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current:borders

CURRENT





Striking Parallels: China is to Taiwan as Russia is to Ukraine

written as of February 6, 2022

by Sofia Branco

The growing conflict in China and Taiwan, in comparison to that in Russia and Ukraine, has captured worldwide attention in recent months and weeks. With ambiguous military presence established by both China and Russia, speculations of planned invasions have risen into perspective. President Biden along with US military intelligence has established the possible actions the US might pursue in case of further developments. As global superpowers, China and Russia have asserted themselves over Taiwan and Ukraine, utilizing their warplanes, and surpluses of troops to establish dominance through military power. Both countries are hungry for expansion and view the weaker sovereignties of Taiwan and Ukraine as outlets that can be utilized to serve their interests ranging from political, economic, and geographical. China and Russia's desired global influence is confronted by the smaller nations who stand in their way. Firstly, China believes that Taiwan is a part of the "One China," while Russia recognizes Ukraine as its own nation, however, its belief that Ukraine and Russia should join together is swiftly on the rise. With the deeply rooted history between each pair of nations, an insight into the outcomes of these conflicts reveals itself. China and Russia will not invade Taiwan and Ukraine because of the threat imposed by the United States and their unrealistic tendency for desired expansion in these sovereignties. The history of these nations' relations must be observed to assess the brewing conflicts so the

“Both countries are hungry for expansion and view the weaker sovereignties of Taiwan and Ukraine as outlets that can be utilized to serve their interests ranging from political, economic, and geographical.”

United States can remain an overarching watchdog to China and Russia.

The conflict between China and Taiwan lies within China's belief that Taiwan is a part of China. Since the 1949 Civil War, Taiwan has instituted itself as the Republic of China, distinguished from the mainland People's Republic of China.¹ The inherent conflict of both believing they are 'the China' not only conveys the ongoing controversy, but the technical war that these soverty's are still engaged in. A series of warplanes have flown into Taiwan's "air defense buffer zone"² and "air and naval exercises [have been conducted] targeting the island."³ Predictions regarding a full-scale invasion

range from three years into the future, a decade, or absolutely never. The truth of the matter is that China lacks the capabilities to launch a full-scale invasion and achieve their "One China" goal. Moreover, China knows the political, economic, and even nuclear retribution they would face from the rest of the world, especially the US, if they were to launch an invasion. The ongoing paradoxical dispute between China and Taiwan has never been disturbed, and now with the stance Biden has taken, to defend Taiwan, surely a full scale invasion of Taiwan is unlikely to occur.

On the other hand, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine lies within Russia's desire for power to expand the buffer between NATO, (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and the European Union. As a former member of the Soviet Union (similar to Taiwan, a part of China), in most recent history, Russia annexed Crimea, a part of Ukraine, as a strategy to prevent them from becoming more allied with the West. Ukraine's relationship with Russia runs deep with cultural, economic, and political controversies. The threat that Putin has established on Ukraine is eerily similar to the "active measures"⁴ that Soviet leaders have employed in the past. These active measures include "military intimidation and non-kinetic, psychological, covert and overt intelligence and disruptive operations."⁵ Putin's establishment of over 175,000 troops along the border certainly supports this theory of proposed "active measures"⁶ to make a statement of power, or perhaps in spite of the rising NATO support in Ukraine.

The US has promised to defend both Taiwan and Ukraine from their neighboring superpowers in the case of which intervention becomes necessary.⁷ It appears that military intimidation reflects China and Russia's bold actions of initiation in the past, all of which were not followed through. Taiwan and Ukraine are left in rising distress at this time of uncertainty for the future of China and Russia's pursuits with hollowed ambitions. As well as being eerily similar, the fate of these conflicts are dependent upon each other because if the United States allows for Russia to pursue military action, then China will be emboldened to seize authority over Taiwan without repercussions of backlash from the U.S. As long as the United States asserts their allegiance to the inferior powers and remains in their position of power, China and Russia will not have the courage to fully pursue the recent threats they have propounded.





Tigray: A Genocide in the Making

By Helen Cui

Ethiopia has been in conflict.

At its core sit two key stakeholders: Prime Minister and Nobel Laureate Abiy Ahmed and the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF). The latter dominated the Ethiopian government before Abiy came into power. Tensions between Abiy and the TPLF grew as he purged Tigrayan officials and as Tigrayans refused to join Abiy's new political party, the Prosperity Party. More than a year ago, these issues came to a head when Tigrayans went forward with regional elections in spite of Abiy's postponement due to COVID-19. Due to this, Ethiopian lawmakers cut funding for the region, leading TPLF forces to preemptively strike a federal military base. While previously the TPLF could be argued to be a political group, it was clear after the strike that they intended on a more radical stance. Feeling threatened by the uprising, Abiy began a military offensive that has resulted in the steady flow of majority Tigrayan refugees into neighboring countries.

What has stood stark in Tigray are the human rights violations committed throughout the war. With a new six month state of emergency in the capital, crimes perpetrated by the Ethiopian government may worsen.¹ The UN has released a report from a joint investigation with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission on November 3rd.² Spearheaded by Daniel Bekele, formerly a part of Human Rights Watch, he alleges door to door executions, mass rape and torture, both based on ethnicity, and attributes crimes to both sides of the war. However, the impartiality of the report has been questioned already, as Tigrayan rebel leadership remain skeptical of the Ethiopian government's involvement in its creation. Others have also raised flags around the report, pointing to the deportation of main UN investigators without explanation in Septem-

ber. However, the UN is attempting to address such discrepancies, as its main human rights body has voted to create another team of experts to further scrutinize the war in Ethiopia.

The US has pressed sanctions against the country, but Ethiopia has long been an extremely important and strategic ally. Considering its position on the Horn of Africa, it is unsurprising that the US has been extremely cautious to make a strong outright condemnation.³ Although, the Biden administration has taken significant action including deploying visa restrictions against officials, launching a sanctions regime, and terminating Ethiopia's special trade status. While Ethiopia is clearly not escaping unscathed, it does not seem that these actions have deterred any of Ethiopia's actions. Arguably, Biden has done everything short of officially declaring the turmoil in Ethiopia as a genocide, stating that Ethiopia has committed, "gross violations of internationally recognized human rights."⁴

But, do the events in Ethiopia constitute a genocide? Genocide is defined as the systematic elimination of a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group by another. The Ethiopian government, vehemently rejects any attempts to assert that the events in Ethiopia are a genocide. Yet, it is almost global consensus that at the very least there is government-perpetrated ethnic cleansing, the systematic elimination of an ethnicity, occurring. Now, this is not to excuse the TPLF's actions, there have been atrocities committed on both sides. Nevertheless, the hallmarks of genocide are distinctly present.

Tigrayans have fled en masse from Ethiopia and many now reside mainly in camps dotted around the border with Sudan. From the accounts of many refugees, Amnesty International reports appalling conditions in these prisons with frequent beatings, torture,

insults, and denial of food and medicine. Arbitrary detention is also commonplace. The Ethiopian government has interned more than 30,000 ethnic Tigrayans in Addis Ababa. It seems as though detainment itself is a death sentence.⁵

"The Ethiopian government has interned more than 30,000 ethnic Tigrayans in Addis Ababa."

Language has been weaponized. Abiy himself has stated, "We will bury this enemy with our blood and bones and make the glory of Ethiopia high again."⁶ While this phrasing is obviously to promote the cause against the Tigrayans, the act of describing them as the 'enemy' and to rid them to 'make the glory of Ethiopia high again' promotes a troubling parallel between killing and proving a national identity. Inflammatory speech employed on social media, as well, has been alarming. Tigrayans have been called, "cancer", "weeds", "rats", and "terrorists."⁷ The consequences of this shift in public opinion create a dire situation for Tigrayan civilians. Conditions only worsened for Tigrayans after Abiy publicly implored citizens to take arms against these rebels.⁸

Clearly, genocide is not implausible for Abiy's Ethiopia.

Though, a question lurks for Western countries: what do we do, if anything?

As the UN voted to begin a new monitor and report, mentioned earlier, Zenebe Kebede Korcho, the Ethiopian Ambassador in Geneva had some choice words: "Multilateralism, after all these years, is once again being hijacked by a neocolonialist mentality. Ethiopia is being targeted and singled out at the Human Rights Council for defending a democratically elected government."⁹ While these remarks are inaccurate, on a continent where Western action has led directly to corruption and exploitation, they're quite inflammatory.

The history of the UN, the US, and Europe in general on the continent of Africa is perilous. After all, genocide and internal strife within independent African states are chiefly attributed to European colonization. And some may argue, rightly so. The "divide and conquer" strategy used by colonizer states and the purposeful stoking of ethnic tensions are foundational for modern day African conflicts. Despite Ethiopia not having technically been colonized, it persists that ethnic identities were purposefully politicized during the era of colonization in general.

Weapons sales should also be examined. The violence that is on the ground in Ethiopia cannot be perpetrated without the proper tools. It is no surprise that the US, France and Germany are among the top five countries that have sold arms to Ethiopia.¹⁰ There

are grounds to make an argument that even indirectly, Western influence should be held somewhat responsible.

Focusing upon those statistics misses an obvious sentiment though. The simple belief that we should not be bystanders in a crime against humanity is far more applicable. During the Rwandan genocide in 1994, the US, along with the UN, removed their citizens and left the country to systematically murder those who were of Tutsi ethnicity. An entire world watched a country implode with the slaughter of their own citizens. So far the US has enforced some key restrictions on Ethiopia but we have obviously stopped short of military action. It almost feels as though nothing was learned from '94. Ethiopia is not likely to change its course and the US is not likely to employ troops. But, I would like to make a personal plea here.

I think it's difficult to encapsulate what a crime against humanity looks like. You always feel as though you can fathom what it means to see one occur. Even now, I am talking about it theoretically. We make conjectures upon stories written in history textbooks or newspapers from people you would never meet in real life. The ease of that separation is truly a privilege, yet it dilutes that human trait we value so much: empathy.

While in South Africa, I did not realize I had benefited from that distance until I learned about Tigray. I met students who did not know where their parents and families were, much less if they were alive. They did not know where they would be staying and for how long. And they all still had to go to school.

I ask you to consider the words, "never again."

Do we mean never again for everybody, or do we mean never again to only our own proximity.

Ethiopia is a strategic country for the US; is the hesitance we have to act based upon our allyship? Is it because we know that whatever occurs in Ethiopia affects the US very little? Is the minority of Ethiopians in our country too small for us to care?

As the events in Ethiopia continue, the US's actions need to be examined with a critical and attentive eye lest we be complicit in another genocide on the continent without consequence.

opinions





Reversing the Effects of China's One-Child Policy

by Angie Feng

Following China's baby boom under the leadership of Chairman Mao during the Great Leap Forward, which encouraged greater numbers of births to form a larger workforce and stronger country, China created the one-child policy of 1979. This disastrous legislation limited couples to one birth and created countless social issues, such as female infanticide, a labor shortage, skewed birth ratios between genders, and an overall increase in sexism. As a result, despite its scant repeal of the regulation in 2015 in which the one birth limit was expanded to two, its effects remain vastly prevalent today as the country continues to pass new legislation to reverse the damages.

While the one-child policy successfully decreased the rapidly-growing population of China, it created a hostile environment upholding a tolerance of sexism and gender imbalance throughout the nation. In a 2000 census, the country was found to have "nearly 19 million boys more than girls in the 0-15 age group."¹ Mothers hoped for male babies as they would grow up to receive certain privileges given to them because of their gender. Men not only had higher rates of employment, but also were given larger salaries and ultimately a significant advantage to a more stable future and greater economic prosperity. With strict limitations on births, women were continuously devalued and discriminated against as families wished for male children to carry on the family name and lineage and create wealth for their family.

Furthermore, the one-child policy resulted in a diminished younger generation of China and continues to depress already rapidly declining birth rates today. In 2020, the nation faced a record-breaking low fertility rate of 1.3 children per woman, which was once a high 2.7.² As this number continues to decline, the youth population consequently decreases. With a reduced population of children comes many consequences as elders are provided with less support and career positions become unfulfilled as current workers retire and a lack of younger citizens fail to fill their spots.

"With strict limitations on births, women were continuously devalued and discriminated against as families wished for male children to carry on the family name and lineage and create wealth for their family."

As a result, China has made several efforts to mitigate and prevent these increasingly prevalent consequences. In 2015, the one-child policy was expanded to the two-child policy. While this created a two-year period of instantaneous growth, it proved wholly ineffective as families remained reluctant to have more children after the extensive societal changes caused by the era of the one-child policy. In May 2021, President Xi Jinping followed up on his previous legislation with an almost identical policy in which the permitted number of births per family was increased to three.³ On its own, this reform makes no significant difference to increasing China's ever-declining birth rate. While

further relaxing the birth policy certainly allows for greater opportunity, the majority of citizens remain unwilling to accept the government's optimization of the new rule. Just as couples were unenthusiastic when the one-child limit eased off to two, the fundamental issue of both policy changes stays the same, "living costs are too high and life pressures are too huge."⁴ Without internal reforms to the systems previously established to uphold the one-child policy, it is impossible for the country to possibly adapt to a new wave of directly contradictory values. The one-child policy created permanent changes cultivating a society more favorable and accustomed to small families, causing mere expansions to the original policy to render ineffective.

One of the main issues preventing the hopeful rise in fertility rates is the high expense of living and childcare. Rising education costs deter couples from producing more children as parents are less willing to spread income among several children when an only child could benefit greatly from a total investment of time, energy, money, and attention.⁵ Through the Gaokao, a rigorous examination of all students to determine college placements, competition in education has always been incredibly high in China. The one-child policy fueled this competition as parents became more

invested in the future of their child, which would later on become a source of support for them after retirement.⁶ Therefore, private education and tutoring have become extremely popular as parents try to improve the prospects of their children at a better education and college.

Chinese officials, having recognized such obstacles to their goals of increasing the national birth rate, enacted restrictions on private education in recent weeks. The legislation consisted of a ban on for-profit tutoring, guidelines for afterschool programs, the establishment of an office overseeing private tutoring, and restrictions on homework loads.⁷ The decision occurring almost overnight with barely any public debate or discussion came as a shock to citizens. In just one hour, 16 billion dollars in market value was lost by three major Chinese education companies,⁸ of which had previously accumulated millions of dollars through countless services designed to aid students in their studies. Without private education, which plays a crucial role in accommodating the goals of academically strong, passionate, or slow students, accessibility to educational opportunities is much more balanced between the wealthy or middle-class families and the many who suffer from poverty. However, many such companies have just moved their operations "un-





derground” in efforts to evade the ban.⁹ This could compromise the policy’s efficacy and render it useless. Additionally, students and parents likewise may now be relieved from many pressures and the intense stress correlated with competition in education. Most importantly, however, citizens may be more open to the idea of raising more children if education is less costly.

“Without internal reforms to the systems previously established to uphold the one-child policy, it is impossible for the country to possibly adapt to a new wave of directly contradictory values”

While recent measures would prevent further age imbalances within the population, many consequences of the one-child policy continue to worsen unresolved. Women’s rights remain overlooked as government officials promote new slogans of reducing abortion and potential prohibition, a major shift from the one-child policy era.¹⁰ With the implementation of a nationwide abortion restriction policy, China could face the paradoxical reality the United States currently confronts with contrasting interpretations and enactments of the same regulation. Women who were once coerced into abortions fear now being unable to have them. Furthermore, workforce competition has worsened the preexisting issue of gender discrimination in China. Many companies pay no mind to the challenges of working for pregnant women and employees such as Liu Tao who encountered complications with her pregnancy and was forced to take a sick leave, end up being fired or required to quit.¹¹ Additionally, pay and hire-ment rates for women remain much lower than those of their male counterparts. As women quit their jobs due to discriminatory work environments and diminished opportunity, China’s aging population cannot afford to lose more workers.

China’s one-child policy altered the nation’s society to unequally benefit smaller families, creating long-term impacts regarding the living expenses and education of children and parents as well as gender inequality across the country. The response towards the one-child policy overreached the goal it set out to achieve, and now the country struggles to reverse the

legislation’s effects as it faces an aging and declining population that has become disinclined to raise more children. The government approaches this issue with additional policies, most of which seek to directly repeal those previously passed during the one-child policy era. With this resolution comes public sentiments of doubt as citizens doubt the legislation’s efficacy as it fails to mitigate several long-term impacts and fear that a complete reversal from the one-child policy may be unattainable.





Peng Shuai: China's Silenced Star

By Mara Dubois

When star tennis player Peng Shuai accused a top government official of sexual assault on a Chinese social media site called Weibo, the government quickly responded by taking down the post. The Chinese government has become very good at censoring and controlling what the country's large population thinks and talks about (1).. They erased any trace of Shuai's post from the internet to prevent the country's citizens from talking about it. The post was removed from social media on November 2nd, and nobody heard from Shuai until weeks after that day. Her situation quickly gained attention across the world and organizations such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) responded to the incident. While most athletic organizations, including the IOC, did not respond in an urgent enough manner, the Women's Tennis Association used a more confrontational approach that put the necessary pressure on the Chinese government.

Because Peng Shuai is a three time Olympian, the International Olympic Committee decided to involve themselves in the tennis star's situation ahead of the winter games in Beijing. A spokesperson for the IOC said that "safeguarding the well-being of athletes is paramount to the IOC and the Olympic Movement" in reference to the committee's decision to respond to Peng Shuai's situation (2). The IOC held a video call with the athlete on November 21st. Although the official transcript of the call was not released, the organization said "[Peng Shuai] appeared to be relaxed" (3). Upon this description of Shuai, Chinese media quickly moved to spread and promote the news. The IOC held a second video call with Peng Shuai and, similarly to the first, did not release the transcript. Although the committee made an effort to address the situation by

connecting with Shuai, they failed to condemn the Chinese government in a manner that was necessary given the circumstances.

"Although the committee made an effort to address the situation by connecting with Shuai, they failed to condemn the Chinese government in a manner that was necessary given the circumstances."

In some ways, the IOC even reflected the Chinese government's way of handling Shuai's accusations. Throughout their statements, they made no mention of her sexual assault claims (4). They exclusively focused on Peng Shuai's wellbeing, and while that is an important concern, they ignored the root problem of her situation, the sexual assault accusations. While the IOC was instrumental in connecting with Shuai, they did not respond to the issue in an effective way, which would have required them to put significant pressure on the Chinese government.

On the other hand, the Women's Tennis Association responded to Peng Shuai's claims and disappearance with a more confrontational approach, which was a necessary measure given the circumstances. Despite the numerous attempts by the Chinese government and media to reassure the public of Shuai's wellbeing, such as publicizing the video calls and releasing an

email supposedly from Shuai, the WTA still questioned the accuracy of these accounts. The WTA expressed concern for both the well being of Peng Shuai, and a lack of investigation into her claims of sexual assault against former Chinese Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli. After the video calls were released, instead of accepting Peng Shuai's healthy appearance, the WTA said, "This video does not change our call for a full, fair and transparent investigation, without censorship, into her allegation of sexual assault, which is the issue that gave rise to our initial concern" (5). In response to the issue, the WTA not only called for action and expressed concerns, but they took substantial steps in pushing the Chinese government to conduct a fair investigation into the claims to ensure the freedom and safety of Peng Shuai. On December 1st, the WTA suspended all tournaments in China amid concerns for Peng Shuai. This was an example of taking effective and necessary actions given the circumstances, as it put economic and social pressure on China. Recently, Shuai denied making her claims of sexual assault, saying "there had been 'a lot of misunderstandings' about the post," and she had "always been very free" (6). Her new comment should not ease all concern, as it appears somewhat suspicious that it came over a month after the initial allegations, and after she disappeared from social media for weeks. The WTA continues to question her "ability to communicate without censorship or coercion" (7). Their response to her comments and the situation is one that others should emulate. Although measures such as the WTA's need to be taken, very few organizations are actually doing anything meaningful to help.

Other sports organizations, such as the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) which controls Men's Tennis, have voiced concern for Shuai but have not taken any direct or helpful actions on the issue (8). Individual athletes, such as Novak Djokovic, have also expressed worry for the star tennis player, but, similarly to the ATP, have done very little to actually help the situation.

"The WTA should not be the only one taking action, and other organizations should recognize that within an issue that so deeply involves the Chinese government there is surely corruption and concealment of information."

The WTA should not be the only one taking action, and other organizations should recognize that within an issue that so deeply involves the Chinese government there is surely corruption and concealment of

information. The Chinese government hiding their persecution of Uyghur Muslims, and their censoring of information regarding COVID-19, are two of many examples of their track record of misleading information. It is not acceptable to simply trust appearances, such as the video calls, and groups have to do more than simply voice concern. Not only should sports organizations be putting more pressure on the Chinese Government, but national governing bodies should also be responding to the issue. Representatives and members of countries such as the United States have pushed for the governments to challenge Chinese authorities by putting economic pressure on them. However, this brings up diplomacy issues that many governments are not willing to face, and as a result, little action has been taken. Overall, more communities and organizations need to be responding to the Peng Shuai issue, and need to look to the WTA as an example of a positive and effective response.

This is not the first time that China has controlled what its citizens can see on social media, and certainly not the first time that a person has suffered consequences for speaking negatively about a part of the government. Peng Shuai's specific case has gained such widespread attention because of how prominent a figure she is, and it is important to note that there are many other people who face similar challenges to her but are not getting any recognition. Peng Shuai, along with many others, deserve to be confident in their safety and freedom, and get the support needed to hold those responsible accountable.



Roe's Prospective Reversal: Mississippi Unveils the Fragility of Roe v. Wade and the Supreme Court

By Corban Shih



An ever-sensitive topic in today's political atmosphere, the subject of abortion is a mainstay of debate at family dinner gatherings. Championed by the left as fundamental to a woman's bodily autonomy, while deprecated by the right on moral grounds, abortion is seldom found as mutual understanding between political debaters. Recent events and legislation have challenged the precedents on abortion set by the Supreme Court of the United States in the past, dangerously trespassing upon women's rights in the United States.

By 1900, abortion in the United States was widely criminally prosecuted, with all 45 states holding legislation that restricted or banned abortion. Nowadays, with hundreds of thousands of abortions being performed every year across all 50 states, abortion policy on a state and federal level has evidently changed dramatically. However, unrest continues to be vocalized by those pushing for change, whether that be from pro-choice or pro-life thinkers. As such, nearly all disputes related to abortion in the United States can be traced to a single 1973 Supreme Court case: *Jane Roe v. Henry Wade*.

The Supreme Court's decision on *Roe v. Wade* remains a political watershed, as it prompted an ongoing debate over the ethics of abortion and the extent to which the right to abortion is protected by the Constitution. In 1969, a Texas woman in her early 20s discovered that she was pregnant with what would be her third child. While abortion was legal in Texas at the time, it was only to be undertaken for the purpose of saving the life of the mother.¹ The woman's representing attorneys filed a lawsuit against the state of Texas under the alias *Jane Roe*, with county district attorney Henry Wade defending the state. On June 19, 1970, a panel of district court judges declared the Texas law to be unconstitutional and in

violation of the 14th Amendment, which reads, "No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States."² The state of Texas appealed the decision to the Supreme Court in 1970, which again sided in favor of *Roe*, with a striking 7-2 majority.³

In the years since, abortion laws have been altered slightly in individual states, but nothing has come close to overturning the verdict of *Roe v. Wade*. However, in 2018, Mississippi lawmakers drafted a bill banning abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy, with a few very narrow exceptions. The law, however, never went into effect as it was immediately appealed to a higher court.⁴ This case, known as *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, looks eagerly to shift the precedent set by *Roe v. Wade*. With the case soon to be reviewed by the Supreme Court, the whole country is watching attentively to see how the future of abortion rights in the United States will play out.

Mississippi is far from alone in pushing back against *Roe v. Wade*. 12 other states have also enacted "abortion trigger laws," which would heavily restrict abortion as soon as *Roe* is weakened or overturned.⁵ Furthermore, there are nine states that held complete abortion bans prior to *Roe* in 1973, including Mississippi. The current state of affairs extends beyond the state of Mississippi, as a domino effect of abortion restrictions could possibly ensue if *Roe* is reversed.

To the pro-choice movement, *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* is a dangerous new precedent for the future of women's rights in the United States. Upholding the Mississippi law would expose the apparent fragile and contradictory nature of the Supreme Court, as previous court rulings have legalized abortion until 24

weeks of pregnancy. *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* seeks not only to overrule *Roe* but also the court's decision on *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*.⁶ This 1992 case decided that states could not enact a "substantial obstacle in the path of a woman seeking an abortion before the fetus attains viability."⁷ An unborn child is said to have fetal viability when it is able to survive outside the uterus, which is usually around 24 weeks.⁸ The Jackson Women's Health Organization has displayed evidence to multiple courts indicating that fetal viability is impossible at 15 weeks, and a federal appellate court decided that the state of Mississippi has failed to provide any medically backed evidence proving otherwise.⁹ Furthermore, not only does the 14th Amendment implicitly protect abortion rights as exercised in *Roe v. Wade*, but the Ninth Amendment does as well. Stating that, "The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people," the Ninth Amendment states that just because the right to abortion is not explicitly outlined by the constitution, it is not to be withheld from the people.¹⁰ As such, pro-choice thinkers argue on a multitude of grounds that the general populace should still maintain the right to abortion although it is not specifically outlined and protected by the Constitution.

"Upholding the Mississippi law would expose the apparent fragile and contradictory nature of the Supreme Court"

While the pro-choice movement certainly present a compelling case for the verdict of *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, pro-lifers have a biological basis on which to lean their arguments. The state of Mississippi continues to assert that by 15 weeks, the fetus has developed significantly, and that terminating the life of the unborn child is analogous to taking the life of a person outside the womb. By 15 weeks, unborn children are able to sense light, have unique fingerprints, and are able to have their sex determined by ultrasound.¹¹ They have been fully formed for about four weeks, and if the baby is female, her ovaries already contain over two million eggs.¹² To end the pregnancy of an unborn child at this stage of its development raises a number of ethical and moral concerns. Moreover, 15 weeks is well into the pregnancy's second trimester, and with that comes a number of health concerns for the mother when attempting an abortion. In a randomized trial conducted by the National Center for Biotechnology Information, it was found that women undergoing a second trimester abortion "reported significantly more pain and experienced more adverse events" when compared to those undergoing a first trimester abortion.¹³ Incomplete abortions are also significantly more common with second trimester abortions, with even more unpleasant effects.¹⁴ In re-

gards to previous Supreme Court rulings such as *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, it should be noted that the Supreme Court overturns its own decisions on a frequent basis, with more than one high court case being overruled per year. When discussing the possibility of *Roe v. Wade* being overturned, it is a logical fallacy for pro-choicers to base their argument in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* being set in stone, because as it turns out, it is not. Recency trumps all; *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* is just as easily overturned as *Roe*, and both can be overturned with a single decision if *Dobbs* prevails.

"While the pro-choice movement certainly present a compelling case for the verdict of Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization, pro-lifers have a biological basis on which to lean their arguments."

Conservative-dominated legislatures such as that of Mississippi continue to create laws restricting the rights outlined by the Supreme Court in 1973, but the question remains: are state governments dangerously encroaching upon fundamental women's rights in the United States? Or is Mississippi correct in ultimately protecting the lives of unborn children and the safety of the mothers? Pro-life thinkers present quite the riveting case, but abortion is ultimately protected under the Constitution, just as it was declared to be some 50 years ago.

"[...]are state governments dangerously encroaching upon fundamental women's rights in the United States? Or is Mississippi correct in ultimately protecting the lives of unborn children and the safety of the mothers?"

However, the American Justice System has been under fire following legal controversies of this day and age such as Kyle Rittenhouse's acquittal and continues to face decisions that could culminate in contradictory and hypocritical verdicts. The Supreme Court is volatile as ever, and with Amy Coney Barrett's recent appointment under Donald Trump, there is an unprecedented 6-3 conservative majority in the high court.



Conservatives Must Stop Glorifying Kyle Rittenhouse

By Alan Cai

With the heavy media sensalization of the Kyle Rittenhouse case, it is hard to avoid getting caught up in the storms of outrage or support over the outcome of his murder trial and of the shootings in Kenosha. However, much of the rhetoric discussed throughout political circles is often hyper-partisan, and ignores the key facts and morality of the case. Based on the facts and verdict of his court case, Kyle Rittenhouse was rightfully acquitted by the jury. However, the response to Kyle Rittenhouse's acquittal by conservatives has only led to violence and widespread glorification of his actions. It is irresponsible for conservatives to openly endorse Kyle Rittenhouse and his actions on August 25th, 2020.

The facts of the case are clear. On the night of August 25th, 2020, Kyle Rittenhouse, armed with an assault rifle and with a group of armed men, stood guard throughout the night around local businesses in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Prior to that fateful day, regional right-wing militias, boogaloo boys, and self-defense forces mobilized throughout social media boards and right wing media, all in the name of protecting private

property from rioters and looters. Protests had been sparked after the killing of George Floyd and other victims of police brutality in the southeastern port city of Kenosha, Wisconsin, just 40 miles south of Milwaukee, the state's largest city. The protests that occurred on August 25th were largely over the police killing of Jacob Blake, a local teenager who was shot multiple times by a White officer. For multiple days violent protests would rage across the city, bringing looting, rioting, and rampant crime with it. Whole city blocks would go up in flames and arsonists would attack local businesses with impunity. Notably, on the day of the shootings, outside of the Kenosha County Courthouse protesters would throw water bottles and shoot fireworks at local police and national guard stationed in the area. In response, law enforcement would use tear gas and crowd control measures against the protestors. Clashes would continue throughout the day, although by nighttime, most of the daytime protestors had gone home. Many of the remaining protestors were armed and acting rowdy. At the sametime, Kyle Rittenhouse was walking the streets of Kenosha with his assault

rifle close by. However, he was chased by a protester, 36-year-old Joseph Rosenbaum, who ran Kyle into a used car lot and threw a plastic bag at him. Kyle Rittenhouse would then proceed to shoot Joseph Rosenbaum. A much larger crowd then attempted to apprehend him. According to the New York Times, Kyle Rittenhouse would proceed to flee from the crowd, "killing Anthony Huber, 26, and wounding Gaige Grosskreutz, who was 26 at the time." After the shootings Kyle Rittenhouse went home, just across the state border in Antioch, Illinois, where the police arrested him the following morning.

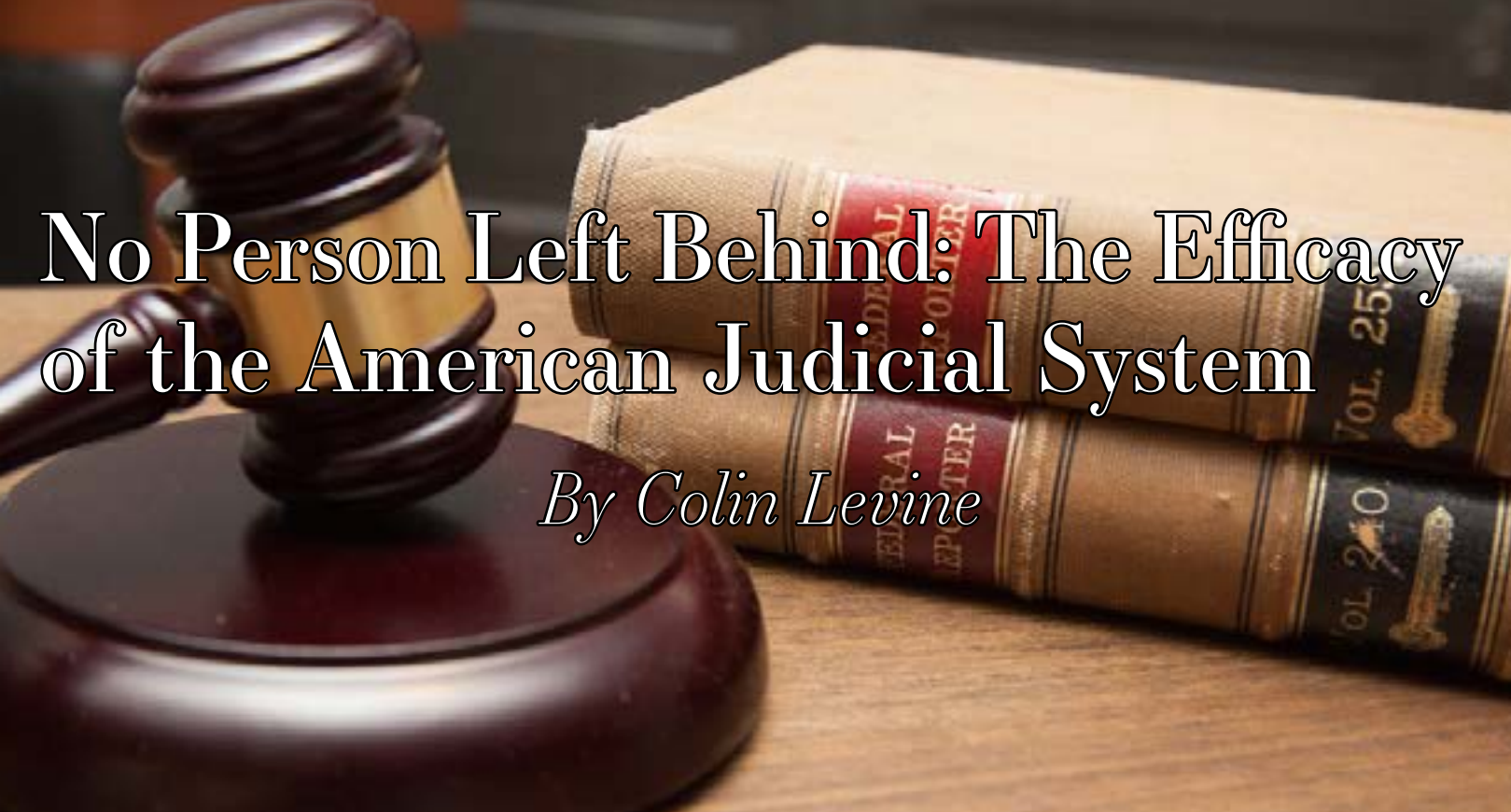
Kyle Rittenhouse was charged with first-degree reckless homicide, first-degree intentional homicide, first-degree reckless endangerment, attempted first-degree intentional homicide, and possession of a dangerous weapon by a person under 18. In court, Kyle's lawyers argued that his actions were in self-defense. Under Wisconsin law, "a person may employ deadly force against another, if the person reasonably believes that force is necessary to protect a 3rd-person or one's self from imminent death or great bodily harm..." Moreover, unlike many other states, Wisconsin does not require that a person "retreat" before using deadly force in self-defense. On that night, Kyle Rittenhouse was attacked and chased by several protesters, and sworn testimony indicated that he feared for his life and only shot his victims to defend himself from harm, in compliance with Wisconsin law. Thus, a jury of his peers found Kyle Rittenhouse rightfully not guilty.

However, being innocent in the eyes of the law does not justify the needless violence that occurred on that night that led to the deaths of two men at the hands of Kyle Rittenhouse, even in self-defense. Conservatives should not continue to glorify the actions of Kyle Rittenhouse and the senseless violence that occurred that night. This tragedy could have easily been avoided by more oversight from law enforcement and local authorities in managing the protests, as well as keeping track of armed groups. The local police department, however, had faced shortages of staff and budget cuts, even preceding calls for defunding the police. Although it is worth noting that calls to defund the police have gained traction, the tragedy that occurred that night should not be politicized and turned hyper-partisan. The right has used Kyle Rittenhouse as a "poster boy" and has celebrated his trial verdict. Conservative organizations, such as Turning Point USA, have recently asked Kyle to give talks at their events. Turning Point USA founder, Charlie Kirk, has even praised Rittenhouse, describing him as "a hero to millions..." Conservatives embracing Kyle Rittenhouse will lead to more senseless violence, as people looking to emulate him will only further bring open violence to cities and protests. It is entirely irresponsible to promote this act of violence, and conservative commentators and figureheads must avoid portraying Rittenhouse as a hero.

"It is irresponsible for conservatives to openly endorse Kyle Rittenhouse and his actions on August 25th, 2020."

This portrayal of Rittenhouse being a hero will only cause a spike in violence as admirers attempt to follow his actions. This phenomenon has been seen through the trend of school shootings that occurred after the Columbine Shooting in Colorado. According to data gathered by Mother Jones, "In at least 14 cases, the Columbine copycats aimed to attack on the anniversary of the massacre. Individuals in 13 cases indicated that their goal was to outdo the Columbine body count. In at least 10 cases, the suspects and attackers referred to the pair who struck in 1999, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, as heroes, idols, martyrs, or God. And at least three perpetrators made pilgrimages to Columbine High School from other states." Media coverages and endorsements of violent acts only cause more death and destruction, no matter if the act was justified or not. In the interest of public safety, conservatives must stop giving attention to vigilante actions, such as Kyle Rittenhouse's actions on the night of August 25th. Doing so will only cause more bloodshed. It is highly irresponsible for conservatives to promote these narratives, especially since Kyle Rittenhouse was a lone vigilante armed with a gun who decided to go to Kenosha, Wisconsin to protect local businesses, even though there was a great threat of confrontation. The fact that he was armed definitely escalated the situation, and much bloodshed would have been avoided if he was not armed originally. Kyle Rittenhouse was acting in self-defense that night on the streets of Kenosha; however, it is highly irresponsible for conservatives to endorse the senseless violence that occurred that night in any way.

While Rittenhouse being acquitted in court was fairly based on presented evidence, Conservatives must stop giving attention to the type of vigilantism that Rittenhouse represents. As previous incidents such as the Columbine Shooting have shown, coverage and attention focused on a dangerous and violent action leads to copycats. An endorsement of Kyle Rittenhouse, and the acceptance of vigilantism and political violence that his actions on August 25th reflected, will backfire on the "tough on crime" platform that the GOP invests so much into preserving.



No Person Left Behind: The Efficacy of the American Judicial System

By Colin Levine

In the wake of the acquittal of Kyle Rittenhouse, the United States press feed saw a widespread spate of calls for massive reform of the “deeply flawed” American judicial system. Left-wing public figures expressed particular frustration with the current system, as in the case of Gavin Newsom’s declaration that “[In] America today: you can break the law, shoot and kill people, and get away with it.”¹ However, these criticisms were clearly grounded not in jurisprudential reasoning, but rather the furtherance of a longstanding progressive fallacy that America itself is deeply flawed. No basis was provided for spurning the Rittenhouse verdict but repetition of the fact that he shot three people, paying no mind to the defensive circumstances of that event. At the lowest level of legal nuance, the state simply failed to meet the American burden of proof of “beyond a reasonable doubt.” This burden of proof was established to ensure that no innocent American would suffer behind bars, at all costs. Indeed, the acquittal of Kyle Rittenhouse was a product of a judicial system that has successfully protected countless American citizens from wrongly spending their lives in prison.

The beauty of the American judicial system is its protection of the defendant. Yes, at times, that protection can extend to reckless vigilante behavior as seen in the Rittenhouse trial (See page X). However, on a much larger scale, this principle ensures that the number of innocent civilians who spend their days in prison is extremely low. According to the Innocence Project, it would be reasonable to estimate that only 1% of U.S. prisoners fell victim to false convictions.² The judicial system operates based upon the famous Blackstone Ratio, which dictates, “It is better that ten guilty persons escape than one innocent suffer.”³ Accordingly, no

matter the criminal charge with which they are faced, American juries are required to consider but a single question: did the prosecution prove their case beyond a reasonable doubt?

“The judicial system operates based upon the famous Blackstone Ratio, which dictates, ‘It is better that ten guilty persons escape than one innocent suffer.’”

This means that, should the defense provide any plausible reason to doubt their client’s guilt, a jury must acquit. Some may forecast that this rule would produce an unreasonably high rate of acquittal. However, in real life, only 14% of jury trials end in acquittal, demonstrating that the reasonable doubt burden of proof does not impede the general triumph of justice.⁴

Even when the burden of proof is falsely achieved, and the innocent are wrongly convicted, the American judicial system is designed to rectify the injustice that has occurred. Indeed, victims of unfair trials can appeal their case in the appellate system, a robust framework of several levels of courts, all fit to determine when a jury has been misled or acted improperly. In just the past 30 years, nearly 2,500 people have been exonerated after appealing for judicial review.⁵ The success of the appeals process has been especially true for African-Americans, the group that has historically been the greatest target

of unjust convictions, for they have been the recipients of the most exonerations.⁶ Indeed, not only does the judicial system maintain extreme attentiveness to the liberty of the citizen, but when it falls short, the system has a built-in contingency to prevent improper imprisonment.

The question becomes: what reforms do critics propose to the present system? If the burden of proof was lowered to a preponderance of the evidence, for example — the current burden of proof in civil trials — the prosecution may have won the Rittenhouse case.

However, they would also see thousands upon thousands of innocents locked away for lifetimes because, despite a possible plethora of contradictions, a majority of the facts went against them. If the right to a jury was replaced with only judge trials, the danger of bias that tends to even out over a pool of twelve citizens would be hostage to the predilections of a single man or woman. As President Biden concluded after the Rittenhouse verdict was announced, “The jury system works.”⁷ The millions of American citizens who enjoy their liberty as a result of its commitment to protect the innocent would agree.



Eastern Europe on the Brink: Poland and the Far-Right

By Simon Juknelis



When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, Poland achieved its independence from fifty years of authoritarianism under the influence of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Through the end of the 20th century and into the beginning of the 21st, the Polish government was largely reform-minded after nearly a half-century of fascist and communist oppression. Poland joined NATO in 1999 and the EU in 2004, and it was heading towards becoming a prosperous democracy along the lines of France or Germany.¹ This trajectory shifted when the far-right Law and Justice Party, abbreviated PiS from its Polish translation, came to power in 2015.² During its tenure, the democratic system of Poland has been effectively destroyed.

PiS established a mandate for its absolute control over the Polish state. Upon taking office, the new Polish leadership immediately did two things of note. Firstly, it called an audit into the previous government of the centrist Civic Platform party. By the accounts of non-PiS ministers, the audit was a witch hunt. As Rafał Trzaskowski, a former minister for European affairs, described, “They didn’t even give us any documents to read or respond to. Each minister just got up and made accusations.”³ Secondly, PiS implemented a monthly child subsidy large enough that for many families it equaled their salary. This subsidy led to many Poles declaring their allegiance to PiS as the party had massively improved their economic standing. However, Poland did not have the money to pay for this huge subsidy, and PiS was essentially racking up an immense amount of debt for the Polish state.⁴ Nevertheless, through these two actions, PiS established in the minds of voters that when other parties came to power,

they were corrupt and hoarded Poland’s money and that therefore, it is the responsibility of PiS to fix the system that elected these malicious leaders. In getting voters to buy into this ideology, PiS placed itself above the rule of law.

“In getting voters to buy into this ideology, PiS placed itself above the rule of law.”

In addition, PiS moved to sustain its control over Polish government through an attack on the judiciary. It began by targeting the Constitutional Court of Poland. The leader of PiS, Jarosław Kaczyński, once referred to as “the bastion of everything in Poland that is bad.” The methods PiS used included having the parliament assert that appointments made under the previous government were illegal, despite the fact that the checks and balances in the Polish constitution simply did not allow the parliament to do this. This initiated audits into anti-PiS judges on the Court, with one anti-PiS judge receiving a letter “that he should adhere to the [PiS-supported] legislation or face a legal review”. PiS leaders also “[ordered] state printing presses not to print [anti-PiS decisions] so as to prevent them from taking legal effect,”⁵ because the Polish constitution requires that court rulings only go into effect when they are officially printed and published by the government.⁶ Eventually, through wearing down the ability of the Court to defend its integrity against

the power of the PiS-controlled parliament and presidency, the party managed to strongarm its way into a majority of the seats on the Constitutional Court.⁷ PiS could now essentially ignore the Polish constitution, becoming supremely powerful. As proof of this power, PiS began passing several laws to suppress basic human rights. The two most notable examples of this were when a third of the country was legally declared an “LGBT-free” zone,⁸ despite the constitution’s guarantee of equality,⁹ and when abortion was made completely illegal. The case of abortion, in particular, exemplified PiS’s control over the Court. After PiS gained control over the Court, it issued a ruling that banned abortion in all cases. However, public demonstrations were organized when a mother died as a result of this ruling, threatening the stability PiS was working to establish. To ensure this issue did not lead to the collapse of the PiS government, the PiS-controlled Court changed its mind and ruled to allow it in exceptional instances.¹⁰ No changes had been made to the constitution between those two rulings¹¹, yet the Court changed the effect of the constitution, doing so in accordance with the best interests of PiS at any given time. This showed that the Court, instead of following the law, will do whatever most benefits PiS. Through the courts, PiS gained total control over the Polish state.

Finally, PiS utilized international condemnation, mostly from the EU, as a tool to bolster its own stability. Several EU institutions have responded negatively to PiS’s actions. The most aggressive act of condemnation thus far has been the invocation by the European Council of Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union. Under the invocation, if PiS continues its pattern of endangering the constitutional order of Poland, the Council could “suspend [Poland’s rights in the EU], including the voting rights of the representative of [its] government in the Council.”¹² These rights could also

include Poland’s tariff-free access to the EU single market.¹³ In summary, if Article 7 is fully carried out, Poland will lose all the rights of an EU member as well as its representation in the EU governing bodies; as such, it will be essentially expelled from the EU. The PiS-run Constitutional Court then ruled that all EU laws which violated the Polish constitution were illegitimate.¹⁴ This violates one of the basic purposes of the EU, which is to establish, in certain areas, uniform laws without always having to get the permission of every single member state as would be the case with a treaty. Accordingly, Poland can no longer truly be considered part of the EU. But PiS leaders have nevertheless asserted that they have no plans to voluntarily leave the EU.¹⁵ In doing this, PiS has set up a gambit. If the EU follows through with Article 7 and effectively removes Poland from its members, PiS will be de facto and de jure free from EU rules. In addition, it will have the EU to point to as the cause of all economic failures they will inevitably encounter and, in doing so, will be able to bolster its own support when it battles the EU. If the EU doesn’t, PiS will use EU benefits while disregarding EU rules and, in doing so, take advantage of every other EU member. PiS has successfully secured its absolute control against pressure from the EU.

Poland is serving as a wake-up call to Western powers, particularly the US and EU, that the work of statecraft in Eastern Europe is not yet finished. In trade wars with China and other countries, the West could greatly benefit from a Poland that realizes its economic potential and uses it cooperatively with North America and the rest of Europe. But if that is to happen, the West must find better strategies for dealing with anti-democratic political parties than threatening the removal of their nations from the EU or similar organizations. Otherwise, authoritarianism will once again come to rule in Eastern Europe.



Overseas US Military Improvements

By Joanne Lee



Earlier this year, US Pentagon officials announced their global plans to focus and improve US airfields, bases, and other infrastructure located in Australia and Guam. The Department of Defense's global posture review (GPR) advised the implementation of these changes in hopes of better preparing their military when encountering China.¹ The GPR stated explicitly, "directs additional cooperation with allies and partners who advance initiatives that contribute to regional stability and deter Chinese military aggression," including "enhanced infrastructure in Guam and in Australia."² President Biden promptly ordered Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin to undertake these actions after the review was presented to the administration. The Indo-Pacific region is a major geographic focus because of Secretary Austin's emphasis on "China as the pacing challenge" for the Department due to their large geographic and political influence.³ Infrastructure improvements to airfields are set to begin next year in Guam, which hosts a large naval and Air Force contingent along with thousands of American troops, as well as Australia, where Marines will deploy on a rotational basis. These airfields will eventually serve the Defense Department in quickly moving troops in and out of the region for drills and deployments, as well as any emergency conflicts.⁴ Both of these plans are fundamental

tactics to counter China in the possible event of war as their military continues to strengthen by the day. The Pentagon plans to send additional ground and logistics forces to Australia while making a range of improvements in Guam's public works including more fuel, ammunition storage, and other undisclosed projects.

However, this required the shifting of currently located troops. Last year, the Trump administration announced that the Pentagon officials removed a cap of 25,000 US military troops that were initially supposed to be assigned to Germany.⁵ Defense officials notified Belgium and Germany that the US would maintain its presence at seven sites previously marked for return to their host nations. Furthermore, in June, the Pentagon removed eight Patriot anti missile systems from the Middle East in a major realignment of its military presence in the region. The government organized the deployment of aircraft and logistics capabilities to Australia and established a permanent deployment of an attack helicopter squadron and an artillery division headquarters in South Korea. The removal of military capabilities in the Middle East or Western Europe then instituting these resources in areas like Australia and South Korea relayed a sign to Gulf allies and others that the US isn't committed to the region, even though US officials have attempted to reassure otherwise.

The Biden Administration has made countering China its main priority in foreign policy, seeing as tensions have proved to exponentially increase with Beijing over the conflicting topic of Taiwan.⁶ Taiwan has been a long standing unofficial ally of the United States; the two respective countries share a robust relationship and close cooperation in regards to a wide range of controversial issues such as the Korean War and the Cold War. Maintaining this partnership is a critical aspect to US aspirations to establish peace and stability in Asia. However, alarming concerns have been expressed in recent affairs when China imposed military intimidation on Taiwan. 25 fighter jets and other warplanes were sent in a menacing formation towards the southern end of Taiwan on October 1st, a display of Chinese military strength on China's National Day.⁷ This escalated to a high of 56 warplanes that were detected by Taiwan's air defenses. Senior Pentagon officials have communicated their unease for China's provocative actions, further inflamed by China's efforts to upgrade and modernize its military. Subsequently, to counter China, the GPR directed the Department to enhance "infrastructure in Guam and Australia," prioritizing "military construction across the Pacific Islands," and "seeking greater regional access for military partnership activities."⁸ The United States had around 75 consultations with partners when assembling the review, including "NATO allies, Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and over a dozen partners across the Middle East and Africa."⁹

Simultaneously, following the Biden Administration's disorganized strategy and decision to end and withdraw from the ongoing Afghanistan war, the US has faced the threats of Moscow's military against Ukraine, including the formation of Russian troops along the Ukrainian border that the US officials suspect may be a prelude to invasion.¹⁰ Withdrawing from Afghanistan means that the US must now monitor for terrorism threats and collect intelligence from farther away. This makes it harder to shift and provide resources to Pentagon plans of taking on Beijing overseas, while deterring Russia and fighting terrorism in the Middle East and Africa. Defense specialists say that the review's lack of sizable adjustments to military forces in Asia also demonstrates the challenges faced in rebalancing these resources to confront China while maintaining and developing other global commitments. The Department did not provide further specific information or detail about how the GPR is directing the US government and military to counter Moscow threats, but one government official quotes the US military is working "with the goal of strengthening a combat credible deterrent vis a vis Russia and the specific requirements of that region."¹¹ While our future in foreign relations with China remains uncertain, the United States is working towards refining the military and undoubtedly making large strides towards preparations in precaution of possible warfare and American intervention in the Pacific.





Forgotten Genocides in South Asia

by Arthi Vithiananthan

When you're born in a country like the United States of America, you rarely think about the rights that you are born into as an American. What about your fellow citizens who immigrated to the States since it is nearly impossible to live freely in their home countries? What about those who remain stuck in those territories, where the government hates its people? The United States may not be perfect, but it sure does feel like a safe haven for people worldwide being threatened in their home countries. In South Asian countries, the danger of mass killings looms over citizens who have done nothing wrong except exist as a minority. Yet those countries and the terrifying realities for hundreds of thousands of people are forgotten by the rest of the world. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, genocide is defined as "the deliberate and systematic destruction of a racial, political, or cultural group".¹ Within South Asia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Myanmar have experienced three genocides that have targeted Sri Lankan Tamils, Bengalis, and Rohingya Muslims to an unprecedented degree of violence that has inadequately been discussed in Western affairs.

There were two main ethnic groups in Sri Lanka: the Sinhalese and the Tamil people. At the time of the Sri Lankan Civil War, the government was majority Sinhalese. Even after the whole country gained independence from Britain in 1948, Sri Lankan Tamils still suffer as the minority in Sri Lanka. Although they are not blameless when it comes to human rights violations, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have sought a separate state where Tamil people could finally live as the majority.² This genocide of the Tamil people ended with the Sinhalese government killing or imprisoning LTTE leaders.³ According to

"69% of the 39,842 Tamil people that were killed, or are still missing, were male, since all Tamil men in Sri Lanka were accused of being a part of the LTTE."⁴

the Human Rights Data Analysis Group (HRDAG), 69% of the 39,842 Tamil people that were killed, or are still missing, were male, since all Tamil men in Sri Lanka were accused of being a part of the LTTE.⁴ This put targets on the backs of many innocent men, who were left with no choice except to flee to the nearest country that would take them or die trying. Even after both parties committed war crimes and human rights violations, Tamil people still are only portrayed in a negative light.⁵ They are constantly caught in the crossfire, and even after the military-related fighting stopped when the war was officially over, insurgencies still continued to emerge. With the new minorities in Sri Lanka being the Christian and Muslim populations, persecution continues to plague Sri Lanka. The Easter Sunday attacks of 2019 killed more than 250 people. The biases created against the minorities in Sri Lanka are still constant after the civil war, with bans on face coverings that target Muslim women.⁶ Those women face harassment in public spaces when they choose to wear headscarves that are a part of their religious identity.⁷



Similar to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh lost 3 million people to the Pakistani army in 1971. This genocide does not hold the same importance to people around the world when compared to the Holocaust and Rwandan genocide.⁸ After the India-Pakistan partition, East Pakistan, or Bangladesh, was always seen as the lesser country. West Pakistanis referred to them as "low lying people of a low lying land."⁹ The West Pakistanis were majority Muslims, as Pakistan was created to be a Muslim state. However, East Pakistanis, or Bengalis, became more influenced by Hindu culture from India, and they were considered disloyal to Pakistan.¹⁰ Because the Bengalis were seen as the equivalent of dirt, West Pakistanis exploited Bangladesh economically controlling its imports and refused to send aid when hundreds of thousands of people were killed during the Bhola Cyclone in 1970.¹¹ Then, Operation Searchlight commenced, and up to 100,000 Hindu Bengalis were killed as a method to scare the East Pakistanis. This was just the start of a horrifying year of mass murders of Hindus in East Pakistan, including over 200,000 women being raped by the Pakistani army.¹²

Although these horrific events happened many years ago, it does not diminish their importance, especially since history continues to repeat itself across South Asia. In Myanmar, the Rohingya Muslims are currently being threatened with violence perpetrated by the Myanmar government. The government stripped citizenship from the Rohingya people, claiming that they are Bengali citizens even though they had settled in Myanmar for the past few decades. Since they are no longer citizens in the eyes of the government, Myanmar is inflicting an "ethnic-cleansing campaign" upon the Rohingya Muslims, forcing them to flee or be subject to mass killings, rapes, and arson

from the government and Buddhist mobs.¹³ If they ever try to return to their homes in Myanmar, they will be subject to detention camps surrounded by barbed wire fences.¹⁴

The reality in these South Asian countries is absolutely disgusting. Sri Lankan Tamils, Bengalis, and Rohingya Muslims will always be minorities, even in their home countries, no matter where they go. No amount of suffering will allow these South Asians to live in peace, as the trauma of being targeted by your own government cannot be solved by moving to an idealistic place like the United States. Why hasn't anyone done anything to step in and help? There has been a very minimal international response to the atrocities in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. Only in 2015, 6 years after the Sri Lankan Civil War was officially declared over, entities started to look into the atrocious violations that occurred throughout the war by both sides.¹⁵ The United States refused to help Bangladesh because of its status as "a Cold War ally."¹⁶ Canada, the United States, and the European Union have all put sanctions on Myanmar as if that would fix anything.¹⁷ Unfortunately, Rohingya Muslims and the other minorities being persecuted are not receiving much aid besides weak indirect actions from these big countries. Acknowledging the blatant uninvolved of powerful nations when they are needed is the first step towards ending the violence against minorities worldwide.

The Reductive Nature of Mainstream White Feminism

By Jackie Zhang

Career success. Last names. Body hair. These are just some of the issues White mainstream feminism has prioritized over the past couple of years. Rafia Zakaria describes a White elitist feminist in her book, *Against White Feminism*, as “someone who refuses to consider the role that Whiteness and the racial privilege attached to it have played and continue to play in universalizing White feminist concerns, agendas, and beliefs as being those of all feminism and all feminists.”¹ They all involve giving more privileges to the already privileged. Mikki Kendall, author of *Hood Feminism*, describes in a *TIME* article her experience in poverty as a single mother. She recounts, “What I remember is hunger. And being afraid that I would lose my child because I couldn’t provide... But as a society, we treat poverty itself like a crime, like the women experiencing it are making bad choices for themselves and their children on purpose.”² While the hardships that Kendall went through don’t seem like the issues typically associated with “feminism”, they are issues that most women in the US struggle with: food security, access to healthcare, basic safety, and housing. White feminism neglects the needs of BIPOC women, transgender and queer women, and women living in poverty. The core focus of the feminism movement should be addressing the needs of all women alongside issues of race, class, and gender, which are all connected by a systemic capitalist patriarchy that is harmful to all.

Socioeconomic issues such as food are not treated by mainstream feminism as feminist issues despite the Food and Agricultural Organization of the U.N. describing how food insecurity rates are greater for women in every region of the world.³ Women earn less than men despite having similar jobs, which means households supported by women are paying larger proportions of income toward rent. In 2018, households with children supported by a single woman were the most likely to experience low food security, a rate double the national average.⁴ It is clear that the basic economic

needs of women are not consistently not being met. Mainstream feminism treats housing and food security as not specifically “feminist” issues despite the multitudes of women struggling with them, demonstrating how the movement is only focused on providing more privileges to already privileged women.

Gun violence is also not often discussed as a specifically feminist issue, but financial interdependence caused by the aforementioned issues can exacerbate the dangers of domestic violence. According to Everytown Research and Policy, “every month, an average of 57 women are shot and killed by an intimate partner. Nearly 1 million women alive today have reported being shot or shot at by intimate partners, and 4.5 million women have reported being threatened with a gun by an intimate partner.”⁵ Despite the fact that gun violence is clearly a major issue that women face, the mainstream feminism movement has not framed it as something central to its goals. White feminism only focuses on the promotion of women in patriarchal and capitalist societies, ignoring the intersecting systems of oppression and how feminist issues connect with other modes of exploitation such as socioeconomic class.

The issue of race is also not discussed often when examining “feminist” issues. Black and working class women have historically been excluded from women’s movements led mostly by White women. While White suffragettes learned activism from the anti-slavery movement, Black suffragettes weren’t allowed to protest alongside them in the fight for women’s rights. When White women got the right to vote, they voted no differently than the White men. In their so-called activism, they established a social hierarchy that put down and ignored the struggle for racial rights by Black men and women.⁶ Only White women received the vote in 1920, while Black women could not exercise the right to vote until 1965 with the passing of the Voting Rights Act. Voter suppression continued post-Civil Rights era in many regions of the country targeting

working class and BIPOC women. Considering race when examining well-known feminist issues such as sexual assault adds new relevance to the struggle. Rape laws were originally created to protect the wives of upper-class men, while the plight of working women was ignored. Moreover, sexual assaulters of working women have disproportionately escaped punishment, but the charge has been aimed at mostly Black men.⁷ Moreover, according to the National Exoneration Registry, “assaults on white women by African-American men are a small minority of all sexual assaults in the United States, but they constitute half of sexual assaults with eyewitness misidentifications that led to exoneration.”⁸ Invented prejudice of Black men has caused terror and violence against the Black community. While race is clearly an important aspect of feminist issues, the mainstream feminist movement has ignored its significance to the lived experiences of woman of color.

White mainstream feminism caters towards cisgender woman and ignores the oppression that trans women face. One example is the case of Aimee Stephens, who came out as transgender to her boss and was fired two weeks later. Her employer, Thomas Rost, testified that she was fired because “[she] was no longer going to represent [herself] as a man. [She] wanted to dress as a woman”. Major medical associations came out in support of Stephens, but conservative religious groups and former President Trump’s Department of Justice filed a brief supporting Rost. Even when considering

how mainstream feminism regards trans issues as separate ones, it was shocking to see so-called “radical feminist” groups side with the Trump administration, as the Women’s Liberation Front (WoLF) did when it claimed that Stephens is a man.⁹ There has been an emergence in the mainstream of groups like WoLF, referred to as “trans-exclusionary radical feminists” or TERFs, who claim that “sex is entirely binary, that the oppression of women is entirely based on that binary difference; that gender is a malign fiction created by a patriarchy that exists wholly and solely to oppress women as a class.”¹⁰ Trans women of color, particularly Black trans women, have faced disproportionate violence. The first six months of 2021 had seen at least 28 transgender or gender-nonconforming people murdered, at least 20 of whom were Black or Brown trans women.¹¹ Mainstream feminism has not accounted for these continued attacks against trans women as “feminist” issues. The reduction of women’s oppression to biology ignores how systems of oppression intersect and how patriarchy can be harmful to all, not just White cisgender women.

In conclusion, White feminism does not enact widespread social change but rather reinforces the status quo. Feminism should be expansive and inclusive across every mode of oppression, intent on battling the systems set in place. “Gender equality cannot be conceptualized without foregrounding racial and economic equality,” American activist Angela Davis says,



The Biden Administration's Colossal Failure in Afghanistan

by Eric Zhou



On August 26th, 2021, a suicide bomber belonging to the terrorist organization ISIS-Khorasan detonated an explosive belt at Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul amid the US' hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan. The consequent explosion and exchange of gunfire resulted in the deaths of 169 Afghan civilians and 13 U.S. service members. It was the largest loss of U.S. military personnel since 2011. Nine hundred American citizens and legal residents have since been evacuated from Afghanistan, but over a hundred still remain there¹. Many Afghans who have worked with the U.S. fear severe Taliban retaliation, with no guarantee that the U.S. will ensure their safety. Despite public outcry over the endangered US and Afghan lives, President Biden seems to be content with labeling his needlessly dangerous withdrawal plan as an “extraordinary success”² and moving on. The damage has been done, however, and the President's overall handling of the situation has made Americans increasingly skeptical of the President's ability to lead in times of crisis.

“It was the largest loss of U.S. military personnel since 2011.”

But what exactly went wrong? Was leaving Afghanistan in disarray unavoidable, as Biden himself claimed³? The answer is complicated given that the Taliban could have escalated the situation at any time. However, U.S. diplomats and military personnel exerted enough influence to make a conditional withdrawal possible. The Doha Agreement, negotiated in February 2020, provided a framework for talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government and made a withdrawal dependent on the Taliban's full cooperation. With substantial military power supporting the U.S. embassy in Afghanistan, the administration was

well-equipped to renegotiate the Doha deal to make a withdrawal explicitly reliant on a Taliban-Afghani compromise. This could have guaranteed that Afghans would retain the freedoms they and the US had fought for. Instead, Biden opted to announce an unconditional, expedited withdrawal in April 2021. Sher Jan Ahmadzai, a professor at the University of Nebraska and former Afghan official, was dismayed at the suddenness of the withdrawal:

“It was unbelievable to see the government crumble in a few hours. The more we look into it, the more we can understand why [that happened] —and a good chunk of the blame goes to the US. There's no doubt the Afghan government was dealing with corruptness and inefficiencies, no doubt that the Taliban—supported by Pakistan—were gaining ground, but in the midst of all this, [US] presence was guaranteeing security and stability. US troops provided morale to the Afghan forces and government, and as soon as the US suddenly withdrew, the morale was gone.”⁴

Abandoning our defense of Afghan liberty by withdrawing our troops empowered the Taliban and severely weakened an already-fragile Afghan government that relied heavily on U.S. forces for support. A more measured withdrawal could have produced a power-sharing agreement between the Afghan government and the Taliban⁵, allowing the people to maintain rights that would eventually be lost under sharia law (an Islamic religious code). When most of the cards were in the U.S' hands, they folded and took the easy way out, leaving the Afghan people to suffer under a legal system notorious for stoning women accused of adultery to death.

By July, plans to remove all troops were well underway; the military was to shut down all bases while the U.S. embassy would serve as a point of contact to maintain diplomatic relations. The next step was to

shut down the Bagram airbase, which was significant due to its proximity to Kabul, its technological capacity, and its imprisonment of prominent terrorists. Various intelligence agencies along with the Department of Defense warned that the Taliban were quickly wresting control from the Afghan government⁶. The airbase was well-equipped for offensive operations and civilian evacuation, both of which were going to be necessary given the Taliban's overwhelming expansion. Despite this, Biden moved to close the airbase on schedule, relinquishing most of the United States' military capacity. Bagram was shut down on July 2.

In August, the Taliban swept into Kabul, taking Bagram and the embassy in a scene eerily reminiscent of the fall of the South Vietnamese capital of Saigon, a stunning loss that marked the end and failure of the Vietnam War⁷. Bagram's prisoners, featuring 1,800 ISIS-K members and 36 Al-Qaeda fighters⁸, were released, reigniting the possibility of terror attacks against the U.S. In fact, the bomber responsible for the Kabul airport attack was confirmed to be a former Bagram captive⁹. Representative Dan Crenshaw (R-TX), having served in Afghanistan himself, blasted the loss of Bagram as a complete logistical blunder:

“My office has been in touch with sources who are very close to the operation. And this is a State Department-led operation. The State Department overruled DOD (Department of Defense). When DOD wanted to make Bagram the last place where we would have troops, the State Department overruled them. It was a foolish mistake because Bagram can hold a lot more aircraft, for instance, than Kabul Airport.”¹⁰

A strong military presence at Bagram could have supported Kabul, acting as a bulwark against encroaching Taliban forces. Even if Kabul were doomed to fall, Bagram could have been used to facilitate safe, orderly evacuations for embassy workers, American citizens, and Afghans. Advanced military equipment and imprisoned terrorists could have been moved to a more secure location, where they wouldn't be captured by

Taliban forces. Instead, the administration ignored the advice of its most knowledgeable experts and watched as the Taliban marched right into Bagram and Kabul.

Having no other choice, the administration completed a hurried evacuation at the Kabul Airport. The U.S. had such little control over the airport and surrounding areas that they had to negotiate with the Taliban in order to guarantee the safety of their citizens¹¹. Protecting the lives of Americans is a bare minimum, and it never should have been compromised in the first place. Furthermore, America couldn't offer the protection they had promised to the thousands of Afghans who were turned back at the Taliban perimeter. Biden once pledged to our Afghan allies that “there is a home for you in the United States if you so choose, and we will stand with you just as you stood with us”¹². But America didn't stand with them, letting the Taliban hunt down Afghans that had worked with the US¹³.

Admittedly, the operation had some successes, such as the safe evacuation of US citizens, but the failures heavily outweigh the successes. The Taliban are free to re-establish their rule, one that is especially brutal toward women. The Taliban have been known supporters of al Qaeda, the group responsible for 9/11, and their recent success has reinvigorated radical jihadist (militant Islamic) movements around the world. America's global reputation will certainly be tarnished: our inadequate preparation and response will sow distrust among our allies and embolden our enemies. As new threats related to Afghanistan join the myriad other challenges that the Biden administration faces, the question remains: is President Biden prepared to solve these crises?



Younger People Deserve the Right to Vote

by Clare Struzziery

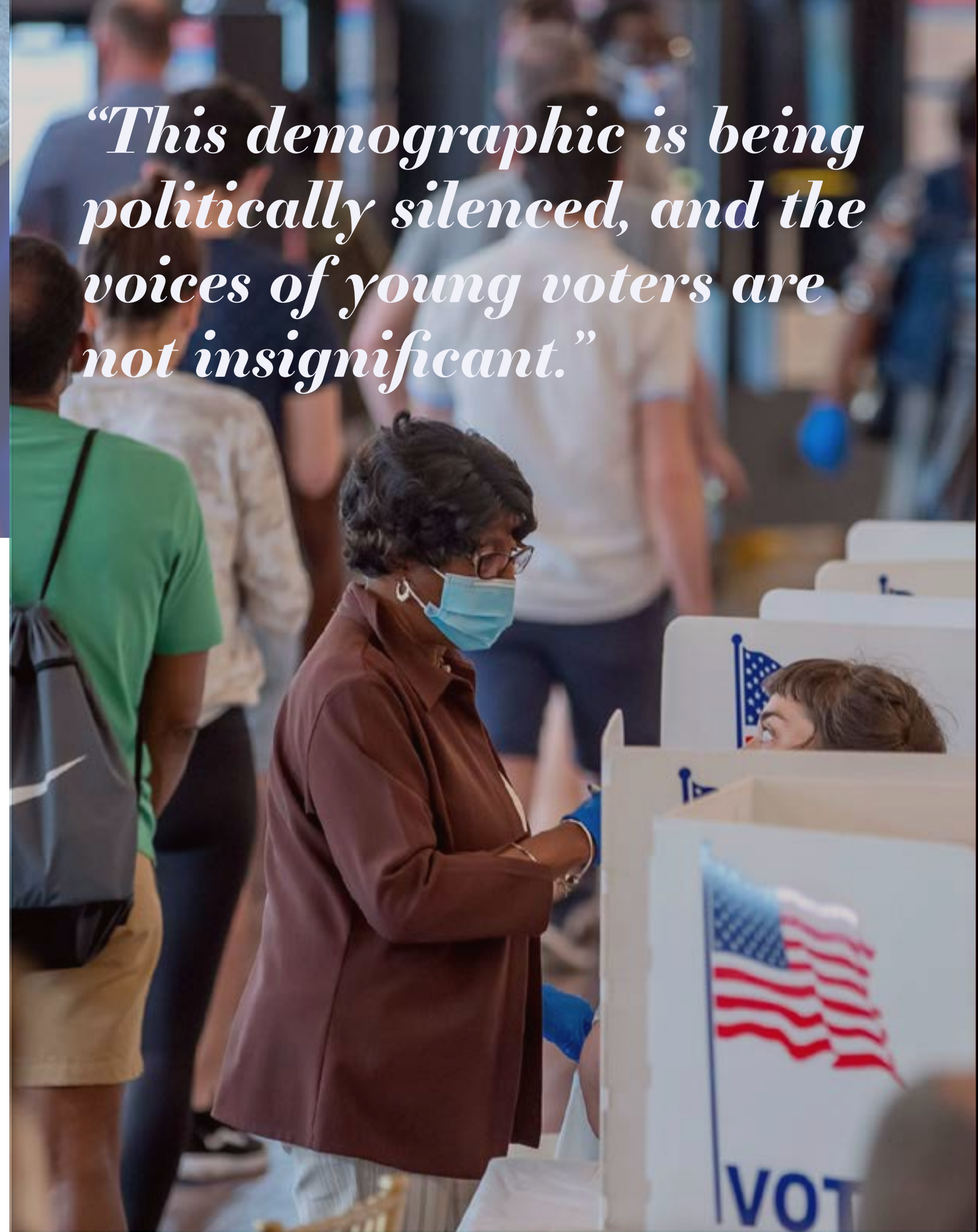
Elections are the cornerstone of American democracy. The values our nation was founded upon dictate that every citizen has the right to express their beliefs and opinions by voting. However, in recent years, people have been calling attention to unfairness in our democratic system. Claims of foreign election interference and voter suppression among communities of color have tarnished our nation's electoral institution. No matter the level of the election, it is crucial to ensure that each eligible voice is heard in government. The requirements for voter eligibility currently exclude a portion of American citizens: people under the age of 18. These are, in many cases, working American taxpayers who hold the same responsibilities as those currently eligible to vote. However, this faction of worthy citizens have no say in decisions that affect them.

Lowering the voting age to 16 would give millions of deserving Americans the government representation they are due. This issue has been heavily debated over the past decade. 16-17-year-olds are able to work, pay taxes, and help support their families. Those who do not have these responsibilities are still likely participants of their community's public school system and are living at home, giving them strong ties to their local area. A common refrain among those who do not support lowering the voting age is that children under the age of 18 have little knowledge of or interest in politics.

However, political intelligence is not a necessary criteria for voting. Throughout history, each time this argument has been brought up, it has been done so with the sole intention of excluding people from democracy. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 outlawed discriminatory literacy tests, and established "that a sixth-grade education provided 'sufficient literacy, comprehension, and intelligence to vote in any election.'"¹

As for the other portion of this argument, a select few cities in the United States have lowered the voting age, the first being Takoma Park, Maryland. When this change was instituted in 2013, "registered voters under 18 had a turnout rate four times higher than voters over 18," according to the National Youth Rights Association.² This age group is eager and qualified to vote, refuting any argument that they have no interest in voting. This demographic is being politically silenced, and the voices of young voters are not insignificant. The Smithsonian Magazine states that in the 2020 presidential election, "young voters aged 18-29 preferred the Democratic ticket by a 25-point margin" and this age group "played a key role in 'flipping' battleground states."³ If the youngest voting bracket has this much influence, expanding the voting age may have the potential to shift election results. These deserving citizens will finally be able to orchestrate true change when they are granted the right to vote.

"This demographic is being politically silenced, and the voices of young voters are not insignificant."





Developing Countries Need to Find Sustainable Growth Models

by Ashley Wang

The most impactful global environmental problem our planet faces is climate change. Climate change is deeply rooted in interactions between environmental, economic, political, and technological pressures. In terms of equity, it is greatly influential internationally and intergenerationally, and sustainable development is greatly impacted by climate change. These impacts are seen through the disadvantages developing countries face, as it is especially important for developing countries to attempt to alleviate and accommodate for changes in the climate as they are most susceptible to its detrimental impacts. For instance, in Burkina Faso, many young students must gather under trees during their lessons due to the lack of widespread access to efficient technology to cool their buildings in order to overcome the adverse effects of climate change. Moreover, the developing country Burkina Faso lies in a position where they are more so affected by climate change than the rest of the world as temperatures are rising 150% faster in the Sahel than anywhere else across the globe.

“Most developing countries do not have sufficient funding to adjust to sea level rise, extreme weather, natural disasters, and other negative impacts of climate change.”

Developing countries looking to improve their economy aspire to implement growth strategies that will rapidly and exponentially increase their gross domestic product (GDP). In contrast, economic growth, as it stands, necessitates greater usage of non-renewable resources, higher levels of carbon emission and pollution, rises in overall temperature, and potentially, habitat loss. In 1997, China's GDP stood at less than \$1 trillion in current U.S. dollars. However, after exposure to the World Trade Organization in 2001, China's export-oriented development model led to exponential GDP growth for the following two decades, reaching \$14.7 trillion by 2020. This is the growth model that most developing countries currently view as their goal despite it being deleterious for the climate. As China's economy flourished, the country's carbon emissions boomed, surpassing those of the United States in 2005 and tripling in only 14 years. Therefore, it is especially important that developing countries do not strive to imitate the growth models many developed countries currently operate on, but instead, look for various other ways to grow their economies sustainably. However, in order for these countries to make educated decisions and take adequate action to mitigate climate change, they must have access to some pertinent data. According to the book titled Climate Change and Developing Countries, it is necessary for developing

countries to possess information that includes “the contribution of countries and regions to the growth in greenhouse gas emissions, changes in regional climate, impacts of projected climate change on ecosystems and the economy, technology and capital needs to mitigate and adapt to climate change, implications of addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation on equity and sustainable development, and global mechanisms to address climate change and their implications.”

Unfortunately, even with access to detailed environmental trajectories and data, most developing countries do not have sufficient funding to adjust to sea level rise, extreme weather, natural disasters, and other negative impacts of climate change. Moreover, countries are further challenged as they must adjust to these climate effects while growing their economies without increasing production of greenhouse gases, and keeping their emission rates consistent with lowering global warming below the internationally agreed 2°C target.

“Temperatures are rising 150% faster in the Sahel than anywhere else across the globe.”

Thus, finding sustainable ways to grow their economies have become next to impossible for developing countries. International inaction on climate change has led to a massive spike in greenhouse gas emissions, consequently leaving developing countries disadvantaged. A recent United Nations Climate Change Conference, known as the 26th Conference of the Parties, resulted in slight progress in taking steps toward the betterment of the climate crisis, however, most negotiators regrettably recognized that countries were unsuccessful in gathering strategies to finance green development. The completion of finding strategies to improve their growth models in sustainable ways had not only been promised by these developed countries in previous agreements, but the incremental decrease in emissions and consumption of non-renewable resources had not been sufficient in addressing the large-scale problem of climate change in the first place. However, the significant amounts of carbon emission produced by first world countries is all the greater reason for developing countries to adapt to climate change and adjust their growth strategies accordingly. On the other hand, the fluctuations in data on the unending increase in growth of emissions make finding these strategies even harder as many developing countries are left in the dark about detailed information in this regard...and so continues the cycle.

essays



US Involvement in Iran: An Invasion on Rights and Contradiction of Principles

By Chris Tillen

Considered a beacon of equality and justice throughout the West, the United States of America firmly asserts itself into the developing world. The Middle East is a region in which US involvement is palpable, and Iran experiences the greatest impact. Throughout the 20th century, Iran was regarded as valuable by the United States due to its abundance of oil, and the US went to extraordinarily pervasive methods in order to secure this economic interest. Iran's monarchy, led by the all-powerful Shah, was intertwined with American influence until the overturn of power due to the Iranian Revolution in 1979. While a parliament headed by a Prime Minister existed under the monarchy, the Shah still drastically outweighed the prime minister's authority. Through the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) orchestration of the 1953 coup that ousted Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh for a return of Reza Pahlavi, along with the collusion between America and rebel leader Khomeini during the Iranian Revolution that would topple the monarchy, US involvement with Iran drastically affected the political and social structure of the nation. America's overbearing presence in Iran has been unjust and detrimental as it harmed the Iranian people and contradicted core American principles.

Firstly, Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh's economic and social policy revolutionized Iran in an extremely progressive manner, illuminating the devastating effect of removing him from his role. Prior to the election of Mossadegh, Iran faced a huge economic downfall due to the enormous British presence in the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC).

British workers controlled the highest paying jobs in the AIOC draining Iran of its most precious natural resource and leaving the nation's workers poor.¹ Political factions united to support Mossadegh's election as prime minister, hoping for a progressive figure to fix internal issues. Mossadegh's immediate action to nationalize the Iranian oil industry began repairing Iran's economy, replacing British technicians with Iranians and expelling the controlling hand of the United Kingdom, thereby revitalizing the Iranian economy.² Mossadegh's decision to put Iran's people first, giving them jobs and correctly capitalizing on a resource that had long since been swindled away from its home nation, highlights his revolutionary thinking and ameliorative impact. In addition to his economic reform, Mossadegh aided Iran's people through social revitalization. As stated by writer Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian of Foreign Policy, "He [Mossadegh] openly championed democratic values and hoped to establish a democracy in Iran. The elected parliament selected him as prime minister, a position he used to reduce the power of the shah, thus bringing Iran closer in line with the political traditions that had developed in Europe (3)."

"He [Mossadegh] openly championed democratic values and hoped to establish a democracy in Iran."

The very existence of a powerful figure shifted focus away from Iran's monarchy and towards a more democratic state, as it undercut the Shah's overarching authority. Free speech under Mossadegh thrived with multitudes of journals covering different opinions and over 600 novels were published domestically throughout his three year tenure.⁴ Iranian life under Mossadegh was a revolutionary time where even opinions against the government were permitted, and the values Mossadegh was preaching directly parallel those of America. Mossadegh exemplified just leadership for the Iranian people, a champion of Iranian rights, and America's later role in removing Mossadegh completely disregarded the needs of the Iranian people, silenced freedom of speech and negated the fundamentally American belief of democracy.

Secondly, American actions to overthrow the democratically-elected Mossadegh encroached on Iranian national sovereignty and repudiated American values. Known as Operation Ajax, the CIA's role in the 1953 coup was spearheaded by Kermit Roosevelt. Mossadegh's nationalization of the AIOC had harmed both the UK and the US, motivating the US to topple him in order to regain control. US action in Iran was hidden from the American public at the time, illustrating the secretive nature of this pervasive assault. Modern CIA documents now reveal that the US aimed to: "Through legal, or quasi-legal, methods to effect the fall of the Mossadeq government; and to replace it with a pro-Western government under the Shah's leadership with Zahedi as its Prime Minister."⁵ Recent declassified CIA reports uncover American attempts to sway the Iranian public, with efforts made to ensure to Iranians that "authority to govern the people rested solely and completely in the hands of the Shah."⁶ Via 'quasi-legal methods,' the US was willing to trample international law in order to strengthen the Shah as a leader, enabling the dictatorship of the Shah and undermining the democracy that Mossadegh strived for. Roosevelt then seized control of the Iranian press

through bribery in order to disperse anti-Mossadegh propaganda.⁷ Roosevelt's willingness to bribe a foreign power's newspaper in order to sabotage a democratic leader also brings to light the repression of a core American value: freedom of speech. Due to collaboration with the Iranian military, which entailed bribery, the coup succeeded. Mossadegh was overthrown, and the US reaped this victory with a new 40% share of Iran's oil output.⁸ Prime Minister Zahedi, a man who was a puppet of the Shah and returned parliament to a powerless enabler of the dictatorship, replaced Mossadegh, highlighting further America's part in ending a semi-democratic state. The coup paved the way for violence under the Shah and resulted in decades of abuse against Iranians. Moreover, the measures that the US took to achieve the overthrow of Mossadegh demonstrate a contradiction of American principles and an invasion of Iran's autonomy, which would further harm the Iranian people under the ensuing regime.

Thirdly, the resulting renewal of the Shah's power plunged Iran into a dark era of oppression, revealing the harmful repercussions of the CIA's coup. Immediately following the imprisonment of Mossadegh, the Shah moved to silence any government opposition, authorizing the imprisonment and torture of a wide swath of political figures such as, "Cabinet Ministers, political leaders, members of parliament, militants, journalists, intellectuals, union members and rebellious army officers."⁹ While multitudes of opinions in journals and novels were present under Mossadegh, any written work which attacked the monarchy was censored under the Shah.¹⁰ Similar to American actions during the coup, the core American value of freedom of speech was decimated. America's decision to support Reza Pahlavi in this suppression further underscores the lack of US adherence to one of its own core principles. The Shah's actions continued to increase militarization in Iran, when the Sāzemān-e Ettelāāt va Amniyat-e Keshvar (SAVAK) was introduced as Iran's secret police. The SAVAK was founded



and trained by the CIA, thus influenced by the US, and was responsible for thousands of unjust arrests and torture.¹¹ America's intrusion on internal Iranian affairs led to the harming of innocent Iranian civilians. Both in overthrowing Mossadegh to clear a path for the Shah and in supporting his corrosive regime and intrusive secret police despite their clear violations on human rights and on American principles, America was responsible for the maltreatment of the Iranian people under Pahlavi.

Additionally, Reza Pahlavi capitalized on selective Western propaganda to control the Iranian public, creating a distinct and public connection between his violent methods and the US. Theaters, papers, and news broadcasts were flooded with American media, all which glorified the Shah and established a parallel between Pahlavia and America.¹² This wide scale propaganda endeavor further shows the Shah's efforts to deceive his people, and the overbearing presence of the West underscores his attempts to move away from traditional Iranian culture. Moreover, publicly connecting America to the brutal Shah further solidified the US's central and loathsome role in facilitating a dictator. America was equally vocal in supporting the Shah, utterly ignoring the malicious crimes Pahlavi was committing. In oppressing the people and political rivals, creating the SAVAK, and circulating harmful Western media, America and the Shah laid the framework for a broken Iranian population that was susceptible to radical ideas of Ayatollah Khomeini.

“Moreover, publicly connecting America to the brutal Shah further solidified the US's central and loathsome role in facilitating a dictator.”

The US heinously enabled the repression of an entire nation's citizens while ignoring their own empty claims of supporting democracy and freedom of speech, a pattern of hypocrisy which was evident again with the collusion between America and Khomeini.

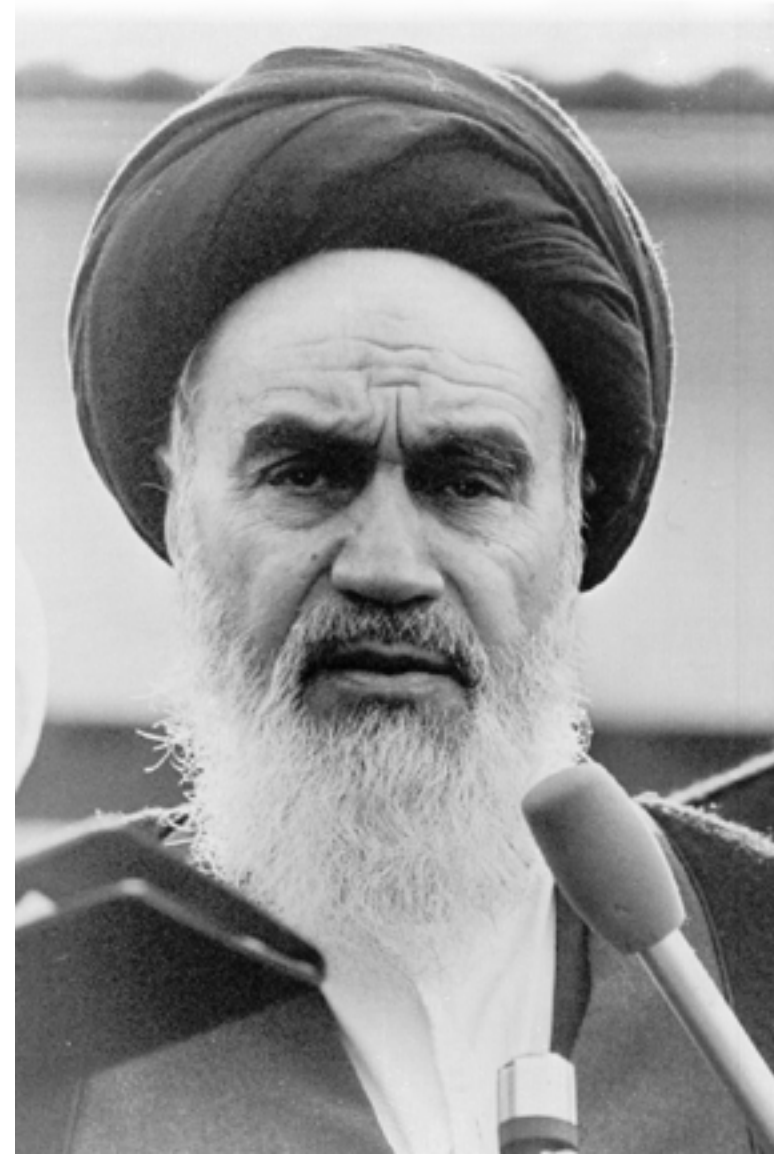
Fourthly, following the resulting oppression from the coup, the deceitful and secretive measures which the US took while supporting Ayatollah Khomeini were based on corrupt motives and trampled Iranian autonomy. Throughout the Shah's oppressive regime, the West mostly sat idly to his crimes, as American interests were being fulfilled. A BBC report on the newly revealed CIA documents outlining American motives to suddenly support Khomeini for the “vital flow of oil; and the future of the most important institution of power in Iran, the military.”¹³ America was willing to allow humans to be tortured and to support the dictator, only inserting itself once oil flow was threatened. A telegram from the US Ambassador to Iran, William

Sullivan, highlights how, “The only tangible evidence of Iranian support for the monarchy comes from the armed forces.”¹⁴ Sullivan's touting of the fragile nature of the monarchy the US had been so vehemently supporting demonstrates the first act of betrayal of existent alliances. Firstly, the US subtly ousted the Shah by persuading him to take a leave of absence, leaving Iran vulnerable to intervention.¹⁵ Secondly, through a secretive line of direct communication to Khomeini, America informed the revolutionaries that the US looked favorably upon a regime change. Furthermore, these messages confirmed to Khomeini that the Iranian military was willing to support a revolution.¹⁶ Together with the absence of the Shah, this intel was instrumental in Khomeini's successful takeover. America was acting on reasons that were anything but just, as they were solely acting on behalf of militaristic and economic interests, never for human lives. Moreover, American methods once again infringed upon Iranian sovereignty. The added secrecy and betrayal in American efforts oppose the notion that America is an honest beacon of justice in the developing world. America's role in bringing Khomeini into power was based on twisted motivations and played out in a contradictorily clandestine manner, and it would lead to further violations of the Iranian public.

Consequently, Ayatollah Khomeini was an equally oppressive leader to the people of Iran, ruling through fear due from his violent executions and religious threats, as well as through his restrictions on women's rights. Although Khomeini preached a reversal of the Shah's dictatorial methods, his first actions closely mirrored those of the Shah in 1953: execution. Over 18 months, Khomeini executed 30,000 citizens and political adversaries, beginning a new repressive era.¹⁷ Khomeini specifically attacked the prisons, killing and torturing numerous citizens who had not been sentenced to death, and threw them in mass graves.¹⁸ Despite promises of a new dawn for Iran, Khomeini ruled ruthlessly, illuminating the damaging repercussions of American involvement. Similar to the US, Khomeini exhibited a total lack of empathy for the people of Iran, killing many of his own citizens as a result of American aid in 1979. America allowed a dictator to murder the Iranian people. Additionally, the Ayatollah referred to Islam as justification for his heinous crimes, turning the culture of Iran against its own people.¹⁹ Khomeini used this profiteering of Islam to instill fear in Iranians. He connected his policies to the will of Allah, meaning those who opposed him were made to believe that they were directly sinning against the one true God. Again on the grounds of Khomeini's radicalized Islam, the regime moved to suppress women's rights. Khomeini mandated a religious veil, eliminating the freedom of choice for women's clothing. The segregation of education, the workforce, and public places further alienated women. Laws regarding divorce, child custody, and citizenship were also introduced, all with the purpose of taking away female rights.²⁰ Freedom of religion and women's rights, two central aspects of

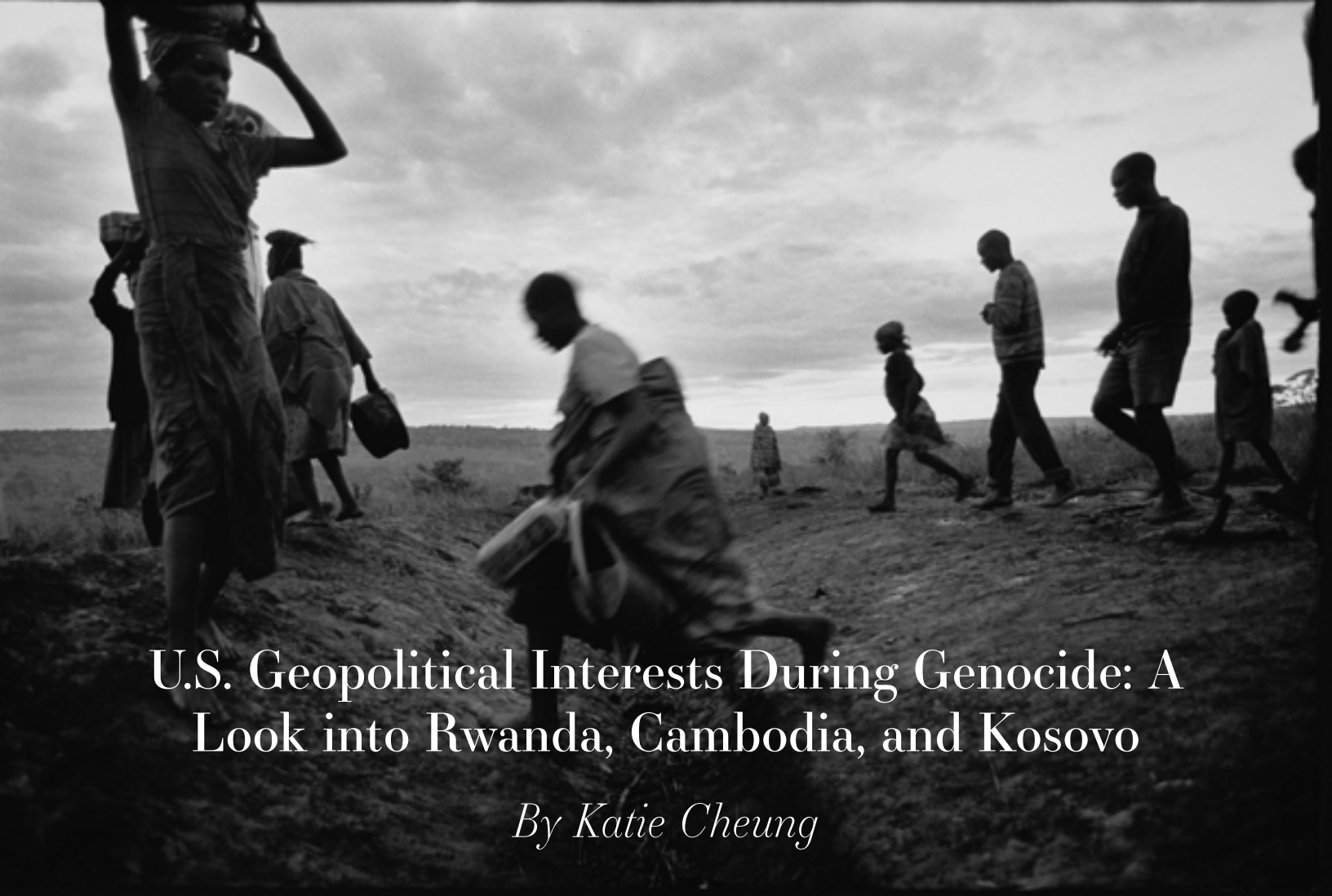
20th century America, were decimated in a further act demonstrative of American principles being shattered on account of US involvement. Khomeini's ability to perform these abhorrent violations of human rights were achievable due to American aid, both in fostering the desperate environment he exploited to gain power and in physically introducing Khomeini as ruler. The end result of America's secret support to Khomeini was the complete repression of Iran's citizens through the destruction of America's central value of freedom, and the hatred of the US in Iranian public opinion further reveals the repercussions of these catastrophic acts.

Finally, Khomeini's increasingly intense anti-American rhetoric, which climaxed in the Iranian Hostage crisis of 1979, highlights the consequences of America's unjust actions. One of Khomeini's trademark metaphors was referring to America as “the Great Satan,” depicting Western influence as the ultimate enemy to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Khomeini's religious and inflammatory speeches urged Iranians to combat this foreign force. In one instance, Khomeini commanded Iranians to, “Echo the crushing slogan of disavowing the pagans and apostates of world arrogance - headed by the criminal United States - in the house of monotheism and remember to express their hatred toward the enemies of God and mankind.”²¹ This sentiment



was popular, as America was publicly responsible for the oppressive Shah. This violent reaction to America is a direct response to the pain the US had caused Iranians, and while Khomeini spearheaded this notion, the Iranian public also harbored rightful disdain. Khomeini referenced America's global reputation, calling the nation out on hypocrisy. Specifically, Khomeini highlighted how America proclaimed to have supported human rights, yet they allowed police to kill innocent civilians.²² While Khomeini was equally as guilty, his statements on the US's hypocrisy gained popularity because Iran had suffered as a direct result of America (though American involvement with Khomeini was barred from the Iranian public, Western support of the Shah and the America's role in the 1953 coup were widely known). In November of 1979, the US embassy and the 60 Americans inside were taken by Iranian students and held for 444 days, painting America as impotent to the international community.²³ Ultimately, the Iranian Hostage Crisis occurred in response to America's own actions toward Iran. The anti-American spirit of the students who triggered the storming of the US Embassy directly exemplifies how America has damaged Iran's people. Anti-American speech and acts within Iran occurred due to America's past deeds, illustrating the pain Iranian citizens endured on account of US engagement and the wrongful compromise on American values.

Through its hegemony, the United States of America entangled itself in Iranian affairs throughout the 20th century. The US has acted primarily on self interest, with disregard for the Iranian public and in direct contrast towards America's own values. This is exemplified with America's first direct intervention, which plundered Iranian sovereignty and brought down the democratic and beneficial Mossadegh in favor of a dictator, doing so through corruption and suppression of free speech. America's interference with Iran's autonomy continued in the collusion revolving around Ayatollah Khomeini, where Iran's rights as a nation were violated and the image of the honest and just US obliterated. The role of America in Iran's history has additional global reverberations, as the ‘success’ of the 1953 coup empowered America to orchestrate future clandestine destruction of governments. America exhibits aloofness towards the killings, torturings, and other acts of oppression against the Iranian people, which were committed by dictators sponsored by the US. Equally important is the corruption of American principles, where US actions violated freedom of speech, democracy, transparency, and justice. The shining image of a glorious America bringing peace to the world is snuffed out by the reality of American actions regarding Iran. The deceitful and heavy hand of US involvement in foreign nations is epitomized with Iran, a nation where America has cavalierly invaded Iranian jurisdiction and atrociously allowed for the abuse of the public, all while hypocritically repudiating its own values.



U.S. Geopolitical Interests During Genocide: A Look into Rwanda, Cambodia, and Kosovo

By Katie Cheung

In 1941, Raphael Lemkin invented a term to describe the abhorrent human rights violations perpetrated by the Nazis during WWII. He coined the word “genocide” by combining *genos*, the Greek word for race or tribe, with the Latin suffix *-cide* (“to kill”). Genocide is violence against members of a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group with intent to destroy the entire group, and the United Nations declared it to be an international crime in 1948.¹ Many horrific acts of violence that met the definition of genocide have occurred since 1948, of which three lesser known crises took place in Rwanda, Cambodia, and Kosovo. The (lack of) response to these three genocides from the international community, specifically the United States, was cast into the spotlight. The extent to which the United States expended monetary or military resources to become involved in the Rwandan, Cambodian, and Kosovo genocides directly correlated with its economic and geopolitical interests.

During the spring of 1994 in just under three months, the Rwandan genocide led to over 800,000 deaths of the Tutsi people, an ethnic minority and political party.² Under the WWI League of Nations mandate, the Belgian’s ruling of Rwanda favored the Tutsis over the Hutus, creating tensions that caused conflict. In 1973, Juvenal Habyarimana (a Hutu) rose to power through a coup by the National Revolutionary Move-

ment for Development. In 1990, the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF), led by Tutsi refugees, invaded Rwanda. Over the next three years, the Hutu-led government directed Tutsi massacres as a civil war ensued. A ceasefire led to the 1993 Arusha Accords, calling for a transitional government including the RPF.

Peace lasted for only eight months until a plane carrying Habyarimana and the Republic of Burundi’s president was shot down in April 1994 with no survivors. Immediately, the genocide commenced as four governmental Hutu forces converged to murder Tutsis and moderate Hutus. The day after, Belgian troops withdrew after Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana and 10 Belgian peacekeepers for the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) were killed.³ Hundreds of thousands of Rwandans were dead and 2 million refugees fled, exacerbating an already dire humanitarian crisis.⁴ The genocide spread as government-sponsored radio stations ordered civilians to murder their neighbors. In July after RPF forces gained control of Kigali, leaders established a bipartisan government. In a compromise, Pasteur Bizimungu, a Hutu, was declared president. Paul Kagame, a Tutsi, was declared vice president and defense minister. In October of 1994, the Rwandan genocide concluded with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Tanzania.

With only two exceptions, the international community made no effort to mitigate the Rwandan genocide with military intervention or humanitarian aid. Although controversial, France’s “Zone Turquoise” in southwest Rwanda and Belgium’s aid packages of over 720 million Belgian francs were the only endeavors which aimed to lessen the conflict.⁶ In contrast, the U.S. failed to mount any meaningful attempts to combat the erasure of the Tutsi people due to Rwanda’s lack of geopolitical value. The Atlantic reported that, “Clinton had shown virtually no interest in stopping the genocide, and his Administration had stood by as the death toll rose into the hundreds of thousands.”⁷ After President Bush’s previous failure of a humanitarian mission in Somalia in 1993, the U.S. saw no political benefit in becoming involved in another African conflict. If the U.S. had intervened to stabilize Rwanda’s war-torn society, the U.S. would have been indefinitely responsible for propping up a country with no economic promise.

America’s lack of condemnation was highlighted during the first three days of the killings, when U.S. diplomats in Rwanda reported that armed extremists were aiming to eliminate the Tutsi, and the press reported the door-to-door hunting of unarmed civilians. On April 7, 1994 David Rawson, an American ambassador, ordered the removal of all U.S. personnel, and “in the three days during which some 4,000 foreigners were evacuated, about 20,000 Rwandans were killed.”⁸ Even worse, on April 21, press reports accounted for 100,000 dead; however, the Security Council voted to slash UNAMIR forces to 270 men.⁸ With this, the U.S. and the entire world consciously chose to abandon the Tutsi people. The U.S. had more than enough intelligence to realize that a genocide was taking place, but did not even consider the possibility of intervention. It appeared that Rwanda’s lack of global importance made the deployment of U.S. soldiers unworthy despite the mass murder of Tutsis.

It shocked the world when the U.S. failed to act despite its State Department reporting that, “lists of Tutsi victims’ names and addresses had reportedly been prepared; Rwandan government troops and Hutu militia and youth squads were the main perpetrators.”⁹ Furthermore, The Washington Post’s documentation of “the heads and limbs of victims were sorted and piled neatly, a bone-chilling order in the midst of chaos that harked back to the Holocaust,”¹⁰ was not enough to convince Clinton to take action. During the three months, he never assembled his top advisors to discuss the slaughterings. As former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali stated, “The failure of Rwanda is 10 times greater than the failure of Yugoslavia. Because in Yugoslavia the international community was interested, was involved. In Rwanda nobody was interested.”¹¹ America saw Rwanda as another failed African nation that held no political or economic gain. They believed investing money and sending troops to the Bosnian war took precedence over Rwanda. The U.S.’s failure to become involved due to the absence of

geopolitical interest in Rwanda reflected its own goal: to further the U.S.-centric ideals of economic and political dominance. In contrast, the Cambodian and Kosovo genocides illustrate the varying extent of U.S. involvement which correlated with each country’s ability to further U.S. interests.

Nineteen years prior to the Rwandan genocide, the Khmer Rouge (KR), a brutal communist regime, ruled Cambodia. Under the leadership of Marxist dictator Pol Pot, the KR aimed to create a master race which led to 1.7-2.2 million proletariat deaths as a result of execution, starvation, disease, or overwork.¹² Before the genocide began in 1975, Cambodia was ruled by monarch Prince Norodom Sihanouk. The KR operated as the armed wing of the Communist Party of Kampuchea primarily in the remote jungle areas near the Vietnam border. Pol Pot viewed the rural villagers as self-sufficient and untainted by the evils of money, wealth, and religion. The KR’s main opposition was Prime Minister Lon Nol, who was backed by the U.S. due to their anti-communist beliefs. In 1970, the tension between rural and urban citizens surged when the Prince was ousted by a coup led by Lon Nol. Forced out of power, the Prince established an alliance with the KR, ensuring his political prominence. Since the monarch was supported by Cambodians in the city, the Communists gained widespread support.

After five years of civil war between Lon Nol and the KR, the fighting concluded when the KR invaded Phnom Penh, handing total power to Pol Pot. The genocide began as he transformed Cambodia using the model of villages as an agriculture-oriented utopia, renamed Cambodia as Kampuchea, and declared 1975 as “Year Zero.” Pol Pot resettled millions of city-dwellers onto farming communes, abolished the country’s currency, outlawed ownership of private property, and prohibited practicing religion. People on the collectives suffered from overwork, lack of food, and abuse by the ruthless KR guards overseeing the camps. Enemies of the state such as intellectuals or potential leaders of revolutions were executed in centers like the Tuol Sleng jail. It was rumored that wearing glasses was enough reason to be killed. The KR hoped to extend their power into Vietnam, but the end of Pol Pot’s atrocious rule came in 1979 when the Vietnamese Army invaded Cambodia. In 1993, Prince Norodom returned to rule under a constitutional monarchy, and four years later, Pol Pot died during the trial for his crimes against the state which had resulted in the death of nearly 25% of Cambodia’s population.¹³

In contrast to the U.S.’s total absence in the Rwandan genocide, the U.S. was indirectly involved in the Cambodian genocide through criticizing Pol Pot and the expansion of Communism across southeast Asia. American soldiers were previously deployed during the Vietnam War, and the U.S. government actively fostered political ties with Lon Nol. The U.S. provided \$1.85 billion USD in aid to Lon Nol’s anti-communist regime, 95% of Lon Nol’s income, and advanced weaponry which boosted his forces during the civil war.¹⁴

The threat of Communism as a result of Cambodia's adjacent geographic position to Vietnam was important enough for the U.S. to grant monetary and military aid to Lon Nol, indirectly establishing a U.S. presence during the Cambodian genocide.

Another reason for indirect U.S. involvement was the opposing political relations between the KR, who was backed by China, and Lon Nol. The U.S.-China relationship was conflicted because while China viewed the KR as an ideological ally within the region, its global presence was central in U.S. foreign policy circles after President Nixon's trip to Beijing. As the U.S. and China battled for industrial dominance, China supplied the KR with military advisers and weaponry consisting of 100 tanks, 200 missiles, 130-mm guns, and over 12 fighter aircrafts.¹⁵ Instead of condemning the transactions, the U.S. viewed China as "a central element" in its global policy although China supported the brutal regime who aimed to exterminate "lesser" peoples. Due to China's growing geopolitical influence in southeast Asia, through their support of the KR, the U.S. intended to terminate Communism's spread and counter Chinese military supremacy through its indirect involvement in the Cambodian genocide.

In 1996, two years after the Rwandan genocide, tensions between ethnic Albanians and ethnic Serbs gave rise to the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). The Kosovo genocide displaced and murdered over a million Kosovar Albanians.¹⁶ Ten years prior, in 1986, Serbian president Slobodan Milošević altered the constitution to reduce Kosovo's provincial autonomy, eliminated thousands of Kosovar Albanian jobs, and restricted their cultural organizations. Leader of the Albanians, Ibrahim Rugova, organized protests against the repeal of the province's autonomy, and in 1991, ethnic Albanians proclaimed themselves members of the Republic of Kosovo.

In 1998, the genocide began when Serbs massacred over 50 members of the Jashari family, the founders of the KLA. An 11 year-old girl who survived recalled, "The third day they shot at us and killed my uncle... I saw that everything was burned."¹⁷ This massacre moved the Contact Group (U.S., UK, France, Germany, Italy and Russia) to congregate, and the immediate assemblage of the world's strongest nations mirrors the U.S.'s political ideals.¹⁸ The Western nations feared total war in southeastern Europe more than they had in Rwanda. The Balkans held greater importance due to its geographic position between western Europe and the Middle East. Likewise, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) took action much quicker compared to their response to other situations due to the risk of violence spreading to other Balkan states, which would force Russia to become involved in a full blown proxy war. Resolution 1160 condemned the use of "excessive force by Serbian police forces... and all external support for terrorist activity in Kosovo, including finance, arms and training."¹⁹ In Rwanda, there was minimal urgency from the international community to even acknowledge the violence. However, the explicit denun-

ciation of the Kosovo genocide by the UNSC reflects how Kosovo held greater geopolitical influence and value than Rwanda or Cambodia.

In May, Rugova sought President Clinton's support after 20 Kosovar Albanians were killed in retaliation for the death of a Serb policeman.²⁰ The Balkan Air Show in the summer of 1998 had 85 NATO warplanes fly over Albania in a show of force aimed at Milošević.²¹ The immense opportunity for political gain in Kosovo led the U.S. to directly dispatch armed forces both in the air and on the ground to aid the Kosovar Albanians. As more Kosovar Albanians were massacred, the October Agreement prompted for Serbian compliance with UN Resolution 1999, a cease-fire, troop withdrawals, and autonomy for Kosovo. Peace ensued until the Racak Massacre resulted in 45 Kosovar Albanian deaths on January 15, 1999.²² Fearful of creating a crisis similar to the Bosnian genocide, Clinton gathered his foreign policy council and the KLA attended peace talks with the Contact Group. Direct efforts from the U.S. to establish peace occurred when Clinton announced the deployment of 4,000 U.S. peacekeepers in Kosovo.²³ With U.S. aid and the UNSC adoption of Resolution 1244, over 600,000 Albanians returned from the hills.²⁴ Formal violence closed with the Kumanovo Treaty, and finally, Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in February 2008, just 13 years ago. Due to the geopolitical implications Kosovo possessed, the U.S. military directly intervened to resolve the Kosovo genocide, something the U.S. failed to replicate in Rwanda and Cambodia.

"The third day they shot at us and killed my uncle... I saw that everything was burned."

In summary, the level of U.S. involvement in the Rwandan, Cambodian, and Kosovo genocides reflected the geopolitical interests of the U.S.. Although the Rwandan genocide was known as the "most efficient killing spree of the twentieth century," it received no U.S. military intervention due to the country's lack of political value or influence.²⁵ In comparison, the sizable financial aid from the U.S. to bolster Lon Nol's forces against the expansion of Communism along with opposing political Asian alliances justified the U.S. to become indirectly involved in condemning the KR's mass murder of Cambodians. Finally, the U.S.'s direct role in NATO's mission against Russian dominance in Kosovo led the U.S. to deliberately use air and ground forces to resolve the Kosovo genocide. Tensions among targeted populations have continued into the 21st century, highlighting the importance of reflection regarding the United State's varying response to these conflicts and the dire need for adequate solutions that will mitigate casualties.



"The Kosovo genocide displaced and murdered over a million Kosovar Albanians."



KNOCK (it) OFF

By Angelica Anousis

Just as police in a city deal with crime, innovators of a brand deal with counterfeiters. Counterfeit products are imitations of authentic goods that are sold with the intention to exploit the superior worth and cost of a genuine product. The counterfeiting business has extended into technology, software, consumer goods and manufacturing. A company's profits determine the amount of taxes they pay to the government, the ability to increase hiring which improves consumer spending, and influences trade and the economy. Larger companies play a big role assisting the overarching economy but generally have more intellectual property rights and thus, are more impacted by counterfeiters. Not only does the mimicked product affect the veritable companies profit, but due to the copious amounts of counterfeiting, especially from China, there is an association with diminished economic activity, particularly in the United States. It is known that eighty percent of the world's counterfeited goods stem from China.¹ Counterfeit businesses are able to do this by disregarding Intellectual Property Rights, such as patents, of companies globally. These rights are attributed to the authentic creator of a product to protect their innovation and to provide exclusive rights for a period of time. China's lack of respect towards intellectual property rights threatens the economic ecosystems of the world including one of the largest economies, the United States. China disrespecting the United States intellectual property rights hurts the United States economy as well as China's own, and it impairs the US perception of China.

The continued penetration of Chinese counterfeit products into the United States, enhanced through

e-commerce channels, represents China's blatant disrespect of US intellectual property rights (IPR). In addition, China's actions result in the need for a costly enforcement effort from the US, significant safety concerns, negative perception towards China, and adverse impacts on the US economy. A surge of e-commerce has "revolutionized the way goods are bought and sold, allowing for counterfeit and pirated goods to flood [US] borders and penetrate our communities and homes. Illicit goods trafficked to American consumers by e-commerce platforms and online third-party marketplaces threaten public health and safety, as well as national security."² The effect of the increased use of e-commerce and the efficiency in which goods can be offered for sale and purchased online has accelerated the amount of counterfeit items entering the US. By allowing for these fake products to be manufactured and sold at all, shows the utter lack of respect of China towards the US IPR. Moreover, this illegal infringement, along with the knowledge that several of these knock-off products jeopardize public health and safety and are made in China, lays the foundation for the cynical or negative global impression of China. The ease with which China sells their counterfeit products throughout the US, provides, "the ability to rapidly proliferate third-party online marketplaces [which] greatly complicates enforcement efforts, especially for intellectual property rights holders."³ Thus, by increasingly selling counterfeit goods online, China's lack of respect towards IPR creates a massive issue for the intellectual property rights holder to track and thwart the everpresent counterfeit business. The difficulty to enforce and monitor counterfeiter infringement gives

a window of opportunity for these counterfeiters to flourish, and as a result, "encourage[ing] IP theft,"⁴ which causes the authentic company to lose revenue. With US products not being purchased, this eats into the U.S economy. The economic effects of IP theft on the United States is a topic followed by the IP Commission Report which states, "[It is] estimate[d] that the annual cost to the US economy continues to exceed \$225 billion in counterfeit goods, pirated software, and theft of trade secrets and could be as high as \$600 billion."⁵ This estimation, the majority of which is brought upon by Chinese counterfeit goods, demonstrates the serious financial losses that the US faces when IP rights are disregarded.

As stated previously, the ever increasing disregard of IPR online via counterfeit goods only heightens a financial threat. There are many counterfeit goods that disrespect IPR such as footwear, jewelry, electronics, handbags, and apparel, however a significant amount of other types of "products...pose significant dangers to the consumer. Fake prescription drugs can lack active ingredients, contain incorrect dosages, or include dangerous additives. Fake personal care items such as cosmetics have been found to contain everything from harmful bacteria to human waste."⁶ These knock-off products are created with ingredients harmful to humans, causing the demographic to be less likely to purchase these products from the branded manufacturer or an online retailer. Once rendered as Chinese counterfeit, the attitude towards China is damaged. Thus, this not only puts the person's health in danger, but the US economy suffers. These billions of dollars lost from the U.S economy and safety threats inflicted on the US citizens caused, "the Trump administration...to ensure that China is keeping its promises to protect American intellectual property, ratcheting up searches for counterfeit goods at ports and increasing pressure on e-commerce companies like Amazon to halt online sales of Chinese knockoffs."⁷ This blatant and costly action is a reflection at the highest level in the US, of the image the U.S holds of China. Evidence of the impaired U.S perception of China, is illustrated when China is singled out at the US ports for inspections of counterfeit goods, which in turn, due to monitoring costs negatively influences the U.S economy. China's failure to abide by US IPR, accelerated by the popularity of e-commerce channels, has increased China's counterfeit products sold into the United States. This creates economic decline in the US due to lost profits, expensive monitoring efforts, and safety concerns, all of which roll into a negative image of China.

Over time these counterfeit products dilute the authentic brands, causing loss of profit directly and indirectly, through damage of the existing brand and in the actions necessary to fight against counterfeiters, leading to an overall reduction in the U.S economy. The counterfeit goods are almost always completely identical in style to the authentic product and, "since many customers are unaware that the product in their hands is a fake, when the knock-off item fails to work

correctly, or it falls apart quickly, or it doesn't meet their expectations, then the customer will blame the authentic company... Customers will also leave negative reviews online, further cementing this new reputation crisis... This does twice as much damage on Amazon... Online reviews are used as public indicators for brand quality."⁸ When these counterfeit goods, eighty percent of which are manufactured in China, are bought by unsuspecting U.S customers, their experience is reflected onto the authentic brand, from which they think they have purchased.⁹ The counterfeit products are so similar to the authentic brand that customers do not recognize discrepancies, so any product malfunctions lead the buyer to correlate these negative attributes with the high quality brand, often publicly unleashing negative reviews online. Online consumers rely on reviews as a representation of the product and brand quality, and the loss of the brands' goodwill from accumulated negative reviews inhibits new and existing customers from purchasing. Without maintaining or increasing the profits within the individual brands in the US that file into the US business infrastructure, the US economy overall suffers economic losses. The extent of the reduction in brand confidence and its impact to the overall US economy is fueled by the, "66% of consumers that had been ripped off after unintentionally purchasing counterfeit goods have lost trust in buying from that brand again, while 34% of all consumers surveyed were less likely to buy from the brand's own website if its products had been susceptible to counterfeiting elsewhere online."¹⁰ The loss of 66% of counterfeit consumers from repurchasing the genuine branded product causes a significant future drop in sales for the US company. In turn, the aggregate of all US companies suffering from this loss of revenue inhibits the overall US economy.

Furthermore, these same customers who have purchased a counterfeit product will often reach out to the authentic company to express their dissatisfaction with the product. This exchange may be the first instance when a company realizes that their product is being copied. The next step after "a company discovers they're being targeted by counterfeiters, [is] generally want[ing] to fight back. But this is time-consuming and...extremely expensive. Resources get pulled away from ... anything else the company may have been excited to invest in, and instead must fund lawyers and lawsuits to defend their intellectual property... Legitimate companies are forced to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars... trying to force back a tidal wave of counterfeits sold on places like Amazon."¹¹ As more funds are spent on costly and time-consuming litigation to fend off counterfeiting businesses, the brands must invest outside of their companies, in lieu of investments in research, innovation, and advertising that would otherwise have helped their brand. Further, when in combination with other companies in the same position, this would drive growth for the overall US economy. Counterfeit products adulterate the authentic brands, and leave companies losing money

in the efforts necessary to fight the counterfeiters, ultimately contracting the U.S economy.

When China infringes on US intellectual property rights, US entrepreneurs become discouraged, decreasing innovation, which in turn leads to economic decline in the US. Most reputable companies in the US hold intellectual property rights protecting the metes and bounds of their products. Patents, trademarks, and copyrights are all regarded as, “Intellectual property protection [which] actively promotes innovation, according to the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC). Research and development and other innovations flourish when there are strong intellectual property rights (IPR) and companies realize there’s more value from innovations protected by IPR than those that are not.”¹² The protection of IPR provides security allowing for innovation to ignite as the publication of patents fosters others to make new improvements and this leads to the gradual progression of innovation. When IPR is disrespected, there is no security within the system, discouraging the innovation process. IPR is disrespected through the creation of counterfeit products. If IPR promotes innovation, and China disrespects the IPR through the creation of counterfeit goods, then China is inhibiting US innovation, which erodes the US economy. The effects of counterfeiting are not limited to inflicting harm on consumers and companies alike, but are “complex and far reaching... The illegal counterfeit trade also stifles research and innovation which is not just important for creativity, cultural diversity and the availability of better products and services for consumers, but also for the long-term growth of economies.”¹³ Evidently, China’s disrespect of IPR, has a major effect on the innovation process of companies by disturbing the new developments of authentic US brands, the latter of which drive the U.S economy. Thus, this explains how China’s counterfeiting activities have a direct influence on the United States economic growth. A high-level representative of a US company speaking to the President of the United States, explained that, “We put all these resources, time, energy, money, the design, make sure the consumer wants to buy it, come up with a marketing campaign to launch the product and do all that effort and find within 30 days the product dies a very fast death because of counterfeits... There’s not much incentive to be innovative and continue to come up with new products.”¹⁴ He further asserts, “counterfeit products coming from China and sold on Amazon are destroying his business.”¹⁵ This illustrates the direct impact a Chinese counterfeiting business has on a US business; one destroying the other. With the dwindling innovation that results, US company after US company generates less revenue, risks their business, stops innovating, and this ultimately leads to US economic decline.

China’s counterfeit measures negatively affect China’s own economy as well, through the lens of the food industry and the dangers associated with having counterfeit ingredients impacting the health of their citizens. Well-known scandals such as toxin-tainted

milk, fake eggs, and gutter oil have plagued Chinese consumers to the point where they are, “buying more imported international food or preferring packaging that has tamper-proof seals and prominently displayed origin or certification labels, even if those products are more expensive.”¹⁶ Due to the embedded distrust and continued fears within the society related to the danger of counterfeit Chinese foods, the citizens look outside of China to buy trustworthy goods, to the detriment of one of China’s largest economies, the food industry. The lack of trust between Chinese citizens and the available food products, creates staggering statistics revealing that “More than 85% [of Chinese consumers] buy imported food... Chinese consumers are most likely to buy imported foods from the US and France, as they are seen as having the best reputation for exported food.”¹⁷ This demonstrates a direct and proportional relationship between the unfavorable health-related side effects of the Chinese fake foods and the deliberate decision of the majority of the Chinese population to purchase external goods. It follows that the Chinese food industries’ economy has been bypassed. China’s counterfeit food products have played a major role in the drastic agricultural import increases, so much so that, “China is now the world’s largest agricultural importer, surpassing both the European Union (EU) and the United States in 2019 with imports totaling \$133.1 billion.”¹⁸ Overall, the Chinese population has spent 133.1 billion dollars on foreign imports, a substantial amount of which has been extracted from the Chinese agricultural/food industry. In the infant formula and dairy products alone, “The EU dominates China’s infant formula market, with an overall dairy market share of 45 percent.”¹ This meteoric upsurge in baby formula imports, specifically, is just one example of many that depicts the direct link between increase in imports and decrease in the Chinese market share and economy. With more trust placed in European products and the increased purchases outside of China’s borders, the European Union dominates this market while China’s economy perishes.

China has the potential to be a leading nation with great standing in the global economy; however, their negligence towards US intellectual property rights has led to detrimental effects not only to the U.S economy, but also to their own. Their continued behavior perpetuates the negative US perception that China takes shortcuts, which is only further supplemented by the astounding realization that the Chinese are willing to place their own citizens’ health in danger by producing and distributing fake food. As disturbing current news exposing counterfeit Covid-19 vaccines and other scandals from China accumulate, it becomes more evident that the Chinese government has to step up regulations and prioritize the enforcement of IPR. If health is not a motivating force for this behavior, then perhaps the emergence of their own branded companies, and the fear that counterfeiters will copy those, will incentivize them.





The Effect of United States Detente Policy Upon Sino-Japanese Relations

By Corban Shih

Dating back to as early as the seventh century A.D., China and Japan have constantly been in and out of conflicts. With systems of government in eastern Asia ever-changing, from dynastic, to feudal, to imperial, conflict was the only constant. During the Qing dynasty in 1875, tensions rose as Japan forced the Chinese-controlled Korean Peninsula to open up to foreign trade, particularly from Japan and the West. War broke out in 1894, the aftermath of which resulted in Korean independence and China ceding many island territories to Japan, such as Taiwan, the Liaodong Peninsula, and the Pescadores islands.¹ The ultimate implications of this first Sino-Japanese war were Dynastic China's weak underbelly being put on display, and the Japanese Empire rising and becoming a prominent power in the East. During the 1900's, relations between China and Japan would experience the effects of many external influences, such as the United States. The 20th century would also bring about a second Sino-Japanese war in 1937, contemporary with World War II. During WWII in 1941, the Japanese bombing of the United States naval base Pearl Harbor launched American involvement into both WWII and the ongoing Sino-Japanese conflict. The end of the Second Sino-Japanese war marked the beginning of large-scale American involvement in China-Japan relations. Prominent topics such as American occupation, Tiananmen sanctions, and the Cold War were the fuel of negative China-Japan relations, with the Shanghai Communiqué and Taiwan being positive influencers.

United States detente policy was the guiding hand of Sino-Japanese relations, dramatically declining or improving diplomatic ties between the two nations throughout the decades. Ultimately, such policy had a negative influence on the bilateral relations of the two countries, demonstrating the great harm of modern 20th century imperialism.

The first of the many negative American influences on Sino-Japanese relations was American occupation of Japan post-WWII, which greatly discouraged trilateral diplomatic relations and was the primary reason that a friendship between China and Japan failed to develop for two decades. In 1947, the United States declared a post-war constitution for Japan, outlawing the "right of belligerency" and establishing that the right to collective self defense was no longer a sovereign right.² Western militarization of Japan continued as The Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan was signed in 1951. The treaty was, in short, a military alliance between the United States and Japan as part of repercussions for the atrocities committed in war during the previous decade. This treaty meant that the United States was able to station American troops and bases on Japanese soil. This treaty, and the ensuing implications, drove relations between China and Japan into the ground, especially with the Korean War on the horizon.³ China viewed Japan with increasing distrust during this time, as Mao's anti-west China strongly opposed having a neighbor that was essentially an American military base. Occu-

pation of Japan became more and more problematic as the Korean War dawned on eastern Asia. Japan and China found themselves on opposite sides of the conflict, supporting South Korea and North Korea respectively. During the time of this war, Japan was used as a vessel for the United States, while also not being allowed to defend itself pending Chinese invasion. Although indirectly, being opposing belligerents in a war that was not only over territory but also ideology was detrimental to bilateral diplomatic relations.

Secondly, breaking the trend of American occupation and negative influence, the "Nixon Shock," bringing about the Shanghai Communiqué, was the turning point of 20th century Sino-Japanese relations, opening up diplomatic relations in an unprecedented manner. In 1972, President Richard Nixon visited the People's Republic of China, the first sitting president to do so. This was a widespread shock to the nation, as ever since the PRC defeated the ROC military in 1949, Japan and the United States recognized the ROC government on Taiwan as the sole government of China.⁴ Nixon sought out normalized relations with the PRC, and Japan followed suit. In Beijing, Nixon worked for months with PRC and Japanese officials to establish trilateral diplomatic relations, eventually coming out in September 1972 with the Joint Communiqué of Government of Japan and Government of People's Republic of China, also known as the Shanghai Communiqué. The joint statement reads,

The Government of Japan and the Government

of People's Republic of China have decided to establish diplomatic relations as from September 29, 1972. The two Governments have decided to take all necessary measures for the establishment and the performance of the functions of each other's embassy in their respective capitals in accordance with international law and practice, and to exchange ambassadors as speedily as possible.⁵

The exchange of embassies and ambassadors in both countries was essential for a positive foundation for bilateral foreign affairs, with embassies being utilized for a plethora of reasons, such as business, education, and tourism, all of which were transactions that had been unheard of between China and Japan in centuries. Secondly, in point six of the communiqué, it is declared that,

The Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of China agree to establish relations of perpetual peace and friendship between the two countries on the basis of the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence. The two Governments confirm that, in conformity with the foregoing principles and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, Japan and China shall in their mutual relations settle all disputes by peaceful means

and shall refrain from the use or threat of force.⁶ This point of the communiqué was especially significant because of the extremely violent and conflict-ridden relationship between the two nations in the past. Peaceful coexistence between China and Japan was so rarely found, and to have a formal document declaring mutual respect for one another was essential. This communiqué could not have been settled upon without the persistence and boldness of the Nixon administration, and negotiations never would have been settled without this American support and involvement.

As mentioned in the Shanghai Communiqué, Taiwan's status as recognized by Japan as a part of mainland China was one of the few aspects holding together Sino-Japanese relations, as it set a precedent of trust between PRC and Japan, while other western countries such as the U.S. recognized Taiwan's independence. An essential point made in the above Shanghai Communiqué was the status of Taiwan as recognized by Japan and the west. In 1951, the U.S. came to the San Francisco Treaty, which called for Japanese forfeit of territory, one such instrumental territory being Taiwan.⁷ While the San Francisco Treaty freed Taiwan from Japan's sovereignty, it was still left unclear in the declaration whether Taiwan was to be independent or a part of the PRC. The subject became one of great controversy, as the ROC and president Chiang Kai-Shek not only physically occupied the island, but were also promised sovereignty over Taiwan, and they were no longer the official governing body in China. Clause three of the Shanghai Communiqué states,

The Government of the People's Republic of China reiterates that Taiwan is an inalienable part of the territory of the People's Republic of China. The Government of Japan fully understands and respects this stand of the Government of the People's Republic of China, and it firmly maintains its stand under Article 8 of the Potsdam Proclamation.⁸

Japan recognized Beijing and the PRC as the sole governing body of China, breaking away from

the trend set by the United States. This was part of what allowed Japan and China to establish diplomatic relations, as Taiwan was a controversy that could not be solved in the East until 1972.⁹ The uncertainty surrounding Taiwan is the biggest reason why Japan recognizing Taiwan as part of PRC was so significant. Japan was one of the only countries of the time not to recognize ROC's independence, allowing for trust and friendship to form between Japan and the PRC.

In early June of 1989, pro-democracy protesters gathered in Tiananmen Square.

The 1989 sanctions imposed upon China by Japan and the United States following the authoritarian crackdown of Chinese statesman Deng Xiaoping were catastrophic for Sino-Japanese relations, and demonstrates why economic and trade relations were never able to be cultivated between the two nations. Following in the footsteps of the United States and the West, Japan imposed unofficial sanctions on the PRC following the Tiananmen massacre in 1989. The largest of these actions was Japan's suspension of their \$5.57 billion six year concessional loan program with China. Japan also withdrew Japanese "specialists" in China, working on various projects of engineering and technology, harboring any further advancements.¹⁰ The two countries reached an economic stalemate, which was catastrophic for both economies, as they had become increasingly interdependent upon one other. Japan veered from using the term "sanctions," in order to make their intent clear; following suit with the West while attempting to maintain benevolent relations with their Pacific neighbor.¹¹ These sanctions demonstrated how Japan still had little independence from American influence, which continued to see a decline in diplomatic relations with China. This is further exemplified by the fact that Japan strongly opposed imposing any sanctions at all, with Prime Minister Sosuke Uno making a public statement saying that imposing sanctions against China "is very impolite to a neighboring country."¹² Many Japanese officials also thought that

the United States was overly punitive of China, with repercussions such as worsening China's isolation. This clearly demonstrates how Japan wanted to maintain trade relations with China, but the United States would not permit China to go unpunished. These Sino-Japanese ties and plans for collective economic growth were snuffed out by American influence, and is the main reason for Japan and China failing to restabilize economic friendship.

Finally, the United States emerging as a sole power, following the Cold War and fall of the Soviet Union, is the primary reason for China and Japan being launched back into their original positions of mistrust and rivalry. During the 1970's, and through the 1980's, there was what is known as a Golden Age in Sino-Japanese relations, with trade and friendship being well cultivated and encouraged. However, when China lost their biggest influence and stabilizer in the Soviet Union, the view of China shifted completely in Japan. China began to be seen as a regional rival, standing in the way of Japan's own interests, no longer necessary for aid to Japan. During the Taiwan Missile Crisis of 1995-96, Japanese suspicions grew into concerns, with China firing a series of missiles at the coast of Taiwan. This set a precedent for Japan and other surrounding island nations, fearing that they could be the next targets of an untrustworthy China.¹³ Ultimately, national security was at the center of all these worries, something Japan still had little control over, as Japan was essentially still an American pawn at the time. The United States and Japan continued to strengthen and reaffirm their positive bilateral relations, promising military defense not only in Japan, but also in areas surrounding Japan. This raised further suspicions in China regarding the status of Taiwan, and if there would be American intervention and involvement. On the opposite end, China grew more and more concerned about Japan and remilitarization, especially looking at the violent history of a highly relations with their Pacific neighbor.¹⁴ These sanctions demonstrated

how Japan still had little independence from American influence, which continued to see a decline in diplomatic relations with China. This is further exemplified by the fact that Japan strongly opposed imposing any sanctions at all, with Prime Minister Sosuke Uno making a public statement saying that imposing sanctions against China "is very impolite to a neighboring country."¹⁵ Many Japanese officials also thought that the United States was overly punitive of China, with repercussions such as worsening China's isolation. This clearly demonstrates how Japan wanted to maintain trade relations with China, but the United States would not permit China to go unpunished. These Sino-Japanese ties and plans for collective economic growth were snuffed out by American influence, and is the main reason for Japan and China failing to restabilize economic friendship.

Throughout the 20th century and continuing to modern times, United States foreign affairs and detente policy have been the backbone of Sino-Japanese relations, remaining the deciding factor on the nature of their diplomatic interdependency. Ultimately, by means of occupation, the Tiananmen sanctions, and the Cold War, the United States has had an overwhelmingly negative impact upon economic and diplomatic relations between China and Japan. This is but one of the many prominent, persistent conflicts which continue to this day, that have been sparked or worsened by Western Imperialism and influence. Another such example is the Israel-Palestine conflict, which worsened when the British issued the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence to the Arab people, then undercut them with the Sykes-Picot agreement. The center of these conflicts is not just imperialism, but also unbalanced power dynamics, as evident with the United States effectively utilizing Japan as an annex for half a century.



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