges, the bottleneck is not in private sector commitment. It is in the skill level of participants and their lack of culture and habits that would allow them to be successful in a working environment. Resolving this is a long-term challenge. Nonetheless, some 19,000 ex-combatants have found stable jobs; the rest are still in the education process.

### **Community**

Finally, there is the community component, which is key to achieving reconciliation. Forgiveness is a personal act; governments have no power to decree or enforce it. But governments can create conditions that allow people to forgive (not forget) the past atrocities of ex-combatants. Our team has understood the reintegration process as a way of creating long-term sustainable conditions in Colombian communities. We have identified three elements needed for a community to be able to move past the violence and be able to prosper.

The first element is order, which includes the legitimate use of force to defend citizens and justice, meaning an effective justice system. The second is effective investment, understood as the combination of public investment that facilitates private capital inflows as well as investment that builds skills

in citizens, as described above. This element needs to be complemented with profitable and socially responsible private sector investment. Finally, a culture that predisposes citizens to solve differences constructively and collectively needs to be built.

### **Conclusion**

The aforementioned crime reductions—with theft, murder, and kidnapping way down and the vast majority of process participants complying with the rules of reintegration—are encouraging. If properly addressed, effective social investment that builds people's skills might be the way out of violence.

The challenge ahead is how to work more on the causes of violence so we don't have to encounter its consequences. Too often, social investment in the past has failed to address the risk factors of violence. As a corollary to our reintegration work, we set the stage for modifying several social investment programs nationwide to improve their content. But this takes time. Government leaders should mobilize cities and countries to dedicate significant resources to address the root causes of violence that have to do with the individual, his or her family, and the broader community.

After all, achieving peace and reconciliation is a long-term effort. It might take a complete generation to do. What we have undertaken are just initial steps so people like Beatriz and Oscar would never be faced with the option of joining an illegal organization.

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Image by Flickr user paloetic.

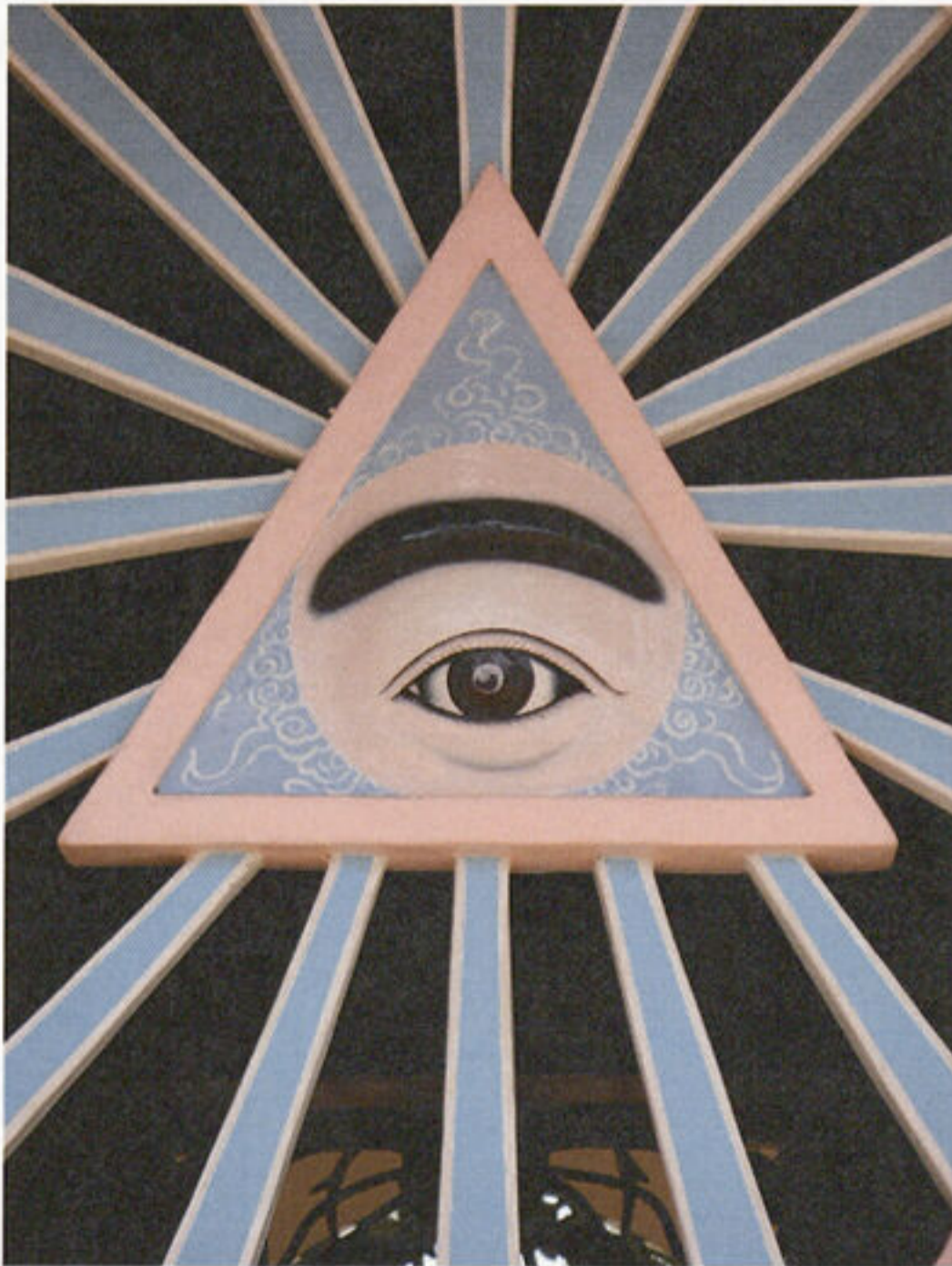
## Sight Unseen

by Wendy P. Barreno

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### "All Seeing Eye"



Tay Ninh, Vietnam

Privacy: As social networking explodes and shared experiences blur the ownership of personal information, what is the role of government in protecting private information from public consumption?

## “Girl Parts”



Hutong, Beijing, China

Gendercide: Served poisoned milk, fed rice husks that slits their throats, stuffed in clay pots, starved and dehydrated with salt, overfed and wrapped in tight, wet blankets: all methods of modern-day female infanticide.



Charleston, South Carolina, U.S.A.

### “At Prayer”



Tay Ninh, Vietnam

Faith in politics: How much leeway should faith-based service providers have, if any, to require prayer or preach religious values when operating homeless shelters and medical clinics—with or without government funding? What happens in policy making when reason and faith reach an impasse?

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### “Reflections”



Hoi An, Vietnam

With urgent needs around unemployment, retirement benefits, energy, defense, and other issues, what is the right balance between deliberation and swift action? When does careful research become paralysis?



## “Red Door”



Hoi An, Vietnam

In the twentieth century, ideological differences helped fuel two Red Scares, a Cold War, and wars by proxy. Today, competing ideologies on human rights and other issues are fueling new hostilities. How can policy makers balance a passion for capitalism and representative democracy with respect for alternative political ideologies? And to what extent can outsiders drive and sustain ideological change abroad?

## Walking Down the Mountain: Indigenous Empowerment in the Peruvian Andes

by Katherine Majzoub

*Katherine Majzoub is a 2011 Master in Public Policy candidate at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, focusing on human rights and health policy. She has been supporting the Communities of Q'eros in their pursuit of self-directed development since she met community members as a Thomas J. Watson Fellow in 2007.*

There are local elections in town, so he has brought a portable radio instead of his guitar. The book-sized device is strapped across his body like it is part of his uniform, a natural addition to sturdy khaki pants, a white-collared shirt, and a flimsy sunhat (he had traded his wide-brimmed felt hat with a Taiwanese tourist a few months back). On top of the shirt he wears a blue sweater from one of the street markets in Cusco, Peru. Most importantly, he has exchanged his hojotas, Andean shoes made out of old tire tread, for shiny leather hiking boots that make him limp a little bit with every step. Those, I can safely bet, were a find at the *bartillo*, Cusco's Saturday morning market of stolen, used, and otherwise available camping gear, cell phones, wool blankets, textbooks, handcrafts, bicycles, empty glass jars, and bent forks. Although we are now deep within the mountains, we started in the city, and these are city clothes.

By most standards Fredy is not a large person—he and I stand eye-to-eye—but he can run this trail that I am now struggling just to walk. He stops, asking if I want to rest. I shake my head. We can see the pass now, and after that, it will be downhill into the valley below. Plus, we are late, I note, gesturing to the sun whose trail across the massive Andean sky I am learning to track. We need to get to the school before nine. I doubt we have more than an hour left.

*Normally young men will only stay a few weeks in the mines.*

With Fredy a few steps ahead, we continue walking across the luma, the craggy rocky area above the pastureland that wraps like a skirt around the sacred mountain Wamanlipa. Because animals and people only cross this area on their way to somewhere else, it is one of the most pristine parts of Q'ero land and the best place for shamanic ceremonies. Every once in awhile, Fredy points to a large boulder that shielded him from a storm as a child, when he spent days at a time tending his grandfather's alpacas. He remembers being constantly hungry, cold, and tired. Often he was afraid of the spirits that swirled in the constant mists, but only once, he recounts proudly, as he looks out at the horizon wallpapered with mountains in all directions, was he ever lost.

We walk along to a steady fuzz of sound, punctuated with mumbled strings of excited commentary. Apparently the radio waves don't penetrate

*It is not surprising, then, that hearing Fredy talk about the jungle was like listening to someone describing a known but distant country: every bit of exaggeration encapsulated an element of disturbing truth.*

the space between the mountains. The intrusion of the noise into our pristine surroundings grates on my thoughts.

"Fredy, puedes entender la radio, o....?" I ask in my awkward Spanish.

"Si, si, si!" he exclaims, giving me an up-to-the-minute account of exactly who is winning the elections and what this means for the new school where he is one of the two teachers.

As we continue to walk to the sound of static, my mind settles on memories of Antonio, Fredy's younger brother who had previously accompanied us on journeys like this one. For a moment, I think to ask Fredy if he has heard anything of him but stop myself. I know the answer.

Against his family's advice and Fredy's strong admonitions, Antonio had left his home village of Ccochomocco four months earlier. For several weeks before he disappeared, Antonio attended Kusi Quyllur, the school that Fredy recently founded with the support of the community and several international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Although Antonio had often tried to teach himself to write the numbers from one to one hundred and to spell basic words, Kusi Quyllur was the first school he had gone to with any regularity. Not surprisingly, he failed all of the tests that Fredy and the new teacher from

the city put in front of him. It wouldn't have taken him long to realize how far behind he was for his age level.

When young men from Hatun Q'ero decide to leave their fathers' subsis-

tence potato fields in the mountains to make money, they have a few options. They can sell their services as shamans to foreign tourists, which requires wearing the traditional clothing of the community and making the right contacts in Cusco or the Sacred Valley. Another option is to work on the Transoceanic Highway, the new thoroughfare financed by the Brazilian government that travels across South America from Brazil's coast in the East to Peru's coast in the West.

*The children would learn how to speak Spanish, fathers would no longer look for hope in bottles of 90-proof alcohol, women would participate in community meetings, and young adults would attend professional schools in Cusco.*

As the international price of gold has steadily increased over the past four years, however, these options have paled in comparison to the last alternative: going to the jungle to work in the mines.

Normally young men will stay only a few weeks in the mines. It is dangerous and difficult work in which miners operate large machinery to uproot the rainforest and then use deadly amounts of mercury to extract a few ounces of gold from the torn land. Although the area of Madre de Dios is officially protected as the Manu National Park and the Tambopata National Reserve, the local law enforcement is unprepared (or unwilling) to monitor the vast expanse of rainforest under its protection. The Peruvian government acknowledges that the illegal gold mining industry within its national parks is thriving and growing.

Antonio initially traveled to the jungle with a group of Q'eros but when his companions returned to the village a month later, Antonio was not among them. As the weeks went on and Antonio did not arrive, his father, who often works in Cusco as a shaman, read his sacred coca leaves to determine the well-being of his youngest son. His readings assured the community that Antonio wasn't suffering, but Fredy's recurring dream that his brother had lost his left hand to a chainsaw finally

pushed Fredy to make preparations for a journey.

There were few things that would draw Fredy into the jungle. As a child he had traveled to its edge during his family's annual harvest of bananas, bamboo, and other jungle products. In recent years, however, the arrival of plastic goods and weekly markets to the nearby mountain town of Ocongate had mercifully replaced these trips.

The location of Hatun Q'ero, perched on the edge of a mountain 13,000 feet above the Amazon basin, probably contributed to the jungle's legendary reputation among the Q'eros, but the division between the mountains and the jungle was more than a geographic drop of thousands of feet. It was also a boundary of spiritual dimensions. Every year that border is ritually marked in the pilgrimage of Quyllur Ri'ti, where for centuries



Path to Hatun Q'ero. Photo by Fredy Flores Machacca.

indigenous groups from the Amazon and the Andes have met to worship sacred mountains with dance, music, and a midnight trek into the glaciers. Although they share geographic space during the festival, the dances, music, and languages of each group remain distinct and foreign to the other.

It is not surprising, then, that hearing Fredy talk about the jungle was like listening to someone describing a known but distant country: every bit of exaggeration encapsulated an element of disturbing truth. Among the nuggets that he had collected was a claim that children in the jungle stood in front of their houses with rifles and weren't afraid to use them. The steady supply of gold meant the economy was inflated to the point that simple meals cost ten times what they did in Cusco.

Even more problematic was that the jungle's stifling damp climate bred poisonous insects, snakes, and diseases that couldn't be cured with mountain medicines.

Worst of all was that Fredy knew that on his journey to find his brother he wouldn't be able to trust anyone in the jungle. Although he was one of the few Q'eros who could speak both Spanish and his indigenous Quechua, he was still a Q'ero. In anticipation, he had gotten a police report from the nearest town and intended to go directly to the station once he reached Puerto Maldonado. He considered the possibility that the police, too, would be corrupt. But there was no other option.

Most of Fredy's arrangements for his trip consisted of finding other people

who would travel with him; the jungle was not a place that Q'eros went alone. Eventually he located two other young men from the community who were eager to return to their jobs in the mines. At twenty-one and nineteen, Fredy's companions were strong, friendly, and barely able to manage a few words in Spanish.

For two days and the equivalent of \$30 the group rode on top of one of the monstrous PELIGRO petrol trucks that careen down the road to Madre de Dios every day. Like many roads in that area of the Peruvian Andes, it sees numerous fatalities. That reality, however, doesn't stop any of the locals from using it: the only other way to make the same trip is to spend two months' salary buying a ticket on a tourist plane flying from Cusco to Puerto Maldonado. The tourists, of course, are headed for the national park. They don't realize it is infested with gold mines like maggots eating their way through a loaf of bread.

*None of the schools is closer than a seven-mile walk from Ccochomocco, and not one of them is called nochanchispa escuelanchis, a smooth blend of Quechua and Spanish that means, very simply, "our school." I.E. Kusi Quyllur is, then, in spirit if not in fact, the first.*

In the end, it took Fredy a week to reach the remote outpost where Antonio was working: two days on top of the PELIGRO truck, one day waiting around Puerto Maldonado to find someone who would take him to the mine, two days working for the owner of the mine in exchange for passage on a canoe down the river, and two more

days slogging through the jungle muck to his brother's camp.

When Fredy finally arrived at the remote outpost, he found Antonio with both hands intact but debilitated by a jungle illness. Everything was fine, Antonio assured Fredy in the few minutes that they had alone, and he was making good money that the brothers could use to buy llamas. Refusing Fredy's offer to leave the jungle together, Antonio promised that he'd return to Hatun Q'ero as soon as he was strong enough to make the journey.

It has now been two months since that conversation, and nobody in Hatun Q'ero has heard anything from Antonio. When the topic comes up, Fredy launches into a lecture about how Antonio wouldn't have disappeared into the jungle if he had been able to go to a good school as a child, a school like the one Fredy was now creating for the village. With education, Fredy would explain, everything would

be better. The children would learn how to speak Spanish, fathers would no longer look for hope in bottles of 90-proof alcohol, women would participate in community meetings, and young adults would attend professional schools in Cusco. Eventually, he hoped, those educated young people would return to serve the community.

Instead of remaining dependent on the capricious beneficence of NGOs and the coercive bargaining of government agencies, the indigenous government would make choices according to its values and collective goals. The future would not be as it is now.

My thoughts have carried me to the pass. We now descend quickly into the valley of Ccochomocco, laughing as we stumble down the incline of loose rocks toward the small tin roof in the distance. When we finally arrive, thirty children stop their impromptu soccer match and run to line up in front of the stone schoolhouse. Some of them, the girls mostly, wear the clothing of the community: long, plaited braids, neon pink sweaters, and gathered black skirts that swirl above bare knees as they shift their sandaled feet in the cold. Only a few of the boys have chosen to cover their faded city clothes with traditional woolen ponchos. Everything appears as if through the smoke of the cooking fires that fill the stone huts on the surrounding slopes: the fog has not yet left the valley.

Technically, it would be incorrect to call I.E. Kusi Quyllur the first school in Hatun Q'ero. In fact, there are three other schools spread out across the six villages of the community. The first was founded in the early 1960s, the second was sponsored by the indigenous rights activist wife of a former Peruvian president, and the third was the recent project of a foreign woman. The Peruvian government currently runs all three schools, and as a result, they are staffed with teachers who are too inexperienced, too unreliable, or simply too bad to get jobs anywhere else. None of the schools is closer than a seven-mile walk from Ccochomocco,

and not one of them is called *nochan-chispa escuelanchis*, a smooth blend of Quechua and Spanish that means, very simply, "our school." I.E. Kusi Quyllur is, then, in spirit if not in fact, the first.

With a broad smile and authoritative stride, Fredy welcomes the children in the schoolyard by name as he notes their attendance in his new notebook. While many of the students are his cousins, one six-year-old, whose hair is only long enough for two stubby pigtails, is his daughter. Once roll call is complete, Fredy begins his morning lecture in Quechua.

Our traditional clothes, he tells the students as he pulls humorously at his khakis and sweater, are things to be proud of, and furthermore, he adds with a wry smile, they will keep us warmer in the schoolhouse than the city clothes. The two boys wearing ponchos stand a little straighter. Later that day, one of them, the best student in the school, will declare that he will become a teacher like Fredy.

## Chattahoochee Hills Charter School: The Future of American Education

by Tyler S. Thigpen

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In the 1980s, restaurant owner Steve Nygren developed a series of successful bistros in Atlanta, GA, called the Peasant Restaurants. He and his wife Marie loved working in Atlanta but gradually grew concerned that spending so much time in the city was cutting off their three daughters from nature. So in 1991, they purchased sixty acres of land in the middle of the woods southwest of Atlanta and began to make weekend visits. They gardened, cut trails into the woods, renovated one of the small farm cottages on the property, and after three years, relocated entirely.

One day while Nygren was out running with his daughter, they came across a bulldozer flattening a piece of land neighboring his property. Alarmed at the thought that urban sprawl might spoil his family's new way of life, and passionate about extending a similar lifestyle opportunity to others, Nygren quickly bought 400 more acres of land. He then spent the next ten years embarking on a mission: he recruited like-minded entrepreneurs, bought 60,000 acres and incorporated it into the rural town of Chattahoochee Hills, and in December



2010, cofounded the city's first charter school.

As stated on its Web site, the mission of the Chattahoochee Hills Charter School (CHCS) is to "inspire children to the highest levels of academic achievement through a rigorous curriculum that integrates the wonders of the natural world." Nygren, together with others who collaborated in writing the charter (including parents, grandparents, concerned Chattahoochee Hills citizens, and myself), plan to reconnect children with nature by using the abundant, rural nature of the community as a vehicle for experiential learning.

We foresee teachers working with students in streams, ponds, fields, forests, and farms to observe the complex interactions between human and natural systems and practicing gardening and recycling to experience the impact of their choices on the environment. Author Richard Louv's 2005 bestseller *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* describes this philosophy and is the first book that Nygren puts in the hands of visitors.

CHCS will be the first charter school in Georgia to incorporate environment-based education programs into its core curriculum and one of 200 or so charter schools in the United States that, according to the Green Schools Charter Network, have a green focus. Moreover, CHCS will be the first charter school in the nation to position agricultural, environmental, and artistic themes as lenses through which students can explore the Common Core Standards—the newly accepted academic guidelines that all Georgia

children will be held accountable to learn.

CHCS, whose doors will open in August 2011, is dissolving the traditional curricular silos of math, science, language arts, and social studies. It is reorganizing academic knowledge and skills around select agricultural, environmental, and artistic themes that are inherently multidisciplinary and multicultural. Because the traditional silos are so pervasive, and because U.S. teachers usually make lesson plans independently (or at best with other teachers within their silo), students in typical U.S. schools often lack the opportunity to encounter the connections among different subject areas.

The ramifications of this disconnect between the disciplines, which developmental psychologist and researcher Howard Gardner suggests stifles innovation, are too costly for CHCS leaders. We plan to provide students with multifaceted exchanges that rigorously highlight cross-cultural currents and interdisciplinary connections. For example, instead of attending a conventional science class, children at CHCS will attend a three-week-long investigation entitled "The Problem of Drinking Water" during which they will study potable water from a blend of mathematical, scientific, linguistic/literary, and social/historical perspectives. The curricular reorientation, CHCS argues, will challenge habits of compartmentalized thinking and better equip students to address twenty-first century questions.

For its facilities, CHCS is tapping into an emerging array of engineers focused on constructing schools mainly from recyclable materials and ensuring that

classrooms generate an energy surplus. Energy-demand reduction, air quality, climate customization, natural light, solar power, no/low VOC-emitting interiors, and high-tech monitoring are among the focus points of these green builders. CHCS plans to use their designs to excite students about science and math and foster a transparent relationship between CHCS students and their surrounding environment. The end goal of school construction, as CHCS sees it, is to produce sustainable structures that support the curriculum, engender global citizenship and stewardship, reflect the creative spirit of the community, and engage students with the social and natural worlds.

The importance to CHCS of the latter point—engaging students with both the social and natural worlds—cannot be understated. Louv’s assertion about a nature-deficit disorder is one in a growing body of mostly qualitative research arguing that children who engage in environmental-based investigations in their own communities are getting better test scores, displaying fewer discipline issues, and becoming more excited about learning. Leading the way in this field of inquiry is the California Department of Education, which commissioned a series of studies in the late 1990s finding that 77 percent of students in their environment-based programs earned higher grade point averages and scored higher than their peers across all standardized tests. Additionally, education analysts Amy Dirks and Kathryn Orvis (2005) noted from case studies that Indiana third-graders who attended schools with gardens achieved higher test scores and exhibited fewer discipline problems than students in

schools without them.

Cautiously but increasingly, researchers like Louv, Dirks, and Orvis are linking the rise of technology and an urban, indoor lifestyle, as well as the correlating decline of an outdoor experience with natural environments and cycles, to record rates within the American population of ADD, ADHD, and clinical depression. The hypothesis generated by these and other qualitative studies, and the one that in the future must be tested by additional quantitative methods, is that environment-based educational programs have not just instrumental merit—as a means of improving test scores and behavior—but inherent value, as an indispensable educational component of child development and, ultimately, of human life itself.

But Nygren is not waiting. Although U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan recently acknowledged the federal government’s absence “from the movement to educate our children to be stewards of our environment and prepare them to participate in a sustainable economy” (Duncan 2010), Nygren and our Chattahoochee Hills charter team have long been forging ahead with the belief that schools succeed not only to the extent that they train children to compete globally, but also to the extent that they train children to appreciate and cultivate the social and natural worlds.

To be sure, the CHCS model is still in its infancy. There is little evidence regarding the efficacy of multidisciplinary team-working in educational settings. Moreover, having access to appropriate accommodation and resources, employing teachers who

have had profession-specific training, and finding adequate teacher training for environmental education are considerable challenges that CHCS will face. The Georgia Charter Commission, which December 2010 authorized only three of more than twenty applying brick-and-mortar schools, will no doubt be keeping a close eye on CHCS's progress.

Yet we embrace the opportunity to demonstrate how effective this model can be. Two decades after Nygren and his daughter's run-in with the bulldozer, at least two things stand out about Chattahoochee Hills country. The first is that by valuing social responsibility and deep commitment to environmental sustainability, Chattahoochee Hills is receiving local and national recognition for setting a new standard in responsible development. The second is that Chattahoochee Hills, through its student engagement with a school's natural surroundings, curriculum development, school facilities construction, and educational purpose, is officially in full pursuit of education reform.

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## The Samurai Ethics: A Paradigm for Corporate Behavior

by Shinya Fujimura

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Wealthy countries that are still figuring out how to cope with the economic downturn should consider taking a page from an ancient Japanese tradition: samurai ethics.

This set of ethics, known as bushido, suggests that continual and rapid growth doesn't have to be the ultimate goal of economic existence. Rather, there is an alternative paradigm. Although bushido is not economics-specific, it points to how the developed world might find a path to greater economic contentment—a path that's possible with or without an ever-rising GDP.

Bushido was born out of the class of elite Japanese warriors that comprised the samurai from roughly the twelfth century until the dawn of the Industrial Age. Yet a wide swath of Japanese society has internalized bushido over hundreds of years of cultural exposure. According to nineteenth century social theorist Inazo Nitobe, the concept has “filtered down from the social class where it originated,” thereby “furnishing a moral standard for the whole people” (2004).

So what is bushido? It is a code of conduct—a set of moral standards—that prizes qualities like loyalty, duty, and generosity. This distinctly Japanese tradition permeates the country's corporate culture and has informed many of Japan's social developments over the last century. When applied to economic activity, it

has led to a constellation of values and behaviors that have helped Japan thrive in good times as well as bad.

### **Bushido and Japan's Economic Growth**

Although economic growth is not everything, one core bushido principle—chugi—has likely worked to Japan's benefit in this regard. A samurai principle centering on loyalty, chugi helps us understand the success of the top-down, Japanese corporate structure, which relies more on social obligations than on economic incentives. Chugi has made it possible for Japanese companies to have employees who work equally hard regardless of whether salaries are going up or down. The diligence inherent in this set of social commitments has been one of the primary reasons for Japan's robust and at times miraculous economic performance since World War II. Indeed, the chugi principle helps explain how

overwork is rampant in Japanese society. Moreover, systemic loyalty keeps workers mired in positions where they are less productive and creative than they might otherwise be. Still, Japan's tremendous productivity may not have been possible without it.

### **Bushido and Egalitarianism: A Spiritual Backbone of the Distributive Justice**

If bushido has had both positive and negative impacts on Japan's economic growth, what about its other effects? For one thing, bushido has contributed to the relatively egalitarian economic system that's prevalent in that country. At first that might seem counterintuitive: if loyalty is the main operating principle in the Japanese workplace, we might expect employers to exploit their employees, leading to gross inequality and harmful effects on the general population's quality of life. Yet Japan thrives on quality-of-life indicators

*Bushido contains egalitarian principles that have allowed wealth to trickle down to the vast majority in Japanese society, increasing the supply of human happiness by enabling everyone to feel part of the nation's success.*

the Japanese were able to change their focus so quickly and determinedly from militarism to economic development after their defeat in that conflict: leaders saw that this shift needed to happen, and the population rapidly switched gears.

To be sure, not all of chugi's implications are positive. For one thing,

such as life expectancy, infant mortality, and educational achievement. Why?

Bushido contains egalitarian principles that have allowed wealth to trickle down to the vast majority in Japanese society, increasing the supply of human happiness by enabling everyone to feel part of the nation's success.

The first of these egalitarian principles is *seihin*, which means honorable poverty. The samurai, despite being connected to Japan's ruling class, were expected to live humbly. Even today, one of the most striking facts about Japanese society is that elite figures are

tives, and employees alike. As a result, profits have tended to trickle down to the bottom of the social strata in Japanese society. It's no surprise that the Japanese have a saying: *ichioku-sochuryu*, which translates literally to "100 million completely middle class."

*Bushido, then, is part of the basis for a sense of national identity and belonging—an ideal that says the Japanese are one people, in it together. What could be more egalitarian than that?*

not necessarily wealthy. Consequently, greed is less pervasive than one might expect. True, there is corruption in the Japanese business world, as there is anywhere. But the fact that wealth is a little less needed for prestige helps keep avarice in check.

The second principle is *jin*, which means benevolence, generosity, and compassion. Originally from Confucianism, *jin* was arguably the most important ethical concept for the ruling samurai, allowing them to empathize with the governed. One Japanese leader who exemplified this quality was Yozan Uesugi, an eighteenth and nineteenth century statesman who was a member of the ruling class. He lived modestly and helped his clan climb out of debt by demanding shared sacrifice—a sacrifice that the samurai, too, were expected to make for the good of the whole. "In order for us to be proud that our region is wealthy," he said, "all the people in my region must be better off" (Mori 2010).

Today, this principle is manifest in Japanese corporate culture. Companies in Japan have successfully shared profits among shareholders, execu-

In other words, Japan is "a nation that's all middle class." In fact, for most of the postwar era, economic indicators showed that Japan had remarkably low income inequality. Although the nation has slipped a bit in this area given the economic problems of the last two decades, it still ranks above countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Ireland. Moreover, because bushido values are such a strong part of Japanese identity, the basis exists for continued improvement on income inequality. In any event, without the role of *jin*, Japan might be a far less egalitarian place than it is today.

Finally, bushido points to something even more important than economic indicators. Namely, it provides social meaning. The moral purpose that bushido articulates transcends booms and busts, providing Japan with a stable foundation. It is often said that a Japanese company is like a family, with executives caring about employees and employees showing respect to executives. Bushido, then, is part of the basis for a sense of national identity and belonging—an ideal that says the

Japanese are one people, in it together. What could be more egalitarian than that?

### **Alternative Corporate Ethics in the Post-Lehman Era?**

So what now? It has been more than two years since the global financial crisis occurred, and it seems that we still have not explored, let alone settled on, an alternative paradigm for coping with economic stress. But perhaps bushido could provide another way of thinking about the problem. If corporate ethics are seen through the bushido lens, things other than pure growth suddenly become important, even as growth remains a useful side effect.

As one concrete example, business researchers could incorporate bushido into studies on corporate social responsibility, a fast-growing field that helps companies figure out how to operate in a broadly beneficial way. Founders of Sony and Toyota were said to apply bushido concepts in their day-to-day operations, and companies elsewhere in the world might benefit from doing the same.

Of course, every nation has its own needs and values. But understanding what the Japanese have to offer in this realm—and pondering how to incorporate the most useful concepts from samurai ethics—could only enrich the range of options that the nations of the world have at their disposal. Bushido may therefore have a role to play in inching the world toward greater prosperity, distributive justice, and social meaning.

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## Abolish Marriage! A Fourteen-Point Manifesto

by Tracey L. Stark

*Tracey L. Stark is a 2011 Mid-Career Master in Public Administration candidate at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. She is single.*

**1** We could end the tragedy of divorce in one fell swoop. Nearly half of marriages in the United States end in divorce. All divorces are the result of marriage. End marriage; end divorce.

**3** Ending marriage will reduce sin. Commandments like the seventh (don't commit adultery) and the tenth (don't covet your neighbor's wife) won't be necessary, saving us on marriage counseling and attorneys' fees.

**5** Marriage is costly. The average American wedding costs almost \$30,000.

**7** Marriage creates laziness. Look at how many people let themselves go after tying the knot. Do we need to see more dads with beer bellies and more moms in high-waisted mom jeans at Walmart?

**2** Marriage is a health hazard. Married people are twice as likely to become obese as single couples. No wonder couples have to pledge to support each other "in sickness and in health."

**4** The average divorce lawyer earns \$96,000 a year. Should we be subsidizing this bloodsucking profession?

**6** Did you see the headline "Wedding Causes Cholera"? A destination wedding in the Caribbean sent 400 guests to the toilet.



8 Like sex? Don't get married. In the film *Before Sunset*, the character of Jesse sums up his libido after marriage: "I'm like a monk, you know. I mean, I've had sex less than ten times in the last four years."

9 Marriage is bad for women. As Gloria Steinem once said, it's an "arrangement for one and a half people."

10 Gays have suffered discrimination for centuries. Shouldn't we care enough to spare them the additional misery of marriage?

11 Plus, gay marriage will lead to gay divorce and change the meaning of "gay divorcee" for all the straight people who escaped bad marriages.

12 If everyone is married, who will thwart the *Zombie Apocalypse*? We humans need the energy and freedom to get it on with the zombies so we can make some hybrid babies—the only way to win *World War Z*, of course.

13 The Tea Party wants to get government off our backs. I agree! Get government out of the bedroom, too. All that space it takes up could be better used for shoe storage.

14 Lovers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your ball and chain.

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