

# AGORA



*Palo Alto High School's foreign affairs magazine*

## *The U.S. Should Limit Afghanistan Withdrawal*

BY NASSIM FEDEL  
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Cover photo courtesy of The U.S. Army

Magazine design by Anna McGarrigle with assistance from Brian Benton

# What is *Agora*?

Members of Paly's Foreign Affairs Club saw a need for a publication to express opinions about foreign policy. We've created this magazine to create a new forum for Paly students to discuss foreign affairs. One of Paly's strengths is the incredible diversity of backgrounds and opinions of our students, and *Agora* provides a new way for students to talk about how they see the world. We could not have made this magazine without the incredible passion and outspokenness of the PALY community, as well as the generosity of ASB, and we thank you all sincerely. Enjoy!

Gregory Dunn and Nassim Fedel  
Presidents

## Submit to *Agora*

We want to hear your opinion! As part of our mission, we strive to publish student opinions on foreign affairs, from a variety of perspectives. We welcome anyone interested in foreign affairs.

Contact [palajofa@gmail.com](mailto:palajofa@gmail.com) for more information.

## *Agora's* Artwork

In our efforts to serve the student body, *Agora* features student cartoons and drawings in addition to images licensed for public use. Our cartoonists, Gracie Fang and Christiana Cheng design and draw cartoons based on the content of particular articles. We are always looking for more artists who want to have their work published.

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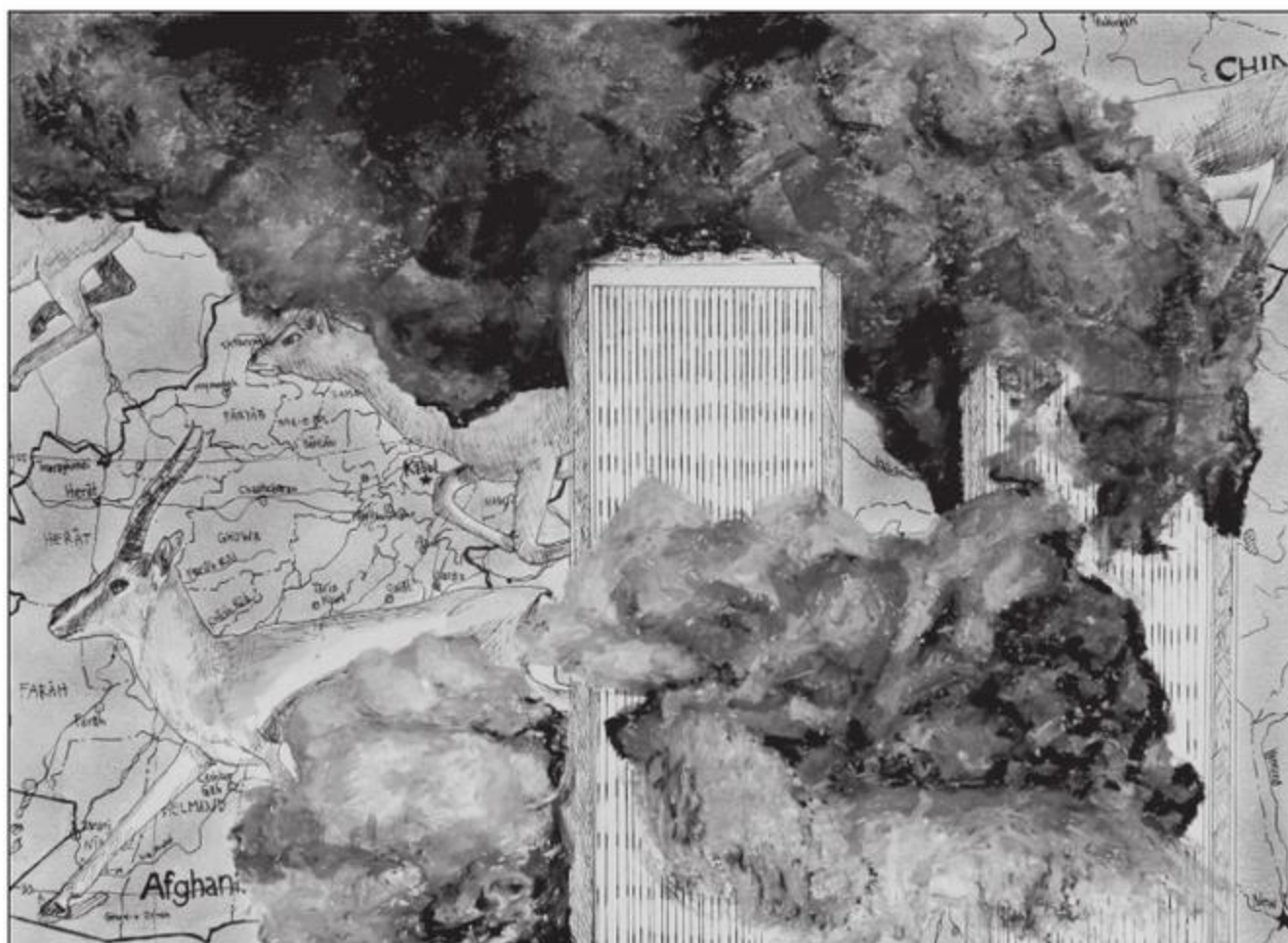
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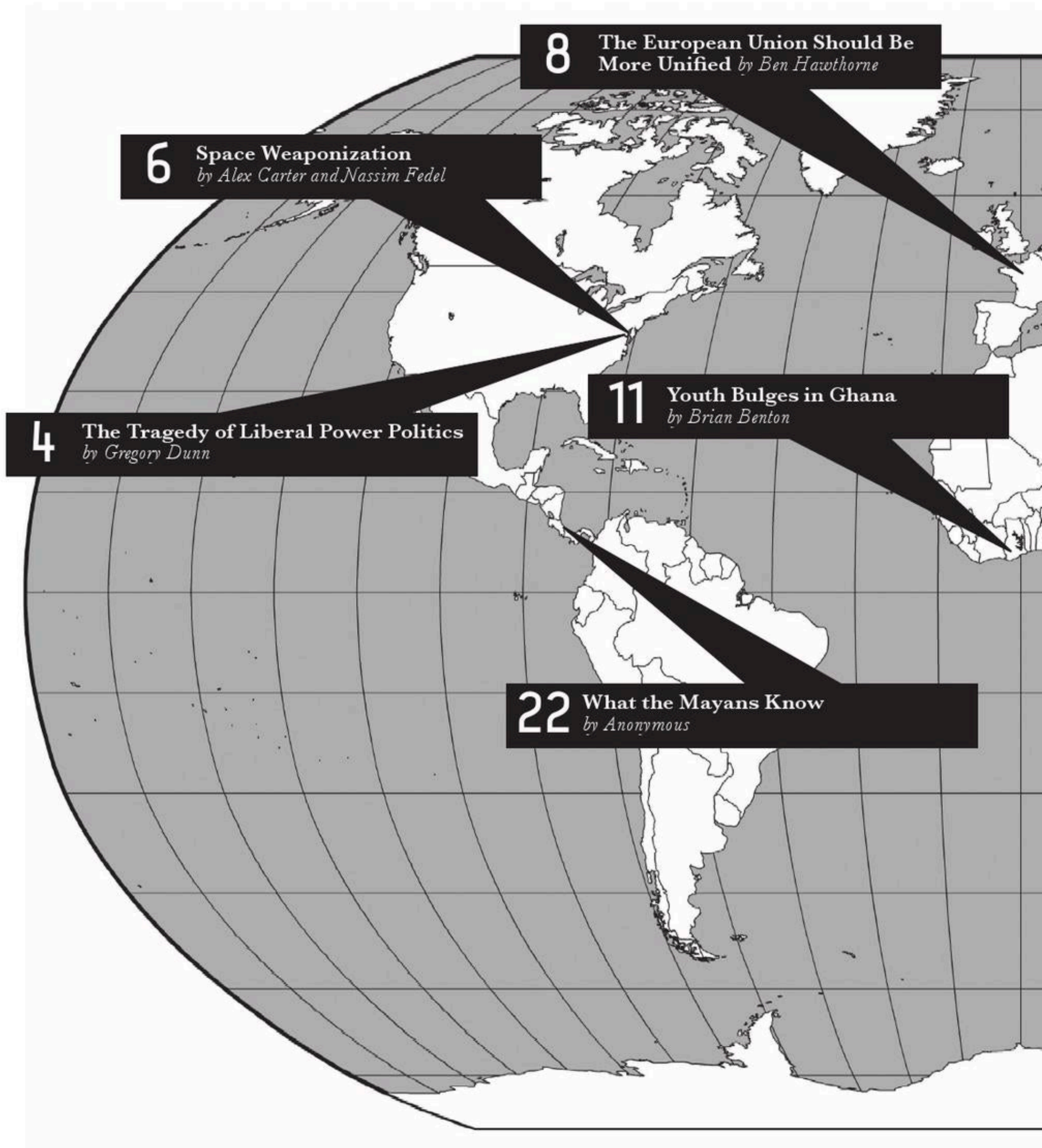


## Fight vs. Flight

*Fight vs. Flight depicts the irony of September 11th and subsequent war in Afghanistan. What began with a flight soon turned into a fight, and after 10 years the troops begin to fly back home. The juxtaposition of explosion with the fleeing antelope explores the connotation of "flight" — is it cowardly or courageous?*

—Maddie Kau, Senior

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# The Tragedy of Liberal Power Politics

*“An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind”  
—Mahatma Ghandi*

By Gregory Dunn  
PRESIDENT

The era after the Cold War has been marked by the United States trying to decide what to do now that the specter of communism has been defeated. The Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Iran and Libya have all experienced the United States' interventionism, but what unites them seems to be little more than power structures that the U.S. objects to.

Justly or unjustly, the U.S. has largely followed the pattern of first painting the actions of a regime as morally objectionable, and then launching an attack with the assistance of a coalition. Theoretically, this is the ideal state of foreign policy in the eyes of liberal theorists. The United States has led coalitions towards the elimination of groups or leaders that we find morally unacceptable.

Whether the situations that the United States sought to rectify were actually unjust is beyond the scope of this paper. However, the beginning of the 21st century has made it clear that the liberal theory of a large coalition using military force to do good is a fantasy. Violence, no matter how justified the United States may be in carrying it out, can only lead to more violence.

For the purposes of this paper, liberal peace theory will be considered as the idea that foreign policy should be approached

with a coalition of other nations that use their militaries to stomp out violence and impose peace. The conflicts of the post-Cold-War era have been manifestations of this theory. All of these conflicts have found some threat to peace (WMDs, genocide) and used moral reasons (usually the oppression of a minority) to intervene with a coalition, usually backed by the United Nations.<sup>1</sup>

History is not enough to prove the failure of liberal interventionism, but it is a good start. One of the most common enemies that come to mind is al-Qaeda. The United States has described al-Qaeda as an evil that rose out of a lack of Western political ideals.

The reality is far different. Osama Bin Laden had no reason to hate the United States until the United States was forced to establish permanent bases in the Middle East as a part of supporting Operation Desert Storm.

Extremist factions, including Bin Laden's, perceived these bases as an invasion under the cover of protecting Kuwait.<sup>2</sup> Bin Laden was then able to use United States presence to amplify a narrative of a Western war on Islam that we fight to this day.

We came to the Middle East with the best of intentions, but the innately terrible nature of war erased all positive “spin” we could put on the action in the eyes of those who now lived in a war zone. Al-Qaeda did not spontaneously generate, instead a large portion of its creation was due to liberal interventionism.

We attempted to solve a local instance of injustice, albeit a scary one, with force, and the violent and permanent (we kept our bases) nature of the response convinced many Arabs that Western allied forces were far

greater aggressors than Iraq. Although our response was justifiable, the bases and networks we created in the region as a part of our assault ended up doing more harm than good. Both Iraq and coalition forces wanted a greater military footprint in the Gulf of Oman region. In the eyes of Arabs, only the coalition forces succeeded.

***The liberal theory of a large coalition using military force to do good is a fantasy. Violence can only lead to more violence.***

Another example of liberal peace theory's failure is in Somalia. Black Hawk Down is not only a riveting chronicle of a defeat of United States Special Forces so severe that we eventually left the country in the 1993 Battle of Mogadishu, but a testa-

ment to the power of the liberal narrative. As Mark Bowden notes in his introduction to the book, he needed to do original research six years later — the analysts had chosen to sweep the incident under the rug.<sup>3</sup>

This is understandable — we thought we had done everything right. We had a coalition including sizable Malaysian and Pakistani forces who ended up saving pinned down U.S. forces.<sup>4</sup> Even after the battle, everyone agreed we had adequate intelligence<sup>5</sup>. We were morally justified — Somalia was internationally recognized as a humanitarian disaster.

But our intervention didn't work. Somalia has gone on to become a 21st century haven for everything but farmers or a government, despite our involvement. Again, the idea that a just, violent intervention can prevent a network's violence is to blame.

The Battle of Mogadishu was actually not our first engagement in Somalia — we had already built a large base outside Mogadishu.<sup>6</sup> This allowed for the narrative of an



*A statue of Saddam Hussein is brought down in Firdos Square following the U.S. Invasion of Iraq.*

1. Scaruffi, Piero. “Wars and Casualties of the 20th Century.” Piero Scaruffi's Knowledge Base. Piero Scaruffi, 2009. Web. 28 Jan. 2012.

2. Wright, Lawrence. *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*. New York: Knopf, 2006. Print.

3. Bowden, Mark. *Black Hawk Down: A Story of Modern War*. New York: Grove, 2010. Print.

4. MU.S.harraf, Pervez. *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir*. New York: Free, 2006. Print.

5. Moore, Robin, and Michael Lennon. *The Wars of the Green Berets: Amazing Stories from Vietnam to the Present*. New York: Skyhorse Pub., 2007. Print.

6. Department of Public Information. “UNOSOM II.” The Website of the United Nations. The United Nations,



*A protester in Tahrir Square, Egypt objects to the potential for American intervention in the midst of the Libyan uprising March 4th, 2011, reflecting widespread resentment of American intervention worldwide.*

invasion to take hold. We came in to Somalia, took their land, killed their people and were prepared to kill more — can they really be blamed for getting mad? Yes, we may have succeeded in killing one or two bad people, but the fall of a couple warlords means little in the face of imperialists at the doorstep, much like saving Kuwait hasn't garnered U.S. much in the war on terror. We came for violence, and we got it.

Of course, the most notable failure of liberal interventionism is Operation Iraqi Freedom. This instance of failure is notable because it looked like we were doing everything right initially. We fine-tuned our propaganda machine until we believed we would be greeted as liberators.

However, we were not. The crowds that pulled down the symbolic Saddam statue were staged.<sup>7</sup> Three months after Bush gave his famous "Mission Accomplished" speech, a bomb killed the United Nations' Special Representative in Iraq, Sérgio Vieira de Mello, at the order of al-Qaeda in Iraq.<sup>8</sup> It is impossible to convince people being violently invaded to love their invaders.

Even if the propaganda effort is mostly successful, the small proportion that does not believe the propaganda will fight. The ongoing war will convince others that the United States has only brought violence, not liberty. Propaganda's effectiveness can only

decrease, while the toll of violence can only increase.

Unfortunately, there is no such thing as "good violence". Violence is immutably horrible. Therefore, the idea that we can solve violence with violence simply is not true. Of course, some people would initially be grate-

***The one-time nature of a 'liberating' invasion is less memorable than ongoing occupation, and certainly less memorable than the accidents that will inevitably occur.***

ful that we have intervened in a hypothetical genocide. However, the nature of modern warfare is that networks carry out atrocities, not individual power structures. From the clans of Sudan to the gangs of Columbia, the diffuse nature of evil makes it difficult to eliminate evil quickly. Therefore, intervening forces must maintain a sustained presence, which lets people forget the good they are doing and reminds them of the violence that invasion logically entails.

The one-time nature of a "liberating" invasion is less memorable than ongoing occupation, and certainly less memorable than the accidents that will inevitably occur. A prime example of such an "accident" is when the United States launched a drone strike to eliminate al-Qaeda in Yemen. Instead, the United States killed Jaber al-Shabwani, who was aiding the government in its negotiations with al-Qaeda.<sup>9</sup> His tribe subsequently

9. Abdullah, Khaled. "Drones Spur Yemenis' Distr. U.S. of Government and U.S." Reuters News. Reuters, 27 Oct.

began to attack the Yemeni government. At the end of the day, nobody likes being invaded.

Some might contend that our recent invasion of Libya was a "good war". It is important to note that no theory is perfect or entirely wrong — there can be a good war much like there can be a cold year during a period of global warming. A modern war, at least for the United States, tends to be a war against a network, such as the Haqqani network.

The war in Libya was against one leader. Once he fell, the opposition was too shocked and disorganized to recover. Libya was one of the last of a dying breed, and therefore of little use in formulating policy towards a modern adversary: diffuse, leaderless networks. In combating these modern networks, a new vision is needed in the face of the failure of liberal interventions. This will undoubtedly be one of the defining challenges of 21st century foreign policy.

The argument that the success of some counterterror operations, notably in Indonesia, show good wars are possible is similarly dubious. Nobody doubts the ability of the United States to kill terrorists. When these killings do irreparable damage to an organization, the organization will fall and the United States will prevail.

However, "irreparable damage" is very difficult to achieve in many places where the United States operates, because a hostile populace is more than willing to fill in the ranks. In some cases (like Indonesia), the population of a nation may be more sympathetic to the interests of the United States, allowing "irreparable damage" to be a plausible outcome. But this too is the exception, not the norm.

The fundamental problem with liberal peace theory is that it hopes to stop war with war. It hopes to build coalitions to stamp out situations instead of countries.

While it is easy enough to defeat a country, it is much more difficult to defeat a situation (the Iraq war lasted 8 years, 273 days while World War II lasted 6 years, 1 day). Interventions, while of limited utility, carry all of the horror that comes with war, which motivates people to try and stop war — by fighting back.

The military is a hammer, but not everything is a nail. So while it is tempting to intervene in "situations" from Darfur to Damascus, logic and history tell us that the liberal fantasy of being able to cast geopolitical unjustness as a nail results in everyone being pounded by the hammer of hegemony, and eager for revenge.

2010. Web. 28 Jan. 2012.

2003. Web. 28 Jan. 2012.

7. Zucchini, David. "Saddam Statue Staged | Army Stage-Managed Fall of H.U.S. sein Statue." The Los Angeles Times Online. The Los Angeles Times, 03 July 2004. Web. 28 Jan. 2012.

8. GlobalSecurity. "UN Headquarters Bombing, Baghdad, Iraq." GlobalSecurity.org. Edward Corcoran, Sept. 2011. Web. 28 Jan. 2012.

# Space Weaponization

*What is the future of space?*

By Alex Carter and Nassim Fedel

FACT CHECKER, PRESIDENT



*Launching weaponized satellites would secure the United States' position as a world power by allowing it to dominate the celestial battlefields with the devolving weapons technology. The U.S. must come out first in the arms race to space to ensure weapons superiority among other leading world powers.*

## Executive Summary

Another Pearl Harbor is in the making. No, we are not predicting the resurrection of the Empire of Japan, complete with kamikaze pilots, the rising sun flag, and slightly rotting sushi. Instead, we are entering a new era of global conflict: yes, the next great power war will be fought for control of outer space.

With China gleefully seeking to dominate the international system by whatever means possible, it will strike at what is currently both the U.S.' Achilles' heel and the secret behind the U.S.' success in terrestrial military conflicts: our military satellites.

In order to defend our vital space assets and dissuade future competitors from seeking space dominance, the U.S. must act now to weaponize space, thereby securing its position at the top of the Earth's gravity well.

Time is running short. With China's growing anti-satellite (ASAT) capability, Congress cannot afford delay. It is time to set aside legislation categorizing pizza as a vegetable for the purposes of school lunches, and time to pick up a meaty bill – one that will extend Pax Americana well into the future.

## Background

First, some definitions: the militarization of space refers to the use of space for any military purpose. The weaponization of space refers to the deployment of space weapons – either kinetic weapons like guns and missiles or directed energy weapons like lasers – to Earth orbit in outer space.

Prior to 2007, space had been a global commons – an area free of warfare. The United Nations' Outer Space Treaty underlined this, detailing a quasi-cosmopolitan framework for global cooperation and non-weaponization of space. However, behind this idealistic facade lay a growing network of U.S. military satellites, which have truly proven to be the crux of U.S. military power in the past two decades. The U.S.' position of military and economic dominance in space – buttressed by its satellites – had been uncontested in the space age until 2007, when China successfully tested its first ASAT missile.

This is the beginning of a slippery slope toward a world in which China can satisfy its will to cripple U.S. military dominance by

destroying American satellites.<sup>1</sup> Given these changing conditions, the U.S. must act to prevent a “Space Pearl Harbor” by weaponizing space.

## Current U.S. Policy

Currently, the U.S. relies heavily on space for its military needs. It has been said that Operation Desert Storm was the first war that was truly fought from space.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, satellite usage in warfare has increased significantly in the last two decades: Operation Iraqi Freedom saw a 400 percent increase in satellites communications despite a 60 percent smaller troop count.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, the U.S. policy of using drones to attack important targets would not be possible without space support for positioning.

Additionally, the U.S.' ability to strike accurately in all conditions requires space support. This shows the high value of space satellites to the U.S. in military conflicts, and the necessity of defending these satellites.

1. Kitfield, James. “Crowded, Congested Space.” *Air Force Magazine* 93.8 (2010): 24-29. [Airforce-magazine.com](http://airforce-magazine.com). Air Force Association, Aug. 2010. Web. 16 Nov. 2011.

2. Dolman, Everett Carl. *Astropolitik: Classical Geopolitics in the Space Age*. London: Frank Cass, 2002. Print.

3. *ibid* ii



# Launching weaponized satellites would put the U.S. at the top of Earth's gravity well, preventing competitors from weaponizing space and from threatening our satellites.

In a report by the "Commission to Assess United States National Security Space Management and Organization" it was stated that future warfare in space was unavoidable, and that all necessary precautions must be taken to deter attackers.<sup>4</sup>

However, the current political climate which abhors large, long-term spending projects is currently preventing substantive action to achieve these aims. As a result, current policy is forced to rely on space treaties, tenuously signed decades ago, to enforce order in space.

In other words, current policy leaves our space assets vulnerable and our position of dominance in danger, should realpolitik (in the form of a Chinese first strike) ever rear its ugly head in the global commons.

## Analysis

In order to demonstrate the shortcomings of current U.S. policy, both a space war and another country's attempt at dominating space must be shown to be inevitable. This would show the public that no matter how good things are now, a change is necessary to prevent future costs.

Several factors point to the increasing challenges to U.S. space dominance. First is China's ASAT test, which has concretely demonstrated that opponents have at least a rudimentary ability to impair our space assets.

In addition, other factors point to the increasingly contested nature of the global commons. Over 50 countries, including the European Union (EU), China, Russia, and India have satellites in space that serve their private interests. Specifically, the EU is seeking space-based security assets to increase independence from U.S. and NATO security contracts.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, India's power feud with China is causing it to seek space-based solutions to its geopolitical, terrestrial confrontations – this means space security.<sup>6</sup> Lastly, Russia's as big and scary as it was under the Soviets – and it's itching for a fight.

Sources close to the Russian leadership indicate that Russia could complete a weaponization program as soon as 2015.<sup>7</sup> With all

of these challenges, and more, it is imperative that the U.S. maintains space dominance.

The weaponization, and growing destabilization, of space add to the risk of a "Space Pearl Harbor." A large-scale attack on U.S. space assets would severely hamper our military dominance on Earth, and Chinese space weaponization would upend the global order, leading to a violent transition away from U.S. hegemony.

Without space assets, or in a world in which our space dominance is challenged, the U.S.' ability to exert its influence effectively around the world would be diminished by several orders of magnitude. This incentivizes other actors to seeking to decrease our dominance of space – both for the advantages they would garner from space military capabilities and for the damage they would do to the U.S.

If an opponent weaponizes space first, they would likely do so by launching a weaponized satellite to the top of the Earth's "gravity well", where it would be able to shoot down the space launches of other nations and thereby denying any other country access to outer space.<sup>8</sup>

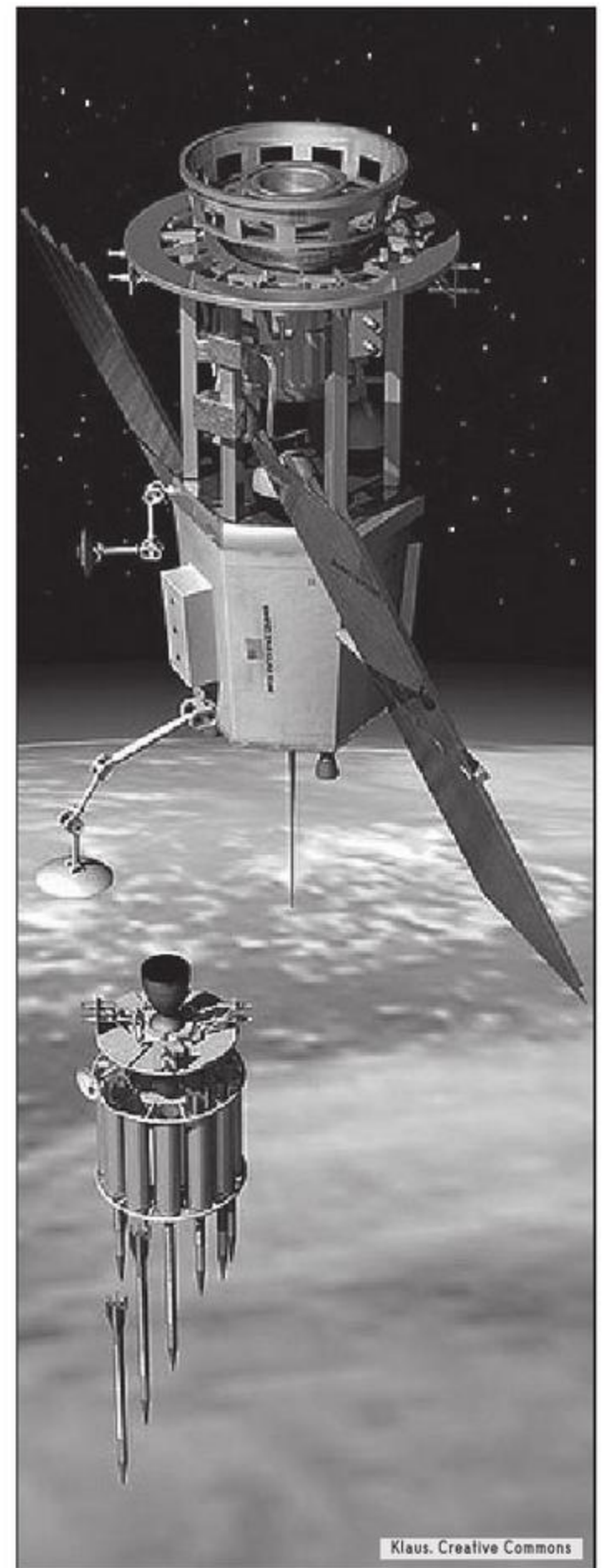
Therefore, a solution must be found in order to both prevent others from weaponizing and therefore dominating space, and from hampering U.S. space capabilities.

## Opinion

The clear solution to these problems is that the U.S. must be the first to launch weaponized satellites. Doing so would put the U.S. at the top of the Earth's gravity well, thereby definitively preventing competitors from weaponizing space and from threatening our satellites.

Additionally, this policy would reduce the likelihood of global conflict on Earth. If the U.S. were to weaponize space, it would have an easy, extremely powerful, and near-instantaneous response to crises anywhere on Earth, making its ability to make diplomacy much more viable and its threats more credible.<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, as offensive realism dictates, space power would provide for an additional



Klaus. Creative Commons

*A proposed satellite that can fire large rods from orbit, which would empower the U.S. to instantly conduct precision strikes anywhere on Earth.*

offensive mode of deterrence, allowing the U.S. to actively and preemptively stop attempts at reversing the global order.<sup>10</sup> This means that this policy would preserve American hegemony well into the future – a good thing for peace, prosperity and liberty.

Rather than letting hegemony wither, the U.S. should do something it can do: weaponize space. This would definitively sustain hegemony, for with space dominance, no nation could possibly challenge U.S. hegemony. With American space dominance, Pax Americana will reign forever.

4. *ibid* i

5. Dolman, Everett C., Peter Hays, and Karl Mueller. "Toward a U.S. Grand Strategy in Space." The Marshall Institute - Science for Better Public Policy. The Marshall Institute: Washington Roundtable on Science & Public Policy, 10 Mar. 2006. Web. 17 Nov. 2011.

6. *ibid* ii

7. *ibid* v

8. Dolman, Everett C. "The Case for Weapons in Space: A Geopolitical Assessment." Social Science Research Network. APSA (American Political Science Association), 17 Sept. 2010. Web. 16 Nov. 2011.

9. Dolman, Everett C. "US Military Transformation and Weapons in Space." E-parl.net. E-parliament, 14 Sept. 2005. Web. 16 Nov. 2011.

10. Smith, M. V. "Chapter 17: Security and Spacepower." Toward a Theory of Spacepower. Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, 2011. Web. 16 Nov. 2011.

# A Disunited Union

*The European Union should be more unified*

By Ben Hawthorne  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The current European crisis is as much a crisis of identity as it is of economy. The poorer debtor nations – Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece and Spain (PIIGS) – are battling the wealthier, export-oriented countries like Germany and France for the heart and soul of the European Union (EU). While wealthier countries push for lower trade barriers, a more valuable currency, and more austerity, the debtor nations push for a more protective trade policy, lower currency, and debt relief.<sup>1</sup>

To historians, this all looks very familiar. The EU Charter strongly resembles the Articles of Confederation, the document that governed the United States from 1781 until 1787 when it was replaced by the constitution. Like the EU charter, the Articles held each U.S. state to be a sovereign nation, and considered the U.S. to be nothing more than a confederacy. Like the EU, the U.S. under the Articles lacked the ability to tax, had no executive branch, received all of its funding from its member states, required a super-majority of two-thirds to pass bills in Congress, granted the right of extradition to citizens (a New Yorker who broke the law in Pennsylvania would be extradited back to New York for a trial) and granted freedom of movement to citizens.<sup>2</sup> In addition, early America was divided between the commercial New Englanders and the poorer agrarians, who were often debtors,<sup>3</sup> paralleling the current conflict between Germany and the PIIGS.

Ultimately, the Articles failed. Despite being authorized to regulate commerce and interstate relations, the Articles failed to do so, with several states imposing tariffs on each other, having uneven tariffs and regulations<sup>4</sup> and restricting immigration from other states.<sup>5</sup> All but the last one can be observed in the modern EU<sup>6,7</sup>, as the EU lacks

a strong executive dedicated to enforcing its laws. The Articles' inability to tax, also shared by the EU<sup>8</sup>, hurt the country when it was unable to pay for infrastructure and its army, leading to the army marching on the capital of Philadelphia.<sup>9</sup>

The EU could learn from the early U.S. and turn itself into a real sovereign state. In addition to solving the problems listed above, solidifying the EU would have three additional benefits. First, a stronger state would be able to actively observe and regulate the activities of its members. The fact that few knew about the debt crisis in states like Spain and Greece before it was too late shows that increased monitoring would be beneficial in preventing crises. Further, a European state would be able to more effectively give monetary aid based on need because it would have the institutions and data banks needed to give aid already in place, which would prevent the delay that exacerbated the cur-

rent crisis. More regulation is especially important since it would have prevented the sovereign debt issues in the PIIGS countries that led to the current economic crisis. A federalized EU with the power to tax could effectively determine where bailout money should go, and it could raise enough money to effectively bailout member states.<sup>10</sup>

Second, a more unified Europe would be more cohesive by definition, allowing that government to effectively tackle international and inter-European problems such as poverty, human trafficking and climate change, among other things. A stronger, more cohesive union would also give Europe more weight to throw around in the diplomatic arena. Since the EU has the world's largest GDP<sup>11</sup> (PPP) and its third largest population (after China and India), it would be better able to enforce its interests abroad, influence other countries to make them conform to international laws and human rights standards if it was unified.

A unified European government would gain more power and respect, which could be used to fight Russia's oil and gas monopoly, among other things. This is similar to how the U.S. gained international respect after it ratified the Constitution, and was thus able to purchase Louisiana, sign the favorable Convention of 1800 with France, and win a war with the Barbary Pirates.<sup>12</sup>

Third, economic integration would boost

10. *ibid* vii

11. "European Union." CIA World Factbook. Central Intelligence Agency, 19 Jan. 2012. Web. 6 Feb. 2012.

12. *ibid* iii

8. "Taxation." Activities of the European Union - European Union. Web. 03 Mar. 2012.

9. *ibid* iii

1. Harding, Gareth. "The Myth of Europe." Foreign Policy. N.p., Jan.-Feb. 2012. Web. 8 Feb. 2012.

2. "The Schengen Area and Cooperation." EUROPA. Summaries of EU Legislation. European Union, 3 Aug 2008. Web. 05 Feb. 2012.

3. Kennedy, David M., Lizabeth Cohen, and Thomas Andrew Bailey. *The American Pageant*. 14th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2006. 179-235. Print.

4. *ibid* iii

5. Gordon-Murnane, Laura. "Early Immigration 1700-1800." 4 May 1998. 14 Jan. 2008

6. "German Business Portal - Duties." German Business Portal. Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology. Web. 06 Feb. 2012.

7. Ira, Kumaran. "French National Assembly debates anti-immigration law." World Socialist Web site. International Committee of the Fourth International, 7 Oct. 2010. Web. 5 Feb. 2012.



Map: Wikimedia commons, adapted for use

the European economy. The various national laws and regulations governing business make it difficult for a company to conduct trade within the EU<sup>13</sup>, and standardization of these rules would make trade easier. Greater freedom of movement would remove the legal barriers to trade like lengthy visa procurement processes. Standardization of culture, as in people considering themselves Europeans instead of Germans, which would result from a stronger EU (and to some extent has already resulted from the current one), would make trade easier, since businesspeople are more comfortable doing business with people they identify with than with foreigners.<sup>14</sup> Even if a standardization of culture does not happen, lowering barriers to migration will make people more familiar with other cultures, thereby smoothing trade relations. In addition, making the EU a nation-state instead of a "super-national organization" would reduce nationalism, a phenomena that can make business more difficult.<sup>15</sup>

Integration has already produced impressive results, and there is no reason to believe that it cannot repeat this feat: from 1970 to 1993 (when the EU was formed), Europe's annual growth rate was 1.6 percent. From 1993 to 2007, the growth rate increased to 2.5 percent per year.<sup>16</sup> Further, studies have shown that integration has already increased employment rates, lowered the price of goods and services<sup>17</sup>, increased economic competitiveness, increased foreign investment by 62 percent<sup>18</sup>, and decreased the cost of making transactions.

To achieve these benefits, a centralized European government would have to be built similarly to the U.S., albeit with some exceptions. The first step towards a functional EU would be the implementation of a "supremacy clause," which would give the EU's government power and legitimacy. The next most important areas where reform is needed are in lawmaking and trade regulations. Removal of the super-majority requirement in the European Parliament would be a good place to start since it would ease legislative deadlock and

***The European Council should become an advisory council, and should consist of appointed specialists instead of heads of state, who are far too busy to be forced to govern two countries at once.***

allow the majority to get their say.

The European Parliament should also be given full lawmaking and legislative initiative powers, which would make it a true and legitimate legislative body and because delegating lawmaking and legislative initiative to three different bodies (as is done now) is horrifically inefficient. In order to fix regulatory impediments to business and bolster internal trade, the EU should remove all barriers to trade and migration between states. A uniform external tariff would also help make doing business in the EU easier.

It would also be imperative to drastically reform the EU's convoluted executive branch which is currently a three-headed monster consisting of the European Council, an advisory body of European heads of state; the Council, a partly legislative body consisting of bureaucrats from various European nations; and the European Commission, a 27 member body that actually serves the role of executive branch. The European Council should consist of elected specialists instead of heads of state, whom are far too busy to be forced to govern two countries at once. The Council should become an upper house instead of the quasi-upper house and advisory body that it is now, and the veto granted to individual states ought to be repealed to make the government run smoother. If the Council is to be a legislative body, it ought to have its members voted for instead of appointed as per current policy, in order to grant the EU democratic legitimacy.

The European Commission ought to be



the only executive body in Europe, and its president ought to be directly elected by the people of Europe instead of appointed by a committee as is down now. The Commission also should be given real power, namely the ability to enforce laws through economic (e.g. cutting off free trade benefits and welfare) and possibly military means.

Unfortunately, Europe's diversity could pose a problem. The poorer European nations want a weaker currency, while the wealthier export nations, particularly Germany, want a stronger one. However, since arguments like these plagued those drafting the American constitution<sup>19</sup>, Europeans can borrow a page from the U.S. and compromise. The recent willingness of the Greeks and Italians to negotiate and pass despised austerity measures suggests that compromise is plausible.<sup>20,21</sup>

Further, nationalism is on the decline in Europe, as evidenced by a 2003 study that predicts 70 percent of Europeans identifying themselves as Europeans within 20 years, so such compromises may not even be necessary.<sup>22</sup> This decline of nationalism, coupled with the possibility of giving nations that object to a strengthened EU the option to simply drop out of the EU, would mean that Europe's ethnic and cultural diversity will probably pose little challenge to the formation of a stronger EU.

Although it may be implausible in the short term because of Europe's diversity and nationalism, a more unified EU would be the most effective way to combat political gridlock and economic collapse.

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# A Cold Spring

## *Russia's Veto of Syrian Regime Change*

By Gregory Dunn  
PRESIDENT

Everyone saw that Russia blocked the UN Security Council endorsing Syrian regime change. Not everyone saw why.

Western-aligned powers have been quick to demonize Russia and China, with U.S.-backed Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu describing the decision as based in Cold War logic.<sup>1</sup> Russia's veto (backed by China) was described by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton a "travesty" and the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., Susan Rice, added that "any further bloodshed that flows will be on their hands".<sup>2</sup>

While it is tempting to paint Russia and China as valuing their self-interest over the lives of innocent people, it is worth understanding their claims to better understand a country that we may soon find our troops in.

Russia and China described the decision to veto as primarily based on internal Syrian affairs. They argued that the Syrian uprising is not a part of the Arab Spring and therefore not just to intervene in. They contended that the Syrian protest was never peaceful<sup>3</sup>, and that at least 40 percent of the widely-touted "5,000 deaths"<sup>4</sup> figure is from Syrian governmental forces. A violent civil war is different from the Arab Spring, because it sets a precedent for violence in a way no power should endorse.

Veto supporters point to polls that indicate<sup>5</sup> that the government is still popular among a near majority of Syrians, and contrast it with the disorganized Syrian resistance. They argue that Syrian resistance is so disorganized since no group has stepped up for negotiations with the government, despite Russian governmental urgings. Yevgeny Primakov, former Russian Prime Minister, contends that the question of what will happen once the leadership in Syria is removed has not been answered.<sup>6</sup>

Since opposition groups are splintered and Assad is still popular with some Syrians,

removing Assad would lead to a multi-faction power struggle that would be far bloodier than the current insurrection. We could end up trying to broker peace between many militant factions who have already shown that they are not willing to negotiate. We would not have a viable exit strategy. As the U.S. intervention in Iraq an exit strategy is necessary for a successful intervention.

Besides, Russia and China's supporters contend, Assad has made progress. He has enacted reforms like removing the state of emergency and pledging to introduce a multi-party system. He has promised to deliver a new constitution and national elections by this summer.<sup>7</sup> These promises may not be perfect, but they seem better than another prolonged conflict like Iraq.

Of course, the veto was partially based on stopping NATO. Russia wants to avoid giving the U.N. the power to remove any regime friendly to Iran. Russia would also like to have a multipolar world. Although Syria is not a large regional player, it is one of an

7. *ibid* vi

increasingly short list of non-NATO-aligned states, and therefore valuable to Russian counterbalancing interests.

However, Russia's veto was not publicly explained as thwarting NATO from gaining influence in the region. Russia's official objection was that the resolution put all the blame on Assad and no blame on the protesters. With the protesters refusing talks, refusing peace, and refusing to sort out internal differences, Russia viewed the pro-protesters language of the resolution as too far removed from the truth to endorse.<sup>8</sup> While Russia's reasons may just be ideas conjured to sup-

***Veto supporters point to polls which indicate that the government is still popular among a majority of Syrians, and contrast it with the disorganized Syrian resistance***

port fighting NATO under a noble guise, they bear consideration in the debate on what path

to take towards stabilizing Syria.

However, our tolerance for Russia's objections is not without consequences. Recently, the failure of Syrian forces to honor terms of the peace agreement brokered by former Secretary-General of the United Nations Kofi Annan raised further concerns about the Syrian regime. Russia previously applied intense diplomatic pressure to peacekeeping forces to moderate their efforts, and the result was continued violence.<sup>9</sup> However valid Russia's concerns may be, it is clear that peace in Syria is a possibility, and we must not let concerns voiced by any nation get in the way of bringing peace to Syria.

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# The Benefits of Bulges

*Why youth bulges are a blessing, not a curse.*

By Brian Benton  
STAFF WRITER

In the United States, young people are valued. They're thought of as prized possessions – the future of our great nation – that in the next few decades will be managing businesses or running for president. We think we're lucky that America has a swarm of people under the age of 30 with more ambition than ever ready to do great things when their time.

But such optimism for young people is not universal. According to the Youth Bulge Theory, young people are a curse. The theory, based on a study done by Population Action International (PAI), a Washington-based advocacy group, suggests that nations with “bulging” youth populations are more prone to civil conflicts. The PAI report found that between 1970 and 1999, more than three quarters of civil conflicts were in nations where over 60 percent of the population was under the age of thirty.<sup>1</sup>

This claim mostly makes sense, but it is not looking at youth bulges with the right perspective. The study admits that these young people are not the sole reason for the conflicts, but German social scientist Gunnar Heinsohn, the man who coined the term “youth bulge” after he thought he connected the dots of the PAI report, may be looking at the data from the wrong direction. Maybe the curse of the youth bulge could actually be a blessing.<sup>2</sup>

Let's look at an example: Ghana. Ghana is doing well compared to other African nations. It has huge mineral reserves and a large amount of foreign money invested in the extraction of these minerals. The Ghanaian government is proud of its single-digit unemployment rate and says it is creating millions of new jobs annually to make the most out of its large youth bulge.

Unfortunately, all of the proceeds from the mineral reserves end up in the hands of the president and his cabinet, and the single digit unemployment rate is inflated by people working useless jobs, leaving over 25 percent of Ghana's youth bulge unemployed.<sup>3</sup>

So, many of the young people of Ghana took a tip from their Nigerian friends to the east and found something to do in their free

time: the “pen pal scam” or “African ruler scam,” whichever one you prefer. Ghana has declared itself the “Internet Capital of West Africa,” so the scams took off, especially as more Ghanaians got access to computers.<sup>4</sup>

The scammers, seeing the success of their simple tricks, began contacting hackers from the US and Europe who taught them basic credit card fraud, which they combined with their email scams to create increasingly elaborate and profitable super-scams. Ghana is slowly overtaking Nigeria as the e-fraud capital of the world and the government is scrambling to find a way to keep the scammers from wrecking the country's good business reputation.<sup>5</sup>

But what does this have to do with why the youth bulge is a blessing? Think about it. If these scammers are able to perfect the art of e-fraud, why shouldn't they be able to put the same effort into a different focus? They weren't scamming because they wanted to harm Ghana, they were scamming because they wanted to help themselves.

While it is true that creating jobs is the best way to overcome the problems that can come with a youth bulge, those jobs have to be the right kind of jobs. Ghanaians won't want to work as water vendors when they could make ten times as much as a scammer.

Some other African countries are already beginning to take steps in the right direction. Kenya is leading an African space science alliance that is currently in the running to build the world's largest radio telescope.<sup>6</sup> West Africans, with a love of music but without computers to share it, have begun recording songs on cell phones and using bluetooth connections to share them as part of an underground music scene that is innovative but incredibly simple as well.

Many of the world's current most influential people are under the age of 30. These people used their own ambition to do something better for the world. The biggest difference between these successful young people and the so-called “problematic” young people of Ghana and all other bulging nations is that the so-called “problematic” youth were not given the same encouragement and support that young people in the United States

and other westernized nations receive.

If the Ghanaian scammers have the ambition to reach out to hackers and to conduct highly complicated scams, they could easily do something just as innovative that is beneficial to Ghana as a whole. They could work towards providing wireless internet for even more of the population. They could start an online education program, like Khan Academy, to help spread knowledge throughout the nation, among other options.

The problem is, the governments of the nations with youth bulges wouldn't allow this. The minute the leaders actually put in a real effort to better their nation, their riches and luxurious palaces disappear. Leaders in nations like Ghana know that without proper education and proper jobs, people are unable to take a stand against their corrupt governments.

*The youth in Ghana weren't scamming because they wanted to harm Ghana. They were scamming because they wanted to help themselves.*

Heinsohn's theory says that the excess of young people leads to unrest because they try to get power by eliminating each other, but that is not always the case, especially recently.<sup>7</sup>

Tunisia, Syria, Egypt and Yemen all have youth bulges. And, for what its worth, all were able to take advantage of their surplus of young people to eliminate their authoritarian governments, instead of each other as Heinsohn predicted they would. The idea of the youth bulge causing unrest is not wrong, but the claim that these ambitious, excited youth are a problem is.<sup>8</sup>

So back to Ghana. Compare Ghana to Tunisia, pre-Arab Spring. Both had a youth bulge. Both had a leader that put himself above his people and did little to help them. And both had an increasing interest in the Internet.<sup>9</sup>

We have yet to see an Arab Spring-esque revolution in sub-Saharan Africa, but Ghana sure does fit the mold that led to the hand-further north that we have seen so far. And if Ghana does the deed, maybe Nigeria, or one of the other dozen African countries close by with equally large youth bulges, will follow suit.

In the United States, young people are valued for their ambition and innovation, and have proved themselves through advancements in technology that older generations did not even imagine. In nations with youth bulges, these same young people could be just as valuable if they put their ambitious and innovative nature to the right cause. Youth bulges aren't a problem. The governments that manage them are.

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3. “Ghana's Scamming Bulge.” VICE. 2011. Web. 10 Feb. 2012.

4. *ibid* iii

5. *ibid* iii

6. “Africa Invests in Radio Capacity.” Daily Kenyan News Update. 19 Dec. 2011. Web. 10 Feb. 2012.

7. *ibid* i

8. Osman, Tarek. “What's Next for the Arab Spring?” Movements.org Web. 10 Feb. 2012.

9. *ibid* viii

# Heads Held High

## *Success of the Iraq War*

By William Hall  
STAFF WRITER



On Sunday, Feb. 19, fifteen Iraqis were killed and another twenty-one wounded in Baghdad when a suicide car-bomber struck the city's police academy.<sup>1</sup> The attack, as with all those that have occurred since the American withdrawal in December 2011, has raised doubts about the ability of Iraq to defend itself. It also provides an opportunity to reflect on the outcome of the U.S. invasion.

A month from the 19th marks the 9th anniversary of the start of the Iraq War; a conflict many Americans consider a pointless, costly endeavor that was started on false pretenses and ended with nothing to show for our sacrifices. These frustrations have some merit. The invasion was based upon preventing Saddam from using or distributing WMDs he did not possess. Our government fought an excellent war, but horribly mismanaged the peace, resulting in the death of 4,885 Americans and over 100,000 Iraqis at the tremendous cost of 800 billion U.S. dollars.<sup>2</sup>

The conflict was characterized by its blunders: the "Mission Accomplished" banner that hung on the USS *Abraham Lincoln*, the mistreatment of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, and the killing of Iraqi civilians by Blackwater mercenary contractors to name a few. Yet the war cannot be declared a fail-

ure, because doing so ignores the fact that the efforts of the United States have brought about tremendous positive change in Iraq, change that will allow it to have a chance to be a successful country in the future.

Prior to the U.S. invasion, Iraq remained oppressed under the dictator Saddam Hussein. Dissidents were rounded up and killed; a rebellion by the Kurds was suppressed through the indiscriminate use of chemical weapons, and an uprising in the Shiite-dominated south resulted in the razing of whole towns by Saddam's forces. An estimated 1-2 million people were killed during Saddam's twenty-four year reign, and mass graves continue to be found.<sup>3</sup> In April 2011, a mass grave containing 800 corpses dating from the late 1980s was found in the Anbar province of Iraq.<sup>4</sup> The 2003 invasion freed the Iraqi people from Saddam's tyranny.

The country now has a coalition democracy composed of officials from a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds. Difficulties have arisen as a result of this diversity but the various factions have shown a willingness to engage in dialogue. Just last month, the Sunni bloc ended its boycott of parliament sessions, defusing a political crisis and allowing for constructive debate at

a national summit<sup>5</sup>. The government also largely abides by the rule of law and the Iraqi people are guaranteed by their constitution basic human rights and numerous civil liberties<sup>6</sup>. Additionally, according to the Brookings Iraq Index, a compilation of statistics concerning Iraq, the country is showing substantial signs of progress. For instance, Iraqi civilian deaths per year have drastically declined: in 2008 there were an estimated 6,400 deaths, and in 2011 there were 1,578. Iraqi Security force fatalities have fallen as well over the years: there were 468 deaths in 2010 compared to 1,830.

These statistics taken together indicate both a decrease in violence and the improving abilities of Iraq's security forces. Iraq's economy has also improved; GDP grew an estimate 9.6 percent last year and is projected to grow by another 12.6 percent this year. Oil revenues have risen as well; in 2011 Iraq exported \$37 billion dollars worth of oil. The Brookings Iraq Index further shows a drop in the unemployment rate from 60 percent to 25 percent, an increase in the number of Internet and telephone subscribers in Iraq and an increase in the number of people with electricity from 95,000 before the war to 120,000 today. A poll conducted by the International Republican Institute, in April of 2011 reflected these gains, showing that 59 percent felt the country was better off than the year before.<sup>7</sup>

The country still faces many challenges: sectarian violence and political conflict could tear the country apart, there are high levels of corruption throughout the nation's government and many Iraqis lack access to basic necessities such as clean drinking water. But had the U.S. invasion not occurred, Iraq would still be under Saddam's rule and would have remained so until he died, at which point power would have passed on to one of his relatives.

The country might have participated in the Arab spring protests, but it is unlikely that the opposition could have succeeded against a man willing to use chemical weapons against his own people. The development of the nation would have hinged on the whim of its dictator, rather than capabilities of its people.

The Iraq war was a mismanaged conflict, and in the future there must be a more concrete reason to invade a country than the possibility its leader has nuclear weapons. But the United States also invaded Iraq to dispose of a horrible dictator and liberate a nation, and in that regard we succeeded overwhelmingly.

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# U.S. Presence in Japan Should End

*Why the U.S. Presence in Japan is unnecessary, unstable, and untenable*

By Josh Arfin and Gregory Dunn  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, PRESIDENT

The United States has hundreds of thousands of military personnel stationed around the world. American policymakers have deployed United States forces to a staggering array of countries, and that number only grows as the United States becomes increasingly involved in Africa.

Although many accept that our foreign presence is a key asset for the United States, the numbers of troops overseas are still astonishing. We have 53,000 troops in Germany, almost 30,000 in South Korea, and nearly 10,000 in the United Kingdom. Additionally, the United States has 40,000 troops in Japan. These troops were an essential part of the American Cold War strategy of containment. However, it is time for policymakers to face reality: the Cold War is over. Because keeping these troops in Japan is expensive, unnecessary and opposed by the Japanese, we should bring them home.

First, the troops and bases in Japan are incredibly expensive. Permanent bases, like the ones in Japan, are not just bases for troops; they house entire families necessitating construction of expensive housing developments at bases in Japan. Additionally, this means that over the course of three years America pays for around 27,000 families to move to bases in Japan and for 27,000 families to move back. Furthermore, keeping tens of thousands of troops there costs millions of dollars per year.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, our military bas-

es in Japan are not strategically important. We have over 25,000 troops in South Korea and Japan has a strong military that would help America in a crisis.<sup>2</sup> We do not need to show China our strength through foreign bases; the size and strength of the U.S. military is public information. Additionally, we would not have to bring every servicemember home and close every base in Japan. If we significantly downsized to only a few bases and around five thousand troops, we would maintain our influence. Our strategic partnership with Japan is not dependent on massive troop numbers. America has recently moved troops from Japan to other East Asian areas strengthening our alliance with Japan. We could continue to further strengthen our alliance by expanding many of the projects that we are currently working on with Japan such as anti-missile technology.

In 2011, America had over 39,000 troops stationed in Japan.<sup>3</sup> Those troops represent

pan." G2mil. 2009. Web. 19 Apr. 2012.

2. Latina, Prensa. "Japanese Want U.S. Military Bases Gone." English Pravda.ru. Pravda, 13 Mar. 2003. Web. 19 Apr. 2012.

3. United States. Department of Defense. Active Duty Military Personnel Strengths By Regional Area And By

about half of all U.S. troops in East Asia (although exact figures on South Korean deployment strength are not public, in 2008 the United States Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, confirmed that 28,500<sup>4</sup> were in the ROK and there have been no major changes since). Since there are tens of thousands of troops in Guam and South Korea, leaving five thousand remaining in Japan would be sufficient to maintain our goals and obligations in the region. With around 80,000 troops in East Asia, America can fulfill its obligations to other nations with fewer troops in Japan. America would also be able to continue its strategic partnership with Japan. The ballistic missile defense systems that America is working on with Japan would not disappear. America would still be able to check China's rise with troops deployed throughout East Asia.

Finally, many Japanese, especially those on the island of Okinawa, want American troops removed. The bases located on Okinawa cause significant disturbance to local Okinawans. The Japanese dislike that there are major American bases in the

middle of their cities.

This resentment has led to the removal of American troops from Okinawa becoming as big a political issue in Japan as gun control is in America. People in Japan want the bases gone want the bases gone from Okinawa.<sup>5</sup> The Japanese have marched by the thousands in protest of the presence of the United States. While our large base in Japan garners us relatively little in comparison to a future smaller presence, it does entail significant diplomatic consequences for the United States. By leaving the bases on Okinawa, America would raise its public image in Japan. Furthermore, because the Japanese want American troops out of Okinawa, we could avoid a spending spike by asking Japan to pay for the soldiers and their families to come home.

With America trillions of dollars in debt, keeping 39,000 troops deployed in a peaceful, stable democracy is indefensible. We can continue to have a network of bases around the world in a way that is less threatening to the rising military power of China if we were to substantially decrease the forces we have deployed in Japan. A strategic reduction of troops from Japan would strengthen our alliance, save money, and allow America to keep its influence in East Asia.

<sup>4</sup>This article was written prior to the withdrawal of Marines in April, 2012.

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4. Gates, Robert, and Sang-hee Lee. "Briefing by Defense Secretary Gates and ROK Minister Lee." Interview. America.gov. United States, 17 Oct. 2008. Web. 19 Apr. 2012.

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*Number of U.S.  
troops in Japan:  
39,000*



*A member of the South Carolina Army National Guard performing a training exercise in Sendai, Japan as a part of the continued American military presence on the ground since the end of World War II.*

# What To Do With Iran

*The next steps in America's relationship with the Middle Eastern power*

By Ben Hawthorne  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Before anyone can have a reasonable discussion about foreign policy, it's necessary to know what we, the United States, want. In the case of Iran, we want four things: oil, democracy in Iran, a market for U.S. goods, and no Iranian nuclear weapons. The first three make sense on their face, but the fourth one requires a bit more analysis. After all, we didn't slap sanctions on France when it got its nuclear weapons.

We are scared of Iranian nuclear weapons for three reasons: First, they have stated their intent to obliterate Israel. Second, they could give their weapons to terrorists. Third, they have stated their intention use their nuclear weapons to gain leverage and influence, both in the Middle East and abroad.

The first outcome is highly unlikely. Although many pundits consider Iran to be an undeterrable "rogue state" led by maniacs with one goal, that could easily describe Mao's China or the Soviet Union, and yet neither ever initiated nuclear holocaust upon getting their weapons. The Soviet Union, which existed for the sole purpose of spreading Marxism-Leninism at any cost to its own people, never initiated nuclear war. Neither did Mao Zedong, who famously stated

"When 900 million are left out of 2.9 billion, several five-year plans can be developed for the total elimination of capitalism and for permanent peace. It is not a bad thing." In other words, Mao, who believed that a total nuclear holocaust would be pretty okay, never ended up causing WWII, so it is irrational to expect the Iranian regime to want to initiate a nuclear war despite their rhetoric. In addition, Iran's leadership is rational and self interested<sup>1</sup>, and they will continue to behave as such in the future. This is evidenced by their behavior in the Iran-Iraq war, in which they rationally decided to sign a ceasefire to cut their losses even though they appeared to be winning, in addition to the testimonies of several prominent scholars.<sup>2</sup>

With that in mind, the probability that Iran gives nuclear weapons to a terrorist group is very low. Even the most loyal terrorist organizations can often turn against

1. Duss, Matthew. "The Martyr State Myth." Foreign Policy. N.p., 24 Aug. 2011. Web. 9 Feb. 2012.

**American military might has a record of providing credible deterrence against potentially harmful regimes, so it can do so to Iran.**

the nation that sponsors them, as in the case of the U.S. funded Mujaheddin turning into Al-Qaeda. Further, the uranium in a nuclear weapon can be traced back to its source using modern nuclear forensics techniques<sup>2</sup>, so any attack using an Iranian supplied bomb would be immediately identified as an attack by Iran, leading to a swift and deadly retaliation by the west. No self-interested state would allow that to happen.

The main concern with a nuclear Iran, then, would be Iran becoming a major regional power and using its influence to spread terrorism, cause instability, and promote dictatorial, radical and hostile regimes throughout the region through the use of coups and revolutions. Iran has been trying to do this for a long time, evidenced by its support for Hezbollah, Bashar al-Assad, Iraqi anti-government militias, and the 2011

attempted Shiite uprising in Bahrain. American military might has a record of providing credible deterrence against potentially harmful

regimes, so it can do so to Iran.

Thus, more troop deployments to pro-western countries in the Middle East, such as Iraq or Kuwait, coupled with more exercises, can help to credibly deter a rising Iran. Further, more financial and diplomatic aid to U.S. allies and neutral countries in the Middle East can strengthen U.S. allies in the region and bring neutral countries over to our side.

Thus, in the event that Iran attempts to overthrow a friendly regime, the friendly regime will be stronger and better equipped to defeat an undemocratic uprising. To stop terrorism, small groups of U.S. special operations troops can be deployed to terrorist hotspots to train local forces and root out terrorist cells, in a fashion similar to the highly successful Operation Enduring Freedom in the Philippines.<sup>3</sup>

However, recent events, such as Iran's ultimatum warning the *USS John C. Stennis* not to return to the Persian Gulf, or a 2002 naval war game<sup>4</sup> that claimed that the U.S. Navy would lose a battle with Iran over the strait, make the deployment of troops to the region look like a dangerous option. These fears are misguided. Although Iran has been making a lot of noise about how it won't tolerate any U.S. forces in the Gulf, the *USS Abraham Lincoln* and her carrier strike group entered the

2. Joint Working Group of the American Physical Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Nuclear Forensics: role, State of the Art, and Program Needs. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print.

3. Schmitt, Eric, and Thom Shanker. Counterstrike: The Untold Story of America's Secret Campaign Against Al-Qaeda. New York City: Times Books, 2011. Print.

4. Schmitt, Eric, Thom Shanker, and Elisabeth Bumiller. "U.S. Warns Top Iran Leader Not to Shut Strait of Hormuz." ny.com. New York Times, 12 Jan. 2012. Web. 9 Feb. 2012.



*American destroyers underway in the Strait of Hormuz between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Iranian warships in the strait pose a serious threat to international oil shipping, necessitating U.S. patrol of the area.*





*An Iranian missile boat conducts a test launch in the Strait of Hormuz, as part of a naval exercise. Iran prepares to use boats such as this one to blockade oil shipments to the U.S. and other countries in the area, adding stress to the politics of oil exports. Oil prices worldwide would spike in the case of severe conflict.*

Gulf on 22 January 2012 without incident.

Further, the day after Iran issued its ultimatum to the *Stennis*, her crew reported that the Iranian warships and aircraft in the Gulf were not stepping up their patrols, as would be expected if the Iranians actually planned to take action against the *Stennis*. The crew of the *Stennis* reported that the Iranian warships were returning to port, exactly the opposite of what would be expected.

Also, the 2002 war game was highly flawed. It consisted of three parts: a real life air combat exercise against the Israeli Air force, a computer simulation of a naval war with Iran for the

strait, the part that matters for us, and a real life naval exercise in which the U.S. Navy reenacted the events of the computer simulation.<sup>5</sup> The computer simulation glitched, allowing the Iranian missile to teleport and regenerate. The air-to-air combat against the Israeli Air force wouldn't simulate a battle with Iran because of the superiority of the Israeli aircraft (Israel flies modern F-15s and F-16s, Iran flies F-14s and F-4s from the 1960s and 70s) and pilots.

Note that this is not a call for war with Iran. This is simply a plea for more military exercises and deployments to the Persian Gulf region. War with Iran would be a di-

saster because it would cost an unreasonable amount of money, hurt our image abroad, which would erase our soft power and fuel terrorism, and would only set Iran's nuclear program back a year or two.<sup>6</sup> Because the U.S. does not know the exact location of all Iranian sites<sup>7</sup>, an attack would not only fail to destroy Iran's nuclear program but it would also convince the Iranians to harden

## ***Sanctions have only hurt the Iranian people while allowing the Iranian government to shut out foreign oil companies and make more money.***

and hide their nuclear program.<sup>8</sup> An aggressive war waged by the U.S. against Iranian reactors, some of which are located in cities<sup>8</sup>, and the inevitable civilian casualties that would follow<sup>9</sup>, would likely send Iranian support for the regime soaring<sup>9</sup>, thereby crushing any hope of a democratic Iran.

Furthermore, sanctions have failed. Economic sanctions have only hurt the Iranian people while allowing the Iranian government to shut out foreign oil companies and thus make more money, and have allowed

the regime to skillfully paint a picture of unwarranted U.S. aggression that increases support for the regime, the exact thing we don't want.<sup>6</sup> Besides, sanctions hurt the economies of Europe and our East Asian allies by denying them the oil their economy relies on.

Thus, the only policy that has seemed to work so far is covert attacks on Iran's nuclear program, such as Stuxnet or the "accidental" explosion of Iran's nuclear facilities earlier this year. However, a better solution would be to persuade Iran to give up its pursuit of nuclear weapons, since if these acts are uncovered, they could be used by the regime to generate opposition to America. This is not to say that such acts should not be done, however. Negotiations cannot be done with the overtly hostile current regime, regime change is thus needed. The problem of encouraging regime change in Iran is the high probability of a repeat of the 1979 Iranian revolution, which was U.S. funded, which put Ayatollah Khomeini and the current regime in power. To avoid this, we need to covertly fund a pro-democracy opposition group in Iran that aligns itself with U.S. interests. Evidence suggests that such a group exists. If we can cause one such group to become powerful enough, they could overthrow the government and give us an ally.

Thus, we could achieve all four of our objectives in Iran: lifting sanctions secures our oil, a revolution would spread democracy and give American businesses a market to export to, and more troops would stop Iranian regional hegemony in its tracks.

5. "16 U.S. Naval Ships at the bottom of the Persian Gulf." *The Cutting Edge*. N.p., 2004. Web. 9 Feb. 2012.

6. LeVine, Steve. "The Weekly Wrap - Jan. 27, 2012." *Foreign Policy*. N.p., 27 Jan. 2012. Web. 9 Feb. 2012.

7. "Bombing Iran." *The Economist* 25 Feb. 2012. n. pag. Print.

8. "Seven Reasons not to attack Iran." *American Foreign Policy*. American ForeignPolicy Project, n.d. Web. 3 Mar. 2012.

# U.S. China Trade Relations

*China's investment in the American economy is becoming dangerous*

By David Lim  
STAFF WRITER

The political tension regarding trade relations between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China has continued to progress through the beginning of the 21st century. With the Chinese and American governments differing in their calculation of the trade deficit between the two countries, accusations of currency manipulation from American politicians, and two married economies that are in a state of mutually assured destruction, problems are abound.

The United States and China will have to maintain trade relations unless China is willing to take a major loss on its investments. Only reform from the World Trade Organization will be able to make a difference influencing China to step back from the regulatory controls they have put on their economy in hopes of stability over the long term.

U.S.-China relations from Ronald Reagan to now: In 1983, the Reagan administration moved China from the Group P export group to the less restrictive Group V, which allowed more exports in technology.<sup>1</sup> In 1989, these restrictions were loosened even further, allowing more exports. This resulted in a trade surplus with China into the ear-

ly 90's when the U.S. restricted trade again in technology.<sup>1</sup> The Renminbi (or RMB, China's currency), increased value from 8.7 RMB per dollar to 8.279 RMB per dollar over the course of the decade.<sup>1</sup> Currently the exchange rate sits at 6.354 per dollar, showing the further valuation of the RMB over the last decade. However, experts claim that it is still undervalued by 20-40 percent.<sup>2</sup>

An undervalued RMB at face value doesn't seem like a bad thing at first glance; the stronger dollar allows the United States to get more materials for each exchange. Why would China keep the value of their currency low? The problem comes when the only area positively influenced by a weaker currency — exports — becomes evident. With a cheap currency and a factory-based economy, the goal of the economy becomes keeping those factories running.

1. Zhang, Jialin. "U.S.-China Trade Issues After the WTO and the PNTR Deal: A Chinese Perspective." Hoover Institution (Aug. 2000): Hoover Institution Web. 21 Nov. 2011.  
Hamid, Shadi, and Steven Brooke. "Promoting Democracy to Stop Terror, Revisited." Hoover Institution (Feb. 2010): n. pag Hoover Institution. Web. 28 Jan. 2012.

2. Kuttner, Robert. "American Policy Made in China." Rev. of 2011 Report to Congress of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, by U.S. Government Printing Office. Washington D.C. Huffington Post. AOL, n.d. Web. 21 Nov. 2011

By having a centrally planned government, China is able to keep its saving rate higher, keeping the growth of the country higher than the advances in wealth of individual citizens.<sup>3</sup> By using this high savings rate, which sits at 50 percent, China is able to invest at the state level into anything in a very effective manner. This just so happens to be stocks and bonds in the United States. Since the government takes about 50 percent of wages from each person working in the factories, it slows uncontrolled inflation and thus stops social riots.

By feeding back into the largest importer of Chinese goods, China enforces a cycle of payment that allows them to increase their investments, giving them a large amount of stockpiled wealth.<sup>4</sup> A higher currency value would force factories to close, decrease the savings rate, and potentially incite rebellion.

In 2008, the United States had a trade imbalance of one billion dollars per day with China.<sup>5</sup> Currently the United States is in debt approximately 1.2 trillion dollars to China.<sup>6</sup> The basic policy is a marriage of the two economies, such that they are so intertwined that it is mutually assured destruction, much like the nuclear threat during the Cold War. The United States is currently attempting to pressure China into letting their currency increase in value and is pressuring the WTO to attempt to force China to listen.

However, these efforts are not serious, since Congress realizes how closely intertwined the United States is with China.<sup>7</sup> Recent free trade agreements with countries including South Korea continue to expand the competitive scene on international trade.<sup>8</sup> The United States is waiting for more developments in China.

The American people and government must come to terms with their increasing trade imbalance with China and take steps to reduce the massive amount of debt accumulated over the past quarter century in order to stay afloat economically in the upcoming century. While popular opinion dictates that China holds most of the power and influence over the United States, this is simply not the whole picture.

While the amounting debt gives China a great amount of influence in the world, the fact that they have invested so heavily in U.S. Treasury Bonds makes them vulnerable to the whim of the Treasury's bond and lending policy.<sup>9</sup> If the United States stops

3. Fallows, James. "The \$1.4 Trillion Question The Chinese are subsidizing the American way of life. Are we playing them for suckers—or are they playing us?" The Atlantic (Jan.-Feb. 2008): n. pag The Atlantic. Web. 22 Nov. 2011.

4. *ibid* iii

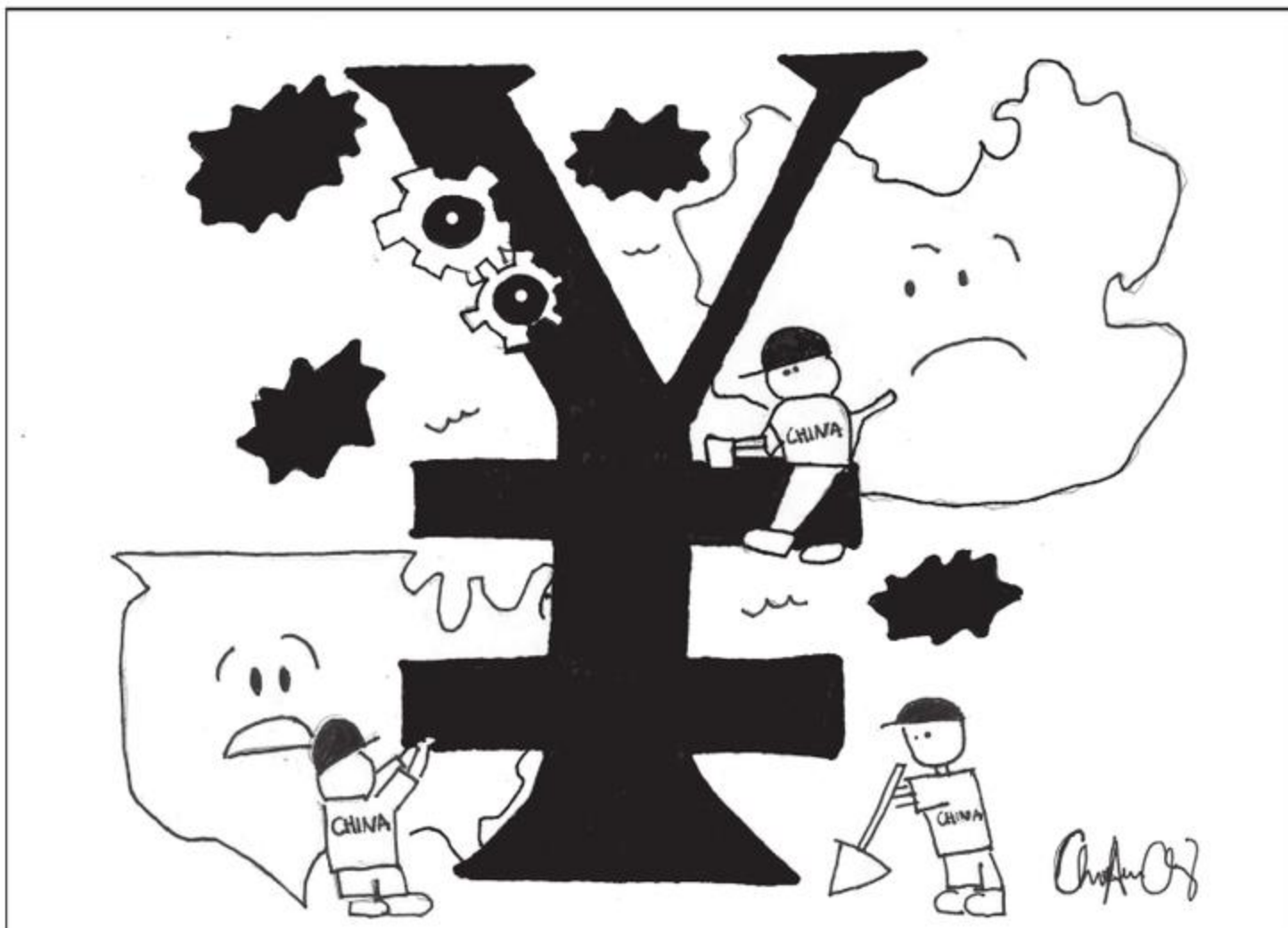
5. *ibid* i

6. *ibid* i

7. Dalton, Matthew, and Diana Kinch. "Debate on Yuan Manipulation Moves to WTO." The Wall Street Journal 16 Nov. 2011: n. pag The Wall Street Journal. Web. 17 Nov. 2011.

8. The Economist 2 Nov. 2011: n. pag The Economist. Web. 17 Nov. 2011.

9. *ibid* ii





Albert Law. Creative Commons

*The Shanghai skyline and Huangpu River from the Shanghai World Financial Center's observation deck. The city is a center of commerce for international trade.*

trading with China, the dollar will likely go into hyperinflation, goods taken for granted will not be delivered, and economic turmoil will be the norm.<sup>10</sup>

The consequences for China would be just as dire since they would have widespread unemployment, leading to more social unrest in an already politically tense country.<sup>11</sup> If we defaulted on our loans, China would stand to lose the most; in addition to trade deficits, they have bought many treasury bonds over the past two decades. Since China is primarily a manufacturing based economy, they need trade with the U.S., who is the largest importer of their goods.

The solution for the United States is to count on the fact that China will become increasingly unstable in the upcoming years. This appears to be a decent bet, sense China has a 50 percent savings rate, compared to India's 25 percent saving rate. This means that if a worker gets paid 100 dollars right now in China, if the savings rate was equal to India, they would be earning 150 dollars.<sup>12</sup> Suppressing the income of the citizens cre-

ates stable growth in the long run, lowers its currency value, and slows inflation, although it will lead to social unrest and a huge wealth disparity between the cities and the countries.

The cheap labor will not last forever, and the manufacturing capability of China

***The fact that the Chinese have invested so heavily in U.S. Treasury Bonds makes them vulnerable to the whim of the Treasury's bond and lending policy***

will slow, which in turn will slow its exports, increase the value of its currency as more people spend more, and allow the United States to return to a more equal playing field in terms of trade.<sup>13</sup> While a large country such as China has inherent strengths for manufacturing, it also has weaknesses, as it depends on other countries for key commodities such as food.

The United States still remains a world power, and has great influence over trade relations with China. Despite the pessimistic forecasts, the U.S. still constitutes 25 percent

of global GDP, and China is just as dependent on the U.S. as the U.S. is on China, if not more so. The key goal of the United States should not be to stop trading with China, but rather to try to break into their market creating by demand for our exports, which in turn will create demand for a lower savings rate in China.

With more being spent on our exports, not only will the trade deficit narrow, but the value of the RMB will as well. By creating a

truly equal free trade agreement, without the regulations which China has imposed on our exports, the United States will be able to create a more sustainable and mutually beneficial partnership with a country that we must remain friends with in the 21st century.<sup>14,15</sup>

Although ending the current trade dispute with China would be difficult since it is a very contentious partisan issue, it could be accomplished through an executive order from President Barack Obama.

10. *ibid* iii

11. *ibid* i

12. *ibid* iii

13. *ibid* i

14. *ibid* ii

15. *ibid* vii

# The U.S. Should Limit Afghanistan Withdrawal

*Current exit strategy could become costly and ineffective*

By Nassim Fedel  
PRESIDENT

The Afghanistan war has cost the U.S. and Afghanistan thousands of lives, cost our taxpayers scores of billion dollars and eroded much of the U.S.' credibility and the international perception of our resolve. Therefore, the Obama administration should be commended for its willingness to stand by a complete withdrawal of U.S. combat troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2014.<sup>1</sup> Yet this decision was more political than strategic, since it went against the opinion of military elite and was intended to curry favor with American voters, among whom the war is highly unpopular.<sup>2</sup>

As such, the U.S. should rethink its withdrawal plan, because no matter how costly the war is now, the cost of a poorly planned exit strategy will be considerably worse. In

1. Bumiller, Elisabeth. "Panetta says U.S. will keep fighting in Afghanistan." *New York Times* 2 Feb. 2012. A12. *New York Times*. Web. 31 Mar. 2012.

2. "73% say Afghan war is unwinnable." *Press Association*. United Kingdom Press Association, 12 Mar. 2012. Web. 31 Mar. 2012.

order to maintain a large enough residual force in case of an attempted Taliban takeover, as well as continue the targeted drone strikes that have proven very effective in countering al-Qaeda in the past few years, the United States should leave an effective force of approximately 50,000 troops in Afghanistan.

As justification for the relatively precipitous planned withdrawal, the Obama administration has been touting the success of its surge strategy, saying that the 30,000 additional troops it deployed in 2009 have been instrumental in the unprecedented success against the Taliban. Indeed, the Taliban has set up an office in Qatar with an indication that it might be open to negotiations, evidence that it has been hit hard by the 100,000 soldier strong NATO army, because strategically speaking, the Taliban would gain nothing from negotiation unless it indeed thought that the United States may be on the verge of incapacitating it. Yet the

Taliban knows that no matter how successful the United States is, it can achieve pyrrhic victories by laying siege to cities and killing civilians from the inside, perhaps in order to spin a persuasive propaganda story of the United States' wholesale abandonment of the Afghanistan project.

The facts corroborate this: violence against civilians has been the highest ever in the past year, with 3,021 killed by an insurgent Taliban.<sup>3</sup> This is proof of the failure of the primary goals of the Petraeus-style counterinsurgency strategy, which has been civilian protection in order to win the hearts and minds of the people and make them believe in the superiority of the United States 'benevolence.

This indicates two things: first, that a counterinsurgency strategy in areas in which the Taliban has strong influence (such as

3. Johnson, Kay. "Afghanistan Civilian Deaths: 2011 Was Deadliest Year For Civilians In Afghan War." *Huffington Post*. N.p., 4 Feb. 2012. Web. 31 Mar. 2012.



The U.S. Army. Creative Commons

Helmand and Kandahar) will inevitably fail; and second, that the prospect of a complete United States troop withdrawal has emboldened the Taliban to conduct more wanton aggression as the militant group seeks to fill the imminent void in both boots on the ground and moral support that will arise after U.S. troops withdraw in 2014.

The consequences of Obama's strategy could prove even more dire than civilian violence and the failure to win over a people who will invariably oppose Western influence. For instance, the Taliban could take advantage of the weak Afghan security force, which will not be ready in any realistic time frame for the experience-driven and resource-heavy endeavor that is counterinsurgency, and attempt a takeover of the entire country.

Furthermore, the lack of counterterrorism (drone) forces on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border could debase efforts to prevent the flow of Taliban and al-Qaeda members into Pakistan. These are the insurgents who have been destabilizing the nuclear weapons state by filling the void during natural disasters, taking advantage of the Pakistani government's failure and incompetence. A terrorist in possession of a nuclear weapon could do more than strike the U.S., which could provoke political support for a second strike on Pakistan or hypothetical al-Qaeda strongholds. Al-Qaeda could also use Pakistan's nuclear weapons in order to spark a war with India, which would inevitably sap U.S. strength, further the Haqqani network's interests, and lead to a devastating loss of life.

The impacts of a Taliban takeover and the failure of the United

States to contain al-Qaeda's militants are clearly devastating, and the current strategy would fail at preventing it. What is needed is a compromise — one that would prove strategically superior to the current plan, as well as politically superior for Obama and his reelection prospects. The United States federal government should substantially reduce its military presence in Afghanistan by withdrawing its counterterrorism forces from the North and West of the country and withdrawing its counterinsurgency troops from the South and East. This is not a new argument, but it bears repeating given the U.S.'s seeming resolve in following through with a foolish exit strategy.

Counterinsurgency: it fails in the South and East but succeeds in the North and West. In the South and East, it cannot possibly win over the people who, due to tribal affiliations to the Pashtun, the very people whose deep sense of nationalism singlehandedly drove out the Soviets in the 1980s, as well as an agricultural lifestyle on which our



Staff Sgt. Susan Will. Creative Commons

*President Obama visiting soldiers at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan during a surprise tour. His administration has planned the withdrawal of American troops in 2014 due to strategized success.*

large military footprint has a large and direct economic impact, will always hate the United States. No matter how many hospitals and schools are built, American counterinsurgency projects will be spun by the Taliban as western influence.<sup>4</sup>

Additionally, the mountainous and rural nature of the terrain makes it impossible

***The US should rethink its withdrawal plan, because no matter how costly the war is now, the cost of a poorly planned exit strategy could prove even worse.***

for any realistically-sized counterinsurgency force to achieve its objectives, since the Taliban can just siege the places we take over, as evinced by the siegings of Kandahar and Helmand.<sup>4</sup>

In the North and West however, there is a high approval rating of the United States due to the relatively higher education of its urban population.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, the terrain is more flat and its cities are better connected, both by distance and by a decent network of roads, making the region much more conducive to counterinsurgency.

Counterterrorism: it is counterproductive in the North and West but succeeds in the South and East. In the North and West, the population is highly concentrated, which makes drone attacks impractical and even counterproductive to the point where civilian casualties, such as the bombings of weddings or the killing of innocent children, be-

come persuasive propaganda stories.

In the South and East however, counterterrorism attacks are critical to prevent the flow of insurgents into Pakistan, as well as to contain the Taliban and al-Qaeda. While terrorism can never be truly eradicated without addressing the underlying causes, a problem for which this piece humbly avoids offering a solution, killing leaders can decrease — and has of late proven successful at doing so — attacks and recruitment.

Thus the solution: do each strategy where it would succeed, which would require a residual force of 50,000 United States troops as well as a willingness to abandon the notion that Afghanistan is a uniform nation of uniform peoples and uniform geography.

This would be a political win for President Obama, as it would be perceived both as a substantial withdrawal (a greater than 50 percent decrease in troops), a smart change in strategy that would send the signal that the U.S. is not going to stay in Afghanistan for a long war based on tried-and-failed principles, and a compromise that would appease Republicans wary of a fixed and precipitous withdrawal timetable.

Obama and Leon Panetta got many things right in terms of foreign policy. Their greatest success has been the near decimation of al-Qaeda with targeted drone killings.

Their latest plan to functionally abandon Afghanistan would jeopardize those successes. A fundamental rethinking of strategy would perhaps not achieve victory, but a de facto partition of the country along with a sizeable withdrawal would be, on balance, the least bad option.

<sup>4</sup> Blackwell, Robert D. "Plan B in Afghanistan." *Foreign Affairs* (Jan.-Feb. 2011): n. pag. Council on Foreign Relations. Web. 31 Mar. 2012.

# DEBATE: Israel-Palestine

## Israel Should Conquer Palestine

By Ben Hawthorne  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

There is a lot of debate in the media about what to do with Israel and Palestine. West Bank terrorists continue killing Israeli civilians, and the Israeli military destroys Palestinian homes and families in response. The best solution to this crisis would be to allow Israel to take over the West Bank, since it would be a legal action that would help the Palestinians.

First, the Palestinians have no right to the land. Legitimate rule is contingent upon the ability of a state to keep its people safe both from itself and from foreign powers. The fact that Israel is able to build all of its settlements in the first place without any action from the Palestinian Authority just goes to show that the Palestinian Authority is not strong enough to be considered the legitimate owner of the West Bank.

The West Bank is governed by an ineffective and bankrupt state, the Palestinian Authority, which is unable to provide its people with even the most basic health care and education, such as elementary

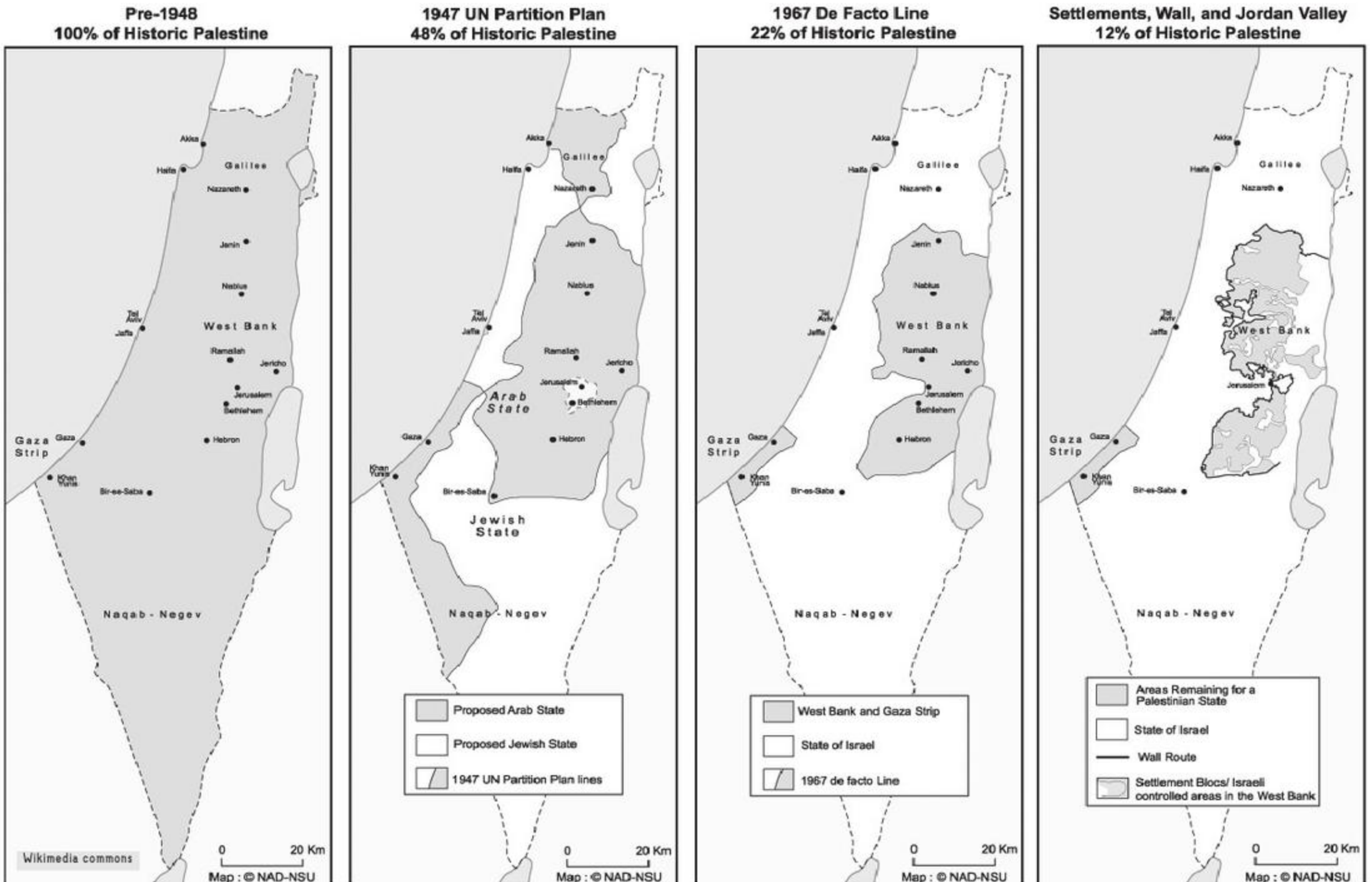
## Two-State Solution is Superior

By Nassim Fedel  
PRESIDENT

It is time for a just peace in the Middle East. For too long "West vs. the Rest" party politics and jingoism have dominated discourse on the issue of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israel continues to build illegal settlements, Hamas continues to launch rockets, and the U.S. continues to rely on a categorical alliance that hinders its interests. Given this state of affairs, a rational and non-ideological view of the conflict suggests a two-state solution as the best for all involved parties.

Ever since the creation of the state of Israel, the plight of the Palestinian people has been functionally ignored or intentionally marginalized by American and Israeli elites; being called an "invented" people<sup>1</sup> is but one example. A two-state solution which respects Palestinians' fundamental right to a sovereign state through self-determination would breathe new life into Palestine's social,

1. "Palestinians are an invented people, says Newt Gingrich." The Guardian, 9 Dec. 2011. Web. 31 Mar. 2012.



continued

## ISRAEL SHOULD CONQUER PALESTINE

school education and maternity clinics.<sup>1</sup>

The Gaza Strip is governed by Hamas, which is classified as a terrorist organization by the State Department, and with good reason: it massacres its political opponents<sup>2</sup>, uses civilians as human shields<sup>2</sup>, and has dedicated itself to the destruction of Israel.

In addition, there would be numerous benefits to allowing Israel to control the West Bank and Gaza. Israel is a modern democracy with functioning legal institutions, rights for women, decent education systems, welfare institutions, and basic civil liberties.<sup>3</sup> Israel has a booming economy that is entrepreneur driven<sup>3</sup>, so a unification of Israel and Palestine would help lift Palestinians out of poverty.

Although there is some anti-Palestinian discrimination in Israel, discrimination in

1. Mataria, Awad, et al. Heath in the Occupied Palestinian Territory 5. 2009. Print. 5.

2. Under Cover of War: Hamas Political Violence in Gaza. New York City: Human Rights Watch, 2009. Print.

3. Oren, Michael. "The Ultimate Ally." Foreign Policy. Washington Post, May-June 2011. Web. 9 Feb. 2012.

Palestine is as severe or worse, although it is directed at different targets. For example, enforcement of Shari'a law in some areas of Palestine has caused women there to have virtually no rights<sup>4</sup>. The disabled are also discriminated against; the Palestinian Authority abets the frequent killing of the disabled and often does not supply them with doctors.<sup>5</sup> Israeli security forces can provide real law enforcement, and could effectively defeat terrorists, as they did during the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West

Bank. An Israeli takeover would dramatically boost the Palestine standard of living, and give them freedoms that the religious single-party Palestinian Authority cannot offer.

It is thus not surprising that polls show that most Palestinians in East Jerusalem who have experienced the benefits of Israeli welfare, rights and health care want to live in Israel instead of Palestine.<sup>6</sup>

4. Facts on Violence Against Women in Palestine. Jerusalem: MIFTAH, 2005. Print.

5. Amro, Nuereddin. "From discrimination to an inclusive future for the visually handicapped in Palestine." Strong Voices, 6 Dec. 2011. Web. 10 Feb. 2012.

6. Diehl, Jackson. "Why Palestinians want to be Israeli

citizens." Post Partisan. Washington Post, 12 Jan. 2011. Web. 10 Feb. 2012.

Contrast this with Palestine. The Palestinian economy is nearly entirely agricultural with some small industries, making it barely a developing nation. The main barrier to prosperity there is costly and limited access to capital thanks to government policies, and nearly all economic growth has been caused by foreign aid instead of private sector development. The Palestinian Authority is swamped with debts, causing it to cut welfare and raise prices on things like power.

Unemployment stands at 25 percent in the West Bank and 40 percent in Gaza, compared with 5.6 percent in Israel, which has a fast-growing economy with many job openings.<sup>7</sup> Health care in Palestine is a failure: infant mortality is high compared to the rest of the Arab world, treatable non-communicable diseases are the leading cause of death, and thousands of Palestinians are forced to seek health care in other nations due to the lack of health care in much of Palestine.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, while the Israeli occupation of the West Bank may at face look unjust and oppressive, it is actually greatly beneficial to the Palestinians.

7. "West Bank." CIA World Factbook. CIA, 18 Jan. 2012. Web. 6 Feb. 2012.

8. Ibid i

continued

## TWO-STATE SOLUTION IS SUPERIOR

economic, and political life.

According to Merriam-Webster's dictionary, "sovereignty" denotes "supreme power...over a body politic" with "freedom from external control", as "an autonomous state,"<sup>2</sup> while "self-determination" denotes the "determination by the people of a territorial unit of their own future political status."<sup>3</sup>

Yet the right of the Palestinian people to self-determine a sovereign state has been violated for over six decades. Israel's settlements on occupied Palestinian territory in West Bank and in East Jerusalem have been deemed illegal by the International Court of Justice; Israel not only infringes on Palestinians' fundamental rights to private property, but also on reasonable access to water and basic services.<sup>4</sup>

The constraints created by the lack of a functioning, internationally credible, and legitimate state – constraints imposed by the legal restrictions of occupation and the political conditions created by an economy subsisting mostly on foreign aid<sup>5</sup> – cause many

2. "Sovereignty." Merriam Webster. Print.

3. "Self-Determination." Merriam Webster. Print.

4. "Illegal Israeli settlement plans threaten Palestinian human rights." Amnesty.org. Amnesty International, 15 Oct. 2010. Web. 31 Mar. 2012.

5. Issacharoff, Avi. "World Bank: Economic slowdown in Palestinian Authority endangers statebuilding efforts." Haaretz 15 Mar. 2003; Haaretz. Web. 31 Mar. 2012.

of the problems which opponents of a Palestinian state point to: lack of access to health-care, lack of opportunity and the election of quasi-militant, incendiary political groups such as Hamas. If Palestinians were to gain a sovereign state recognized by Israel, the U.S. and the UN, then they would be able to better determine their own political and economic futures by working through international organizations like the UN.

Intransigence on their part over the Israel issue is not one of dogma or ideology; for most Palestinians, the will to support groups like Hamas stems only from the feeling of hopelessness in their situation. Israel should not fight fire with fire; economic cooperation can go a long way toward stably integrating Palestine into the fold of international politics and norms.

The advantages for Israel are just as great. While Israel would no longer completely dominate Palestinian lands, pro-Israel supporters who ardently advocate a one-state solution should realize that the status quo is unsustainable. Sooner or later, the internal Israeli political pressure as a response to the inexorably intensifying rocket attacks from Hamas (and the ever-more real threat of Iranian nuclear adventurism), as well as

international political pressure as a symptom of a growing concern for the plight of the Palestinians, will force Israel to yield to the two-state solution.

It would be a superior course of action for Israel to limit its security concern due to Hamas's terror, silence the voices denouncing its illegitimacy due to the illegality of its actions, and improve its soft power and relations with its Arab, Palestinian-sympathetic neighbors.

The United States has the ability to greatly influence the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. The U.S. could use its successful resolution, combined with a generally positive support of the Arab Spring revolutions, as a springboard for launching a new era of positive American influence in the Middle East.

If the substantive concerns of the anti-Israel zealots are answered, then Holocaust deniers such as Ahmadinejad will have very little with which to justify their inflammatory statements. The United States should isolate Iran not by isolating its allies through unjust policies, but by beating back its statements with proof that it can be a benevolent hegemon. Cooperation is the only true way forward.

**The right of the Palestinian people to self-determine a sovereign state has been violated for over six decades.**

# What the Myans knew

## *Retooling the American war machine*

By Anonymous

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The year is 2012, and I bring tragic tidings. A circular stone disc somewhere in Central America carved thousands of years ago, likely created by an intoxicated Mayan, predicts the end of the world on 21 December of this year, and so it shall be. The evidence is irrefutable: the disc has a number of faces on it that are obviously trying to say "The world will end in 2012." Additionally, those words are carved underneath inside a text bubble connected to the mouths of said faces. And so it is with this in mind that I write to you, my audience, about the U.S.' global military footprint and Armed Forces recruitment policies.

The Mayans didn't get everything wrong though. In the ancient city of Tik'al ("The place where voices resonate"), priests would speak from the tops of the many pyramids and exalt their deities, or pray for additional rainfall. Their most renowned ritual involved sending the Emperor's son down to a sinkhole to drown. They would tie him to large rocks and plop him in as an offering to the water god, who, if pleased, would call forth some rain. It is enough to say Emperor's sons were usually in short supply, but due to the critical nature of rainfall and the purported efficiency in this methodology, the Emperor was never short of women to bear his children.

We look back upon the customs of the ancient Mayans with disgust, and yet we fail to comprehend the context in which these customs existed. To the Mayans, this was the greatest honor anyone could receive, and it was why only the Emperor's son (who has considered to be a demigod) was permitted to descend into a Cenote to consult with the water god. It was viewed as the highest and most noble sacrifice, and the royal princes were celebrated for it.

Now let me take you somewhere else for a moment. The year is 2003, and vast numbers of racist, homophobic, muscular American southerners, many of them belonging to mistreated ethnic minorities and the vast majority lacking any sort of proper education outside that of how to effectively shoot a number of lethal weapons, are pouring into the sovereign nation of Iraq. Their tanks steamroll through cities, and under all of their gear they practically don't even look human anymore. They drag Iraqi men and women to the ground, threaten them at gunpoint laughingly, while listening to death-

metal classics such as "Hammer Smashed Face" or "No Remorse" at full volume. They have no respect for privacy, no cultural sensitivity, and seemingly no humanity. That, and the occasional "accidental" shooting of some poor Iraqi makes "winning the hearts and minds" of the Iraqi people a sick joke.

The Mayans sent their best and brightest unto the breach to serve their countrymen and bring hope for a better tomorrow to the average Juan. We Americans on the other hand send our poorest and most moronic to

*The United States interfaces with most of the rest of the world through its military, not its diplomats.*

scare the living shit out of other human beings, which, as we well know, is the best way to "spread democracy".

Yes, that last bit was sarcasm. So what am I saying? The U.S., being the U.S., interfaces with most of the rest of the world through its military, not its diplomats. That means that our military represents us Americans to the rest of the world. If our goal is to convince people that our system of government is so great, why do we send those whom our system has used and abused to persuade others?

Now at this point, you might have just fallen out of your chair. Did I just insinuate that our poor and uneducated are our country's worst? That they are somehow less intelligent than the rest of us? And that I, by extension, am a racist-elitist hack? Well... yeah. But I would also point you to some empirics (historically based arguments, and conclusions arrived at from analysis of data.)

So if I told you that the war in Iraq was fought with an all-time historical low of high school graduates (estimates range from 60-75 percent) or with an all-time high of underprivileged youths (individuals from lower-middle class neighborhoods were four times more likely to serve than individuals from upper class neighborhoods), those would be called empirical arguments.

In 2006, the Heritage Foundation, the most influential conservative think-tank, released a report in which it called out these number-based falsifications for what they really were, sharing their own brand of em-

pirics. Tragically enough, the intellectual community stepped in and explained how the statistics relied upon by the Foundation's report were either completely false or factual omissions. The Heritage Foundation retaliated, as it often does, by calling everyone and everything "gay" and then sulking.

But, this problem of recruitment has now proven to be more widespread and persistent than we could have anticipated. Iraq was a catastrophe, but now troops in Afghanistan have been endangering our strategic position there: two recent incidents have brought into question the capacity of our soldiers to carry out their mission there, indeed their capacity to use their heads. First, on 12 January 2012, a video hit the web of U.S. forces urinating on the bodies of dead members of the Taliban, spurring massive outrage. Then, on 11 March 2012 a single soldier left his base and killed 16 civilians, 9 of them children, before he was stopped. These incidents have obviously made "winning the hearts and minds"

something of a challenge.

I have nothing against the poor and uneducated of this nation or any other. I think most, if not all have been unfairly denied their human rights by some system

of authority. But it is also my belief that we ought to recognize the fact that the poor and uneducated haven't and won't make exceptional soldiers we can trust with the most important of missions. It seems to me that if we really want it to rain we need to send more Emperor's sons into the Cenote.

Enough metaphors. What am I saying? My goal is not to bring back the Mayan drowning-ritual but to change the way the U.S. thinks about intervention. Peace should not be brought to foreign nations by B-2 bombers, solidarity should not be brought by masked killing-machines, nor justice by automatic weapons. The age of large standing armies is over. What the U.S. needs is to shift its military from a war machine to a peace machine.

Because I've already painted two pictures for you allow me to paint just one more. Imagine the next time violence breaks out in some nation somewhere where we seem to have a great deal at stake, but where we really don't belong, we airlift a couple metric tons of Marijuana into the center of the crisis, along with a fleet of red cross doctors, and a veritable legion of polisci majors. Imagine shipping crates of books rather than bullets, teachers rather than tanks, and students rather than soldiers, to learn and share in what could be the birth of a new age.

When you think about it, it really isn't as ridiculous as what we have come to accept as "normal" intervention, and that's the sad part.