

# The Political Voice



by Undergraduates for Undergraduates in the UF Department of Political Science  
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# The Political Voice

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## Letter From the Editor

Dear Readers,

Welcome to Volume two, Issue three of the Political Voice. As many of you know, Pi Sigma Alpha has published the Political Voice every semester since fall of 2010. This semester, however, we are trying something new. With so many well-informed students and critical thinkers, we decided the Political Voice could be a biweekly publication. Our goal is to provide students with more opportunities to write and new material for readers. In addition, we are progressing towards a style of writing that is somewhere between academic and journalistic. As a student who is both a political science and journalism major, I believe it is very important that we learn to write with clarity and conciseness while holding onto our analytical roots. We hope that you welcome the new features of the Political Voice and are as excited as we are about making it great!

Thanks,

*Kristen Morrell*

PSA Historian



## Letter From the President

Political Voice Readers,

It brings me great honor to introduce this issue of the Political Voice. As some of the brightest and most dedicated undergraduate students of the University of Florida Political Science Department, we strive to make this publication one that encompasses it's namesake; we want to give a voice to the issues that matter to us most. All too often the words of today's youth go unnoticed or are degraded to mere triviality. *The Political Voice* is an open forum meant to educate others and express our thoughts on history, government, international politics and even the college experience of a political science student. The purpose of this publication is to inform and to promote an engagement within our department, as well as with the study of political science as a whole. So find an article, inform yourself, learn something new and begin a journey with one of our wonderful writers from Pi Sigma Alpha.

Sincerely,

*Alexa Lipke*

PSA President







# Sectarianism in Syria: The Role of Religion

by Richard Vieira

As the ongoing conflict in Syria continues to worsen, the death toll and number of displaced people continues to soar. The UN Refugee Agency estimates that about 275,000 Syrians have fled their homeland into neighboring Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq while the widely accepted death toll exceeds 30,000. While this conflict has escalated into an urgent humanitarian crisis, the geopolitical implications of the power struggle in Syria are preventing foreign powers from intervening. One of the dominant complications is religion. As Syrians identify with a number of interpretations of Islam, religion plays a large role in this conflict that cannot be ignored.

The Syrian Alawite minority, whose adherents comprise the Assad regime, is found in the western most region of the country. The Kurdish minority, which has now organized its own militia, is located at the northeastern border near Turkey, and the Sunni majority is dispersed throughout the remainder of Syria. This diverse demographic blurs the lines between alliances and may create a political vacuum if the Assad regime collapses. For western policy makers and strategists, religion has made the effort to understand and identify the Syrian opposition a difficult task.

In March, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta stated, “It is not clear what constitutes the Syrian armed opposition,” in a testimony in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee. According to the Institute for the Study of War, The Free Syrian Army (FSA) is headquartered in Turkey and functions as the unifying organization for the Khalid bin Walid Brigade as well as the Omari and Harmoush Battalions, which are Syria’s dominant militias. Regardless of how organized and unified the FSA is, western powers are becoming more cautious in their interactions with the opposition.

A recent article published on the Washington Post website indicates that the weapons being shipped into Syria from Saudi Arabia and Qatar are going to the Jihadist factions of the FSA. This fundamentalist threat has become a growing concern for U.S officials. If extremist factions attain power in Syria, the result could be a tyranny of the majority, which can lead to the persecution of minority groups. However, without western aid, many fear that Syrian opposition forces will instead turn to Islamic fundamentalist groups such as Al-Qaeda in search of weapons.

The religious complications of the Syrian conflict may also spillover into neighboring countries. The Turkish government has reported that there are over 100,000 Syrian refugees in Turkey, which may create tensions within Turkey between the Sunni-led government and the minority refugees. On Oct. 5, USA Today reported that the Turkish parliament authorized the unilateral use of military force soon after five Turkish civilians were killed as a result of Syrian warfare. As a key ally for western

nations, Turkey fears that a well-armed Kurdish militia will demand autonomy near its border if there is a regime change in Syria. Many speculate that the Turkish parliament’s actions are reflective of Turkey’s desire to eradicate the threat of Kurdish nationalism.

Though religious turmoil is plaguing the region, many hope that religion will play a unifying role as well. According to the Guardian, Lakhdar Brahimi, an envoy for the U.N, declared that Assad has accepted a request for a cease-fire for the four-day Muslim celebration of Eid-al-Adha, beginning Friday Oct. 26. It was impossible to determine if religion would be the deciding factor in the outcome of the Syrian crisis. What remains clear, however, is that time is of the essence. Massive groups of people are migrating into neighboring countries. Turkish interests are at stake. Great powers such as Russia and Iran share a joint interest in supporting the Alawite regime. Regardless of how U.S. foreign policy makers approach this issue, the risk of sectarian conflict is great.

# Striking the Persian Bomb

by Dillon Clancy

**In the recent presidential debate centered on foreign policy, both President Obama and his challenger, Gov. Mitt Romney, affirmed that all options remain on the table for dealing with Iran’s supposed nuclear program. There are subtle differences in their policies, but the bottom line remains that whatever the result of the election, the President of the United States will have expressed a willingness to use military force to compel Iran to give up its nuclear ambitions should other, less dramatic measures fail.**

Whether or not Iran’s nuclear operation should be attacked is a matter of lively debate among policy makers and scholars. For the purposes of this article, we will assume that the decision makers in Washington have concluded that the benefits to stopping the Iranians from pursuing nuclear technology outweigh the potential risks of military action.

Israel has used preemptive air strikes against nascent nuclear programs twice in the past, in Iraq in 1981 and Syria in 2007. Both strikes effectively ended those nations’ nuclear ambitions. However, for a myriad of reasons, a strike on Iran would be a far more complex operation. In each of the historical cases, the strikes targeted a single facility that was not hardened against attack in any significant manner. Both operations involved a relatively

small number of aircraft using common, conventional munitions. A raid on Iran’s nuclear program would be far more complex. In September 2012 the Center for Strategic and International Studies published a report detailing what such an attack might look like. The complexity of the mission, as well the political concerns of maintaining the support of the nations of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, UAE and Oman), require that the United States, not Israel, bear the brunt of the effort.

As noted above, the strikes by Israel against Iraq and Syria were both centered on a single facility. In order to cause enough damage to delay Iran’s pursuit of nuclear arms by five to ten years,

targets are dispersed all over Iran, covering an area over 1,600,000 square kilometers or about the size of Alaska. If two aircraft are detailed to each target, the operation would require a total of 100 strike aircraft. The CSIS report recommends that the five main nuclear facilities be attacked with U.S. Air Force B-2A stealth bombers, carrying the 30,000-pound GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrator “bunker buster” bomb and flying from the U.S. military facility on Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. The remainder of the targets would be attacked with more conventional aircraft, such as USAF F-16s or F-15Es flying from forward bases or F/A-18E/Fs operating from U.S. Navy aircraft carriers in the Persian Gulf or the Indian Ocean.

In addition to the aircraft involved in the strike package, additional forces would be necessary to ensure the success of the mission. Iran possesses an antiquated, but still dangerous air force as well as an air-defense system that is worthy of note. Countering these threats will require a number of additional combat aircraft. In the air superiority role it will be necessary to conduct a “fighter sweep” in advance of the main strike package and to maintain a Combat Air Patrol to protect U.S. allies in region from Iran retaliatory strikes. The surface to air missile and anti-aircraft artillery threat will require that aircraft optimized for the





Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses (SEAD) role accompany the strike aircraft to ensure that they reach their targets unmolested. Also critical to mission success are non-combat support aircraft, in roles such as command and control, electronic warfare and aerial-refueling.

Even if the Iranian leadership is warned and assured that the goals of the strike are limited, as Matthew Kroenig advocates in his Foreign Affairs article “Time to Attack Iran,” it is naïve to assume that they will passively accept an attack on their territory. The authors of the CSIS report identify Iranian ballistic missiles as the most likely tool of retaliation, targeted on Israel, the GCC states and U.S. military facilities in the region. It is for this reason that the list of targets includes Iranian missile launchers, bases and production facilities. It would be preferable to destroy as many Iranian missiles as possible before they are launched in retaliation. It is likely that some will escape the raid untouched, however, and that those weapons will be used to respond. To defend against that, the U.S. has deployed a number of countermeasures in the region to help defend our allies and assets in the region. The Defense Support Program satellite network is capable of detecting ballistic missiles in their boost phase, and will provide the initial warning of a retaliatory strike. U.S. Navy ships equipped with the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense System would intercept inbound missiles during their unpowered “mid-course” flight. For point defense, an early warning radar based in Qatar would provide guidance to systems such as the Theater High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) and Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC-3) missile batteries stationed in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE.

The other primary avenue through which Iran might attempt retaliation is by closing off the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow waterway between Iran and the Arabian Peninsula. According to data from the U.S. Energy Information Agency, about twenty percent of the oil traded in 2011 passed through the Strait of Hormuz. The effective closure of that passage would result in a tremendous spike in oil prices and have a devastating effect on the global economy. It is essential that Iran not be permitted to close the Strait, which might involve a significant effort on the part of the U.S. Navy and the naval forces of the GCC states.

The U.S. military is known for its prowess at precision air strikes, but the complexity of an attack on the dispersed facilities that make up Iran’s nuclear program and its

ballistic missile capability would tax even America’s vaunted military. The necessity of mitigating the inevitable Iranian response requires even more assets and the involvement of the Gulf Cooperation Council, which in turn means that the role of Israel should be minimized as it was in the 1991 Gulf War. The idea that an attack on the Iranian nuclear program would be as quick and bloodless as the Israeli operations against Iraq and Syria couldn’t be further from the truth, it would, in fact, require a massive campaign that is likely to be expensive in terms of both blood and treasure. The scenario depicted above is not the only conceivable option for attacking the Iranian nuclear program, but since it is unlikely that the United States or any other nation would be willing to commit ground forces or use non-conventional weapons, it is my opinion that an air campaign remains the most likely option. The political delicacy and operational complexity of such an operation would make it a far-from-trivial exercise and something to be carefully considered. ▢



# Malala Yousafzai vs. the Taliban

## and the Implications

### for Women in Pakistan



by Grace Kranstover

It seems that lately, the issue of women’s rights has been brought to light by the media both in the U.S. and abroad, particularly in the Middle East, as Gov. Romney and President Obama battle for the White House. On Oct. 9, women’s issues in the Middle East once again created international attention when 15-year-old Malala Yousafzai was the target of an attempted assassination by the Taliban in Pakistan. But what exactly compelled the Taliban to attack a girl who isn’t even old enough drive?

For those not aware, the Swat Valley region in Pakistan lies in the northern region of the country and is known for its beautiful natural scenery. The region has recently been a source of conflict between the Pakistani government, military forces and the Taliban who are both struggling for power in the district with the latter holding most of the control in recent years.

Under the rule of the Taliban, Yousafzai began to speak out against the oppressive regime which began to prohibit education for girls as early as 11 years old. She wrote a blog for BBC detailing the daily struggles many in the area faced. Over the years, Yousafzai increased her political activism and began to speak out against the Taliban’s beliefs more frequently. She was even awarded the National Youth Peace Prize in 2011. Yousafzai drew international fame for her outspoken nature, which many found impressive and courageous for a girl so young. But the new attention brought negative implications when the Taliban itself began to notice and condemn the “western views” Yousafzai was preaching. The Taliban

started to threaten the young girl and her family.

Yet Yousafzai persevered and did not let the threats faze her. Unfortunately, this past October, the Taliban made good on its promise and shot Yousafzai on her way home from school. The young activist survived and was eventually flown to the United Kingdom where she is currently making a full recovery.

But Yousafzai’s situation poses a greater problem for women in the country. Though the Taliban thankfully did not kill the young girl, the instillment of fear created in the region may prove to be a greater tool for the Taliban than expected. Other women

who may want to speak out alongside Yousafzai may become silent in fear that they or their families may be attacked as well. The Taliban claim that it did not attack Yousafzai for her campaign in favor of women’s education, but rather for her opposition of its goal. The attack, however, may have been enough to keep women from rising up and demanding equality. Unfortunately for progress to occur, international pressure towards Pakistan is not going to be sufficient enough to help the women. Women from within Pakistan will need to rise before they begin to see a difference; even if it is in the face of danger, it is only then that any real change occur. ▢



AND THE WINNER IS...

by Brandon Scott

lead which I felt would remain secure. However, nobody anticipated such a lackadaisical performance by the President Obama in the first debate that ceded all the momentum to Gov. Romney.

Currently, Gov. Romney holds a one percent lead over President Obama in the RCP national average. While the popular vote is important, it is the Electoral College that determines the election. If the election were held today, the states that could be considered locks for each candidate would result in an electoral count of 243 for Obama and 206 for Romney. The winner must achieve an electoral count of 270. There are currently eight toss-up states where polls indicate a lead of less than 2.5 percent for either candidate. These states are Florida, Virginia, Ohio, New Hampshire, Wisconsin, Iowa and Colorado. The way I'm going to predict these states is by using the current RCP average for each. The one exception will be Colorado, which is currently tied.

I predict the state of Florida to be won by Gov. Romney. In the state Gov. Romney currently holds a 1.8 percent lead over Obama in the RCP average. In a state where the state government is dominated by Republicans, and Gov. Romney has a lead in the polls, I am comfortable in predicting that Gov. Romney will the state. This will give Gov. Romney 29 electoral votes, increasing his total to 235. I also predict that Gov. Romney will win the state of Virginia. The RCP average for Virginia has Gov. Romney leading Obama by 1.2 percent. In a state that is discontented by the lack of change promised by Obama in the 2008 election, combined with the fact that President Bush won Virginia by over 8 percent in both 2000 and 2004, I give the edge to Gov. Romney. Winning the state of Virginia will give Gov. Romney 248 electoral votes to Obama's 243. It is interesting to note that a lot of electoral observers believe Virginia may be one of the states in which the result is greatly influenced by third-party candidates.

I predict that the state of Wisconsin will be won by President Obama. He currently holds a 2.3 percent lead according to the RCP average, and in a state that has been blue the last three elections, combined with President Obama winning the state by almost 14 percent in 2008, I'm led to believe that President Obama will

The 2012 Presidential election will be one for the ages. After months of campaigning, both party conventions and three debates, the race for president is closer than ever. Utilizing Realclearpolitics.com (RCP) average poll numbers, which combine several polls in order to close the margin of error as well as the sites interactive electoral map, I am going to predict the winner of the election. When I wrote an article a couple of weeks ago depicting the poll numbers before the debates, Obama had a commanding lead; a

prevail in Wisconsin. Winning Wisconsin will increase President Obama's electoral count to 253. Next I predict the state of Iowa to be won by President Obama. Since the 2008 primaries, President Obama has always done well including an almost 10 percent win in the 2008 general election. This shows that President Obama is well liked in Iowa; this fact combined with Obama leading Romney by 2.3 percnet in the state's RCP average has me predicting President Obama to win the state. This increases Obama's total electoral count to 259. The next state I predict is the state of Colorado. Colorado is a statistical dead heat according to the RCP average. Colorado has become a state that is increasingly more socially liberal; this fact, along with my belief that Colorado Libertarian Gary Johnson will take votes away from Gov. Romney, has me giving President Obama the edge in the state of Colorado. This will result in President Obama's electoral count being 268, which is two short of the 270 needed.

Now is where it gets interesting. The two states I have yet to predict are Ohio and New Hampshire. The most interesting fact here is that no GOP candidate has ever won the election without winning the state of Ohio. This streak does not look like it will be broken this year. According to my predictions, it is impossible for Gov. Romney to win the election without carrying Ohio. It is still even possible that, if Gov. Romney wins

Ohio, he could still lose the election. So in order to win the election, Gov. Romney needs to win both New Hampshire and Ohio. Unfortunately for Gov. Romney, I predict that President Obama will win both Ohio and New Hampshire. Not only does the president hold a lead of 2.3 percent according to RCP average in Ohio, he has come out on top of eight of the 11 polls taken in the state since Oct. 17. The three that President Obama did not win were ties. I thus predict with confidence that the president will win Ohio, effectively winning the election by surpassing the 270 electoral count needed to win. My final electoral count is President Obama with 290 electoral votes and Gov. Romney with 248.

One quick note is that it will be interesting to see what, if any, impact Hurricane Sandy has on the elections.



Scott predicts Obama will retain his office.



Why We Should Respect Paul Ryan

by Blake Giragos



"People get the government they deserve" was a quote I first stumbled upon in my senior year high school government class. I initially regarded it as harsh, but now, entrenched in the 2012 election cycle and witnessing the reaction to the behavior of Rep. Paul Ryan, candidate for the vice presidency, my judgment might have been mistaken. The quote, originating from Alexis de Tocqueville, was found in Rick Shenkman's book, Just How Stupid Are We?: Facing the Truth about the American Voter, in which the George Mason professor examines how the citizenry has metaphorically dug its own pit. While written for the 2008 election cycle, it can be argued that little has fundamentally changed in our country in merely four years, with the attitude and figures presented by Shenkman remaining bold and polemic. This holds especially true since currently, both major political parties are scuffling over an increasingly small portion of the electorate while praising a civically uninterested nation as exceptional. It is with this background I turn, in a hopefully reasonable and honest manner, to the situation surrounding the US entitlement system, the American national body and Paul Ryan.

Based on various sources, which usually only offer petty differences in their forecasts, the status of the entitlement system around which Americans plan their lives is dire. Respectable groups, such as the Associated Press, project the depletion of the Social Security trust fund by 2033 as the imbalance between retirees and active workers becomes critically unstable. The situation is even worse for Medicare, which is expected by its own trustees to enter deficit spending by 2017 and be a bankrupt fund by 2024. These are non-partisan facts for a non-partisan issue which will affect the entire US population, particularly the parents of the Millennial Generation. In 2033, I will be forty-two and my parents entering their early seventies, a situation from which yours likely is not far off. With that, do not think this discussion is in the least bit irrelevant to you and your family's future. Furthermore, please do not think this discussion is not worth having because of the current trust deficit experienced between the philosophical camps

of politics; as a society we are in this boat together and have an interest in having the most earnest debate possible. That debate is vital. I hope this piece will contribute to that thorough debate and, importantly, sincerely caution against hastily embracing the easiest course of action.

I state the above because, in light of the appropriately demoralizing state of US entitlement policy, the general response to anything resembling appropriate action has been horrifying. It is here I reintroduce Paul Ryan, whose both person and entitlement reform proposals, which deal with a matter avoided by both major parties has been met with extreme scrutiny, perhaps even demagoguery. There exists so much poisonous data on the Ryan Plan that I shall mention only the most essential and reputable to both preserve time and sanity, as well as give a general picture of the situation. Per the OMB, Social Security has grown 36.8 percent (or \$773 billion) since 2002; Medicare, the real beast, has grown 67.7 percent (or \$478 billion) during the same time. Because of the aging US population, these numbers will continue to balloon evermore. Both are categorized as mandatory spending, which means they automatically expand under the purviews of legislation without renewed authorization. Unless action is taken, this shortsighted formula will simply continue. Depending on whom you ask, Ryan's answer could be either the solution or the apocalypse, but entering that bloodbath is neither helpful nor entirely relevant. What should instead be highlighted is Ryan's commendable and uncommon objective of touching the third rail of politics, which I ask left-leaning readers entertain even momentarily as honest, that at

least confronting the problems society would rather ignore. Coming from someone who endorses fiscal conservatism as a goal, the straight truth is that Ryan's plan would not end guaranteed entitlements for those who deserve them (a claim awarded the 2011 "Lie of the Year" distinction by Florida's own PolitiFact.com), but might not certainly save it either. The results, with so many variables, would be unknown. But the lesson is this, as Einstein once said so well "that doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results defines insanity. Those who venture something thorough should be admired, and if not at least respected."

There are many partisan arguments I could have included here but chose not to; I would rather prompt discussion. And although when that necessary discussion does takes place it will be based off of partisan philosophical views, such as those on the selfishness of man, the corruptibility of government or the possibility of a grand bargain (all of which are worthy topics), the metaphorical call to arms ought to be bipartisan and inclusive so that ultimately the best ideas may win out. Exploring entitlement program solutions is a worthwhile endeavor, one in which I hope someone may be involved without defaming others or thinking them malevolent because their methods are different. Notice that the best does not inherently mean the easiest or most popular. In fact, it may mean the opposite. So you could put off such a difficult thought as entitlement reform for another day, but if you feel tempted, remember how the saying goes: people get the government they deserve.





# The Euro Crisis: A Win-Win?

by Melissa-Melody Marcan

The euro crisis has remained a popular topic of conversation among many politically interested college students. However, details about the Euro itself are frequently omitted. In fact, many are surprised to hear that the euro’s exchange rate has remained exceptionally stable since the start of the crisis in 2010. So, the big question is: Why?

According to a commentary by Dr. Stephen Silvia, an associate professor at the American University’s School of International Service, has identified three major reasons for the euro’s remarkably stable exchange rate. First, the U.S.’s monetary policy has had a tremendous effect on the euro’s stability. From November 2010 to June 2011, the U.S. implemented its second round of quantitative easing, which led to a 19 percent increase in the euro-dollar exchange rate, essentially boosting to 1.48. A subsequent loosening of European monetary policy, among others, depreciated the euro again. However, the U.S. Federal Reserve Board’s recent announcement of implementing a third round of quantitative easing boosted the euro-dollar exchange rate once again to 1.30. Dr. Silvia

further highlights the fact that “[t]he euro-dollar exchange rate exhibited far bigger swings in the ten years before the euro crisis (e.g., two-year movements exceeding 30 percent).” Hence, one would not be able to tell that there has been a euro crisis at all by simply looking at the euro-dollar exchange rate.

Second, all of the imbalances that led to the crisis in the first place are contained within the single currency area, which is new compared to any other sovereign debt crisis in the past. This means that one euro-country’s export is another euro-country’s import. Furthermore, the surpluses of many northern euro-zone states compensate for the deficit of many southern euro-zone states, at least externally. Consequently, the euro-zone’s trade with external trading partners has remained stable. Dr. Silvia further emphasizes, “unlike in previous sovereign debt crises, there has been no downward pressure on the euro resulting from excess accumulation of euros in

external markets, or a sudden need to sell large quantities of euros to pay short-term loans from abroad.”

Third, Dr. Silvia predicts that the euro crisis’s effect on the euro will be positive no matter what the outcome will be. If the euro-member countries will be able to eventually introduce effective reforms, the euro’s value will inevitably increase. However, if they fail to do so and countries decide to leave the euro-zone, a smaller euro-zone would be in place with the more stable economies remaining. “The improved fundamentals and superior structure of a smaller, fitter euro area would, if anything, drive up the value of the euro vis-à-vis the dollar,” concluded Dr. Silvia.

This is certainly great news for citizens of the euro-zone looking to invest across the Atlantic, but vice versa the future doesn’t look as promising. So, whether the euro-zone members get their act together or not, it looks like a win-win situation for the euro’s value either way. ■

# Ghana Crack Down on China

by Ama Gyimah

China, being the largest consumer in the world, has stopped at nothing to gain resources, and China’s case with Ghana is no exception.

Ghana, the second largest country in Africa to obtain gold, has turned a blind eye to the illegal mining that is taking place on its soil by the Chinese. Ghana has just recently started to crackdown on the illegal mining by detaining Chinese miners (last month 38 Chinese miners were deported), but not without controversy.

On Oct.15 2012, it was reported that a 16-year-old

Chinese miner was shot to death within a security force operation within the gold-rich Ashanti region. 100 Chinese nationals were also arrested during this security force operation against illegal mining. China has called for a full investigation on the matter. Ghana’s Deputy Foreign Minister Chris Kpodo has met with the Chinese ambassador and has also allowed him to communicate with the detainees. Chinese ambassador Gong Jianzhong went as far as to describe the Chinese detainees as victims. Kpodo has claimed that the government is pulling a

full on investigation on the case. Ghana officials have also released that illegal mining is very dangerous because it causes death and negatively affects the economy.

From Globe and Mail: Richard Kofi Afenu, sectoral policy and planning manager at Ghana’s Mineral Commission, said, “Most of these Chinese illegal miners are heavily armed and shoot at anyone that gets near them. In this case, they opened fire when police tried to arrest them.” His remark was referring to the raid that left the Chinese boy dead. “It is not as though police wanted to shoot them,” he said.

China is Africa’s greatest trading partner. Some see China as a catalyst in the development aspect of Africa as a whole. Others see China as a new colonial power sucking out the resources of Africa illegally by making violations to local laws for its own gain. China also makes sure to take advantage of corrupt leaders within Africa, which luckily is not the case for Ghana.

So what can Africa as a whole learn from past events? African states need to take a stand on negotiating on their own terms. In this case, the international community will also back up Africa in these approved negotiations. After all, it is their land in which resources are being exported from.

# What If Terrorism Was Different From What We Think It Is?

by Adelina Vasileva

In this year’s February Gallup poll, 74 percent of the participants said that terrorism and national security was “extremely/very important” in influencing their vote for president. This percentage is even higher than the percentage of participants that felt the same way about taxes, immigration, the gap between the rich and the poor and social issues like abortion and gay marriage. Terrorism and national security will not have as much influence on the election as the economy or unemployment, but it is pretty high on the voters’ list of priorities. After watching the third presidential debate, it is interesting to see that both candidates have a similar general strategy. President Obama and Gov. Romney both plan to first go after the aggressors and then work on the socioeconomic development of the area. In their defense, this has been the government’s standard approach when dealing with terrorism. However, the issue at hand is whether or not this standard approach is effective. With this question in mind, I want to survey two alternative approaches to terrorism that use a creative framework in order to come up with asymmetric solutions. The two authors of these approaches have different career and personal backgrounds, giving terrorism their own spin. Jason McCue is lawyer from the United Kingdom that specializes in domestic and international class action. McCue also works with private lawsuits on behalf of victims of terror and rogue regimes and individuals. He was lead counsel in the first ever civil case against the members of a terrorist organization in the Breslin & Ors v. McKenna & Ors. The case involved the families of the victims of the 1998 Omagh bombing suing the Real Irish Republican Army (RIRA). Loretta Napoleoni is an Italian born economist that has a PhD in economics and masters degrees in international relations, philosophy and terrorism from universities like John Hopkins and the London School of Economics. She writes for The Guardian, Le Monde and El Pais, and is a media commentator for BBC, CNN and Sky.

## If terrorism was a brand...

Jason McCue believes that perception shapes the way people respond to issues. He argues that if individuals have an alternative view of problems, like for example terrorism, this should lead to asymmetric responses. His perception of terrorism is quite creative and it constructs terrorism as a brand much like Coca Cola and Pepsi. This new way of looking at terrorism makes it much more evident that it is a flawed product; it harms the consumer and his

loved ones. In some scenarios, terrorism causes death and is dangerous for a large part of society. Most importantly, terrorism does not work as advertised; for example terrorism in the 1980s did not even come close to bringing down capitalism. There are two ways in which a flawed brand like terrorism could be destroyed: first diminishing its market, and second, as McCue calls it, “attacking the brand myth.” Both strategies are targeted at the consumers of terrorism and its constituency rather than its CEOs and CFOs. Diminishing the market is about showing that our brand, democracy, is better, and not only has to show consumers its values, but also has to demonstrate them through its actions. This is the job of democratic governments and their civil societies. Bringing down the brand itself is more difficult since democracy is its prime competitor, and it will be quite hard for the consumers of terrorism to see it as a trustworthy source of information. The only people that the terrorist constituency is likely to believe knocking down the product are the victims of terrorism; they are the ones that can testify on the flaws of the product and have their scars, dead families and destroyed lives for proof. The problem is

that society does not take care of the victims, and governments have a reactionary mentality in which they immediately go after the aggressors. The key in fighting terrorism is having a proactive approach and seeking asymmetrical solutions. Democracies have to take terrorism as seriously as terrorists take themselves. They have to almost see it in black and white terms and put everything they have into the fight. One of the asymmetric solutions that McCue suggests is something that he has had great experience in. McCue has brought civil action against terrorism, or as he calls it, “lawfare.” An example of such “lawfare” is the lawsuit against the RIRA with regards to the Omagh bombing. For McCue, this approach works not only because it brings justice where it has been absent, but also because it turns terrorists from underdogs to aggressors. This change is detrimental because a great amount of terrorist recruiting power lays in their “underdogs against imperialism” narrative.

## If terrorism was a business...

Loretta Napoleoni was one of the few people to gain the trust of the Red Brigades and to have the privilege of listening to their

Left Above: Killturnip, Flickr

Left Below: SkyTruth, Flickr via Google Maps



stories. While interviewing the head of the Red Brigades, Mario Moretti, it occurred to her why most members avoided talking about ideology and politics; they only had a vague idea of these things because they are more like very expensive businesses. They are in constant need of money and are constantly looking for new ways to find it. Contrary to popular belief, the lives of terrorists are not ruled by ideology and religion, but by economics. In her investigation of the economics of terrorist businesses, Napoleoni realized that there is an international economic system created by terrorist and criminal organizations which runs parallel to our own. It has been developing in the same manner as our own international economy and it's going through the same three stages: state sponsorship, privatization and globalization. The Contras in Nicaragua during the Cold War

are a great example of the stage of state sponsorship in terrorism. They were created by the CIA through legal Congress funding but were also illegally funded by the Reagan administration through operations like the Iran-Contra Affair which established the trend of the terrorist economies being funded by legal and illegal activities. In the 1970s and 1980s, some terrorist groups successfully separated themselves from the state and privatized, much like the IRA which controlled the North Irish private transportation system. The third stage is the most life changing because it allows terrorist businesses to connect with each other and start doing business with criminal organizations as well. Al-Qaeda is one of the children of this stage because it not only acquires funding across borders, but it also has the ability to carry out its “business” across different continents.

*Napoleoni has calculated that the terrorist/ criminal economy prior to the terrorist attacks of 9/11 was worth close to \$1.5 trillion. Prior to the Patriot Act, the majority of this money was part of the American economy because U.S. dollars were the terrorists' currency of choice. Also because their laundering operations took place there. In a way, the United States was facilitating terrorism through its economy.*

This all changed with the Patriot Act which allowed the government to monitor all U.S. dollar transactions within and outside the United States. This temporarily hurt terrorist businesses, but they were fast to adapt to the changing situation. In about six months, they had switched all their activity to a new currency. The euro became their currency of choice and Europe the new money laundering center. Unfortunately, no PatriotAct- like legislature has been introduced in Europe to prevent terrorist economic activity. The relationship between people's everyday lives as citizens and the world of terrorism and crime is astonishing.

In the end, it is not about what perception of terrorism is right or wrong, but the realization of its complexity. It is constantly changing and adapting to the world, and so should the approaches for defeating it. ▢

# A Land of Opportunity: The United States & Higher Education

By Frances Chapman

Throughout the existence of America’s social contract, public funds have been used for the advancement of higher education for millions of individuals. With congressional legislation, universities have had the ability to become established through acts such as the Morrill Land Grant Acts. They have also been able to assist Americans in affording their new opportunities through legislation such as the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (The G.I. Bill) or the Higher Education Act of 1965.

In 2011, the United States Census Bureau estimated that 20 million students would be enrolled in American colleges and universities in the fall. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, “The number of these college-educated workers has increased almost every year. Over the 1992 to 2009 period, the number of college-educated workers increased from 27 million to 44 million. In contrast, the number of employed people with only a high school diploma or without a high school diploma has remained steady or decreased.” Furthermore, the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics also notes that college-educated Americans were recorded to earn 1.8 times more than those with only a high school diploma. Although Americans earning a higher education have more success in obtaining a secure occupation, throughout the dialogue of the recent presidential election it has become more apparent that attending a college or university is financially difficult for many Americans. Not only has finding a job after obtaining a higher education become difficult for numerous college graduates, but according to USA Today, collectively the “nationwide tuition debt is now closing in on \$1 trillion.” With the clear economic hardship that students can incur over many years, both President Obama and Gov. Romney have stressed the need to alleviate the situation.

Throughout President Obama’s first term, multiple pieces of legislation under his guidance have been enacted to assist students in paying for higher education. For instance, President Obama has expanded the maximum amount of money received through Pell Grants for each American to \$5,365 for the 2012 to 2013 year, and has allowed an expansion of 50 percent more students to receive the grant, according to <http://www.whitehouse.gov>. In order to address rising costs of interest rates on loans, President Obama has advocated for capping the rates. Also with the “Pay as You Earn” program, 1.6 million students have taken advantage of the option to pay a maximum of 10 percent on their student loans, according to the White House website. Furthermore, he has also promoted a reduction of interest rates on college loans, and according to the website, “With

President Obama’s leadership, rates on new subsidized Stafford loans remained at 3.4 percent instead of doubling to 6.8 percent this past summer.” According to the official Obama campaign website, President Obama has also expanded the post-9/11 G.I. Bill, allowing more than 800,000 veterans to obtain an education. The Obama campaign has continued to make college affordability a priority and is continuing to advocate for similar policies.

Gov. Romney has also discussed the need to improve the lives of American students struggling to meet the expense of tuition. According to his official campaign website, Gov. Romney criticizes the “flood of federal dollars driving up tuition” and hopes to “strengthen and simplify the financial aid system, welcome private sector participation instead of pushing it away, and replace burdensome regulation with innovation and competition.” During Gov. Romney’s term in Massachusetts, he championed a “sweeping plan to overhaul the state’s public college system to cut waste, reduce costs and boost

efficiency,” according to the Huffington Post. However, the news organization also cites that Gov. Romney was only able to significantly impact the educational system through his creation of a merit scholarship for successful high school students. This scholarship, the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship, assisted over 18,000 students in the 2011 to 2012 academic year in obtaining four years of paid tuition to any Massachusetts state college or university with amounts ranging from \$700 to \$1,700.

Regardless of the candidate, it is evident that public funds will still play a role in shaping the affordability and access of public education. As the nation celebrates 150 years of The Morrill-Land Grant Acts, eminent legislation can impact the education of future American students for decades to come. ▢



# The Political Voice



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