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Cover photograph by Sean Ventura.

Letter from the Editor

This issue of the Jackson School Journal is comprised of exemplary written work originally submitted as assignments for courses from across the Jackson School. The issue serves as an excellent resource for students that would like to get a sneak peak at papers that are considered by faculty to be among the best work in some of the Jackson School's most challenging courses.

The issue's lead article was written for JSIS 478 "Water and Security in the Middle East"—one of many classes within the Jackson School that requires students to perform significant research on a subject in a very short amount of time. *Transnational Rivers, Local Conflict*, authored by graduating senior Sean Ventura, analyzes water security issues in Iraq, and draws upon many of Sean's personal accounts from his time as a soldier in Iraq, providing an original analysis of the topic.

In the second article of this issue, we switch gears and present a beautifully written paper from JSIS 202 "Cultural Interactions in an Interdependent World." JSIS 202 requires students to think critically about the events occurring around them and apply course concepts to contemporary issues. *Veiled Violence*, a piece by Sophomore Karthik Palaniappan, discusses the use of the veil in secular France and raises important questions concerning the rhetoric that has become commonplace in the French vernacular.

Lastly, we are proud to showcase a chapter from JSIS Task Force. Widely considered to be the Jackson School's most challenging graduation requirement, Task Force requires students to apply skills obtained in the Jackson School to

a policy research project focused on one of the world's most complex, pertinent issues of the day. This year, we have chosen to include a segment from *End Game: Rethinking the War on Terror*, a Task Force report produced by a team of 15 students during winter quarter 2014. Authored by graduating senior Bevin McLeod, *An Obsolete AUMF* analyzes the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force and is an excellent example of original research and legal analysis. The editorial board hopes that these papers provide students with insight into what professors are looking for in writing for some of the Jackson Schools most demanding courses.

This issue of the Journal is the last for some outstanding editors that have greatly contributed to the success and notoriety of the Journal. Moreover, they have been hugely positive influences on me, and have provided me with invaluable knowledge and experience. They include Rutger Ceballos, Daniel Dedo, Charlotte Dubiel, Camian Keeble, Katie MacDonald, and Binh Vong. I am eternally grateful to have been a member of their cohort. In their place, the Journal welcomes a new generation of editorial board members that are sure to continue to provide the Jackson School community with an impeccable undergraduate academic journal that we all can continue to be proud of.

Sincerely,

Simon Walker
Editor in Chief



The eighth issue of the Jackson School Journal is dedicated to our faculty advisor, Sara Curran. Her unwavering support of the editorial board and dedication to the success of the Journal is invaluable.



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Sean Ventura

Transnational Rivers, Regional Conflict Water Security Implications in Diyala, Iraq

Iraq is a nation with a troubled recent history. The nation languished under dictatorship, suffered through international sanctions, foreign invasion, nine-year occupation, and sectarian tensions leading to civil war. Climate change and regional instability relating to water resources may severely complicate Iraq's future, and failure to secure agreements with neighbors concerning transnational water sources is harming Iraq's future stability. The issues of Turkish and Syrian claims to water from the Tigris-Euphrates river basin are well known, however transnational water issues in Iraq's eastern "breadbasket" region of Diyala may instigate conflict with Iran, or reignite sectarian tensions into civil war that will engulf the country. This paper argues that Diyala may instigate a time-bomb of social instability. Given that a large percentage of Diyala's population is agrarian and the government is unable to adequately provide services or police the region, severe water restriction in the province will cause increased unemployment and migrations which may further polarize the formerly ethnically mixed population into protectionist enclaves.

One of the concerns forecast by climate change is war between states over shared freshwater supplies, however, shared water conflict is much more likely to result in intrastate instability rather than interstate armed violence. Wolf states, "wars between upstream and downstream neighbors are likely only in a narrow set of circumstances. . . there are very few of these basins around the world where all of these conditions hold now, or might hold in the future."¹ Interstate wars are costly and destabilizing for all parties. States have historically sought cooperative management of shared water sources. Even states involved in interstate political confrontation regarding

other issues often manage political resolutions to shared-water disputes. However, states do not act monolithically. Internal factions within states compete for resources based on conflicting interests. Within a nation these interests include domestic use, agriculture, hydroelectric power generation, recreation, and environment—any of which are regularly at odds."² Echoing Wolf, Gleick states that water-related violence is most likely to occur domestically: regional authorities, tribal, state or provinces—"as the scale drops, the likelihood and intensity of violence goes up."³

History is rife with interstate water-stress tensions, "exacerbated relations, and conflicting

interests . . . but not state level violence.”⁴ Rather, shared water resources often lead to dialogue and mutual cooperation between states that otherwise remain political rivals.⁵ According to Wolf, “there is ample evidence showing that acute violence has occasionally been the result.”⁶ These conflicts happen at a sub-state level: “sets of individual irrigators, urban uses versus rural uses.”⁷ It is at these domestic levels where the effects of water access are most apparent, and most likely to result in conflict where differing parties seek claim to access or control water. These disputes result in flashpoint violence that can be acute in severity but parochial in scope.

Those at greatest risk of violence related to water-stress are populations suffering myriad pre-existing societal stress factors.⁸ Water-stress compounds pre-existing tensions, acting as a multiplying factor where resources are already stressed.⁹ Wolf states that the danger of water-stress lies in long-term effects over time rather than immediate impact: “As water quality/quantity degrades over time within a local setting, the effect on the stability of a region can be unsettling—it is difficult to say precisely where its impact begins and ends, yet the effects can be profound.”¹⁰ Because the effects happen over a span of time the reality of water-stress is ignored or unrecognized until they become unmanageable.

Societies with a high degree of social fragmentation, a lack of respect or trust in government or security forces, strong sub-state social authority structures (such as tribal or religious leaders), distinct ethnic blocks and pre-existing intergroup conflicts are at a high risk of falling into violence when the compounding factors of water-stress aggravate social issues such as declining health, unemployment, food shortages, and migrations imposed by the lack

of water for human or agricultural uses.¹¹ Such social pressure often leads to extremism or acceptance of strict religious fundamentalism. According to Lorenz and Erickson, “rising tensions [due to uncooperative parties] may empower dissidents, cause loss of trust in civil services and central governments” and in extreme cases support the formation of local militias and strongmen or non-state authority structures, further eroding the ability of a state to manage internal conflict.¹²

Such behavior creates “flashpoints” where violent conflict occurs between sub-state groups or against the state itself.¹³ Violence in these cases tends to be limited in size, but very acute. Flashpoints are manageable by a state with strong institutions and public support, though at-risk states with weak governments, fragile institutions, and a lack of public support risk violence spreading beyond the parochial initiators and sparking wider conflict. As such, Wolf is correct in stating that water wars classified as interstate armed conflict for control of water resources are extremely rare,¹⁴ however “there is ample evidence that the lack of clean freshwater had led to occasionally intense political instability and [small-scale] acute violence.”¹⁵ Transnational water presents an even more difficult prospect for at-risk states to manage, as it requires riparian partnerships and cooperation. States in unstable regions often lack the resources or political will to cooperate with troubled neighbors.

This scenario has occurred several times during the twenty-first century throughout Africa and the Middle East. A changing climate has shifted seasonal weather patterns, increasing the severity, duration and frequency of droughts throughout MENA, the greatest of which hit in 2006-2008. According to a 2014 report

commissioned by the United States Department of Defense, a lack of freshwater for human or agricultural use in weakly governed states helped to create the socio-political conditions for the 2011 Arab uprisings, the ongoing Syrian civil war and the 2012 coup by militant extremists in Mali.¹⁶ The report cites desertification, food shortages, unemployment in the agricultural sector and scarcity-induced migrations as contributing factors to social instability in each of these events.

The pattern is clear: water-stress may not result in interstate wars, but it does contribute to civil wars, and because water scarcity knows no borders, the instability factors that drag one state into conflict are creating regional instability among neighboring states.

Water-Stress Risk in Iraq's Diyala Province

To illustrate water-stress effects in an at-risk state, this paper examines growing instability in a single province of Iraq and the threat of water-stress due to a failure to effectively manage transnational freshwater. Diyala province is a microcosm of Iraq as a whole with diverse ethnic and religious affiliations, pre-existing social conflicts, politically insolvent local government and sub-state authority structures. In some respects, the claim could be made that what happens in Diyala is a harbinger for the rest of Iraq.

The life spring of Mesopotamia, the Tigris-Euphrates river basins provide much of modern Iraq's fresh water needs. Transnational surface tributaries flowing from Iran and Turkey also water the eastern provinces. These provinces are sensitive to both climate and political change, especially the traditional bread basket region of Diyala, and primarily rely on transnational

water sources. Recent droughts exacerbated by international irrigation and hydropower projects are forcing farmers from their fields and orchards and increasing migration to urban centers where unemployment, lack of access to basic services and a depopulated rural hinterland benefit anti-government dissidents.¹⁷

Diyala lies northeast of Baghdad, spanning diverse terrain that stretches to the Iranian border. Spanning the northeastern border of Iraq, the Hamrin Mountains (westernmost ridge of the greater Zagros mountain range) spawn rivers that sustain much of the province. The Diyala River basin runs from these mountains southeast through Lake Hamrin before emptying into the Tigris River near Baghdad.¹⁸ The land around Diyala River is lush and fertile, supporting extensive agriculture throughout the central plain. Outside of the basin's fertile embrace the land stretches from hard scrub into barren desert tracts still bearing scars of the Iran-Iraq War.

Citrus and date agriculture forms the basis of Diyala's economy. The province spans over 850,000 acres of arable land, employing seventy percent of residents in agricultural positions.¹⁹ Diyala accounts for only 10 percent of arable land in Iraq, yet the soil is so fertile that the region often produces enough food for export, earning the nickname "Iraq's breadbasket."²⁰ Since ancient times, dates from Miqdadiyah and Kifri have been famed throughout the Middle East. Diyala's date production was so prized that former dictator Saddam Hussein ordered massive plantations of date palms planted along the upper Diyala River. Baqubah oranges are also renowned throughout the region and citrus orchards still dominate the central province. Grain, and grass-fed open range livestock complete the core of agricultural production.²¹

Neighbors, Not Partners: Transnational Water and Ineffectual National Government

Diyala's agriculture is supported by three primary water sources: surface water flows from the Tigris River in the west, tributary rivers in the Diyala River basin including smaller transnational rivers near Khanaqin and Mandali and groundwater from the Central Diyala Basin (Bai Hassan-Miqdadiyah aquifer).²² Lake Hamrin (one of the largest artificial lakes east of Baghdad) was built specifically to store irrigation water, primarily fed by Diyala River.

"...water-stress may not result in interstate wars, but it does contribute to civil wars, and because water scarcity knows no borders, the instability factors that drag one state into conflict are creating regional instability among neighboring states."

The Central Diyala Basin (Bai Hassan-Miqdadiyah aquifer) lies 20-200 meters below the surface and forms a reserve of water for irrigation. While the aquifer is not considered in danger of depletion at this time, the annual draw for irrigation remains low.²³ If drought conditions persist, the increased draw for irrigation and lessened recharge rate may cause a rise in salinity and other pollutants. Similar to the region's transnational surface water, no international usage agreement exists between Baghdad and Tehran concerning this resource.²⁴

The Diyala River Basin of fresh water

in Iraq are the transnational flows of the two major river basins. The Euphrates River flows into Iraq from Syria and originates in mountains in Turkey. The Tigris River is fed by tributaries originating from Turkey in the north and Iran in the east. Government projects along both rivers, such as the Taqba Dam in Syria, and the Southeast Anatolia Project (GAP) in Turkey pose major problems for water allocation.

To mitigate this, the Government of Iraq (GoI), UN and USAID are currently focusing on water quality and quantity issues concerning the Euphrates-Tigris river basin and international issues with the Syrian and Turkish governments. By comparison, the flow restriction to tributaries that affect Diyala are easily ignored in favor of concentrating resources on the larger rivers.²⁵ As a result, Diyala's potential water shortage remains unresolved; a shortage that the Baghdad government has placed as a secondary concern despite the prospect of lasting political and economic implications for the region.

The GoI is still struggling to consolidate and rebuild after a decade of occupation, insurgency, civil-strife and internal corruption. Funds for infrastructural projects are often diverted when (and if) they become available. Communication between Baghdad and the provincial level is often one-sided or non-existent, leaving many provincial governments to deal with complex inter-district or international issues on their own. Farmers in Diyala blame Iran for withholding water in rivers originating in the Zagros Mountains, yet Baghdad's inability to take international action leaves farmers feeling abandoned. Taking matters into their own hands, local water management organizations from Diyala Province have been visiting Tehran directly to discuss water allocation on transnational rivers.²⁶ This not only causes the

national government to lose legitimacy, but often results in promises and agreements with no national backing.

Iran's role in regional water management cannot be overlooked. Iran is a riparian of the Euphrates-Tigris river basin, contributing 20 to 30 percent of the Tigris River's annual flow through major tributaries such as the Alwan and Sirwan (Persian name for the Diyala River) rivers, which are also Diyala province's main sources of agricultural water.²⁷ The UN reports no agreements exist concerning shared water use between Baghdad and Tehran regarding Diyala province or Diyala River basin.²⁸ Iranian dams along the Alwan River produce hydroelectric power for Iranian citizens at a heavy cost to Iraqi farmers and Tehran is implementing plans for further construction. Daryan Dam is expected to be operational by 2018, further impacting Diyala River and its tributaries.

The effects of Iranian irrigation and hydroelectric projects on the rivers' water flow have not gone unnoticed downstream. In 2012, Iraqi Minister of Irrigation and Water Resources Mohannad al Saddi proclaimed "Iran has been abusing [the] Alwan River of late, and this is detrimental to Iraqi agricultural lands."³⁰ Restricted flow of the Alwan River is generating anger amongst farmers throughout the region. The Khanaqin Chamber of Water Resources reported in July 2012 that water flow on Alwan River was as low as 0.25 cubic meters per second rather than the estimated need of 6-7 cubic meters per second.³⁰ Khanaqin's mayor Mohammed Othman illustrated the dire situation facing his city in recent interviews when he said, "cutting water is a crime against life."³¹ Many Iraqis in Diyala share his sentiments: in 2009, 2011 and 2012 farmers in the Khanaqin region blocked cross-border traffic from Iran in demanding

positive responses from both Baghdad and Tehran on water allocation in the Alwan River.³² As one frustrated farmer near Baqubah stated, the situation feels as though they are "waiting for the Iranians to allow Iraqis water to irrigate our orange trees."³³

To date, GoI sponsored projects to relieve the water shortage have produced mixed results. In 2009, money allocated to dig 2,000 emergency wells in Diyala was refunded when the project stalled after only 20 percent of the project was complete. The wells that were completed were soon unusable due to saltwater intrusion from deep groundwater.³⁴

One of the most essential and neglected government services in Diyala is drinking water. Nearly 40 percent of residents have irregular access to water services.³⁵ In Miqdadiyah district, the number of people lacking clean water increases to 74 percent.³⁶ One-half of households in Miqdadiyah, Kifri and Baladruz districts drink directly from streams, rivers or lakes (surface water), although bottled water is usually available in most towns.³⁷ These numbers do not take into account some 60,000 internally displaced persons living in refugee camps.³⁸

According to a 2013 United Nations report, water quality in Iraq is poor and does not meet Iraqi National Standards or World Health Organization standards.³⁹ Measurements of biological oxygen demand, which are used to determine pollution, are three times higher than the national limit of 10mg/l.⁴⁰ Pollution increases the risks of waterborne diseases such as typhoid, cholera, and hepatitis. Hussein Karim el-Shamri, a farmer from Miqdadiyah, claimed that regular bathing in well-water produced skin lesions and infections.⁴¹

In addition to bureaucratic issues, global climate change is beginning to impact the

province, exasperating already thinly stretched water resources. Drought hit the region in 2006 and lasted until 2011.⁴² Lake Hamrin, fed by the River Diyala, dipped to 20 percent of its volume in 2010.⁴³ Provincial Director of Agriculture Majid Khalil estimated that 80,000 acres of cropland were destroyed between 2006-2008, with another 120,000 acres damaged by desertification.⁴⁴

Building the Flashpoint: Societal and Security Issues

The population of Diyala province is primarily split between ethnic and sectarian identities: Kurds dominate the north while Sunni and Shi'a Muslim Arabs live throughout the remaining district in tribes with lineages originating among the earliest Middle Eastern inhabitants. Diyala province had an estimated population of 1.2 million in 2003 with a workforce of 872,000 of which 59 percent live in rural conditions.⁴⁵

Poverty and rising ethnic tensions are paramount social concerns as drought and international water sharing issues increasingly affect the agrarian province. The convergences of environmental and social challenges threaten to churn tensions still simmering after years of sectarian violence. A 2011 Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction report stated that 33 percent of Diyala's residents lived below the national poverty line and the per capita GDP in 2011 was just USD \$7,200.⁴⁶ Many residents rely on bartering portions of local harvests to support their income, which has become uncertain with growing water insecurity.

Diyala is among the five least developed regions in Iraq.⁴⁷ Proximity to Iran, and predominantly agrarian population make the

region a remote backwater compared to the urban streets of Baghdad. Although many people in larger cities are reliant on government services and compensation, the full reach of Baghdad's influence does not extend throughout Diyala. The current GoI appears unable or unwilling to adequately police the province. A reported 48 percent of residents polled in 2011 had a negative view of GoI and believed that services had not improved, or may have degraded.⁴⁸ Prior to 2011, the region had been locked in a vicious civil war, so the poll indicates a drastic decrease in popular sentiment. Growing social instability, unemployment, lack of services, and disillusionment with central government has been the impetus for change: shortly after the poll was taken the Directorate of Diyala filed for autonomy under Article 119 of the Iraqi constitution.⁴⁹ The already fragile state of the province makes it vulnerable to further destabilization due to water-security issues.

"Communication between Baghdad and provincial level is often one-sided or non-existent, leaving many provincial governments to deal with complex inter-district or international issues."

Conditions in Diyala represent a grave security risk to Baghdad. Water insecurity overlays longstanding ethnic tensions. Fearful of Iranian support for Shi'a tribes, Saddam Hussein often gifted estates in Diyala to valued Ba'ath party members or high-ranking military officers to help spread the extent of his influence

in remote regions. These former officials (often from influential Sunni tribes) were forcibly unemployed when the provisional government purged Ba'athists in 2004. Prior to the US invasion, Saddam Hussein's oppression of both Kurds and Shi'a Muslims created historic grievances and mistrust of the recently purged Ba'athist Sunnis, who feared a Shi'a government takeover following their ouster. Influential Shi'a tribes in Diyala were empowered by the government purges.⁵⁰

Rival tribes and religious sects that peacefully coexisted under the dictator turned to arms against each other as civil authority crumbled under a post-invasion, provisional Iraqi government; initiating purges and mass displacement of non-combatants. On the backdrop of internecine tension al Qaeda affiliated al-Tawhid wal-Jihad moved into the region espousing an extremist interpretation of Sunni Islam. Led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the jihadist group funneled foreign fighters and money into Diyala, committing atrocities against the Shi'a and carving out a breakaway Islamic state among the dense palm groves and farming towns.

Exacerbating these conditions, a drought hit in the summer of 2006. Dying fields left a pool of able-bodied, unemployed men at the same time post-invasion chaos erupted. A war-economy replaced traditional employment as insurgents paid small sums for villagers to dig holes on roads, plant bombs, or spy on Coalition troops and rival militias. Access to water became a wartime commodity used to leverage control over the population—foreign fighters were reported driving tankers of clean water to internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, exploiting women and recruiting men in return for potable water.⁵¹ At other times irrigation

canals were diverted or destroyed to force farmers off their land. Urban residents that could not flee began to starve as government food shipments rotted undistributed in warehouses and local farm-to-market goods dried up. Despite a brief period of stability in 2008, Iraq and Diyala once again experienced severe drought from 2009 to 2011, furthering desertification and depletion of water reserves, and provoking a new wave of departures from rural areas. 2011 and 2012 saw extreme precipitation, however it was sporadic and out of season.

These incidents highlight how inextricably linked the security of the water supply is to the political and economic development of the region. Little is being done to offer water access for drinking or agricultural use despite USAID partnership projects throughout the region. Access to water will become more difficult with the degradation of Tigris River water quality, Iranian control of tributary rivers and the possibility of competing claims to the Central Diyala basin aquifer, both internationally and among tribes. The specter of climate change looms on the horizon yet Baghdad appears unwilling or unable to manage water resources. These factors threaten to destabilize the province amid a resource conflict that could erupt into a civil war. Aid organizations have reported an increase in violent incidents concerning water supply since 2012 amid unaddressed concerns such as a lack of sectarian representation in government.⁵² Four years after the first civil war, conditions appear little changed.

Assessment

Wolf states that conflict over water resources exists at many levels: state, district, rural or urban, and individual. In Iraq, state-

level water resources are troubled, but focus remains on interstate negotiations over primary basins. At district, or provincial level, the Diyala governate remains unable to adequately address the water needs of its citizens and cannot leverage state bureaucracies to negotiate with Iran. Rural or urban levels are seeing population shifts as unemployed farmers and peasants move to urban centers where water is more easily accessed. This shift in population creates a growing unease with the GoI, providing a body for recruitment among anti-government agents.

Civil war is the outcome of a host of grievances converging without civil outlet or remediation. In Iraq, environmental change initiating drought is the underlying factor for economic, social, and political grievances. Baghdad's inability or unwillingness to address the problem is rapidly eroding any trust in civil remediation.

Baghdad remains distracted, hindering provincial and state governments as migrations and population shifts bring unemployed farmers and peasants out of the fields and into the cities. In turn, the negative sentiment among unemployed military-aged people provides an excellent stock for anti-government militias. The complex social structure of tribal, religious and ethnic identities fractures in times of extreme stress as certain groups are perceived to receive an advantage over others, especially after a civil war just a few short years before. The system becomes stressed, in danger of social fragmentation that could spread to other segments of the population with their own grievances.

Sectarian, ethnic, or tribal/family ties that cross borders often link populations in the Middle East. Porous national boundaries allow insurgents to flow between the warzone and supply areas. Sometimes internal conflict will spark a response

from neighbors, especially in the case of a weak government. In such an interconnected region, civil war can easily pull the other states into conflict. Such a cascade of collapsing nations can easily bring foreign intervention or invasion. Although Wolf may be correct that nations do not fight each other over water, water may still be a key factor in preventing conflict in the future.

"Poverty and rising ethnic tensions are paramount social concerns as drought and international water sharing issues increasing affect the agrarian province."

The grim possibility remains that Iraq could fall into chaos soon, and foreign powers may be drawn into intervention and stabilization efforts. Interstate war is not an unheard of possibility at this point. If this happens, it will not be states fighting for access to resources, but due to conditions set by a lack of access, just as Wolf argues.

Looking Forward

Diyala province is small and somewhat remote yet a key component of Iraq's internal security. The region once known as "Iraq's breadbasket" is now suffering from water shortages due, in part, to the GoI's inability to manage transnational water resources. Diyala has a history of ethnic and religious tension and can easily slip back into armed anarchy as unemployment rises and essential services fail. Unless Baghdad takes immediate action to secure transnational agreements for the Central

Diyala Basin, tributary rivers, and water sharing between countries, then Iraq faces the very real threat of resurgent civil war.

While Diyala province is historically restive, steps can still be taken to mediate the water stress issues causing economic problems. First, Baghdad must do more to engage Tehran on seasonal water allocation in shared surface water sources. Viable long-term solutions must be found between the two governments, but it needs to happen at the national level, not at provincial ones. Second, water flow through transnational surface water must be increased for lengthy durations to help groundwater recharge. Iraq's reserve is very low and unlikely to last through another lengthy drought. Third, water-sharing agreements on the Bai Hassan-Miqdadiyah aquifer should be arranged between Iraq and Iran. Both countries appear reluctant to discuss the groundwater issue, especially Iraq since water from the aquifer is predominately used by Iraqi farmers, however droughts and changing climate are increasing water draw from this reserve. Eventually Iran may feel the need to begin pumping groundwater, adversely affecting farmers in Diyala. It is better to begin negotiations now rather than wait until it sparks a crisis.

Iraq's Minister of Water Resources Muhannad al-Saadi reported that heavier than usual precipitation replenished reservoirs in October 2013 and claimed the replenished water enough to last through the summer.⁵³ Winter rains may have brought a reprieve but without formal plans to implement transnational resource cooperation agreements the future remains uncertain. Iraq cannot continue to rely on seasonal rain especially as dam-building projects in both Iran and Kurdistan continue to threaten irrigation programs in Diyala.

The invasion and civil war of the past decade have placed water security issues as secondary concerns. It has become far too easy for officials to prioritize other projects. Government officials argue against allocating precious time and resources to an issue that may not become apparent for years; no one can predict the next drought and transnational issues in the Euphrates-Tigris river basin are of paramount importance.

The foundation for social collapse is being set: distrust of government, social fragmentation along ethnic and religious lines, mass migrations and unemployment. Water-stress may become the proverbial straw breaking the camel's back. ♦

¹ Wolf, Aaron. "Shared Waters: Conflict and Cooperation." *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*. (2007): 244-255.

² *Ibid.*, 244.

³ *Ibid.*, 245.

⁴ Bernice Lee, "Managing the Interlocking Climate and Resource Challenges." *International Affairs*. 85.6 (2009): 1106.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1108.

⁶ Wolf, Aaron. "Shared Waters: Conflict and Cooperation." *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*. (2007): 244-255.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 244.

⁸ CNA Military Advisory Board. *National Security and the Accelerating Risks of Climate Change*. Alexandria: CNA Corp., 2014. electronic. 3 May 2014. <<https://www.cna.org>>. 2.

⁹ Frederick Lorenz and Edward J. Erickson. *Strategic Water: Iraq and Security Planning in the Euphrates-Tigris Basin*. Quantico: Marine

- Corpus University Press, 2013. 19 May 2014. 13.
- ¹⁰ Aaron Wolf, "Water and Human Security." 1999. Critical Infrastructure Protection Initiative--Dalhousie University. electronic. 10 April 2014. <cip.management.dal.ca>. 31.
- ¹¹ Frederick Lorenz and Edward J. Erickson. Strategic Water: Iraq and Security Planning in the Euphrates-Tigris Basin. Quantico: Marine Corps University Press, 2013. 19 May 2014. 240.
- ¹² Ibid., 13.
- ¹³ Aaron Wolf, "Water and Human Security." 1999. Critical Infrastructure Protection Initiative--Dalhousie University. electronic. 10 April 2014. <cip.management.dal.ca>. 31.
- ¹⁴ Wolf notes only one such example in history, between Sumerian cities of Lagash and Umma circa 2,500 BCE. "Water and Human Security," 37.
- ¹⁵ Aaron Wolf, "Water and Human Security." 1999. Critical Infrastructure Protection Initiative--Dalhousie University. electronic. 10 April 2014. <cip.management.dal.ca>. 31.
- ¹⁶ CNA Military Advisory Board. National Security and the Accelerating Risks of Climate Change. Alexandria: CNA Corp., 2014. electronic. 3 May 2014. <https://www.cna.org>. 13.
- ¹⁷ Frederick Lorenz and Edward J. Erickson. Strategic Water: Iraq and Security Planning in the Euphrates-Tigris Basin. Quantico: Marine Corps University Press, 2013. 19 May 2014. 13.
- ¹⁸ David Speidel, "Conservation Report from Iraq." Journal of Soil and Water Conservation 63.4 (2008). 100A. <www.jswnonline.org>
- ¹⁹ Ibid.; Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, 47.
- ²⁰ Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, p. 49.; Hsia, CPT Timothy. "Iraq's Water Woes." Small Wars Journal. July 2008. October 2013. <www.smallwarsjournal.com>.
- ²¹ Industrial Development Authority.
- ²² UN-ESCWA and BGR (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; Bundesanstalt für
- ²³ The Central Diyala Basin (Bai Hassan-Miqdadiyah aquifer) lies 20-200 meters below the surface and forms a reserve of water for irrigation. More than half of the basin lies across the Iranian border. This aquifer has a storage capacity of 500-1050 MCM in Iraq and the capacity in Iran is unknown at this time. Water quality is considered 'good' at shallow depths, less than 1,000mg/l salinity. At levels deeper than 120m the salinity rises to an unacceptable 3,000mg/l with sulfur intrusion.; In the past, the aquifer has received 17.3 percent of its yearly recharge rate from the average annual rainfall of 350mm, but since 2006 the region has received less than 100mm annual rainfall.; UN-ESCWA and BGR (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; Bundesanstalt für ; Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, 49
- ²⁴ David Speidel, "Conservation Report from Iraq." Journal of Soil and Water Conservation 63.4 (2008). 100A. <www.jswnonline.org>; Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, 100A.
- ²⁵ The issues facing the Euphrates-Tigris river basin are complex and arguably represent the primary water-stress concerns for the country, however this paper focuses specifically on transnational water originating in Iran and how this issue is easily overlooked by government agencies dealing with the main basin.
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Sean Ventura recently graduated from the University of Washington with a BA in International Studies and Political Science with a focus on international security and nonproliferation of nuclear weapons. His academic interests include terrorism, intrastate conflict, and state responses to such violence, focused on socio-political, economic, and environmental factors that contribute to intrastate violence by non-state actors. This article was originally produced for JSIS B 478: Water Security in the Middle East. The original work was inspired by the author's personal observations witnessing environmental stresses that supported formation of non-state armed actors while serving with the US Army in Iraq between 2006-2009.

Edited by Rutger Ceballos



Jackson School Focus

The Journal is pleased to feature two examples of class work performed by Jackson School undergraduates. The first, *Veiled Violence: An Examination of the Rhetoric Surrounding the Banning of the Veil in France* was selected from JSIS 202 “Cultural Interactions in an Interdependent World.” In JSIS 202, Professor Cabieri Robinson introduces a critical approach to understanding the relationship between culture and politics by examining the relationship of political violence and armed conflict within society. The course’s final essay prompt instructs students to write a paper critical of the media’s approach to an event, and to use class sources, along with at least three outside news sources. The editorial board agreed that it could serve as a great resource for students that would like to see an example of what makes an excellent JSIS 200 series paper.

The second was originally written for the Jackson School’s senior capstone course, Task Force. *An Obsolete AUMF: Questions of Legality Surrounding the Continued Use of Military Force Abroad* provides a well thought out analysis of the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force in the context of both international and domestic law. The article provides compelling, well-substantiated legal analysis and original research. This contribution was originally written under the guidance of Ranking House Armed Services Committee Member, Congressman Adam Smith, as part of a comprehensive report on the United States’ War on Terror. Former Department of Defense Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Dr. James Miller, evaluated the report.

The Editorial Board hopes that students use Jackson School Focus as a resource, and that the UW student community benefits from having access to exemplary student work.

It is important to note that although the papers selected for publication were exceptional upon submission to the Journal, they have undergone multiple rounds of editing. Edits made to the following papers were done to improve specific issues regarding evidence and claims, however, the papers themselves remain true to their original theses, general level of quality, and class prompts.

Karthik Palaniappan

Veiled Violence

An Examination of the Rhetoric Surrounding the Banning of the Veil in France

In France in 2008, the firing of a Baby Loup nursery worker who refused to take off her niqab (full face veil) was recently addressed and upheld by the Court of Cassation—the highest court of appeals for civil and criminal cases in France. The court's decision reflects the views of many about the public display of religious symbols. The wearing of the veil by French Muslims has become a particular focus. Rhetoric used by political figures has commonly focused on the practice of laïcité, permeating the dialogue around the importance of secularism in France and creating misconceptions about the veil, and more broadly, Muslim culture. The rhetoric surrounding the veil not only represents French politicians' failure to understand the role of the veil in the lives of French Muslims, but also that the rhetoric itself is a subtle form of violence. Violence is defined as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation."¹ The rhetoric that both the French media and politicians use when referring to the veil creates social pressures that act to psychologically harm individuals and therefore can be considered subtle violence. This paper begins by establishing that the rhetoric around the veil is one-sided and creates a biased characterization of Muslim women and of Islam as a culture. The language surrounding the veil creates a dichotomy that is used as a political wedge issue, in which the values held by "Muslims" are pitted against those held by the "French." It then goes on to argue that the rhetoric itself is a form of violence. It concludes by arguing that the violence projected toward the Muslim community is not a product of a fear of the minority, but is a way to preserve a power relationship over a minority.

In 2004, the French government passed a controversial ban on obvious religious symbols such as veils and large crucifixes in public schools, and then in 2011, further clarified the ban to include full face coverings in public spaces.² However, in a surprise decision in 2013, the Court of Cassation ruled that the firing of the nursery worker was discrimination related to

religious conviction.³ This sparked an outcry from politicians across the political spectrum, who argued that the decision ignored the French concept of *laïcité*. *Laïcité* is often translated as "secularism," but it refers more to protection from religion than protection of religion.⁴

Generally, the French political system and the French media have failed to acknowledge

or highlight the viewpoints of women who wear veils. This has limited an understanding of the garment, the women who wear it, and more broadly, Islamic culture. The one-sided nature of this discourse is reflected in the oft-quoted argument that is posed by French politicians and journalists—that the veil represents the oppression of women.

Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy stated the veil is “contrary to our values and contrary to the ideals we have of a woman’s dignity.”⁵ Journalist Thomas Legrand said it is a “universal and quite simple fight for individual freedom, and in this particular case for sex equality.”⁶ However, this “simple fight” is a misdiagnosis of the situation—as noted by Cabeiri Robinson in lecture, definitions of “freedom” and “oppression” are different for different cultures. Legrand interpreted the issue through a specifically French or Western cultural context. While he sees the veil as oppressive for women, many women in France actively choose to wear a veil for modesty or for religious reasons. For example, one woman who wears the hijab reflected, “When I face a classmate or colleague I can be confident that my body is not being scrutinized.”⁷ As multiple scholars argue, it is important – especially when making decisions regarding public policy – to understand the cultural backgrounds and histories of the many sects within a society, as well as individual non-adherence to values that may be attributed to their specific groups.⁸

Beyond a failure to represent or include the voices and perspectives of Muslims in France in the debate surrounding the veil, rhetoric used to discuss the issue promotes a biased or over-generalized characterization of Muslims. For example, many say that the veil represents religious fundamentalism or extremism. Referencing the Baby Loup decision’s implications, Catherine

Arenou, the mayor of Chanteloup stated, “There is a real threat when things [laws] are not clearly defined. It leaves an opening for extremists on both sides—fundamentalists and hyper-secularists.”⁹ Though she acknowledges that there may be “hyper-secularists,” her use of the term “fundamentalists” is an analysis failure, for it patronizes a culture as simply extremist without recognizing the general legitimacy of the practice within the religion.

This kind of rhetoric extends throughout the French political system and regularly features a xenophobic ‘us vs. them’ tone, using a perversion of the concept of *laïcité* in France. For example, Interior Minister Valls claimed the ban was “a law against practices that have nothing to do with our traditions and our values.”¹⁰ Similarly, President Sarkozy asserted, “wearing a full veil is a rejection of the values of the Republic.”¹¹ According to journalist Eric Zemmour, a new law applying to private companies is needed to protect the French ‘way of life’.¹² In general, defenders of the law state that, “France’s Muslims, immigrants, and French-born must accept French norms.”¹³ There is a very strict sense of sacred, unified French traditions juxtaposed against the traditions brought over with the “incoming” Muslims. The statements made by the above journalist and politicians present a clear call to action, wherein the reader is urged to protect a “French way of life,” by prohibiting French Muslims from expressing their values.

The use of this rhetoric by some media outlets, politicians and individual citizens can be interpreted as violence, as it results in psychological harm for women who wear the veil. Professors Adrien Katherine Wing and Monica Nigh Smith use the term “spirit injury” to explain the impact of the negative stigma around the veil in France. Symptoms of “spirit injury”

include: “defilement, silence, denial, shame, guilt, fear, blaming the victim, violence, self-destructive behaviors, acute despair/emotional, and death.” These describe the psychological impacts of the rhetoric on French women who choose to express their faith.¹⁴ Their interviews expose the pressure on Muslim girls who wore the face veil. For example, one girl remembers, “The teachers completely ignored me. I didn’t have the right to a hello.”¹⁵ Another described “experience of isolation and exclusion from her schoolmates.”¹⁶ Pressuring people to act a certain way is psychological harm in the form of deprivation, and therefore should be considered an act of violence.

In addition, the rhetoric’s impact extends to “structural” violence: which refers to harm created by the legal and economic institutions that prevents people from meeting basic needs.¹⁷ Here, the Baby Loup nurse was fired by a private business because she refused to take off her veil. This type of violence is ‘structural’ in nature because legal institutions maintained by the state allow for discrimination of a particular religious group on the grounds of secularism. In interviews with France’s *LeMonde* newspaper, several girls recount their difficulties finding jobs and studying because of the veil. “When entering university, a young Muslim woman named Saida thought ‘it would be difficult to study with her veil.’”¹⁸ Another does not place her picture on her CV, because she would like “to be first tracked by [her] experience and qualifications,” and in veiled interviews she never received any callbacks.¹⁹ Employers, influenced by the rhetoric, were allowed to discriminate on the basis of religious symbols—making it difficult for these girls to find employment. As such, the system is by default producing norms that foster structural violence. While the court’s ruling nullifies this practice, as

the BBC points out, the political rhetoric and popular support favors ending the new “legal loophole.”²⁰

According to a recent poll, 84 percent of the French people would favor allowing private employers to ban headscarves in their business if employees come in contact with the public.²¹ Given that both public policy and social interaction are dependent on public opinion, this statistic has serious implications and negative feelings about the headscarf and may arguably be contributing to prejudice against Muslims in France generally. Racist threats and acts in France increased by 23 percent in 2012.²² Graffiti on mosques and other forms of anti-religious acts have been frequent from 2010 to 2014 as well.

“Pressuring people to act a certain way is psychological harm in the form of deprivation, and therefore should be considered an act of violence.”

In part, escalating discrimination against Muslims in France may cause what Foucault coined the Panopticon effect. The Panopticon is a prison design that features a central viewing tower complete with tinted glass/one way viewing which disallows prisoners the knowledge of whether or not they are being watched, creating a dynamic in which it does not matter whether or not someone is actually being scrutinized, people feel as though they could consistently be under surveillance and so they internalize and follow the “correct” behavior in order to stay out of trouble. The subtle, yet negative rhetoric surrounding the niqab which permeates French society and

attempts to change the behavior of Muslims could be seen as a means of indirect “correct” training.

Therefore, the nationalistic rhetoric produced by public figures and the legal actions taken by the state are more than simply an expression of fear by the majority of the minority; rather, it preserves a power relationship between the majority, and its leadership, over the minority. The *Times* reports that “the mayor [of a Parisian suburb] ominously warned that her town’s social harmony—it’s ‘vivre ensemble’—was in danger” due to the Baby Loup decision.²⁴ The mayor seems to imply that Islam, and religious symbols in public, will cause social unrest. As discussed in the last paragraph, this can create subtle social violence. By playing off the fears of the majority through her rhetoric—that their safety and position is threatened by Muslims—she remains popular with the majority. Similarly, French Interior Minister, Manuel Valls lamented that the decision was a victory for “the claims of *ethnic* groups, to the detriment of republican values” [emphasis added].²⁵ This rhetoric is indicative of Thongchai Winichakul’s concept of two-way identification—positive reinforcement of national values, and a negative view of others.²⁶ Here, the French “values” (i.e. *laïcité*) are upheld, while Muslims’ practices are shunned. French Cultural Secretary Tessa Jowell states, “women who are heavily veiled, whose identity is obscured to the world apart from their husband, cannot take their full place in society.”²⁷ Minister Valls admits “What I find shocking, and what I will always find shocking, is a fully-veiled woman.”²⁸ These statements illustrate how the rhetoric creates an ‘otherness’ around the use of the veil.

‘Violence’ is often seen as primitive armed conflict—and not the norm within developed countries. However, the French debate around the use of the niqab in public places, in combination

with institutionalized means of discrimination, have undeniably caused many French Muslims to feel psychological harm. Cloaked in nationalism and *laïcité*, the rhetoric surrounding the Baby Loup case promotes an unrepresentative characterization of Muslim women, and should be considered subtle violence. There is a markedly ‘us vs. them’ tone, and as indicated, it is used to advance the political interests of leaders in the majority. As the ethnographers sourced in this paper have highlighted in different contexts and time periods, we must be ever-vigilant of rhetoric’s important deviations from reality. ♦

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Karthik Palaniappan is a sophomore majoring in Computer Science. He is generally interested in international and political issues, and his research focuses on fostering dialogue with online tools. This paper was originally produced to satisfy the final requirement for JSIS 202: Cultural Interactions in an Interdependent World. It was selected by the Journal after being recommended by Professor Cabieri Robinson.

Edited by Simon Walker

Bevin McLeod

An Obsolete AUMF

Questions of Legality Surrounding the Continued Use of Military Force Abroad

This paper addresses the legality of the US Congress's Authorization of the Use of Military Force (AUMF) in its current form, and evaluates two distinctly different perspectives around the issue: the first, which is consistently used by the Obama administration, is that the AUMF is both legal domestically under the Commander in Chief clause of the Constitution, and internationally under the Customary Law and International Humanitarian Law right to self-defense.¹ However, many legal scholars counter that under domestic law there is no legal consensus as to the legality of the AUMF in its current form, and our use of military force is illegal under international law.² In this paper, the language, interpretations and revisions of the AUMF are examined as well as the language and interpretations of international law. This paper argues that our current military actions against al Qaeda and "affiliated forces" are not legal and do not conform to International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights Law, or Customary Law standards of war. Furthermore, domestically, the AUMF in its current form is of questionable legality and is no longer relevant to the continued hostilities that the United States is engaged. In order to align within an appropriate legal framework for current military actions, this paper makes two recommendations on how both the Executive Branch and Congress could work together to meet both domestic and international legal standards.

As history makes clear, terrorism is nothing new to the human race. The United States has been dealing with terrorist threats and attacks since long before 9/11, and has judiciously treated those threats and actions as criminal cases where perpetrators were tried and sentenced in a court of law. However, consistent fatwas from Osama Bin Laden, as well as attacks against U.S. ships, embassies, and American personnel throughout the 1990's finally prompted President Clinton to enter in to military engagements with al Qaeda in 1998-99.³ The events that unfolded on 9/11 catalyzed

the final push into continuous armed hostilities between the United States, al Qaeda, and forces associated with or deemed to be harboring the terrorist network. On September 14th, 2001, Congress issued its authorization for the use of military force (AUMF).⁴ Below is a closer look at the language Congress incorporated into the AUMF, followed by analysis of both revisions and interpretations.

Congressional Authorization Language –

Whereas, on September 11, 2001, acts

of treacherous violence were committed against the United States and its citizens; and

Whereas, such acts render it both necessary and appropriate that the United States exercise its rights to self-defense and to protect United States citizens both at home and abroad; and

Whereas, in light of the threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by these grave acts of violence; and

Whereas, such acts continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States; and

Whereas, the President has authority under the Constitution to take action to deter and prevent acts of international terrorism against the United States:

(a) IN GENERAL.—That the President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.

(b) WAR POWERS RESOLUTION REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) SPECIFIC STATUTORY AUTHORIZATION.—Consistent with section 8(a)(1) of the War Powers Resolution, the Congress declares that this section is intended to constitute specific statutory authorization within

the meaning of section 5(b) of the War Powers Resolution.⁵

♦ ♦ ♦

The language in the AUMF listed above is both broad and specific. For example, the fact that “the President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force” is vague, and does not specify as to how “necessary and appropriate” are determined. Moreover, what constitutes a use of force is ambiguous under the language of the AUMF, and could potentially range from the use of torture, hellfire missiles, tactical teams, and even nuclear weapons. It is also unclear whether Congress has a say in how force is defined, or whether that is solely determined by the President. Such ambiguity leaves the door wide open for interpretation, and therefore action by an individual who may arguably wield that power in an illegal manner. Targeted killings, night raids, and drone strikes in sovereign airspace certainly appear illegal under established standards of international law.⁶ More ambiguity is illustrated in the phrase, “*Whereas*, such acts continue to pose an *unusual* and *extraordinary* threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.” Again, such language makes it unclear what constitutes an unusual and extraordinary threat, as well as who decides. It is precisely because of this vague language that the Executive branch has maintained military action against al Qaeda and other terrorist groups worldwide, while continuously adding new legal interpretations and broader legal language to defend its actions internationally and domestically.

Consequently, through its failure to clarify such ambiguities in the language of the AUMF, the United States or more specifically its

Executive Branch, can legally justify its actions both domestically and abroad. Yet another ambiguity in the language of the AUMF is, “Whereas, the President has authority under the Constitution *to take action to deter and prevent* acts of terrorism against the United States.”⁷ In this case many would argue that under the Constitution the President has the duty to follow any statute and/or law enacted by Congress, as per his article II responsibilities.⁸ However, history also indicates that complications emerge from this mandate, particularly with the ideological struggles of the Cold War, and the perception of Communism (as an ideology) as the enemy.. As shown in the Cold War, if the President is indeed authorized to “take action” to “deter and prevent” any future acts of terror, then the U.S. will find itself, once again, in an endless battle against an ideology that thrives on violence. As pointed out previously, terrorism is not a new development in human history, and as long as the Executive Branch continues to fight from a preemptive stance rather than a defensive stance, the hostilities will maintain themselves as new terrorists are born out of spite or anger towards United States’ military actions abroad.⁹ Moreover, permanently incorporating broad language within the AUMF leaves the door open for Congress to continue to cede its power to authorize the unilateral use of force by the Executive Branch. As a result, permanently incorporating such broad language allows traditionally criminal activity, namely terrorism, to be treated as a phenomena that requires the use of preemptive military force.

The section with specific language is where the *purpose* and the *individuals* of the AUMF are defined: “...those nations, organizations, or persons he [the President] determines planned, authorized...[t]he

terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11th, 2001.”¹⁰ Firstly, in these words Congress distinctly defined a nexus requirement, and made it clear that those being targeted must be tied to the attacks on September 11th, 2001 for the purpose of acting in self-defense against an attack on American soil.¹¹ It was President Bush who first took liberties with the wording and stated that, “Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated.”¹²

“...permanently incorporating such broad language allows traditionally criminal activity, namely terrorism, to be treated as a phenomena that requires the use of preemptive military force.”

Though Bush’s statement is not clearly present in the AUMF—thirteen years of fighting and billions spent on offensive military tactics seems to suggest that this is what the United States hopes to achieve. Based on the nexus requirement within the current AUMF however, any military response and/or pursuit of a person or group not responsible for the attacks on 9/11, is illegal both domestically and internationally.¹³ Critics might point to the clause defined above and argue that the President is authorized through the AUMF and Congress to deter and/or prevent any future attacks, but this paper argues that the nexus requirement clearly establishes purpose and people, and that any future terrorist activity should be treated as a crime for which there is sufficient criminal code both domestically and internationally.

Secondly, even though the nexus requirement clearly establishes a *general* answer to *who* can be targeted, examining the text more closely raises additional legal questions over the specifics of targeting.¹⁴ According to the AUMF, targeting would include “...those nations, organizations, or persons” that the *President* determines “...authorized, committed, or aided...or harbored such organizations or persons” that committed the attacks on 9/11. However, after thirteen years of continuous military response, those people—including Osama Bin Laden—who were part of, or helped orchestrate 9/11, are either in prison or deceased. As such, the nexus requirement in the AUMF has been fulfilled, and anyone being targeted at this point cannot be considered to be directly associated with the attacks on 9/11 and therefore, should not be judged under the purview of the AUMF.¹⁵ It is also important to point out that the United States is no longer in the state of emergency invoked by 9/11 and therefore the power vested in the Executive Branch by Congress to unilaterally determine the guilt of a suspect thousands of miles away is not only unnecessary but is also legally and politically dangerous.¹⁶ To this end, Justice Robert Jackson was quoted post 9/11 when he said, “executive claims to power must be scrutinized with caution, for what is at stake is the equilibrium established by our constitutional system.”¹⁷ Based on the current use of the AUMF, and the persistent reliance of the Executive Branch on the Commander in Chief clause of the Constitution for our continued use of military force abroad, it is clear that the legal precedent being set must both be challenged and altered.¹⁸

Revisions/Interpretations

The AUMF clearly acknowledges the War Powers Resolution (WPR), yet does not explicitly say that the President is obligated to adhere to the requirements set forth in the WPR.¹⁹ These would require that the President report to Congress on the state of hostilities at least every six months.²⁰ The WPR is quite significant because it was drafted and signed into legislation as a response to President Nixon’s secret bombing of Cambodia during the Vietnam War.²¹ It is widely recognized among legal scholars that the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was the broadest AUMF in American history, and that the WPR was passed because of a need to rein in Executive power and what seemed like a never-ending armed conflict.²² In terms of broad scope and language, the 2001 AUMF is essentially equal in language and scope to Congress’s declaration of war against Germany, or the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.²³ However, both of those examples had clear geographical parameters, specific guidelines on who was to be targeted, and a specific end goal. Since the current AUMF is arguably broader in all three of these categories, it is clear that when passing the 2001 AUMF to include specific paragraphs of the WPR, Congress intended to find an end-date to hostilities and keep the Executive Office in check. Therefore, it is within the spirit of not only the WPR, but the AUMF itself to address the need for a sunset date, define more clearly who the United States may target and when, and rely first on diplomatic efforts and traditional law enforcement methods in order to bring an end to the current hostilities. The next section looks closely at the language used in the NDAA of 2012 and how it relates to the AUMF and the continued use of military force.

National Defense Authorization Act 2012 –

In 2012, Congress reauthorized allocation of funds towards the use of military force in connection with ongoing hostilities between the U.S., al Qaeda, and “associated forces.” Congress defined more closely some of the broader issues within the AUMF while simultaneously offering the Executive more leeway:

“...the power vested in the Executive Branch by Congress to unilaterally determine the guilt of a suspect thousands of miles away is not only unnecessary but is also legally and politically dangerous.”

Congress affirms that—

- (1) the United States is engaged in an armed conflict with al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and associated forces and that those entities continue to pose a threat to the United States and its citizens, both domestically and abroad;
- (2) the President has the authority to use all necessary and appropriate force during the current armed conflict with al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and associated forces pursuant to the Authorization for Use of Military Force (Public Law 107–40; 50 U.S.C. 1541 note);
- (3) the current armed conflict includes nations, organization, and persons who—
 - (A) are part of, or are substantially supporting, al-Qaeda, the Taliban, or associated forces that are engaged in hostilities against the United States or its coalition partners; or

- (B) have engaged in hostilities or have directly supported hostilities in aid of a nation, organization, or person described in subparagraph (A); and
- (4) the President’s authority pursuant to the Authorization for Use of Military Force (Public Law 107–40; 50 U.S.C. 1541 note) includes the authority to detain belligerents, including persons described in paragraph (3), until the termination of hostilities.²⁴

♦ ♦ ♦

In this text Congress more distinctively clarifies who the U.S. is engaged in hostilities with, whereas in the original AUMF it states “those nations, organization, or persons” responsible for the attacks on 9/11. This, coupled with section 3A, allows the President to not only pursue those responsible for 9/11, but anyone he deems guilty of “substantially supporting, al Qaeda, the Taliban, or associated forces,” and who he believes are “engaged in hostilities against the United States or its coalition partners.”²⁵ He is then given the authority to detain these people “until the termination of hostilities.” Here again is a hint towards an end to hostilities as mentioned in the original AUMF when referencing the WPR, yet it also includes a broad authorization to detain whomever the Executive decides is a threat and for an indeterminate amount of time. The U.S. has already targeted and killed U.S. citizens under this broad authorization, which is unconstitutional as per the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution.²⁶

Another piece of this legislation to scrutinize is section 3B. In some cases this could be an example of *ex post facto* law (after the fact), which is unconstitutional as per Article I,

section 9 of the U.S. Constitution.²⁷ Implicitly assumed in section 3B is that even if someone is no longer acting hostile or committing hostile acts, the President is still authorized to “use all necessary and appropriate force” to detain and/or kill that person. What section 3B fails to define is what constitutes a hostile act, and whether international or domestic laws have codified those acts as illegal. Again, with the use of undefined language and broad generalization, both Congress and the Executive branch laydown a dangerous legal precedent and pave the way for an endless military endeavor.²⁸

There are several questions as to the legality of the current AUMF at a domestic level, even with the amendments Congress has codified. It is essential that Congress and the American people move to sunset the AUMF so that the U.S. can move forward on a more appropriate legal standing domestically. It is important at many levels that the U.S. refrain from the use of military force unless absolutely necessary, and instead rely on diplomacy and law enforcement models to combat the extremist ideologies proliferated by groups like al Qaeda. As such, the US should rethink its use of military force against groups like al Qaeda, and by extension, the implications of its actions in the context of the international community and its laws.

International Law

When it comes to international law and the conduct of war, unarmed conflict, and armed conflict, there are three leading categories: Customary International Law, International Humanitarian Law (IHL or LOAC), and Human Rights Law. This paper will not discuss the intricacies of each, but rather

will focus on how the U.S.’s use of military force abroad is affected by any, or all, of these bodies of international law. For clarity, it is important to note that Customary International Law is the oldest form of international law and has been shaped over centuries by various persons, nations, institutions, and events. Both IHL and Human Rights Law are tied to the Charter of the United Nations. IHL is codified through the Lieber Code, the Geneva Conventions and its Additional Protocols, and Human Rights Law is codified through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as other treaties and statutes.²⁹ Moving forward, it is important to understand and remember that the United States is a party to, and has ratified all of the above-mentioned charters, statutes, conventions, and protocols.

U.N. Charter –

- Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations.³⁰
- All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.³¹

♦ ♦ ♦

At international levels as well as domestic levels it is universally accepted (customary law) that individuals and nations have a right to self-defense. As illustrated above, it is codified within

the Charter of the United Nations. Therefore, it cannot be disputed that following the events on 9/11 it was within the legal right, both internationally and domestically, for the U.S. to pursue those responsible with lethal force. However, thirteen years after the events on 9/11 the U.S. is still pursuing a military policy internationally as if it were 2001.

It is also codified within the U.N. Charter that nations must work towards peace and security, and must not threaten the peace through unnecessary force or posturing.³² Our continued use of targeted strikes in countries like Yemen and Somalia are in clear violation of that mandate, as well as our disregard for the national sovereignty of Pakistan. Specific to this situation, legal scholars also argue that “[t]here are limitations on a state’s right to self-defense against terrorist attacks. [T]hose limitations are immediacy, necessity, and most significant, proportionality.”³³ Clearly, if the U.S. wishes to lead the way legally, ethically, and politically, it is imperative that we adhere to these IHL standards:

Imminence –

As defined by Daniel Webster while litigating the Caroline Case: “instant, overwhelming, and leaving no choice of means, and no moment for deliberation.”³⁴ Though the U.S. has developed its own version of imminence, this definition holds for international law expectations. Based on the above definition, it is even congruous to assume that domestic terrorism is more of an imminent threat than from anything abroad. It would make sense then, to lessen the United States’ use of military force abroad and focus more on efforts domestically in

order to act defensively rather than offensively.

Necessity –

“In international law, ‘necessity’ is usually applicable when action is necessary for the security or safety of the state – a form of self-preservation.”³⁵

It has not been made clear that since 9/11 the safety of the state has been in jeopardy, or that acts of terrorism are capable of causing the kind of damage to an entire country that is implied by this definition. Barring a nuclear, chemical, or biological weapon, the threat posed by groups like al Qaeda does not seem to meet these criteria.

Proportionality –

“Proportionality limits defensive force to that required to repel the attack.”³⁶ In other words, a defensive military response to an imminent threat must be just enough to repel the attack. Again, it is arguable that the current military force being employed by the U.S. government is not proportionate to the threat, and that the casualties caused by that military threat far outnumber those potentially threatened by terrorist activity.

Distinction –

In order to ensure respect for and protection of the civilian population and civilian objects, the Parties to the conflict shall at all times distinguish between the civilian population and combatants and between civilian objects and military objectives and accordingly shall direct their operations only against military objectives.³⁷

Not only is this recognized under Customary International Law, but it is codified in the Geneva Conventions to which the U.S. is a party. With the current use of military force against *suspected* terrorists, it appears that the U.S. government is ignoring this mandate and instead refusing to take the time to draw distinctions between civilians and combatants before using military force.

Based on these criteria, it is clear that the use of military force currently being employed by the United States is out of line with both statutory and Customary International Law. However, different types of conflicts will also necessitate different conduct for hostilities, which should be examined in the context of international law.

Non-international Armed Conflict vs. Non-international Unarmed Conflict –

To determine which category the conflict between the U.S. and al Qaeda falls into one must examine what necessitates that the conflict's properties be aligned with each category of conflict. For instance, in a non-international armed conflict (in other words a civil war or military coup), the armed conflict must be continuous and ongoing, and must be at a scale that warrants such a categorization.³⁸ A non-international unarmed conflict however, denotes sporadic fighting and therefore does not ascribe to the same laws of war as a non-international armed conflict. Specifically, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) lists for a non-international armed conflict:

- (1) That the party in revolt... possesses an organized military force, an authority

responsible for its acts, acting within a determinate territory and have the means of respecting and ensuring respect for the Conventions.

- (2) That the legal government is obliged to have recourse to the regular military forces against insurgents organized as military and in possession of a part of the natural territory.

- (3) (a) That the *de jure* Government has recognized the insurgents as belligerents...

- (d) That the dispute has been admitted to the agency of the Security Council or the General Assembly of the United Nations as being a threat to international peace...

- (4) (a) That the insurgents have an organization purporting to have the characteristics of a State.

- (b) That the insurgent civil authority exercises *de facto* authority over persons within a determinate territory...³⁹

♦ ♦ ♦

Arguably, the current hostilities between the U.S., al Qaeda, and “affiliated forces” do not conform to any of these standards. There is no specific geographic location or defined battlefield, no insurgent leader on behalf of al Qaeda and “affiliated forces” with the means of respecting the Conventions, and no organized military on behalf of al Qaeda and “affiliated forces.” Consequently, the U.S., al Qaeda, and “affiliated forces” are in fact engaged in a non-international unarmed conflict classified as sporadic fighting under International legal code. If this is the case, then *suspected* terrorists are no longer legal or unlawful combatants,⁴⁰ but

rather potential criminals likely ready to engage in criminal acts. By extension, if this is the case, then the U.S. is engaging its military and CIA operatives in internationally illegal acts such as targeted killings and signature strikes. Finally, if al Qaeda members as well as “associated forces” are not classified as enemy combatants, then they are by definition civilians and are protected under Human Rights Law.⁴¹ As a result, this will bear significant implications for US behavior towards suspected terrorists abroad, particularly with the implementation of the CIA drone program.

CIA Drone Program

Through the implementation of its drone program, the U.S. continues to set dangerous domestic and international legal precedent.⁴² As one legal scholar illustrates, “The creation of international norms is an iterative process, one to which the United States makes significant contributions. Because of this outsized influence, the United States should not claim international legal rights that it is not prepared to see proliferate around the globe. Scholars have observed that the Obama Administration’s ‘expansive and open-ended interpretation of the right to self-defence threatens to destroy the prohibition on the use of armed force.’ Indeed, ‘[i]f other states were to claim the broad-based authority that the United States does, to kill people anywhere, anytime, the result would be chaos.”⁴³ Although it is obviously valid to maintain, that the U.S. is not just killing anyone anywhere at anytime, the perception on an international level -in light of current practices - is that the U.S. government is in fact

authorizing the killing of innocents in multiple countries.⁴⁴ Ultimately the U.S. must ask itself whether the political, moral, and legal precedent it is currently setting on the international stage is in fact detrimental to foreign policy efforts, and whether or not it is putting Americans and their allies in harms way due to its continued military endeavors abroad.

This debate is also based on whether the U.S. is engaged in a non-international armed conflict. If members of al Qaeda and “associated forces” can be classified as enemy combatants then it is legal within IHL and LOAC to target them and their bases.⁴⁵ However, since the conflict does not meet the internationally recognized standards of a non-international armed conflict,⁴⁶ it is the position of this paper that the targeted killings of civilians by the CIA – also comprised of civilians – is illegal under international law.⁴⁷ As defined previously, in order to be legally targeted, one must be recognized as an enemy combatant.⁴⁸ If a person, or persons, cannot be defined as such, lethal force cannot and should not be used unless in self-defense.⁴⁹ The Obama Administration has issued its own definition of enemy combatants as, “[a]n individual who was part of or supporting Taliban or al Qaeda forces, or associated forces that are engaged in hostilities against the United States or its coalition partners.”⁵⁰ Using this definition along with the argument that the U.S. has the right to *preemptively* strike in self-defense, the Executive has continued its support for the CIA’s drone program.⁵¹

Targeted killings and signature strikes from a domestic perspective necessitates a close look at the nexus requirements embedded in the AUMF: those responsible for the attacks

on September 11th, 2001.⁵² It is also crucial to reflect on the assassination ban signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in Executive Order 12333:

2.11 *Prohibition on Assassination.* No person employed by or acting on behalf of the United States Government shall engage in, or conspire to engage in, assassination.

2.12 *Indirect Participation.* No agency of the Intelligence Community shall participate in or request any person to undertake activities forbidden by this Order.⁵³

♦ ♦ ♦

In an essay published in the *Harvard International Law Journal*, David Abramowitz stresses the significance of the assassination ban and concedes that many in Congress expressed concern after passing S.J. Res. 23.⁵⁴ In response to this concern Abramowitz writes, "...[i]t has long been the view of the executive branch that targeting the enemy's command and control structures, including those of insurgent groups, is permissible under the laws of war and does not constitute 'assassination.' Thus, regardless of whether S.J. Res. 23 had been enacted or not, the executive branch would take the view that the President could carry out targeted attacks on those responsible for the attacks of September 11, 2001, without violating this ban."⁵⁵ It is easy to understand this perspective in the few years following September 11th, however it is increasingly hard to argue thirteen years later, and therefore tenable to argue that the CIA's drone program is in direct violation of executive order 12333. It is true that under both Customary International Law and IHL targeting enemy

command and control structures is permissible,⁵⁶ yet the current drone program targets specific people who have been determined by the Executive to be a threat to the United States and are not, as defined previously, enemy combatants. As such, this is essentially civilians participating in combat,⁵⁷ which is illegal under Additional Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions.⁵⁸ "Thus, not only does the United States decide to violate the laws of war by engaging the CIA, a branch that lacks uniforms or distinguishing insignia, in hostilities, but it also violates the laws of war by not allowing its distinct military branches to carry out these same hostilities."⁵⁹ Both Congress and the Executive need to acknowledge that the Executive's current misuse of the CIA and interpretations of the broad language under the AUMF not only undermines domestic and international laws, but it potentially sets the U.S. up for future claims of capital international crimes such as crimes against humanity or war crimes, for which there are no statutes of limitations.⁶⁰

Conclusion

For too long, both Congress and the Executive have enacted policies not in accordance with international law.⁶¹ Especially now, the disregard on an international level for the UN Charter and legal due process has meant that the international community is withdrawing political and social support.⁶² Reflecting on the entirety of this paper and scope of law it draws from, one must recognize the legally sensitive footing the U.S. is on while fighting potential criminal acts with military force under the umbrella of the 2001

AUMF. Simply put, since all who are responsible for 9/11 are either behind bars or deceased, it is becoming increasingly clear that the U.S. is interpreting the AUMF to enable aggressive counter-terrorism rather than a defensive battle.⁶³ As was made clear throughout this paper, this is not sanctioned or codified under international law and is of questionable legality domestically. Based on this analysis, it is the recommendation of this paper that the US Congress set a date to sunset the AUMF while simultaneously amending the WPR to include specific time parameters for an undeclared war. As Beau D. Barnes puts it, “Overly malleable concepts are not the proper basis for the consistent use of military force in a democracy.”⁶⁴ Clearly, the U.S. must alter the way in which it combats extremist ideologies, for we cannot kill our way to victory. ♦

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³ Nat’l Comm’n on Terrorist Attacks Upon the U.S., The 9/11 Commission Report 108-43 (2004), available at http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report_Ch4.htm.

⁴ “S.J.Res. 23--107th Congress: Authorization for Use of Military Force.” [www.GovTrack.us](http://www.govtrack.us). 2001. January 26, 2014 <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/107/sjres23>.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Cronogue, Graham, “A New AUMF: Defining Combatants in the War on Terror;” 22 Duke

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⁷ “S.J.Res. 23--107th Congress: Authorization for Use of Military Force.” [www.GovTrack.us](http://www.govtrack.us). 2001. January 26, 2014 <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/107/sjres23>.

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¹¹ Cronogue, Graham, “A New AUMF: Defining Combatants in the War on Terror;” 22 Duke J. Comp. & Int’l L. 377 (2011-2012).

¹² President George W. Bush, Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People (Sept. 20, 2001), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>

¹³ Geraghty, Thomas, “The Criminal-Enemy Distinction: Prosecuting a Limited War against Terrorism following the September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks;” 33 McGeorge L. Rev. 551 (2001-2002).

¹⁴ Cronogue, Graham, “A New AUMF: Defining Combatants in the War on Terror;” 22 Duke J. Comp. & Int’l L. 377 (2011-2012).

¹⁵ Geraghty, Thomas, “The Criminal-Enemy Distinction: Prosecuting a Limited War against Terrorism following the September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks;” 33 McGeorge L. Rev. 551 (2001-2002).

¹⁶ Cronogue, Graham, “A New AUMF: Defining Combatants in the War on Terror;” 22 Duke J. Comp. & Int’l L. 377 (2011-2012).

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Bevin McLeod is a senior at both the Jackson School of International Studies and the Department of Economics, studying international political economy. Bevin is a passionate supporter of human rights, equality, and socioeconomic fairness. She plans to pursue an MA at the Jackson School of International Studies as well as a JD in international law while focusing on human and women's rights issues both domestically and abroad.

Edited by Simon Walker and Adam Khan

Expert Insights

This section shifts away from student work in order to provide a professional perspective of someone working in the field of International Studies. For this edition of Expert Insights, the Jackson School Journal had the pleasure of interviewing Jennifer Butte-Dahl. Butte-Dahl is the Program Director for the Jackson School's new graduate degree in Applied International Studies and has worked previously at the State Department during both the Bush and Obama administrations. Butte-Dahl also teaches the undergraduate course "Crafting and Influencing U.S. Foreign Policy in the 21st Century" at the Jackson School. In a recent interview, she spoke with the Journal about her path from college to an exciting and rewarding career in the State Department, and gave some useful advice for Jackson School students as well.

The Journal also had the pleasure of catching up with Julie Mendel. Mendel was a founding member of this Journal who graduated from the Jackson School in 2012 and recently began a new job at an environmental advocacy organization in Los Angeles. In a recent interview, Mendel spoke with us about her experiences as a young professional, which included a front-row seat to the world's strongest and most deadly typhoon on record—Haiyan, which hit the Filipino city of Tacloban where Julie was staying last November.

Q&A with Jennifer Butte-Dahl

Jackson School Journal: Could we start with a brief description of your path from college to the Department of State—was it a path you planned on as an undergraduate?

Butte-Dahl: I think I had about seven different majors as an undergraduate at Purdue University. Everything from political science to marine biology—I even wanted to be a photojournalist at one point. I interned in the School of Forestry, but that didn't last very long. I also thought I wanted to be a forest ranger. I eventually found my way into business because I just felt that it was a practical degree when I really didn't know what I wanted to do, and there were some interesting things occurring internationally in that space as well.

Jackson School Journal: Did you really go straight from forestry school to a business degree?

Butte-Dahl: I did. And I got involved in AIESIC (a French acronym for International Association of Students in Economic and Commercial Sciences), an organization that I really credit for opening my eyes to the possibilities of working internationally. AIESIC is an international student organization operating in most countries of the world now, normally out of business schools, and it was set up by seven European students after WWII who came together and said “How do we make sure another world war never happens?”

Their answer was that people needed to go and live with each other, learn about each other, and understand each other's countries and cultures. So they set up this organization that facilitated student exchanges initially between seven countries, but have since grown to be worldwide. The organization taught me a lot about networking, understanding what it takes to be a leader, and how to run a business. I was also working with AIESEC's undergraduate global trainee exchange program at the same time. After a year of working with AIESEC as an undergrad, I was getting ready to graduate, and I organized a traineeship for myself in South Africa. I *thought* I was going to work for a small non-profit, but when I got there I realized there was no money, office, or business plan; there were a couple of visionaries with some great ideas and the sole intention of helping their community.

I went to South Africa a few years after the end of apartheid, which was a really interesting transitional period of time. However, before I graduated business school I had to take this once-a-week course where they brought in CEOs, VPs, and heads of major organizations to teach us what it was like in the real world. In order to get credit for this class we had to take them to breakfast, take them on a tour, or somehow interact with these leaders. I happened to sign up for the day when the speaker was both the head of the Motorola Foundation and the Vice President for global literacy for Motorola.

We were sitting at breakfast - a group of about 10 undergrads sitting around a table with this VP - and she asked us what we planned to do after graduation. Everyone said, "I'm going to work for this accounting firm," or "I'm going to Wall Street," and I'm like—"I'm going to go work for this small non-profit in South Africa." And that caught her attention, since the Motorola Foundation was heavily involved in South Africa at the time. She was impressed by my "gumption," I think she called it, at a time when South Africa was in the midst of massive economic and political transition, and not necessarily tranquil. And so she helped me connect with her team in South Africa and eventually go to work for Motorola. So, when I got there (and there really wasn't much infrastructure there for me to do the job that I thought I was going to do) I ended up working for Motorola. It was good, because the non-profit that I was working for in parallel **paid me in fruits and vegetables—and that was fantastic**, but it didn't really take me that far financially. So I spent a year in South Africa, worked for Motorola in the radio networking division, and eventually moved over full time to work for this non-profit. At this time, we were doing really basic business skills training and entrepreneurship training in the Northern Province.

There was also this situation—post-apartheid—where most of these people had been let down by the education system and disenfranchised. They were not given skills that were leading to any kind of jobs, so everyone was unemployed and didn't know what to do. We worked for a lot of cooperative groups, many comprised of women, who would come together and do crafts but needed help figuring out what to do with that. Many didn't understand some important skills, such as:

how do you get those crafts to market? What are the different channels? How do you set a price for this? What is your break-even point? I mean really, really simple business skills that were life changing for them.

Everyone said, "I'm going to work for this accounting firm," or "I'm going to Wall Street," and I'm like—"I'm going to go work for this small non profit in South Africa."

My trajectory has always been trying to think about where I—and this sounds kind of cliché—can have the biggest impact on the world. In South Africa I felt like I was having a massive impact on the people around me, which was often burdensome but also really powerful. At the same time, I also felt it was really small and thought I could do more if I had a bigger platform, but I was unsure what that platform was.

I went on to work in Brazil for some time, and then Dubai. And then life changed - as I think it did for many people in my generation - on 9/11. One, I was away from the U.S. and felt really... *far* from everyone who seemed to be coming together around this horrible thing that had happened. I was also living in the Middle East, and it was a really tense time to be in the Middle East as an American. I had an Egyptian boyfriend of three years, and we had a really hard time over that period because there was a lot of blame. Even amidst groups of friends, which included Americans and Europeans and Arabs, there was a lot of tension

and hurt feelings. and it was hard not to make it personal. But it was at that point that I felt like—I had been living in the Middle East for two years, I had a rudimentary grasp of Arabic and knew that world a little better than many of my fellow citizens. I also felt like I needed to do something to help my country. So I quit my job and decided to go back for a degree in foreign policy that would take me into public service. I went to Georgetown, got a degree in Foreign Service (focusing in on Foreign Policy and International Security, with a Certificate in Arab Studies and a proficiency in Arabic), and then joined the State Department.

Jackson School Journal: What path did you take to get into the State Department?

Butte-Dahl: I went through the Presidential Management Fellowship program. I think the process is different now, but graduate schools nominate a number of students (they can apply), then the students go through a series of different assessments. There's a written assessment, a day long sort of interpersonal dynamics assessment, and accepted students join a pool of maybe 100-200 PMFs. The government then opens up a number of slots in different agencies for PMFs, so if students are interested in those agencies they can go see what each has available. It's sort of like a big job fair kind of thing. However, if you wait for the job fair, there might not be anything left. As a PMF candidate, you need to network heavily, identify the agencies and roles you want to go after, and then be persistent.

Jackson School Journal: What would a typical 'day in the life'—if there is such a thing—look like for a State Department employee?

Butte-Dahl: No day at State was the same. I think I had either eleven or twelve jobs in the six years I was there—everything from working with the Hill on Middle East issues, budget issues, and Middle East peace, to working on this big Libya claims issue, to working for the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State—every day was a surprise.

Jackson School Journal: Is that typical to have such a wide array of responsibilities?

Butte-Dahl: A lot of it comes from being a PMF. It's a leadership program for people who want to be in government and public service, so PMF's have to do rotations. Each agency runs it little differently, but PMF's start in an agency and can then rotate into the field. So in State a PMF could work in an embassy, or even go over to the Defense Department or USAID, but the whole point is to get a broader perspective of the government than one would by just going into an agency and sitting in the same office. And so when you're a PMF people start to think of you as as flexible, as a trouble-shooter, as someone they can bring in—they're generally flexible at least in their first two years, and I think that's what happened to me. I became this flexible, available person who could get pulled into something to help and that continued to happen. And I like that, so I consistently sought out new and interesting roles.

I don't think that's the same for everyone who goes into the State Department, or any other government institution. **You have to push, and you have to make your experience what you want it to be**, because if you just sit at your desk and do what you're told without asking for more, or don't ask questions,

you could be sitting there for a long time.

Jackson School Journal: What did your daily routine look like at State?

Butte-Dahl: Normally I would get up at 5:10 and make a cup of coffee. I would check email while I drank it -just to make sure no crisis had happened overnight - and then go to the gym. If I was on the treadmill, I would either watch the news or read the newspaper at the same time, and I was usually in the office by 7:30. **The key was to have all the news—all the headlines—read by the time your boss got there,** because if something happened you needed to be able to speak articulately about what it was and we were doing about it. So yeah, mornings start quick. Most people checked their email at about midnight, before they went to bed. Many things happened across time zones I didn't want to miss, and if something came at night I wanted to be able to ask questions so that I would have answers when I woke up.

Jackson School Journal: I know you've also stressed the importance of making personal connections and building those relationships. Could you discuss that aspect of it a little?

Butte-Dahl: Personal relationships are everything. Recently, a student of mine asked one of our guest speakers "If I want to work in this particular area, or on this particular thing, who should I talk to or what should I do?" My guest speaker said, "Work with people you really, really like, because they're also going to move on in their careers. They're probably going to do things that are interesting to you, and they'll keep calling you to say hey, do you want to come do this with me?" That's

how it works. Everyone helps everybody in D.C., and in the world of international affairs relationships are all-important.

Jackson School Journal: What was it like transitioning between different administrations, and working for different secretaries as they made the transition?

Butte-Dahl: Well it's interesting because I entered the State Department under Colin Powell, and I went through that first intra-administration transition from Colin Powell to Condoleezza Rice, which was a shift in itself. It's kind of the feel of the building that changes if that makes sense. After that I went through the second administration change, from Condoleezza Rice to Hillary Clinton. I need to caveat, though, because I sat in different places in the different administrations. At the beginning I was very young and didn't really know what I was a part of yet. However, by the end I had been there for quite some time. I think that for me it boils down to the fact that the State Department is a mix of people, personalities, opinions, and political views and you know that at any given time there are Foreign Service Officers, Civil Servants and appointees.

I think from the outside people find the difference between those people much starker than it is, but as an insider I think you might not always know who's a Civil Servant, who's a Foreign Service Officer, or who's a schedule B (which is an expert appointee). I mean, these people work side by side on things, and while politics definitely plays a role in certain areas and on certain issues, they often don't. And so, in my view, I didn't—there were no massive policy swings on the issues that I worked on

between any of those transitions, or at least none where it was a stark—go to work one day where this was the policy and then the next day it changed. All these transitions, or shifts in policy direction, normally require normally require policy reviews, long sessions, and numbers of meetings before the tables turn. Generally, the people in those meetings are all really smart people, and good people, doing the best they can to craft policy that is in the best interest of this country, and I think that for me the transitions were less interesting than people would think they'd be.

“Everyone helps everybody in D.C., and in the world of international affairs relationships are all-important.”

Jackson School Journal: As Edward Snowden and the NSA leaks continue to make headlines, I'm curious how a story like that might be perceived or dealt with from inside the administration?

Butte-Dahl: Well I had a very similar situation when I was working for the Deputy Secretary and the first 'Wikileak' occurred. This was a massive issue that we were dealing with in the days and weeks before the various newspapers reported on the story. We knew it was happening, and we were frantically trying to figure out what was included in that cache of documents, what really sensitive items might put people's lives at risk, and all sorts of other things. **It was stressful; it was really stressful. The mood was not happy.**

The big thing with Wikileaks that I

found difficult was that most people in the general public just didn't understand why it was a big deal. Why it is dangerous for certain information to be leaked. Why it is important for certain things to be kept out of the public eye. Why it's important for us to keep the names of people out of the press. People who speak freely to American officials—it's a much bigger deal that most people realize, and there were ramifications across the world. I mean, we were dealing with what would happen in our embassy in Istanbul or in Tel Aviv, or in whatever capital when cables were released that included sensitive information. We were worried about the security of our people, and of other people who might have been in a meeting that was discussed in a cable. All of this has security implications.

Jackson School Journal: It couldn't have made things easier that it was all still classified, either, and so you can't talk about it outside the office.

Butte-Dahl: There's this phrase, “If they know, they're not talking, and if they're talking, they don't know.” And so when something's breaking, or a quiet negotiation is going on, a lot of the communications that are happening around it are really sensitive. If you have access to sensitive information, which in some cases could be classified, then you just don't talk about those things in the public domain. Sometimes it's hard, because an issue will make its way into the newspaper. Still, just because something's in the newspaper doesn't mean it's not classified. It makes it really complicated, so people tend not to talk about it. When I was in an after-work atmosphere I never talked about foreign policy issues. One, I was tired and it was work. But in D.C., everyone talks about foreign policy. Two, I never wanted to say something that I thought

could be classified, so it was easier to just not open my mouth.

Jackson School Journal: Is the State Department really somewhere where an individual can “make a difference?”

Butte-Dahl: The thing that is amazing about public service is that even at the most junior levels, you *can* influence policy. You could be a Desk Officer in the State Department on your first assignment, write up draft talking points for the Secretary of State, and later that day hear the Secretary saying exactly what you wrote down. There are a million other people who are going to clear off, edit, and maybe wordsmith what you’ve written, but *you wrote it*. There are very few places where you can have that kind of impact at any level.

The way the government functions puts a lot of responsibility on everyone, and there is more work happening, more crises breaking, and more issues that need to be addressed at any given time than there are people who can handle it. So everyone’s overloaded, which means that if you’re smart, if you are a go-getter and ambitious, if you’re just there and ready to do the work, then you’ll always have opportunities to make a difference.

I did some fantastic work during my time in government. I worked on really interesting issues, and was always working on things that were in the headlines. I had the opportunity to work with really senior people throughout the government, and it was fun. Most people who leave government say, “I honestly felt that the work I did mattered. In my own small way, I made a difference in the world.”

Jackson School Journal: Any standout moments or achievements? Or things that were particularly frustrating?

Butte-Dahl: I had the opportunity to do a lot of different things, in a number of different offices. I spent a year in Jerusalem during Gaza Disengagement (when the Israelis pulled out of Gaza) and through to the end of the 2006 Hizbollah-Israel conflict. It was a fascinating time to be in that place, and to be working on really sensitive and important issues.

Maybe my proudest accomplishment was the Libya claims deal, which I talk about in class a little bit, and the arrangement that we worked out with the Libyans to assure that our progress bringing Libya back into the fold of the international community continued. Another important part of that deal was ensuring that they stuck by their commitment to renounce terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, and also to settle outstanding legal claims brought by victims of past Libyan terrorism. That was a really massive undertaking and a really important accomplishment for the United States. Unfortunately, now it has all been undone with what we’ve seen happen in Libya. But for the claims victims, who were finally able to close a chapter in their lives, it was really important. It was really important for the American government too, to show other international actors that making the right choices (giving up bad things) will reap dividends. And rebuilding the relationship with Libya was important for a number of other national security reasons as well. It was a great project, and we had a great team.

Jackson School Journal: What advice or next-steps might you recommend for Jackson School

students who want to pursue that kind of work?

Butte-Dahl: Take a few years and get out into the field. Take a few years and work - get to DC, or NYC, get out into the field. Do *anything*, and you'll come back with an understanding not only of other cultures, but also of how programs are implemented, how policy is made, and how work actually gets done on the ground. Do this, and you'll have much more to offer. Learn the language, if you can. At times in my life I've learned Spanish, Portuguese, and Arabic. Now they're all a mess, but I like to maintain that they're somewhere in the back of my head and if I need them, I'll be able to access them. But it's not only about the skill, though. Learning other languages is about truly understanding other cultures, which is a critical component of engaging in global affairs. It also shows dedication, and a drive to go that extra mile. Generally though, I think it's important for Jackson School students to get experience. Even if they don't plan to work for a couple of years before grad school—which I hope everyone does—doing some substantive and meaningful internships during the course of your studies is really important. I didn't do that as an undergrad. In fact, I worked at Subway as a sandwich artist. I also rented out movies at Mister Movies. I sold Cutco Knives, and worked as a server at restaurants and bars. I still didn't understand the fact that other students my age were either working in a Congressman's office or in a law firm.

When I got to grad school, I realized that a lot of those things were right in front of me. I wasted a lot of time because I wasn't discerning enough about the jobs that I took; I just needed some extra cash. As a student, if you have the ability to be discerning, then *be discerning*. Go do something that's going to look

great on your resume and give you real skills. I worked throughout my graduate degree. I did an internship with the State Department, on the Hill, and with the Scowcroft Group. At State I worked in the office of Jordan, Lebanon, and Syrian Affairs and I was kind of like an extra hand in the office. I wrote draft memos and answered a lot of constituent mail. It wasn't hugely substantive, but it provided me with an understanding of the world I was jumping into, and I made a lot of connections. One which led to my first job as a PMF a year later. And this is another piece of advice I have: internships are often short, and I think it takes a while before you feel comfortable. You're in learning mode for a little while, and by the time you get comfortable to ask for more work or to go into meetings, you're almost at the end. Students should be self-assertive. Be bold. Ask for what you want. Volunteer for additional assignments, because that is how you learn. People appreciate it, but the world's a busy place so the people you're working with probably won't realize that you don't have enough to do, and are probably unaware – despite the fact that they probably wouldn't mind at all – that you wanted to sit in on that meeting.

When starting an internship, I would advise students to sit down with their boss and lay out their expectations. As interns, students wonder “what are their expectations of *me*? Am *I* going to do a good job?” Turn the tables around, and say “This is a learning experience for me, and I've only got three months. What do I want from *you*?” Be clear on what you're trying to get out of it. Are you trying to get skills in writing or talking or briefing, or are you trying to understand the structure of the organization? Also, be upfront with the person that you're working for, and say this is what I want to get

out of this experience, and these are the ways I think we can do that. That's usually impressive to the employer, because it indicates that you've been thinking about it. It also reminds them to bring you into those meetings because you're into it. If you don't tell them that, they will not know. They also will not know that you aren't overwhelmed with the work you're given. Make it clear if you want to be more involved.

Jackson School Journal: What would you say to those who might think that government work is bureaucratic, or if the government is not the place to make a difference?

Butte-Dahl: I teach because I want to inspire young people to go into public service, so they'll realize how fascinating the work is, how much they'll love it, and that they really *can* make a difference—even from the beginning. It's also worth noting that, coming out of grad school, I had the same concern. I had a hard time differentiating policy from politics. For me it was all mixed up, and this whole world was kind of ugly, partisan, and bureaucratic. I was afraid I would end up in some dungeon-like office writing hand-written papers without seeing the light of day, and I had no desire to be part of that. And it took an internship during grad school with the State Department, when the light came on and I thought this might be really interesting, but it is really what you make of it. Like I said, **there are crises happening all the time, and if you're smart and ambitious you can do great work and go far with it.** You still do need to make your way through a large bureaucracy. It's just like any company or massive organization. Microsoft, Boeing, Amazon, or Gates—all of these are big bureaucracies that you're going to have to find your way through as

an undergraduate or recent undergraduate. The most important thing to remember, whether you go into the State Department or anywhere else in the world of international affairs, is that you have the potential to affect events in the world on a very large scale. Your work will impact people's lives and livelihoods. It is quite powerful, and we need good people out there doing this work.

Interview Edited by Cam Keeble and Isaac Stockdale

Q&A with Julie Mendel

Jackson School Journal: You have had an intense last couple of years, but let's start back at the U.W. first. What was your major and track?

Mendel: I majored in International Studies, my track was in 'development,' but I've always wondered how relevant that is, since I think it's only a few special classes. I reached a point in my Sophomore year where I was taking development classes and reading a lot about poverty alleviation and it kind of hit me that it seemed like everything I was learning about was very much in the abstract; very much from the perspective of people that I thought I wanted to be like—policy makers and economists who wanted to work to fix development issues. It struck me that there was probably a whole other perspective to see and experience, and for me, that was kind of the big impetus for joining a study abroad program—to go to a place that hasn't experienced a lot of development and to see what that is like and what kind of issues I would find. It brought up a lot of questions and was definitely an enormous personal learning experience for me. I studied abroad through the honors program, first between my Sophomore and Junior year and then I went again the next summer, between my Junior and Senior year, and I was fortunate enough to go on a trip that they actually no longer offer, to Sierra Leone in West Africa. Apart from founding and working on the Journal, that was one of the most formative

things I did, and I definitely still draw a lot from that experience.

Jackson School Journal: Tell me more about your experience in Sierra Leone. What made you want to go back a second time?

Mendel: The program was led by an anthropologist who had worked in the community that we stayed in for twenty years, and had researched and written his own dissertation on it. The thing I really liked about it is that the group was really small. I think we took twelve students and from across disciplines—there was a drama major, a journalism major, a couple of International Studies majors; we had a diverse range across the liberal arts. Everybody goes with their own research question in mind, and in theory you're given enough ethnography training to ask questions and conduct interviews and make a write up of your research findings. I was interested in that structure because I think I kind of reached a point where I wanted to be able to ask my own questions and not just sort of read what people had done or read how other people came to learn things, I wanted to do something that was really hands on and—this sounds really trite—but I really wanted to challenge myself and I knew that I would be shocked. And I *was* shocked and I kind of wanted that to happen. I wanted to be shocked out of whatever kind of complacency or comfort that I had acquired

about what I was studying.

So my first year, the way I came across all of this is I took a class that was Health and Human Rights—and I don't think I was quite ready to take it, it was a 400 level class and I was a Sophomore—but I remember the first couple weeks especially struggling with understanding Human Rights Law. I remember the first exercise we did, going over the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and I thought that was really interesting, and that it must have been a very messy process to say we're going to go beyond the basic things that humans need to survive and say that all these other particular things are human rights as well, and then protection from particular practices are human rights. I just kind of got stuck there and I really wanted to understand how that happened, and that class ultimately wasn't really about that, so I ended up dropping the class. It was one of the first classes I'd ever dropped and I was sort of feeling like a failure and I got obsessed with the concept of human rights and how can we define what things are rights and what aren't across an entire world?

So I kind of reeled it all back, and I got down to food—which I think is one of the most basic human rights. I got interested in agriculture, agricultural aid and so I kind of broke down the problem and said, “Ok. Everybody needs food, so I'm just going to think about food, and that's what I did my first year in Sierra Leone—I studied how food moves within a community; who farms it, who makes it, who cooks it, and what it means when it's such a scarce resource. And that was really, really cool. I learned” to cook, and that was incredible. I spent a lot of time in cooking huts with women and they were showing me things like how to kill and then pluck the chickens, and then feeding me

the food that I had mostly watched them make.

And I think that a lot of people have this kind of experience when they travel to such a poor country, that people overwhelmingly want to be generous hosts and want to give you everything they have, because they are so excited and so honored to see you. Across the board, **everyone in my program really struggled with what it means to accept an enormous plate of food, that you don't really like to eat because it seems kind of weird, and from people who don't have a lot to give.** That was an interesting personal experience that I really enjoy thinking about. Food became, for me, kind of like a way of inspecting all of these things.

My second year, I was thinking about what interested me, and it was definitely the women that I became friends with in Sierra Leone. Just how they sort of navigated in a community that was so incredibly patriarchal—none of the women in the community I was in held land in their own name. In fact, they could only access it, or farm it, if it belonged to their husband or their brother or cousin—some man that decided to be their benefactor. So I was interested in exploring how women circumvent those things, because there were a couple of women in the community who at first glance didn't seem to have a male husband or brother or son who was their key to all of that. I quickly learned that that was the kind of project that took years, and a lot of training, and not two months.

Jackson School Journal: Were you able to even bring up those sorts of personal questions with any of the women you met?

Mendel: Well that's why I went my second year, because I wanted to ask those questions and it was a much more difficult experience for me in

a lot of ways, I wasn't coming into the project from an anthropology basis, so I didn't really have the background that it needed. I didn't quite have the language skills, either, and so logistically there were challenges. Also though, it was hard—and I imagine a lot of researchers encounter this—but it was really difficult to sit down with a woman and say, “Ok well what does it mean, like how do you access land?” **For me to ask a question that was pinned on the assumption that something was wrong with their lives, that they didn't have the right to something—they had no conception of that.** So I hit a lot of walls because I didn't know how to frame questions or approach my topic from how they might see it. I would ask a lot of women how do you do the work that you need to do but you also raise children and all of these things and they kind of shrug and say, “Well, I just do it.” It was a really personally difficult experience for me because I think what I was bumping up against was the limit of my own assumptions.

There's something that I think can be really magical about those kinds of experiences, though. A lot of my time in Sierra Leone—and I think this is true for a lot of the other people that I studied with—there were moments that we would have with the friends we would make that really felt like that person was my friend, even though honestly we have no business knowing each other. **There was no reason why I should ever have been in that place, but I was because of all of these insane privileges that I happen hold.** There were moments where I could transcend that, and there were moments where it was really thrown in your face that you can't. I really admire field researchers and anthropologists who find a way to do that and that's what is really cool about the Jackson School, there are a lot of people who teach, who

do their own research, like Cabeiri Robinson and a lot of other people. Looking at them and reflecting on my own experience, I see that being able to do that takes a lot of time and dedication, and really immersing yourself in a community for a very long time. And I think I decided that I wasn't ready to do that at the time.

Still, it was definitely amazing. The people who were also on the program that I shared that with are some of my closest friends today, and it's an experience that I still carry with me, and I try to stay abreast of what happens in development and poverty alleviation. I'm increasingly interested in the way the United States deals with poverty in its own country and thinking about those kinds of things from a policy person's point of view, and my experience in Sierra Leone means that I would approach those problems from a little fuller a perspective than I would if I'd just come in with the “why question” structure. Having the experience I've had, I think there's some kind of like third element to it. Even now, reflecting on what I sometimes consider to be a failure of mine, I think knowing how hard it can be to do that kind of work makes me a lot more humble about what my role in all of that is. I think a lot of undergraduates come to that in their own way, and that was just my journey.

Jackson School Journal: It sounds like it was a really incredible experience, even for its influence on your personal growth alone.

Mendel: Yeah, yeah, it was really great—and I think everyone kind of has those moments, but that was mine. It made me realize how big the world is, but also how small. One of the most interesting things about it, which connects to all of the other travel experiences I've had, and

especially the one in the Philippines, was that apart from the research and the Jackson School kind of intellectual heavy lifting that I was trying to do, **there was also the coming back, and talking to your friends about what you just experienced.** It's hard to put into words, but it was a firm belief of mine that you have to try. There were moments where it did feel like I had a genuine connection with a friend I made in Sierra Leone and that made me feel like the world was so small, and that if more people understood that connections like that were possible, and had them for themselves, then maybe there wouldn't be people living halfway across the world in such dire circumstances. I'm a big believer in the power of empathy. A lot of where my personal interests went, after those trips, was trying to write about the 'third world' with genuine empathy and respect.

Jackson School Journal: Let's talk about the Philippines—what was it like being in the middle of such an enormous and tragic natural disaster?

Mendel: So, I had been there for a couple days before the typhoon hit, and people knew that it was coming. Some communities right on the beach began to evacuate, but by and large I think people thought, "Oh, we'll be fine." Part of that seemed to come from a distrust in the media. A lot of people I talked with were saying, "It's a level four (which is the highest level they have for a typhoon) but well, we had level three last year, and it was fine, just a heavy rain. The news likes to exaggerate things." So I really had no idea what was coming. Honestly I don't think a lot of people did. It didn't seem to me, especially in the days immediately after, that the Filipino government was particularly prepared, but I think generally it didn't seem like anyone knew how powerful it

would become until made landfall, and by then it was pretty much too late for everyone.

So I was there when it hit, staying with a cousin, and we were incredibly lucky. He lives in a two story house and his father and brother are engineers so he was really picky about the building materials so his house was really strong. He lived in what was sort of considered to be a less-than-desirable part of the city, which was a blessing in disguise. It was on the outskirts, by a bunch of warehouses, and I think that's what saved us from a lot of the flooding – the warehouses blocked us. There was this really big storm surge that destroyed the most, and killed the most people, the morning the typhoon hit.

It was scary, but I didn't really know when it was happening, that it was the largest typhoon to make landfall in history. I had heard from my cousins and mom about typhoons that had hit in the past because the Philippines is a country that has those kinds of natural disasters, so we were just trying to make the best of it, pouring water out of the living room, which was flooded, and stuff like that. It was raining, there was very, very strong wind for maybe five hours straight, from 7 a.m. to early afternoon and then it calmed down. People trickled out, some people went to retrieve parts of their roof that had fallen off, and things like that. I think I was in the house the whole day after, and then the second day my cousin, who had already gone out himself, was like, "Well let's go see what's going on."

I was really scared, because what I had expected was post-Katrina sort of chaos, but it was so incredibly different from what I thought it would be, I don't even know how to bridge the gulf between those things. I'm sure you've seen the photos, they were all over the news, but you could not have set a better stage for a city that had just been hit by a typhoon. It looked like

something out of a movie, to me; like someone had stage-managed it. The roof of the gas station pumps had fallen over, dangling—it looked like someone had planned it. The streets were covered in trees and tin and wood and all sorts of things, so it was really only navigable by foot. Some people had motorcycles but, like my cousin and I, would have to get off and lift it over something, or crawl underneath telephone wires that had fallen. I was afraid, but being out with him, running into people he knew—he’s a teacher at a college there—everyone was like, “Are you ok?” or, “I’m ok and these people are ok, so if someone asks about them tell them they are ok,” or “Hey, if you need some water...” It was very much like witnessing a community come together, which sounds trite, but I was expecting—like in the days after Hurricane Katrina—all we heard about was looting, people breaking into stores with guns and all of that stuff and I think the biggest thing I learned from that experience is that some of that stuff does happen, and some of it we see in media portrayals because that’s what we expect to see.

I think a lot of reporters who came to Tacloban in the days after the typhoon saw what they expected to see, partially because they would fly into the airport, which was pretty much destroyed. It sits on a peninsula, surrounded by water, so that area was definitely the hardest hit of the city—completely flattened. At one point my cousin and I drove out to that area to check on somebody he knew, and all of the photographers, all of the CNN guys, were all in that area of the city. It did not seem that they had left the area of the airport, and that really frustrated me. When I left Tacloban and started scanning the news I noticed that all the reports were from this one part of the city, and it seemed to me wrong somehow that all of what my family (back home) was seeing was like the worst possible stuff. Even though

all of that is true, you know, there were also kids that were laughing and playing, in weird little treehouses that they’d made out of debris, and stuff.

“I’m a big believer in the power of empathy. A lot of where my personal interests went, after those trips, was trying to write about the ‘third world’ with genuine empathy and respect.”

I feel a certain pressure to be articulate about the complexity of media coverage in a situation like that because, obviously, people died and people lost their homes and that stuff happened – but there was all of this other stuff; people smiling. The looters, that you probably saw on TV stealing bags of rice, would walk down the road and hand it out to kids and women, who would come to collect it. So it was kind of an upside down thing. There was what I had expected—and what people generally expect when you combine natural disaster with ‘poor brown people’—and then there was what I actually experienced and I have this distinct memory of reading the New York Times front page, on its website, when I got back to Manila, and **I felt like I somehow peeled back that front page and dove in and saw people just living their lives and being genuinely really warm, caring people.** I’ve come to realize that “looting” is a really complicated term; I’m not so sure why we’re so concerned with property rights in a situation like that, you know? Because most of what I saw was people stealing towels, and diapers, and water bottles and stuff like that. There’s always a bigger story, and now I believe

there's the *underneath* behind the front page.

Sometimes I wonder if it's fair to be angry, that we don't see that stuff, because I know that it's hard for reporters to see that stuff and be everywhere, but it's frustrating. My parents must have been scared out of their minds and in some ways they needed to be, but in other ways they really didn't. The safest place for me was probably in Tacloban, weirdly enough. Even though all my cousins were like, "you should get out, there's lots of looting, people are dangerous," and I was like—I haven't seen a single person walking around with a gun. Everybody that I've met has asked me if I'm ok. What really amazed me was that, as we were driving around checking on people that my cousin knew and family members, we would drive up to streets with debris, and we wouldn't know how to get to a house, and somebody would come out and say, "Who are you looking for? Oh, I think I know him, I think he evacuated. In case you see these other people, let them know all these other people are ok." I don't know anybody in America who knows the name of every single person on their street like that. It was an interesting, really human way of networking and communicating. It sort of makes me think of mutual friends on Facebook only in real time and without that weird contrived abstraction of Facebook – like what you want that to be in real life.

Jackson School Journal: What do you mean when you say that "looting" is a complicated term?

Mendel: Well one of my cousins did a lot of looting, to be honest about that. He would come back with enormous bags of rice, or canned goods, or frozen goods, and I'd ask him how it was and he'd be like—"oh, it was really orderly."

There was this big cargo ship that ran aground close to where we were, in the warehouse district, and it was really high, some guys had tossed some rope down so you could pull yourself up. Then some others had laid down some coconut trees. My cousin was like, "Yeah there were two coconut trees, and one was the entrance and one was the exit." And the bags of rice are super heavy, so they'd devised this pulley system. He did tell me about some other, more chaotic situations, but at least in this one situation it was actually incredibly orderly and absurd. Not what I expected.

It's funny, there was apparently a helicopter flying overhead when my cousin was on the cargo ship, and so footage of men screwing around on the cargo ship and looting was on national news in the Philippines. Another cousin in the Philippines saw that footage on TV and I think thought—"Oh my God, look at those *looters*." But my cousin told me, "Yeah we were on this ship looking at the bags of rice and then this helicopter came and we thought they were going to shoot us." So it was this weird thing where both sides are assuming the worst about each other, which was kind of like the theme of what happened.

Another cousin had heard that one of the large, American-style malls had been broken into and was being looted, and he was telling me this story and said, "I had my bike with me, but there was a guy in front of the store, trying to arrange all of his packages on his bike so I asked him if he'd watch it for me." So my cousin went in and grabbed a bunch of Nikes (which turned out to be girls' Nikes, in the wrong size) and came out and the guy was still there. My cousin was like, "He was still trying to fit everything on his bike and he even gave me some cologne, cause he didn't have room for it." So it was these

absurd little moments of people helping each other out—in contrast to *every man for himself*, which is what I remember on the news after Katrina—that was kind of the sense of things.

Jackson School Journal: What was it like witnessing that camaraderie in the midst of so much confusion and chaos and probably shock, too? Where does it come from?

Mendel: When I was there, I couldn't help but wonder if it was something about Filipino national spirit—Filipinos in general are just funny people and will make jokes out of anything, and in the days after the Typhoon I heard more people laughing than crying. In fact I think the first time I went out on the street I didn't hear anyone cry. I don't know why, but that was a shock to me, but again, I remember the news coverage in Oklahoma last year and it was just shots of people weeping openly. I didn't see any of that in Tacloban.

I don't want to downplay the trauma, because I was obviously very lucky and wasn't physically hurt, and the people around me weren't hurt—nobody in my family died, although a lot of my cousins lost homes and things, but I do think, especially in a country that is somewhat used to experiencing things like that and a country that just doesn't have many resources to begin with, it's sort of like—when you lose everything that you have, all you can do is laugh. Crying isn't going to get you anywhere and laughing sort of gets you through the day. I think part of that is something that's very Filipino, but I also just generally think that that might be human nature. I'm certainly not an authority on human nature or the Filipino spirit, though.

There are a few writers—and Rebecca

Solnit, who wrote “A Paradise Built in Hell,” is one who does it better than most—that have identified that weird sense of elated, joyful community-ness that happens after a disaster, that you don't really see anywhere and have articulated it better than I can. I think she's identified something that is kind of true and universal; I have every reason to suspect.

Jackson School Journal: So after those first couple of chaotic days, how long did it take for the dust to start settling, if it did, and what was your ‘exit strategy?’

Mendel: Whenever I tell people about being in Tacloban they always say, “Oh my god did you leave immediately?” I actually didn't feel the need to leave immediately; I didn't feel unsafe. It did occur to me eventually though, that basically everyone was just waiting for things to return to normal. There was no electricity, a lot of people didn't have running water, some of the wells had been contaminated, so it was a lot of people trying to get things back to normal and I realized that was going to take a really long time and that I was of no use. At the end of the day I was just eating my cousins food, and so after a few days I decided if I could leave I should try to leave. And I knew that whenever something like this happens, the U.S. State Department and military tries to get American citizens out and figured if they were anywhere they'd be at the airport. So I asked my cousin and we went on his motorbike to go check out the situation at the airport and we got there in the morning and there was an enormous crowd of people trying to leave the city.

There was one Filipino carrier that had very few scheduled flights, and they were still accepting money for them, for there was a line

hundreds of people long. There were also a lot of people trying to get on American military planes. There were a lot of Americans there though, so we talked to a couple and confirmed that there were flights, there were other Americans leaving, and it didn't seem like a problem. So I put my name down, and went back to get my things and say my goodbyes. There were some more family members that came by though, and I ended up staying a couple hours longer than I'd planned. When I got back the crowd had multiplied by like six, and people were a lot more anxious.

I asked a Filipino military soldier where I could find the American that I had seen earlier and he looked really closely at me and asked, "Wait, are you American?" And I showed him my passport and he pointed and was like "Go, run" and pushed me ahead of like twenty people who were crowded around me trying to go through the gates and get on the plane, like dragged me away from them and shoved me toward this open space where there were a couple other Americans and a couple other Filipino soldiers and basically shoved me in front of a line that had hundreds of people in it, I didn't really know what was happening, so I couldn't really even think about it.

I was telling that story to a Filipino that I met in Manila, and without any kind of judgment she nodded and said, "Oh, yeah—Americans always get special treatment like that." That's what happens when you are a citizen of the largest military in the world, and I'm not going to apologize for that, or feel guilty about it, but it is kind of an interesting thing to figure out how to carry it with any kind of grace. At any rate, most of the Americans had left earlier that morning, and so there may have been a few others on my plane but by and large it was all Filipinos, and yeah, I rode a C1-30. It was very loud.

Jackson School Journal: What an incredible experience. So you made it back safely, though, and then I know you still had to find a job and have had some recent success, is that right?

Mendel: Yeah, so after a little more traveling I got back to the U.S. around Christmas, and didn't start job hunting till around mid-January, and now I've just started a new job, which is really exciting. It's the Natural Resources Defense Council, which is one of the largest environmental advocacy firms in the U.S. and I work in the L.A. office as a program assistant on two programs: the Southern California Ecosystems Project, and the Marine Mammals Protection Project. I'm still learning, but it's really exciting. I never would have thought that I'd end up at an environmental organization, to be honest, but it's one of the more pressing challenges of our time and it's really exciting to find myself in that and to learn about those issues. Part of what motivated my interest was definitely my experience in the Philippines during the typhoon and seeing how disproportionately affected poor communities are by big weather events and other things spurred on by climate change that are only going to occur more—I also think that goes for poor communities in the U.S. From a city like Seattle to L.A. is like moving from one end of the spectrum to the other—Seattle is a really compact city, people can bike around it, people are just generally environmentally friendly and hold priorities that, if we're talking in broad strokes, Los Angeles isn't necessarily known for, but as one of the biggest cities in the world, it has to figure out how to deal with these issues or we're screwed. Also, in many ways Los Angeles isn't as livable as Seattle initially—it's a lot harder to get around on public transportation—and so moving back here and trying to build a life

here I was sort of like, this has to change, and some things are happening and I wanted to get more involved in that. And I think being able to articulate these concerns was why they hired me.

Jackson School Journal: That was actually my next question—How and why did you make the transition from the Jackson School to your current job, and what advice can you give current undergrads?

Mendel: There's a lot of random factors that led to me ending up at NRDC, but if I was to give advice to a Jackson School undergrad I think it would be in figuring out how to talk about transferable skills. With the education you get at the Jackson School, you are good at a lot of things—you just have to figure out how to talk about them. You're good at working out problems, you're good at research, at finding different ways to answer questions, and understanding how to make the argument that those skills are relevant to what an employer is looking for is kind of your big challenge. I had come off a year of experience at a really small consulting firm and, even now in my first week, I realize that I learned a lot at that first job and I think being able to move up as a professional depends a lot on your ability to look back and say, "I know how to do things I didn't know before and how to talk about things with a new vocabulary and from a different perspective than I could a year ago, because I'm slowly growing into more of a professional."

For me there was a lot of trying, and not quite hitting the right note. I didn't feel as an undergraduate that I knew someone that had the career that I wanted and I don't know if that was because that person didn't exist, or because I just didn't know what kind of career I

wanted—it was probably a mix of both. At the Jackson School the teachers that you have are incredible and because they are so incredible and brilliant, and a lot of them are also super cool, a lot of kids, myself included, think "I want to go into academia, and I want to go to graduate school"—and it took my own twists and turns to realize that that wasn't for me and I would have to set out and kind of figure out what I wanted outside of that.

"I felt a certain pressure to specialize, to be the West Africa person, or the Land Rights in West Africa person."

I'm learning, because I'm finding myself at an organization whose theme is not really the same one I'd carried for a couple years, that I felt a certain pressure to specialize, to be the West Africa person, or the Land Rights in West Africa person. And I think a lot of that was insecurity about being the expert in one thing, so that when I was in a room full of experts I could at least feel like I had something to talk about and it's also, from being around a lot of people who want to go to grad school and focus on research, and write a PhD about one super esoteric thing. What I've really enjoyed about my work experience, so far, is that it's really broken me out of that.

When I graduated I was like—I'm not going to go to grad school and study land rights in West Africa, that's not happening for me. So what else am I interested in? Who else can I be? And I think there's a lot to be said for being a generalist, that I didn't really feel was cool when I was an undergraduate and I think you learn that more when you're in the working world and

you encounter people who have expertise in a lot of disparate areas.

Jackson School Journal: You mentioned the impact personal connections have had on your personal growth, but what about career-wise? What role do you see personal relationships or mentors playing in advancing those goals?

Mendel: I definitely had advisers and professors who were really influential to me. I think that, as with a lot of career advice, it's something I heard as an undergraduate and didn't really understand how true it was until I started working and it's like, oh—that's a real thing. The people you take on as your mentors do become really important; you're looking out for them and they're looking out for you, personally and professionally.

I was really fortunate in my first job at Williams Works to work with a really small team of really incredible individuals, some of whom I would count as mentors but all of whom I would count as influential to me. I think something that I feel very fortunate to have had and something that everyone should try to prioritize, is to surround yourself with really amazing people—even though they will scare you out of your pants all the time. Because being scared out of your pants all the time means that you will slowly become less scared and you'll get used to being around higher level achievement and thought and strategy and I feel really grateful that I was around people like that, because in some ways, I hope, some of that rubbed off. I think I learned some good habits, and good ways of asking questions and I think it's a good way of thinking about continuing your education. I had a couple of professors at the Jackson School who I wanted to sit in a room with and listen to all the time, because they were the smartest people I knew.

And I think finding that in a workforce, or a boss, or a colleague, or someone who becomes a mentor is super important and has been crucial for me as a really young professional trying to navigate all of these things.

There's so much stuff that I heard about or read that would then hit me when I started working and I would be like, "Why didn't anyone tell me that before?" Then my parents would inevitably say "We did!" That's going to happen. You're going to have to learn something that thousands of other people learned before you and tried to help you out with but sometimes you have to learn that on your own and just cut yourself some slack when you feel like an idiot for doing that, cause that's going to happen.

Interview Edited by Cam Keeble and Isaac Stockdale

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