

# Northeastern University Political Review

A photograph of a woman and a child. The woman, in the upper left, wears a brown headscarf and a dark jacket. The child, in the lower left, wears a white winter jacket and a colorful, knitted hat with a fur-lined hood. They are holding several balloons: a large red one with the Turkish flag (a white crescent and star), and several blue ones with the European Union flag (yellow stars on a blue background).

## Why the EU Needs Turkey: A Case for Accession

**Plus: The War on  
Taxes, Religious  
Tolerance in America,  
and Law Enforcement  
& Counterterrorism**

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## **Mission Statement of the Northeastern University Political Review**

The Northeastern University Political Review seeks to be a nonpartisan platform for students to publish essays and articles of the highest possible caliber on contemporary domestic and international politics, as well as critical reviews of political media. The Political Review aspires to foster a culture of intelligent political discourse among interested individuals while promoting awareness of political issues in the campus community. The organization envisions itself as a place where students with a common interest in politics and world affairs may come together to discuss and develop their views and refine their opinions. The Political Review hopes to reflect the diversity of thought and spirit at Northeastern, including the dual ethic of academic and experiential education our school embodies.

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**From the Editor:**

This latest issue of the Northeastern University Political Review, like all the others, hopes to explore political issues of interest to students at Northeastern. The analyses, perspectives and opinions expressed here belong to the articles' authors themselves and no one else. The issues discussed here are as diverse as their authors. The unifying thread through each of them is that all accept and condone the right of others to express their perspectives and opinions in the same place.

As some of the articles point out, this has not always been the case in our politics recently. In addition to a pervasive polarization of opinion and party affiliation, we have seen an acerbic sectarianism directed at some religious and ethnic minorities in recent months, too frequently tolerated (if not bated) by some of our leaders in the media and government. While we can expect politicians to be opportunistic in the pursuit of reelection and media personalities to hop on the next train to higher ratings, we should be sure to remind them what our country is all about. And we should not ourselves be so cowardly as to accept narrow and bigoted narratives about this, that or the other group simply because the struggle for power makes it easy to pick on small and vulnerable minorities. Our society prides itself on its ability to evolve its culture and institutions to meet challenges. If we allow ourselves to go back on our basic traditions and point to one or two sets of people – be they citizens now or prospective ones -- as irredeemable outsiders we betray our obligations as citizens in a free society. The more narrowly we construct our narrative the fewer possibilities we allow ourselves for reconciliation and reform in reality.

The way we talk and write about each other matters. It matters when we turn our heads while a worked up crowd bullies our neighbors. It matters if someone we have elected to represent us thinks he can win more of our votes by encouraging us to join in on the mob mentality. It matters when someone tells the world that our classmate's faith is really just a political cult rather than a religion. And it matters when we can find the gumption to say enough is enough, clearly and decisively, for we only have the rights we are willing to defend.

- Khalid Lum, Political Science '11

## The War on Taxes

### Expiration of Bush taxes an opportunity for growth

At midnight this New Year's Eve most Americans will be watching the ball drop in Times Square. However, as the ball is dropping there will be a far more important change within the tax system. Set to expire at midnight are the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 (EGTRRA) and the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003 (JGTRRA), better known as the Bush tax cuts. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle are scrambling to find a supplement for the expiring cuts, but as of press time there are no solutions in place.

Prior to EGTRRA in 2001 the top tax bracket rate was at 39.6% for those annually grossing more than \$300,000. EGTRRA lowered that rate to 35%, as well as lowered subsequent three bracket rates by about 3%. Two years later Congress passed JGTRRA, which implemented the EGTRRA cuts earlier than originally planned. Both bills hold an important caveat that

Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle are scrambling to find a supplement for the expiring cuts, but as of now there are no solutions in place.

provides the basis for the current debate over replacing the cuts.

Fearing a filibuster, Majority Leader Trent Lott invoked an unusual Senate rule called rec-

onciliation, allowing for a simple majority vote instead of a 60 vote supermajority. Reconciliation is subject to the Byrd Rule, which assures that bills passed through reconciliation must either decrease the deficit or increase the deficit for no more than 10 years. Both bills were passed through this process.

According to the Tax Policy Center's analysis, over the last decade the Bush tax cuts have cost about 2.3 trillion dollars. Still, it has become a very common conservative argument that the cuts pay for themselves by stimulating the economy and increasing revenues that supplement the lowered taxes. As pointed out by Tax Notes' tax analyst, David Cay Johnston, during the last eight years tax revenues dropped 11.8% or \$144.66 billion dollars. With this evidence, many still argue that tax cuts do not need to be offset in the budget.

Many proponents of tax cuts have stated that allowing taxes to increase would directly harm small businesses. These

statements are difficult to believe since only two percent of all small businesses are within the top filing bracket. Another problem with the term "small business" is that the Joint Committee on Taxation report titled *Present Law and the President's Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Proposals Related to Selected*

*Individual Income Tax Provisions Scheduled to Expire Under the Sunset Provisions of the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001*, "50 percent of the approximately \$1 trillion of aggregate net positive business income will be reported on returns that have a marginal rate of 36 or 39.6 percent. These figures for net positive business income do not imply that all of the income is from entities that might be considered 'small.' For example, in 2005, 12,862 S corporations and 6,658 partnerships had receipts of more than \$50 million." An "S" corporation has its income reported through the personal income taxes of its shareholders. Companies with fewer than 100 shareholders can qualify for this status. Which is what allowed Fidelity Investments, which took in about \$11.5 billion in 2009 revenue and Tribune Co., which took in about 4.2 billion in 2008 revenue, to be taxed as small businesses.

Supporters of tax cuts state that cuts to the top bracket trickle-down to the lower brackets. Part of that equation is average income, which David Cay Johnston's research shows fell about 7% or \$3,512 per person between 2000 and 2008. Another fact that seems to disagree with the idea of the whole economy receiving a benefit is the level of poverty within the United States. According to the U.S. census Bureau, there were 37,276,000 under the poverty line in 2007, compared to only 31,581,000 in 2000.

The most important policy change will be allowing the current tax bracket to return to the 1993 level of 39.6%. This idea of a tax

hike within an economic downturn is widely considered a negative policy, yet it could hold some positive economic impact. For historical context, Bill Clinton was elected at the tail end of a small recession that had the country in an economic downturn. Within his first year President Clinton signed the Revenue Reconciliation Act of 1993, which raised the top bracket from 31% to 39.6%. Over the next two years unemployment dropped from 6.9% to 5.7%. Compare that to the post EGTRRA unemployment numbers, which grew from 4.5% in June 2001 to 6.3% in June 2003. This makes a small tax hike for the upper bracket seem like a more palatable policy. Allowing the top bracket tax cuts to expire would also help the country towards austerity. According to the Congressional Budget Office, extending these cuts would cost about \$40 billion in the first year and \$700 billion over the next decade. These numbers explain why some have challenged Republicans fighting for both a balanced budget and an extension of all the tax cuts.

The most important issue ahead of this country for the next few years is finding some sort of catalyst to spur economic growth. Many of the austerity measures called for conservatives may be impossible at this time. Before a nation can truly begin dealing with budgetary weakness, it must be on solid economic footing. This economy is far from being strong enough to endure budget cuts, especially to necessary safety-net programs that receive more use during economic downturns.

With the recession came a massive loss in revenue that

caused a spike in the size of the deficit. Before any administration can begin to look towards a balanced budget, revenue will need to return to pre-recession levels. In order to regain the revenues lost to the recession, the economy will need a boost in growth that can come from new spending projects.

As seen with the stimulus package, it is quite possible to use federal spending to stimulate a struggling economy. Spending on programs such as infrastructure repairs and tax credits for hiring new employees are policies that hold promise for the economy. According to the assessments of Alan Blinder and Mark Zandi, the stimulus package alone pre-

these added investments could be important for job growth and strengthening the middle class. The Council of Economic Advisors released a report in October stating that about 80% of jobs created would be in sectors mainly populated by the middle-class. Along with infrastructure spending, there is a need to institute a temporary tax credit on hiring. Through these credits, businesses would be able to reduce their tax burden while adding jobs to the US economy. According to the Congressional Budget Office, this plan would lead to about four to six times more jobs created than an extension of the Bush cuts. \$17.5 billion has already been spent on a plan

**Spending on infrastructure projects like those targeted in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) could create a two-fold positive impact as it would stimulate economic growth and help stabilize the country's crumbling infrastructure.**

vented the loss of about 12 million jobs. Spending on infrastructure projects like those targeted in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) could create a two-fold positive impact as it would stimulate economic growth and help stabilize the country's crumbling infrastructure.

Recently a study from the Political Economy Research Institute at UMASS Amherst highlighted the point that 18,000 jobs are created for every \$1 billion spent on infrastructure. If anything,

similar to this, called the HIRE Act, which has led to the hiring of about 6.9 million new workers after about 3 months. With added employment comes an increase in consumption that could potentially stimulate the economic growth that the United States needs. Depending on the decision made about the cuts, 2011 could either usher in a new decade resembling either our boom in the 1990s or our bust in the 2000s.

*- Robert J. Cohen,  
Political Science, '15*

## Street Corner Counterterrorism

### The role of police in combating terrorism

The United States counterterrorism community has evolved significantly in the nine years since the attacks on September 11, 2001 but questions persist about the intelligence community's ability to prevent the next attack. Terrorism is just as much, if not a greater threat today than before the attacks. Leon Panetta, current director of the Central Intelligence Agency, in a 2009 address reaffirmed al Qaeda's status as the preeminent threat to the United States homeland and interests abroad. Therefore, local law enforcement agencies need to increase their efforts to combat terrorism in the United States in response to current threats.

While terrorist threats from al-Qaeda senior leadership remain real, recent statements by current and former national security officials portray a shift from large-scale operations, directed by al-Qaeda senior leaders to small-scale, fairly autonomous attacks. General Michael Hayden, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, in a CNN editorial that stated U.S. efforts to combat al-Qaeda are so effective that al-Qaeda leadership is more concerned with personal survival than directing operations against the United States. The implication of this change is likely going to be a rise in small-scale, autonomous attacks inspired by the al-Qaeda ethos. The impact is already evident in recent attacks inspired

by the propaganda disseminated by al-Qaeda senior leadership and affiliated groups such as al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula or al-Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb. Examples of such attacks are the shooting at Fort Hood in November 2009, the Christmas Day attempted attack on Northwest Flight 253, and the May 1, 2010 failed car bomb placed in Times Square, New York.

Individuals planning attacks with little or no direct links to foreign terrorist groups are significantly more difficult to detect before an attack has actually taken place. For this reason it is crucial for local police to understand what activities and signals to look for and for where to look for in terms of possible terrorist activity. Activities associated with terrorist operations range from pre-operational target casing to acquiring material (e.g. weapons, vehicles, communications equipment) to conducting dry runs of the attack. Police patrolmen should learn these warning signs because they have the local knowledge to notice irregularities in their areas of operations.

The New York Police Department has one of the most highly developed and active counterterrorism divisions in the country. The NYPD established a very unique program named Operation Nexus, a partnership between the NYPD and local business owners. The NYPD encourages businesses to report suspicious behavior to

NYPD counterterrorism detectives assigned to Operation Nexus. For example, a beauty supply store would pay close attention to individuals purchasing large quantities of acetone and peroxide – precursors for Triacetone-Triperoxide, a common explosive favored by terrorist organizations around the world for a variety of applications, from car bombs to suicide vests. As a partner in Operation Nexus, the aforementioned beauty supply store would report suspicious behavior and purchases to NYPD detectives assigned to the counterterrorism division.

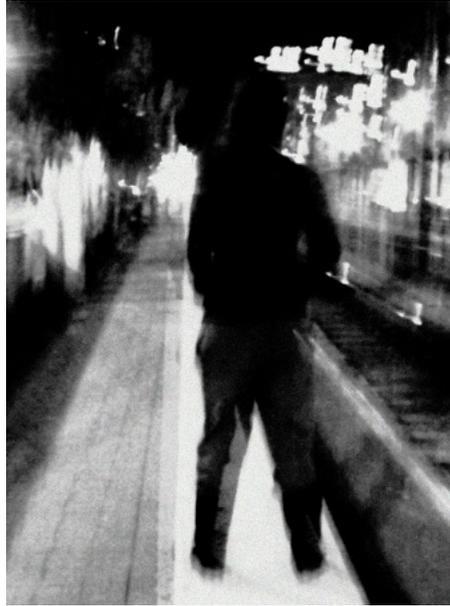
Community interaction is critical in combating domestic terrorism because it is easy for terrorists to maintain a low profile and avoid law enforcement scrutiny in the pre-operational planning stage. Much like police patrolmen, neighborhood denizens know intuitively when something is out of the ordinary in their area. Detectives assigned to Operation Nexus are engaging local businesses to increase awareness of pre-attack indicators. Other cities in the U.S. may have outreach programs but not to the same extent and degree as the NYPD's Operation Nexus. Outreach programs present low-risk, high-reward opportunities for law enforcement agencies to educate the general public. Adam Serwer, a blogger for *The American Prospect*, highlights eleven terrorist plots from October 2001 to this past October that were discovered or foiled with the help of ordinary citizens. Many of the plots were discovered by way of anonymous tips to local law enforcement agencies. A knowledgeable and prepared public clearly benefits counterterrorism efforts by help-

ing to inform and local and federal orient law enforcement agencies.

More metropolitan police departments need to develop programs of their own modeled after Operation Nexus, to combat terrorist activity within their jurisdictions. But police departments that have not been impacted by terrorism as directly as the NYPD are not likely to see the utility in a program like Operation Nexus in addition to using traditional confidential informants.

Many police departments around the country also need more anti-terrorism and counterterrorism training. Recent assessments of law enforcement capacities to respond to terrorist attacks show the majority of police departments in the country are vastly under trained and under equipped for such serious incidents. Many major cities have advanced counterterrorism divisions, but beyond large metropolises funding and training for terrorism prevention is not as readily available. NYPD commissioner Ray Kelly suggested reapportioning “pork-barrel” money in the Department of Homeland Security to provide funding for this training. Although small cities and towns are less likely to be targeted by terrorist plots, terrorists often take advantage of quiet towns to plot and train for violent operations to avoid law enforcement scrutiny.

One example occurred in 2001 where several extremists – later termed the Portland Seven – conducted firearms training in a rural town in Washington before attempting to travel to Afghanistan to attack U.S. and NATO forces. Fortunately, this group was discovered by a lo-



cal deputy sheriff and ultimately thwarted by the FBI. It was luck and chance that led to discovering this plot and we cannot count on always being this lucky.

The NYPD uses civilian analysts to support law enforcement investigations and operations. In the wake of 9/11, the NYPD expanded its Intelligence Division, under the leadership of CIA veteran (and Northeastern University alumnus) David Cohen, to provide background and analysis for the Department’s experienced detectives. Bringing analysts into a police department was a critical addition to augment traditional law enforcement investigations. Analysts use their knowledge and expertise to uncover leads and better focus investigations. Within hours of the May 1 bombing attempt in Times Square, for example, the NYPD analysts discovered a strong lead on the culprit by scouring Internet forums for any mention of the attempted bombing. This is the kind of value-added support

analysts provide police officers – these analysts knew where, and how, to look for this information.

The lack of communication between national intelligence agencies and local law enforcement is an issue of extreme importance. The 9/11 Commission Report highlights many of the communication failures which led, in part, to the attacks. Communication is crucial in combating terrorism and since 9/11 efforts have been made to improve communication throughout the counterterrorism community. The Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) program, which was created to connect local law enforcement agencies with FBI field offices, has expanded dramatically since 9/11. Unfortunately, JTTFs are often bottlenecks where the information police departments send filters up to the FBI and the FBI reports very little back to different police departments or even other JTTFs. For example the Philadelphia police department could discover details of a terrorist plot targeting New York City and provide the intelligence to the Philadelphia-based JTTF, however there is no guarantee the information will make it to the appropriate authorities in New York. The counterterrorism community as a whole needs to improve intelligence sharing because collaboration provides a better picture of a terrorist plot.

Similarly, law enforcement agencies, including the FBI, need to share information with national level intelligence agencies whenever necessary and applicable. The reason for this may be a cultural difference between analysts and agents, as former NYPD Analytic

Unit chief Samuel J. Rascoff put it, “FBI agents sometimes look at their analysts and say, ‘So, basically, we do the same job, but I carry a gun and kick down doors

## The lack of communication between national intelligence agencies and local law enforcement is an issue of extreme importance.

while you sit at your desk all day.” The NYPD Intelligence Division had to fight tooth and nail with the FBI to obtain access to relevant classified documents, before turning to the Department of Defense for help constructing a secure facility the NYPD could call home.

Law enforcement officers are the most likely to be first responders and are the first line of defense in a terrorist attack, yet police departments often receive

less funding, which could be used for counterterrorism training, than other government agencies or military units – which only interact with terrorists in extreme

situations. By way of comparison, the 2010 budget for the Department of Defense was \$693 billion and the budget for the National Intelligence Program was \$49.8 billion in 2009, while the 2010 budget for the entire NYPD was only \$4.3 billion. Combating terrorism is a multifaceted task, but it can be made more effective by adding knowledgeable analysts to enhance law enforcement officers’ investigations, increase

counterterrorism training, and working with the general public and local businesses. Further, more police departments should create outreach programs like NYPD’s Operation Nexus to interface with the general public. A final suggestion is to break down the communication barriers between the FBI, local police departments, and national level intelligence agencies which hinder effective counterterrorism efforts.

Law enforcement agencies can only treat the symptoms of terrorism, while policy makers in Washington are responsible for handling the causes of terrorism. Despite the division of responsibility, law enforcement agencies need to understand the root causes of terrorism to combat terrorism more effectively and prevent the next attack.

- Andrew McConnell,  
*International Affairs '11*

## Computer Geek Piracy

### File sharing and the law

When a person hears the word “pirate,” what is the first image to come to mind? Is it a swarthy, unkempt scalawag with a parrot on his shoulder and cutlass at his hip? Maybe it is that of a rugged individual searching for the treasure of a lifetime. Others might even say it is Johnny Depp embarking on a wild adventure with wacky hijinks. Certainly, few think of the lowly computer geek, sitting at a terminal and typing away at a keyboard. However, in the twenty-first century, the computer geek is the most common type of pirate. The increas-

ing prevalence of computer piracy and file sharing, particularly of software, music, and movies, has led to an increase in legal efforts directed at quashing this practice.

In order to understand how file sharing and computer piracy is affecting the legal arena, it is important to note that file sharing is and has always been a large part of the Internet as a whole. The many changes in file sharing technology since its introduction in 1971 have made it far more accessible to the average person, and many use it for legitimate activities, such as software updates and

the like. Unfortunately, with the good also comes the bad; file sharing has made it easier to circulate material that is protected by copyright, which is where most efforts of antipiracy forces are directed towards.

Under pressure from organizations such as the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), and the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI), governments around the world have scrambled to develop ways of dealing with piracy

in all its forms. By far the largest method that has been developed is modification or adoption of new laws specifically formulated to deal with this issue. These laws have ranged from treaties on the international level, to simpler yet no less potent ones on the domestic fronts of several countries.

Over the last few years, several states have independently adopted laws specifically targeted at illegal file sharers. One of the most prominent of these laws is the French HADOPI law. HADOPI is an example of what is known as a “three-strikes law”; essentially, a person has three chances to cease illegal file sharing before they are forcibly banned from Internet access via the use of a governmental blacklist. The problem being raised with HADOPI, however, is that the language of the law does not require outright proof; rather, a person need only be accused of piracy to merit a warning. This has led to an outcry from public interest groups, the reaction of which will be discussed later in this article.

Elsewhere, laws such as the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) in the United States form the backbone of antipiracy activities. The DMCA contains provisions directed at protecting copyrighted material; the most important of these provisions is something known as the anti-circumvention rule. Essentially, this clause makes it illegal to make personal backups of anything containing digital rights management (also known as DRM; software in this category is meant to circumvent piracy attempts), and flies in the face of the facts established in

existing US copyright law. Organizations looking to protect their products in the US often wield the DMCA as a cudgel, filing lawsuit after lawsuit until their target backs down.

At the international level, the proverbial 800-pound gorilla is the secretive Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement. After laying the groundwork in 2007, several countries around the world (including the United States, Japan, New Zealand, and several members of the European Union) have continued to meet and refine the document over the last few years. Unfortunately for advocates of file sharing technology, the exact details of the treaty are still secret, and this makes it difficult to

know exactly what is going on. Leaks to organizations such as WikiLeaks as well as to media groups like Ars Technica have revealed some provisions contained within the treaty. These include pro-DRM clauses and the implementation of three-strikes’ laws, amongst other measures. News of this treaty has been received poorly by privacy advocates

opposing such actions, and some have even referred to it as applying US beliefs on copyright to the larger international community.

Reactions to the laws mentioned above and others like them have been fierce and spirited. Organizations such as the Electronic Frontier Foundation have stood out against the methods currently being used, and have even gone so far as to call them “a serious threat to public policy.” This belief is based on the idea that draconian antipiracy laws such as the DMCA curtail the doctrine of fair use, which has been part and parcel of copyright law since its inception. In addition, such laws theoretically interfere with existing cyber-security statutes, as well

as a perceived hindering of competition and innovation in the marketplace. Lastly, there has been an outcry over the invocation of the DMCA and other laws in several respects, particularly regarding overuse by those organizations that lobbied for its passage.

There is some hope for opponents of these laws. A movement in Europe known as the Piratpartiet (Swedish for “Pirate Party”) has arisen on the political



scene. In only four short years, they and other regional groups bearing their name have gained a foothold in 26 different countries based on their platform of copyright reform, patent reform, and emphasis on privacy rights. What is even more impressive is that the Swedish variant of the Pirate Party garnered enough support within the European Union to acquire a seat in the European Parliament. Other grassroots movements have sprung up in the wake of the Pirate Party's development, and they have shown few signs of slowing down.

Unfortunately, however, these are only small bulwarks against the current tide of lobbyist groups and powerful organizations pushing for additional tools with which to combat file sharing. Urgent reforms need to be done for the problems with file sharing to be fully addressed. Firstly, copyright law needs to be reformed,

and in a drastic fashion. Current ideas regarding copyright are rooted in pre-Internet thinking and have not adjusted for the times. As such, they are not easily applied to modern situations, and invariably result in incorrect or improper application.

For the above to be effectively performed, laws such as the DMCA, HADOPI, and the secret ACTA treaty must be repealed or replaced with ones that more sensibly protect both artists and consumers. This latter group is often punished unfairly due to the actions of illegal sharers, who reap all the benefits without any of the drawbacks, such as DRM technology. The laws are ineffective at best, and are malicious at worst. They help no one and harm everyone.

The final recommendation, and the most important one, is the fact that more people need to get involved, whether through their

voices, their wallets, or their votes. Right now, this is not a big issue, but things like this have a way of snowballing. Eventually, it will become too big to control, and that will not be an acceptable result for anyone. The more people that get involved, the more coverage the issue gets, and the more discussion takes place. With any luck, a common sense solution would result from such discussion, and a better result would occur.

Although the laws regarding file sharing and internet piracy are still nascent, they are rapidly becoming a relevant issue with the still-increasing pervasiveness of the Internet. Action must be taken, and taken soon, so that a decent solution may be found to the problems arising from file sharing. It is the hope of many that such a solution is possible, and implemented quickly enough to make a difference.

- Paul Hanley,  
Political Science '12



## Massachusetts Midterm Election Results

**Governor:** Patrick (Democrat, 48.4%)

**House of Representatives:** Olver (Democrat, 60.1%), Neal (Democrat, 57.3%), McGovern (Democrat, 56.5%), Frank (Democrat, 53.9%), Tsongas (Democrat, 54.9%), Tierney (Democrat, 56.9%), Markey (Democrat, 65.9%), Capuano (Democrat, uncontested), Lynch (Democrat, 68.1%) & Keating (Democrat, 46.9%)

**Major Ballot Measures:** Eliminate sales tax on alcohol passed with 52.0% of the vote • Require full completion of permits for building subsidized housing failed • Reduce sales tax to 3% failed

**Secretary of State:** Bill Galvin, the Democratic Incumbent with 64.5% of the vote

**Attorney General:** Martha Coakley, the Democratic Incumbent with 62.8% of the vote.

- As reported by the New York Times, Nov. 2010

## The Microfinance Split

### Reharnessing the good of micro loans

Poverty can be eradicated by 2050 as proposed by the Millennium Development Goals, according to Muhammad Yunus. Founder of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, he believes that microcredit is the answer. Lending small amounts of money to people who are too poor or marginalized to qualify for bank loans in order to further their small businesses is his solution to eradicate poverty. This social business model is growing in popularity in locales as diverse as Mexico, Brazil, South Africa, Bangladesh, and Indonesia. There are even a few microfinance institutions (MFIs) in the United States. However, as the industry continues to grow, many, including Yunus himself, have doubts as to the direction in which it is heading. While microcredit is not charity (Grameen Bank is a for-profit institution), Yunus argues that profiting off of the poor is immoral. That said, two MFIs stand on the opposite side of a dividing line among the microfinance world. Banco Compartamos in Mexico and SKS in India are the only two MFIs in the world to have held initial public offerings (IPOs), meaning that they have made the transition from NGOs to commercialized banks that are publicly traded. Yunus says that this direction ought not to be furthered, considering that these banks profit off of the poor and directly contradict the social mission of microcredit in general. The chief executives of these banks argue that commercialization is the only way to greatly increase

equity by attracting investors who ultimately fund their lending practices.

Mexico's Banco Compartamos is the first MFI to hold an IPO. They argue that their struggle to procure funding for their bank warrants the shift. Begun as a non-profit organization, Compartamos transitioned first to commercial banking before holding this IPO. "It's marvelous to have one creditor but it's marvelous to have one million creditors," Carlos Labarthe, one of the two chief executives of Compartamos said, "and that's where we really start to change the face of opportunity." The "Two Carloses," as the two chiefs of Compartamos are known in the microfinance world, argue that the more investment capital they can find, the more clients they can reach with credit. Similarly, SKS held their IPO as recently as August of 2010. This offering was surrounded by controversy, as a wave of suicides by SKS borrowers in Andhra Pradesh in India, the capital of microfinance in India and home of SKS headquarters, had critics wondering. SKS gives similar reasoning for their commercialization. Vikram Akula, founder and chief of SKS, at one point considered taking out an extra mortgage on his own home in order to raise the capital necessary to grow the MFI at a rapid rate. This rapid scaling is the key to his success, and the centerpiece of his business model. Both SKS and Compartamos, like most MFIs, have goals of reaching

millions of clients. This lofty social mission is tough to achieve rapidly without high levels of investor capital to start up. "Many believe that microfinance should be a 'social business,' meaning investors should get their investment back but no profits," SKS promotes on their website. However, "SKS has a different view. If the microfinance industry is going to provide the estimated INR 2,399.35 billion (USD 51.4 billion) of credit needed by the poor, it must tap commercial capital markets – and that means structuring microfinance so that investors can expect a return on their investment." Proponents of the commercialization method argue that Yunus' Grameen Bank, founded in 1976 and which is self-sustaining, has had time to grow at a slow and steady rate. They argue that commercialization is the only way to fairly compete in the world market.

But at what price? Sky-high interest rates lead critics of the commercialization approach such as Yunus to cringe. While interest rates in the microcredit world are traditionally high due to higher maintenance costs than the traditional banking system, Compartamos especially charges usurious rates. Because MFIs go to their clients to collect payments and to disburse loans, lend minute amounts at a time, and face a higher cost of credit themselves in order to finance their lending, interest rates that are considered "fair" average around 20 percent. Compartamos charges close to a 100 percent annual interest rate.

While the Two Carloses argue that their clients are willing to pay that price, citing their



Photo Courtesy of Shawn (The Unclutred Project)/Creative Commons

high retention rate as well as high maintenance costs, critics disagree. Yunus argues that demand for microcredit does not behave in the same manner as “normal” economics would suggest. Microcredit borrowers are ineligible to borrow from traditional borrowers in most cases making microcredit their only option. These borrowers are also often uneducated, which makes it difficult for them to decide between options. When it is a question of survival, microcredit borrowers will usually opt for this chance.

In terms of attracting large investments, Grameen calls both Compartamos’ and SKS’s bluffs. Grameen is more successful, reaching more borrowers and with more branches than either of the latter, without having sought investment or having held an IPO. The secret to Grameen’s success is the difference between microcredit and microfinance. While credit means solely lending, the practice of microfinance incorpo-

rates savings and insurance products as well. By accepting cash deposits into savings accounts (still on the same micro scale), Grameen is self-sustainable. The inflow of cash enables Grameen’s branches to have a large enough store of cash to be able to disburse payments without ever borrowing money. Grameen expanded at enormous rates, now reaching an incredible 62 percent penetration rate of the poor in Bangladesh.

MFIs that are not commercialized banks, often referred to as NGO-MFIs, often have trouble obtaining sufficient funding to expand. Rapid growth is the goal of any MFI, with missions to end poverty coupled with a global “Bottom Billion” (according to Paul Collier’s titular book) of individuals living under the poverty line of \$1.25 per person per day. SKS Microfinance, an Indian commercialized MFI, claimed growing pains before commercialization and their recent IPO. The microcredit market in Bolivia is said to

be at capacity, and the industry there features fierce competition, similar to the competition which is causing cycles of suicides in Andhra Pradesh, India. The leading NGO-MFI is Grameen Bank, which was founded as a non-profit organization and quickly became incorporated under the auspices of the government-run Bengali Central Bank. Grameen funded its early expansion with loans from the Central Bank and others, quickly becoming independent and taking their last loan in 1995. After this point, Grameen was self-sustainable. The MFI lent cash fully supported by deposits by the same borrowers. According to Grameen, 150% of outstanding loans are financed by deposits. This is what constitutes microfinance as opposed to microcredit; finance incorporates savings accounts and other forms of financial tools for the poor. Grameen even provides a life insurance policy. NGO-MFIs cannot be considered “non-profit” because Grameen and its affiliates do bring in profit. However, because Grameen is self-sustaining, it lacks the necessity felt by commercialized MFIs to seek investor capital. Grameen’s village banking model utilizes social collateral rather than traditional banking methods of requiring monetary or material collateral; borrowers must form groups of five in order to take out a loan. The pressure from the group is collateral enough to make repayment rates high, with Grameen’s repayment rate at 97%. Commercialized banks often begin as NGO-MFIs.

Further, the secondary IPO that Compartamos held did not benefit the company directly. The sale cost the company a large sum

of money while providing profit only to the investors who sold their shares. The impoverished borrowers saw not one penny of income from the sale. The IPO which SKS held only a few months ago was similar. For SKS, analysts doubted whether the company would be profitable enough to exist on the open market.

Seeking private investment may be the easier route for an MFI to take, but as Yunus says, it demeans the image and product that the organization is attempting to put out. While microfinance is meant to raise the poor out of poverty, equally important to this goal is the image and awareness that high profile MFIs like Grameen, Compartamos, and SKS bring to the subject of poverty. In beginning the debate over whether or not MFIs should profit off of the poor, commercialization detracts in a major way from their own goals. Whether profiting off of the

poor is immoral or not is relevant only in the eye of the beholder. In bringing this debate to the forefront, Compartamos and SKS simply highlight and, in a way, confirm well-intentioned people's fears about microfinance robbing the poor rather than enriching them. This deters the popular movement from providing these services to poor people globally in favor of a better solution.

The microfinance industry will be able to better achieve their collective mission by refocusing on the eradication of poverty. What commercialized MFIs such as Compartamos and SKS fail to do is to measure their impact in a qualitative way. While high repayment rates look good on paper, they do not tell the whole story. Microcredit providers must assure that borrowers are actually being raised out of poverty, and not

simply coming back for loan after loan, falling farther and farther into a debt cycle. Interest rates, while held high by the costs of the

[They] in a way confirm well-intentioned people's fears about microfinance robbing the poor rather than enriching them.

industry, must become reasonable and fair. Compartamos and SKS could learn from Yunus and his Grameen Bank and strive to find better means to finance their loans than private investors seeking high returns. The Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty by 2015 and eradicating it by 2050 are achievable if the microfinance industry does not lose focus.

- Catia Sharp,  
*IAF/Env. Studies '13*

## Why the EU Needs Turkey

### A case for accession

The Republic of Turkey stands at the crossroads of the Eastern and Western worlds. It is a land bridge between Europe and Asia, and through it flows the major water route between Russia and the Middle East. Its location has always put Turkey at the center of cultural origin and intercourse. For hundreds of years the Ottomans Turks ruled a vast empire that stretched from Algiers to the gates of Vienna - an empire that at one point threatened to overrun Europe. Its influence in the world fell suddenly after World War I

but since the founding of the Republic of Turkey by revolutionary Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1922 there has been formidable Turkish influence in the surrounding regions. In recent decades Turkey has slowly re-emerged as an economic and military powerhouse with the geographic and cultural position to bridge the East and West in the modern age. Today, Turkey's bid to join the European Union (EU) has raised speculation on the implications Turkish EU membership would have for the region, the EU, and the world.

Old prejudice dies slowly. There is suspicion among some EU members that Turkey is not "European" enough to be admitted to the Union. But in a way, Turkey's bid for EU membership raises the fundamental question: in the modern age, what is the common identity and purpose of this diverse collection of states that waged war on one another with such devotion not so long ago? The future success of the European Union may well depend on its ability to rise above old differences and see Turkey as a valuable partner in facing

the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century.

Officially, Turkey has been an Associate Member of the EU since the 1963 “Ankara Agreement” set the stage for economic integration between Turkey and the European Economic Community (EEC), through tariff quotas, free movement of labor, and EEC financial assistance to Turkey. On April 14, 1987 Turkey submitted its application for EU membership and was subsequently acknowledged as an official candidate for full membership on December 12, 1999. Negotiations on Turkey’s viability as a member state opened on October 3, 2005, and have been taking place internally, among current member states, and bilaterally, between Brussels and Ankara. While there remain many potential stumbling blocks in the negotiations, full EU membership for Turkey would serve the Union’s interests in several ways and it should make every reasonable effort to make it happen.

Turkey has long maintained a strong and vigilant military. Its strength could fortify EU security in several unstable regions that border Turkey and are potentially hostile to European interests. Examples are the independent democracies emerging from a crumbling Yugoslavia, an ever turbulent Middle East, and the ongoing Nagorno-Karabakh territorial dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Turkey’s accession would give greater regional military influence to the EU. Turkey boasts the 10th largest military in the world and is the 2nd largest contributor to NATO (behind the United States).



Turkey’s proximity to conflict areas combined with its standing military might render it an undeniable resource to the European Union’s military strategy and capabilities. For the EU to deny membership to a country that would clearly embolden its important military influence in the most troubled regions of the world would be to thumb its nose at very real and pressing security concerns.

Turkey’s geographic location also predisposes it to play an important role in securing the EU’s future energy supplies. A key element of this energy security is the Nabucco natural gas pipeline proposed to run from the Caucasus and Middle East regions through Turkey and the Balkans to Austria. This pipeline would provide the EU a direct reliable gas supply link and reduce its dependency on current unreliable pipelines running from Russia through the Ukraine. The precariousness of this link was all too apparent in the winter of 2009, when Russian – Ukraine politics shut off gas

supplies to eastern Europe during a period of sub-zero temperatures.

Accession of Turkey to the EU would help facilitate the construction of the Nabucco pipeline by quelling regional conflict in the Caucasus as well as soothing relations with Middle East suppliers, none of which have been confirmed as suppliers to the pipeline, but yet whose contribution is paramount to its success. A stable and secure European Union must have a stable and secure energy supply, a reality more easily realized in an EU with Turkey as a member.

Perhaps the most substantial benefit to the European Union of Turkey’s accession would manifest itself economically. Turkey has been one of the fastest growing economies in the world in recent years. Throughout the eighties, nineties and early 2000s Turkey was a world leader in economic growth and was often boasting growth above 6% of GDP for consecutive years. Economists have estimated that Turkey will become Europe’s third largest economy, behind Russia and the UK, by 2050. It has suffered along with other developed nations in the recent global financial crisis, but Turkey shows signs of weathering the storm better than other European economies. Not a single Turkish bank failed in the financial meltdown of 2008-9.

With strong manufacturing and agricultural sectors combined with a young and growing population, Turkey has attracted large amounts of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), twenty-two billion dollars in 2007 alone; and the US Department of Commerce has recognized Turkey as one of the

fastest emerging economies in the world with \$225 billion in exports this year. Turkey's strong, promising economy combined with its young labor force is exactly what an aging European economy needs to resume growth and for the EU to sustain an influential voice on the future world economic stage.

Apart from economic gain, Turkey's accession would also bring the EU cultural benefits. Turkey presents a unique opportunity for Muslim-Western integration because while Turkey's population is ninety-eight percent Muslim, it maintains a strong tradition of secular democracy comparable to the philosophy of European secular democracies. While some member states view Turkey's overwhelming Muslim population as a source of its incompatibility with a historically Christian Europe, others see the integration of Turkey and the EU as an important gesture of peace to the Muslim world. According to the Gallup Poll's "Islam and the West: Annual Report of the State of Dialogue," while most Muslims around the world respect the West, they also feel that Westerners do not reciprocate this respect and, indeed, polling shows that a minority of Westerners have respect for Muslim culture and the Muslim world. Turkey's acceptance into the EU would not only be a symbolic gesture of respect but it would also bring Western and Islamic cultures closer together to facilitate mutual understanding and cohesion.

Turkey maintains strong

cultural and diplomatic ties with Middle Eastern Islamic nations. The Turkish foreign service has played a major role in facilitating dialogue between Iran and the West. For example, in November of this year Iran declared that it was ready to commence nuclear talks in Ankara with six world powers, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany. Having a member state Iran trusts and respects would provide substantial diplomatic power to the European Union. Turkey's accession presents a unique opportunity for the EU to build a bridge between Western and Islamic cultures and doing so would provide a solid foundation on which to build strong and stable Western-Islamic relationship in the future.

The opposition of certain powerful member states to Turkey's accession to the European Union may eventually be seen as an indulgence in separate na-

**For the EU to deny membership to a country that would clearly embolden its important military influence in the most troubled regions of the world would be to thumb its nose at very real and pressing security concerns.**

tional interests and prejudices at the expense of European projects. The two most influential member states, France and Germany, are opposed to Turkey's entrance for nationalistic reasons. Both are wary of the integration of Turkish traditions. While writing about remarks made by German Chancellor Angela Merkle, commentator Petr Morvay declared :

*Multiculti was doomed to failure from the outset . . . Above all because it negated the fundamental cultural differences. ... ultimately what is more important is what immigrants are talking about and which values they believe in. The problem is not that Christian churches and mosques stand side by side in a European city, but what is preached in these houses of God: love for one's neighbors even if they hold different beliefs, or hate. Multiculti is a failure because a number of immigrants have no sympathy for the democratic system, for the freedom of the individual, for equal rights for women and for laws that apply equally to all. A consensus on these common values is however a precondition for any kind of multicultural coexistence.*

Furthermore, a seemingly insurmountable Turkey-Cyprus conflict threatens to derail the negotiations all together as Cyprus itself is a member state and therefore holds veto power over Turkey's accession.

Nevertheless, Europe has much to gain from Turkey's strength at the beginning of this new century – to secure its energy future, maintain strong regional alliances, to ensure the EU's competitiveness in the global economy, and to facilitate constructive discourse with the Islamic world. Just as Turkey helped bridge East and West for millennia, the European Union should come to see it as its own bridge to the future, a bridge it cannot afford to ignore.

- Cameron Lyons,  
*Political Science, '12*

## Indeed, A Part of America: Americans who believe in Islam

*"I should like to assure you, my Islamic friends, that under the American Constitution, under American tradition, and in American hearts, this Center, this place of worship, is just as welcome as could be a similar edifice of any other religion. Indeed, America would fight with her whole strength for your right to have here your own church and worship according to your own conscience. This concept is indeed a part of America, and without that concept we would be something else than what we are."* -President Dwight Eisenhower; Remarks at Ceremonies Opening the Islamic Center. June 28, 1957

A common theme in the Bush Administration's "War on Terror" was bringing freedom to oppressed peoples. The Bush Administration advertised the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan to the American people as a means of bringing freedom to these two predominantly Muslim societies. As we continue to fight two wars and spend trillions of our tax dollars for the freedom of Muslims overseas, can we not afford the same freedoms to Muslim-Americans at home? While an extreme minority of Muslims has been known to commit acts of terror against Western targets, most of the world's 1.5 billion Muslims work, worship, and live in peace – especially in America. Americans of faith (and those without) have a responsibility to accept Muslim-Americans as equals in citizenship and dignity.

Since the horrific events of 9/11, Muslim-Americans have been placed under immense scru-

tiny by their neighbors, politicians, and law enforcement officials. Suspicion and fear should not be factored into how we deal with fellow citizens. The First Amendment protects the religious practice of all Americans. Unfortunately, in recent months there have been calls from the Tea Party and others to apply extraordinary conditions for Muslims attempting to build new Islamic centers and mosques and questioning the ability of Muslims to be patriotic citizens like Christians, Jews and others. At mosques in California and Maine vandals have put severed pig heads at the entrances of mosques (the pig is considered unclean in Islam, as in Judaism) and in Tennessee arsonists set fire to the construction site of a new mosque being built there. And of course there is the national upheaval over the proposed Park51 Islamic Center in lower Manhattan. Radical opponents of toleration of Muslim-Americans accuse Muslims of supporting terrorism, seeking to undermine Christianity and to covert all of America to Islam. Many of these activists see President Barack Obama as part of a supposed Muslim conspiracy to destroy America – and use the fact that his father was a Muslim to attack his legitimacy, as if Islam itself is a stain on American identity. These double standards and anti-Muslim sentiments damage America by undermining its place as a safe haven of religious freedom.

Despite religious liberty being one of the tenets of the

Constitution, American history is littered with stories of both religious tolerance and intolerance. Modern opponents of religious liberty for American Muslims seem to ignore the good example our Founders. In 1763, while the American colonies were still under the auspices of the British crown, a synagogue was established as a place of worship for the Jewish colonists of Newport, Rhode Island. The synagogue was named Touro Synagogue and still stands today in the same location as it has for almost 250 years. The Touro Synagogue would not only become a place of worship for the Jewish people, but also a community center for the people of Newport for years to come. George Washington came to the Touro Synagogue in 1781 to meet with his French counterparts to plan the last battles of the Revolutionary War. After the war the synagogue was used as a meeting place for Rhode Island's General Assembly, State Supreme Court and the town of Newport, making it an important place in Rhode Island's history.

Rhode Island itself has a history of religious tolerance going back to the colony's founding. Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island, had fled Massachusetts Bay Colony because of the Puritans' religious intolerance to his own and others' faith and beliefs. Williams founded Rhode Island as a place for those seeking to practice their beliefs without fearing retribution from others. This concept would be carried on after the colonial era as an American ideal and would be added into our Constitution as the First Amendment. Other nations around the world would follow our lead and instill this concept

into their own laws and practices.

There are many other stories of repression that often go untold in our national narrative. Northeastern University Professor Steven Vallas, Chairperson of the Sociology and Anthropology Department, pointed to Irish and Italian Catholics experiences of strong discrimination in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. These groups were feared for three things, “rum, Romanism, and rebellion” by their Anglo-Saxon counterparts, said Vallas. Vallas also acknowledged that Irish Catholics were not allowed to build their own churches in Boston until the 1870s, and that nativism has existed throughout our history. “It’s not really a linear process, it simply takes time and [it] depends on the timing, condition and economic status of the country,” said Vallas.

Today, after several waves of immigration to the United States from various parts of the world, the debate over the right to build religious institutions wherever one may see fit is under attack. Park51, a proposed Muslim community center that would house a swimming pool, culinary school and mosque in an abandoned Burlington Coat Factory building, has left Muslim Americans to defend their rights and their place in American society. Park51, formerly known as Cordoba House, and better known as the “Ground Zero Mosque,” became a hot political issue that dominated the nation’s headlines through the latter half of the summer. With the midterm elections, politicians from the right and left used the issue to sway voters by coming out against the proposed community center. “It just reeks of the politics

of fear,” said Vallas on the issue.

Despite all the efforts made since 9/11 by the Muslim-American community to promote tolerance of Islam, it faces an uphill struggle before they can be fully accepted as a part of the American mainstream. The portrayals of Islam and Muslims in popular media often fail to help Americans understand what Islam is and who their Muslim compatriots are. More often than not, the stereotypical image the average American receives of Islam is one of violence and hate for non-Muslims, discrimination against women and hostility toward science which all go against the basic tenets of American-Muslims’ faith. One of the key tenets of Islam is giving zakat or alms; news reports tend to securitize this practice by focusing intently on instances of terrorists using Muslim charities to finance their activities. While figures in a CNN/Opinion Research survey suggests that approximately 70% of Americans are against the “Ground Zero Mosque,” one must question the type of information people have

### The Muslim-American community [faces] an uphill struggle before they can be fully accepted.

been fed or led to believe about the issue. One rarely sees American Muslims represented in public debates on the question – an imam here, an activist there, counterterrorism experts and pundits talking about rather than to Muslims. Stereotypical broadcasts in the media have hurt American Muslims

in their efforts to grow as citizens of America. Many Muslim-Americans are stunned at the treatment they receive in public. According to a 2007 Pew survey, the approximately 6 million Muslim-Americans work hard, are well educated, and believe their communities are excellent places to live. Although a plurality of those Muslims polled saw issues like discrimination, prejudice, “being viewed as terrorists,” and stereotyping as the most significant issues facing their community, the poll showed that American Muslims are, nevertheless, only slightly less satisfied with life in America than the general population by massive majorities, with the young being more satisfied than the old. Of those surveyed 71% agreed that they “could get ahead in America if they are willing to work hard.” This survey helps to prove that Muslim-Americans, like others, are dedicated members of American society and adhere to many of the same values as the mainstream - “Middle class and mostly mainstream,” read the report’s subtitle. Despite their American ideals, Muslim-American

have had trouble building their houses of worship and community centers all across America with the “Ground Zero Mosque” bringing about a whirlwind of politicized controversy. Angry activist groups have attempted to intimidate Muslims through protests and by using the instruments of local government to restrict mosque construction. There is ample room for pessimism about the possibility of greater acceptance for Muslim-Americans. But there is also an imperative

for Americans to act proactively to build a more positive atmosphere for Muslims in America.

Professor Jocelyn Cesari, director of the Islam in the West Program at Harvard University, had much to say about what Muslims should do to be accepted in Western societies. Cesari listed past Muslim-American figures such as Mohammad Ali and Malcolm X as having brought Islam into the public sphere, but said that today's average American needs another larger-than-life persona to help Islam assimilate into the mainstream and make Muslims more relatable. She cited pop culture and the media as areas that American Muslims needed to be involved in to rid themselves of the "terrorist" and "extremist" labels. Cesari also pointed to the economic downturn as a reason for the recent upswing in anti-Muslim sentiments, a well-documented phenomenon in other waves of anti-minority sentiment. Muslims need to work to engage other Americans more directly in the media and everyday life in order to humanize wider society's perception of Muslims. "What Muslims need is a *Cosby Show* of their own," recommended Cesari. Polls have shown that Americans who have met Muslims, on average, a more favorable opinion of Muslim-Americans than those that have never interacted with Muslims.

Cesari has been studying Muslim minorities living in Western nations while at Harvard and has published several books on Islam and Muslims in today's modern era. She believes that conditions were tolerable for Muslims in America a while after 9/11 because of the grassroots ef-



*Photo Courtesy of Paul Stein/Creative Commons*

forts of local Muslim communities to educate others about their religion. She now believes, however, that something needs to be done by Muslim-Americans on a national stage to quell the anger directed at them. "There's still a lot of work to do to build an unapologetic discourse on who's responsible for terrorist attacks," she said. Muslims, both religious leaders and laypeople, need to continue to work creatively and aggressively to separate themselves from any association with terrorism, extremism or ideologically driven violence. While Muslim-Americans are aware of their position, many other Americans do not get to hear from them and rely on talking

heads for information about Islam. An American Muslim has to ask him or herself: Do I want Glenn Beck to tell my neighbors about Islam or should I do it myself?

This fall, NPR columnist Juan Williams appeared on Fox News and stated that whenever he boarded a plane and saw an individual wearing Muslim "garb" he got worried and nervous. Williams was fired for his comments, and however offensive his comments may have been, they do reflect how many Americans feel about Muslim-Americans – for now. This shows that much work still needs to be done on both sides to promote efforts of understanding and tolerance. Park51 can become

the symbol of a new America, an America that accepts all its citizens and treats them equally under the rule of law. New York's Mayor Michael Bloomberg's has commented that although we may not always agree with our neighbors Americans have an obliga-

tion to live with our neighbors, "in mutual respect and tolerance." In today's political climate, Muslim-Americans cannot afford to be passive in building a community committed to religious tolerance. They must struggle to be recognized as Americans on equal footing.

Their conviction must be, as one Boston-area Muslim-American leader said recently: "I am not a Muslim living in America. I am an American who believes in Islam."

-Omar Duwaji,  
Accounting '11

## Book Review:

### Big Girls Don't Cry: The Election that Changed Everything for American Women by Rebecca Traister

*Big Girls Don't Cry: The Election That Changed Everything for American Women* by Rebecca Traister is a thorough analysis of the roles women played in the groundbreaking election cycle of 2008. Traister examines the actions and impact of all the obvious participants, including Hillary Clinton, Sarah Palin, and Michelle Obama, as well as those whose contributions to the election process are often overlooked, such as Katie Couric, Tina Fey, Elizabeth Edwards, and many others.

Traister examines and explains in a new light the causes and implications of everything from Clinton's failed campaign to Katie Couric's interview with Sarah Palin. By discussing her own experiences as a young feminist, Traister provides a view of the election that is strongly compatible with and directed towards this generation. She emphasizes the generational discord that permeated the various campaigns and defends against the attacks of political ignorance and disinterest often leveled at young people. Also, while Traister clearly states her partisan views, the

book provides a refreshing look at the elections that someone of any partisan standpoint could find interesting.

Traister explains Clinton's win in the New Hampshire primary in a particularly interesting way. This completely unexpected win in New Hampshire occurred immediately after Clinton's supposed crying jag, when her voice broke and her eyes welled up while she was answering a supporter's personal question, "How do you keep upbeat and so wonderful?" Many media figures and politicians, especially men, insisted she had been hysterically sobbing and promptly began reveling in what

Traister always goes one step further in her analysis than much of the mainstream media.

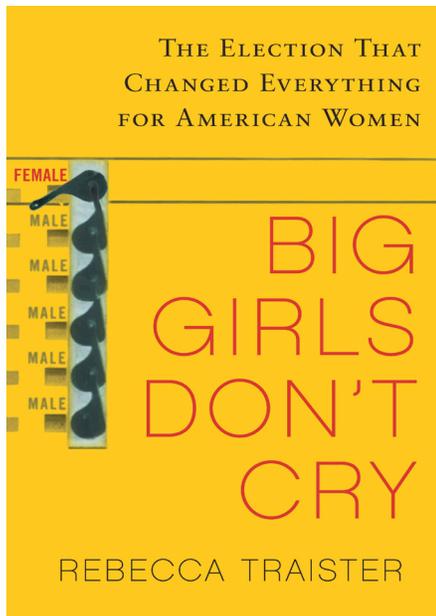
they felt to be Clinton's imminent downfall. Traister carefully describes how after this uproar, many women hoped Hillary would win not simply because she was a woman, but instead because they were so appalled by the horrible treatment some politicians, mem-

bers of the media, and other misogynist opponents subjected her to. Traister puts it perfectly in saying, "those who were roused to Clinton's defense were roused not because she was a girl, but because she was being treated like one." The point here, like most of the analysis in the book, seems so obvious, and yet it is rarely considered in mainstream discourse. Traister always goes one step further in her analysis than much of the mainstream media and provides clever new explanations for events that the media has widely covered but seldom fully explained.

After reading *Big Girls Don't Cry*, I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to sit down and talk with Ms. Traister when she came to Northeastern to speak about her book.

**What do you think about Palin's continued presence in the media? ...**

*I don't make any bones about my partisan commitment, so I disagree with Sarah Palin on every single possible topic. However, I do think that she represents some of the changing roles for politicians... There was an enormous amount of conventional wisdom that said if a woman was going to run (not that there was a real model for this)...*



she should hide her femininity. And when Hillary did that, it didn't work out so well for her... Palin has defied every bit of conventional wisdom by everything she's done... Historically, to quit your gubernatorial term halfway through means the end of your political career. And here we are a year later, and she's the person most people want to talk about.... She's utterly unpredictable; she's absolutely as advertised 'maverick-y'... It's totally remarkable... One of the things we have to come to grips with- and this is a really important issue- is that when you're shut out of power... you get to come up with a big fantasy about what [having a female leader] would be like... Those expectations for perfection really got in the way of Hillary running... we wanted women to be better. And in fact, if we were going to get closer to actual political parity, which is still way down the road, what we're going to have to come to grips with is that female candidates are going to come in just

as many varieties as male candidates... And in some ways, having figures like Palin and O'Donnell... this is part of what it's going to look like if we actually one day do have political equality, gender equality in politics.

**If you were editing or writing this book again, now, what would you add or change?** ... [I think I] would've amplified something that I've been feeling a lot recently, which is my own disappointment in the Democratic Party for not better addressing its women and better offering something to compete with the Mama Grizzly, 'We're the party of women' narrative that's being thrown out there by the Republicans in a total rebranding/marketing ploy designed to address a gender gap. You know, because women vote for Democrats way more often than they vote for Republicans. And so the Republicans are trying to dress themselves up as the party of women, and this is completely false on a million levels: policy, ideology, numbers... This crazy Republican notion that somehow the Republicans are the party of women, and Democrats, who have a female base, who have tons more female elected officials, are not saying, 'Wait a minute.' They're not presenting themselves as they could be. They're not saying, 'We're the party that passed the Lilly Ledbetter legislation, we're the party that made being a woman not a preexisting condition in health-care.' They're not promoting their female candidates. They're not throwing their money, support, and the spotlight on female candidates... Because [Democrats have] been labeled the 'female party,'

and they understand this not to be a compliment- the 'mommy party'... they're constantly trying to masculinize themselves. And right now I feel that... there's an appetite for female leadership, an appetite for rhetoric about empowering women. This is a changing country, and the Democrats are totally missing the boat...

Big Girls Don't Cry summarizes Clinton's position throughout the primaries, stating that "like Harry Potter's Hermione Granger or Margaret from Dennis the Menace, Hillary was being portrayed as the hand-in-the-air, know-it-all girl, grating and unpopular in her determination to prove herself." This really sums up a hard-to-place but aggravating phenomenon. So often, in so many different situations, the cool new guy who just waltzed onto the scene beats the smart, well-qualified girl who really wants the job. This demonstrates yet another example of Traister's ability to provide clever analysis and connect with her audience, especially in the younger generation. It's hard to imagine an older political analyst comparing a politician to a character from Harry Potter, and yet when Traister does so, it makes perfect sense. Analysis provides the basis of the book, but Big Girls Don't Cry is prevented from becoming just another polemic by providing a fresh and contemporary take on America's politics. What really sets Big Girls Don't Cry apart in a completely new way is that this youthful point of view actually allows young people to identify with Traister, with politics, and with feminism in new and clever ways.

- Hayley Anderson,  
Biochemistry '15

## Point-Counterpoint: WikiLeaks, Secrecy and the Right to Know

### Open the Vault: Against Government Secrecy

We are fashioned to accept truths, to conform to the narrative of our leaders. To question the authority or legitimacy of the powers that be can be dangerous. Most people accept the rules set out for them by government, even if they do not fully understand or see the supposed benefits of the social contract. Instead of revolting against the regime, they allow their government to assault them in secret. Only a brave few dare to openly and actively challenge this status quo. And it is often those within the system who have the power to affect meaningful change by using their access to expose wrongdoing. This has occurred in modern American history, notably the 1972 Pentagon Papers scandal and more recently in the 2010 WikiLeaks controversy. The two incidents parallel each other remarkably and reveal a government in which people are expected to be naive puppets. This ideology of covert and authoritarian control has become a structural foundation for American government. Whistle-blowing provides the public with a window into the often opaque and detached world of our government.

For years the American government held its people's devotion, making it easy for them to sway the public into its corner. But authority began to unravel, and suspicion grew rampant with the rise of the secret security state. This came to a head during the Vietnam War era. Secret wars, illegal domestic spying by the CIA and the Watergate scandal caused much disillusionment. Nixon's illegal use of the Plumbers, an organization

de-signed to eliminate his political "enemies" was uncovered and highlighted how leaders in government put their personal ambitions before the public will. After these scandals and secrets came to light the people's trust in governmental organizations plummeted. In his article, "A Crisis of Moral Legitimacy," Daniel Yankelovich notes that "...by the second Nixon election in 1972 [...] a two-thirds majority withdrew confidence from national institutions, with the mood shifting from optimism to anxious uneasiness."

President Nixon categorized Daniel Ellsberg, a Department of Defense analyst at the time, as a danger. But to whom was he a danger? In 1972, Ellsberg handed a 7,000-page classified government history of the Vietnam War to the New York Times, whose editors immediately published the documents. In Gloria Goodale's July 2010 interview with Ellsberg, she noted that "...senior Pentagon and administration officials were misleading Americans about the course of the Vietnam War." The documents explained that even the government did not believe America would be successful in the securing South Vietnam. Daniel Ellsberg's challenge to the government's involvement in the war effort caused him to be labeled as a danger by our President. Nixon's Plumbers arranged to break into Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office to search for incriminating information about his mental state – choosing to break the law in the name of Nixon's political ambitions.

The release of the 7,000 Pentagon Papers foreshadowed a situation that occurred earlier this year when WikiLeaks publicized 91,000 classified documents

about US military involvement in Afghanistan. In Goodale's interview with Daniel Ellsberg, he describes the similarities between the two incidents. "[The documents] look very familiar to me. Different places and names, but they are describing a war that is as thoroughly stale-mated as was the case 40 years ago and more in Vietnam".

The comparison goes beyond the war. There was an immediate backlash from the government this time around as well. A New York Times profile of WikiLeaks's founder Julian Assange highlighted the Australian's personal eccentricities and quoted sources saying "he is not in his right mind" – reflective of the hostility that many pro-establishment voices hold for whistle-blowers. The U.S. government has even tried to shut down the WikiLeaks website and many former officials. Both the Pentagon Papers and WikiLeaks incidents are prime examples of a government disconnected from its people and attempting to manipulate them by controlling the flow of information.

It is illogical for documents to be concealed from the public even in an effort to protect national security. The public is entitled to accurate and truthful accounts of its government's activities. The government relies on its people, who fund it through taxes and defend it by volunteering to fight its wars. When an American gifts the government with his or her service, the least he or she deserves is truthful information on the mission that could take his or her life. Yet the political class too often displays arrogance and dis-trust of the average citizen. The authorities too often forget the importance of their pawns. Take for instance the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The Bush administration bullied opponents of the war as unpatriotic dupes who could not see the higher cause in

a war of aggression, while it used doctored intelligence to support its position and betrayed CIA officers like Valerie Plame in the process.

The critics who suggest that secrets are pertinent to ensure national security people fail or refuse to appreciate the implications secrecy has for our society. Take Everette E. Dennis. Dennis along with his coauthor, John C. Merrill wrote "Media Debates," a compilation of discussions topics in journalism. Dennis states that the right to know "is not an inalienable right guaranteed by the Constitution". Therefore, it is not a true right. John Merrill and Jane Kirtley disagree. Kirtley writes, "In any democracy, an informed public is vital. The public votes to elect officials who draft and execute their laws. Without information, citizens would risk being alienated from a government that becomes less and less accountable to them." This position is further cemented by Justice William O. Douglas's words, "Secrecy in government is fundamentally anti-democratic, perpetuating bureaucratic errors. Open debate and discussion of public issues are vital to our national health." Advocates of government secrecy promote a government of without a democratic foundation.

Once secrets are revealed they often come with evidence of the regime's shortcomings. These shortcomings are able to persist because secrecy insulates government officials from accountability. This erodes American credibility around the world. Conducting a war shrouded in darkness, isolated from the criticism and debate that might come from a more informed public; left to its own with little accountability, the government is free to ignore the values and principles it purports to defend – especially in self-proclaimed democracies. This

is especially true of terrorism. In the frenzy following 9/11, the government resorted to questionable if not wholly illegal practices to obtain information on terrorist activities. The CIA established a number of secret prisons, fittingly known as "black sites," where detainees suspected of involvement in terrorism were often tortured. In its crazed haste to eliminate terrorism, the American government sometimes inadvertently subjected innocent people to torture at black sites - including but not limited to electric shocks, beatings, food, water, and sleep deprivation. "Extraordinary renditions" of terrorism suspects to black sites or countries that willfully practice torture are embarrassing; so are accidental abductions of innocent people. So instead, it is kept as secret as possible. Fortunately, investigations and testimonies from former CIA officers have revealed this issue to the American public. But we only know because individuals came forward. We know nothing of the countless other abuses perpetrated by our government that remain "classified."

The American government's main objective is to protect its people. It has looked differently the last several decades. In his article, "CIA Veterans Condemn Torture," Jason Vest cites opposition of the public and of CIA officers to black sites. "[O]utrage has focused on the existence and symbolism of the black sites, comparatively little attention has been paid to the concerns--if not outright objections--of many distinguished CIA veterans about these sites and the use of torture in general". Prominent former CIA officers like Bob Baer, Frank Anderson, and Vincent Cannistraro recently voiced their opposition to torture on practical grounds – as Cannistraro has said someone being tortured will

“say virtually anything to end their torment.” Vest writes that “several lesser-known former officers have been trying, publicly and privately, to convince both the agency and the public that torture and other unduly coercive questioning tactics are morally wrong as well.” Many officers do not believe in torture practices, yet the government does not take this into account. There is a conflict between the legal codes set out by government and harsh reality. In addition to being ineffective, there are long-lasting psychological traumas for those who carry out and witness torture. Still, the government continues to condone torture practices when it sees fit. This indifference to the affects of policy choices on government employees and citizens reflects the necessity of whistle-blowing outlets like WikiLeaks.

- Francisca Fils-Aime,  
*Human Services/IAF '14*

Secrecy is a necessary part of gov-

### **The Importance of Information Asymmetry: In Defense of Secrecy**

ernment in the modern information age where an event can happen one moment and be reported to the whole world the next. According to former Assistant Director of Central Intelligence for Analysis Mark M. Lowenthal, secrecy is a essential for successful intelligence operations. Classified information collected and retained by the United States government is kept secret from the world, not solely the American people. It is unrealistic and outright impossible to allow Americans access to secret documents without the information also being accessed by the intelligence services of other nations. Disclosing classified information to American citizens, for the purpose of "open debate" or for any

other reason, leads to that information being seen by any interested party with an Internet connection—including the enemies and adversaries of America. Therefore it is in America's best interest, and thus the American people's best interest, for classified information to remain guarded closely so it does not fall into the hands of those seeking to harm the United States. Secrecy helps ensure America's safety.

The assertion that the American people "have a right to know" about classified information fails to capture fully how classified material relates to the public. What purpose does it serve to disseminate information to the average American? It is essential that the operations designed to protect the American people from foreign enemies and domestic threats are successful. Information asymmetry helps ensure mission success by allowing our security and intelligence services to exploit the power of surprise and superior situational awareness. Would a poker player reveal his cards to his opponents in a high-stakes game of poker? Unlikely. Similarly, a government's ability to keep important information hidden from its adversaries enhances strategic and tactical advantages, and can prevent well meaning but unauthorized vigilantes from muddling in the work of trained professionals.

There are rare instances where classified material is used to cover up wrongdoings, as in cases of extraordinary rendition but these are exceptions – not the rule. The vast majority of classified material is kept secret to protect the sources and methods used to collect information. The advanced technology used to collect various forms of information must remain a secret so others do not develop the ability to use it against Amer-

ica, undermine, or evade its use. More than just paperwork, the work that goes on in the dark world of intelligence and diplomacy ensures the safety of Americans and the pursuit of their interests. Intelligence operations must be conducted in secret so that targets or their allies do not disrupt collection efforts. For example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation keeps investigatory case files closely guarded so suspects do not flee before they can be apprehended. Publicly releasing the case file on a suspected terrorist cell before its members were arrested would foil the operation and could put law enforcement officers' lives at risk if the terrorists were given time to prepare for the sting. For the same reason, military operations are often planned in secrecy to preserve the element of surprise when conducting an attack on the enemy. The recent mass data dumps of classified American military and diplomatic documents by WikiLeaks show why classification regulations ought to be respected by members of the intelligence community and the public at large. Between the Iraq and Afghanistan war documents and the most recent publication of Department of State diplomatic cables, irreparable political damage has been and will be done to America and its allies around the world. Many commentators have compared WikiLeaks to the Pentagon Papers, which revealed serious illegal actions committed knowingly by the U.S government. Daniel Ellsberg, the Department of Defense analyst who leaked the Pentagon Papers intended to bring to light the crimes committed in Vietnam. The recent WikiLeaks dump has exposed only the frankness and candor of American Foreign Service officers in reporting their observations, impressions and analysis of

events on the ground overseas to inform and prepare American diplomatic strategy. The American sources of WikiLeaks' stolen reports and cables have not declared an ethical crusade on the specific actions of their government. The major crimes exposed by the WikiLeaks scandal are those committed by the leakers themselves. WikiLeaks seeks only to embarrass the United States and undermine American foreign interests and affairs, as evident by the indiscriminate publication of thousands of secret documents without assessing the value of information included in the mass data dump. Foreign Policy reported a list of high-value critical infrastructure in various countries around the world was included in the latest mass of leaked cables, termed "Cable-gate." This specific list of locations is one of the most clear-cut examples of Assange's assault on America. Now the list is in the public domain and as easily accessible to loyal citizens as to anti-American terrorists who could use it to update their list of targets. The critical infrastructure listed was classified for a reason – to keep America's perceived vulnerabilities and interests hidden from its enemies. WikiLeaks claims no one will be harmed by its release of classified documents. Assange treats revealing state secrets like a children's game where no one gets hurt, as if lives are not at risk from what WikiLeaks is doing. But the members of our intelligence community, diplomatic corps and the citizens whose lives and interests they serve and protect are real people and security breaches affect more than just what goes on the front page of the New York Times.

- Andrew McConnell,  
*International Affairs '11*

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