

VITAL SIGNS

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Embattled Gaza: Elusive Peace in the Twice-Promised Land

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Avoiding U.S.-China Conflict 2
 HUNTER STIRES
Charlie Hebdo and Security Reform in France 4
 PRADYUTH MAGANTI
Incarceration Incorporated 5
 PETER SHIM
Embattled Gaza 6
 NATALIE LIFSON
Plunging Oil Prices 8
 NICOLE MO
CIA Torture, National Insecurity? 9
 EMILIA McMANUS
Ferguson and Race Relations 10
 JOSH METZGER
Rape at UVA? 12
 NEEL SAMBAMURTHY
An Attack on Free Expression 13
 SEAN WANG
The Future of Darren Wilson 15
 JULIA AXTELL
Economy Against Ecology? 16
 EMMA PALMER
Brave New World of the "Sharing Economy" 18
 JONATHAN ALGOO
China's Corruption Crackdown 19
 SIYU CAO
Concussions in Sports 21
 BRYCE WEISHOLTZ AND SAM KECECI
PTSD—The War Comes Home 24
 GREG NARATIL

EDITORIAL



President Obama greets PRC Premier Wen Jiabao at the UN in 2010. THE WHITE HOUSE

Deterrence and Diplomacy: Avoiding a U.S.-China War

China's ascent has created new threats to peace in Asia. To preserve regional stability, the United States must be prepared to diplomatically engage and militarily deter China.

BY HUNTER STIRES

In recent years, the rise in the national clout and military power of the People's Republic of China has led to serious consternation among the armed forces of the United States and its Pacific allies. Should the United States fail to effectively signal that its armed forces are unambiguously capable of addressing this emerging regional threat, the American ability to deter hostile action will likely break down, increasing the danger of large-scale armed conflict in the Western Pacific.

China at this time is the strongest of three major revisionist powers in Eurasia, the other two being Iran and Russia. China's current national objective, articulated by Xi Jinping as "the Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation," appears to include the "restoration" of

historical Chinese hegemony over East Asia that was lost during the decline and fall of the Qing Dynasty. This new effort has taken the form of a "salami-slicing" campaign in the South China Sea and the East China Sea, where China has begun to selectively challenge international law and specific aspects of the status quo to suit its own purposes. China's recent actions give the impression that it seeks to displace the United States as the arbiter of security in the Western Pacific, perhaps by openly confronting U.S. allies like Taiwan, Japan, and the Philippines.

This does not necessarily mean that China wishes for war with the United States. Current People's Liberation Army leaders emphasize that their improving capabilities, though impressive, do not yet surpass those of the United States. Nevertheless, a combination of diplomatic, military, and economic factors could make conflict much more likely. Longstanding strategic distrust, fueled on the American side by the opacity of both the Chinese Communist Party and the People's Liberation Army, and on the Chinese side by the American propensity to view single-party autocracies as illegitimate regimes, has encouraged a divergence of perception in the two countries. Chinese military writers see the American "Pacific Pivot" as an attempt to contain it geopolitically and even as a preparatory move toward the eventual overthrow of

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**On the Cover:
 Israeli Security Forces on Patrol**

the CCP, while many in the U.S. believe that China's assurances of its "peaceful rise" are, in fact, an attempt to conceal hostile intentions. Militarily, while China is not yet in a position to win a symmetrical war with the U.S., particularly at sea, where such a conflict would be expected to unfold, the new composition of the People's Liberation Army Navy and the Second Artillery Corps is designed to meet just such a challenge. By building a green-water "fortress fleet" and developing their long-range systems of shore-based anti-ship weaponry, China hopes to close large swaths of the Western Pacific to U.S. forces and thereby deny freedom of action to U.S. carrier groups according to what modern naval planners refer to as an "Anti-Access and Area Denial" (A2/AD) strategy. Should the Chinese leadership miscalculate American intentions, become overconfident in its own capabilities, or gain the misperception that the United States would decline to intervene against an attack on a major ally for fear of economic repercussions and unacceptable losses, the CCP, if faced with domestic political pressure, might whip up nationalist sentiment and launch an external military adventure that would result in a major conflagration.

Such a grim outcome can, however, be avoided. By applying the lessons of history across all levels of command (tactical, operational, theatre, and strategic), the American military can gain greater understanding of the large-scale trends and strategic circumstances that face it today in the Pacific. The U.S. and its allies have seen similar situations before, first with Germany's strategic naval challenge in World War I, then with Japan's use of A2/AD operational tactics in World War II, and most recently with the Soviet Union's sea denial fleet and doctrine in the latter part of the Cold War. I would argue that the crux of these examples lies in the success or failure of deterrence during each time period. In the two world wars, admirals in Germany and Japan believed that victory could be achieved if their smaller fleets could destroy some piece of their respective larger adversary's fleet through the use of new technology, the dreadnought in the case of Germany and carrier air power in the case of Japan. This thinking fostered the perception of a temporary lapse in capability—and therefore deterrence credibility—on the part of Britain and the United States, and led to reckless actions, such as the decision to ignore Britain's ultimatum to withdraw from Belgium and the attack on Pearl Harbor. The Soviet problem, meanwhile, was successfully addressed with a mix of strategic nuclear deterrence and the development of powerful long-range naval air defense through the revolutionary Aegis Combat System.

For the 21st century, it will be imperative for the United States to maintain both good diplomatic relations with China and military advantage. The U.S. should continue to widen its economic, political, and military relationships with China to assuage distrust and close the strategic rift between the two countries, but should do so from a position of strength that can enable smart generosity and effective partnership. Tactical innovations currently in development, such as laser-based point defenses, stealthy anti-ship missiles, and railguns will help American forces improve their ability to defeat and, more importantly, deter potential attacks on forward positions in the Western Pacific. At the same time, procurement of new conventional, nuclear, and cyber naval and air platforms will give policymakers a greater range of options when responding to regional challenges.

The United States has a broad range of historical experiences to draw upon when considering the great power dynamics of the 21st century. If the United States can pay close attention to the lessons of the past, it can avert strategic scenarios that lead to deterrence breakdown and total war, and instead opt for an outcome that avoids battlefield confrontation while attaining strategic victory. If, however, in its rush to disarm after a decade of protracted, open-ended conflict, the United States allows its capability of dealing with major global threats to falter, then expansionist Chinese politics could very possibly decide the future.

" The U.S. should continue to widen its economic, political, and military relationships with China to assuage distrust and close the strategic rift between the two countries, but should do so from a position of strength that can enable smart generosity and effective partnership. "



US PACIFIC FLEET/FLICHR

EDITORIAL



Charlie Hebdo's Impact on French Security

JESUISGODEFROYTROUDE FLICKR

The terrorist attack on Charlie Hebdo this past January has shocked the French public to a degree comparable with the effect of 9/11 on the United States. How this tragedy will effect French security policy, however, remains to be seen.

BY PRADYUTH MAGANTI

The *Charlie Hebdo* crisis is to French history as 9/11 is to American history. The Hebdo shootings are the most significant act of terrorism on French soil in at least the past half-century. Although the sheer magnitude of the Hebdo attack was not nearly as severe as 9/11, its importance is comparable. It will spark tremendous debate in France about national security procedures similar to the deliberations that preceded U.S. policy reforms following September 11th.

The perpetrators of the attack were not alone in their hatred for *Charlie Hebdo*, a satirical French magazine. For decades, *Charlie Hebdo* has mocked the Islamic religion among many others. According to many interpretations of Islam, the depiction of the prophet Muhammad is strictly forbidden. Yet *Charlie Hebdo* drew cartoons of Muhammad with no regard to those beliefs. Despite many threats and a previous bombing, *Charlie Hebdo* never wavered in its resolve to publish satire that directly mocked Muslims. Retaliation was not necessary though—freedom of speech may have enabled the magazine to publish offensive cartoons, but extremists took it too far in an attempt to avenge the prophet Muhammad.

On January 7, 2015, two jihadists who frequently associate with al-Qaida barged into the offices of *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris, and then shot and killed 11 people there, adding a final victim on their way out of the building. The ensuing manhunt for brothers Cherif and Said Kouachi resulted in chaos across France and forced the government to issue its highest terror alert. Although French police caught the pair of suspects two days later, the entire ordeal cost millions of dollars and left a sense of uncertainty across all of France. How did two known extremists manage to execute a terror plot that French intelligence agencies had specifically prepared for?

French officials have long known of the hatred that extreme Islamist groups harbor toward *Charlie Hebdo*. That is why security measures were already in place, including security guards and surveillance cameras surrounding the premises of *Charlie Hebdo*. Still, the two suspects managed to enter through the front door of the building and go on a killing spree. The success of the killers in breaching the security protocol indicate that not enough was done to protect the magazine. Fortunately, that will change. The aftermath of any tragedy is always a critical focal point, because recovery and reform are the essential

objectives in preparing for the future. More can and will be done.

Terrorism has existed for centuries, and attacks will continue to occur. Though we cannot control the timing and setting of these incidents, the extent of these attacks largely depends on the preparation and response of government agencies. The chemistry between different national agencies plays a critical role in national security. For instance, the Directorate General for External Security and the Directorate of Territorial Surveillance were not sharing information effectively, causing a delay in the response to the *Hebdo* shootings. A similar issue occurred with the CIA and FBI prior to the 9/11 attacks. The CIA never made the FBI aware of the tourist visas that were granted to previously known members of al-Qaida. Obviously, it is impossible to tell whether, if the FBI had known, they would have taken measures to stop the terrorists from boarding the airplanes. Nevertheless, with increased coordination among government agencies, relaying important information creates better prospects of stopping acts of terrorism.

Even with intelligence reforms, however, it is becoming increasingly difficult to stop senseless acts of terrorist violence. Not only do agencies within the confines of the same borders have to work smoothly together, but agencies around the world need to coordinate better. The problem here is simple: not all nations are willing to cooperate. It is nearly impossible for all agencies to disseminate all their information on terrorists to each other without the fear of some of the knowledge getting into the wrong hands. Trusting other nations to keep classified information confidential poses many problems. The advancement of national security is far more challenging now than it was a decade ago. Advancing one's own security technology often appears easier than trusting competing countries. Government agencies can only become more meticulous in their handling of terrorist suspects. Technology will always progress, but human emotion and interaction are nearly impossible to advance. Security protocols have not nearly reached their full potential, but perfection is impossible.

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(Above): Demonstrators gather at the Place de la République in Paris on the night of the attack



Eden Detention Center in Eden, Texas, owned and operated by the Corrections Corporation of America

With broken justice systems built on mandatory sentencing of minor criminals, states have begun to outsource prisons to private companies, leading to overcrowding and a conflict of interest between the public good and corporate profit.

BY PETER SHIM

In a recent conversation, a very conservative acquaintance of mine, who usually supports privatizing any and all current public entities (including schools), commented that privatization of prisons should not be allowed. The debate over this controversial practice can be clarified by looking at the origins of for-profit prisons.

In the 1970s, when the United States declared war on drugs, there was a massive influx of inmates into US prisons, an influx that the then current prison infrastructure could not cope with. For-profit prisons took off in response to overcrowding of public prisons due to the influx of convicted drug offenders. In short, for-profit prisons came into being because public prisons could not handle the incoming tide. Many argue that the same dynamic is at work today. State and federal prisons are experiencing near-record levels of overcrowding. For example, the state of Alabama has filled its prison system to 189.3% of capacity. As there are 130,000 inmates currently in private prisons, many argue that the overcrowding rates in prisons would only get worse if private prisons were outlawed. Currently, private prisons play an important role in alleviating prison overcrowding, which according to Portland State University is directly correlated with high levels of violence in prisons and inversely correlated with the psychological health of inmates. The reasoning is simple; when there are too many prisoners, prisons do not have the infrastructural capacities to house them safely, often packing them into small cells or repurposing old laundry rooms not fit for habitation to confine inmates. Furthermore, an overcrowded prison does not have the capacity to take proper physical care of the prisoners, often underfeeding them or not giving them proper medical care in time. In fact, in one overcrowded Californian prison, a prisoner is 6 times more likely to die than in other prisons due to complications with overcrowding. Finally, the lack of staff increases the chance of violent riots and prison breakouts. Additionally, overcrowding has not been a problem in private prisons. Most for-profit prisons sign a contract with governments requiring that they be filled to an 80-100% capacity, and thus prisoners in private prisons can expect a better quality of life than those in public prisons.

While this may seem like an insurmountable argument for keeping for-profit prisons, it neglects the fact that for-profit prison is merely a Band-Aid forestalling necessary reform. Private prisons can actually exacerbate the problems of our criminal justice system by fueling mass incarceration. It all comes down to the fundamental objective of a for-profit organization—to earn a return on investment before all else. Specifically, for-profit prisons earn their incomes by forcing the state to constantly

assign new inmates to meet their occupancy quotas of 80-100%. The state must pay heavy fines if the number of prisoners in these prisons drops below that percentage. This in turn, gives the state an incentive to sanction unduly harsh penalties for minor crimes that target minorities and the poor. Rather than giving states a stimulus to reduce crime rates, private prisons incentivize states to encourage recidivism.

Moreover, a privatized prison system pushes a state to choose incarceration over other forms of punishment, and to assign longer prison sentences. Margaret Winter of the ACLU writes, “All for-profit prison corporations are in the very business of generating the greatest possible profits, by any means necessary.” Oftentimes, this results in the unjust imprisonment of individuals who deserve to be freed. Sharon Dolovich notes that private prison officials are pivotal figures in determining when (if ever) prisoners are released on parole. These officials have a financial incentive to, and frequently do, recommend against releasing these individuals even if they merit parole. Additionally, many of the staff at private prisons own stock in the prison companies. This includes guards and administrators - the very people who decide whether a prisoner is eligible for educational or vocational programs that would decrease both their chance of recidivism and their current sentence. These people have a direct incentive to deny inmates access to programs and activities that improve their chances at reintegrating into society. This both inhibits rehabilitation and increases prison violence.

While it may seem that private prisons are necessary to alleviate the problems of overcrowding, it is clear that this mindset is short-sighted and untenable in the long run. Instead of focusing on managing a large prison population, the United States ought to look at the core problem, namely its harsh incarceration policies. The United States has more incarceration per capita than any other country in the world. It has over 6 times the incarceration rate of China and houses 25% of the world’s inmate population while having only 5% of the world population. The US needs to take a page out of the rest of the world’s book and stop wasting money incarcerating minor offenders.

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Embattled Gaza: Elusive Peace in the Twice-Promised Land

With the recent war in Gaza and the victory of Benjamin Netanyahu's conservatives in last month's election, it might seem that prospects for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are worse than ever. History tells us otherwise.

BY NATALIE LIFSON

It was only about a century ago that Jews and Arabs lived together in the Middle East in relative peace. Although the Jews were not entirely equal under Muslim rule and acts of antisemitism occasionally occurred, Jews had certain protections and rights under the law as practitioners of another monotheistic religion. If only a hundred years ago this raging animosity between Zionists and Palestinians did not exist, then what changed to spark the violence?

The war in Gaza is the product of a history of antisemitism in the Middle East. During World War II, the media and Palestinian leaders propagated animosity towards Jews through false statements to the general public, and as a result, the Palestinian Arabs were misinformed, angry, and eventually became violent. Not realizing their prejudices were based on misinformation, the Arabs genuinely believed that their hostility towards the Jews was warranted. The Jews retaliated, and so it wasn't long before the bloodshed spiraled out

of control and both the Jews and the Arabs harbored an extreme hatred for one another. Israel's establishment as a Jewish state only further enraged the Palestinian Arabs and spurred them to take action against the Zionists, those who believed that Israel should be an independent Jewish state. Although Gaza has only recently blown up in the American media, violence in The Gaza Strip has existed since 1948.

The unrest between the Jews and the Arabs ignited as worldwide persecution of Jews dramatically increased and the seeds of the Holocaust were sown. Between 1929 and 1936, as antisemitism began to skyrocket worldwide, Haj Amin al-Husseini, the Muslim leader of Palestine and one of Hitler's greatest supporters, encouraged attacks and massacres in predominantly Jewish cities. Al-Husseini fabricated claims against the Jews and released lies to the public that a Zionist plot to vandalize mosques and murder Palestinians had recently been uncovered. Soon after, he organized a violent protest against the British

Mandate that had allowed Jews to immigrate into Palestine. This series of riots resulted in the murders of many Jews and the destruction of Jewish livestock, crops, and shops. Because of al-Husseini's outrageous declarations and the newfound widespread German and Italian anti-Jewish propaganda in Palestine, anti-semitism among the Arab population notably escalated.

The unbridled violence proved to be a problem for Britain, which governed Palestine as a territory. Ultimately, Britain decided that the only way to halt the hostility was to divide the land into two states, one for the Arabs and one for the Jews. Although approximately 600,000 people, a third of the population, were Jewish, when the lines were drawn on the map to divide the state, the Jews were given only one fifth of the land, which was comprised mostly of uninhabitable deserts and mountainous regions. Despite this inequity, the Jews were desperate enough to end the violence and have a state of their own that they reluctantly agreed to Britain's terms. It



(Above): Israeli F-16s fly over Tel Aviv.

ISRAELI DEFENSE FORCES/WIKIPEDIA

was the Arabs that declined Britain's offer, as Al-Husseini claimed to admire the Nazis, who were adamantly opposed to the idea of a partition plan because they would not tolerate a Jewish state. Because of Al-Husseini's unyielding support of the Nazis with both the partition plan and portrayal in the media, Hitler's Germany provided the Palestinians with weapons to fight against the Jews. Britain, which had entirely lost control of the situation, proposed another partition plan to appease the Arabs that granted only one twentieth of the state of Palestine to the Jews. This time, both the Arabs and the Jews declined to sign the agreement.

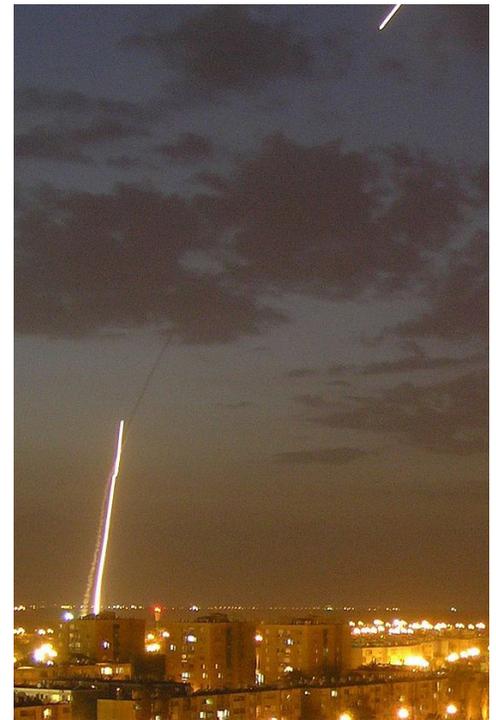
After the Allies achieved victory over Nazi Germany, there were hundreds of thousands of misplaced Holocaust survivors with no home to return to. They began to migrate to Palestine in waves. The population had become so dense in such a small state that Britain was forced to limit Jewish immigration even further than the previous strict regulations had been. The Jews vehemently protested these new regulations. Eventually, Britain not only recanted their decision to restrict Jews from entering Palestine, but decided that something had to be done about the misplaced Holocaust survivors who had only recently been liberated from German concentration camps and fervently began to work towards granting the Jews a state of their own. In 1947, a final partition plan was put into action after Britain handed Palestine to the United Nations to allocate the land. Again, the Jews received the raw end of the deal and not only were granted significantly less land than the Arabs, but exclusively deserts and mountains. Notwithstanding, they accepted the terms of the United Nations, willing to compromise to acquire an independent state. The Arabs did not like the idea of being subjected to new laws under a new government that did not properly represent their people with new Hebrew town names, street names, and landmark names. Rather, angry at the prospect of living under Jewish rule, the vast majority of Palestinians who lived in Israeli territory opted to leave rather than submit to the Jews. Before long, so many Arabs had left the land that would soon become Israel that, while they had previously been the majority, they now made up only 23% of the population.

Less than 24 hours after Israel was established as a state, Israel was attacked by the armies of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq. The Arabs were greater in number and had proper military equipment while the Jews

were outnumbered, lacked the proper weapons to fight back, and a significant portion of those that fought for Israel were sickly recent Holocaust survivors. Nobody counted on the desperation of the Israeli people and their superior military organization to allow them to prevail in the face of the overwhelming odds. When Israel won that first campaign, they took 40% more of the land than had initially been granted by the UN. The Jews felt as if they deserved this land, as they had not initially been granted enough land for the Holocaust survivors that poured into the state, but the Arabs were positively livid. They had not tolerated the initial Zionist taking of Palestinian land, much less additional land that they believed was rightfully Palestinian soil. After Israel's victory, attacks on the newfound state increased from across the borders of the Gaza Strip. Rather than aim to destroy Israeli soldiers or government officials, they specifically targeted civilians. After Israel's victory in the 6 Day War, Israel took the Gaza Strip from Egypt, among other territories, in an attempt to gain control and suspend the violence. Now out of Egypt's control and instruction, Gaza did not halt attacks, but remained a constant threat to the Israeli people.

It wasn't until 1979 that the state of Israel finally signed a peace treaty with Egypt. Now that Israel was confident that they were safe from Egyptian attacks, they offered the Gaza Strip back to Egypt as a peace offering. Israel did not have the ability or resources to keep Gaza under control and they hoped that Gazans would be more likely to cease their attacks on Israel if they were once more a part of Egypt. The Egyptians, however, rejected Israel's offer, as they were no longer interested in having jurisdiction over the Gaza strip. The Palestinians in Gaza, blamed Israel for removing them from Egyptian rule. Once more, the attacks increased. The plight of the Gazan people was a vicious cycle; they wanted to be free from Israeli rule and so they initiated violence in protest, but Israel felt the need to retain them as an occupied territory so as to limit Gazan brutality against the Israeli people.

In 1994, violence in Gaza seemed to be dying down and Israel had arrived at an agreement with the Palestinian Liberation Organization that pushed both the Arabs and the Jews towards peace. As a result, Israel began to take steps towards the implementation of Palestinian authority in the Gaza Strip and eventually withdrew troops from Gaza. Israel left over 95% of Gazans under Palestinian rule but retained the right to control borders, coastline,



EMANUEL YELLIN/WIKIPEDIA

(Above): Israel's "Iron Dome" in action

and airspace, as well as utilize Israeli military forces in Gaza for self-defense purposes if necessary; in return, Israel supplied essential resources such as food, water, and electricity. Despite the significant increase of freedom in Gaza, the people refused rest until they were entirely self-governing and Israel no longer existed as a Jewish state.

In 1997, Israeli citizens were shaken when Hamas, a small Arab organization based in Gaza that had formed ten years earlier but had previously gained little traction, committed a series of suicide bombings in the name of Palestine that killed 44 Israeli citizens and wounded over 400. The attacks on Israel only worsened when, in 2001, mortars began to be launched from Gaza, and in 2005, Hamas began to fire rockets into Israel. Nearly ten years later, Hamas continues to fire missiles into Israel from the Gaza Strip that deliberately target civilians. Desperate for the safety of its people, in an attempt to maintain control over Gaza, Israel began to halt the entrance of resources into Gaza such as food, water, and electricity after particularly brutal attacks. The number of rockets fired peaked when nearly 3,300 missiles were launched in 2008 alone. Overall, more than 11,000 rockets have been fired into Israel since 2005 and Israel has been the target of a combined total of over 15,200 rockets and mortars since 2001. The Iron Dome was eventually devel-

...CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

The Spring After Oil's Fall: Ramifications of Plunging Oil Prices

Oil has long been a cornerstone of the global economy, making the dramatic rout of oil prices in recent months a cause of excitement and alarm for many different state and non-state actors around the world.

BY NICOLE MO

Talk to a long commuter, soccer mom, road trip enthusiast, or anyone who regularly drives an automobile, and the topic will eventually come up: after years of exorbitant and much-bemoaned gasoline prices, costs have been plummeting. Last winter, for the first time since 2009, a gallon of gas in New Jersey could be bought for under \$2, following a greater trend of plunging crude oil prices with the global drop-off at 6%. On the surface, these low prices are reason for celebration as heating our houses and driving our cars will no longer drain our wallets, but amidst the praise of cheaper commutes a growing discomfort has arisen. Why the drop? What does it mean? What will it mean?

Of the multiple, interwoven layers of factors contributing to such drastic price cuts, one of the most significant causes is a combination of fading demand from major consumers—such as China and the U.S.—and a dramatic increase in U.S. shale oil production. This boom in U.S. shale supply, combined with post-Soviet era highs of oil output in Russia and Iraqi exports at a 35-year peak, has been arousing serious concerns of oversupply. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, currently composed of 12 countries which have a sizable crude oil output, was established to “ensure the stabilization of oil markets.” However,

instead of limiting their own production levels to temper risky growth, OPEC members such as oil kingpin Saudi Arabia see this option as only hurting their own market shares and are instead slashing their prices to be more attractive to importing countries and to suppress growing industries in the U.S. and elsewhere. Ultimately, the fragile balance of supply and demand is being wildly skewed, and the result has been oil prices at their lowest in over half a decade.

For export countries, these developments have obvious and potentially disastrous repercussions. With oil and gas output constituting two-thirds of its export income, Russia is estimated to lose roughly \$100 billion if these low prices persist. In tandem with Western sanctions over the conflict in Ukraine, the oil price drop has caused the ruble to hit a 16-year low, and Russia is looking at a devastating recession if conditions remain the same. Saudi Arabia, the undisputed leader of OPEC and the only country with greater levels of oil export than Russia, is also looking at a \$100 billion loss in revenues if prices keep sliding. However, some of the lowest production costs in the world along with substantial foreign currency reserves mean that Saudi Arabia and several other OPEC members can ride out the short-term consequences relatively unscathed. On the other hand, OPEC countries such as Iran, with larger populations and therefore more demanding domestic budgetary issues,

will have a much tougher time surviving the price cuts.

Countries with a greater import than export level will see mixed consequences. With the euro at lows it hasn't seen since 2006, any sort of price cut will relieve economic burdens for Europe. China and other emerging Asian economies are set to benefit most from such low prices, as these countries with high levels of oil imports will most likely experience an expansion of their respective GDPs. In fact, China could see a \$50 billion boost in revenues even if oil prices plateau where they are now at \$50 a barrel. However, while both Europe and China will receive short-term benefits, these may not fully compensate for slackening economies, and negative long-term consequences will ultimately catch up with them. And for the United States, the single largest consumer of oil, slashed prices have saved the average consumer some money on their heating bills this winter, and will undoubtedly boost the economy. However, the growing fracking industry that the U.S. is desperate to maintain in order to end dependence on foreign oil might be slowed by such fierce competition.

Short-term, it seems that the benefits will outweigh the losses as populous countries such as China and India tend to be the bigger oil importers and other import-heavy countries will also see a boost in their economies. However, the long-term reverberations of such precarious movements in such an important industry will most likely be harmful, as price wars and potential job cuts might undermine even importing countries while leaving exporting economies decimated. So, enjoy the low gas prices while you can—we might be seriously paying for it down the road.

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THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION/FICKR



CIA Torture: A Case of National Insecurity?

With the recent Senate report on the CIA's use of "enhanced interrogation" techniques over the last decade, observers here and around the world now have reason to question the moral high ground historically claimed by the United States.

FRY1989/WIKIPEDIA

By EMILIA McMANUS

After five years of investigation the Senate Intelligence Committee has released a 6,000 page report regarding inhumane and barbaric methods used by the Central Intelligence Agency against suspected terrorists. The report on the torture program, referred to officially as Rendition, Detention, and Interrogation, provides substantial evidence to support the claims of detainees, especially those suspected of association with the September 11 attack, that they experienced extreme brutality. The aim of the report, according to the Intelligence Committee, is to prevent future use of torture by any United States agency or associated groups.

According to the report, the tactics used to interrogate "terror" suspects were far more severe than previously assumed. It also indicates that the Central Intelligence Agency misled investigators on the vicious acts and placed the blame for the majority of the torture on two outside contractors that controlled the fate of the detainees. Investigators found that the CIA failed to give accurate insight to the Bush administration, or the public, regarding the worldwide scope of the program. In 2008, although in control of 119 detainees, the CIA only reported a total number of 98. While the entire report still remains classified, it is known that the brutality extended to over 100 suspected terrorists between 2001 and 2009. President Obama dismantled the program in 2009.

In response to the recent reports, the president said he "hope[s] that today's report can help us leave these techniques where they belong—in the past" and expressed his belief that the United States is still "the greatest force for freedom and human dignity that the world has ever known." Senator Dianne Feinstein of California, the outgoing chairwoman of the Senate investigating committee, denounced the program as "a stain on our values and our history."

For the most part, the harsh tactics resulted in more inaccurate intelligence and false accounts of terror events than beneficial knowledge. The majority of the information never produced plausible evidence of an imminent threat to Americans domestically or abroad. If any substantial information was obtained, the report says the same data was eventually obtained through other, nonviolent, means anyway. In recent statements, the CIA still remains firm in their belief that their tactics helped to save lives. Director of the CIA, John Brennan said "the intelligence gained from the program was critical to our understanding of al-Qaeda and continues to inform our counterterrorism efforts to this day."

There is significant evidence of repeated attempts by the CIA to fabricate and alter facts to support the program. In one instance, the agency helped write a speech for President George W. Bush in 2006 that seemed to argue crucial intelligence was continuing to be obtained, even though internal CIA documents indicate otherwise.

The release of the report has sparked controversy within the government agency. Former CIA agents have begun a campaign to refute the report and claim that the summary report only shares the particularly gruesome aspects of the program. They also affirm that vital information was acquired that aided in preventing terrorism against the United States. The CIA specifically claims essential information leading to the killing of Osama Bin Laden was acquired through the program.

The detainees were sent to countries all over the world where they had no legal protection or rights under American law. Known locations include Romania, Egypt and Syria. The extremity of the tactics includes psychological and physical harm. Some detainees even reported attempts of self-harm or self-mutilation. Abu Zubaydah, the first detainee kept at a center in Thailand, reports that he was kept naked and

sleep-deprived for weeks on end. At one point he was even placed in a box that resembled a coffin, and experienced waterboarding to the point of nearly drowning. In another case, the torture extended to an "intellectually challenged" man who was used as leverage against a family member with access to "highly essential" information. The report also mentions that the Justice Department lawyers approved these methods.

In 2006, President Bush ordered that all of the detainees be transferred to the prison at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Yet the CIA retained control of several detainees in secret locations for months before they were finally transported.

The brutality was so extreme at times that CIA personnel tried to stop the torture but were ordered by senior officials to continue. Some CIA personnel were at the point of tears after witnessing interrogations and asked to be transferred out of the detention centers. Others sent messages to headquarters questioning the legality of the program, but their complaints received no response. John Kiriakou, a former CIA analyst and counterterrorism officer, was the first to speak publicly about waterboarding as a torture tactic and was later sentenced to 30 months in prison for disclosing classified information. He says he is proud to have played a role in exposing the torture and that he "would do it all over again."

The CIA detainee program ultimately has damaged the US's security rather than protected it. By tarnishing America's human rights record, the evidence against the United States leaves opportunity for claims of hypocrisy if the US tries to criticize or sanction radical or dictatorial regimes in the future.

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SAMANTHA LOTTI/WIKIMEDIA

Ferguson's Impact on Race Relations

In an era when many Americans have been optimistic about prospects for eliminating racism once and for all, the protest movements that have arisen in the wake of several police shootings are a sad reminder that racial tensions will not die easily.

BY JOSH METZGER

Race relations have long been a problem in our country. Unfair treatment of African Americans has generated civil and social injustice throughout history. Officer Darren Wilson's shooting of unarmed teenager Michael Brown on August 9, 2014, and Officer Daniel Pantaleo's killing of Eric Garner on July 17, 2014 were widely believed to be driven by ulterior racial motives. Moreover, the failure of both grand juries to indict the two officers has catalyzed many to raise difficult questions about our democracy and criminal justice system. Both the killings committed by the police officers, and the decision of the grand juries not to indict them, highlight deep-rooted racial disparities in both government and law enforcement, ultimately causing many blacks to tap into what Roger Parloff calls "oceans of grief and grievance engendered by decades, if not centuries, of injustices."

Both Officer Darren Wilson and Officer Daniel Pantaleo's cases seemed to support the "reasonable suspicion" needed to indict. However, both grand juries deemed the police officers innocent. So, why are police officers so often not indicted when there seems to be plausible evidence of guilt?

Many Americans, even some who are seemingly impartial, harbor implicit or unconscious biases about blacks. As Stephen Menendian notes, because of these "pervasive and yet unconscious, culturally embedded associations, black boys are automatically viewed with suspicion." Thus, the criminalization of impoverished blacks is much higher than that of whites. For example, black teens are 21 times more likely to be killed by police than white teens. Officer Wilson described Michael Brown as a "demon-like, dead-eyed giant," dehumanizing the unarmed teen and attributing negative racial

characteristics to him. By characterizing Brown as a dangerous black "demon," Officer Wilson may have influenced the jury's ideas about the teen and therefore impacted their final decision not to indict.

Furthermore, police credibility plays a huge role in the judicial process. Police officers are often seen as the moral upholders of society, protecting the rights of Americans citizens and continually providing safety and security. Grand jurors' belief that police officers are "credible suspects" allows them to "cover up" and alter certain aspects of their testimony. For example, the chokehold maneuver used on Eric Garner by Officer Pantaleo was a police tactic deemed too dangerous and therefore banned in 1993. However, Pantaleo claimed he was simply using a "wrestling move" and had no other choice to subdue Garner's resistance to arrest. Instead of using the video evidence presented to them, the jury believed Pantaleo's story and returned "no-true bill" on all five charges, ranging from murder to manslaughter. Finally, officers are only legally allowed to shoot or kill someone under two conditions: if they feel imminent danger to their own or others' lives, or if a criminal has escaped from a serious crime and poses danger to others. However, cops generally receive great leeway to defend themselves, even when the danger they may feel is entirely based on opinion. Thus, when cops experience any feeling of endangerment, the split-second decision they make often proves to be fatal.

Many people across the country have begun to believe the murders of Michael Brown and Eric Garner illustrate a pattern of police brutality, racial discrimination, and racial disparity that exists within police forces and law enforcement nationally. Although Michael Brown's death sparked protests in Ferguson, Missouri, his death did not serve as the only incentive for frustrated residents; he served as a catalyst for larger preexisting racial problems within the city. In the city of Ferguson, as German Lopez notes, the "mayor and

(Above): A Chicago protest over the Staten Island grand jury decision



LOAVESOFBREAD/FLICKR

police chief are white, just one of six city council members is black, zero school board members are black, and only three out of 53 commissioned police officers are black.” Although almost 70% of Ferguson’s population is black, the municipal government and police force does not adequately represent its populace. Moreover, Ferguson police are three times more likely to arrest blacks than whites. Thus, according to the *Washington Post*, “Brown’s death has raised, once again, old questions about the relationship between law enforcement and the black community in urban and suburban communities.” In addition, the militaristic police response to protests in both cities, especially in Ferguson, has caused citizens to once again harbor fear and defensiveness against the police. While the police should be working toward a decrease in violence, their response to the protests unquestionably inspired more people to retaliate and protest against law enforcement. As with the protests of Ferguson, dissent against police continues in Staten Island. Protesters chanting the phrases “Black Lives Matter,” “Hands Up, Don’t Shoot,” and “I Can’t Breathe” has ignited an anti-police sentiment throughout New York and the country. Many people are starting to believe with Senator Rand Paul that anyone “who thinks race does not skew the application of criminal justice in this country is just not paying close enough attention.”

The killings of Michael Brown and Eric

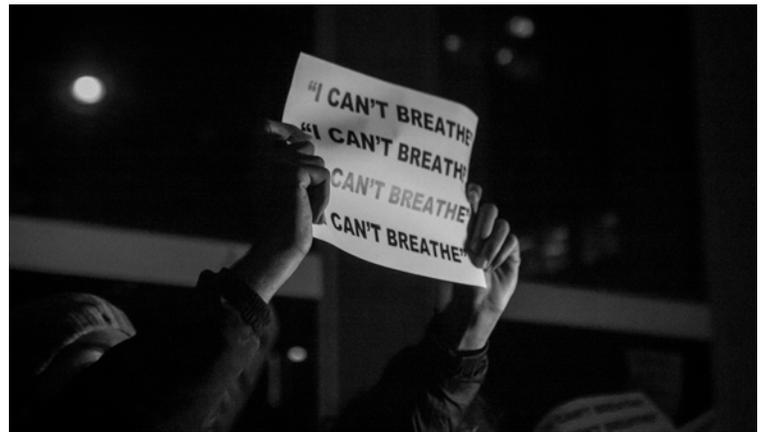
Garner and the failure of grand juries to indict both police officers are believed to illustrate some of the racial dilemmas our country struggles to confront. The deaths parallel what President Obama and many other observers consider a “long history of discrimination against black people.” They assert that, due to unconscious biases against African Americans and the grand jury’s willingness to believe in police officers, indictment has proven to be unsuccessful. Others allege that these two cases are separate, involving two completely different sets of events and people, and question whether race played a role in either killing.

These two cases are highly controversial and have resulted in a considerable chaos. Retraining of police officers is hotly debated, President Obama and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio have encouraged body-camer implementation, many political figures such as George Bush have called the situation “hard to understand,” and a major rift has developed between law enforcement and the general public. Race relations in New York City continued to worsen when Is-

maaiyl Brinsley, in revenge for the death of Michael Brown, killed two NYPD officers, Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos, while they were in their police car on December 20, 2014. This chaotic reverberation has caused great controversy between whites and blacks, leaving many to wonder when tensions will lessen. Because these two murders have been believed by many to “reopen” old wounds of social injustice, as a society we must work together to strengthen positive racial interactions. To believe our criminal justice system is unflawed and entirely unaffected by race is to remain blind to reality.

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DAVE BLEDSOE/FLICKR

(Above): Police use tear gas against demonstrators in Ferguson, August 17, 2014

“Because these two murders have been believed to ‘reopen’ old wounds of social injustice we must work together as a society to strengthen positive racial relations.”

Rape at the University of Virginia: Fact, Fiction, or Journalistic Malpractice?

Rolling Stone's publication of an inflammatory article graphically detailing a gang rape at a UVA fraternity has raised questions about the account's authenticity, and could prevent true justice from being served.

BY NEEL SAMBAMURTHY

On November 19, 2014, *Rolling Stone* magazine published an article about what has since become known as the notorious University of Virginia rape case. The central figure in this article is Jackie, a UVA college student who claimed that she was gang-raped at a UVA fraternity party on September 28, 2012. The contributing editor of *Rolling Stone*, Sabrina Rubin Erdely, was the reporter who broke this story for the magazine. Seven men allegedly raped Jackie when a junior named Drew invited her to this party. When she emerged from the frat house around 3 A.M., with her face beaten and her dress covered in blood, she called a friend for help. Three friends, two boys and a girl, came to her aid but advised her not to report what had happened for fear of tarnishing her reputation. The article also revealed that at the end of her freshman year, Jackie reported the rape to Dean Nicole Eramo, the head of UVA's Sexual Misconduct Board. The *Rolling Stone* story created a furor and brought attention to rape incidents at college campuses all over the country. Under great pressure from the campus community, UVA President Teresa Sullivan suspended all campus fraternities, sororities, and Greek

organizations until January 9th, 2015. She also asked the Charlottesville Police Department to investigate the rape.

Soon thereafter, questions began to emerge about the facts of this story. A former editor of *George* magazine, Richard Bradley, wrote an essay questioning the factuality of the story. He claimed that the friends who came to Jackie's aid were never interviewed, and that Erdely had not attempted to contact the alleged rapists. Los Angeles *Times* reporter Jonah Goldberg compared Jackie's story to the Duke lacrosse rape fiasco, where the alleged victim had fabricated her account. On November 28, 2014, Erdely defended her reporting methods in the *Washington Post*. She claimed that Jackie was bursting to tell her story and she spent weeks corroborating Jackie's version of the events and found her to be completely credible. However, when pressured on why she did not speak to other sources, Erdely began evading questions. Finally, on December 1, 2014, *Rolling Stone* confirmed that nobody spoke to the alleged rapists, but that the men described were real, and still lived on campus.

Erdely's story began to unravel further when the *Washington Post* did a piece which claimed that the alleged frat house, Phi Kappa Psi, never held a party on September 28, 2012. Also, in another shocking twist, the three students who rushed to help Jackie that night, revealed that the details she gave to them about Drew were distorted, causing her friends to question her veracity. Soon, other glaring inconsistencies in Jackie's story began to be revealed. In light of all these questions, *Rolling Stone* decided to reevaluate its campus rape story and announced that they had asked the Columbia Journalism School to investigate the matter further. On

April 5, 2015 when the final report came out, it fully supported Erdely's critics, concluding that she had failed to follow basic rules of professional journalism, and had not produced any valid evidence that the fraternity gang rape ever occurred.

This article created a lot of buzz and raised questions about how colleges and universities across our country deal with the issue of sexual assault on campus. Even though this article proved to be inconsistent with the available facts, colleges still have to do a much better job of dealing with sexual assaults on campus. While Jackie admitted there were inconsistencies in what she said, she is still standing by the core account of what happened. It is clear that there was at best a journalistic lapse and at worst journalistic malpractice. The reporter wanted to tell her story without checking the facts and *Rolling Stone* went with it, thereby causing great reputational harm to several people. It is also clear, however, that the campus culture towards women both at UVA and on other campuses needs to change, and the article, while incorrect, did start a national dialogue and soul searching across college campuses in the country. That is the silver lining in the otherwise sad and disreputable episode.

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The Attack on Charlie Hebdo and on Freedom of Expression

The attack on Charlie Hebdo was an explicit challenge by Islamist radicals to the notion of free speech. Is the Islamic faith fundamentally against freedom of expression?

BY SEAN WANG

On January 7, 2015, the *Charlie Hebdo* office was infiltrated by two well-armed assassins, who left 12 dead and 4 injured. The motive behind the attack was apparent outrage over the magazine's drawings of the prophet Muhammad, which many Muslims are consider to be blasphemous.

However, this is not the first time the magazine has dealt with controversy and violence. While in France the blasphemy law has been defunct since 1830, it has been partially replaced by anti-defamation laws. In 2006, the magazine was unsuccessfully sued by various Islamic organizations for republishing cartoons of Muhammad from the Danish newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten*. In 2011, the magazine's office was fire-bombed and its website hacked. In 2012, the maga-

zine published a series of cartoons depicting Muhammad that came days after attacks on US embassies throughout the Middle East, allegedly in response to the film *Innocence of Muslims* (which had been overdubbed with anti-Islamic content). The unrest over the film had also caused the French government to close embassies, consulates, cultural centers, and international schools in multiple Muslim countries. In 2013, former *Charlie Hebdo* editor-in-chief Stéphane "Charb" Charbonnier and several editors at *Jyllands-Posten* were added to al Qaeda's most-wanted list.

In response to the recent attack, the French government has increased its national security level to its highest level of terrorist alert and mobilized soldiers throughout France. In addition, the "Je suis Charlie" ("I am Charlie" in French) Movement gained popularity in the days following as a demonstration of solidarity

against the shooting. The following week's edition of *Charlie Hebdo* was published in six languages and sold over three million copies. To some surprise, the magazine came back swinging with an image of Muhammad holding a sign saying "Je suis Charlie" underneath the text "Tout est pardonné" (All is forgiven). Despite the tragedy, *Charlie Hebdo* refuses to be silenced. After the firebombing in 2011, Charlie Hebdo made a strong recovery with the headline "Charia Hebdo" (Sharia Weekly) and a picture of one of the magazine's cartoonists kissing a Muslim man with "Love is stronger than hate" written above them. The world needs to follow suit in proving that, in spite of tragedy, we will endure and become stronger than before. Succumbing to tragedy and becoming fearful of the future is allowing for the terrorists to win.

The weeks following the shooting have

(Above): The Charlie Hebdo attack spurred protest in support of freedom of speech in countries throughout the world. Are those assassinated during this attack, however, truly martyrs of free speech or just victims of terrorism?



A silent crowd protests the Charlie Hebdo killings in Paris's Place de la République, January 7, 2015

GODEFROY TROUDE/WIKIMEDIA

begged the question of what defines freedom of speech. Has freedom of speech become too dangerous to protect? In principle, anyone can take offense at anything; however, to punish those who express provocative statements is unacceptable and excessive. Simply because the magazine utilizes its freedom of speech does not entitle the magazine to an audience. We as an audience have the right to feel offended; however, this does not grant us the right to inflict our frustrations upon others. By limiting freedom of speech in the context of the shootings, we allow for oppression against a free and secular world, and create a world where extremists have won.

For now, French Prime Minister Manuel Valls has stated that "We [France] are at war with terrorism not Islam." French Foreign Prime Minister, Laurent Fabius, said "The terrorists' religion is not Islam, which they are betraying. It's barbarity." The distinction needs to be made that France is no longer dealing with Islam, but with terrorists—people who have deviated from the Qur'an in favor of a more extreme interpretation.

The attackers in this year's shootings and those of the past have all claim to have a motive in common—honor. While it seems that the majority of world has moved on from an honor-based culture, some groups are stuck in the past. Extremists in these groups have subscribed to the idea that by killing and dying to preserve the honor of their religion, they become martyrs and will be rewarded in heaven. The issue of honor-based crimes extends much further than scattered terrorist

shootings; to address such a large problem requires a reduction in the number of outlets that continue to spread the "honor" school of thought. However, the idea of preserving one's "honor" by any means necessary may have been systematically integrated into certain schools of Islamic thought. Thus, it may become necessary to reevaluate how Islamic activity within states is regulated.

One of the major problems with Islam's integration into modern society may lie with the issue of Sharia law. In states where Sharia law is in place, there is no separation of religion and state. Some of these governments are established under an Islamic theocracy and are run by an authoritative hand. In Iran, for example, the reformist daily *Mardom-e Emrooz* was closed during the middle of January after showing solidarity against the attack on *Charlie Hebdo*. Despite the elected Iranian government and some of its senior clerics also showing solidarity against the shooting, Iran's regime disapproves of *Charlie Hebdo's* publications of images of Muhammad. In addition, the Iranian government has prevented journalists from rallying in Tehran to show solidarity against the attack. Iran's culture minister, Ali Jannati, was threatened with impeachment if he did not act against *Mardom-e Emrooz*. While *Charlie Hebdo's* battle for freedom of speech has existed for years, Iran's battle has just begun.

The attack on *Charlie Hebdo* serves as a reminder that freedom of speech is more than an intrinsic right; it is a privilege that is worth fighting for. In order to bring freedom

of speech to all, it requires modifying social norms and refusing to back down against oppression at any cost.

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"The attack on Charlie Hebdo serves as a reminder that the freedom of speech is more than an intrinsic right; it is a privilege that is worth fighting for."

The Future of Darren Wilson

In the wake of the deadly shooting of Michael Brown and the Ferguson protests, former police officer Wilson faces great uncertainty as he tries to move out of public view.

BY JULIA AXTELL

A New Year always brings about a feeling of anticipation as everyone looks forward to starting the year off with a clean slate. While we never know what can happen in the New Year, one person who was especially nervous over what 2015 would bring was Ferguson Missouri police officer Darren Wilson. With a county grand jury's decision not to indict Wilson, the police officer who shot and killed unarmed African American teenager, Michael Brown, we were left with a final question in the Michael Brown saga: what would happen next for Wilson post non-indictment?

Following the grand jury's decision not to indict him, Wilson resigned from the Ferguson Police Department after nearly three years of service, citing threats against his fellow officers as the cause for his departure. He will not receive a severance package, pension, or benefits. His resignation came five days after the grand jury's decision not to indict him. One of Wilson's attorneys, Neil Bruntrager, said that the Ferguson Police Department

"got some intelligence that suggested there were going to be some targets at the Ferguson Police Department and the minute he [Wilson] said that, he also indicated that he thought his resignation might alleviate some of those threats." Bruntrager said the department had "intel that suggested there was going to be some action of a violent nature." In his letter of resignation, Wilson wrote that he hoped his departure would help protect his fellow Ferguson police officers and the residents of Ferguson and that "it is [his] hope that [his] resignation will allow the community to heal." Additionally, Wilson wrote that he wanted to stay on the force "but the safety of other police officers and the community are of paramount importance to [him]." In an interview with ABC News' George Stephanopoulos, Wilson revealed that he had hoped "to stay on the road for 30 years and then retire as sergeant." As of now, Barbara Spalding, wife of Darren Wilson, who also happens to be pregnant with the couple's first child, remains an officer on the Ferguson Police Force, but was asked to resign. She has yet to make the decision.

According to CNN, Wilson technically

could have returned to his job on the police force but the network, along with many others, speculates that he will never work on a police force again. CNN legal analyst, Paul Callan, agrees with Wilson's resignation because he believes that keeping the infamous officer on the police force would only create controversy. Callan believes that if Wilson were to stay he would only "be distrusted by the citizenry and maybe subjected to abuse when he's out on the street."

Going forward, Bruntrager said he hopes Wilson will be able "to translate as much of this event as he can into a teachable moment." Bruntrager thinks that Wilson "wants to share with people the lessons he learned" and hopes that Wilson does.

Even though the Grand Jury decided not to indict Darren Wilson, he became the subject of an internal investigation by the Ferguson Police Department. In addition, the US Justice Department conducted two civil rights investigations related to the shooting: "one into whether Wilson, who is white, violated Brown's civil rights, and the other into the police department's overall track record with

...CONTINUED ON PAGE 22



The Garner Protest and Ferguson Protest converge in downtown Seattle, December 4, 2014

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Climate Change: Economy Against Ecology?

With rising global temperatures posing a serious threat to many countries around the world, economists, political leaders, and scientists are struggling to find the proper balance between counteracting climate change and fostering economic growth.

BY EMMA PALMER

Nearly everyone is used to hearing the words “climate change” on a somewhat regular basis. We are all told how fossil fuels are being released into our atmosphere or how the earth is getting warmer while ice caps are melting and causing our oceans to rise. People have proof of these occurrences surrounding climate change and many accept them; however, for the most part it is as if people believe that climate change will not affect them or that it is something they do not need to worry about right now. When it comes to climate change, we convince ourselves that we are untouchable. Nevertheless, based on situations in countries around the world, there is proof that humans are not invincible to the affects of climate change. In countries such as Bangladesh, the Philippines, and Indonesia, climate change is playing a fundamental role in many lives. While many believe that climate change will not affect them any time soon, the current situations of many countries around

the world confirm that our changing planet is severely harming millions of people and is clearly a pressing issue.

Bangladesh is particularly vulnerable when it comes to climate change. With many districts situated below sea level near bodies of water, and with a tendency for floods and cyclones, the environment of Bangladesh provides the “perfect storm” to greatly suffer the effects of climate change. In a country that already relies on the carefully calculated flood season for its crops, just the tiniest amount of excess water is immediately too much. Additionally, the poverty of many people in Bangladesh makes them even more defenseless to storms and floods. Rafael Reuveny, a professor in the Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs, adds, “There are a lot of places in the world at risk from rising sea levels, but Bangladesh is at the top of everybody’s list, and the world is not ready to cope with the problems.” As the country is literally shrinking from rising sea levels and floods, Bangladeshis are forced

from their homes and deeper and deeper into poverty. Saltwater also is polluting groundwater drinking supplies and poisoning the fields where people used to be able to grow crops. Atiq Rahman, Executive Director of the Bangladesh Center for Advanced Studies, states, “The country’s climate scientists and politicians have come to agree that by 2050, rising sea levels will inundate some 17 percent of the land and displace about 18 million people.” With such a future impending, Bangladeshis living in lowlands and rivers deltas have moved into city slums thought to be less susceptible to climate change. However, as Gardiner Harris of the *New York Times* explains, “The slums that greet them in Dhaka are also built on low-lying land, making them almost as vulnerable to being inundated as the land villagers left behind.” As the government of Bangladesh is not sufficiently helping to prevent this imminent disaster, it appears that for the people of Bangladesh, there is no way to escape the wrath of climate change or prepare for the future.

(Above): A protest over the increase in carbon emissions leading to climate change

Perhaps one of the most frustrating aspects of the climate change situation in Bangladesh is that the country is not a major contributor to fossil fuels emissions. Naturally, Bangladesh is expecting larger, wealthier countries to help, since countries such as China, the United States, India, and Indonesia are the largest culprits for fossil fuel emissions. Many hope that the recent agreement between the United States and China to cut fossil fuel emissions in the future will spur similar action in other countries. The Philippines is especially willing to do their part after recent floods from typhoons drove millions of people from their homes. The country has pledged to cut carbon emissions with hopes to encourage other more developed countries to do the same. Robert N. Stavins, Director of the Harvard Environmental Economics Program at the John F. Kennedy School of Government explains, “The announcement by the Philippines builds on the dramatic U.S.-China announcement two weeks ago. It shows that there can be a deal in which emerging economies and countries on the growth path from developed to developing are now willing to negotiate.”

Sadly, in countries such as Indonesia, steps towards a reduction in carbon emissions have not come as simply. As Michael R Gordon and Coral Davenport of the *New York Times* explain, the chief source of the country’s emissions is deforestation, but as its growing population depends increasingly on cheap electricity from coal-fired power plants, the country’s emissions are expected to grow rapidly in coming decades.” Because deforestation provides a significant short-term source of revenue, the forestry industry has significant influence over the Indonesia government. While the forestry industry has said they will stop deforestation in Indonesia, these calls to action have

(Right): The results of a study conducted by NASA that investigated the global land-ocean temperatures during a 120-year period. The results show the remarkable climate change that has taken place in recent history.

not been executed. As billions of acres of forest burn, releasing carbon into the air, it appears that Indonesia will not see the need to stop this harmful activity until they experience the effects of climate change as Bangladesh did.

While many people believe that climate change will not affect them in the near future, current conditions in many countries around the world confirm that our changing planet is causing great, and perhaps irreparable harm. In Bangladesh and the Philippines the cost of climate change is very real and alarmingly extensive. While most countries accept the climate change “hypothesis,” it appears to them as a threat of the future. Even though there is little time to spare on this issue, many countries wait to experience the effects of climate change firsthand before realizing that change needs to happen right away. Thus, the true question remains, how many human beings will suffer from climate degradation before true collaborative action is taken?

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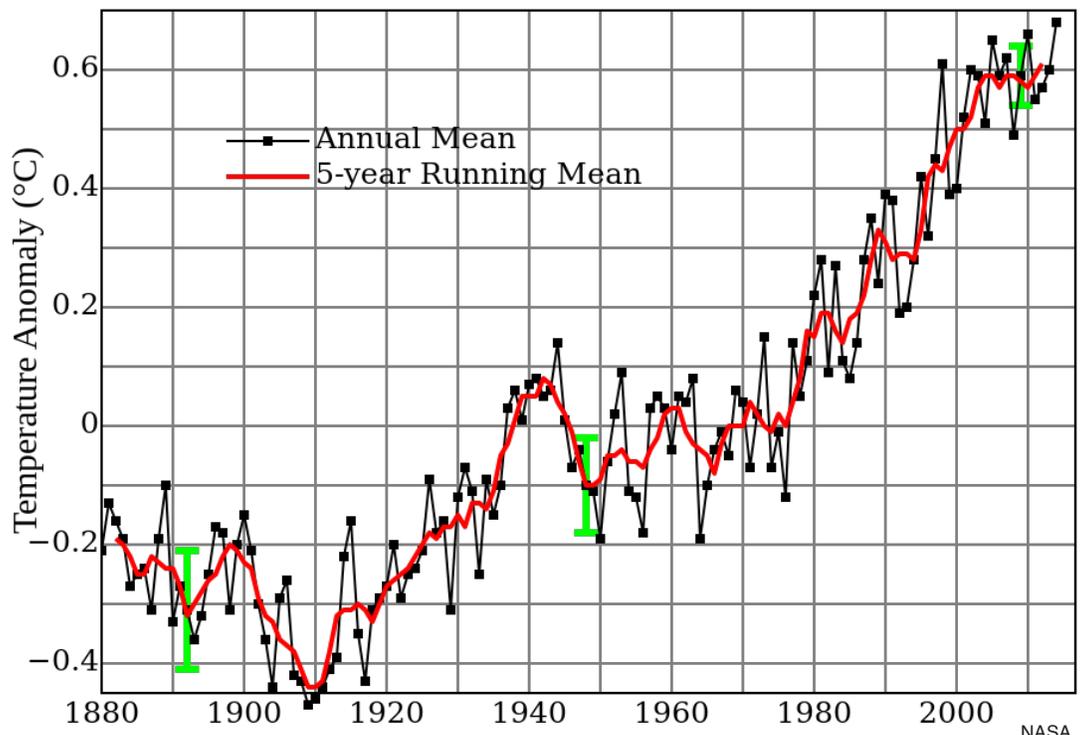
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KIM SENG/FICKR

(Above): Heavy industrialization promotes greenhouse gas emissions into our atmosphere. How much longer can we depend on fossil fuels despite their detrimental impact on the environment?

Global Land–Ocean Temperature Index



NASA



ALEXANDER TORRENEGRA/WIKIMEDIA

Ride-sharing companies like Uber have been touted as the economic models of the future. But is the sharing economy just a way to circumvent government regulation, public safety standards, and traditional competition?

BY JONATHAN ALGOO

How do you regulate ride-sharing companies like Uber, Lyft, and Sidecar within an old framework of government regulations that makes these companies legal? This has been the problem for both local and federal government and policy makers worldwide. A number of local government and taxi associations claim that these companies should be illegal, as they increasingly compete with taxi companies that must pay for medallions and register their cars as commercial vehicles. But Uber claims that it isn't breaking the law; it's just providing a service to connect independent drivers and passengers.

It's undeniable that apps like Uber take business away from taxi companies that buy medallions, the usual requirement to operate a taxi in cities and states nationwide. These medallions can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, so naturally, Uber doesn't want to pay for it. Formal taxi companies also have to register their cars as commercial vehicles, buy liability insurance up to \$1 million per vehicle, buy commercial license plates, and institute criminal background checks for their drivers. Uber claims that since it's just a service that connects passengers with drivers, it doesn't need to conform to the same rules pertaining to traditional yellow-

cab taxi companies. In many areas, without a medallion cab drivers cannot legally pick up passengers and drive them to their destination. Ride-sharing companies claim that they shouldn't be held accountable if drivers use their apps to operate illegally, since the apps aren't inherently illegal; they're just a tech-play.

Uber, the largest ride-sharing company, has been mired in controversy this past year, with lawsuits threatening to close the business in cities and countries around the world. France is considering a law to ban ride-sharing companies like Uber because authorities say it unfairly competes with taxi drivers. In India, after an Uber driver allegedly raped a female passenger, authorities banned it in India's capital district, New Delhi.

In the U.S., Uber is facing myriad lawsuits ranging from coast to coast. Despite a court order banning it in Virginia, Uber vows to keep operating there. In its home state of California, the district attorney is suing Uber over allegedly not performing required background checks on drivers, and providing service at airports it doesn't have authorization to be in. The company is also being sued for charging a \$1 "safe ride" and a \$4 "airport fee toll." Uber has also been heavily criticized for comments made by one of its senior executives

that the company should "hire four top opposition researchers and four journalists" to dig up dirt on journalists who criticize the company. Uber also lobbies numerous government authorities and has asked its customers in mass emails to complain to local transportation officials in areas in which they are banned.

Despite its controversies, Uber is growing exponentially. It's currently valued at around \$40 billion, up from \$17 billion 6 months ago. It threatens to upset the monopolistic, government-sponsored taxi industry, and offers drivers about twice what they would normally make per ride (although they have to provide their own car). And it is clear that consumers benefit from Uber, as it offers reliability and convenience that you can't get from a traditional taxi. Uber acts as an interesting test case, because it's a new company that, so far, has avoided government regulations and yet generated a large profit.

It is clearly unfair to government-regulated taxi companies and drivers that Uber can be allowed to operate without practically any government oversight. It's an unfair burden to the taxi companies, unfair to a market in which every company is supposed to operate under the same rules. Regulations need to be set in place so that Uber is policed similarly to other taxi companies. This should



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the government details on how many people they employ and where; in locations where ride-sharing companies are determined illegal, they should be forced to stop. Uber, Lyft, and other ride-sharing companies offer great potential and an interesting test case for on-demand user services, but they should be regulated in order to promote economic fairness.

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include criminal background checks, local government oversight on the number of cabs, and registering vehicles as being for commercial purposes. That being said, ride-sharing companies should not be regulated in exactly the same ways as commercial taxi companies. An example would be availability. Ride-sharing companies should

not be limited by the government on where they can operate, since wide availability is basically Uber's biggest advantage. However, ride-sharing companies should be prevented from picking up anyone who hailed them on the street, and the rates they charge should be somewhat regulated. These companies should also have to give

Upper-Left: The Co-Founder and CEO of Uber, Travis Kalanick, at a Conference in 2013



US DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Xi Jinping's anti-graft campaign has been described by some as a purge in disguise. But is the effort as successful at eliminating corruption as it is with Xi's political rivals?

BY SIYU CAO

President Xi Jinping's campaign against corruption in China, which he launched at the end of 2012, is becoming one of the broadest and most ambitious in China's modern history. Xi, who became president of China in 2013, is arresting hundreds of government officials and businessmen in an

attempt to change a society of bribery and corruption that has jeopardized economic growth. In order to rebuild the Communist Party's legitimacy, reinvigorate the economy and consolidate his own power, Xi recently created The Central National Security Commission (CNSC). This new commission meets to discuss internal politics, homeland security, military affairs,

economic policy, nuclear safety and other domestic issues. In addition to leading the CNSC, Xi is punishing corruption by investigating thousands of Chinese officials. In 2013, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the Communist Party of China punished 182,000 officials for corruption and abuse of power—13% more than in 2012. Moreover, multiple

(Above): US Secretary of State John Kerry Meets with China's President Xi Jinping

“China’s leaders are not only cracking down on corruption within China, but are also detaining economic criminals abroad.”

foreign companies have been caught in the anti-graft campaign. For instance, China accused GlaxoSmithKline, a U.K. pharmaceutical giant, and Danone, the world’s largest yogurt producer, of paying bribes to promote their products and boost sales. In 2014, China’s anti-graft authority banned the use of public funds to purchase mooncakes, traditional treats that are eaten during the Mid-Autumn Festival. Attorney Chris Priddy said, “the holiday also provides an opportunity for individuals with less admirable intentions to corruptly curry favor with influential political and business contacts through extravagant and valuable gifts.” There have been cases where people give mooncakes made from precious stones or stuffed with cash as forms of bribery.

China’s leaders are not only cracking down on corruption within China, but are also detaining economic criminals abroad. In “Operation Fox Hunt 2014,” Xi sent dozens of special police forces to more than 40 countries, retrieving fugitives from nations such as Australia, Nigeria, and Cambodia. As of December 4th, 2014, the police teams have seized 428 fugitives; of the 428, 141 were implicated in financial crimes involving over 10 million yuan (\$1.63 million). More than 200 suspects turned themselves in because the campaign gave criminals a deadline to surrender before December 1st. Those who did surrender before the deadline are promised to receive more lenient sentences.

In more recent news, Xi has targeted Zhou Yongkang, the first member of China’s Standing Committee of the Political Bureau to be charged with corruption. Besides

being a retired member of the country’s highest governing body, Zhou was in charge of a giant state-owned petroleum company and of China’s domestic security agency. Zhou’s crimes, which include abuse of power, leaking of the Party’s and the country’s secrets, and bribery, severely damaged the Communist party’s reputation. In the Chinese political system, Zhou was a commoner who got to the top without the aid of elite connections. To gain power and influence, Zhou committed offenses which undermined the Communist party’s affairs. After Zhou’s expulsion, the Communist Party Politburo decided to put him under criminal investigation. Prosecutors arrested him after they found out that Zhou had exploited his position to help his family members, mistresses, and friends make huge profits, while creating massive losses for state-owned assets. An investigation by the *New York Times* revealed that Zhou’s son, a sister-in-law, and his son’s mother-in-law owned assets worth about 1 billion yuan (\$160 million). Chinese newspapers have described him as a ringmaster of five corrupt circles: the Sichuan Province, the oil sector, the public security service, his secretaries, and his family and relatives. Li Xiaolin, a lawyer who represents officials tried on corruption charges, said, “we lawyers all believe that he took rule of law in China backwards at least a decade.”

In 2012, Bo Xilai, who was China’s former Chongqing party chief, was accused of abusing his power and covering up a murder of a British businessman named Neil Heywood. Like Zhou, Bo exploited his power in office to receive bribes and

help others gain massive profits. His wife, Bogu Kailai—“the Jackie Kennedy of China”, also abused her husband’s position to seek profits and receive bribes and property from others. Bloomberg found out that Bo’s in-laws “controlled a web of businesses from Beijing to Hong Kong to the Caribbean worth at least \$126 million.” Bo Xilai also attempted to revive Maosim in Chongqing, China by instigating the “red terror.” According to Li Jun, a prominent businessman who escaped the “red terror” by fleeing overseas, Bo’s campaign was worse than Mao’s Cultural Revolution. “Everyone was afraid they were in danger; it was a very frightening time, because they were just arresting people all over the place and then packaging them up as several hundred members of triad gangs,” Li said. The government eventually arrested Bo Xilai and detained his wife because they suspected that she was involved in Heywood’s murder. According to sources, Gu demanded that Heywood move a large amount of money abroad and poisoned him after he threatened to expose her plan. For many years, Heywood had helped manage the family’s money and even helped Bo’s son, Bo Guagua, get into Harrow for an English education. Although Bo Xilai’s case humiliated the government, it was a warning to other officials. Corruption in China has grown too big to be ignored and President Jinping is attempting to stop it through anti-graft campaigns and targeting high and low level officials. In a speech in January of 2014, Xi stated that the Communist Party needs the courage of a man ready to chop off his own snakebite-poisoned hand to save his own life.

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Bo Xilai is sentenced to life in prison.

XINHUA/XIE HUANCHI



ED YOURDON/FICKR

Though physical sports are an integral part of American culture, the severe head injuries sustained by players leave many to wonder if it is worth risking life and limb for the love of the game.

**BY BRYCE WEISHOLTZ AND
SAM KECECI**

In the modern day sports world, concussions represent the biggest threat to the well-being of athletes.

Essentially, concussions occur when the brain comes in contact with the skull wall with enough force to cause damage to the neural pathways, usually as a result of one severe or several repetitive blows to the head. Reducing concussions by changing equipment, such as the new pitcher hat in baseball, have been discussed. Rule changes have already occurred. But in spite of the known risks to players, none of the other possible solutions that have been suggested seem to take hold, and it is conceivable that nothing may ever truly eliminate concussions from sports because of the intrinsic competitive nature of professional athletes.

In highly physical leagues such as the NHL and NFL, violence is viewed as an integral part of the sports we all know and love. The biggest and hardest hits dominate the highlight reel and elicit the loudest cheers. If these sports seek to eliminate the aggressive plays that now result in head injuries, they put their profitability and the fundamental legacy of the sport at risk. Thus, it appears that the only way to retain the passionate fanbase and financial value of the sport is to improve the safety of equipment without changing the game.

While new equipment is still being created, the various leagues have changed their rules

dramatically. Older generations remember a time when the linebacker ruled the football field, hitting everything in sight. However, now there are rules in place that take out all hits to the head. Although arguably safer, many feel that extremely sensitive penalty calls have taken away from the game itself. For example, fans of the sport generally feel that the frequency of defensive pass interference calls disallows any sort of physical play. The same thing is occurring in the NHL. New boarding and roughing penalties are working to take hard hits out of the game. These rules are changing each sport, yet are not real solutions because concussions are still a common occurrence.

As sport progresses into a new age, we are finally able to see the long-term effects of repeated head trauma injuries, since retired players are reaching an age in which the consequences become obvious. Famous athletes, such as NFL All-Pro Junior Seau and Andre Waters, have passed away through the devastating effects of brain trauma, which has been implicated in the suicides of both.

Generally, sports fans associate severe concussions with high-contact sports; however, this is not necessarily the case. Some of the most severe cases occur in Association Football. With sparse head-to-head contact, it stands to reason that people would not associate severe concussions with soccer, but soccer goalkeepers are the most commonly concussed athletes in any sport. Given the facts and game play, this makes sense, but the athletes' drive to compete is ultimately more detrimental to their health. One famous

instance occurred in the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil—in the twenty-third minute of the championship game, German midfielder Christoph Kramer suffered a major concussion. Immediately after the incident, Kramer came off the field and was examined by team doctors. Minutes later, however, Kramer was put back in. This was an incredibly ill-advised choice, seeing that during the game, Kramer went so far as to approach the referee and ask “I need to know if this is really the final.” Clearly Christoph Kramer and his medical and coaching staff were so focused on winning that they risked the health of a young, aspiring twenty-three year-old athlete.

In this age of intense athletic competition, jarring physical contact seems inevitable. However, if we continue to condone the appalling injuries that athletes must endure as part of their everyday jobs, then sports as we know it will be regarded an archaic memento of a past age, just as boxing and MMA have already become. Thus, the only possible options that would maintain the integrity of sports while preserving the health of the players lies in the advancement of protective equipment. For now, while we are still striving toward new breakthroughs in this area, sports executives must be willing to concede profits and commercial success to compensate for the terrible tragedies that mar the sports world on a regular basis.

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C-52 OF 3/2 STRYKER BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM



Department of Veterans Affairs, estimates that “two out of three veterans who commit suicide were not enrolled in the VA’s health care system.” If veterans do not feel encouraged to seek aid and assistance from these VA facilities, which exist to support and care for

those who have experienced the horrors of war, then the U.S. is doing a poor job of publicizing the hospitable and open environment the treatment centers offer. In addition, MST, one of the causal factors in the development of PTSD, is within the power of the military

Above: An Army Stryker lies on its side after surviving a buried IED blast in Iraq, 2007.

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minorities.” As these investigations began CNN legal analyst Mark O’Mara speculated that the federal investigation of Wilson’s actions might be inconclusive. O’Mara said that to convict someone of a civil rights violation one must truly prove that someone acted with intent to take away civil rights based, in this case, on race. Moreover, O’Mara noted that there was more evidence proving Wilson acted in self-defense as opposed to evidence suggesting he acted based on racial discrimination.

Callan on the other hand argued that because of the lack of a local indictment, the federal government might be inspired to “open a much more stringent and powerful investigation” of Wilson’s actions. Callan pointed out that the feds have a right to do a completely independent investigation, and they’re not bound in any way by [the] grand jury determination.” Even Callan did not expect a federal charge soon, though, since he found it hard to “imagine they’re going to swoop in on this one too quickly.” Ultimately the Justice Department did conduct a thorough investigation, which in March 2015 cleared Wilson of violating Brown’s civil rights in the shooting incident.

In addition to having had to face criminal investigations, Wilson is the subject of a pending wrongful death lawsuit, which was filed by the Brown family in April. Callan and O’Mara agreed the Browns have every right to file this lawsuit against Wilson and the Ferguson

Police Department, but O’Mara warned that “law enforcement officers are afforded certain legal protections” as they put themselves in harm’s way every day in protecting the people of our nation. The litigation of the suit will clearly last many months and keep the Ferguson controversy alive.

Even though he has been cleared of all criminal charges, Darren Wilson will always be connected to this now infamous case. Wilson’s reputation will forever be tarnished with the shooting of Michael Brown. However, one issue that will hopefully be resolved as 2015 progresses—the violent protests that are destroying towns and cities across America. In the words of Michael Brown’s mother, Lesley McSpadden, “Answering violence with violence is not an appropriate reaction,” a message we should all keep in mind as we face the future.

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to prevent. The law protects victims of sexual abuse and harassment, and such acts should not have a place in a body protecting and representing the values and standards of the nation. It is disappointing and discouraging to see those who have sacrificed so much for the well being of others damaged by their service in the nation’s wars against terrorism.

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SIVEN BESA/THE ISRAELI DEFENSE FORCES



Clockwise from Above: Kindergarten students in central Israel take cover during a rocket alarm; A destroyed ambulance in Shuja’iyya in the Gaza Strip; Shaymaa al-Masri, five years old, at a-Shifaa Hospital, Gaza. Shaymaa was injured in an Israeli airstrike.

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oped, an Israeli air defense system that is able to take out a significant amount of Palestinian missiles. The Iron Dome, however, is not always effective, and so Israeli citizens continue to live in fear. Israelis have been forced to take extreme measures to protect themselves from this constant threat. In certain areas of Israel, for example, bus stops double as safe rooms in case of a missile threat.

Although Israel is almost constantly bombarded with missiles, the death toll of nearly 75 Israelis between July 8th and August 27th of 2014 remains lower than Gaza's of approximately 2,100, not only because Israel takes such careful measures to protect its people, but because Hamas actively attempts to soil the Israeli reputation in the media and turn the world against the Jewish state. With very little regard for human life, Hamas is willing to sacrifice Palestinian civilians. By placing the launchpads for their missiles in and on the roofs of schools, hospitals, mosques, and other civilian-dense places, Hamas gives Israel little choice but to bomb these centers in order to protect Israeli civilians. Israel continuously gives warnings, such as firing dud missiles

before a strike or simply calling ahead on the phone before they bomb so civilians have time to evacuate the area, but the Gazan citizens continue to be used by Hamas as human shields. The Gazans refuse to evacuate before a bombing because the Hamas-run Gaza Interior Ministry released a government statement arguing that Israeli bomb warnings "are designed to weaken [their] resolve and to sow panic and fear among [the Gazans] in light of the failure of [their] enemies" and that they "call on Gaza residents not to pay attention to these messages and not to leave their homes."

To quote Ibn Saud, the King of Saudi Arabia until 1953 who was actively involved in the movement against Israel until his death, "There are fifty million Arabs. What does it matter if we lose ten million people to kill all of the Jews?" This sentiment among many of the Arabs has endured, and as a result, people are dying and living in fear in both Gaza and Israel. Hamas is a terrorist organization that preys upon the ignorance and blind trust of the Gazan people to both manipulate them into sacrificing their lives and to isolate Israel from the rest of the world. The Israeli citizens and Gazans all want the same thing: a reprieve

from the violence, and the only way to accomplish this is to eradicate Hamas and once more attempt to bring about peace between the Jews and the Arabs.

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MUHAMMAD SABAH/ WWW.BTSELEM.ORG



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U.S. Soldiers of the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment train Iraqi commando troops in 2010

US ARMY

The War that Follows Soldiers Home: Iraq, Afghanistan, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

As the conflicts of the early 21st Century wind down, many American servicemen and women have found that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan rage on in their memories and in their minds long after they have left the combat zone.

BY GREG NARATIL

As of September 2014, nearly 400,000 veterans returning from their deployments in either Iraq or Afghanistan have been evaluated at VA facilities for post-traumatic stress disorder, more commonly known as PTSD. According to the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, PTSD is defined as “a mental health problem that can occur after someone goes through a traumatic event like war, assault, an accident or disaster.” While the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are commonly grouped together as part of the global war on terrorism, there are major differences between the conflicts caused by the clash of forces taking place in each country that affect the incidence of PTSD.

Soldiers fighting in Iraq, known as Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) troops, have been exposed to more combat and the traumas accompanying war when compared to soldiers fighting in Afghanistan, known as Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Approximately twice as many troops in Iraq admit to having seen dead bodies, been shot at or attacked, or known someone killed or seriously injured, while deployed in this war-ridden country than in Afghanistan. These OIF troops have been “at risk for being killed or wounded themselves, are likely to have witnessed the suffering of others, and may have participated in killing or wounding others as part of combat operations,” all of which directly correlate to PTSD development. As a result, 20% of OIF veterans experience the effects of PTSD, as opposed to the 11% of OEF veterans.

While the increased combat exposure is the most significant discrepancy between those fighting in Iraq and those fighting in Afghanistan, there are other factors that would make particular OIF or OEF troops more likely to display the symptoms of PTSD. These include longer deployment time, a more serious physical injury, a traumatic injury to the brain, being of lower rank or educational status, having

low self-esteem or inadequate support from peers, being unmarried or in midst of family complications, having previous exposure to combat and the suffering it causes, being a female, having a Hispanic background, or experiencing Military Sexual Trauma. MST is “sexual assault or repeated threatening sexual harassment that occurs in the military,” endangering both men and women. Although there are various contributing factors putting veterans at risk of developing PTSD, not all veterans admit to being mentally affected by these influences following the termination of their deployment.

The 400,000 OIF and OEF veterans being evaluated at VA facilities for PTSD after returning home from war in the Middle East do not include those who have mental health problems but have not visited said facilities for care. Many veterans suffering with mental health difficulties do not seek care from the VA, as they have concerns over their public image and effect on others around them, such as appearing weak, getting special treatment, witnessing others’ loss of confidence in them, or even losing their sense of privacy. Others may have their doubts about the effectiveness of the mental care administered by the VA, including the possible, location, cost, and side effects of treatment. As a result, the VA has reached out to OEF and OIF veterans and informed them of the success of various PTSD treatments. However, the 500 suicides a month committed by U.S. veterans call the success of these efforts into question.

The United States is not doing enough to keep its veterans from developing PTSD or to help those suffering from the disease. The fact that 20% of U.S. suicides are committed by people who have fought to preserve the freedom of the United States of America, shows a grave deficiency in our country’s handling and treatment of this veteran population. The majority of veterans committing suicide previously attempted to battle their mental health problems single-handedly and never received outside help. Eric Shinseki, former Secretary of the

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