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Balancing
the nation's
health

Opinion by Guy Kopsombut, Senior, College of Engineering

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Sideshows and Sensationalism
Jeffrey Jay

Thursday, August 5 marked the end of relentless, direct and, sometimes, inflammatory political advertisements in Tennessee, Vanderbilt's home state. Numerous primary elections were held across the state, but the headlining event was the primary held to determine the Republican nomination for Tennessee's upcoming gubernatorial election in November. Bill Haslam, Knoxville mayor and prominent state businessman, secured the nomination in a landslide victory over U.S. Representative Zach Wamp and Lieutenant Governor Ron Ramsey, but odds are that, unless you are a resident of Tennessee, you do not know anything about these politicians. However, I am willing to bet that, at the very least, you have heard someone mention the name Basil Marceaux in the last few weeks...

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Musings of a Disgruntled South Carolinian

Noah Fram

Before I begin, let me apologize. I do not normally allow my emotions to get the better of me, but this situation simply could not be analyzed objectively. There is real and valid debate over good and bad ways to combat poverty in this country. Some think that it must be reduced by reducing the income gap between the poor and the wealthy, or by offering more substantial financial assistance to persons and families in distress. Others say the dilemma is one of incentives, and that benefits ought be curtailed, thus encouraging people to find work...

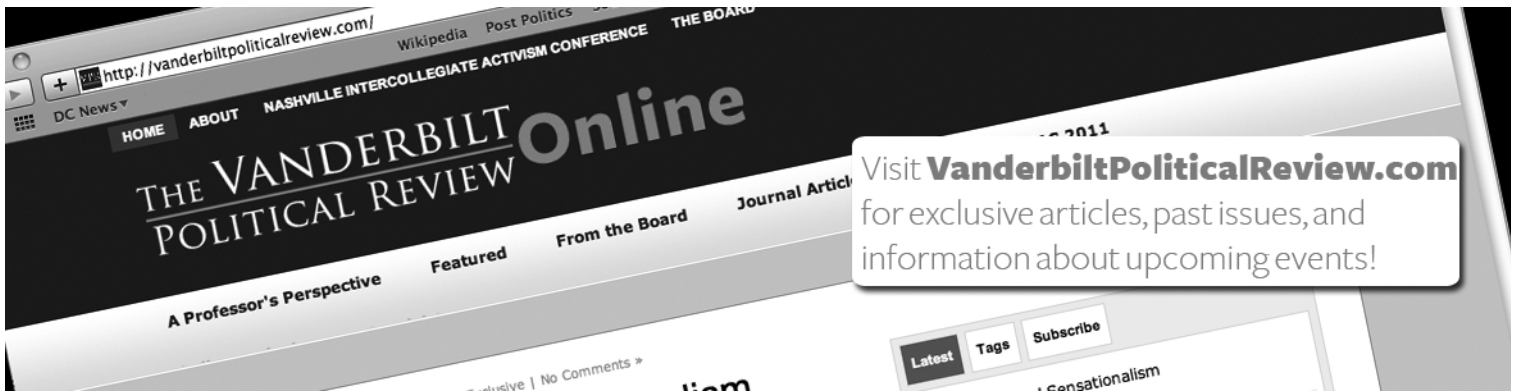
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Founded in spring 2008 by Jadzia Butler, the organization published its first issue in fall 2008. Since that time, VPR has expanded into a three branched organization through print, online, and events.



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A Professor's Perspective: John Lachs



Interview conducted by Allegra Noonan and Matthew Taylor

VPR: Do you think that health care reform is ethically imperative?

Lachs: No. It has some good features to it but some very problematic ones. If you consider companies that turn a profit, you have to consider that they're now going to have to take everyone no matter their medical condition. and they are going to have to make no exceptions. What does that mean? Inevitably, the price of insurance will rise. That's a given. People are going to game the system because they always game the system, and they're going to go ahead and not sign up until they need to sign up. It will be very costly. The real problem grows out of this. That is, sooner or later costs will get so high, there will have to be choices made about what is covered. They will have to decide what will and will not be covered and who will and who will not be covered. This will be very bad for older people. Inevitably, there will be things that simply will not be done. And we're gonna give the reasoning that they've already had their lives. A death sentence for seniors is too dramatic, but there's no question

there will be some rationing. We have rationing now, but it operates on different principles. This is systematic rationing. What worries me is that when governed by a panel, bureaucrats and politicians will make it so there are no exceptions. That is very inhuman. If you put the three together (the bureaucrats, the politicians, and the rationing), it becomes very problematic.

VPR: Do you think that it's the "rationing" that has made people so violent, or is it something else?

Lachs: I think people view it as they view their relationship to government... In the U.S. more than in Europe, deep suspicion in government is not always valid, but it is real. Actually, it's not valid, but it's real. [It's] the idea that somehow bureaucrats and politicians will govern the treatment that we're going to receive at the hand of our physician, that there's not going to be a personal relationship between physician and payment, but instead there will be a third party. It's bad enough if it's an insurance company, but it's real bad if it's the government. I think that's got something to do with it.

VPR: Do you think some of it is mean-spiritedness?

Lachs: Sure. You know that people are not nice. At least, not always.

VPR: Another major problem people have with the health care bill is its provision for abortion funding, what do you think about that?

Lachs: That's a special deal for some people. That's very problematic for some people. I, personally, don't believe it's very problematic at an early stage. It's a huge issue for some people but not for me. Whether that should be paid for by federally sanctioned funds is not an issue that I... it's a huge issue for some people,

but not for me.

VPR: On the other end of the spectrum, what do you think about the death penalty?

Lachs: The classical justification for capital punishment may not work, but it's the classical one. It was worked out, oddly enough, by Kant, who is known to us as the person saying things like, "You must never use human beings as a means only." What the hell are you doing then? Death is an ends to itself. The justification works. You do something, and you know that it has consequences. So, you don't just choose the act, say of killing somebody, you choose the entire bundle, including the consequences. So, therefore, we put you to death. Suppose we have laws saying, you kill someone we put you to death. We're not using humans as means, we're honoring your choice. But, I am not a Kantian, much closer to a sensible utilitarian. I want to know, does killing people work? And we have all sorts of contradictory data on that. It's full of contradiction. All I can be sure of is one thing: anybody put to death is unlikely to commit the same crime again.

VPR: During President Obama's campaign, he promised to close down Guantanamo Bay, and he hasn't. What do you think about the ethics of using that as an extraterritorial place where the government does what it wants?

Lachs: What the government does tends to be heavy-handed, almost always. Guantanamo Bay is a classic case. We don't know who's a killer, we don't know who's in Al Qaeda, and we don't know who is a terrorist so we keep them. That's not good. On the other hand, you release them and they'll be in Afghanistan within two weeks, so that's not good either. It's really a very nasty situation. Now, there's no easy way out. We don't want the nasty ones next door. Other countries won't

take them. The real bite is that there were some among them. A number of them were actually harmless but were swept up in an operation and they ended up in Guantanamo. It's like a pit—once you get there you don't get out. The problem is, what will you do that's any better than what Bush did? That's the question, and we haven't gotten the solution.

VPR: Is there a specific philosophical idea that we should take into account?

Lachs: A tremendously forgotten, but crucial idea is that even with the sharp division in this country, all of us are citizens and all of us, nevertheless, respect each other. There's a lot of hate going around, there's a lot of name calling, but nobody got killed. You know in other countries, they bomb people they don't like. We're Americans. We'll disagree. We'll call each other nasty names, but then we go home and have a drink, maybe even go to a bar and have a drink together. So, I think that's so crucial. In other words, the democratic ideal is alive and well.

VPR: Is there any one piece of legislation or something that especially worries you, ethically? We addressed capital punishment and abortion, but what about euthanasia or the debate over affirmative action and is there anything that you think is an ethical issue?

Lachs: Let me move to one level higher than that. When legislation is passed by Congress, senators and representatives ask, "Will this promote public good?" and I think that's very important. But nobody asks, "What is the cost of this in liberty?" Liberty is something that you can't overlook. Liberty is crucial for human happiness. You know this, [and] I know this, from our personal lives. When somebody tries to tell you what to do, you'd like to kill the son of a bitch. But nobody asks, "What will this law do to people's liberty?" Will this give them more choice or inhibit choice? I think this is far more important than any given piece of legislation. Not that there aren't very important

pieces of legislation. This just needs to be part of the legislation.

High security is dangerous, [such as] giving government an opportunity to listen in. Is it worth the intrusion? A lot of the recent developments, [like] the full body scanners and the wire tapping, do you think those are the most dangerous?

Lachs: Extremely dangerous. Giving government the opportunity without getting court permission for this, to listen in to conversations. You can always justify this by saying, "We've got to catch some people! They're dangerous!" Well, of course you will, but is that worth the intrusion into our privacy? I think that question needs to be asked. Is it worth the intrusion?

VPR: Do you think American society as a whole is advancing morally or do you think we're regressing?

Lachs: Clearly advancing. I was around when there was segregation of blacks and white. And you know we're still talking about racism and so on and no doubt there is racism, but nothing like what there was. Nothing like what there was. A black person couldn't buy a house in my neighborhood when we first moved to Nashville. They couldn't do it because it was illegal to do that. Nothing like that existed. I think that we're morally confused about many things, but in the mean time, decency seems to spread. I think there's far more decency today than we've ever had in history.

VPR: Are there any ethic responsibilities that Vandy students have or our generation has to help out in the future?

Lachs: Well you know...I think that ethical responsibilities are terribly important, but ethics is broader than that. It's not only a matter of responsibility...it's so important to organize your life in a way that when you die or when you get close to dying you can look back on it and say that it was good. So I talk a lot in the ethics class about spontaneity. I talk a lot about happiness; I talk a lot about

self-control. And one of the things that I come to again and again is that I don't believe that there is such a thing as addiction. This usually gets a rise out of people. They say, "What do you mean by that?!" If you mean by "addiction" that you absolutely can't help yourself, I invite them to surrender themselves or their addictions to me so I will have complete power over what they do and I will be able to give them motives for not doing what they are addicted to. Why do they need what they're addicted to? I think that to me is what is so crazy about addiction. Everything is addictive. Someone said, "I am addicted to McDonald's coffee," [Tiger] Woods is addicted to sex. What the hell does that mean? It means he likes it. Is that all it means? I want to say a lot about the personal side of ethics. That doesn't mean that I'm not interested and don't talk a lot about responsibilities. One of the main responsibilities is decency towards others. But I think we're told a lot about decency and about our obligations but very few of us focus on how to make a life meaningful.

Guest Essay

Constructing the Obama Doctrine:

How to Assess and Address Global Warming

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There is no doubt that the Obama administration has inherited a considerable number of important and urgent foreign policy challenges, ranging from dealing with a potentially nuclear Iran to preparing for China's unprecedented economic growth rate. But in constructing a foreign policy agenda of its own, the Obama administration should be careful to avoid making the same mistakes of administrations past. Primarily, it cannot afford to disregard climate change as

a speculative issue for future generations to deal with. In writing this paper, I hope to prove that global warming is the greatest foreign policy concern for the administration and that bolstering international institutions is the best strategy for addressing it. In the first part of this paper, I will present the issue of climate and change and introduce four weighing standards that synergistically prove why it is in fact the most important issue. In the second part of this paper, I will explain that the Obama administration should ultimately chose a neoliberal framework for thought since working with international institutions seems to be the most effective and most appropriate way of addressing an issue like global warming.

At a time when only 49%[1] of Americans believe that there is a global environmental crisis to address, there are a few fundamental questions that require an honest and clear answer. The first, what exactly is the greenhouse effect and to what extent is it natural? The second, what about it makes it more important than any other harm? Absent a sufficient answer to these questions, warranting why the United States has a unique responsibility in dealing with this crisis will prove to be very difficult.

The greenhouse effect is indeed a natural process that allows the Earth to experience warmer temperatures. Certain gasses that leave the Earth trap heat and re-emitting it back to the Earth's surface. There is nothing inherently troubling about this effect; rather, a natural sense of warming is necessary for human beings to maintain their way of life. The problem, otherwise known as global warming, occurs when there is an excess of such gasses in the atmosphere.[2]

The implications of an unrestricted rise in temperature are of paramount concern for four reasons: (1) its severe magnitude, (2) its irreversibil-

ity, (3) its indefinite time frame, and (4) its global scope. The magnitude, or the effects of global climate range from "sea level rise, coastal flooding, and extensive glacial deterioration to droughts, heat waves, and desertification,"[3] and all of them are manifesting themselves in our world today. According to scientists at Yale and Columbia, these effects are only expected to "grow in severity"[4] meaning that the harm will only continue to escalate. This is especially true for global warming because warming operates within a positive feedback system, meaning once a cycle is initiated, we risk the possibility of "going over the edge," in which case, "we will transition to an environment far outside the range that has been experienced by humanity, and there will be no return."[5] This point of no return implies that human beings cannot undo the effects of the harm that are being done upon them.

Unlike war or religious and cultural differences, global warming transcends political, subjective, and cultural boundaries; first, it is inherently scientific. That is not to say that there aren't politicizations of it or that all climate scientists are always truthful. Rather, that is to say that the majority of climate science is objective and devoid of special interests. After all, how much could special interest groups gain from reducing greenhouse gas emissions? But second, and most importantly global warming is not an issue that is discriminate or unique to one group of people; rather, greenhouse gasses have an "impact on global change irrespective of where they are emitted" meaning that cooperation and efforts "must occur at an international level with broad participation." [6] Rarely, if ever, has there been an issue that affects every nation-state and every civilization. It is indeed the combination of the four factors: the magnitude, the irreversibility, the time frame, and the global scope that warrant primary delegation. But identifying why this prob-

lem is important is only the first part of the problem; the second part of the problem is that there still remains the question of which political framework the United States ought to adopt in addressing this issue. For such an inherently international issue, the neo-liberalist doctrine would make most sense.

A neoliberal framework would promote the role of institutions in addressing global warming. Institutions can "provide information, reduce transaction costs, make commitments more credible, establish focal points for coordination, and in general facilitate the operation of reciprocity." [7] Two of the main existing problems of international cooperation on climate change including the difficulty of getting states to cooperate and the difficulty of ensuring that they don't cheat [8] could be solved back, or at the very least, minimized by the presence of institutions. Institutions, especially those that are bolstered by the strong presence the United States, could set collective goals, create economic pressures and incentives for lowering GHG emissions, and ultimately crystallize the efforts of the world to fight off a common aggressor: itself.

While the results might not be immediate, the neo-liberalist solution is the best, given the choices or the lack thereof. Similar to the ways in which the WTO has managed to facilitate world trade by reducing tariffs, it is quite possible that an institution perhaps even rooted from the IPCC or supported by the United Nations could facilitate how much carbon dioxide is being emitted into the atmosphere. This issue does indeed carry a great deal of import, and working together multilaterally through an organized system seems to be the most natural and logical solution to the issue. Indeed, the best political systems, and the best political doctrines seem to be ones that govern not merely with good hindsight, but with good foresight. If the Obama administration listens to

scientists, works with other nation, it just might deliver the change it promised.

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Domestic Affairs

The Mad Hatter's Tea Party:

A Trip Through Rhetorical Wonderland

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The Tea Party is a quasi-grassroots organization composed of the Republican party's far-right conservative wing. This fringe faction held its first "National Tea Party Convention" on February 5, where passionate politicians participated as self-described "delegates" in deliberation[1]. The party has gained enough political capital and media attention to pose a legitimate political threat to moderates and liberals in Congress. The Demo-

cratic Party even plans to specifically address the Tea Party for the 2010 election cycle as a threat to the party's majorities in the House and Senate[2]. The emergence of the Tea Party will strongly influence the forthcoming U.S. national elections by polarizing their constituency and threatening the stability of the Republican Party. These self-proclaimed conservative libertarians align themselves with the Michelle Bachmanns, Dick Cheney's, and Sarah Palins of the Republican Party[3]. The Tea Party represents the most polarizing wing of the Republican Party that could threaten the competitiveness of Republican candidates or divisively split off and create a third-party, should the Republicans lose their support.

The Tea Party rose to national prominence because of the anti-government efforts of staunch conservatives. Fox News, as a media conglomerate, is significant to the Tea Party's rise to national recognition because they perpetuated the cause with internal support to extended coverage. As a result, the Fox News Network has helped the Tea Party into the national spotlight[4][5]. The self-proclaimed spokeswoman of the Tea Party movement, former Alaskan Governor Sarah Palin, was hired by Fox News in January as an on-air contributor[6]. Glenn Beck's 9/12 Project, a political club dedicated to "limited government, maximum freedom, and the values of our Founders", is in Beck's words a "decentralized tea party"[7][8]. However, these two groups are a muddled product of the Republican party's polarization that is powerful, combustible, and decentralized. Although the party has much mobilized support from energized anti-Obama administration party activists, the Tea Party has delegitimized itself as a political organization with its disorganized and often volatile political support[9][10]. Protesters have

been accused of resorting to threats and profanity against Democratic politicians[9]. This ideologically homogeneous group has yet to decide its long-term course of action as political figures, operatives, and pundits fight for issue space.

This organization ignores the Moderate-Conservative wing of the Republican party in favor of the hard-line neoconservative wing of the Republican party. Sarah Palin tweeted "Commonsense Conservatives & lovers of America: "Don't Retreat, Instead – RELOAD!" Pls see my Facebook page"[11]. This references Palin's fan page on Facebook with a map of twenty competitive Congressional districts marked by rifle scopes[12]. This rhetorical threat to moderate Democrats in Republican-leaning Congressional districts attempts to mobilize support from Tea Partiers. Furthermore, since the foundation of the Tea Party, many political candidates have entered the political arena in the name of the movement[13]. 2008 Republican Presidential Candidate John McCain faces a Tea Party primary challenger in his re-election bid, but Tea Party Patriot Sarah Palin stumped for Senator John McCain in Phoenix and Tucson, calling her former running mate a real Tea Partier to reassure her loyal constituency[14][15]. If this act of political polarization is not perplexing enough, the Tea Party has counter intuitively put up three primary-challengers against traditional Conservative Ron Paul[16].

The Tea Party is an inefficient political organization. The party portrays itself as an organization founded on the principles held by the majority of Americans—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; but these vague aspirations are no more than idealistic rhetoric sprouting from the ashes of economic decay. The majority of Americans are not polarized like the Democratic and Republican parties;

in fact, the American constituency is rather moderate and politically apathetic[17]. This distortion that the Tea Party is creating is very harmful to America's political climate. The Tea Party outrage against the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 called for the bill's repeal through an e-mail sent to the organization's members[18]. Instead of offering amendments or changes they would make to the legislation, the organization focused on the Obama Administration's radical socialist agenda, portraying it as a slippery-slope to universal amnesty and universal voter registration[18]. Democracy in the form of democratic deliberation is least served by impassioned rhetoric that detracts from the free flow of information available to the general public. Across the board, the Tea Party has failed to offer its constituents tangible solutions to help shape the legislative process. Even though the Tea Party borders on political party status, its purpose defeats the definition of political parties. Political parties are created to collect members with common beliefs, and they act as a vehicle for the interests of its supporters. The Tea Party is by no means a political asset to the Republican Party because it fails as a political party, as a political organization, and as an organization for progress.

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Virginia's Gubernatorial Election:

A sign of 'Change' in 2010

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Last November, the Nation witnessed the historic election of Presi-

dent Barack Obama as the first African-American President of the United States of America. The election of a Democratic President was portrayed by many (certainly most of the media) as a referendum against eight years of Republican governance in both the Executive and Legislative branches. Riding the wave of momentum created by Barack Obama, a number of newly-elected Democrats flooded Congress. Throughout the Nation, incumbent Republican congressmen lost their seats to the challenging Democrats. This electoral result was seen by many as a sign that the Nation, angered by the policy choices made in the Bush Administration, wanted 'change.' However, if the 2009 Gubernatorial election in Virginia provides any evidence, support for the GOP may be swiftly on the rise after only a year-long experiment with liberal Democratic leadership in Washington.

In keeping with the theme of 'change' that defined the 2008 election cycle, the State of Virginia broke with tradition by voting for a Democratic Presidential candidate for the first time since 1964.[1] Coupling the onset of the largest financial crisis experienced since the Great Depression of the 1930s with the Bush Administration's deeply -divisive decision to send troops to fight in the Middle East, Virginians also succumbed to the idea of 'change' that Obama preached.

But barely one year later, the citizens of Virginia (perhaps closest to the chaos spewing out of Washington) acted to express their view that the 'change' they voted for last fall, was indeed not the 'change' they either expected or wanted. Controversial Health Care legislation that began boiling over in Congress during the summer months caused many headaches for congressmen during their August recesses as they faced the angry outcry of Americans in their

districts. Additionally, citizen frustration mounted as the unemployment rate continued to rise in spite of the massive American Relief and Recovery Act (ARRA) passed earlier in the year by Congress and signed by the President.

This legislative action itself faced much criticism from citizens who considered it to be merely wasteful government spending mainly used to fund 'pork' projects. The insertion of a \$30 million dollar earmark inside the \$ 789 billion dollar ARRA to protect an endangered salt harvest mouse in Nancy Pelosi's own district added more fervor to those claims of irresponsible spending. The philosophy behind the ARRA stimulus legislation, as the name implied, was to inject capital in those sectors of the economy deemed to be failing in order to help them to recover. Earmarked spending of an exorbitant amount of money to protect a small rodent with no apparent bearing on America's economic recovery caught the eye of many as the definition of wasteful government spending.

Amidst all the controversy that surrounded the implementation of the Stimulus legislation (remarkably a large portion yet to be spent) and the on-going Health Care Reform debate, the election of Republican Bob McDonnell to the governorship in Virginia on November 4th served as a clear repudiation of the policy choices championed by the Obama Administration. McDonnell's election demonstrates a resurgence of the GOP and discontent with the standing Democratic leadership in Washington, given that for the previous eight years Virginia's Governor had been a Democrat and The Old Dominion's congressional Democratic candidates had been extremely successful in the State's election cycle last year.

McDonnell repeatedly won districts in this year's gubernatorial

election that had supported Democratic congressional candidates last year. The voting results from the 5th and the Hampton Roads congressional districts, respectively, provide an example of the changing political winds. Both districts were claimed by Democratic candidates in the 2008 election; but on Tuesday November 4th, McDonnell convincingly garnered the majority of the votes in both districts[2].

Opposition to a proposal, largely unknown to the Nation at-large, but one which negatively affects the citizens of Hampton Roads, also contributed to the impressive electoral success McDonnell. Voters in Hampton Roads, a community with close ties to the military, were angered by the proposal that would shift the home port of the Navy's newest aircraft carrier from Virginia to Florida[3]. Bill Nye, the Democratic representative from Hampton Roads, who owed his election victory last fall to Obama's campaign presence in the district, saw his constituency overwhelmingly support McDonnell this year[4].

Similar economic concerns were expressed by those living in Virginia's 5th district. Heavily influenced by the proposed Cap and Trade environmental legislation that many believe will further burden manufacturers in an area that boasts the State's largest unemployment rate. fragment -Emily Megan Morgenstern 11/10/09 5:01 PM Tom Perriello, the Democratic representative from the area, gained victory in his district last fall by a mere 727 votes (the lowest margin of victory in the country).[5] But McDonnell this November carried 61.4% of the vote in the 5th.

With a host of races heating up throughout the Country in anticipation of 2010's congressional elections, the resurgence of the GOP in a state such as Virginia, previously under solid control of the Democrats,

provides evidence of a tilt back towards conservative governance.

McDonnell's victory speech, highlighting the goals of lower taxes and reduced spending, clearly was aimed at an electorate that in large measure was angered by the perception and fact of 'big government'[6]. It's fair to say that in 2010 the Nation may witness more change. Contrary to the 2008 phenomenon, this next cycle of 'change' may well result in Republicans replacing Democrats and regaining influence in Washington.

Republican National Committee Chair Michael Steele notes that the victory in Virginia serves his Party as a "springboard for 2010." With all the seats in the House of Representatives up for grabs, and more than 35 Senate seats being contested, a challenge awaits incumbent Democrats next year[7]. Leaders amongst the Democrats are already advising colleagues to "get ready, fasten your seat belt, because this is going to be a tough cycle." [8]

Unlike 2008, 2010 may not reward those citizens who support the Blue Donkey over the Red Elephant.

Editor's Note: This Essay was slated for publication in the Fall 2009 issue, but unfortunately was lost during the production process. The Staff of Vanderbilt Political Review regrets this error.

[1] <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704013004574517924229019190.html>

[2] Ibid

[3] Ibid

[4] Ibid

[5] <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/blogs/beltway-confidential/Lessons-from-the-2009-election-results-69054827.html>

[6] <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/11/03/democrats-republicans-prepare-possible-legal-battle-new-jersey-race/>

[7] http://www2.timesdispatch.com/rtd/news/state_regional/state_regional_govtpolitics/article/GOVS041_20091104-001202/303560/

[8] <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/11/03/democrats-republicans-prepare-possible-legal-battle-new-jersey-race/>

cy. Accepting the unlikelihood of the former, the latter is not equivalent to having wealth. A country's wealth is only a consequence of its production. The fact that production in America decreases almost daily demonstrates that we cannot be accumulating more wealth realistically. Therefore, the money from this "stimulus" only creates a greater and greater illusion of money in the economy, in the same way the speculation on the stock market created an illusion of capital in the 1920's. History shows us that illusions of economy did not work then and, similarly, they will not work now.

Global Affairs

Should the UK Join the Euro?

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The Euro dates back to January 1st, 1999, when it became the legal tender for participating European countries within the EU. With the single currency comes a central bank, called the European Central Bank, which conducts monetary policy covering all the members of the Eurozone. There are no longer any separate national monetary policies, and no country can introduce any policies of their own, such as ones involving interest rates and exchange rates. The UK obtained a special opt-out agreement in the original Maastricht Treaty of the EU, stating that it would only have to join if the government decided to do so.

This topic has been debated time and time again, and it will most likely continue to be debated for quite a long time. While there are definitely some economic benefits to being within the

Eurozone, there are also major cons to having the Euro that go along with several other political as well as social (or rather, cultural) negatives. While this may change in the future, at this point in time it seems to be disadvantageous for the UK to join the Euro.

Economics

The biggest argument against the UK making a move to join the Eurozone stems from the huge loss of autonomy when it comes to economy policy and governmental control. If the UK were to join the Eurozone, all control it has over monetary policy would be handed over to the European Central Bank, who would then prescribe policies at its whim. This could prove to be disastrous given certain economic circumstances. For instance, the lack of exchange rate controls removes a highly effective mechanism for adjustments of imbalances between countries that can arise from shocks to their economies. This has worked well for the UK in the past, and, as such, this option should be retained. Furthermore, the UK would no longer be able to stimulate its economy during a recession by devaluing its currency and increasing exports. The UK is thought by some to be more sensitive to interest rate changes than other EU countries (mainly because of the high number of owner-occupation on variable-rate mortgages in the housing market), and joining a currency union with no monetary flexibility would correspondingly require the UK to have more flexibility in labor markets and in the housing markets. Problems such as these are only a few examples of how the loss of power to change and implement economic policy would be highly disadvantageous for the UK. Furthermore, many assert that the UK is already a big competitor on the global scale, so the argument that the UK would lose economic influence if it were to not join

the Eurozone is decidedly weak.

Political

On the political front, the debate seems to be a little more straightforward. Following along with having more economic influence, supporters claim that moving to the Eurozone would garner the UK more political say and influence within the region. The UK would have a stronger voice when it came to deciding policies and creating more integration. However, many more view the move to the Eurozone as, essentially, a political disaster. With this move, the British government will have virtually no say on monetary policy. Instead, it will be completely controlled by the European Central Bank, and the UK government will have no way to deal with any crises that may occur within the economy. With the way the government is currently set up, if there are massive problems occurring, the citizens are able to bring in a new government through elections to fix problems within the economy. Under the European Central Bank, even bringing in a new government would be essentially useless.

Opponents of the Eurozone also believe that this move would bring less political influence, rather than more (as supporters believe). The European Union, some assert, is basically a French and German institution; it is their brainchild that caters mainly to their needs and interests. Upon joining the EU, Britain attempted to gain some political clout within the system, but most of her interests and desires were either ignored or strongly contested. Some would say that it has never been in the interest of the UK to be within the Union at all. If the UK were to join the Eurozone, they would be put even further under the EU's rules and regulations that do not cater to the needs of Britain at all, which are decidedly different from

the needs of mainland Europe. There are hopes of Britain becoming the leader of mainland Europe, but some say that it is not a realistic goal, nor is it advantageous or beneficial for the nation to be in such a position.

Social

In addition to the economic and political realms, joining the Eurozone also has an effect upon the social realm of the UK. Supporters believe that having a European currency will strengthen the “European Identity”. Having more and more countries sharing the same legal tender creates a bond that gives a sense of community and togetherness to those involved. It is this very point, though, that opponents resist. Proponents of the Pound have a very nationalistic view of the currency situation, and believe that the Pound is something inherently British, and taking this away would be taking something away from the very fabric of English culture and society. This feeling of autonomy is incredibly prominent throughout the people, and this view that the Pound should be kept, if only to preserve their cultural independence, is not in any danger of fading. If the Euro were to replace the Pound, many feel that a part of the country itself would be lost.

Conclusion

It is clear that the debate regarding the choice to join the Eurozone is substantial and complex. While it may have died down a few years prior to today, it is returning with much more importance due to the current economic crisis. Some believe that now is the time, more than ever, to join the Eurozone and avoid many economic hardships to come. Others believe that by the time the UK were to actually change to the Euro (as it is a years-long process), the current recession will have passed and the

UK would only have a substantially higher sum of debt to deal with, as the process to change over to the Euro would be a massively expensive one. The UK already benefits from intra-European trade due to the agreements made in the past, and many believe Britain to have its own special identity unique to itself, which would be forever tarnished if the Pound were to disappear from the hands of the British people. The loss of governmental economic power would leave the UK at the mercy of the other European powers, and its economy could possibly fall into disrepair with no governmental control to sustain it. It seems that the cons, at least at the present time, outweigh the pros, and the UK should remain tied to their traditional currency.



World Cup 2010:

Hopes set too high for the Rainbow Nation

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In 2004, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) announced that South Africa would be the host for the 2010 World Cup. For the first time in history, the World Cup is going to be on the African Continent, making South Africa not only stand as its own country, one already faced with the difficulties of post-apartheid, but as a representative for all African countries. The South African government views the World Cup as a chance to sustain and promote its economic development goals. The hosting of the World Cup has become an opportunity for South Africa to reshape its society in an attempt for the resolution of a troubled history. By winning the bid to host the FIFA World Cup, South Africa has

both the opportunity and the daunting responsibility to not only ensure a successful tournament, but also to capitalize on the potential political, social, and economic benefits the tournament could provide. However, the ability for South Africa to capture the opportunities for economic gains and social reform will be difficult due to the inadequate structures and programs of post apartheid [2] as well as the substantial costs of hosting the World Cup. [1]

From its beginnings in the 1930s, the World Cup has grown to be one of the most impressive sporting events in the world, and the 2010 World Cup is expected to be the planet’s biggest sporting event ever. Well over a billion people are expected to follow the month long tournament between the world’s top 32 soccer playing nations. Questions of a ‘plan B,’ or whether or not South Africa is ready to host this mega event are no longer prevalent. The only question that remains is, can the World Cup be a springboard for broader development both in the country and the rest of the continent?

A mega sports event such as the World Cup has economically been viewed as a means for rejuvenation. However, the true impact of such an event is greatly debated. Countries who have previously hosted the World Cup expected the tournament to provide greater economic returns than the considerable costs it required to host such an event. However, mega events have historically underestimated costs and environmental impacts, and overestimated the potential revenues and the effects on economic development. This is because the research usually done before the event takes place intends to benefit potential investors [5] and persuade the government that hosting such an event will provide a positive economic return.[6] Furthermore, the World Cup requires considerable investment in facilities,

infrastructure, and organization expenditure, for which the host country is responsible. Yet, FIFA limits the financial benefits of the host country by creating a contract that regulates the profits of the tournament.

There are fewer examples of economic successes in hosting a mega event than there are costly plans in which the host country obtained a large debt. [2] Previous World Cup hosts such as Germany, the United States, South Korea, and Japan, all suggest that the economic boost the world cup provides have consistently grossly overestimated the economic impact on the host country. Furthermore, all four host countries reported minimal economic gain, and some reported economic loss. Therefore, it is important to understand that huge short term economic boosts have historically been incorrect in their forecasts in order to assess the expectations of South Africa and to predict the extent to which South Africa will realize the claims towards using the World Cup as a tool for economic development.

With the welcoming of the single biggest sporting event in the world, the World Cup only creates a larger disparity between the haves and the have-nots. The lavish spending for constructing and renovating world class stadiums has shown no visible or discernible benefit for the hundreds of thousands still waiting for stable homes, reliable electricity, education and preventative health care service. Mass tourism often brings overdevelopment and uneven development, environmental pollution, and invasion by culturally insensitive and economically disruptive foreigners, which have historically been displayed in the case of the World Cup. [4] Many of the world-class stadiums being refurbished or built are next to the slums with no reliable electricity, or even running water. Hiller argues, “When

local people in the millions lack adequate housing, food and other subsistence needs, preparing for a ‘circus’ when people need ‘bread’ will always appear inappropriate” [3] Hiller goes on to conclude that adding human development to mega-event planning may raise expectations that would almost surely result in criticism for failure to achieve development goals after the final match is played. There is no doubt that South Africa will host a successful World Cup, but looking beyond the two months of soccer, South Africa may be setting itself up for great disappointment, and a large sum of debt, than a new Africa.

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Israel, Palestine, and the Real Shadow War

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Nicholas D. Kristof of the New York Times recently wrote an article discussing the “nonviolent” movement currently on the rise in the West Bank.

He described a march he participated in, mentioning the throwing of stones at Israeli soldiers and the soldiers tear-gassing the marchers in retaliation. Then, he compared the Palestinians to the oppressed Indians of Gandhi’s time, discoursing on how much more effective a true protest, perhaps carried out by Palestinian women, would be than the current protests, which define nonviolence as “not involving guns or explosives.” Throughout, he betrays his bias towards the Palestinian position, portraying them as refugees discriminated against by an oppressive occupying force – the state of Israel.

Kristof has fallen into the same trap as the rest of the liberal media; he believes that the core problem is that Israel ought to treat its disenfranchised neighbors better. It probably should, a fact which the Israelis have historically agreed with. The Palestinians have agreed with this notion as well. This conflict is being perpetuated by a relatively small group of people, most of them outside of the Israel/Palestine area, who stand to gain by the bombings and the controversy. Hamas is generally seen as the Palestinian instigator, but it has begun to take its role as a political party more seriously of late. This shift has been helped by the rise of the Fatah party in the West Bank. Israel is currently run by the no-nonsense Benjamin Netanyahu, who has drawn much criticism for his handling of the conflict.

Such criticism as Kristof’s is, however, laced with hypocrisy. The lack of military action on American soil since the Civil War has created a false sense of invincibility, and a mystique that we, isolated by our two oceans and still-dominant navy, could not be attacked. So our response to the 9/11 bombings was to destroy any hint of infrastructure Afghanistan had, however twisted and ineffectual said infrastructure may have been.

Israel has coped with regular attacks, originally from legitimate military forces (belonging to Syria, Iran, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, and for some time Lebanon, among others) and more recently from terrorist organizations, since it was created in 1948. Their response has been primarily to defend their borders against a significant Arabic size advantage. The largest military expansion of their territory to date came as a result of the Six-Day War in 1967, conceived as a strategy to prevent the combined militaries of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria from staging an invasion. At that time, the Arabic nations enjoyed advantages in size, geography, and technology, and it is very likely that had Israel not struck first, it would have been annihilated. By now, most of that land has been returned to its pre-war owners. As of now, Israel maintains control only over the West Bank, Golan Heights, and East Jerusalem.

If the United States found itself in the same situation as Israel, faced with regular bombings on its own soil and high risk to civilians, we would classify the entire Palestinian people as enemy combatants and send in the Marines. By that standard, Israel's response has been fairly mild. Yet Israel has some blame for the current situation. Actually, they shoulder quite a lot of the burden, but not because of their brutality.

Rather, they have picked the wrong target.

Terrorism is essentially a political tactic. Horrific and inhuman, yes, but political in purpose nevertheless. And, terrorism is the chosen tactic of much of the Arab world. By goading Israel into a military response to Palestinian aggressions, the surrounding nations have generated some measure of sympathy for terrorism against Israel – de facto this gives them political leeway to pursue an underlying goal of eradicating the state of Israel.

Time and again, the collective Middle East has demonstrated its opposition to the existence of a Jewish state, regularly attempting to invade. It has only been since Israel developed a superior military (notably, with nuclear armaments) that direct attacks on their soil have fallen out of favor among their foreign enemies. In addition, the leaders of nations like Syria and Iran are well aware of their advantage in world opinion, however inept they are at cultivating it for themselves.

While terrorism is a political tactic that serves the interests of the Arab world well, there are enough rational people among the Palestinian community to realize that terrorism does not help the Palestinian cause at all. This recognition is the primary driving force behind protests like the one in which Kristof participated. In truth, peaceful protest likely is the preferred tactic of the Palestinian people, whose motivation seems to be a need for a legitimate home. They see Israel as an oppressor because that is, indeed, their day-to-day experience of the situation. But despite the religious lens through which this day-to-day experience is often projected, the Palestinian people are not jihadists – rather, they are permanent refugees.

This brings us closer to the core of the problem described quite clearly in another recent New York Times editorial by Efraim Karsh: not only are the nearby Arab states exacerbating the problem, they are doing so with a singular lack of concern for the Palestinians themselves. As clarified in one truly frightening quote mentioned in the editorial, courtesy an Egyptian diplomat of all things: “We couldn't care less if all the refugees die. There are enough Arabs around.” Numerous times throughout this conflict groups sponsored by various Arabic states have slaughtered Palestinians on some pretext or another, and not once were they punished for it. It

could even be said that the refugees have been treated worse by the Arabic countries they seek shelter in than the Jewish nation they are exhorted to despise. It seems hypocrisy runs strong not only in the liberal American media, but in the Arabic world as well.

So here is a suggestion for Netanyahu: stop bombing the Palestinians. Halt your settlements in the West Bank. Extend aid to the Palestinian people, propose peace talks to the Palestinian Authority, do everything in your power to give them what they are asking for – a secure and autonomous state of their own. Punish the culpable, not the scapegoats. It's time to acknowledge that this war is not between the Israelis and the Palestinians, but rather the same war Israel has been fighting for the past sixty years as the only Jewish state in the world against countries like Iran, Syria, and Jordan. The Palestinians are simply human shields for the true aggressors. If only Israel and the American media would figure that out...

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How Should You Treat A Friend?

On the current state of American-Israeli relations

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In March, Vice President Joe Biden visited Israel in an effort to reaffirm to Israelis of the American administration's commitment to Israel's security. During the visit, the Israeli Interior Ministry approved the construction of 1,600 housing units in a Jewish neighborhood of East Jerusalem.

The Vice President was understandably upset at the timing of the announcement, as the United States does not accept Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem, which took place after

the Six-Day War. The announcement was made without the knowledge of Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. Netanyahu apologized to Biden before the Vice President left Israel, and the apology was accepted. Most observers declared the incident over.

In fact, it was only the beginning. Two days later, supposedly at the instruction of President Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called Netanyahu and demanded that Israel make new concessions to the Palestinians with the hope of restarting indirect peace talks between Netanyahu and his Palestinian counterpart, Mahmoud Abbas. Clinton told Netanyahu that the housing start hurt "the bilateral relationship" between the United States and Israel.

Clinton's phone call and the subsequent actions of the Obama administration, including Obama's snub of Netanyahu on his visit to the United States two weeks later (Obama refused to allow press coverage of their hastily-arranged meeting), have been entirely inappropriate. Unfortunately, it is becoming clearer by the day that the Obama administration has no understanding of how the United States should treat its allies.

The Obama administration has failed to recognize the complexity of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The administration would do well to remember three facts:

First, Israel is the closest ally of the United States in the Middle East, and quite possibly worldwide. The US-Israel relationship is built on shared values and interests. The American people and government have long recognized the importance of a strong and secure Israel as part of our broader foreign policy in the region. The relationship is about much more than the peace process. Israel and the United States face the same threats, and strategic cooperation between the

two countries is essential to both nations' defenses. A close relationship between the US and Israel is important for both countries.

Second, Israel has repeatedly announced its support for the two-state solution and the roadmap for peace proposed by the United States, the European Union, Russia and the United Nations. Prime Minister Netanyahu is ready for peace negotiations to begin immediately and without negotiations. Israel has repeatedly made concessions for merely the hope for peace, such as in 2005 when Israel unilaterally disengaged from the Gaza Strip. Blame lies solely with the Palestinian leadership for the stalled peace process, and Prime Minister Abbas has refused to engage in even indirect negotiations with Israel.

Third, the American position on Jerusalem is far from concrete. The 1995 Jerusalem Embassy Act, passed overwhelmingly by both houses of Congress and signed by President Clinton, says that "Jerusalem should be recognized as the capital of the State of Israel." Even President Obama said during the campaign that "Jerusalem will remain the capital of Israel, and it must remain undivided." As president, Obama has failed to live up to that statement.

Opposition to the Obama administration's poor treatment of Israel is not a partisan talking point. Since the administration began berating Israel about the housing announcement, well over 50 lawmakers have spoken out against Obama's efforts, including dozens of Democrats. In the last week of March, over 300 members of the House of Representatives signed on to a letter to Secretary Clinton authored jointly by Steny Hoyer, the Majority Leader, and Eric Cantor, the Minority Whip. The letter reaffirmed the "unbreakable bond that exists between our country and the State of Israel," and expressed the signatories'

"deep concern over recent tension." The letter said that any differences between the United States and Israel "are best resolved quietly, in trust and confidence, as befits longstanding strategic allies."

A bipartisan majority of the United States Congress understands how to treat an ally, as do the American people, who have consistently reiterated their support for Israel by wide margins in opinion polls. President Obama's actions call into question his basic understanding of the foreign policy priorities of the United States. As Iran gets closer and closer to a nuclear weapon and terrorists continue to gain a hold in Afghanistan and Pakistan, why is the Obama administration wasting so much time over Israeli construction in a part of Jerusalem that all parties understand will eventually be part of Israel in any two-state solution?

It's time for the Obama administration to understand that Israel is one of our country's closest allies, and that America's interests are best served when the two nations stand together. The administration's current efforts, which have no clear objective, undermine both the stability of the Middle East and our national security.

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