

# AGORA

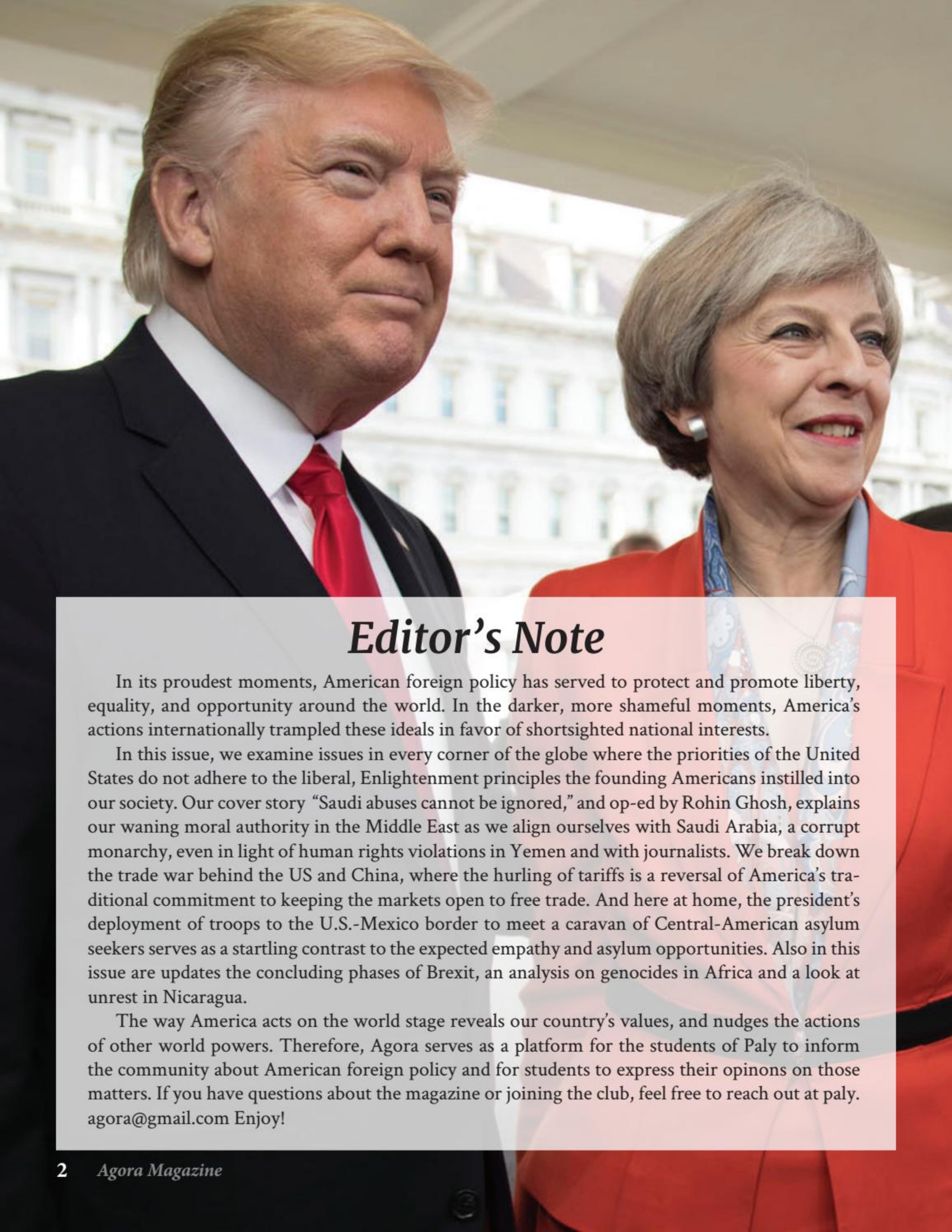
WINTER ISSUE

PALO ALTO HIGH SCHOOL'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS MAGAZINE

A close-up photograph of a man wearing a traditional Saudi Arabian headdress (ghutra) with a red and white checkered pattern and a black agal (headband). He is looking off to the right with a serious expression. The background is blurred, showing other people in similar attire.

**Op-ed: Saudi  
abuses cannot  
be ignored**

*Pg.15*



## *Editor's Note*

In its proudest moments, American foreign policy has served to protect and promote liberty, equality, and opportunity around the world. In the darker, more shameful moments, America's actions internationally trampled these ideals in favor of shortsighted national interests.

In this issue, we examine issues in every corner of the globe where the priorities of the United States do not adhere to the liberal, Enlightenment principles the founding Americans instilled into our society. Our cover story "Saudi abuses cannot be ignored," and op-ed by Rohin Ghosh, explains our waning moral authority in the Middle East as we align ourselves with Saudi Arabia, a corrupt monarchy, even in light of human rights violations in Yemen and with journalists. We break down the trade war behind the US and China, where the hurling of tariffs is a reversal of America's traditional commitment to keeping the markets open to free trade. And here at home, the president's deployment of troops to the U.S.-Mexico border to meet a caravan of Central-American asylum seekers serves as a startling contrast to the expected empathy and asylum opportunities. Also in this issue are updates the concluding phases of Brexit, an analysis on genocides in Africa and a look at unrest in Nicaragua.

The way America acts on the world stage reveals our country's values, and nudges the actions of other world powers. Therefore, Agora serves as a platform for the students of Paly to inform the community about American foreign policy and for students to express their opinions on those matters. If you have questions about the magazine or joining the club, feel free to reach out at [paly.agora@gmail.com](mailto:paly.agora@gmail.com) Enjoy!

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## Editorial\*: Say no to nationalism

### *Protect diplomatic world order, reject global trend*

“**Y**ou know what I am—I’m a nationalist,” President Donald Trump declared at a Oct. 23 rally in Texas. With the adoption of nationalism—a perception of country superiority which leads to isolationism—Trump’s ‘America first’ rally cry overtime turned into ‘American only,’ writing off international responsibilities to universal human rights, economic freedoms the United States.

“A globalist is a person that wants the globe to do well, frankly, not caring about our country so much,” he continues. “And you know what? We can’t have that.”

Although Trump portrays his ‘America first’ mantra as an underdog ideology, the reality is that isolationism, sectionalism and nationalism have

been trending around the world, among countries who benefit little from global intertwinement to those who rely on it to the fullest extent.

Trump’s rejection of globalism is something that many other countries are also adhering to. Europe is roiled in a debate about national sovereignty, with polling indicating an increasing distrust of the European Union, and not just in Brexit-ing Britain, but in Eastern European states turning to far-right isolationist candidates. In the same notion of inward-looking policies, sectionalist divisions between Indian states demonstrated how fears stemming from economic stagnation led to disgruntlement with Prime Minister Modi’s policies. And protectionist attitudes in East Africa threaten a key trade agreement. These

selfish policies continue to heighten in a fearful response to unprecedented numbers of immigrants and refugees, economic insecurity, and disillusionment with the effects of globalization.

As the rest of the world steps away from the global stage, we lower standards for global leaders. Agora encourages students to reject isolationism, to understand the benefits (most self-serving) of diplomacy, open economies and collaboration between countries with similar values. And when candidates, such as Donald Trump, suggest that we should follow others in removing our attention from the center stage, pay attention to who climbs up on the stage to perform.

*\*This editorial is an expression of the collective opinion of the Agora staff.*

# How China's influence is affecting the Pacific

By Adam Friedland

Economic strong-arming is an unfortunate but undeniable fixture in modern geopolitics, but China may prove itself able to yet settle the score, once and for all. An ever-growing superpower, it vies for economic influence around the world with other great powers, most notably the United States. Most recently, this has manifested in a direct tariff war with the US, but most of the battle occurs indirectly, by focusing its influence onto smaller, economically undeveloped states.

China's strategy to gain dominance in this way is outlined by the "Belt and Road" initiative, a Chinese infrastructure program primarily defined by giving large loans to small countries around the world such as Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Kenya to build new infrastructure. However, this comes at a heavy cost. The often exorbitant interest rates on these loans put vulnerable countries at high risk of defaulting—that is, unable to pay the loan back. If this happens, the loan agreement mandates that China obtains de-facto possession of the structure, and allows it unrestricted transportation rights within the country. For many of the developing countries targeted by the initiative, the economic gain is often welcomed, despite the severe consequences for their almost certain loan default. This tactic is often called a 'debt trap', and brings fears surrounding the new theatre in global economic competition.

The Pacific Island nations are particularly vulnerable to debt traps due to their small size and economic underdevelopment. They are strategically important as they hold the waters of the South Pacific, and are located between the United States' Pacific territories and its regional ally, Australia.

Australia has traditionally provided the most foreign aid in the region, being responsible for maintaining the United States' economic relations with Pacific Island nations and keeping them friendly to the US. However, foreign aid has been limited and the islands are still struggling, especially when facing threats such as rising sea levels, which threaten their very existence.

However, the attractive promise of change has come with the arrival of Chinese loans, with the Chinese government recently offering the government of Papua New Guinea \$4 billion to finance the country's first national road network (ABC). It is a massive yet perilous investment into a largely mountainous and indigenous nation, and could have significant financial and political consequences for the local government later on. Huawei, a Chinese telecommunications giant,



**Chinese President Xi Jinping. Photo courtesy of Wikipedia Creative commons.**

has also offered Papua New Guinea an offer for a domestic internet cable proposal. For the United States, this is especially worrying, because U.S. intelligence regards Huawei as a cybersecurity threat.

However, these recent advances have led to a heightened American and Australian interest in the Pacific. The Australian government also announced plans to build high-speed underwater internet cabling between Australia, Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands, and, according to Reuters, pledged 2 billion dollars to build joint military bases and create diplomatic postings in Palau and Niue. Australian Prime Minister claims such programs are part of Australia's efforts to open "a new chapter" in relations with Australia's Pacific neighbors.

As the economic struggle in the Pacific takes shape, countries in the region may be forced to take sides. However, the impact on these countries must not be disregarded. As foreign powers compete for and exploit natural resources, the local communities must not be forgotten and global powers must be conscious of their impact.

# #MeToo movement strikes India

*Media and entertainment industries hit by allegations*

By Kabir Advani

#*MIE* T 

Flag representing the #MeToo Movement that has recently gained steam in India. *Graphic by Kabir Advani.*

The #MeToo movement, which took the United States by storm in 2017, is a movement that advocates for sexual misconduct survivors to come out with their stories, stopping society from suppressing their voices. Founded in 2006 by activist Tarana Burke, this movement spread rapidly after actress Alyssa Milano tweeted, “if you’ve been sexually harassed or assaulted write ‘me too’ as a reply to this tweet.” Shortly after, fellow actress Ashley Judd accused film producer Harvey Weinstein of sexual assault in a New York Times article.

This subsequently provided a platform for other women to talk about their experiences of rape and sexual assault in an environment that would support them to speak out about their experiences. Since then, many women, from Hollywood actresses to athletes in the Olympics, have publically come out with their stories. Time Magazine gave the #MeToo movement recognition when it named the movement its Person of the Year in 2017.

Although the #MeToo Movement has grown to bigger than anyone could have imagined in the United States and has brought an unprecedented recognition of women’s issues, it has recently seen a major spark in a foreign land—India.

Like the United States, India also has too many instances of rape and other forms of sexual harassment. According to The Guardian, about 42 percent of girls in India have been victims of sexual misconduct. Additionally, a survey conducted by the International Center for Research on Women revealed that 95 percent of women reported feeling unsafe outside because of harassment. For example, Indian journalism student Akriti Wadhwa has said in an interview with CNN that molestation and various forms of sexual harassment are basically the “male gaze.” She feels uncomfortable wearing certain clothing because she knows that “people are going to check you out from head to toe.”

Evidently, Indian women are not getting the treatment that they deserve and India’s archaic gender standards are to blame. Women are expected to be homemakers whose sole job is to be a wife or daughter, regardless of their dreams and aspirations.

In interviews conducted by Deepa Narayan, a sociologist from New Delhi, for her book “Chup” (Hindi for ‘Quiet’), the adjectives “mother”, “sacrifice”, and “giving” were most commonly used in describing attributes of a woman, whereas men were described as a “leader” and “powerful”. In the book,



M.J. Akbar (left) shown with an Austrian diplomat during May of 2018 while he was still apart of the Indian Parliament before his sexual misconduct allegations came out. Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0)

Narayan writes that in general, words used for women “describe the emotional qualities and strengths needed to cope with the duties of being a daughter, wife and mother, in other words, meeting everyone else’s needs selflessly”.

In other settings including the professional environment, they are treated as subordinates and often do not encounter the same opportunities as men. According to data from The Economic Times, Indian women on average are paid 25 percent less than men.

This patriarchal society gives men a sense of authority over women, which can lead to them treating women poorly. A study by The Wire revealed that about 99 percent of sexual misconduct cases go unreported in India due to the normalization of such behavior. Thus, with the culmination of unfair gender standards throughout India and women being overlooked by society, men are given to power to act however they want towards women, even if that involves sexual misconduct.

However, the widespread trend of mistreating women is declining because the #MeToo movement has spread to India and given women the power to stand up to their assaulters. This all started in the latter half of 2018 when journalist Priya Ramani identified the anonymous male editor who sexually

assaulted her last year. Inspired by how the #MeToo movement has empowered women in the United States in addition to a Bollywood actress’s accusation against her doctor, Ramani’s tweet with the #MeToo was really what introduced this movement to India.

Ramani’s predator—M.J. Akbar—had an illustrious career as an editor and writer. He also had a political career which began in 1989, however, it soon ended in 1991. But in 2014, he once again re entered politics and was a part of the Indian Parliament. Recently, twenty more women have come out accusing Akbar of some form of sexual misconduct; this behavior of sexual misconduct has now purged its way up to

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s close advisors.

In the months since the start of the #MeToo movement in India, the media and entertainment industries have seen a huge wave of allegations. This has become a revolution for the women of India who have been silenced for so long by power-hungry and predatory men of society. Akbar resigned from Parliament in October of 2018. There is still a long way to go, but finally, this movement is giving Indian women voices, and is putting the M.J. Akbar’s of the world into their rightful place.

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*“You’re an expert on **obscene phone calls, inappropriate compliments and not taking no for an answer**” - Priya Ramani*

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# Power shifts in Armenia, Malaysia

## *Recent events oppose narrative of rising extremism*

By Braxton Miller



Armenian protest leader Nikol Pashinyan speaks to a crowd in April. Photo courtesy of Yerevantsi

A self-centered news cycle surrounds America, which makes it easy to forget that the US contains less than five percent of all people on Earth. However, political power shifts are happening constantly around the world. Billions of lives are changed by their governments' actions, and yet most of this news fails to be widely noticed across the oceans. Foreign elections or political turmoil in recent years share a common narrative: Nationalist and populist dictators and demagogues have taken power in countries at all corners of the globe. This trend is a drastic shift in the way the world's countries are governed.

Despite the prevalence of this narrative, it has not occurred everywhere. Specifically, two exceptions occurred this past May in Armenia and Malaysia. These are two very different countries: Armenia is a small former Soviet state nestled at the boundary of Europe and Asia, with a majority Christian population.

Malaysia, on the other hand, is in the far Southeast of Asia and has a majority Muslim population. People of countless

other religions and ethnicities also call Malaysia home. However, they are oftentimes not treated equally; an article from the Economist describes how Malaysia's constitution goes so far as to lend a "special position" to ethnic Malays over other Malaysians. In both nations, long-lasting leaders who were seen as overstepping their authority were ousted by a sudden shift in the popular will.

Though the events were nearly concurrent, Armenia found itself in the international headlines a few weeks before Malaysia. Armenian president Serzh Sargsyan had been ruling for ten years, and his party, the Republican Party, had ruled for twenty. Faced with term limits, he tried to remain in power by making himself the new prime minister. However, he had previously promised not to do exactly that. Having broken his promise, a wave of nonviolent pro-democratic protests spread across the country, at which point Sargsyan resigned.

By late May, protest leader Nikol Pashinyan was appointed the new prime minister, and a revolution had come and gone without a drop of blood—a "Velvet Revolution". With





Supporters of Pakatan Harapan gather in Malaysia in 2013. Photo courtesy of Firdaus Latif

elections upcoming in December, according to *The Armenian Weekly*—which will have happened by this issue’s publication – Armenia seems, for now, revitalized and optimistic about its future.

Malaysia was not home to a revolution, but the events leading up to its election on May 9 are quite more complex than what happened in Armenia. According to *The New York Times*, the nation’s previous prime minister, Najib Razak, was the latest in a long line of leaders from the right leaning National Front, or Barisan Nasional (BN) in Malay. The BN had ruled Malaysia since its independence from Britain in 1957, and its hold on the country’s government was nearly insurmountable.

For two decades the prime minister was Mahathir Mohamad, who retired in 2003 as a respected and still powerful figure. Mahathir remained supportive of Najib’s government until 2016, when it became dogged in clouds of corruption. Najib was accused of taking hundreds of millions of dollars from a government-linked bank for his own personal gain and usage. Despite having been his mentor, and in spite of be-

ing 92 years old, Mahathir turned against Najib, joining with imprisoned rival Anwar Ibrahim to run against the party he led for twenty years. Despite heavily rigging the election for themselves through excessive gerrymandering, the BN lost power for the first time since it was created. Instead, the Alliance of Hope (Pakatan Harapan) coalition won a majority of seats, with Mahathir as prime minister. Though currently in the position, he plans to hand over power in the near future to Anwar, who he has pardoned. As in Armenia, this result paves a path for a more democratic future in Malaysia, though no outcomes

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*In both nations, long-lasting leaders who were seen as overstepping their authority were ousted by a sudden shift in the popular will.*

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are guaranteed in either country.

These stories likely feel like polar opposites to the supposed rise of populist demagoguery. Though it might be strange to see these wildly different paths being taken at the same time, it is important to look at the other factors involved. Both Armenia and Malaysia had leaders involved in scandals and, while no government is free of corruption, it can reach a certain point where leaders lose a significant amount of popularity and democracy can still reign supreme

# Trading blows: US-China trade war

*Amid ceasefire, world's largest economies still in dispute*

By Alex Selwyn

What began as tariffs on imported solar panels and washing machines has escalated to a full-fledged trade war between the world's two largest economies. At midnight on Sept. 24 new US tariffs took effect on 200 billion dollars worth of Chinese imports. In response, Beijing swiftly imposed retaliatory tariffs on 5,207 categories of US goods, valued at 60 billion dollars.

President Donald Trump believes this aggressive strategy will reinvigorate the US job market, decrease the 376 billion dollar bilateral trade deficit with China and pressure China to change its trade policies. Despite his stated goals, the tension appears to be harming American companies and consumers in addition to rattling the global economy. Overall, the damage may upend the critical trade relationship between the US and China.

While Trump suggested in a tweet that "trade wars are good, and easy to win," several economists and game theory experts challenge this view. Game theory, the study of strategic interaction using mathematical models, has significant applications to trade policy. In relation to the trade war, the US will gain an advantage from tariffs only if China does not pursue countermeasures. In contrast, from China's standpoint, retaliation will limit the amount of damage it must endure and eliminate all benefit to the US. Thus, China can minimize its losses by levying tariffs on the US, thereby increasing the cost of US goods.

This behavior is substantiated by Christof Böhringer, an economics professor at Oldenburg University in Germany, whose simulations indicate that US tariffs would increase the American Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 0.13 percent by the end of 2018, absent a response from China. By comparison, the American GDP would drop by 0.49 percent if China chose to retaliate. Additionally, game theory principles suggest that the US and China could be mired in conflict for some time. Based on a concept known as Nash equilibrium, both countries lack incentive to deviate from their initial strategy. Rather, they remain in a state of confrontation, preventing return to a free trade environment.

Historically, the executive branch has had limited authority to institute tariffs; however, a series of legislation

passed throughout the 20th century grants the president certain foreign trade privileges. A key provision in Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 authorizes the president to modify tariffs if he deems any imports a threat to national security. Earlier this year, Wilbur Ross, current US Secretary of Commerce, prepared a report on the impact of steel and aluminum imports from China. Trump then used this investigation, which vaguely concluded that Chinese imports jeopardized American national security, as a pretext to bypass Congress and the US International Trade Commission.

The Act was predicated on the assumption that a simple majority in both chambers of Congress would be easily attainable in a time of crisis. Nonetheless, Trump appears to be abusing the law to advance his protectionist agenda and undercut China's geopolitical and economic objectives. Unlike prior administrations, Trump has adopted a combative stance toward the Chinese, fixated on punishment rather than diplomacy.

Over the past ten years, China has developed a multi-faceted approach to surpass the US in commercial technology and industrial capacity. In 2008, the country established the Thousand Talents Program, ostensibly to recruit leading international specialists in innovation, science and entrepreneurship. However, an unclassified analysis by the National Intelligence Council claims that the program's true goal is "to facilitate the legal and illicit transfer of US technology, intellectual property and know-how" to China.

Four years later, Chinese leaders outlined a free trade agreement between South-east Asian countries, known as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). This policy was passed after China was excluded from the now defunct

Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a US-backed trade proposal with 11 other countries primarily located in Asia. Through the RCEP, China sought to secure a central position while enhancing bilateral coordination with surrounding nations.

In 2015, China announced "Made in China 2025," a ten-year initiative to broaden China's manufacturing base and bolster its existing technology sectors through government subsidies, state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and IP acquisition.

The main source of contention between the US and China is the program's stipulation that foreign companies

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*China has developed a multi-faceted approach to surpass the US in commercial technology and industrial capacity.*

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President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping in a dinner meeting at the G-20 summit in Buenos Aires, capital of Argentina, on December 1, 2018. Photo courtesy of Tom Brenner/NYT

involved in trade with Chinese firms must enter joint ventures that mandate transfers of technology and production. According to Owen E. Herrstadt, current Director of Trade and Globalization at the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW), these forced transfer agreements siphon jobs away from the US and enable the Chinese to strengthen their own industries. For example, within the aerospace field, China has obtained critical market information from Boeing and Airbus, the world's largest commercial aircraft producers, and is now capable of competing with both companies.

While the ripple effects of the trade war have far-reaching implications for countries across the globe, they may slow US domestic productivity as well. Since the deep market sell-off in October, the anticipated momentum of the US economy is projected to contract by 2019.

Intensifying trade tensions, coupled with rising interest rates, have disquieted American investors and inhibited economic growth. David Joy, the chief market strategist for Ameriprise Financial Inc, attributes the current bear market trend and the plunge in oil prices, which have recently slid 27 percent, to global market turmoil. In fact, some economists believe these signs reflect the imminence of an economic recession. As noted by Jean-François Perrault, chief economist at Scotiabank, this possibility increases the "risk of a self-inflicted wound in the US"

Because China has flouted global trade regulations

for the past two decades, the US should focus on cultivating partnerships with more nations to forge a multilateral front against Chinese trade practices. This approach will prevent Chinese exporters from circumventing US tariffs by transporting goods to smaller countries that subsequently ship Chinese goods to the U.S.

After negotiations between the US, Mexico, and Canada in late September of this year, the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA) was ratified. The deal modernizes trade rules between the three countries, with an emphasis on labor guidelines and environmental safeguards. "For Beijing, this is all just one more piece of Trump's anti-China strategy," said Alan Chong, a professor of international relations at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore. Ultimately, US diplomats should continue to develop strong trade connections with other nations to preserve and expand its foreign influence.

After the G-20 summit in Buenos Aires, capital of Argentina, on Dec. 1 of this year, Trump and Chinese president Xi Jinping called a truce in the trade war and agreed to suspend the imposition of new tariffs. However, while hostility has temporarily been pacified, many fear that both leaders did not bridge the major differences over trade that initially provoked the confrontation. Trump must recognize the need to negotiate structural changes to Chinese trade practices; if not, the commercial relationship between the two countries will be unsustainable for the future.

# Op-ed: North Korea, personality cult

## *Religion is the foundation of the Hermit Kingdom*

By Owen Longstreth



**N**orth and South Korea have been deadlocked for more than a half-century. In North Korea an oppressive regime locks up 10 percent of the population in prison camps, famines cripple the country routinely, and North Korea isolates itself from the outside world with a massive army far greater than its size would suggest.

In the West, North Korea is often referred to as Communist or Socialist but in reality, it is a religious theocracy, where a cult of personality around their leaders has gone to the extreme. North Koreans treat their leaders like deities and are forced to worship the Kim family. It is essential that the cult of personality around the Kim family be seen as a religion, because without this knowledge, peace on the Korean peninsula will be much harder to reach.

While North Korea's social pyramid lacks a middle class, there is a hierarchy. The Kim family and the government officials sit at the top of the pyramid, with complete control of the nation. The rest, making up the majority of the population, are the regular citizens who struggle to survive while the Kim family lives extravagantly.

Furthermore, North Korea relies heavily on Nationalism. Inside North Korea, the Kim family has been touted as the leaders of a sovereign Korea and their Korean identity has

been celebrated. This is completely contrary to the values that Marx and Engels upheld. As they explained, socialism is meant to replace nations. While the Soviet Union had many flaws, they did recognize this. National identity was not celebrated, whether it was Russian or Uzbek. The only defining characteristic was socialism.

The exact opposite is true in North Korea. According to Business Insider, when national holidays are not about the military or the Kim family, they are almost always about Korean culture. Only one holiday is devoted to socialism: International Workers day. Soviet holidays are the opposite. None of the holidays are religious, and those that do not specifically honor socialism are meant to honor some of the Union's greatest accomplishments, like the defeat of Nazi Germany or Yuri Gagarin as the first human in space.

But this trend runs deeper. According to Sino NK, North Korean nationalism is rooted deeply in the idea of being Korean. This again contrasts heavily with the Soviet Union because what was meant to unite the people of the Soviet Union together was not a shared ethnicity or culture, but the belief in an ideal.

And this Korea-focused view influences their foreign policy. Communism intends to be internationalist, meaning that



An up-beat military parade trudges through Pyongyang. For such a small country, North Korea has a surprisingly large military thanks in part to conscription policies. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

communist countries should export their politics outside their borders.

The USSR did this by funding communist parties in the Americas and Europe. North Korea, on the other hand, hails their leader as the leader of all Koreans, and has the end goal of bringing the entire Korean Peninsula under socialism. They do not however, plan to spread this beyond their borders.

In US academic circles, the idea of calling this cult of personality a religion is relatively common. However this is not the case outside of academia, where this idea is not mentioned often. Plenty of the aspects of this personality cult are clearly religious, and many experts support this conclusion, such as Donald Baker, a professor of Korean history at the University of British Columbia, and Thomas J Belke who is a Protestant theologian.

The leaders of North Korea are even seen to have supernatural powers. As Vox News explains, when the Kim family makes a pilgrimage to Mt. Paektu, a mountain that is central to Korean identity, it is alleged that the Kims are able to change the weather on the mountain simply by being there. This goes far beyond the admiration for other Communist dictators, and

even seems to be in line with the Pope who also claims to be able to perform supernatural feats.

Even the mental prowess of the leader is supposedly absolute. The Kim family are also seen as the only ones in the country, or perhaps the world to have a fully correct and complete consciousness. Meaning that following the Kims is the only path leading to full and complete life.

There even is the idea of an afterlife. The Huffington Post

explains that part of the North Korean doctrine is servicing a community. When members of the community die, as long as the community does not disappear, the individual lives on.

It is essential to recognize this cult of personality when

dealing with North Korea. If the West desires denuclearization on the Korean peninsula, the state religion will play a big role. And if war envelops the peninsula, the 23 million people of North Korea will still be indoctrinated by the personality cult. A struggle that will prove their biggest challenge to recovery. A peninsula can be denuclearized, or a regime can be toppled, but a religion endures, because minds do not change easily.

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*If war envelops the peninsula, North Korea's fanatical cult of personality will draw out the conflict.*

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# Increasing radicalism in Indonesia

## *The subtle influence of Saudi Arabia*

By Fiona Farag & Madeline Rose



March 2017 protest demanding Basuki Tjahja Purnama be jailed. Photo courtesy of Cahaya Maulidian.

Indonesia, a country where 88 percent of its citizens are Muslim, has shown signs of an increasing presence of radical Islam groups within its borders. On October 26, a massive rally planned to promote moderate Islam in Indonesia was canceled on the basis that it would create potential violence. A short video had become viral of moderate movement youth supporters burning the flag of an outlawed conservative Muslim group, Hizbut Tahrir. Yahya Cholil Staquf, the general secretary of Nahdlatul Ulama which is Indonesia's largest Muslim organization, claimed that "Hizbut Tahrir 'operatives' disrupted the youth wing's celebrations and exploited religious symbols, which led to the flag burning incident," Al-jazeera reports. According to the New York Times, over 1,000 people protested the burning, calling for the prosecution of the youths responsible.

Some, such as New York Times reporter Richard Paddock, point towards the early May jailing of Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, a Christian Chinese governor of Jakarta, as a warning sign of the nation's increasing radicalization. According to NPR, a viral clip of Purnama in which he had told fishermen that the "politicians who tell them that the Koran forbids voting for non-Muslims are lying to them." Shortly thereafter, protests sparked, both in favor of the governor and opposition calling for his arrest ensued.

According to the New York Times, since the jailing of

Purnama, many political leaders have taken to forging bonds and socializing with leaders of radical Islamic groups. The winner of last year's election, moderate Anies Baswedan, visited the headquarters of the Islamic Defenders Front during his campaign and addressed the party, while the party's leader, Habib Rizieq, sat beside him. President Joko Widodo, who was an ally of Purnama, attended a radical rally in December of 2017. The Hizbut Tahrir was one of its main organizers. When Prabowo, a presidential candidate, was asked if he had entered an unholy alliance with extremist groups, after he had partnered with them for Indonesia's 2019 election, he simply said "if we demonize and we consider certain groups to not be qualified to join the political discourse, that is not a healthy attitude".

In addition, there are other conservative and Islamic Saudi-led coalitions subtly working on spreading their influence in Indonesia for the last few decades. According to the New York Times, Saudi Arabia has quietly funded dozens of schools, scholarships, the distribution of religious material and the construction of mosques in Indonesia.

As Indonesian politicians continue to partner with radical Islamic groups, such as the Hizbut Tahrir, radical Islamic politics will enter the discourse of proposed Indonesian laws. Coupled with the quiet support of Saudi Arabia, Indonesia is showing warning signs of increasing radicalization.

# Op-ed: Saudi abuses cannot be ignored

## *The US must end arms sales to Saudi Arabia*

By Rohin Ghosh



Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman is directing several human rights abuses. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

The murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi by agents—authorized by the Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammed Bin Salman (MBS) demonstrates—Saudi Arabia’s dismal human rights record and America’s lack of action addressing it. For decades, the kingdom has serially abused the most basic rights and liberties. Most recently, the wanton massacre of civilians in Yemen, the poorest Arab nation, and the brutal killing of Khashoggi tests America’s patience.

The contemporary US-Saudi relationship began when the two countries signed a 1951 mutual defense agreement which allowed America access to Saudi oil reserves. Through the years, this relationship has unfortunately come to include American arms sales to the Saudis as well as relatively little action on the part of the US to counter Saudi human rights abuses.

Saudi Arabia’s disregard for fundamental human rights is well documented. The kingdom, rooted in fundamentalist Islamic ideology, is an absolute monarchy and does not tolerate dissent or behavior that does not conform to its strict interpretation of Islamic Law. This is clearly evident in how the kingdom treats women, the internet, and the media. These actions and practices of the Saudis often draw international condemnation from governments including the US, but America seldom gives Saudi Arabia any more than a slap on the wrist.

However, the most recent Saudi offenses to human rights worldwide—the killing of Jamal Khashoggi and the



The Saudi bombing campaign in Yemen has destroyed civilian areas like the one in Sanaa, Yemen, pictured above. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

kingdom's actions in the brutal war in Yemen—are proving to be different. Both of these present serious threats to ideals the US and most of the world holds dear. These actions must be swiftly and firmly punished by the US if it would like to keep any credibility on the world stage.

The murder of Khashoggi unfolded in a manner reminiscent of a mafia movie. The journalist was a long time critic of Saudi policy and fled the kingdom for his safety. He became a legal permanent resident of the United States and continued writing in criticism of the Saudi regime. As a columnist for the *Washington Post*, he criticized Saudi abuses of human rights and called for a firmer tone from America and the world towards Saudi behavior.

This criticism of the monarchy ran contrary to Saudi censorship policies and threatened MBS' consolidation of power. When Khashoggi entered the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, Turkey, Saudi agents strangled him to death, butchered his body, and carried the pieces of the dead journalist's body in suitcases —according to evidence from security cameras in the consulate. Turkish and American intelligence now definitively find that the order to murder Khashoggi came directly from MBS and the top levels of the Saudi regime despite denials from the Crown Prince and President Donald Trump.

The way Khashoggi was murdered served to provide a

clear message to journalists and dissidents who dare stand up to the Saudi regime, that those who criticize Saudi policy will suffer. MBS is attempting, through the murder of Khashoggi, to silence those around the world who may be a threat to his unbridled authority. Khashoggi's killing threatens the work of journalists worldwide, serving as an example to other dictators for how to take dissidents out of the picture. The US has a vested interest in preserving and promoting an open international press and America must defend its residents when they are abroad. The brutal murder of Khashoggi was meant to send a message that the Saudi regime and MBS will hunt down and kill those who

***The United States must send a strong message to Saudi leaders that human rights abuses will not be tolerated.***



stand the way of destructive and authoritarian Saudi policy. The US, along with its allies must send an equally clear and strong message, that journalists are to be respected and that these extrajudicial assassinations will not be tolerated.

While Khashoggi's assassination has garnered condemnation from around the US and the World, it is far from the gravest of Saudi human rights abuses.

The kingdom is pursuing a devastating war against Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen. Despite having access to precision munitions, the Saudi bombing campaign is reported to have bombed hospitals, schools, markets, and residential areas, contributing to a civilian death toll of around 16,000 civilians according to United Nations data from field hospitals in Yemen. In addition, according to ongoing Human Rights Watch reports, Saudi air forces have used American made cluster munitions, a clear violation of international law.

Perhaps the most striking aspects of the Saudi war in Yemen are the effects of the kingdom's blockade on the country's only functioning port, the city of Hodeida. These blockades have caused chronic shortages of food and medicine, which have caused famines and deadly outbreaks of cholera. The UN and other aid groups including the Red Crescent estimate that nearly 100,000 people have died from the humanitarian crisis associated with the war in Yemen.

Throughout the Saudi military campaign in Yemen, the United States has continued its sale of arms to Saudi Arabia and even assisted aerial refueling of Saudi aircraft. American

support has enabled much of the bloodshed in the country, allowing longer bombing raids and providing the munitions used to bomb civilians.

The US does not have a vested national security interest in Saudi Arabia and its allies winning the war in Yemen. Instead, a peaceable resolution to the conflict will be the only way to protect the region's important trade routes and prevent Yemen from continuing to provide a safe haven for terrorist groups including Al Qaeda. The United States can best ensure a peaceful resolution to the conflict by ending its disproportionate support for one side over the other and instead trying to move peace talks forward.

Ending American arms sales to Saudi Arabia is essential to cutting further bloodshed in Yemen and sending a strong message to the kingdom that the laundry list of Saudi human rights violations including the murder of Khashoggi will not be tolerated. The US, in supporting Saudi Arabia, has the blood of tens of thousands of Yemenis and that of Jamal Khashoggi on its hands. Many in the government are beginning to finally realize this truth and are beginning to act.

The outrage of the American public towards Saudi human rights abuses is finally causing members of Congress to put American ideals ahead of campaign conhas voted to advance a bipartisan resolution sales to the kingdom despite Trump's continued denial of Saudi wrongdoing.

If America wishes to maintain its place as a moral leader of the world, it must stop turning a blind eye towards the abuses of the Saudi regime.



The United States continues to supply Saudi Arabia with military hardware including the F-15 fighter jet pictured here. Photo Courtesy Wikimedia Commons

# Could partitioning Syria end the war?

*Weighing the feasibility of partition and federalism*

By Catey Vera



Iran's Rouhani, Turkey's Erdogan, and Russia's Putin shake hands following a 2018 Ankara summit after discussing Syria's future. President Trump did not attend. Photo courtesy Creative Commons.

The ongoing Syrian Civil War has raged since President Bashar al-Assad's 2011 use of military force against Arab Spring protesters, and the subsequent formation of the Free Syrian Army by former government forces taking up arms against Assad. Amid this growing chaos, Kurds in northern Syria, seeking autonomy, also began fighting Assad, and a group allied with Al Qaeda known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant took control of several regions in the east.

The situation grew even more complicated as foreign superpowers, such as Russia and the US, intervened in the conflict in support of opposing parties, according to the USAPP. At least 470,000 people have died in the conflict as of 2016, after which TIME reported that authorities concluded that chaos in the country would make it impossible to reach a conclusive death count.

Four major factions are currently fighting in Syria. President Assad of the Syrian Arab Republic is supported financially and militarily by Russia, Iran, and Iraq. The opposing Syrians receive support from Turkey, and Western nations like the US, UK, and France — they primarily support rebel forces in their fight against ISIS, but have also instituted some limited direct attacks against Assad's forces in retaliation to his

use of chemical weapons on Syrian civilians.

The remaining two factions include the Islamic State — opposed by both Russia, the US, and their respective allies — and the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria, which has allied strongly with the Kurdish Front and with both the US and Russia, thereby complicating the conflict. In these respects the Syrian Civil War can be considered a proxy-war between the US and Russia as each supports a different warring faction, yet these two countries are allied in the common fight against ISIS, according to the New Yorker.

In April 2018, Putin of Russia, Erdogan of Turkey, and Rouhani of Iran attended a summit held in Ankara. These nations are increasingly cooperating to resolve the civil war under the auspices of the Astana Process. Concurrently, Washington remains undecided on what to do in Syria, while President Trump, pushing for an increasingly isolationist agenda, did not attend and is thereby giving up some of the United States' say in Syria's future.

## Partition v. federalism

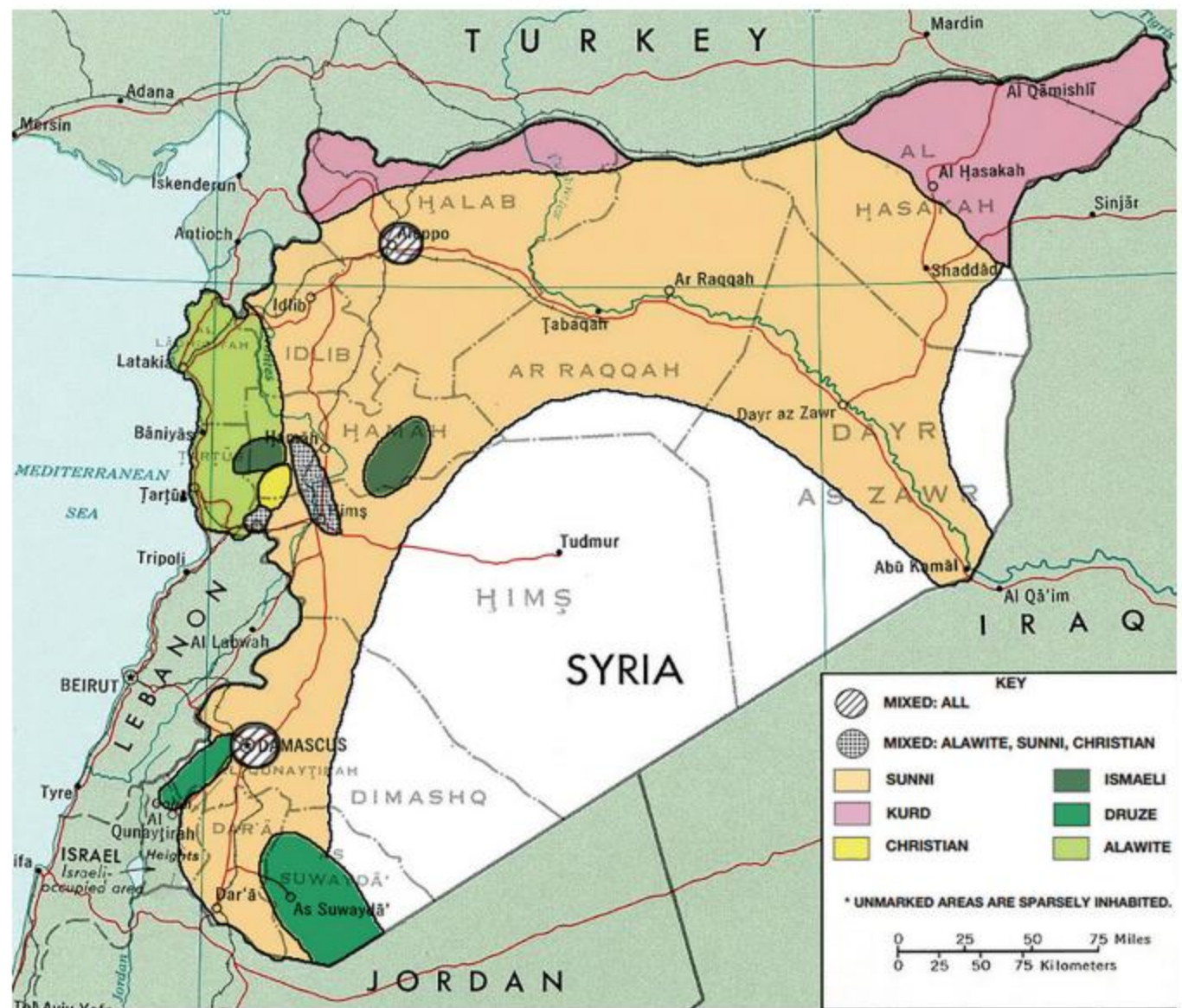
As various ethnic and religious boundaries within Syria begin to settle, and the New York Times claims a possible end

to the conflict is in sight, dividing the country has become a prominent potential solution to end the war. Yet many are divided over the specifics — that is, whether partitioning the state or establishing a system of federalism will best and most feasibly provide long-lasting success and peace.

Those advocating for a partition would prefer to see the various sections of Syria become autonomous nations, much like the partition of East Pakistan to become Bangladesh. In contrast, proponents of a federalist Syria argue that a centralized government should continue to hold power over semi-autonomous regions of Syria, much like the association between the federal and state governments in the US.

It should be noted that while neither the Syrian regime nor its opposition support federalism, it has gained ground as a potential solution because of its proponents in Russia, the Kurdish Front, and the US. Specifically, the US believes partitioning the nation would create a number of antagonist and permanently-armed entities, whereas federalism would more feasibly end the war and preserve peace. The Russians on the other hand believe federalism will allow for continued Russian use of militarily strategic ports and influence by keeping Assad in power.

Yet within Syria's borders and in nearby states, the proposal of federalism as a means of ending the war has received heavy backlash. Turkey, among others, has cited federalism as a threat to national security, given the violence that erupted when Kurds were given self-rule in Iraq. Others cite the fact that unlike the system of federalism engrained in the US' system of government, where the location of states is roughly determined foremost by geographic features, a similar system of states in Syria would be determined by ethnic and religious composition, which would clash with western efforts to push for liberal ideals in the region.



Map depicting the relative locations of various ethno-religious groups throughout Syria. Photo courtesy of Creative Commons.

A federalist system would also be dramatically ineffective if, as currently, various regions of Syria had either unequal levels or different sources of foreign support. Presently, for example, Russia backs President Assad, Turkey backs the rebels, and the US backs the Kurds. Such a system would likely extend the conflict and encourage fragmentation between sections of Syria. Further, some question the very feasi-

bility of a federalist system in a country where a central ruler has governed the nation for practically a half-century, suggesting that the various states would be unwilling to be cooperative with a centralized government. Others question the practicality of fairly dividing

the nation's resources among its states, knowing that natural resources cluster in the north and east of Syria, while its primary harbors are controlled by Assad loyalists in the west.

Whatever the war's outcome, it is clear peace will require extensive negotiations within Syria, and among all of the parties. In July 2018, the journalist Jamal Khashoggi wrote an opinion piece for the Washington Post, arguing that Syria should be partitioned, and that: "It's time for the United States to step up and reassert its traditional authority in the region." Khashoggi argued that the best guarantee of peace for Syria would be to allow for the regions of the country to have a measure of self-governance.

"If those areas are left to live in peace for a few years," he says. "They will flourish."

These words now seem eerie in light of Khashoggi's brutal murder, yet his optimism and unwavering belief in peace should also give us hope.

*Many remain divided as to whether partition or a system of federalism will best resolve the crisis.*

bility of a federalist system in a country where a central ruler has governed the nation for practically a half-century, suggesting that the various states would be unwilling to be cooperative with a centralized government. Others question the practicality of fairly dividing

# Brexit debate rages on

*Evaluating the political and economic implications*

By Maraleis Sinton

European Union members recently approved Great Britain's Brexit deal in Nov., which was originally determined by a referendum in 2016. Now, Prime Minister Theresa May must win the support of Parliament members such as Boris Johnson and Jacob Rees-Mogg, who opposed the Brexit deal, and some members of the Labor Party, who have promised to vote against the deal.

The vote is expected to occur before Christmas and must be approved by both the House of Commons and the EU Parliament, according to the BBC. If the deal is passed, Britain will be leaving the EU block in March 2019. They will then enter the "implementation period," which allows Britain and Europe's economy to adjust to new regulations through the end of the 2020 fiscal year. During this time, Britain will lose their EU membership status and presence in the EU Parliament, Commission, and Court of Justice, but will still be required to abide by the EU rules and trade standards.

The transitional period will also require Britain to pay 39 billion pounds, which includes financial contributions to the EU budget over several years. However, Britain's payment does not guarantee security to Britain-EU relations in the foreseeable future, said the BBC.

While some believe a "clean break" from Europe is possible, it would actually be detrimental to the economy, Ireland, and within Britain's political sphere.

## The economy

The EU is Britain's largest trading partner, providing 50 percent of their exports in 2016; thus in a worst case scenario of Brexit, Britain would lose 9.3 percent of the gross domestic product that it would have otherwise expected in the coming year, according to an article published by The New York Times in Nov.

However, this potential outcome is relatively tame compared to the Bank of England's predicted economic scenarios, which were released in Nov 2018.

In addition, according the Brexit White Paper that

was released July 2018 by May, Britain would implement its own tariffs and independent trade policy despite being bound by EU rules and regulations.

While supporters of Brexit and the government debunked claims, stating that Brexit would help uplift the economy, all outcomes predict by economists show a decreased British economy by 2035 if Brexit goes forward due to limited access to the EU economy.

## Emigration from the EU to the UK

According the Brexit White Paper, the freedom of movement between the EU and Britain would come to an end if passed. In addition, as of now, there would be no specific policies regarding the future rights of EU citizens in the UK and vice-versa.

With Brexit, border checks would also be re-implemented, which would severely impact transportation between the UK and EU.

## Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland

While Britain would have the freedom to negotiate their own trade agreements and immigration policies, the main domestic concern is Britain's relationship with Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, according to the BBC.

If no trade agreement is negotiated by 2020 with Ireland, then a backstop — "a single customs territory between the (European) Union and the United Kingdom" — will only apply to Northern Ireland. This policy is considered to be a last resort in order to secure Ireland's ability to trade with the EU. It also would provide a safety net to Ireland's trade agreements to the rest of the world.

Currently, Britain is a single market economy with its own customs union, which doesn't require inspections. However, after Brexit, Ireland may be split by different customs and regulatory regimes, which would demand that goods be checked at the border.

With the backstop policy, Northern Ireland would have stronger economic ties to the EU than the rest of Britain; thus in order to ensure that Northern Ireland

*All [Brexit] outcomes predict a decreased British economy by 2035.*



doesn't gain an economic advantage, Britain plans to implement its own regulations that would protect British exports.

### **Political repercussions for May**

Negotiating a clean cut for Britain to leave the EU has proved difficult with 23 percent of people unsatisfied. This leaves May estranged from her party and under criticism within Parliament, according to the Economist.

On Dec. 11, if May loses the vote by more than 100 votes, it would not only mean no Brexit deal, but it would crumble her government or force her to face a political battle that may ultimately oust her from Downing Street. As a result, the cabinet and the Tory party may take matters into their own hands.

But, if May faces a more modest defeat of 40 to 50 votes, it would allow her to renegotiate parts of her agreement in Brussels and lessen her political blow.

### **Turning our backs on multilateralism**

Brexit is much more than the 28-nation trading bloc, it aims to uphold Britain's national and social identity — their place in the world and the future of the European project.

Supporters of Brexit believe that EU institutions have fallen short of their lofty promises and have left Britain to deal with the burdens — absorbing migrants and bailing out troubled economies — that many Britons are tired of bearing.

Brexit also follows trends in foreign affairs: losing faith in other nations, which increasingly leads Britain as well as other nations like the US, to their backs on multilateralism.

# Merkel no more: Chancellor to resign

*The beginning of a new chapter for German politics*

By Andrew Shih

German chancellor Angela Merkel announced on Oct. 29 she will be stepping down from her position as German chancellor in 2021. She is not seeking re-election as the leader of the Christian Democratic Union—the political party which she has led since 2000—in upcoming December party elections.

Merkel has held the position of CDU leader and Chancellor since 2000 and 2005, respectively. According to the BBC, her resignation notice has been prompted by regional election setbacks that occurred in October 2018. Although the CDU will retain its majority position in parliament, CDU votes decreased by 10 percent since the previous election.

The results are an indication of Merkel's waning popularity in Germany. A political party closely associated with the CDU, the Christian Social Union, also suffered a loss of seats in Parliament, only further cementing the decline of Merkel's reign.

Some believe Merkel's announcement following the election drove some voters, who had previously drifted toward the fast rising third parties, to return to the CDU. Merkel takes full responsibility for the recent losses.

"As chancellor and leader of the CDU I'm politically responsible for everything," she says, "for successes and for failures." Merkel's resignation has caused an internal scramble among German politicians to fill the political holes left behind.

What does this mean for Germany? Merkel stated that she will not ap-

point a new leader of the CDU, rather letting the democracy of her party decide her successor. Among the twelve candidates who have stepped up to announce their candidacy, there are three main frontrunners: Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, dubbed a "mini Merkel" for her rational approach to politics, Friedrich Merz, a conservative party whip, and Jens Spahn, health minister.

According to informal polls asking 1,001 eligible voting delegates, Kramp-Karrenbauer and Merz are the more popular candidates. Kramp-Karrenbauer's Catholic, west German roots in conjunction with her support of increasing the minimum wage and workers' rights may give her an edge to the public, but Merz is appeals more to party members. The vote is essentially a decision between continuity and radical change, as Kramp-Karrenbauer, CDU general secretary, has been supportive of Merkel's pragmatism. Under Merz, the party is expected to move towards the right.

Many critics viewed Merkel's announcement as admitting her defeat. In actuality, her resignation has been a long time coming. Merkel cited that clinging onto elections where she and her party were continuously defeated served as the writing on the wall. The results in October only confirmed any doubts she had.

Merkel will try to smoothly exit

her position of power, which may not be difficult due to her declining public image ever since she opened Germany's borders to Muslim refugees in 2015. Her announcement, however, offers an opportunity for candidates to begin constructing their political profiles.

What does this mean for the EU? Merkel's eventual resignation bodes poorly for more than just Germany. The European Union has long referred to the chancellor's guidance as a voice of reason and pragmatism, especially in the 2008 financial crash, the Arab Spring, and the European migration crisis. Her voice of reason remains to be filled.

In an era of the European Union where Brexit and the rise of populism in the European parliament threaten a unified Europe, Merkel's vulnerability at home weakens her on the continental scene as the assumed leader of the EU.

As a symbol of steadiness, continuity, and longevity, Merkel stepping down signals a new future for German politics.

The CDU will hold elections to decide its new leader in December 2021, but now with added uncertainty minus Merkel as the front runner. The election holds greater significance, since the next CDU leader will likely be the next chancellor.

As Merkel said in her October announcement, "It's time for a new chapter."

*It's time for a new chapter.*

— German chancellor  
**Angela Merkel**

A close-up, profile photograph of Angela Merkel, looking slightly downwards and to the left. She has short, light brown hair and is wearing a bright orange textured jacket over a dark top. A necklace with dark, irregularly shaped beads is visible around her neck. The background is a solid, vibrant green color.

**Angela Merkel has been the chancellor of Germany since 2005. She plans to step down and retire from all of her current political positions in the following years. Photo courtesy of EU2017EE.**

# War with its people

## *The precarious balance of power in Nicaragua*

By Maya Levine

At night in Managua, Nicaragua's capital, hundreds of metal trees are lit up by colored lights. These biblically-themed "trees of life" are part of a \$3.2 million installation paid for by Nicaragua's increasingly dictatorial government. Alongside them are posters from Nicaragua's 2016 election, which the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) won by a landslide. The posters show the FSLN's leader, Daniel Ortega, and his vice president-wife with the message of their party under them: "Christian, Socialist, Solidarity."

During the 1970s, Daniel Ortega became a revolutionary in the 90 percent Catholic Nicaragua against the US-backed Somoza dictatorship. During the Somoza period, the government and religious institutions had a close alliance: the Somozas gave the Church favors and gifts, and in return, religious leaders did not criticize them. Near the end of the Somoza period, a bishop prayed for Anastasio Somoza's health as a revolution brewed, according to *Foreign Policy*. But liberal religious leaders were instrumental in overthrowing the Somozas.

Nicaraguan religious leaders have huge influence over the people. Ortega failed to understand this during his first time in power and chafed against the Church. After losing the presidency he grew moderate, and ran for president in 2006. To gain the Church's support he remarried his wife in a Roman Catholic ceremony and threw his party's support behind an anti-abortion bill. He won ten days later.

Since then, Ortega has become "increasingly authoritarian," according to director of Nicaraguan Foundation for Development Javier Lacayo. He has taken control of the media, the legislature, courts, and big businesses. In 2014, he passed a law ending presidential term limits, began to crack down on opposition parties, and according to the UN, committed human rights violations. In April 2018, anger against Ortega reached a boiling point, sparking protests that were met with violence from the government. A new UN report details 300 deaths, 2,000 injuries over three months, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, and torture.

"The Nicaraguan government...has declared war on its people," says Gioconda Belli, Nicaraguan poet and activist. "Police and paramilitaries arbitrarily detain citizens every day. They are tortured...hooded... armed irregular forces roam the streets, shooting at will."

The Church's response has been multi-faceted.

Some parts have demanded democratization and an end



At a protest that killed 12 civilians. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

to the abuses. Churches have become a refuge for those fleeing violence on Nicaragua's streets. As it has become harder to express opinions against the government, some churches have become a place for members of the opposition to discuss opinions and try to rally people. "The church has become the last place where citizens can freely express themselves and demand their rights," said lawyer Martha Molina.

Other leaders preached against Ortega, including Bishop Silvio Báez. Báez says he has been disturbed by the violence and disgusted by the government's manipulation of the Church's language, images, and saints' days. An ecclesiastical conference told *El Confidencial* that the Church is "with the victims". On Báez's personal Twitter account, he urged "Ortega...to halt the violence and repression...for the good of Nicaragua!"

In response, Ortega lashed out, accusing the Church of being part of an American-backed coup. Juan Chamorro, a member of Nicaragua's opposition alliance, claims that the government "has declared war on the Church." Churches have been attacked and besieged, leading to deaths. Báez has been forced to lower his profile, but according to *The Guardian's* Toby Hill, he "continues to condemn the 'disgrace' of authoritarian power" and will remain in Nicaragua despite threats to





Obando y Bravo gives Ortega a wafer at Mass. *Diario Digital Nuestro País*. Photo courtesy of Reuters.

his safety.

Other Church members have offered to arbitrate peace talks between Ortega, opposition leaders, and members of rebellious groups. Ortega replied that he would talk only with Nicaragua's business sector. In response, the Episcopal Conference issued a statement "urg[ing] the country's authorities to hear the cry...and to end the crackdown." This has only driven Ortega further.

Other churches have distanced themselves altogether. During mass in the Metropolitan Cathedral, a rector reminded worshippers, "temples are for praying, not protesting."

A final wing has thrown support behind Ortega. During his first time in power in the 1980s, Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo was a voice against him. Ortega attempted to heal their relationship, promising anti-LGBT and anti-abortion policies if he were elected. He also had Obando y Bravo officiate his wedding. "In the past, [the Ortegas] were against the church, but then they understood that made them unpopular," said Cristiana Chamorro, daughter of former President Violeta Chamorro. "Now, [Obando] is the family priest." Obando's support has been instrumental.

To avoid being ousted again, Ortega needs the Church's support. He has been conciliatory, and parts of the Church have responded well. According to journalist Ian Bateson, "the

blessing of the Nicaraguan church's former leader gave Ortega...credibility."

Dominican priest Rafael Aregon says Ortega gained loyalty from part of the Church by mobilizing the FSLN for religious events and building churches. These actions have paid off. For example, the Nicaraguan Council of Bishops has long been trying to censure Venezuela's president Nicolás Maduro. The pro-Ortega members have divided the Council enough to keep it from taking action.

"Favors," Aregon pointed out, "make priests silent." For

Ortega, silence is enough. If the clergy does not speak out against him, then Ortega's regime is that much more stable. With the people against him, Ortega cannot afford to lose the Church's support. If illicit favors and millions of dollars spent in religious

installations do this, Ortega has made it clear he will continue.

Ortega claims that religious leaders should not speak in the political arena, a belief echoed by a significant part of Nicaragua. Anti-FSLN Bishop Báez has other ideas. "The political dimension of faith is indispensable," Báez said. "Christians are not complete if their faith does not involve itself in the social and political dimension."

In a country with so many ongoing human rights abuses, and so much opportunity for the Church to act to protect Nicaragua's people, perhaps Monsignor Báez is correct.

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***'The Nicaraguan government...has declared war on its people.'***

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# Troops sent to US–Mexico border

*A carefully-timed political statement*

By Sarah Dorosin



Trump speaks at a rally in Mesa, Arizona on Oct 19, 2018. According to Arizona Central he commented on the people in the caravan, saying that they were “hardened criminals, not good people.” Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

In response to the caravan of immigrants that reached the United States in mid-November, President Donald Trump deployed troops to the US–Mexico border. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, the majority of the people in the caravan came from Honduras, a country chronically plagued with violence, extortion, crime and weak governmental institutions. Some seek asylum in the United States. However, to be granted asylum immigrants must prove a well-founded fear of persecution in their home country. The Economist reports that this may be difficult for those in the caravan given that Honduras is not at war, leaving migrants with little to substantiate their requests for asylum.

Simultaneously, there is concern that many requesting asylum don’t need it and are abusing the U.S. asylum process. According to one Fox News podcast many of the people in the caravan have simply come for the jobs. Bartolo Fuentes, supporter of the caravan, admits that “the majority of those in the caravan are fleeing for economic reasons.”

In the heat of midterms, Trump allegedly used the cara-

van to accumulate political support. Drawing on his successful immigration rhetoric from the 2016 Presidential elections, he described the caravan as an “assault” by “criminals” from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.

He then went on to say Democrats and their lenient immigration laws were responsible for this “onslaught” of people. And his rhetoric appears to have worked. According to the Washington Post, congressional support for Republicans increased from 38% in August to 42% in October. By November 1 Democrats had only a seven point advantage in congressional support among registered voters. This was a drop from its 11 point advantage in October and 14 point advantage in August.

To further galvanize political support, Trump asked the Department of Homeland Security for a deployment of troops to the border as a form of emergency law enforcement. This was denied by the Pentagon, as troops do not have the authority to conduct what Trump proposed. They refashioned Trump’s initial request behind the scenes so that troops could



Two soldiers watch the southern border of the United States of America. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

be deployed, but not as law enforcement. Instead, troops were sent to support civil authorities on the border and would not come into contact with migrants. A New York Times Podcast reports that troops were waiting for “nothing to happen” and 80% of them were not even armed.

There is concern that this seemingly pointless use of troops will have negative ramifications on the morale of soldiers and their faith in the government if they feel that they are not fighting for a good reason. Furthermore, there is an associated monetary cost that comes with the deployment of troops to the southern border, currently estimated to be between 100 to 220 million dollars.

In the end, Trump’s deployment of troops and immigration rhetoric was not enough to maintain Republican control of the House of Representatives. His tactics may have even hurt him in some ways. He did not capitalize on the prosperous United States economy to gather political support. Additionally, the New York Times reports that his remarks—some blatantly racist—may have deterred swing voters and further bolstered Democrats.

In sum, Trump’s deployment of troops to the Mexican border was a carefully-timed political statement, likely to have monetary ramifications and unlikely to have an effect on national security.

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*‘The president used America’s military forces not against any real threat but as **toy soldiers**, with the intent of manipulating a domestic midterm election outcome, **an unprecedented use of the military by a sitting president**’ –Lawrence B. Wikerson*

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# The forgotten genocides

*African atrocities neglected in discussion and curriculum*

By Malia Chun & Anna Meyer



Around three million people have been displaced by the Darfur genocide, according to World Policy. These people are forced to live in refugee camps like the one pictured. Photo courtesy of Creative Commons

**A**mina Abaker Mohammed, a member of the non-Arab Zaghawa tribe, is a young Muslim woman who grew up in the North Darfur region of Sudan. Her village of Furawiyah was guarded by policemen, but that was not enough to protect Mohammed and her family from the cruelty and havoc wreaked by the Janjaweed.

While she convinced herself that her village would be safe, unlike the village where her uncle and four cousins were killed, the citizens—and even police—were helpless against the bombings conducted by the Sudanese air force. She and her husband stayed in the village but sent five of their children to seek refuge in the mountains.

On January 31st, her village was bombed a second time. The Janjaweed then invaded the village, separating Mohammed from her eldest child. After the gunfire had ceased, Mohammed went back to search for her son, but instead encountered his dismembered face amongst the corpses of her fellow villagers. She escaped with her five remaining children to the nearby country of Chad. The trek took seven days and all of the family's animals had perished by the end.

Since 2003, the Darfuris, a group of non-Arab Sudanese, have been persecuted by the Janjaweed (which loosely translates to 'evil men on horseback'). The Janjaweed, notorious for their brutality, are Arab militias commanded by the government to destroy villages and attack civilians. In just two years, they destroyed 574 villages; along the way, they burned houses and killed, raped, and poisoned innocent Darfuris. The government simultaneously conducted aerial bombings on the villages, according to Foreign Affairs and Jewish World Watch.

In March 2009 and July 2010, the International Criminal Court (ICC) attempted to arrest Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir for his role in the vicious murders of his people. However, as stated in the Jewish World Watch, ICC Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda was forced to delay the prosecution of al-Bashir until more support was garnered due to limited support by the United Nations and global community.

Amina Abaker Mohammed's story is not unique. Nearly 75 percent of the entire Darfur population has been murdered or displaced in the Darfur genocide, according to UNICEF,

and yet most people have never even heard of this atrocity.

The Darfur genocide is just the most recent example of an African genocide that has slipped under the radar of American media and school curricula. According to The Nation, the Combat Genocide Association, and National Broadcasting Company, there have been five major genocides in Africa since the 1960s. However, none are discussed in the classroom.

The Burundian genocide of 1972, in which over 200,000 Hutu and Tutsi people were killed in just three months, was the first of the five genocides. In 1979, another genocide began in Uganda, spanning 14 years and killing 600,000 people overall. The Somali genocide, involving the massacre of 200,000 Somalis, commenced in 1991. Then, in 1994, Hutu mobs ordered the orchestrated execution of 800,000 Tutsis in just 100 days in what is now known as the Rwandan genocide. One of the most recent African genocides, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, began in 1996 and is still occurring today. So far, 5.4 million innocent people have been slaughtered in the Congolese genocide. Another current genocide is the aforementioned Darfur genocide.

For comparison, six million Jews were killed in the Holocaust and five million were and remain affected by the genocide in Sudan against the Darfuris. History classes justifiably repeat the same lessons about the Holocaust, yet never mention the countless deaths that have occurred in Sudan.

Instead, our world history curriculums are filled with tales of European conquests and recurring lessons about the World Wars. Although the legacy of past wars are very important, there are also many aspects of world history that are forgotten and ignored in favor of European and North American history.

The lack of education about these genocides in Africa is an institutionalized issue; nowhere in the

California world history standards does it state that students must learn of these monstrosities. It is essential to be educated on such destructive events in order to better understand the dynamic of the world and the context of current events.

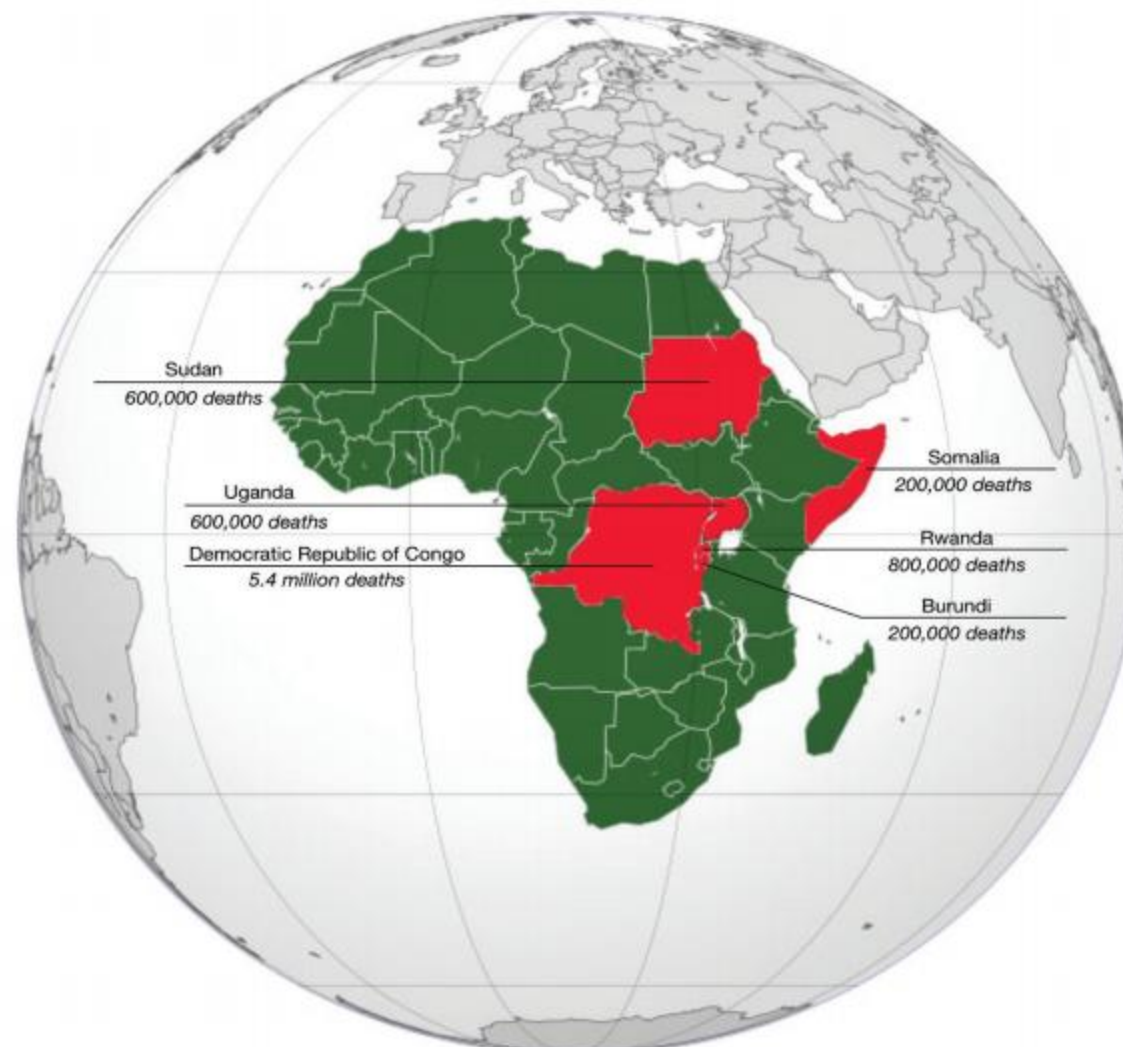
For the American people to stand by in ignorance as millions of innocent African people are slaughtered is immensely irresponsible and must be resolved by the incorporation of genocides and African history into the California state education standards.

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*Since the 1960s, there have been five major genocides in Africa, all of which are rarely discussed in the classroom.*

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### Number of deaths in African genocides



There have been many genocides in Africa, most of which have not been discussed in American classrooms. Graphic by Malia Chun and Anna Meyer

# Land expropriation in South Africa

*Prospective land redistribution rekindles divisive white genocide conspiracy theories*

By Aaron Galper

South Africa's white minority—composing 8.4 percent of the populace—boasts ownership over 72 percent of the national ecumene: an ugly disparity that, having endured the progressive agenda of the post-apartheid South African government, serves as a grim reminder of 17th-century colonialism. To rectify this racial gap, the South African government has sought to facilitate the redistribution of commercial agricultural land from white citizens to black citizens.

Formerly, the South African government pursued means to provide substantial compensation for expropriated land; it instituted a willing-seller willing-buyer program in which the government (the always-willing buyer) would contact a white landowner (a potential seller), agree on the price of some portion of his land, purchase that land, and then grant that land to a black applicant. Unwilling sellers, however, easily circumvented the willing-buyer willing-seller system. By demanding extortionate prices that the South African government surely could not match, they effectively forced it to cede and managed to retain their land.

Bureaucratic frustration ensues.

In Aug. 2018, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa introduced the prospect of land expropriation without com-



South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, advocate of land reform. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

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*‘Just relax, this process will end up vey well’*

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ti-apartheid songs supported by the government, like “Ayesaba Amagwala,” otherwise known as “Kill the Boer1, Kill the Farmer.” Since then, non-profit Afrikaner rights organizations, most notably Afriforum, widely accepted as an authoritative source on white persecution in South Africa, have

penetration. Outraged by this overseas violation of the Fifth Amendment, prominent conservative American figures, most notably Fox News’ Tucker Carlson and President Donald Trump, unafraid to boldly cast politically incorrect words into the raucous waters of racially-charged debate, entered the fray. In an August 24 segment, Tucker Carlson criticized South Africa’s looming policy overhaul. Minutes later, Trump tweeted, announcing that he would dispatch Pompeo to investigate “the large scale killing of farmers.”

Invigorated by attention from the mainstream media, white supremacists in America moved to propagate distasteful conspiracy theories detailing the genocide of white farmers at the hands of black radicals in South Africa.

This “white genocide” theory is no novel idea. Popularized among usavory rings in 1995 by neo-Nazi David Lane, it was reintroduced to the South African public in 2012 following a wave of protests against anti-



Commercial agricultural farmland in South Africa. The South African parliament approved drastic means to redistribute land to black citizens on December 4, 2018. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

sought to raise awareness for their plight.

Although the term “white genocide” is hyperbolic—murders against farmers in South Africa have reached a 20-year low since 1998—farmers do have reason to fear. According to South African police, 52 people have been murdered on farms in 2018 alone. Yet, in a country that tallied 20,336 total murders that same year, that volume of murders cannot reasonably be dubbed “genocide.” Thus, proponents of the white genocide conspiracy rely on a niche demographic to produce such high murder rates of white farmers: the total number of full-time commercial farmers, a population last quantified in the 2011 South African census at about 45,000.

For example, in 2017, Afriforum calculated a murder rate of 156 white farmers per 100,000, a rate 4.5 times higher than that year’s national average. To attain this value, Afriforum divided the number of “farm murders” in 2017 (70, sourced from social media and civilian reports) by the number of commercial farmers in South Africa; however, the term “farm murder” does not necessarily entail that a farmer—or a white farmer, for that matter—was killed.

The true population from which this rate was calculated remains elusive. According to the South African police, any murders that took place on farms or smallholdings (small ag-

ricultural holdings) qualify as “farm murders.” Agricultural workers and residents of farms and smallholdings—800,000 strong—are included in that tally. If Afriforum had calculated their murder rate taking into account this population, the value would have plummeted to 8.3 people per 100,000.

Evidently, a comprehensive understanding of agricultural inhabitants’ demography is necessary to accurately estimate the murder rate of any specific agricultural group. Because Afriforum could not access reliable data concerning such demographics, they could not have derived a definite murder rate of a group as sparse as white farmers.

In the end, the white genocide theory is just that: a theory. Nonetheless, the ambiguity of available information raises serious questions concerning the human rights implications of Ramaphosa’s land expropriation initiative: are white farmers disproportionately targeted murder victims? Or are their deaths the unfortunate byproduct of a crime-ridden state?

On December 4, the South African parliament passed an amendment that will overhaul Section 25 of South America’s constitution, which provides for the right to own private property. How the volume and demographic composition of “farm murders” fluctuates in coming years as land redistribution progresses will provide answers to such questions.



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