



# The Political Voice

by Undergraduates for Undergraduates in the UF Department of Political Science

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# America's Alternative Energy Future: Not So Clear Cut

by Carlos Marquez



The realization that the United States is still mired in an ideological divide, concerning the energy issue, simply boggles the mind. While some progress has indeed been achieved, influential forces on both extremes severely impede the production of a comprehensive and decisive plan. What are the implications if America adamantly insists on remaining highly dependent on fossil fuels? What are the implications associated with increased utilization of renewable energy? The simple truth is that neither option alone is sufficient enough to provide for U.S. security. It is necessary that we strike a balance between the two, where the gradual weaning off of fossil fuels is coupled with large expansions of renewable energy technology. Doing so will not only ensure the health of the United States, but will also serve as a stabilizing force in other regions of the world.

Currently, "about 83 percent" of America's total energy supply is produced via the burning of fossil fuels (U.S. Energy Information Administration 1). Surely this substantial figure adds weight to the argument that renewable and other clean technologies cannot begin to substitute for oil, coal and natural gas in supporting the country's energy needs. After all, this leaves the former category contributing a mere

"17 percent" to the energy supply (U.S. Energy Information Administration 1). Petroleum, for instance, is simply too important to the U.S. economy for it to abruptly switch to something else. The possibility of a rapid conversion is further exacerbated by the problem of infrastructure compatibility. Whole industries would need to make massive, costly adjustments in a relatively short period of time. In addition, failure to further cultivate domestic fossil fuel resources could cost jobs, economic growth and leave the nation at the whim of unstable foreign oil producers.

Maintaining the status quo will have serious repercussions which are not worth the short-term conveniences. According to *Beyond Petroleum*, world oil reserves totaled "1,383.2 billion barrels" near the end of 2011 (6). This current state, coupled with a global oil demand rate of "87 millions of barrels per day" in 2010, allows a dire conclusion to be drawn (International

Energy Agency 3). Should the aforementioned rate hold constant, with no new substantially large oil deposits discovered, more than 40 years remain until oil reserves run dry. The projection worsens, however, when one realizes that although developed countries are decreasing their oil consumption, developing countries are increasing consumption at a much larger rate. Their desire to achieve a comparable standard of living will no doubt push the rate of oil barrels consumed per day to historic highs; leaving less than 40 years worth of oil. Meanwhile, worldwide natural gas reserves are projected to only meet another "58.6 years of global production" with the risky Middle East and former Soviet Union regions jointly possessing "72% of the world's gas reserves" (*Beyond Petroleum* 21).

Betting America's long-term future on energy sources which will eventually run out and become progressively more expensive to extract, due to increasing



competition for limited resources, seems rather ill-conceived. The realization of the impermanence of fossil fuels contributes little in terms of job security or prosperity. Actions taken by the United States have even served to stifle alternative energy growth. From the "early 1970s through 2003, oil received more than \$302 billion in federal support," coal received "\$80 billion"

and nuclear power received "\$63 billion" (Weeks 285). Meanwhile, during the same period, solar, geothermal, wind and biomass energy merely received a total paltry sum of around "\$38 billion" (Weeks 285).

Instead of providing tax breaks and subsidies to oil/gas companies which have developed to the extent that subsidies are no longer needed, the federal government could facilitate the creation of more jobs by investing larger quantities in renewable and cleaner energy technologies. The green sector is an industry that is not only starting to grow, but also possesses the capacity and potential for greater growth. Jobs ranging from manual labor, such as the installation of green devices, to the technical, such as creation of solar panels, to research, where scientists would innovate these technologies, are a few examples of those that can grow. Furthermore, should the U.S. continue neglecting to provide clean energy with adequate support, it could lose its chance at becoming a global leader and could forfeit jobs and investment to other countries. Ultimately, America might replace its dependence on foreign

oil with a dependence on imported green-power technologies from Europe or China (Weeks 286-287). This troubling scenario would be just as bad as the one America is in now. A serious move towards renewable and clean energy is only logical from an economic perspective.

The impetus for change is not merely limited to the economic realm. It also extends from concerns that

fossil fuels contribute to both environmental and human health degradation. Exploitation of fossil fuels is responsible for "75 percent of the 'forcing effect' leading to global warming" (Atkinson 316). When oil, coal and natural gas are used, they release large quantities of carbon dioxide, amongst other greenhouse gases. These increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide serve to capture more outgoing radiation and then reradiate it back to the Earth's surface. This can cause global sea levels to rise and will place a majority of the world's population living by the sea at risk. It also threatens the world's food supply because most plants can neither survive extreme temperatures nor grow healthily in high carbon dioxide environments. Not to mention it has been well documented that exposure to high concentrations of air pollutants, such as carbon dioxide, result in adverse health conditions. For example lung disease, cancer, respiratory problems and "increased mortality by about 1.1 percent per degree temperature increase" have all been linked to greenhouse gas pollution (Ebi and McGregor 1,449-1,451).

**The world stands on the precipice of change. [It's] very difficult to come to any conclusion other than the necessity for a push towards increased renewable and clean energy technologies. — Marquez**

Even the switch to produce more energy through alternative methods has repercussions, and it is imperative that we are aware of them. As this country's energy demands are increasingly met by alternative energy, one can conclude there will be a dramatic reduction in U.S. consumption of oil. This will create major security concerns, not only for oil-exporting countries and their neighbors, but for the West as well (Miller 107-108). For one, international conflicts would increase between current oil exporting states and their consumer states. As consumer states decrease levels of foreign oil consumption, levels of interdependence between the two groups will also decline, thus increasing the likelihood of conflict. Furthermore, violence would grow within oil exporting states. This internal conflict might manifest itself as terrorism, civil wars and/or genocide, all of which are likely to spill over into neighboring states.

Third, countries dependent on oil revenue will have no choice but to turn to illicit sources of income, such as narcotics trafficking or the arms trade, in an attempt to avoid violence and replace lost income (Miller 108-111). Indeed, some OPEC members appear extremely vulnerable to the loss of oil revenue. Specifically, Angola, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya and Iraq all receive "more than one-half of their GDP from oil" (Miller 112). Angola in particular has the highest percentage with "76.75 percent" of its GDP attributed to oil while Saudi Arabia, the second highest percentage, has "58.80 percent" of its GDP coming from oil sales (Miller 112).

This data reveals ample reason to tread lightly in America's approach to reducing dependence on foreign oil, namely oil from the Middle East. The aforementioned externalities are typically overlooked in the U.S. energy debate despite the fact that unintended consequences will affect regional and international security. While the United States should not remain dependent on oil simply to prevent economic instability, illicit trade or regional conflict, it must account for the interests of others and exercise caution in how quickly it reduces consumption (Miller 115-116). One



possible solution for mitigating these issues is for the United States to provide assistance to these countries and promote economic diversification and the development of alternative, legitimate sources of wealth. Doing so will be extraordinarily beneficial in decreasing future problems that countries like Angola, Libya and Saudi Arabia would face, but would also serve to foster trust and better relations amongst these states and the U.S (Miller 116-117).

The world stands on the precipice of change. After considering all the evidence presented, one would find it very difficult to come to any conclusion other than the necessity for a push towards increased renewable and clean energy technologies. The damaging effects of fossil fuels on both the environment and on human health, coupled with the risk of being left beholden to foreign green-technology imports, provide great incentives to move away from their use. Perhaps more importantly is the realization that fossil fuels are running out. It is imperative that the U.S. reduce fossil fuel consumption for economic, environmental and security reasons. Nonetheless, a complete abandonment of resources such as oil, natural gas and coal is neither possible nor recommended in the near future. Regardless of the rate at which U.S. consumption declines, the demand for oil will still be present in the short-term. What is needed is a balanced, moderated approach which lessens the strain on the United States. The approach must also consider the stakes of other states to avoid future threats and help build a more peaceful tomorrow. 🌱

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# Welcome to Florida

## The Swing State That Will Never

by Joe Boehner

As I end my time as an intern during the Florida Legislature's 2012 session, I have already learned one important lesson: the Republican Party really has things figured out. I say this because somehow the Republicans have managed to carve a two-thirds majority in both the Florida Senate and House of Representatives in a state that statistically is nearly split between the number of Democrat and Republican voters. Consider this: In 2008 Florida voters helped to elect President Barak Obama, and then in 2010 elected Republican Rick Scott as Governor, despite both elections being hotly contested and narrowly won. Yet the Republican Party holds a 28-12 majority in the Senate (a 70% majority) and an 81-39 majority in the House (a 67.5% majority). And these numbers have remained stagnant for the better part of the last two decades. Why? The only logical answer is reapportionment.

Reapportionment, also known as redistricting (or by more cynical Americans as "gerrymandering"), is the process undertaken every 10 years by the state governments all across the country to divide the state up into equitable state and congressional districts based on the latest census data. The problem with this is that we have left it up to the elected officials to draw the districts of their own state, which is a bit like interviewing yourself for a job. While the process of redrawing districts has gotten significantly less corrupt than it was even 20 years ago, the fact remains that politicking is still very much at the core of redistricting; only the majority Republican Party has gotten much better at hiding it. By doing things like holding public forums across the state and strictly adhering to voter amendments, the Republicans have once again ensured that they will retain the majority for at least the next 10 years.

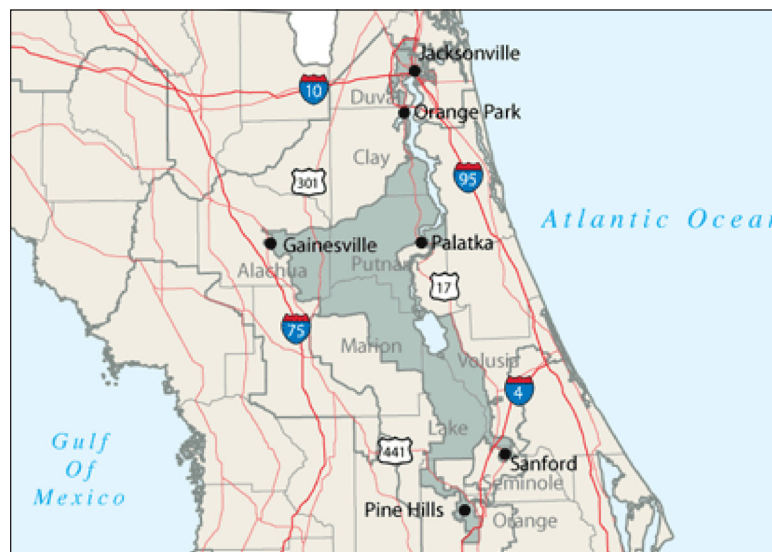
The first topics that must be explained before any strategic maneuverings can be analyzed are the most recent amendments to the Florida Constitution, both of which passed with a voter approval of nearly 65%. Amendment Five makes it unconstitutional to draw districts with the intent to favor or disfavor any political party. By itself, this amendment would have been the best possible tool to creating a state of fair districts; but 6 undid all the good of Amendment 5. Amendment 6 essentially makes it unconstitutional to not allow for minority representation through district drawing, which basically makes the concept of a majority-minority district not only part of statutory law (Voting Rights Act) but constitutional as well. Inherently these two amendments contradict each other, because of the simple fact that minority populations tend to have rather cohesive voting patterns. In Florida, the African-American population largely tends to vote Democrat, along with the Puerto Rican and some other Hispanic groups, while other

groups, such as Cuban-Americans, typically vote Republican. In fact, over the recent voting history of Florida, the only group that does not vote cohesively is the white population. It is the voting tendencies of the black population that Republicans have used to turn them against their own Party.

For the next argument to make sense, one must understand this simple assumption: race does not matter in politics. Let me rephrase that: race should not matter, but as we stand in 2012 it still does. The strategy the Republican Party has used only works because it is predicated on the idea that race does matter, especially to minority voters. In 10 to 20 years, the hope is that once the millennial generation enters the political scene it will cause race to matter less and less, potentially making this entire argument moot. But for now the point is this: it is illegal to intentionally favor or disfavor a party in drawing, but it is not illegal (in fact it is required) to favor or disfavor minority groups.

That means that Republicans are able to take an average area of Florida and make one minority packed district and leave all of the other ones around it that much whiter, a process known as "bleaching". In the process of doing that however, they have "inadvertently" violated Amendment 5's command to not favor a party. In fact, Republicans have now created a district that HYPER-favors the Democratic Party.

To demonstrate this phenomenon, consider the following hypothetical scenario. Say you have an area of Florida and you want to carve that area up into 3 districts. To start, let's make that hypothetical area even in terms of Republicans to Democrats (50-50). Let's also say that this area of Florida has the average black demographic, meaning that 15% of the population of the area is African-American. And for simplicity's sake, let's also say that the rest of the area's population is all white (so 85%). From here it gets a little more complex. Because the black population in Florida



Florida Congressional District 3 has been no less than a 65% Democratic District since its inception, and Corrine Brown has held this seat in primarily unopposed elections since 1992



Steven Martin

largely votes Democrat, let's assume that all of the black population in this sample area will follow the trend. For the white population, let's just say that the split is something like 65% Republican to 35% Democrat. All other factors aside, we can proceed with the sample simulation with these numbers.

Now let's say that we want to follow Amendment 6 to the letter and allow for a minority representative to have a high likelihood of getting elected. To accomplish this, we draw the district in such a way that we get all of the black population in the area put into a single district. When you divide up the remaining white population to ensure that each of these three districts has the same population, the end demographic result is this: one district would have approximately 45% African-American population to 55% white, with the other two districts being 100% white. This, in turn, would lead to the following voting trend: the majority-minority district would be 70% Democratic to 30% Republican, and the other two districts would be 55% Republican to 45% Democratic. Ergo

the majority-minority district created an area that will almost definitely be represented on the whole by 1 Democrat and 2 Republicans. Funnily enough, this ratio of 2 Republicans to 1 Democrat is the exact ratio currently found in both chambers of the Florida Legislature.

Here we can see exactly how Amendments 5 and 6 contradict each other. Amendment 6 allows Republicans to make majority-minority districts, which, because of black voters' tendency to vote Democrat, creates Democratic-packed districts. And because of the high black population of those districts, the likelihood of electing a black Democrat is high, thereby fulfilling the mandate of Amendment 6 to have districts that allow for minority representation. This is how the Republicans can justify packing districts with Democratic voters, even though that is unconstitutional in

Amendment 5. Republicans argue that there is no way that a map can be drawn in such a way that would fulfill every redistricting requirement either federal or state in nature, and they are not wrong. Amendments 5 and 6 contradict each other, and Republicans have used that contradiction to their advantage.

The real question here is this: how do the Democrats not realize what is happening? It seems there are two logical answers. One is that African-Americans care more about the race of their representatives than they do about their political affiliation. Decades ago this sentiment was justified, as there were essentially no blacks in the Florida Legislature despite a somewhat high African-American statewide population. Since the passing of the Voting Rights Act, the House and Senate have been allowed to draw majority-minority districts and since 1992 there has been an increase in African-American representation. But at what cost? As demonstrated above, majority-minority districts actually help the Republican Party, not the Democrat Party that most African-Americans prefer. But thanks to organizations like NAACP (who support the newly drawn maps), we see that the African-American community cares more about getting black people into the Legislature than they do about getting Democrats into the Legislature. The reason black advocacy groups support majority-minority districts is that they seem not to believe that an African-American can get elected even in a Democratic district if they are running against a white Democrat. 30 years ago, this was probably true. The difference between the Florida of the 1980's and the 2010's is that the Millennial Generation is now coming of age. Increasing numbers suggest that young voters care less about race than their older counterparts. As a member of

**Term limits on state representatives and senators...has done wonders to stem the efforts of incumbents to draw districts in such a way that they can be perpetually elected. — Boehner**

the Millennial Generation I know my preference of candidate is entirely based on policy positions, and no consideration of race is even thought of in passing. My belief, and I also believe this is the prevailing position of my peers, is that the candidate who wins an election will be the one with the most merit. Therefore if an African-American happens to be the best candidate, we have no qualms about voting for him or inability to stop the drawing of majority-minority districts is political incumbency. In the past decade, Florida decided that there would be term limits on state representatives and senators (limiting them to two 4-year terms). This has done wonders to stem the efforts of incumbents to draw districts in such a way that they can be perpetually elected. The problem, however, is that the black Democrats show the same preference for majority-minority districts as interest groups such as the NAACP, in that they prefer to keep these heavily black districts to make sure that African-Americans always have representation in the Legislature. Democratic leaders however, such as Senate Minority Leader Nan Rich, see the problem with these seats. Having one safe seat is not as useful to the Party as having two contested seats. Hypothetically, if the Democrats could give up one black majority-minority district and get two seats in return, the number of Democratic Senate seats would go from 12 to 18 (As there are currently 6 majority-minority districts). And that would create a Senate split of 18 Democrats to 22 Republicans, much more in line with Florida's political makeup. Unfortunately, incumbency is still too big a factor, as evidenced by Senator Rich's inability to mount a countermovement against the recently approved maps.

It is a tragedy that this process occurs in Florida. The process of redistricting, intended by the founding fathers to ensure equal and fair representation in concordance with population growths, has been twisted into a systemic misalignment of political representation. Democrats, both black and white (and other ethnicities that were not reviewed in this piece) must realize what effects majority-minority districts have on the makeup of the Legislature. If the African-American community truly wants to be represented, they must learn to be color-blind and realize that they do not need blacks in the Legislature; they need Democrats. And, with the generational changing-of-the-guard, it will likely mean a static change in the number of African-American representation, as skin color ceases to matter among voters. But for now, this is what we have: a two-thirds majority Republican state that happens to swing Democrat. 🌀

## BEHIND THE DESK: EXAMINING INTERNSHIPS

### A Capital Semester *By Trevor Myers*

If you asked me a year and a half ago where I envisioned myself today, I bet you I wouldn't have said Washington, D.C. But that's the funny thing about life – you never know where it's going to take you. My journey began eight months ago, when I was casually doing a Google search on internship opportunities at the local, state and federal levels. I stumbled upon the website of The Fund for American Studies (TFAS), an educational non-profit that places students in competitive internships in and around D.C. while they take classes at Georgetown University. Initially, I was reluctant to apply because I felt I was under qualified, but after thinking it over for about a month, I worked up the nerve to apply to their Capital Semester program – a 15-week long experience offered in Fall and Spring.

In early August 2011, right after I had finished my final exam for Introduction to Public Administration, I received an acceptance letter to the program and a \$5,000 scholarship in the mail. I couldn't believe it – I was going to Washington in January! Over the next few months, I worked with the program director to figure out what internship would be best suited for me. After compiling a list of my top three choices,

the director forwarded my resume and credentials to each of them. It was in mid-November when I found out the U.S. Department of the Treasury wanted to hire me for the semester.

I moved into a furnished apartment inside a brownstone house in the historic Capitol Hill neighborhood of D.C., six blocks behind the U.S. Capitol Building and Library of Congress, in mid-January. I went straight to work at the Treasury Department in the Office of Emergency Programs under the Assistant Secretary for Management. Our office was responsible

for implementing emergency preparedness initiatives and drafting continuity policy. I had the opportunity to work closely with emergency program and information managers, while engaging in independent projects based on some of my own generated ideas. Plus, I got to work in one of Washington's most historic and beautiful landmark buildings each and every day.

And when I finished my internship at the end of the day, I would head over to Georgetown University's campus and take three classes as part of the program: Theories of Constitutional

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And when I finished my internship at the end of the day, I would head over to Georgetown University's campus and take three classes as part of the program: Theories of Constitutional Interpretation, Economics and Public Policy Issues, and Public Affairs Internship Seminar. The professors, whose day jobs included working at think-tanks or for members of Congress, were engaging and proficient in each of their disciplines. We would earn class credit by attending exclusive briefings at the World Bank, IMF, State Department and The Pentagon arranged by our program director. They even encouraged us to attend voluntary events, such as tours of the White House, Capitol Building and Supreme Court.

One of the things I took advantage of from the beginning was the TFAS Mentor Program. My mentor, an alumnus of the Institute of Political Journalism program, was a journalist for the publication, InvestmentNews. Whenever we met up for Friday taco night or lunch at the National Press Club, we would always have a deep and thoughtful conversation about life, careers and goals. I always left with a piece of new advice and a sense of self-assuredness.

The most important piece of advice I learned is to never burn your bridges with anyone. It is because of this that I had the opportunity to interview in-person for a State Department summer internship – an internship that I was formally offered one week ago. So, as cliché as it might sound, it truly is the journey, not the destination, that really matters. If the opportunity presents itself to live, learn and/or work in a new place, take a chance because you never know what can happen as a result. Everyone has a potential for greatness, but it is those who take the first step out of their comfort zone that separates them from the rest. 🌟



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# Syria Today and Lessons from the Past

by Jeff Abalos

“Syrian Troops are said to Battle Rebels Encircled in Central City” is the title of the New York Times article. Although this may sound like a headline ripped from today’s newspapers, the article is thirty years old, written in February of 1982 while a different scion of the Assad family faced an all too familiar crisis. Then, Hafiz Al-Assad faced a popular uprising centered on Syria’s fourth-city Hama. Over the course of several weeks, Hafiz’s military shelled and assaulted the embattled city, killing anywhere from 10,000 to 25,000 people, according to Amnesty International. Reflecting on the events of 1982, Thomas L. Friedman has concluded that Hafiz’s actions constituted “Hama Rules” which is his short-hand for “no rules at all.”

Now, Hafiz’s son Bashar Al-Assad is facing the same problems as his father and has reached the same solution as well; raw violence will win the day. Although it would be easy to conclude that Bashar Al-Assad will succeed in maintaining power as his father did thirty years ago through force and violence, much has changed in Syrian and the world since 1982. For one thing, the Cold War ended over twenty years ago and is as abstract an idea to most children growing up now as the civil war was to their parent’s generation. Russia though, the inheritor of the Soviet Union’s position in the international system, continues to oppose any foreign intervention in Syria, as was done in the 1980s. The rapid expansion of global communication technology, as well as the rapid development of the internet, has led to the terms ‘twitter revolution’ and ‘facebook revolution’ being used to describe the Arab Spring of 2011. These factors, by changing both the balance of the international system and the ability of societies to be as powerful of actors as their governments within it, have created a world that is far removed from the 1982 of Hafiz Al-Assad.

Hafiz Al-Assad insisted that there was no popular revolt

in Hama and prevented foreign government officials and press from accessing the city. Bashar’s attempts to assign responsibility for the violence spreading across his country to terrorist elements and to cover-up the brutal operations being undertaken by his troops, much as his father did, are failing in part because of the wealth of first-hand film and amateur reporting pouring out of besieged neighborhoods in cities such as Homs and Hama. For all his ability to control his own populace, the opinions of the international community are beyond Bashar’s control.

What is preventing the international community from stepping in? For weeks now, the United States, Great Britain, several Arab nations, and more have insisted that the only satisfactory conclusion for events in Syria would be the removal of Bashar Al-Assad from power. Unfortunately, China and Russia continue to veto any motion in the U.N. Security

Council that would allow action to be taken against Syria. The United States is unlikely to act unilaterally. Proponents of intervention are calling for a ‘Libya Model’ to be used in Syria. This ‘Libya Model’ would call for the arming of rebels, limited airstrikes, and the support of the international community; all three of these factors being present in the successful NATO-backed rebel campaign of 2011 undertaken against Muammar Gaddafi.

Various factors could confound such hopes of a ‘Libya Model’ being applied to Syria. As mentioned, the most glaring obstacle is the continued opposition of China and Russia in the U.N. Security Council. China has long been an opponent of interventions for human rights, sticking to a more conservative and traditional definition of sovereignty. It is also possible that China fears denouncing Bashar Al-Assad for the treatment of his citizens will draw attention to China’s treatment of its own.



Bashar is the child on the far left, in front of his father Hafez.

If hypocrisy is what China fears, it should take a lesson from Qatar, Bahrain, and other Gulf States who have had no trouble maintaining a tight grip on the reins of domestic power while supporting liberalism in other areas of the Middle East, no matter how nominally, through organizations such as the Arab League. Besides for a long history of association with Syria, including many lucrative arms deals, Russia has more immediate strategic concerns related to Bashar's nation and to his regime's continued survival. Tartus, on the Mediterranean coast, is home to a crucial warm-water port used by the Russian navy, a hold-over from the days of the Soviet Union. Russian leaders may fear the fall of Assad could precede popular backlash against the former regime's friends abroad, Russia among them.

If the international community wishes to do anything about the current situation in Syria, beyond the usual sanctions whose viability for forcing regime change are highlighted by North Korea, Iran, and Cuba, then Russia and China are going to need to be soothed that their respective interests will not be hurt by Assad's fall. China will have to be assured that any economic interests they have in Syria will continue and any Security Council resolution will have to be worded such that China can abstain from voting for it, rather than vetoing it, with a clear conscience. Russia will need to be reassured that they will have continued access to Tartus. These actions can only be taken once the Syrian opposition achieves a unified voice with which to speak to the outside world, something it has so far failed to do. The diverse factions of Syria's opposition may make this as difficult as any of the obstacles so far mentioned and just one among many on the road to removing Bashar Al-Assad from power. ☉

# The African

By Ama Gyimah

## Brain Drain

Over many decades, Africa has experienced the loss of numerous skilled workers to other well-developed continents and states. Many African scientists have migrated overseas to pursue their practices, with the intention of making a better living than they would have in their African homelands.

Though there are obvious cons to the brain drain, such as the draining of the economy within Africa, there are also benefits. On my numerous summer trips to Africa, I got to experience the culture exhibited by the African people. The people of Ghana have many symbols and traditions that spread throughout the continent. One of the symbols I saw almost everywhere was that of a bird with its head turned all the way around touching its tail. My relatives informed me that the sign is referred to as 'Sankofa'. Translated, Sankofa means 'to go back to your roots.' One of the tribal chiefs then informed me that the Sankofa symbol is well known and recognized in African countries other than Ghana, such as Nigeria, Liberia, Kenya and Tanzania. Africans as a whole feel a sense of responsibility to the land. Therefore, when skilled workers move elsewhere they give back to the continent that they refer to as the motherland by aiding in the building of schools, facilities and infrastructure. The idea behind the Sankofa symbol has been carried on over many generations. Our very own Oprah Winfrey, for example, built a school in South Africa due to her sense of responsibility to the continent despite the fact that she is not part of an African-American generation that has recently migrated. A large proportion of economies within Africa rely on the work and money that skilled workers living outside of the country have put into the continent's welfare.



**One of the symbols [of the People of Ghana] I saw almost everywhere was that of a bird with its head turned all the way around touching its tail. — Gyimah**



Another prominent benefit of the brain drain is that citizens who migrate bring back scientific/medical information, making it easier for skilled workers to find work within the country. Experts within the NASAC (Network of African Science Academies) claim that in order for Africa to become stable, it must take responsibility for itself. Others within NASAC, such as Charles Rotimi (who runs the U.S./ Africa Materials Institute at Princeton University), argue that if ideas are made communally with the African governments, Africa's states will be able to stand on their own and keep skilled works

who can better their native economies. The African Union has called upon the United Nations to financially aid African states in the building of universities and research facilities which will attract young professionals and keep them from migrating. The African Union has also called upon the United Nations for help in obtaining clean drinking water. Migrants from Africa have also been working towards this goal. Hopefully, in years to come, the global community will witness an increase in the ability of African countries to maintain their skilled workforce and prosper independently. 🌍

# Classical Liberal Paradigm

## Austrian Economics and The Scottish Enlightenment

*by Taylor Plumer*

Much of the discourse that occupies the mainstream of International Relations discussions today centers on the dichotomy of the two dominant theories of International Relations: Realism and Liberalism. A common response by students when asked which theory they subscribe to is "I like what liberalism has to say and believe in it to a certain extent, but in the end, I'm probably a realist." This article is a profile of a brand of Classical Liberalism that combines Scottish Enlightenment thought of human nature with the Austrian School of Economic Thought, most notably the work of Nobel Prize winning F.A. Hayek. It should be noted that this version of "Liberalism" is very distinct from the Neoliberalism ingrained in mainstream discussion of today, which puts an egalitarian approach of "top down" liberalism compared to the "bottom up" approach by Classical Liberals.

The Balance of Power, a realist construct, is utilized by these Classical Liberals as well, albeit in a different manner. The lens is critical of the statist notion in traditional realist thought of sacrificing liberty of the individual for the sake of security for the state i.e. national (collectivist) interest. Balance of Power is viewed as a complex manifestation, similar to the construction of institutions such as language,

markets, etc. This "spontaneous order" comes about from the wide assortment of factors involved in the decision making process by various actors, all acting on their own accord. In other words, an international order on the basis of a balance of power, say similar to that of the 19th Century with forming norms of conduct for neutrality and treatment of noncombatants, is preferential to a global hegemon in the mold of a world federation with the enforcement mechanism of collective security, which creates a greater propensity for large scale conflict. The lens is distinct from idealism,

another brand of liberalism, with the view of human nature that rational behavior does not always take precedence in human action. A "harmony of interest", as touted by idealists in creating a rational constructivist global society, is not the central mover of international order. It too, can neither be explained in a simple construct of bilateral or multilateral jockeying for power. Human nature is instead explained by 18th century Scottish Philosopher David Hume as "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions." Reason is an important aspect of the interplay between different human actions and

relations but alone does not suffice. This contributes to the vast array of strategic possibilities that have been associated with great power politics. Before World War I, Germany and the United Kingdom were increasingly becoming more intertwined through commerce, but as history shows, economic interdependence wasn't alone able to prevent war. Merely taking a look at violence within domestic society illuminates human nature. The notion that a domestic society can prevent all forms of aggression has yet to be realized, so a supra-national application is unfounded.

A society in which aggression is minimized most effectively is the central aim of this lens. This brings the focus to its unit of analysis; liberty of the individual. This is sacrosanct for this lens, and it places normative biases on the maximization of liberty through the basis "of human action, not human design". Normative bias for both political economy and spontaneous order arise from the Austrian School of Economic thought. Summarized, "Austrian Economics is the product of a praxeological study of human action which concludes that humans act using means to achieve subjective ends. Ludwig Von Mises and F.A. Hayek show, through analysis of economic calculation and knowledge allocation respectively, that free markets combat the problem of economic scarcity. Thus, the Austrian School of Economics suggests that government intervention in economic activity results in inefficiency and waste as it overrides the price mechanism."<sup>1</sup>

"Little IR" matters of foreign policy would include two key components: value of negative law over positive law and unilateral trade liberalization. Mercantilism and protectionism is the antithesis of classical liberal aims and values. Taking in to account "what is seen and what is not seen" is instrumental in the outlook of an international economic order. Mercantilism serves the benefit of cartelized special interests within a society, all the while misallocating resources from a better utilized function. The removal of constraints to individual liberty, whether regulatory or threatening, is viewed beneficial in both utilitarian and moral aspects. The concept of negative law stresses what an individual and/or group can do to another individual and/or group, i.e. the Bill of Rights. This differs from positive law, which is institutionalized through collective design with a specific purpose of establishing certain norms, i.e. minimum wage laws. Turning to multilateralism, participation in international organizations is something to be wary of, as it can add to or even manifest its own threat to individual liberty. A current example is in regards to intellectual property rights and regulation. The Stop Online Piracy Act, SOPA, received nationwide attention in the United States. Through a successful grassroots and media campaign, opponents of the bill were able to push the House of Representatives to freeze the legislation. Even though this was suppressed in the domestic realm, an international agreement termed 'Anti-Counterfeiting

Trade Agreement' is currently being signed by various member states, including the United States, and is moving its way to implementation on a supra-national stage, all the while containing stark parallels to SOPA. This serves as an indictment of the liberal institutions pushed in the Bretton Woods and Washington Consensus era, utilizing the moniker of free trade and democratization. Showcasing a disconnect between intentions and outcomes, neo-mercantilist tendencies usurp authority within the system to impose corporatist and cartelized interests, offering a critique that even Dependency theorists can offer agreement to.

The studies of F.A. Hayek and other classical liberals have been gaining resurgence in describing the modern day political economy, particularly the financial crisis, over the past few years. Still, this paradigm has stayed relatively domestic. Expansion of this line of thought is ripe for further scholarly work in the field of international relations. This article has profiled many of the ideas and talking points expressed in Dr. Edwin Van De Haar's "Classical Liberalism and International Relations Theory: Hume, Smith, Mises, and Hayek". This brand of Classical Liberal thought serves as another paradigm in which to view international relations, expressing a renewed interest on the liberty of the individual and urging a rehashed view in the way we view the international system, specifically the balance of power. 🌐

<sup>1</sup> David Masten



© Richard Busch



# Venezuela ¿Is There a Democratic Way after Chávez?

*By Corrado Minardi*

I never fully understood what being outside my country meant until February 12th, 2012. On this day, the primary election for the opposition candidates for the Venezuelan presidency was taking place and I was not there to live it in my own skin. The candidate chosen in that election would go on to compete against the current head of state in the next election on October 7th. President Hugo Chávez has been in power for more than a decade and intends to remain there until “two thousand forever,” as he likes to say. However, for the first time since he rose to power in 1999, all of the opposition parties have combined under one equal denomination “MUD” (Coalition for Democratic Unity) and are now assembling a common effort to win over the presidency.

There were five candidates who ran for that election. First in the polls was Henrique Capriles Radonski, a 39 year old former deputy to the National Assembly, mayor and current governor. Capriles Radonski was supported by several political parties from different places within the political spectrum, although he comes from a center-left political formation. Occupying the second place in the polls was Pablo Pérez, a 42 year old governor who was supported by the historically most important parties of the country. He was also from a center-left ideology. Third in the polls was María Corina Machado, 45 years old, and the only female candidate and current deputy to the National Assembly. She was an independent right wing candidate and ran without the support of any political party. Two more candidates completed the ballot. In 4th position was Diego Arria, 74

year old former governor, minister, ambassador to the United Nations and president of the UN Security Council. Arria represents the far right wing sector and he ran as an independent candidate as well. Last in the polls came Pablo Medina, 64 years old, ex-deputy and senator in the national congress. Medina is a leftist politician, previous guerrilla leader and worker’s union leader.

In December, Leopoldo López —at that time a candidate, though he would later decline his candidacy to support Capriles— was holding an event in my city, which is located in Trujillo state. According to the results of the last parliamentary elections in 2010, Trujillo presents a vast chavista<sup>1</sup> majority. Nonetheless, there was reasonable attendance and the event was a success. It was at this event I found

an old friend. He used to be a chavista, so I was really surprised to see him there. I approached him and asked him why he was there and how he felt about the candidates.

It turned out he was rather well informed. He had been going to all the campaigning events in the city, he followed the pre-candidates on Twitter and he had watched the televised debates. He approved of Chávez’s presidency, but he also thought that thirteen years in power is too many, and giving him six more, which means he would have been president for twenty years by 2019, is definitely excessive. My friend liked the one quote from Simón Bolívar that the Bolivarian revolution never mentions: “There’s nothing more dangerous than keeping the same citizen in power for too long. The people get used

to obeying and he gets used to ruling.”<sup>2</sup>

My friend represents an important sector of the Venezuelan population, whose votes the opposition is trying to capitalize upon. This is a sector who is tired of promises, hatred and empty rhetoric, which have led the country to become heavily polarized. Throughout his presidency, Chávez has managed to take advantage of the prevalent income inequalities and the high oil prices in order to implement a series of social programs aimed to construct a base of supporters among the lower classes. Using speeches that appeal to the resentment towards the higher classes, the president has been able to constitute an electoral majority in the country, thanks to the support of the poor. However, people from all social classes have been growing tired of the hatred between classes, the shortage of basic consumption products and the alarming lack of safety in the streets. The government's poor performance in these areas has caused Chávez to lose support since his best performance in the presidential election in 2006, when he was re-elected with over 7 million votes.<sup>3</sup> Proofs of this are the opposition's victory in the constitutional

referendum in December of 2007 and the parliamentary elections in 2010. In the latter, the opposition gathered 51.88% of the votes, while the government's party obtained 48.12%, of a total of 11,329,068 voters.<sup>4</sup> The total number of eligible voters in Venezuela (until the last parliamentary election in 2010) was 17,575,975 people, which means that an absenteeism of around 32.4% was registered.<sup>5</sup> Voter absenteeism in Venezuela has been very high since the presidential election of 1993.<sup>6</sup> This seems to be an expression of the discomfort people feel towards the political options available. However, this also constitutes a sector of the population that both the government and the opposition have been trying to appeal to. With this intention, the opposition has grown and matured over the years. In these primaries, all the pre-candidates (with the exception of Arria who proposed a three year transition period to rewrite the constitution) agreed to follow the guidelines of a common government plan crafted by the MUD.

It is possible to argue that on February 12th, 3,079,284<sup>7</sup> Venezuelans were moved to vote, not only by their dislike for the government, but also by their belief in



a new project. This was very remarkable, since this number represents about 17.5% of the eligible voters, a result which—for primary elections—is unprecedented in the world. The winner was Henrique Capriles Radonski, who received 1,911,648 votes, which equals 62.08%.<sup>8</sup> The votes gathered by Henrique Capriles Radonski and Pablo Pérez, constituted 94.5% of the total. This result is an expression of the country's sympathy towards a more moderated candidate.

In fact, Henrique Capriles Radonski based his campaign on the motto “Hay un camino,” meaning ‘there is a way’, emphasizing that he will govern for everybody, avoid polarization, and address education as the government's main concern. Immediately after the results were announced, the united opposition, including all of the other pre-candidates, acknowledged the results and reaffirmed their support for Capriles Radonski in the campaign towards the presidential election. The first one to back him was Pablo Pérez, who came in second place. This left no doubts about the commitment of these political actors for unity.

The 12th of February was a democratic feast for Venezuela. Regardless of the political tension reigning in the country, and regardless of all the threats the current government poses towards democracy, people were brave enough to go out and vote. “En la unión está la fuerza” (“In union there is strength”) shouted Capriles Radonski as he closed his acceptance speech. Then he held hands with all the pre-candidates and saluted the crowd of people that sang and danced to his campaign song, “There Is A Way.”

There might be a way for the situation in Venezuela to change, but it is not an easy one, and these coming seven months are sure to be some interesting times for Venezuelan politics. 🌟



Luis Carlos Díaz



César González

<sup>1</sup> Term used to refer to Chavez's followers

<sup>2</sup> Simón Bolívar, February 15th 1819. "WikiSource." Discurso de Simón Bolívar ante el Congreso de Angostura. [http://es.wikisource.org/wiki/Discurso\\_de\\_Simón\\_Bolívar\\_ante\\_el\\_Congreso\\_de\\_Angostura](http://es.wikisource.org/wiki/Discurso_de_Simón_Bolívar_ante_el_Congreso_de_Angostura)

<sup>3</sup> "Elección Presidencial- 3 de Diciembre de 2006." [http://www.cne.gob.ve/divulgacionPresidencial/resultado\\_nacional.php](http://www.cne.gob.ve/divulgacionPresidencial/resultado_nacional.php)

<sup>4</sup> ODH GRUPO CONSULTOR. "Elecciones Parlamentarias 2010." Slide Share. <http://www.slideshare.net/alayon20/anlisis-resultados-elecciones-parlamentarias-venezuela-2010-odhcg>

<sup>5</sup> Idem

<sup>6</sup> Gallardo, Juan. "Breve recuento de las campañas presidenciales desde 1958 hasta el 2006." Código Venezuela. <http://www.codigovenueza.com/2012/02/blogs/bicentenario-blogs/breve-recuento-de-las-campanas-presidenciales-desde-1958-hasta-el-2006>

<sup>7</sup> Globovisión. "Sigue aumentando el número de votantes en las primarias." Globovisión. <http://www.globovision.com/news.php?nid=219210>

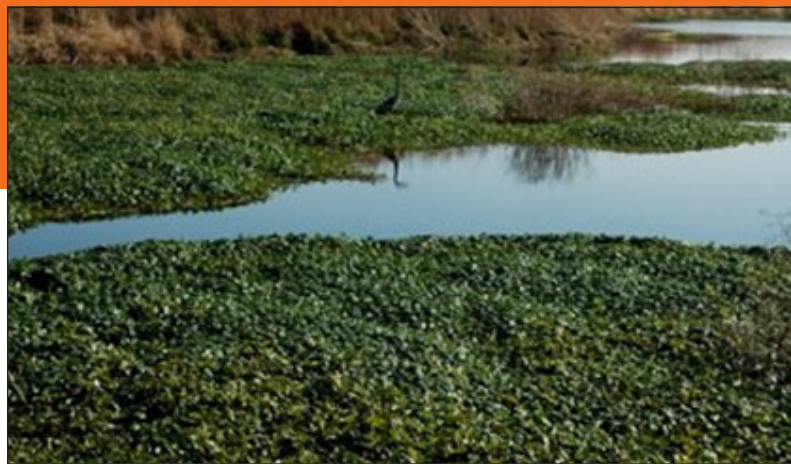
<sup>8</sup> Idem

# Environmental Policy in Alachua County

By Kellsie Kehoe

In the ever-continuing conundrum that surrounds the environmental state of our planet, our local Alachua county government offices are taking initiative and implementing change. While many suspect that national or even international forces are going to produce a change, many within the local county think it begins right here, in our backyard. Alachua County defines sustainability as intending to improve social conditions for all kinds of people, increase economic opportunities, improve environmental protection or restoration efforts, and to continue to have these effects for the foreseeable future. According to Alachua County's Sustainability Department, Declaration for a Resource-Efficient & Resilient County, they have promised to reduce county government fossil-fuel use by 50% by 2030 and use inter local agreements to implement energy self-sufficient goals for the entire county. Additionally, they have numerous ways they plan on reducing the community's usage of liquid fossil fuels by 2020. The Sustainability Department for Alachua has not only promised to decrease the community's use of liquid fossil fuels, they have described how they plan on doing so. One way to reduce usage by 2020 is to maximize mobility opportunities by creating infrastructure and pathways for alternative energy vehicles. Another is to increase the hours that public transit operates.

The environmental policies that Alachua County institutes do not just apply to emission rates, they also have policies that protect land and development uses. These policies focus on how land use and development can maximize energy efficiency and reduce countywide energy consumption. As illustrated in the photos, there are many outdoor parks and spaces that are worth ensuring the condition of. From Payne's Prairie to Lake Walberg, Alachua County and the Gainesville area has thriving landscapes that will not continue to be preserved without our intervention and implementation of certain policies. The Natural Resource Protection Strategies of Alachua County has protected




Photos Kellsie Kehoe

over 20,000 acres of green space within the county. Their strategies are designed to protect these natural areas by a review process and strong protection standards. One example is implementing incentive based land protection for conservation to land owners and developers.

In order to capture economic opportunities of energy technology and develop green-collar development, the county has a couple of priorities. For one, they want to encourage the development of more efficient energy and the location of renewable energy technology businesses and industry clusters in the county. Also, they want to further develop the County Transfer Station for use by clusters of waste based industries.

A project and program that is gaining momentum within the community is Alachua County Forever. Their mission is to acquire, manage and improve environmentally significant lands in order to protect water resources, wildlife habitat, and natural areas that are suitable for resource-based recreation. Currently, the program has protected over 18,000 acres of land within the county.

Alachua County thankfully has detailed numerous energy conservation strategies that will improve the environment that we live in. For us to continue to live in a thriving environmental friendly county, the continued support of the community is crucial. To learn how you can get involved with protecting our local environment log onto [www.alachuacounty.us](http://www.alachuacounty.us). 



# Corruption, Truth & the Really Old Greek Guy

by Gretchell Trochez

The discussion of the role of human nature and how it affects decisions we make is not only a modern day occurrence. In fact, it dates back to one of the pioneers of modern western political thought. Plato not only discussed the innate instinct of humans to be corrupt, but also the fact that we, as humans, are constantly searching for "The Truth". These ideals have been portrayed in the epic Hollywood trilogies of the Matrix and The Lord of the Rings.

In his book *The Republic*, Plato uses an allegory in order to exemplify innate human corruption. The character Socrates begins to tell a story of a man who acquires a ring, a ring with the power to make him invisible. As he starts to become aware of its abilities, he is tempted to seduce the Queen and "with her help [murder] the King and seized the throne." The story expands to the giving of this ring to many more people, and how this affected society. Socrates [Plato] comes to the conclusion that anarchy would reign and people would do as they saw fit. People would be able to commit murder or other crimes because no one would know it was them, therefore there would be no consequences for their actions. This correlates to the ring carried by Frodo in *The Lord of the Rings*. Although Tolkien did not necessarily have Plato in mind when writing the epic, the ring can be seen as a symbol for corruption. Anytime the ring is worn by someone, they are hunted down or stopped altogether. Any wearer of the ring becomes obsessed with the power of it, some to the point of madness. This ties-in with the idea that corruption is part of our human nature and it is not something that we really know how to control. Once it starts, it is really hard to stop. The fact that the ring must be destroyed shows how corruption within the soul needs to be stopped, and Tolkien expresses that this should be done by leading a simple life. Life in the Shire is calm, uneventful and happy. Introduction of the ring is what brings about its destruction.

Plato's "Allegory of the Cave", on the other hand, had a major direct impact on the Matrix. Once again, through the character Socrates, Plato decides to attempt to explain human nature. He begins this allegory by using the example of men being chained to a rock their entire lives, with the inability to move any part of their bodies. All they know of life is the voices of the other men and a puppet show that is created behind them using a fire. This becomes their reality. The world they live in is only the rock they are tied to and the puppet show. Suddenly one man is able to unchain himself, get out of the cave and see what the world really is. He is able to see the sun, experience the breeze, see colors for

the first time. He has found what "truth" is and realizes the life he had been living was a lie. Yet, the question now is...how does he explain this to the others? Is it even possible? The world of the Matrix follows this lead. Neo had lived two lives: one inside the machine and the other as Thomas Anderson in the Matrix. Throughout his journey, the line between those two lives blurs and Neo's path becomes convoluted. His mentor Morpheus tells him that "The Matrix is everywhere. It is all around us. Even now, in this very room. You can see it when you look out your window or when you turn on your television. You can feel it when you go to work... when you go to church... when you pay your taxes. It is the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth." He goes on to explain that "you are a slave, Neo. Like everyone else, you were born into bondage, into a prison that you cannot taste or see or touch. A prison for your mind." This is the moment where Neo steps out of the cave and sees light for the first time. He escapes those chains that kept him tethered to the lie. Neo is the person who now needs to understand and explain the truth.

Modern day political thought follows the messages in these two films. We are



often fearful of corruption within our governments and societies and we try to put a stop to it. We are comforted by our electoral processes, yet are still doubtful of those we decide to elect into positions of power. Anything said by politicians is scrutinized and dissected for misinformation. Citizens want the truth, however, they don't want to jump through hoops to get it. Even so, society as a whole claims ignorance when attempting to find the truth, often living within the shadow of the lies said to them, unwilling to unchain themselves and continue living in the corrupted system created for them as portrayed by Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" and of the Invisible Ring. ☉



# Wartime Morality

Was Harry Truman a war criminal and what would the answer mean for the American people?

by Lyndsey Peck

Many U.S. Presidents hold a special place in the heart of the American people. Historians have spent decades researching the lives of Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, and George Washington, and the American media has turned John F. Kennedy into a fashion icon for the ages. What many Americans seek is the opportunity to admire their presidents, and to have faith in the moral rightness of the decisions they make while in office. To accomplish this, history has effectively glossed over the morally questionable actions of some of the most influential presidents, including but certainly not limited to President Harry S. Truman.

Harry S. Truman became the 33rd president of the United States on April 12th, 1945, immediately following the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. After his first meeting with his Cabinet, Truman was briefed on the top secret Manhattan Project and was informed that the first testing of the atomic bomb had been a success. Upon Japan's refusal to accept the surrender terms of the Potsdam Declaration, Truman authorized the atomic bombing of Hiroshima on August 6th, 1945, and subsequently of Nagasaki on August 9th, 1945. Japanese surrender on August 14th, 1945 was met by elation by the Allies and their people, but to what cost?

According to the Department of Energy, the immediate effects of the bomb blast in Hiroshima killed approximately 70,000 Japanese citizens, and in Nagasaki the immediate toll was approximately 39,000. As a result of burns, injuries, and radiation sickness the number of total casualties almost doubled by the end of 1945, the majority of which were civilians.

This brings us to the question: Were President Truman's actions morally right? Many Americans, especially those of older generations, would undeniably say yes, as he potentially saved the lives of thousands who would have

been killed if Japan hadn't surrendered. Even so, others claim that what-ifs do not justify the deaths of so many. To accurately consider this issue, both the international political realm during 1945 and the moral concept of the double effect doctrine must be considered.

The double-effect doctrine is a concept used for evaluating the permissibility of acting when one's otherwise legitimate act will also cause an effect that one would normally be obliged to avoid. This doctrine is often applied in medicine, in cases where the administrations of certain drugs are necessary to sustain life, even if they may have other potentially severe side-effects. In a way, the double-effect doctrine is a matter of intent. If one does not wish to harm another individual to achieve an end, but yet that person is harmed in a way not proportional to the achieved end, then the harm inflicted upon them is not morally wrong, since the harm was not intended or directed at them. Nonetheless, if that harm was directed at the individual, then it would be considered morally impermissible.

With that understanding, it is important to remember the regulations regarding aerial warfare. In 1938, the League of Nations made a declaration for the "Protection of Civilian Populations Against Bombing

From the Air in Case of War". In the declaration, the League of Nations set forth principles that any subsequent regulations must be based upon. These principles included that: 1) The intentional bombing of civilian populations is illegal; 2) Objectives aimed at from the air must be legitimate military objectives and must be identifiable; 3) Any attack on legitimate military objectives must be carried out in such a way that civilian populations in the neighborhood are not bombed through negligence.

Seen from the viewpoint of these two arenas, President Truman's actions must be put under scrutiny. One could argue, though it would be a difficult argument to make, that President Truman never intended the deaths of the hundreds of thousands of Japanese civilians, even though he knew that they might occur. Unfortunately, this was not the case. It was made clear in President Truman's statements in the Potsdam Declaration that the United States would issue "prompt and utter destruction" to Japan if it did not surrender. As there was no imperative Japanese military stronghold set within either Hiroshima or Nagasaki, there is little to discern from the atomic bombings other than that President Truman, turning his back on all three principles set by the League of

**One could argue ... that President Truman never intended the deaths of the hundreds of thousands of Japanese civilians, even though he knew that they might occur.**

— Peck

Nations, used the bombing of civilians as a direct means to end the war.

Although President Truman's actions had tragic consequences, the serious issue facing Americans today is the manner in which our, and future, generations will view actions similar to his. Will the nation turn a blind eye merely to celebrate its own safety and victory, as it did in 1945? When asked whether he feels that the regard for moral issues during wartime has declined over the years, Robert D'Amico, professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Florida and author of the book *Contemporary Continental Philosophy*, replied, "Yes, absolutely. For example, from the evidence that emerges, many people involved in the policies and decisions during and after World War II had extremely well-developed moral sense of what they were doing and why, [but] I think it has gotten much worse. [Now] there is a dominant view in the society that not having a moral view is a good thing, and that is pretty disturbing." In modern times, it seems that we have seen warfare step into a realm in which a disproportion number of civilians die comparable to the scope of the war. According to the Iraq War Logs released by WikiLeaks, the number of civilian casualties in Iraq since 2003 has topped over 60,000, while deaths of insurgents and Iraqi security forces combined are still below 50,000, and yet very few Americans have raised their voices in protest to these numbers that do not add up. As a nation, America cannot be apathetic to the plight of the civilians living in the countries that it is at war with. Eleanor Roosevelt once stated: "So much attention is paid to the aggressive sins, such as violence and cruelty and greed with all their tragic effects that too little attention is paid to the passive sins, such as apathy and laziness, which in the long run can have a more devastating effect." The deaths of civilians, even during wartimes, are morally impermissible and illegal according to international law, and if the citizens of the United States refuse to recognize the occurrences in which they happen, the nation will be committing a great injustice to the global community. 🌀



# The Biggest National Security Threats of the 21st Century

by Brandon Scott



On December 22, 1991 the Soviet Union had completed its collapse and effectively ended the Cold War. For 45 years after World War II the United States and Soviet Union had been building up their nuclear arsenals as well as other military capabilities in order to outcompete the other. With the collapse of the USSR, uncertainty abounded as to what direction international foreign policy would take. It is clear after 20 years that terrorism has become the main threat to the national security of the United States as well as most countries around the world. The 9/11 attacks signaled the beginning of the Western World's War on Terrorism. In the 10 years since the attacks, global economies have collapsed, military budgets have continued to grow, and a new type of warfare has emerged; cyber warfare.

The United States was bent on getting revenge for the 9/11 attacks and this led to invasions of both Iraq and Afghanistan. Many saw this means of foreign policy as a grave error. Terrorism is based on ideology and attacking a country does not get rid of terrorism. It can be proven that since these invasions, the Islamic terrorist movement has grown uncontrollable and is nowhere near bound by borders. This raises the question as to whether our view of what keeps us safe is fundamentally flawed. Is continued production of warships, fighter jets, and missiles the best way to ensure our national security?

In 2008 the United States as well as countries all over the world experienced a financial meltdown that led to the worst economic collapse since the Great Depression. The 2008 credit crunch led observers to really begin to question our national debt. Currently our national debt stands close to \$15 trillion; a figure many see as insurmountable. A growing number of national security experts see the national debt as the biggest threat to national security. In the summer of 2011, Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff expressed his concern, "I've said many times that I believe the single, biggest threat to our national security is our debt, so I also believe we have every responsibility to help eliminate that threat". We can continue to build up our military as much as we want but there comes a time where we will not have the money to actually afford to deploy the military capabilities we spent so many years to build up.

Mike Mullen continues saying that the military will do its part in order to help eliminate the national debt. I believe that a more radical approach is necessary. I think we need to rethink the way we defend our nation. We no longer

live in the Cold War. Our military capabilities vastly exceed every other country in the world and yet we have no large threat from another state. One may argue China; however, we must worry about them superseding our economic dominance rather than as a military threat in our current mindset.

A new threat is emerging. This threat is cyber warfare. While the United States does have the largest military budget in the world by far, we fall behind many other countries in the world when it comes to cyber security as well as in our ability to launch a major attack. Cyber Warfare is such a threat because through the Internet other countries, as well as terrorists, can target our infrastructure. This includes Nuclear Power plants as well as other sources of energy. If this doesn't seem like a threat, I do not know what is. There have been reports that recently hackers have been able to access the programs of U.S. Air Force drones. If we do not improve our cyber security it is quite possible that other countries could utilize our own military technologies against us as well as cripple our infrastructure. Many are concerned about Iran building nuclear weapons,

however, we should be more concerned with the fact that Iran has the second largest cyber warfare unit in the World. Other countries that have larger cyber warfare task forces than the United States include: Israel, North Korea, China, and Russia. With our military budget being upwards of \$700 billion this should not be the case. I think we need to drastically look at our military strategies and revamp them for warfare of the new century that will be dominated by cyber warfare.

We live in a new century; a century where missiles, guns, warships, and fighter jets alone will not win a war. We face a crucial apex in our countries history. We must not only address our debt as it has been classified as the biggest threat to our national security, but we must revamp our military strategy to fit the 21st century. Cyber War could fundamentally change the way conflicts are dealt with in the 21st century and it would be horrible to fall behind. The decisions lawmakers make over the next couple of years will determine whether we maintain both our military and economic dominance. The fate of both is intertwined. 🌟

# Reflections on the Bush Administration: the Honors of Condoleezza Rice

by *Christine Csencsitz*



Condoleezza Rice is undoubtedly one of the more fascinating political figures of the 21st century. Renowned for her work as the National Security Advisor during the turbulent Bush administration and, later, as the Secretary of State, Dr. Rice has quite the impressive resume that extends well beyond the political arena. Rice achieved success in both the worlds of music and academia. She is a classically learned pianist and served as the provost at Stanford University.

This past November Rice published her latest book, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington*. This sophomore volume strays away from Rice's biography and, instead, delves deeply into the eight-year Bush administration with the keen observations of its authoress. The orientation of the information offers the reader a seldom-seen glimpse of what it must have really been like in the Oval Office just days after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The journey to the White House is fascinating, but is only granted a modest portion of the memoir. Rice then proceeds to describe her early time in Washington, including the trip from her apartment at Watergate to the White House and her daily routines. She reflects nostalgically on the times when she did not have to be escorted by bodyguards whenever she went to the office. Rice began the memoir with emphasis placed on the normality of the first months in office and then paints a disturbingly real portrait of the humanity that surrounded each and every post-9/11 decision the president and his staff had to make.

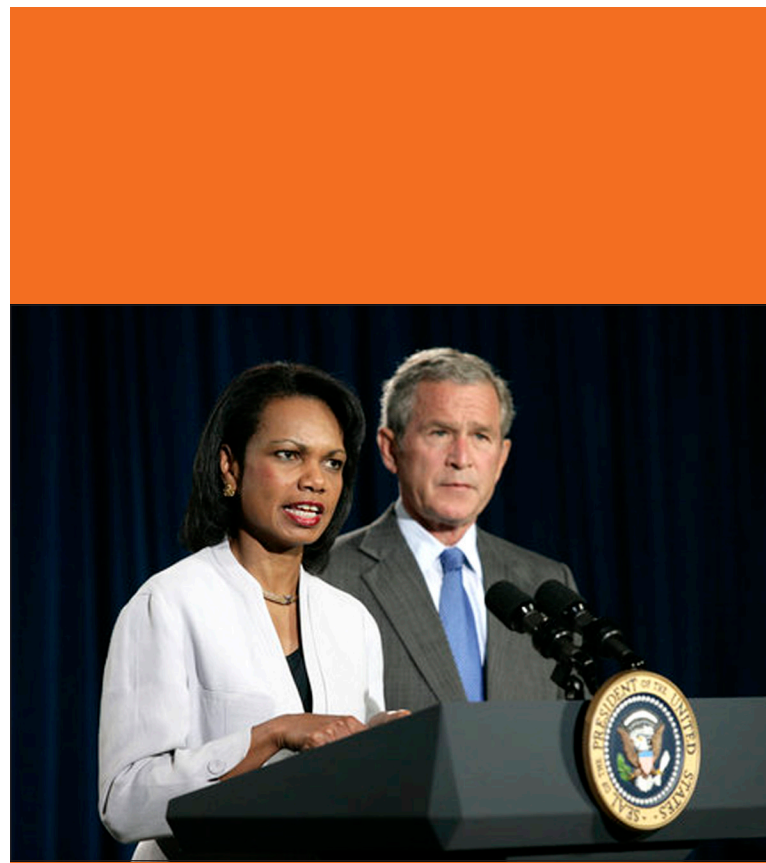
Rice's gentle, storytelling prose leads the reader from her position as Provost at Stanford, through her uncertainty about taking her proposed position with the Bush administration (she worried mostly about her ailing father), and, finally, through the exhausting election process itself. Florida is given its own spotlight as Rice explains how narrowly they won the election.

"I watched the ups and downs in Florida," says Rice, "my mood swinging with every court decision."

*No Higher Honor* gives a relatable face to an administration that often feels very far away. For a generation that grew up shrouded in the aftermath of 9/11, but not fully aware of what it all meant, Rice's

memoir offers a chilling sense of clarity. Rice describes the administration's staff with such simplicity and closeness that the reader feels as if it is not impossible to reach out and shake the hand of any one of the staffers. Rice, who was quite fond of President Bush, often toes the line between friend and work fellow. Throughout the book, Rice includes quips made by the President, and though the true character of George W. Bush is often glazed over in the exchange for the archetypal leader's traits, the reader is given a clear portrait of the man behind closed doors.

In all, *No Higher Honor* achieves what it set out to do: to give explanation to the decisions of the Bush era. After a particularly unsettling chapter regarding a toxic botulism scare in the White House, one for which there was no known antidote, it becomes clear just how intensive a position in the Bush administration must have been. Rice is not, in herself, boastful, but her words resonate the importance of this era in our history, and the reader is left with a sense of awe.



# The Republican Primary Prediction

by Brianna Sidman

With the upcoming presidential election looming over the nation, people are wondering who will win the nomination of the Republican Party and, more importantly, who will win the presidential election. Beginning with the current fight for the Republican national party nominee, three main contenders come to mind. Mitt Romney, Newt Gingrich, and Rick Santorum have all been battling it out for the coveted spot of the Republican Party's presidential candidate for months.

Rick Santorum, the winner of the Iowa caucus, is a former Pennsylvania Senator. He is a social conservative who is currently coming in

third among the candidates in the primaries. His steam seemed to be running out and, although he started strong in the Iowa caucus, it was not looking good for Santorum, who has only raised \$2.2 million as of December 31st, until he surprised a lot of people and swept the Minnesota and Colorado caucuses. Santorum takes last place in campaign finance. He is unlikely to obtain the Republican Party nomination due to his lack of name recognition, funds, and inability to connect with independent voters.

Newt Gingrich is the next plausible candidate to take on Obama in the presidential election. He is the former House Speaker and won

South Carolina in the primary. He has since placed second, behind Romney, consecutively in Florida and Nevada by a fairly large margin. Gingrich is a Tea Party favorite despite some of the challenges facing him in this election. He is also favored among conservatives and evangelical Christians. Gingrich has been known to be polarizing, which is evident when he confronted President Clinton over budgetary issues which lead to a government shutdown. As of December 31st, Mr. Gingrich has raised \$12.7 million for his campaign which is well above Rick Santorum's amount but still not as high as Mitt Romney's current numbers.

Currently, Mitt Romney is the front runner to become the main contender against President Obama in the 2012 Presidential Election. The former Massachusetts governor is a successful businessman who believes his success in business will lead to knowledge of how to make the United States' downward-spiraling economy boom once again. Mitt Romney has been criticized for his more moderate views on social issues by the more conservative members of the Republican Party but within the most recent years, he has made more connections with conservative organizations and has voted as such. Also, the moderate image Romney has portrayed may help him to gain the votes of the people who are in the middle on issues or independents. Most

Americans today have conservative to moderate views on social issues and having a representative that understands what most Americans believe will help a candidate like Mitt Romney win the nomination of the Republican Party to compete with Barack Obama in the upcoming election. It is because of Mitt Romney's campaign tactics, ideology, and financing that I believe he will win the Republican Party's nomination. Only time will tell who will win the nomination but the race has already had some twists and turns and it will be interesting to keep an eye on. ☀



# The End is Near: Plato's Democratic Apocalypse

by Tiffany Johnson

The year 1789 is one of monumental importance in the United States but not because it was the year that the Constitution became the "supreme law of the land" and certified the newly formed nation as legitimate. Neither is it because that year signified the victory of independence and the decline of tyranny. The sad reality is that the year 1789 marked the beginning of The End. With the creation of the Constitution, the fate of American society was signed, sealed and delivered into the inevitable Pit of Self-Destruction. According to Plato we are living in Apocalyptic times. The Founding Fathers simply got it all wrong. They basically traded in one form of injustice (tyranny) for another (democracy). All of the principles of a democratic system such as freedom, individuality, property ownership and the pursuit of happiness have no place in a just society, and the practice of all of these appetite-driven principles will in fact lead to the creation of a despotic system. The same system our Founding Fathers sacrificed so much to escape. So what is the alternative? In *The Republic*, Plato suggests that the only just regime is the aristocracy in which philosophers may be kings, every member of society each performs his (or her) own duties depending on their constitutions as determined by the order of their souls, and each part works for the betterment of the whole in pursuit of realizing their telos. The antithesis of this is a democracy.

According to Plato, Society is based on an "artificial social contract" where individuals are mutually coexisting with each other out of necessity and contributing to the commonwealth through their functioning in different classes or levels: Guardians, Auxiliaries and Producers. People are born with "innate differences" and through liberal educational development, censorship and training they are taught how to perform their respective occupations. The Guardians serve as the kings and impose order and rule over society. The Auxiliaries serve as the enforcers of the rulings of the Guardians and the Producers are the everyday tradesmen and manufacturers, etc. Plato uses the Allegory of the Metals to explain how an individual is sorted out in society. Everyone is born with 3 metals that make up the soul: Gold, Silver and Bronze. Not everyone has an

equal distribution of these metals in their soul. Those that have more gold exhibit the predominating trait of Reason/wisdom. Those with more silver exhibit more Spirit/courage, and those with more bronze exhibit Appetite or desire. Gold souls are attributed to the Guardians, silver to the Auxiliaries and bronze to the Producers. Justice is achieved when each individual at each division of society performs their appropriate task and nothing else, thus creating an effective division of labor. So injustice would be similar to having an ex-body builder turned actor becoming the Governor of California.

Plato further emphasizes the injustice of the democracy through the decline of his ideal society. He says that

decline takes place in stages and happens because man is mortal and not infallible. Aristocracy, rule by the best, is the highest stage in which just rulers with the "best constitutions" are in power and rule with reason. The next stage timocracy, made of rulers who are driven by ambition, spirit and honor, is motivated by courage. While the lower stages [oligarchy- rule by the rich, democracy- rule by the many (poor), and despotism/tyranny- rule by the absolute one] all are motivated by desires and appetite or lack of virtue. All of these stages model the constitutional make-up of the individual soul, and the transition from one stage down to the next reflects a lack of temperance and transcendence.

**People are driven solely by unnecessary appetites; there is no discipline or order. Since people with the wrong souls feel they can govern, they begin to overextend their reach in a variety of positions.** — Johnson

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Plato explains that societal decay begins with human error on the part of the Rulers who accidentally allow the Guardians and Auxiliaries to mate out of season causing the mixing of souls, resulting in lower constitutions. These individuals will unknowingly be raised and educated as Guardians and gain power, then will slowly mislead the rest of society because they are serving in positions that they are not fit to be in such as lobbyists or career politicians. This will result in the mixing of reason, spirit and desire, with spirit and ambition being the victor (timocracy). Later, the offspring of these men will become unsatisfied with the modest and humble lifestyle of the Guardian and desire to own property, which will then escalate to a wide spread desire for wealth and competition for ownership leading to an oligarchy. After, massive class conflict will result between the haves (soft-rich oligarchs) and the have-nots (lean-harden poor aka the 99%). This will lead to a democracy in which the many poor overthrow the few rich and seek to redistribute wealth and emphasize equality. For Plato, this is where things get really, really bad. At this stage, souls of every constitution are given equal power in society, every part of the individual soul is given a vote in what it wants, and universal healthcare, education and housing are being voted on by the masses! So both the individual and the society are in a state of anarchy, disguised as free will.

Plato explains that reason by this stage is nonexistent. People are driven solely by unnecessary appetites; there is no discipline or order. Since people with the wrong souls feel they can govern, they begin to overextend their reach in a variety of positions. Social unrest runs rampant as the ruined drones stage an attack on the wealthy capitalists that have secretly acquired their wealth, who then band together to elect a representative (Hitler, Castro, Mussolini just to name a few) to protect them. This allegedly “democratically” elected individual comes to power and effectively ends democracy and establishes his despotism. He is driven by fear and insatiable appetite (and bitterness from being rejected from art school). Thus, cumulates the demise of justice, which means American is one more economic crisis away from internal catastrophe. For these reasons, Plato asserts convincingly that democracy is highly dangerous and nothing but injustice and decline can come from it. The excessive practice of freedom will inevitably result in no freedom at all. But don't let this get you down, America. When you go into the voter booth in November don't lose hope; the end is near but we still have a few more good centuries before freedom implodes on itself (hopefully). So before you make any hasty decisions as to who to pick for your next “faux Philosopher King,” even though the choices aren't great, take a moment to think to yourself “WWPD”: What would Plato do? 🌟



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