



The Diplomatic Envoy

INF Treaty Disintegrates

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Russia announced on Wednesday, February 6, that within six months it will pull out of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in a “symmetrical” response to the United States’ withdrawal, according to the New York Times.

Russia also still claims that it is not in violation of the treaty, but that the U.S. is. U.S. officials responded by stating the opposite claim.

The INF treaty was signed in 1987 between The United States’ President Ronald Reagan and the Soviet Union’s General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. The treaty, as described by the U.S. State Department, banned the possession of nuclear weapons that had the ca-

pability of striking within a range of 500 to 5500 kilometers.

With this treaty falling apart, there is worry that the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) will also fall apart. Newsweek quotes Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov as saying, “U.S. experts are already saying that the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty [New START], which expires in 2021, will come next.”

New START was an agreement established in 2010 by Barack Obama to update the original START, which was signed by the late George H.W. Bush. The goal of this treaty was and is to decrease strategic nuclear missile launcher and increase inspection and verification in regards to nuclear weapons.

In addition to the situation with New START,



President Donald Trump and President Vladimir Putin greet at a summit.

Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Newsweek also reports that the U.S. has begun production of long-range nuclear weapons for the first time since 1991.

There is, however, disagreement about the impact of the disintegration of the INF treaty and, possibly New START. Russian state officials seem not to be worrying

about this series of developments. The Moscow Times reports that Lavrov declared that, “I don’t think we’re talking about the development of a Cold War, a new era has begun.”

This position is not held by some other analysts who hold that these events will cause desta-

bilization in Europe and Asia. Mark Fitzpatrick, executive director of the non-proliferation program at the Washington-based International Institute for Strategic Studies, told Al-Jazeera that, “The Trump administration has made a huge mistake – it’s a breakdown of arms control.

It’s a breakdown of trust between U.S. and Russia. The U.S. will have problems with its European allies, and it will engage in a new arms race with China as well.”

In fact, President Trump’s political opponents within the United States are, according

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Pope Francis Confirms Sexual Abuse of Nuns by Clergy

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On February 5, Pope Francis publicly acknowledged the sexual abuse of nuns by members of the Catholic clergy, the Associated Press reports. The announcement was made on the Papal plane returning to Rome after the Pope’s visit to the United Arab Emirates. According to NPR, the visit is remarkable not only because it was the first Papal mass delivered in the Middle East, but also for Francis’s statements made afterward. The Pope’s comments reflect the first time that the abuse of nuns at the hands of bishops and priests was revealed to the public.

“Should we do something more? Yes. Is there the will? Yes,” Francis stated. “But it’s a path that we have already begun.”

CBS News details that the abuse of nuns has been a major problem in the Church. At one point, an entire congregation, the Community of St. Jean in France, was suspended by Pope Benedict, the previous pontiff. The reason for why the order was dissolved back in 2005 was not then publicly stated.

Sexual slavery was brought up as part of the reason for the dissolution of the order. “It’s a path that we’ve been on. Pope Benedict had the courage to dissolve a female congregation which was at a certain level, because this

slavery of women had entered it,” Francis remarked. The Vatican has since clarified that Pope Francis didn’t mean to imply sexual slavery but rather sexual manipulation of the victims, according to CNN.

These revelations come at a precarious time for the Catholic Church. An additional report by CNN states that many Archdioceses in the United States are under federal investigation over claims of sexual abuse against minors, most notably in Pennsylvania where there are over 1,000 alleged child victims. Recently, all 15 dioceses in Texas have released the names of priests accused of sexually assaulting minors, USA Today reports.

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Maduro’s Political Survival Comes Closer to an End

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After the Venezuelan leader Mr. Maduro refused to accept new presidential elections, the list of countries that have recognized the opposition leader Guaidó as Venezuela’s interim president grew, says CNN.

According to BBC, several states in Europe now support Guaidó, including the United Kingdom, Spain, France, and Germany. These countries seek to persuade other members of the European Union to follow this recognition, however, some states are still concerned about the future implications of accepting a self-declared leader.

Due to Venezuela’s humanitarian crisis, it is hard

to gather accurate data regarding domestic public opinion on the presidential turmoil, reports CBC. Approximately 90 percent of Venezuelans are below the poverty line and fight for daily survival, so the interest in political change is small. Nonetheless, a poll from November indicates that the majority of Venezuelans support negotiations and Maduro’s exit from office, whereas a minority of citizens support Mr. Maduro’s government.

The Wall Street Journal reports that despite the wide international acceptance of Guaidó as interim president, not all opposition leaders expected that Guaidó would declare himself president. Some parts of the opposition feared that Guaidó’s nomination as president

would worsen negotiations with Mr. Maduro and extend the suffering of millions of Venezuelans that lack access to food and medicine.

In addition, the United States has made diplomatic moves to demonstrate its support of Guaidó as Venezuela’s president, says on a later report. These actions include the revocation of U.S. visas from Venezuelan government officials that serve Mr. Maduro and a push for the entry of U.S. humanitarian aid in Venezuela. According to the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. sought to provide over \$20 million in aid.

However, tensions increased even more as Mr. Maduro blocked the entry of U.S. aid that arrived at

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to Al-Jazeera, currently seeking to establish legislation that would not give Trump, or any other future president, first strike capabilities. The United States would, in effect, become a solely second strike nation, at least legally.

These events may also affect Asia. Newsweek claims that Russia may be forced to secure alliances with eastern nuclear powers such as China, North Korea, Pakistan, and India in the absence of an agreement with the United States.

China is also significant, for the fact that according to Fitzpatrick, China is the “real reason” for the United States’ withdrawal from the INF Treaty. China’s weapons development is ever increasing and has resulted in China’s possession of thousands of weapons that would violate the INF Treaty if it were a signatory.

Al-Jazeera reports that China possesses more than 2,000 ballistic and cruise missiles, most of

which violate the treaty. This may have caused the U.S. to pull out of the treaty with Russia so that it could properly respond to China’s increase in nuclear power, and not Russia’s. China may understand this and has indeed responded to the events regarding the treaty saying that they “may trigger a series of adverse consequences.”

The recent developments of U.S. and Russian foreign policy come in context to a world of evermore-strained relations between the two powers. Russia’s annexation of Crimea along with the U.S. claim that Russia manipulated the 2016 U.S. presidential election only provide more stress to the situation at hand.

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Yellow Vest Protests Drag into Their 13th Week

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Throughout France, the high-profile Yellow Vest movement continued into its 13th week of protesting against French President Emmanuel Macron’s government, according to Time Magazine. Over 2,000 people have been injured since protests broke out on November 17, 2018, and 10 people have been killed in traffic accidents stemming from protesters blocking off roads.

As the protests continue, there have been an increasing amount of eye injuries among protesters caused by rubber balls shot by riot police. Frank Dideron, 20, who claims to have been peacefully protesting, was on the phone with his mother when he was hit in the eye with a rubber ball, according to Time Magazine. France24 reports France’s Council of State ruled on February 1 that security forces were justified in utilizing the high-velocity rubber balls against protesters. The Council also noted the frequency of violence, property destruction, and

deviation from approved protest routes.

Advocates and self-proclaimed members of the Yellow Vest movement denied taking part in any violence towards police. The nationwide protests, which have gained international attention, numbers upwards of 100,000 people. Other groups within the protests are being blamed for the violence. Anarchists, known in France as *casserus*, are far right and far left radical groups that have vandalized sites such as the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, causing upwards of \$3.4 million in damages, reports NPR.

The Yellow Vest movement first arose in reaction to a green fuel tax announced by President Macron as part of his environmental policy that went into effect on New Year’s Day. According to NPR, several truck driver unions and commuters from rural areas expressed frustration with the tax because of the increased cost to commute to work. Middle-class workers have also expressed their frustration with the diminishing standards of living, as many feel their incomes

are too high to qualify for social welfare, but too low to make ends meet.

The name of the Yellow Vest movement stems from the bright yellow traffic vests that protesters wear. French law requires all motorists to carry yellow vests in their cars, which were used when the first protestors began to block traffic.

The movement’s ability to effect change has been questioned because of its lack of centralized leadership. France24 reports that the first two leaders emerged after creating an “official” Facebook page before protests broke out in November 2018. Priscillia Ludosky and Eric Drouet, the creators of the page, attended a meeting with Environment Minister Francois de Rugy in November as representatives of the movement. Since then, Drouet was arrested for an illegal protest and has since called on others to raid the Élysée presidential palace. Ludosky has maintained a more peaceful stance, highlighting the lack of unity within the Yellow Vest movement.

In response to the protests, President Ma-

ron started a two-month long national tour on January 15 to speak and debate those opposed to his recent policy, reports The Local. The president temporarily suspended the tax when protests turned violent in December 2018. Rumors have also surfaced that Macron may hold a referendum on May 26 asking the French public if they feel it is necessary to reduce the number of national lawmakers and implement term limits. This date is particularly important because elections for the European Parliament will also be held then.

President Macron’s opposition, such as Marine le Pen and the Les Republicains Party, has called this possibility a “distraction from the election – which was decided before the debate tour.” Many have argued the referendum would solve nothing for the majority of French citizens and reinforce the criticism that President Macron is out of touch and continues to implement policies that benefit the rich.

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Afghan Government Left Out of Intra-Afghan Negotiation

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On Tuesday, February 5, it appeared that the war in Afghanistan was finally moving towards a peaceful conclusion. Representatives of the Taliban and key Afghan political figures, like former President Hamid Karzai, met in Moscow for two days in another step forward in resolving Afghanistan’s 17 year long war. Despite this, there were no Kabul government officials according to ABC News.

The Washington Post reports that the Afghan government under President Ashraf Ghani was invited to the talks, but instead declined to attend. Their first reason for not attending was that there were no face-to-face talks with the Taliban. The other reason was that the Afghan government feared that the presence of their political rivals would put them on equal footing, which

would be a serious legitimacy issue. Key opposition figures who attended include Afghanistan’s political rivals such as former President Hamid Karzai, Ghani’s former national security adviser and main rival in the recent presidential election Hanif Atmar, as well as key factional leaders like Ismail Khan, Mohammed Mohaqeq, and Atta Mohammad Noor.

The Taliban had their own reasons for not wanting to talk to the Afghan government, reports The Washington Post. They see the current government in Kabul as a United States puppet and therefore, as illegitimate. Two Afghan Daily News reporters, quoted by The Washington Post, have stated that Kabul’s absence “isolates Ghani” and “sabotages the authority of the government.”

However, despite this negativity there appears to be real hope that the war in Afghanistan is closer to ending than

ever before. Al Jazeera reports that despite Kabul’s complaints, the politicians who attended the meeting in Moscow saw it as a continuation of peace efforts. These talks follow progress made



Ghani refused to attend negotiations.

Courtesy of Wikimedia.

by the United States and Taliban in Qatar. Negotiations there seemed to be a step toward moving American and other foreign troops out of Afghanistan. According to The Washington Post, these talks were carried out by Taliban members and U.S. Special Envoy Zalmay Khalilzad amid

a renewed push by U.S. President Donald Trump to bring home American troops.

Despite this progress, the lack of Afghan government representation is going to leave a bitter

taste in Kabul’s mouth and it may also hamper further peace talks. Al Jazeera reports that Fazel Fazly, the chief adviser to President Ashraf Ghani, said in a tweet “[They] are ready to bypass these principles and move towards [the principles]’ destruction due to differences and being away

from power.”

President Ghani’s office also had something to say. As per Al Jazeera, they stated that opposition leaders were only attending the talks “in order to gain power.” President Ghani has also been irritated by Special Envoy Khalilzad’s talks with the Taliban and with other countries in the region.

These talks come during a still very contentious time within Afghanistan. Put together by the Moscow based Council of Afghan society, an Afghan diaspora organization, the talks hope to help bring an end to the longest war of the 21st Century. According to Al Jazeera, the Taliban, despite being thrown out by U.S. troops in 2001, are in control or contest districts in nearly half the country. The most recent quarterly report issued by the U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction puts the situation on the ground as such. Of the 407

districts in Afghanistan, 53.8 percent are under the control of the Afghan government. This amounts to 63.5 percent of the population with the Taliban controlling the rest

Many fear that the Taliban is only biding its time, and though there is still hope for peace, Afghanistan is certainly in a precarious situation. According to Associated Press, a new U.S. watchdog report says that Afghan security forces are weakening and that there are gaps in the security that continue to grow. However, the Taliban continues to hold its own even under intense U.S. bombardment. It only raises the question of who are these talks serving. If the U.S. agrees to terms with the Taliban and withdraws, what will be the fate of the Afghan people?

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Liberian Economy Suffers as President Weah Marks First Year in Office

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Former soccer star-turned-politician George Weah marked his first year in office as President of Liberia on January 22, according to BBC News. Weah, once called the “best footballer in the world,” was elected to the nation’s highest office in 2017 amidst high hopes that he would end the country’s sweeping corruption and repair its struggling economy.

Liberia’s economy has been in recovery mode since 2014 when it, Guinea, and Sierra Leone were struck by an epidemic of the deadly Ebola virus. Liberia was particularly hard hit, with over 4,800 succumbing to the disease. The country was declared Ebola-free in 2016 with no new cases reported, but the disease has had a dampening effect on Liberia’s economy.

Marking his first year in office, the president touted his economic achievements in his annual speech to the Liberian Legislature on January 28. President Weah said that his administration had inherited a broken economy but over the past year, the government had succeeded in stabilizing it.

Weah vouched for the strength of Liberia’s banking system, saying that the sector had “experienced improvement in aggregate assets, deposits, loans, and capitalization,” according to Front Page Africa. The president also expressed that despite optimistic estimates for the country’s future economy, growth rates were still well below pre-Ebola levels when the economy grew at an average of 7.5 percent per year.

One year on into Weah’s presidency, however, average Liberians have not seen the changes promised to them. Some

even claim that the economy has taken a downturn since the former athlete took power.

Opposition parties in the country have claimed that the Liberian economy is “bleeding profusely” under President Weah, reports the Liberian Daily Observer. Wilmot Paye, chairperson of the opposition Unity Party, blasted the President, saying that, “The president and his officials have destroyed whatever was left of the economy after the Ebola crisis.”

The opposition also condemned a government request to print more money in the midst of a scandal wherein a shipment of 16 billion Liberian dollars (\$100 million U.S.) went missing two months after Weah became president.

Officials from the Liberian government have expressed differing views with the opposition’s claims. An additional re-

port by Front Page Africa says that Samora Wolokolie, Liberia’s Deputy Minister for Fiscal Affairs, announced on February 5 that the Liberian economy is expected to grow at a steady 3 percent and commended the government’s economic achievements.

This praise flew in the face of a statement made by Weah himself, however. Weah called on Liberians to pray for God to help Liberia’s beleaguered economy on February 5.

According to BBC News, the Weah administration’s key economic moves thus far are of questionable national value and are mostly targeted personal projects like improving conditions in the slums where he grew up or improving roads in his home district. Initiatives like making college tuition free for students is viewed by some as reckless.

Meanwhile, according to another report from



Weah, once wildly popular, has come under fire. Courtesy of Twitter.

Front Page Africa, average Liberians face severe shortages of cash and must wait in hour-long lines to withdraw meager amounts of their money.

Liberia post-Ebola remains in shoddy shape. Liberia’s currency continues to lose value as the nation grapples with cash shortages and high inflation, which was at a record 26.6 percent in

October 2018 according to Trading Economics. If Liberia is to mount a successful recovery effort, President Weah and his administration will need to make some much-needed changes to revive the struggling post-Ebola economy.

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Pope Francis Confirms Sexual Abuse of Nuns by Clergy

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NJ.com reports that the Archdiocese of Newark in New Jersey has also fallen under scrutiny as a previous archbishop, former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, was accused of sexually abusing seminarians and minors. Separate claims of sexual abuse against different priests within the Archdiocese of Newark are being investigated as well. The sexual abuse scandals rocking the Catholic Church are not limited to the United States as all 34 bishops of Chile offered their resignation to Pope Francis in the wake of allegations that they covered up rampant child

sexual abuse, according to BBC News.

The Pope’s announcement of sexual abuse against nuns marks a fundamental difference between the ongoing sexual assault claims against Catholic officials, as current investigations primarily concern the abuse of minors.

Pope Francis’s response to the ongoing allegations has been to convene a meeting at the Vatican to take place towards the end of February. The presidents of every Catholic bishops’ conference from around the world are expected to attend, the National Catholic Register reports. The

purpose of the meeting is to discuss how to prevent sexual assault of minors and “vulnerable adults,” as stated by the Holy See’s spokeswoman Paloma García Ovejero.

Despite the Pope’s attempts to address the issue, some have lost faith in the Catholic Church’s clergy due to the numerous scandals plaguing the Church, CNN separately documents. With the conference on sexual abuse prevention drawing near, Pope Francis reflected the hope that it will bring in tackling the crisis but expressed caution, America Magazine reports.

“We have to deflate expectations to these points that I have made because the problem of abuse will continue, it is a human problem, a human problem [that is] everywhere,” The Pope said.

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Pope Francis has recently come under fire. Courtesy of Wikimedia.

Maduro’s Political Survival Comes Closer to an End

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the Colombian border, reports Voice of America. Mr. Maduro ordered Venezuelan security forces to use shipping containers and a fuel tanker in order to block the Tienditas Bridge that separates Colombia and Venezuela. Several human rights activists came to the border crossing and requested Mr. Maduro to accept the emergency aid.

The United Nations joined the concerns of these human rights activists and warned against the politicization of humanitarian aid, says Reuters. While Mr. Maduro states that Venezuelans are not “beggars,” the

spokesperson for United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that humanitarian aid should not be used for political gains but rather should follow “the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.” The U.S. State Department joined these concerns and requested the Venezuelans security forces to allow the aid to enter Venezuela.

In fact, the U.S. could still deliver the aid without Mr. Maduro’s consent if there is approval from the United Nations Security Council. However, this approval is hard to get because Russia, as a permanent member, is

likely to block this move, reports Reuters.

As Mr. Maduro increasingly loses political force, he relies on protection and support from Cuban forces, reports ABC News. This reliance on Cuban forces happens simultaneously with Guaidó’s continuous calls for Venezuelan military officers to abandon their loyalty to Mr. Maduro in exchange for amnesty. The expectations are that if more members of the military leave Mr. Maduro’s side, he could be forced to leave the country.

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President Maduro (pictured) faces a political challenge from Guaido.

Courtesy of New York Times

Alleged False Imprisonment in Italy

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Italian officials in Sicily have recently asked two high-ranking Sudanese officials to testify in a case against a man suspected to be a human trafficker who appears to have been mistakenly identified. Currently in the case, magistrates have been using various testimonies from members of the widely feared secret police in Sudan.

The secret police in Sudan is ruled by Hassan al-Bashir, who is currently facing charges of war crimes by the International Court of Justice. Sputnik News International reports that the pair of Sudanese officials were allegedly included in a joint operation between Mr. Bashir's regime, the Italian police, and the British National Crime Agency. The three agencies are believed to be involved in the 2016 arrest in Khartoum of a 35-year-old Eritrean man who is be-

lieved to be Medhanie Yehdego Mered. He is suspected to be one of the world's most sought-after human traffickers and is also known as "The General."

The problem is that ever since he was arrested in Palermo, there have been serious doubts regarding the man's identity. Since news of his arrest has spread, many of Mr. Mered's victims claim that the wrong man is on trial.

According to The Irish Times, the victims claim that the man who was arrested looks a lot different to previous photographs that were released by police before the arrest of Mr. Mered. According to a documentary made last year by the Swedish broadcaster SVT, the real Mr. Mered is having fun partying in Uganda while the arrested suspect is, in reality, a refugee named Medhanie Tesfamariam Berhe.

Another reason as to why it is believed to be a case of mistaken identity is because DNA sam-



Hassan al-Bashir (pictured) rules the Sudanese secret police that has supposedly arrested "the General."

Courtesy of Wikimedia.

ples were taken from Mr. Mered's three-year-old son as well as Mr. Berhe's mother, neither of which match. Attorneys have so far been unable to provide any witnesses to testify, but they are insisting that the man in custody is the actual human trafficker whom the agencies were pursuing.

In order to prove their case, the Italian prosecutors asked the judge to admit the testimony of the two Sudanese officials

who were thought to be participants in the man's arrest and torture. This week, a judge in Palermo accepted the prosecutor's request to include the testimonies. The Guardian reports that the testimony was accepted despite being challenged by Berhe's lawyer, Michele Calantropo. According to him, there is a "grave ethical question" being raised as a result of using their testimony.

Using the Sudanese's

testimonies has also raised an eyebrow by organizations dedicated to human rights. Amnesty International has declared that the judge's decision was completely unacceptable and that the use of the testimony is morally wrong, especially for a democratic country. An additional article from The Guardian reports that in New York, an investigation was published that was based on a three-hour phone interview.

During the interview, Mr. Mered told people he was still at large and that he was currently in a prison in another country at the same time of Berhe's arrest.

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Illegal Immigration from Haiti Worsens after Abaco Crisis



The large group of migrants were fleeing poor economic conditions in Haiti.

Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

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On February 3, a large group of Haitian immigrants attempted to sail to Abaco, an island chain in the North Bahamas, which resulted in many of them drowning off the coast of the islands. Currently, the exact number of Haitians involved in this incident is unknown, but estimates are being made by immigration of-

ficials. Eye witness news stated that "several of the migrants who survived claimed 45 people made the journey. However, immigration officials believe the figure could be as high as 80."

Thus far, the death toll for the group is at 28, as reported by the St. Lucia Times. However, this number is expected to rise. In regard to the survivors of the accident, 17 people have been retrieved from the waters

near Marsh Harbour, Abaco. The rescue effort was made by the Royal Bahamas Defense Force (RBDF) and the U.S. coast guard over two days.

The large group of illegal immigrants were trying to escape Haiti due to its broken economy and poor living conditions. St. Lucia Times stated that it is "the latest tragedy at sea for people seeking to leave the Caribbean's poorest economy."

This expedition by the

Haitians is just one of many that have occurred in the past. Originally, escaping Haitians would generally aim for the islands of Turks and Caicos or for the capital of the Bahamas, Nassau. The Miami Herald stated that "Instead of traveling toward the southern Bahamas island of Inagua and coming through the Exumas to reach Nassau as has been customary, boats are now traveling east on the Atlantic to land in the

outer islands of the archipelago, perhaps to avoid detection."

Countries dealing with this sudden influx of Haitian immigrants have become increasingly concerned about the issue. Meetings have formed between the Caribbean countries to discuss possible solutions for the matter. According to the Miami Herald, "Among the ideas raised – and yet to receive any response from Haitian authorities – is a joint maritime agreement that would allow Royal Bahamas Defense Force boats to patrol Haitian waters with Haiti National Police Officers abroad."

The United Haitian Association has also expressed concerns about the issue following the accident. Its president, Pastor Antoine St. Louis, said "We continue to just push that the Haitian government will continue to do whatever it can to put some kind of stop to this because it has been

going on over and over." The tragic news came as a shock as many Bahamian citizens have close relatives in Haiti. In fact, many at the funeral service had family members on the boat.

Since the body count is still not confirmed, numerous people who had friends or relatives on the boat are still waiting to find out whether or not they made it out alive. The pastor stated later on in the service "We are praying for those families as they come to grips with what took place over the weekend." St. Louis also stated, "I have not received any calls from Haiti and we are waiting on the embassy to see what we can do," reports Eye-witness News.

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Himalayan Ice Caps Melting Questions Arise Over Brazil Dam Collapse

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In the next hundred years, it is projected that ninety percent of Earth's glaciers will disappear, reports The New York Times. Decreased snowfall, increasing snowline elevations, and the phenomenon of elevation-dependent warming are predicted to pose a threat to glaciers, specifically because of the high elevations at which they tend to form.

The New York Times

to avoid the two-degree threshold can be accomplished within the time frame needed to save the HKH glaciers. As the Guardian put it, the Himalayan icefields are "doomed to melt."

However, climate change in the HKH is unlikely to remain localized. Scientists often describe the HKH as a "third pole" because it has the largest amount of ice anywhere outside of the Arctic and Antarctica. Any disruption to the amount of ice in the

the region. However, the largest threat of the loss of Himalayan glaciers lies in its potential to create and worsen environmental disasters.

The New York Times also reported that heat waves in the region will become more severe and there will be an increase in instances of erosion and rock slides in the mountains. Overall, the amplified effects of climate change caused by elevation-dependent warming are likely to have drastic negative



The ice melt in the Himalayas illustrates the extent of climate change.

Courtesy of Futurity.

also reports that many of the world's rivers are sourced from glaciers and snowmelt and their water levels could significantly decrease without the glaciers and ice fields that supply their water. The loss of rivers threatens to significantly disrupt economic activity as well as negatively affect the quality of life of people across the world.

Nowhere is this a more threatening scenario than in the Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region, the home of Mount Everest and K2. According to the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development in a statement to Reuters, "Global warming is on track to transform the frigid, glacier-covered mountain peaks of the HKH cutting across eight countries to bare rocks in a little less than a century."

If global temperatures increase by 2 degrees Fahrenheit, the increase will be inflated in the Himalayas to the equivalent of nearly 4 degrees. It is unlikely that drastic action at the level needed

HKH has the potential to ripple across Asia. The HKH covers around 2,000 square miles of Asia and its annual snowfall, as well as its glaciers and ice fields, are a vital source of water in the region.

Many of Asia's mightiest rivers, such as the Yangtze, Mekong, Indus, and Ganges, are dependent upon the cycle of ice and snow melt in the HKH to maintain their water levels. These rivers supply water to a combined total of around 1.8 billion people, close to a quarter of the world's population, and reductions in their water levels have the potential to drastically reduce the quality of life of many in the region.

The reduction in water levels could have additional economic effects in the form of a reduced capacity for hydropower and a food shortage. Many farmers in the HKH region are dependent on this steady source of water during the dry season. Without local crops, it will be a struggle to feed the enormous population of

effects on the quality of life of those living in Southeast Asia.

With the discovery of climate-dependent warming, mountain regions now join low-lying islands as "climate hotspots" that will become the front lines of climate change. The loss of the icepack in the HKH will vastly change the terrain of the region and change the lives of the nearly two billion people who call it home.

Climate change in the HKH could also generate climate refugees, especially because of its effects on an extremely large, and growing, population. The Himalayan ice fields are poised to be one of the great casualties of climate change and their loss could very well cause a migration crisis in Southeast Asia.

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On January 25, a dam in Brazil's Minas Gerais region holding black iron ore waste collapsed and caused the death of over 120 people. At least 220 people are still missing, according to ABC News. This tragedy has raised critical questions challenging the Brazilian government and its industries, ultimately leading to censure around which is more important to Brazil: economic advancement or citizens' lives and environmental sustainability.

Even calling the failed structure a "dam" is loosely attributed considering the mining waste was only held back by a mixture of sand and silt, with no major concrete structure in place. Eighty eight other dams in Brazil are built similarly, and are equally vulnerable to collapse. This structure is known as an upstream tailings dam, and as The New York Times notes, unless these structures are heavily monitored, they present serious safety concerns for the surrounding area.

This region of Brazil is not unaccustomed to this type of environmental and human tragedy. A similar event occurred nearly 80 miles from the currently affected area in 2015. Although only 19 people were killed on that dam collapse, no changes in regulation were made since then. Disturbingly, regulations have only gotten worse, increasing

the likelihood of another collapse.

The mining company, Vale SA, was found responsible for the maintenance of the dam and had ties to the 2015 collapse as well. Flavio Schvartsman, the company's CEO, acknowledged fault in this instance, according to ABC News.

However, state deputy Joao Vitor Xavier told The Associated Press, "Minas Gerais has a centuries-long history of being lenient with the mining sector... the industry creates a discourse where they dangle jobs and economic growth in front of people, but they put profit over safety." In addition, experts told New York Times investigative journalists that the collapse itself was a "tragedy but not a surprise."

This horrific accident raises crucial questions on the mining inspection and emergency system itself. BBC claims that the mine had been inspected twice in the month prior to the accident, and there was an emergency system involving cameras and a collection of sirens. Yet, this emergency system needed to be activated and controlled manually, not automatically. On the day the system was most needed, it failed.

Beyond the rising death count, the incident poses serious, long-lasting health and environmental concerns because of the toxic sludge that was released into the local community. The mining waste contaminated

a nearby ecosystem and river, which could lead to the spread of dengue, yellow fever or diarrhea. This sludge is expected to affect 1.3 million people according to the Associated Press.

This incident also poses serious economic hardships, with iron ore prices spiking around \$100, as reported by the Sydney Morning Herald. As a result of Vale halting operations, the company will decrease their iron ore supply by 30 million tons, which has serious ramifications for global supply and iron ore prices. It is predicted that iron pricing could jump 15 percent in wake of accident.

The environmental and health impacts in similar cases are insurmountable: high blood pressure, diabetes, cardiovascular conditions, stroke, and cancer are possible in the months or years after the accident. Importantly, Brazil's public healthcare system will cover the brunt of these health related costs. In addition, state agencies will respond with helicopters, firefighters, and other rescue workers to combat the issue.

According to the Associated Press, Fiocruz researcher Diego Xavier stated that, "the public system is the one paying, dealing with the damage, while the private sector is getting the profit."

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The concerns of the affected indigenous people have been left largely unaddressed.

Courtesy of Wikimedia.

Hungary

Stephanie Miller
Staff Writer

Amidst Europe’s worst refugee crisis since World War II, the Hungarian government drew international attention by erecting a barrier along its southern border with Serbia and Croatia in 2015, reports BBC. Four years later, officials and citizens alike still hold to the belief that the fence is a critical necessity for combatting illegal immigration and securing state sovereignty, reports Fox News.

“Since we built a fence, and since the police and army have been there, we basically have no illegal migrants on the territory of the country,” Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto told Fox News. “There are constant attempts to break through, but the infrastructure itself, namely the fence, and police and the army, make it impossible to get in.”

Hungary’s decision to build its wall resulted from its proximity to the migration crisis. As a Central European country, Hungary was a popu-

lar destination for tens of thousands of migrants. Civilians took to the streets in protest and demanded a viable solution from Viktor Orban, Hungary’s Prime Minister.

Orban, a populist who Steve Bannon once told The National was “the original Trump,” quickly delivered. The first fence went up in 2015 and the second was fully complete by April 2017, reports Euronews.

Since then, Hungary has seen an 88 percent drop in asylum applications, from 29,432 in 2016 to 3,397 in 2017, and only 280 in the first quarter of 2018 according to the International Organization for Migration.

“Every single migrant poses a public security and terror risk,” the president said at a 2016 news conference in Budapest, reports CBC News. He went on to elaborate that barriers are necessary to protect countries from irregular migration and, more crucially, from criminals and would-be terrorists among the masses. Orban also claimed that the migrants passing through his country at the time were “Muslim invad-

ers” who threatened Hungary and all of Europe’s “Christian identity.”

Prime Minister Orban’s party went on to win a supermajority in the 2018 Hungarian national election, which centered primarily on illegal immigration platforms, reports The New York Times.

In an additional report, The New York Times said that the influx of ‘invasive’ Muslim migrants, many of whom were simply trying to reach the more prosperous countries of northwestern Europe, has all but dried up.

While the native population seems to be happy with the result, both the European Union and the United Nations have chastised Hungary for restricting its asylum and immigration policies. Euronews reports that asylum seekers arriving at the Hungarian border can only do so in two border zones, and a recent law allows the government to detain incoming migrants in shipping containers.

The Hungarian government also faced accusations of food deprivation in its refugee camps in 2017. The Budapest Beacon reports that the

camp at Kiskunhalas no longer had access to food or medical services, forcing local residents to step in and provide supplies. To date, Hungarian law still prevents outside individuals from donating supplies to refugee camps.

Fully equipped with alarms, thermal imaging cameras, razor wire, and patrolled by the military, The Guardian reports that Hungary’s border wall is one of the most fortified in Europe. Closed to journalists, only one person can enter and begin the asylum process per day. Once beyond this point, however, refugees and asylum-seekers are not provided with legal advice regarding their rights.

In mid-2018, the Hungarian parliament passed a law that jails activists and lawyers for advising asylum-seekers on their rights, reports Reuters. Besides denying refugees access to basic legal resources this move also “narrows the scope of action by non-governmental organizations, making their workers liable for jail terms for helping migrants to seek asylum when they are not entitled

to it.”

Freedom House’s annual Freedom in the World report has categorized Hungary as a free state every year since the latter became a democracy in 1990. However, according to the Washington Post, this year’s report found a “consistent and ominous” pattern of democracy in retreat across the globe and in Hungary specifically. Its new status as “partly free” now ranks it alongside countries like Pakistan, Singapore, Ukraine, and Zimbabwe.

Hungary is now the first EU member state ever designated as only partly free. This downgrade in status is important to the European Union, whose member states are required to retain a certain level of democracy and freedom, argues R. Daniel Kelemen, professor of political science and law and Jean Monnet chair in EU politics at Rutgers University.

Hungary’s border wall stands not only as a ward against refugees and asylum-seekers, but as an indication of a growing anti-immigration platform within the European Union, argues Kelemen.

As bigger states like Italy, Spain, and France joined Hungary in limiting the movement of migrants within their own borders, the continent has seen a sharp decline in the very democratic values that the EU’s foreign policy platform claims to protect.

On the EU’s response to how its member states are dealing with the migrant crisis, former head of the European Commission’s enlargement department Michael Leigh advised against such rightward swings in policy, reports Politico.

“European leaders should not abandon these values to obtain a short-lived, late-night fix. Rounding up migrants, fleeing war, conflict, persecution, drought or poverty, and putting them behind bars should have no place in a continent that has lived through the tragedies of the 20th century.”

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Uncertainty arises as Hungary continues pushing for harder border protection.

Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

The United States

Alyssa Veltre
Staff Writer

A wall on the U.S.-Mexico border has been a pillar of President Donald Trump's campaign and administration since inception. His vision of the wall would span 1,900 miles of land, supported by natural barriers and border patrol, and would cost anywhere between \$4 billion and \$8 billion, according to The New York Times. Two years ago, the wall was a promise, but today, construction has not yet begun and the wall has already cost more than predicted.

Trump demanded that \$5 billion in funding for the wall be included in a spending bill necessary to keep the government running, and the only thing that prevented the spending legislation from being passed is Democrats who have long opposed

the idea, reports the New York Times.

Trump insists on building a border wall despite the fact that illegal border crossing from Mexico has been in decline since 2000, says a study conducted by the Brookings Institution. Taking into account maintenance costs for upkeep and future repair, the wall could cost anywhere from \$25 billion to \$70 billion in the next ten years.

Disagreements over Trump's border wall were directly responsible for the United States' recent partial government shutdown. "I am proud to shut down the government for border security because the people of this country don't want criminals and people that have lots of problems and drugs pouring into our country," Trump told Representative Nancy Pelosi and Senator Chuck Schumer, according to The New York Times.

Ten days later, Trump claimed, in direct contradiction to himself, that the shutdown was not his fault and that the decision belonged to the Democrats.

Surprisingly, the largest issue with completing the wall is not the cost, but rather the land, reports the Washington Post. In the cross-country expanse that is the United States' southern border, hundreds of miles are unbuildable. Dotted along the path are acres of land that are not federally owned or legally seizable.

Eloisa Tamez fought for her land in 2008 when the Bush administration tried to seize an acre of her Cameron County, Texas, land under the Secure Fence Act of 2006, reports The Washington Post. After seven years of litigation and negotiation, she received \$56,000 for a quarter of the acre. This same issue could arise across the 1,300 miles

of land that make up the border. The wall would become a logistical nightmare and a money pit.

The Brookings Institution also emphasized that physical barriers are ineffective at combating smuggling. The Department of Homeland Security believes that planting the wall six-feet-deep into the ground will prevent tunneling. However, tunnels were found that run as far down as 70 feet, says Brookings.

According to Scientific American, the wall could also have serious long-term consequences

for ecological life in the borderlands, preventing natural migration patterns for wildlife to find food and water, especially in an unpredictably dry desert grassland. With only 35 percent of the entire border fenced, environmental impacts are already noticeable, with the first jaguar to cross the border since 2012 only a year and a half ago.

Undeterred, Trump continues to push forward on his campaign promise. While the new congressional deal provided Trump with 1.4 billion for the wall, he

declared a national emergency in an attempt to obtain more funding, only for the house to overturn this declaration on February 26th. The shutdown caused Transportation Security Agents take leave, leaving America's skies vulnerable. Amnesty International has left volunteers abroad, almost in the dark. Workers are still working without pay despite a temporary end to the shutdown, reports the Associated Press.

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President Trump's wall proposal continues to face backlash.

Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Northern Ireland

Madison Feser
Staff Writer

Constructed by settlers over 400 years ago, the border walls at Derry, Northern Ireland, draw tourists year-round to the last completely enclosed city in Ireland, reports The Northern Ireland Foundation.

However, walls do not just border Derry — they run through it. These internal 'peace walls' are physical barriers constructed during the Troubles to separate Protestant-Loyalist and Catholic-Nationalist communities to mitigate inter-group violence, reports The Northern Ireland Foundation. Derry and Belfast, the capital of Northern Ireland, house a majority of these walls.

Dr. Dermot Quinn, Professor and Director of Graduate Studies at Seton Hall University's Department of History, emphasized that the walls

are not the cause of divisiveness between these two groups, but rather the effect of preexisting tensions.

"The walls divide and make permanent what are essentially tribal divisions in Northern Ireland," Quinn told the Diplomatic Envoy. "They manifest in the exterior what is an internal reality. Since the Troubles, there has been great effort to physically divide these communities."

The Troubles was an ethno-nationalist conflict beginning in the late 1960s between Protestant-Loyalist and Catholic-Nationalist groups that claimed over 4,000 lives, reports The Northern Ireland Foundation. The peace walls were first erected in 1969 between Lower Falls and Shankill in Belfast, with another period of major construction occurring in the 1980s.

Peace walls were initially intended to be



The religious division is meant to maintain peace.

Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

temporary structures, reports The Northern Ireland Foundation, but even after the 1998 Good Friday Agreement ends the Troubles conflict, new peace walls were built and the old were fortified.

With this relatively new construction, it is doubtful that the Northern Ireland Assembly's recent promise to eliminate all 108 peace walls by 2030 is feasible, reports BBC. Only two walls have been removed, one in 2016 and another in 2017, and those were efforts made by individual communities, not government initiative, according to The Guardian.

A further complication to their removal is that, in

some ways, the walls do effectively prevent violent clashes, argues Professor Quinn.

"That's the paradox of the walls," says Quinn. "Pragmatically, they served their purpose of keeping violence between groups at bay, especially in terms of gang violence. But there is also the issue of whether or not they are reinforcing divisive ideas."

Since their construction 50 years ago, the walls have become part of daily life in Northern Ireland. They divide parks, cut through neighborhoods, and have become a canvas for street muralists, reports The Washington Post. The murals span both sides of the walls, depict-

ing political and religious motifs of each group.

"The walls have become part of the landscape, and the murals show an appropriation of the wall by each side," says Quinn. "But today, there is a greater effort to end sectarian divides. People are now asking: Why are the walls still there, are they necessary, and why haven't they been removed?"

Jonny Byrne, a lecturer in politics at the University of Ulster, told The Guardian that Catholics view peace walls as a barrier to the development of community, whereas Protestants see the walls as protecting their way of life. If the walls are to ever come down, it must be in a manner that

Protestants do not perceive as threatening their existence.

Quinn found Byrne's observation interesting, as it seems to describe the way Catholics and Protestants view themselves and their history within Ireland.

"This is just another example of how the walls serve as a metaphor for the way people view the world," he says. "Walls don't tell people what to think or how to think, rather they serve as proof for the way people are already thinking. Before the walls come down, mental barriers must first come down."

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The Necessary Evil of U.S. Sanctions on Venezuela



Guaidó, interim president of Venezuela, leads a protest march against Maduro.

Courtesy of Alex Abello Leiva.

Saveria Antonacci
Staff Writer

The United States Treasury Department, recently declared oil sanctions on Venezuela's state-run oil company, Petroleos de Venezuela (PDVSA), according to the New York Times. This is a decision targeting an oil company that produces 90 percent of Venezuela's currency. While it seems that the sanctions would be another blow to the Venezuelan people, who are already suffering from the

effects of extreme poverty and humanitarian violations, it is a useful strategy to force the military to obey the orders of Interim President Juan Guaidó instead of current President Nicolás Maduro. According to Business Insider, the Trump administration said last week it would impose sanctions against Venezuela's state-owned oil industry in an attempt to cripple the government of President, and Dictator, Nicolás Maduro, who is facing global pressure to cede power to opposition leader Juan Guaidó."

The sanctions serve as a method for the United States and other countries to undermine the legitimacy of President Maduro. Recently, control over the oil industry has been handed over to the military, leading to sanctions serving as a way to push the Venezuelan military towards the side of Guaidó. Thus far, the sanctions proved effective with the New York Times reporting that, "Venezuelan oil exports to the United States, which provide the biggest source of cash for Mr. Maduro's gov-

ernment, plummeted 40 percent last week." Additionally, oil is one of the country's largest sources of revenue. Corruption has led to millions of dollars in oil revenue going missing, with suspicions that government officials have been on the receiving side of this money. Per another article by Business Insider, Venezuela's inflation rate just hit 830,000 percent in November. The allocation of these funds has been crucial for many citizens struggling to afford basic necessities such as food, water, and urgent medical

care.

President Maduro has blocked incoming humanitarian aid by placing freight containers across a highway that connects Colombia and Venezuela, as reported by Yahoo! News. The barricade was also surrounded by security forces. These actions reflect the dictatorship of Maduro, seeking to hold onto power rather than concede. His actions were condemned by humanitarian advocates and the international community.

On January 23, Guaidó, declared himself the Interim President of the Venezuelan Government, according to CNN. Guaidó is a young politician who openly accepts democratic principles and western nations. His decision to declare himself as Interim President was not one that came easily, as he was previously jailed for speaking out against Maduro. The United States and some European nations have publicly expressed support and recognition of Guaidó as the new leader.

Overall, the decision of the U.S. and other western countries to place sanctions on Venezuela is necessary and well-timed. The Venezuelan people have reached a breaking point in their oppression, and they want an end to Maduro and his corrupt regime. Maduro is irrational and does not care for the well-being of the Venezuelan people. The sanctions will have a larger effect on the military, already seeking to back Guaidó, and will allow his idea of a freer Venezuela to prevail. According to and additional article by Yahoo News!, Guaidó yelled out at a recent protest, "You saw the general's video today...Soldiers of this nation, it is your role to reconstruct Venezuela."

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Mass Detention of Chinese Muslim Uyghurs Mirrors Rohingya Crisis

Sam Adams
Staff Writer

The Chinese government has turned the Xinjiang Province into a Police state, from a ban on the Uyghur language to a slew of internment camps that many claim torture and force conversion from Islam, the religion of the Uyghurs.

The camps, which state authorities claim are "voluntary vocational camps," are wrought with stories of rape, beatings, and torture. Quoted by Al Jazeera, a former inmate recalls his time inside, "I've seen many people being beaten in interrogations inside. At times they used bare electrical cords... What I can't forget is the blood..."

The Chinese refer to the semi-autonomous region in northwestern China as Xinjiang, but many residents still refer to it as East Turkestan, its 20th century name. Xinjiang is home to one of the largest minority groups in China, the Uyghurs Mus-

lims, who number close to 10 million, reports BBC. In recent years, the region has come under more and more pressure by the Chinese authorities in Beijing on claims of separatism and extremism. Although some in the region claim they belong to East Turkestan, there is no evidence to support the Chinese governmental claims of a growing separatist or Islamist movement.

Alongside the horrors of the camps, detainees are often charged arbitrarily with citing religious text, having studied abroad, or simply being on an international phone call, Al Jazeera reports. In response to reports of abuse, forced conversion, and arbitrary arrests, Amnesty International has submitted a proposal to the United Nations Human Rights Council, an international organization to which China is a member, calling for an independent fact finding mission to report to the Human Rights Council. To combat the grow-

ing wave of denunciations on the world stage, China has offered to take small groups on tours of their "vocational camps," to which the European Union offered three of its diplomats, reports the New York Times. These officials visited sites care-



The "re-education" camps remain mysterious. Courtesy of Wikimedia.

fully selected and tours orchestrated by Chinese authorities. Upon returning, the EU officials regarded the trip as giving insight into Chinese actions, "but does not invalidate the EU's view of the human rights situation in Xinjiang, including in relation to mass detention, political re-education, religious freedom and sinicization policies," reports the New York Times.

While the international community scrambles to respond more effectively than the response to the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya, China continues to expand their operation. Reporting from the Middle East Monitor claims that Chi-

na has inked a deal with a controversial formerly United States based mercenary group, Frontier Services Group. Details on the deal are scarce, but the group will construct a "training center" in Xinjiang.

The deal seems to imply that this training center will have much more to do with forced conversion and ideological suppression than anything else, reports Middle

East Monitor. FSG chairperson Erik Prince, an American who once ran the extremely controversial Blackwater group that was tied to the 2007 slaying of 14 innocent Iraqis, has denied knowledge of the contract with the Chinese, but acknowledged the deal is at least in its preliminary stages.

FSG has a record of relationships with less than savory regimes. FSG is based in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, where the government has massive influence over the company as the nation granted FSG \$529 million to build a small army to be under direct control of the Crown Prince of the UAE.

The extent to which Erik Prince is involved with the UAE has surfaced in his apparent attendance of a meeting with the UAE, Russia, and a Trump official that is under investigation by the FBI.

Through companies such as FSG, China creates an intermediary they can use to brush off

accountability of their actions. Furthermore, Amnesty International quoted Kenneth Roth of Human Rights Watch stating, "The Human Rights Council's integrity demands that states not allow China to hide behind its membership or economic might to escape accountability."

As the international community decides on an appropriate response, with the HRC provision not yet before the High Commissioner, China will continue to strengthen its grip over the Uyghur. The response the international community will take cannot mirror that of the Rohingya crisis if it wishes to uphold the credibility of the United Nations, the Human Rights Council, and most importantly the human rights of the Uyghur.

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What Chinese Construction of Solar Parks in Saudi Arabia Means for Geopolitics

Mark Wood
Staff Writer

Renewable energies are changing the face of geopolitics and China is at the forefront. Fossil fuels and oil have played a central role in geopolitics following the Industrial Revolution. As governments put their efforts into research and development of renewable energies, the geopolitics that were once determined by those who had control and scores of ‘black gold’ will eventually shift.

Crown Prince and Chairman of the Council of Economic and Development Affairs Muhammad bin Salman, of Saudi Arabia is the architect behind Vision 2030, a program that is seen as Saudi Arabia’s roadmap towards social and economic reform. According to Vision 2030 one of the key areas of development

in the oil rich kingdom, is a move away from being solely reliant on its oil rich reserves to a more energy diverse economy. Investing in cheaper renewable energies is a key feature in the Gulf Nations’ vision.

Construction Week Online reports that there is a \$1 billion project to build the Middle East’s first solar thin-film will be built in Saudi Arabia. The project will be headed by Beijing-based Hanergy Thin Film Power Group in conjunction with Ajlan and Bros. The deal between the two parties was signed at the launch of the Saudi Arabia National Industrial Development and Logistics Program (NIDLP). The NIDLP, according Arab News is part of Vision 2030, “aimed at diversifying the economy” and to attract more than \$400 billion over the next 10 years in from “Saudi and global private-sector investors.”

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s General Authority for Statistics states that China is the main destination of Saudi oil. China may see Saudi Arabia as an opportunity to solidify its presence in renewable energy in the region. As rightly pointed out by Green Tech Media though, it may be a long time before the value of Chinese renewable energy equipment sales in Saudi Arabia approaches the amount that Asian economic giants pay for oil.

China may not have the volumes of ‘black gold’ that control world markets, however, its steadfast investment in renewables will make them a stronger force in the world. The renewable energy investments it is making around the world has made the geopolitical pendulum swing in favor of nations who are investing in renewable energy. Renewable energy



Solar investments may mark a shift away from Middle Eastern reliance on “black gold.” Courtesy of Unsplash.

allows for nations to be more independent and have a better energy security, which is a key reason as to why Saudi Arabia is investing in the solar project.

The Geopolitics of the Energy Transformation states that countries like China will have a stronger influence on the international stage because they have invested heavily in renewable technologies. This will redraw the geopolitical map in the 21 Century, and alter relations among nations

on an economic and environmental level. Energy is a crucial factor in economic activity and human development, and China is spearheading the sources of energy in the new millennium. These efforts will change nations demand for energy away from old, expensive and environmentally hazardous types, to cheaper and cleaner energy.

Green Tech Media further reported that Ben Backwell, the CEO of the Global Wind Energy Council believes moving

forward, the major differentiation for successful economies will be the “willingness to embrace new energy technology.” China’s renewable energy soft power approach will yield in their influence in the region in the long run. The Middle East is an ideal region to further this conquest of economic influence and dominance around the world.

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U.S. – North Korea Envoys Prepare for Second Summit

Tien Phan
Staff Writer

According to The Washington Post, the United States’ Special Envoy has been sent to speak with their North Korean counterparts in discussing the logistics as well as organization of the second summit prior to the leaders of each country meeting up together.

Under former President Barack Obama’s administration, relations between the U.S. and North Korea drew apart

as North Korea increased its military development, which caused tension within the area with two of the most important allies for the U.S. in East Asia: Japan and South Korea.

With President Donald Trump taking over the oval office, relations have been slowly normalized with North Korea’s leader Kim Jong-un. Evidently, June 12, 2018 marked the first time that the leaders from these nations agreed to meet with one another to discuss denuclearization of North Korea as a

whole, reports CNN.

Though it was a summit focusing on opening a dialogue without any strict laws officially signed on to, a signed agreement was concrete enough to solidify the commitment of both sides to further their relations. Consequently, it turned out to be in high favor for South Korea, Japan, and China.

Speculation around the decided venue seems to reveal the intentions of the U.S. This upcoming summit will take place in Hanoi, Vietnam toward the end of February 2019.

The White House leader announced this decision in his State of the Union speech on Tuesday, February 5.

Reuters reports that the second summit, with build-up the momentum created from the first summit, giving the possibility to move beyond past conflicts from both sides. Based on last year’s summit, the purpose for this year will likely remain the same with complete denuclearization and complete normalization between the nations.

The choice of Vietnam as the location is not coincidental, since President Trump’s hope is to let North Korea learn from the example of Vietnam being able to grow out from poverty after normalizing the relations with the U.S. after 1994. U.S. State Department spokesperson Robert Palladino says the history between Vietnam and the U.S. “reflects the possibility for peace and prosperity.”

Frankly, though North

Korea is more likely to commit to a reasonable agreement, they still pose a substantial threat to the U.S.’s national security, reports Fox News. Actions towards a verifiable denuclearization is almost non-existent because Kim Jong-un is only committed to non-complying to international standards.

There are skeptics who doubt this process of building a dialogue with North Korea. Their argument remains from the last summit, that this is only a conversation between two leaders who are trying to build public images instead of getting genuine work done in order to push for real actions. They also cite the fact that North Korea is likely to remain an authoritarian regime, so aligning with them makes it seem like the U.S. is normalizing its stance with authoritarian ideologies in general.

Such skepticism is valid though if followers of the relations look at these activities and understand

North Korea’s culture and ideology. President Trump’s actions are helpful in giving the U.S. a chance to have a different position in the East Asian geopolitical sphere. If North Korea agrees on the terms, the U.S. might be able to have more advantages over China in further establishing their influence in the region.

In the worst-case scenario, at least the U.S. can have a potential partner for future years in the case of Vietnam. Nevertheless, as the reality stands, if the U.S. uses more sanctions towards North Korea and strengthens its military stance, the negotiation can break apart rapidly, NBC reports. Thus, a more peaceful approach will favor more for both sides as the U.S. does not lose a partner, and North Korea does not lose economically.

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U.S. Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo takes questions from the media in Seoul.

Courtesy of KBS.

The Cost of Security: Build That Wall

Anthony Chen
Staff Writer

The Democratic Party and liberal news media today are most certain that “walls” or physical barriers along the Mexican-American border counters American values. They claim that the wall sends a message that the U.S. is closed off to immigration and has retracted from its original offer of freedom and opportunity; this is a misconception. The reason why the American dream involves a white picket fence is the same reason why a wall is needed along the southern border. A physical barrier provides privacy from the outside world and allows America to govern and maintain its own affairs. It halts and hinders the illegal entrance of people and protects the American way of life.

Democratic Representatives, such as Speaker Nancy Pelosi, have said, “Democrats will stand fast against the immoral, ineffective border wall,” contradicting the Demo-

crat’s efforts to strengthen border security in 2006. references a bill, requesting to fund two layers of reinforced fencing and 700 miles of border fencing, reports . At the time, 80 U.S. Senators voted in favor of this bill, including Senator Chuck Schumer, and then Senators Barack Obama, Joe Biden, and Hillary Clinton. Sometime between then and now, public opinion has changed and with that, the Democratic Party chose to follow the norms of newly developed opinions and decline the real dangers at hand.

Aside from concerns of terrorists entering the U.S., migrants who enter the country are also people to be concerned about. According to CNN, the textbook definition of a migrant or immigrant is, “someone who chooses to resettle to another country for a better life.” While the U.S. may be receiving refugees that are escaping the dangers of their country, migrants are usually not welcome without proper invitation because they are relocat-



President Trump examines wall prototypes. Courtesy of the US CBP.

ing by their own choice. Migrants are undocumented and may smuggle through some unsecure areas of our borders, meaning that they may be someone escaping poverty or a violent crime, fleeing the authorities of their home country.

The “Global” War on Terrorism has expanded beyond the boundaries of the Middle East. Failed African states and weak governments allow unregulated areas to be utilized by terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State

to move in. These areas create safe havens, training camps, and operating hubs for attacks on Americans in their country and at home. ABC News reports that terrorist organizations’ ideologies have influenced local extremist groups such as al-Shabbab, Boko Haram, and the Lord’s Resistance Army. The next step for these organizations is to expand into the same areas with little governance in South America, or to use the trafficking routes for drugs and migrants to enter the U.S. and execute

planned attacks.

CIS reported that there were 15 confirmed terrorist migrants captured in attempt of smuggling into the U.S. between 2001 and 2018. Almost all of the Middle Eastern migrants traveled through various routes in Latin America. These individuals were often affiliated with extremist organizations such as al-Shabbab, ISIS, Hezbollah, and the Pakistani Taliban. In an additional article, CIS added on that, “many Latin American Countries have porous borders, limited law enforcement capabilities and established smuggling routes. These vulnerabilities offer opportunities to foreign terrorist groups.” Despite the small number of perpetrators captured, this number remains to be under-count due to classified or protected government data.

The total cost of President Trump’s wall is estimated to be somewhere between \$5 to \$70 billion, according to Brookings. Regardless of the figure, the price of this wall is pocket change compared

to the annual tax revenue collected by the government. This is something achievable with a unanimous agreement from both parties of our government. As the people that hold elected leaders accountable for their actions and decisions, Americans need to better understand their own situation. Minus the Trump bash, racial finger-pointing, and accusations of Republican anti-immigration policies, one can fully understand the need for more border security. It is the very thing that provides liberal Americans their freedom to make such accusations in the first place. Although the U.S. was built by the labor of immigrants, the world in which Americans live in is ever-changing, and it only takes one person with evil intentions to compromise the safety of America. So, build that wall and carry on.

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Critical Language Scholarship

Mariah McCloskey
Managing Editor

Imagine getting to spend ten weeks of your summer vacation in another country, learning another language, for free. As a semi-finalist for the U.S. Department of State's Critical Language Scholarship, junior Diplomacy major Ian Murphy may get to do just that.

The Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program is an "intensive overseas language and cultural immersion program for American students enrolled at U.S. colleges and universities." According to the Critical Language Scholarship website, the program includes intensive language instruction in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Russian - all languages offered at Seton Hall. The structured 'cultural enrichment' experiences promote rapid language enhancement for students who attend.

CLS is part of a wider government initiative



CLS sponsors eight to ten weeks of language instruction, as well as travel and excursion costs for potential participants such as Murphy (right).



Courtesy of CLS and Murphy.

to expand the number of Americans studying and mastering foreign languages deemed critical to U.S. national security and economic prosperity. CLS plays an important role in preparing students for the globalized aspect of today's workforce and hopes to increase national competitiveness among language students.

Murphy's love for languages is longstanding. "I've tried to study Russian beforehand," he stated, "but something just told me to take [Chinese] in college, and I've really fallen in love with it."

"I heard about [CLS] from Dongdong Chen," Murphy said, referring to the Languages, Literature, and Cultures professor.

Murphy said that the Chinese program at Seton Hall is "really close" and that professor Chen got him "really passionate about the language."

Chen also helped Murphy in his United States International Exchange Youth Program (IEYP) trip this past summer. He stated that while he had a great leaning experience with IEYP, CLS would be able to open different doors. CLS has culture and language classes, Murphy told the Diplomatic Envoy, "and on the weekends or during free time they send you on little cultural excursions."

The CLS program was a huge opportunity for Murphy. He said, "I was actually interested in this

freshman year, so it's been something on my mind for two years." He was physically excited during his interview. "They put you with a host family, which is so cool," he said.

Having only learned about the CLS program deadline three days before it was due, Murphy was scrambling to get everything done. "I ran around, got my documents ready," he said. "I even learned how to use the scanner in the library."

The first steps only require a resume, transcripts, and the answers to a couple of specific questions. "It was a relatively straight forward and easy application," Murphy claimed. "They make it easy on you."

Murphy learned about his semi-finalist status through an email. "It actually didn't say congratulations at first and it gave me a mini heart attack," Murphy exclaimed. However, once he read that he had become a semi-finalist, he found that there were many more documents and forms he had to fill out. Murphy stated that there are still multiple steps to take before he can celebrate; he still has to get to the finalist stage and apply for a visa. "After you apply for your visa," he stated, "it's not up to CLS, it's the country's government that accepts or declines you."

His advice for anyone who wants to apply in the future is to "have a

strong bond with teachers because their recommendations can make or break an application." He said that you have to have passion for your language through attending cultural lessons on campus or in New York City and that it is important for students to seek out professionals on campus whether or not they are in your program. He also stated that it is important to remember that you are a cultural ambassador.

"You're representing not just yourself," Murphy said, "but the State Department and the United States government."

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Visiting Chair Discusses Peacekeeping Efforts in Africa

Harshana Ghoorhoo
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Staff Writers

Dr. Tatsushi Arai, current Sergio Vieira de Mello Endowed Visiting Chair at the School of Diplomacy and International Relations, talked to diplomacy students about his research on reconstruction and reconciliation in Northeastern Nigeria on February 7. He discussed Boko Haram, the Islamic State in West Africa, and the threats of peace in the northern part of Nigeria.

During his seminar, Dr. Arai emphasized that peacebuilding cannot be done in a few sections but rather requires a mechanism that can sustain the reconciliation process. Moreover, he emphasized the need for engaged policy-makers to hold meaningful conversations. He claimed that there is a limit to what civil society can do but if people are able to forgive, to some extent, a reconciliation may take place.

Dr. Arai reminded the audience of that the notion of reconciliation is abstract. He defined the term as "the process

of restoring broken relationships while striving to overcome trauma, guilt, and in some case the desire for revenge." Dr. Arai stated that even though the notion of reconciliation reached Nigeria, it remains abstract for ordinary people. While difficult to implement, it is necessary to adapt this notion to people's social economic realities.

The students were reminded of how the attacks from the Boko Haram started. After one of the Boko Haram members was killed, the rest of the group was enraged and started to engage in massive violence, including attacks to military, police, and government officials. Boko Haram remains active with its headquarters in the Sambisa Forest and recruitment in the town of Gwoza.

Afterwards, Dr. Arai shared with the audience the surprising results of his surveys in Nigeria. He went to several locations and after proper introduction from Nigerian fellows, he asked several groups if they would be willing to accept Boko Haram's members back. Over 95 percent of the groups said that they

would be willing to accept the members back. Dr. Arai then highlighted the extremely high number of groups that did not want revenge nor compensation.

Dr. Arai used this positive data to make a point about research methodology. Dr. Arai conducted a simulation exercise with some of these groups where people thought they were meeting with Boko Haram members. Despite previously stating that they would forgive, the groups got angry throughout this fake interaction with Boko Haram members. Dr. Arai emphasized that even though people can verbalize willingness, real reconciliation is a very complex process and that it is necessary to experience it in actuality to address all the challenges. Dr. Arai encouraged the diplomacy students to train themselves to be of service for contexts of reconciliation and peacebuilding, given the need to have people in the field.

As a last remark, Dr. Arai highlighted that the processes of forgiveness, reconciliation, and coexistence can be independent. He said that he

does not believe the findings of forgiveness would be applicable because it only reflects the fact that since the killing was intimate and within familial bounds, the social fabric of Nigeria's families would collapse if the victims could not forgive.

In addition to his lecture, Dr. Arai, sat down with a reporter from the Envoy to talk about his involvement in African peacekeeping operations. He addressed the challenges in mediation within the AU. He said that "one of the vital points is for its mediation function to be utilized better, and the second function is related to its convening power." Dr. Arai continued by stating that, "As a whole, the AU is a relatively loose organization with no fixed standing, but [it] definitely serves a better purpose than not having any platform to address such critical issues at all."

"In order to address the countless conflicts occurring throughout Africa," it is possible to create what Dr. Arai called 'pockets of change', these areas serve as a point of organizing and analyzing the efficacy of organizations receiving weapons.

In Sierra Leone, there is a government civil society watchdog which Dr. Arai has been very engaged in, that monitors the flow of weapons. He believes that "the element of humanism coupled with the appropriate techniques in peak African areas affected by conflict," is crucial in peacekeeping efforts.

Dr. Arai stated that a key aspect in all peacekeeping and mediation operations is in working together with the locals and government agencies. He further said that the most critical thing is to start with what can be done and through that it becomes possible to inspire others to take more action.

When he regarded peacebuilding, Dr. Arai also added that "against all odds, you take some steps and then the people and government begin to better understand and realize to what extent the society can be improved." He believed that people are a key to the success of peacebuilding and stated that, "if you only talk then nothing happens, but when you start taking actions then there is always something that happens for the better."

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Dr. Arai brainstorms with students.

Courtesy of SHU.

SHU Commits to Diversity Inclusion Grant

Alyssa Veltre
Staff Writer

“From the library to the [cafeteria] to the streets. Hear our demands, Seton Hall. If we don’t get it, shut it down,” the Seton Hall University Concerned 44 tweeted on October 24, 2018. Since the protests in the Fall 2018 semester, many things have changed for the better on campus.

The student activist group stood with the Black Caucus against what they describe as the “deeply dissatisfying” way students of color have been treated and represented by Seton Hall’s administration. Among their five demands as tuition-paying students, was a grant for events and organizations involving inclusion.

The grant, totaling \$20,000, has been entrusted to the Student Government Association for use on diversity-centered initiatives. In an interview, SGA Treasurer Divine Tanamal, talked about the formation of a pilot committee for the Spring 2019

semester called the Diversity and Inclusion Grant Committee.

The committee is comprised of Tanamal, the Multicultural Advisory Committee Finance Coordinator, the SGA Finance Chair, a chosen representative of the Concerned 44, members of on-campus organizations, and anyone who would like to learn about how they are represented on campus. The university approved the idea, giving \$10,000 in addition to the \$6,000 that SGA’s semester allotment.

“Since this has never been done before, this pilot program will certainly be a learning curve,” Tanamal wrote. “I think that the \$20,000 that the university will be providing yearly is more than sufficient to help student organizations out with planning on-campus diversity initiatives,” she continued. Tanamal added that it was important to note that there have been resources providing these groups with funding already, but that they have gone consistently underutilized by many organizations.

The way the committee will run is similar to the way the SGA Finance Committee runs. Organizations recognized by the association seeking funding can request up to \$3,500 for any event pertaining to diversity awareness. If these funds are insufficient, they are eligible for up to \$3,000 more at the Finance Committee’s discretion.

Tanamal expressed her hope that the grant will bring attention to the student government and help boost student spending for the Finance Committee and the co-sponsorship budget. Finally, she added, “Overall, I am excited to see what progress we can make with the Diversity and Inclusion Grant Committee.”

Undoubtedly, many are rightfully excited by the new opportunities that will be made available through this grant, which is a step toward better representing one of the most diverse Catholic schools in the country.

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Seton Hall Alum Discusses Private Sector Opportunities

Jarrett Dang
Staff Writer

Seton Hall alumnus Edward Klink talked to Diplomacy students on February 6 about potential careers in the private sector at an event called, ‘Business Careers for Non-Business Majors’. Mr. Klink, Director of Marketing Strategies at the accounting firm KPMG, spoke to students about his own background at Seton Hall.

A communications major, Mr. Klink graduated from Seton Hall in 1989 and was offered a job right after college as a journalist writing classifieds for a newspaper. Klink turned the offer down, however, and accepted a job at a mutual fund instead despite not knowing anything about the mutual fund beforehand. From there, Klink worked his way up until being hired at a fledgling internet company. He was later laid off, but soon found himself at KPMG, one of the ‘Big Four’ accounting firms, thanks to connections he made

from other jobs.

Mr. Klink went on to talk about how people of differing backgrounds fit in at KPMG - from former teachers to NASCAR drivers. Many ‘diplomacy’ skills used in diplomacy are used in business, and there are many ‘hidden jobs’ at firms for people from diverse backgrounds.

One of the key points that Klink focused on was to be flexible when looking towards the future, saying, “Don’t ask yourself, ‘What am I going to do for the rest of my life?’ but rather ‘What am I going to do for the next five years?’” He also emphasized that “Things will not go according to plan” and provided a series of steps to success for all students regardless of major.

The first step, according to Klink, is to make a plan even if you are not going to stick to it. The second step is to adapt if the plan from step one does not happen and keep your options open. The third step is to build relationships with people, which he said is import-

ant for knowing about and getting jobs.

The fourth step is to do more and better work than others, as that will get you further and open doors. He provided an example where two people, one from Yale and one from Ramapo College (a state university in New Jersey) were working on the same team at KPMG. He said that if you work harder than other people, nobody will care where you went to school.

The last of the five steps is to persevere in a positive way. He said that this comes down to not only being hard working but also being good to work with and making people want to work with you.

As diplomacy students, most expect to go into the public or non-profit sector. With Edward Klink’s advice, however, more diplomacy students may find themselves considering jobs in the private sector as an alternative.

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