

# JOHN G. TOWER CENTER STUDENT FORUM FOR POLITICAL STUDIES

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## Dance and politics

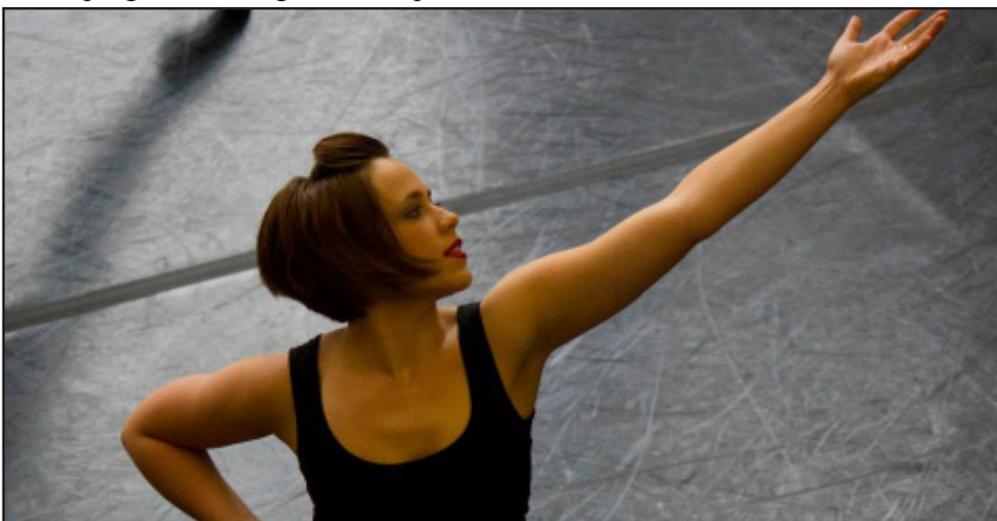
by Katie Schaible

Like every other college student, I have developed an automatic response to the question “What’s your major?” Without thinking, I answer almost robotically: “Dance and international studies, with minors in human rights and French.” Most of the time, I receive looks of skepticism or outright shock. “What an interesting combination,” they say, followed by the inevitable follow-up question: “And what do you plan to do with that?” I have yet to develop an automatic response to this one.

I never imagined I would be studying at one of the nation’s top dance programs. Along with this privi-

lege comes a certain pressure to find my identity as a college student entirely wrapped up in the arts school and to set my eyes on a fulfilling career as a performer. However, I can’t say this has been true of my experience. Despite my belief in humanity’s need for art, especially dance in which no outside tools or technology is integral to the art form, this pursuit seems entirely unfulfilling. I have come to attribute this to my experiences in other countries.

The Dominican Republic feels like home to me. I have spent a week there every summer for the past five years, serving on mission trips with my church. Although my stay there is never long, I return to the same village, meet with the same people, and love on the



Courtesy of Diana Antohe

Undergraduate research fellow performs at Meadows Brown Bag 2013. Schaible, a double major in dance and international studies, sees her passions as interdisciplinary.

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same children each year. My first time there opened my eyes to the idea of disparity of wealth – fabulously rich and fiercely poor living in the same country. The stark difference between the sprawling urban centers and the rural rice farming villages felt uncomfortable. Returning to the same place over time forced me to ask the tough questions: Why don't these kids go to college? Do these makeshift homes have addresses to receive mail? Why would a simple case of strep throat put a little girl in a hospital an hour away? These questions about poverty and the way the government deals with the poor began to tug on my heart in a way I couldn't ignore.

As I struggled to work through my confusion and frustration, I was able to experience something so beautiful: the power of dance. During my most recent trip to the Dominican Republic, I organized and taught a weeklong dance workshop to a group of 8-12 year old girls. These girls had no idea what a structured dance class looked like, something that I experienced daily as part of my education. The joy in discovering the universality of dance changed our lives. Amazingly, an educated American woman and thirty Dominican girls living in inescapable poverty could speak the same language.

This simple experience taught me the life-giving power of community-based projects. This led me to explore the idea of bottom-up, grassroots development, specifically during my time in Africa two summers ago on a research trip with the human rights program. Over two

and a half weeks in Rwanda, Uganda, and South Africa, I researched microfinance as a development strategy and women's economic empowerment. Again, I witnessed an even greater disparity of wealth, both urban and rural poverty, and numerous incomplete or ineffective development projects funded by government organizations such as USAID. My confusion and frustration regarding poverty increased

“  
*Returning to the same place over time forced me to ask the tough questions*  
 ”

greatly in Africa as I questioned how a place full of such innovative, intelligent, compassionate people could be experiencing such cyclical economic despair.

Despite this often disheartening research, Africa, much like the Dominican Republic, proved to me the universality of my greatest love, dance. I joined in a dance class in Rwanda for street boys who otherwise have no structure in their lives. I learned about a non-profit in Uganda that uses art and dance to empower young people who are destined to remain poor and uneducated like their parents. Arts education, much like microfinance, meets people where they are, harnesses their astounding potential, and empowers them to pull themselves out of their situation and become what-

ever they want. I can confidently say that my previous perception of dance as just an unfulfilling career path changed drastically with this realization. No longer am I just a college student pursuing a BFA and a BA. I study French, which is spoken in many countries in Africa, with intentions of truly being able to use it. I study African History and Political Economy of Development to learn more about what's been done and what I can do. And I study dance, every day with commitment and conviction, because it changes people's lives.

Politics and dance are my two passions, and they are two passions that I hope can achieve the same goal: a better world.

Katie, an undergraduate research fellow at the Tower Center, researches women's empowerment issues.

We asked her about the implications of gender quotas in Rwanda.

"Gender quotas establish greater universal participation in government, which leads to greater individual freedom for women and builds a solid foundation for future participation in democracy...Although gender quotas are highly contested, as is Kagame's one-party regime, taking steps to increase the efficacy of all women in Rwanda is certainly a step towards creating a more free and modern society."

## An Interview with Tower Center Fellow, Dr. Joshua Rovner

*Joshua Rovner is the John Goodwin Tower Distinguished Chair of International Politics and National Security, Associate Professor of Political Science, and Director of Studies at the Tower Center for Political Studies.*

*Why did you decide to move from the Naval War College to SMU?*

It was a very tough decision to leave the Department of Strategy & Policy at the Naval War College, because it's the finest strategy department in the world, and I still have enormous respect and fondness for the place. But the Tower Center is committed to building a world-class undergraduate program in international security studies. It's vital that students have the opportunity to think hard about issues of war and peace before they start their careers, whether or not they intend to go into the policy world. I couldn't pass up the opportunity to be a part of that.

*What is your specific area of research? It what ways does your research and area of interest tie into your position here at SMU?*

My research deals with intelligence, strategy, international relations, and foreign policy. I recently wrote a book on how policymakers use and misuse intelligence estimates, and I've also been working on issues related to nuclear proliferation and the future of the U.S. military presence

in the Persian Gulf region. Before that I wrote on U.S. strategy in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. All of these topics are central to the courses I offer at SMU, as well as the national security events and programs we run at the Tower Center.

*What do you feel makes SMU stand apart from other universities in the nation?*

For a long time political scientists, as well as diplomatic and military historians, have worried that the academy is not investing enough in security studies. This is especially a problem for undergraduates; while there are several excellent graduate programs that focus on international security, there aren't as many opportunities at the undergraduate level. The fact that SMU is bucking that trend is very encouraging.



### About *Fixing the Facts*

What is the role of intelligence agencies in strategy and policy? How do policymakers use (or misuse) intelligence estimates? When do intelligence-policy relations work best? How do intelligence-policy failures influence threat assessment, military strategy, and foreign policy? These questions are at the heart of recent national security controversies, including the 9/11 attacks and the war in Iraq. In both cases the relationship between intelligence and policy broke down—with disastrous consequences.

In *Fixing the Facts*, Joshua Rovner explores the complex interaction between intelligence and policy and shines a spotlight on the problem of politicization. Major episodes in the history of American foreign policy have been closely tied to the manipulation of intelligence estimates. Rovner describes how the Johnson administration dealt with the intelligence community during the Vietnam War; how President Nixon and President Ford politicized estimates on the Soviet Union; and how pressure from the George W. Bush administration contributed to flawed intelligence on Iraq. He also compares the U.S. case with the British experience between 1998 and 2003, and demonstrates that high-profile government inquiries in both countries were fundamentally wrong about what happened before the war.

## SMU in DC

### Student connects research, policy

by Emily Mankowski

Not many people can say that they live within walking distance of the most powerful legislative body in the world. From day one of moving into D.C.'s chic Capitol Hill neighborhood, I had to adjust quickly to this city's constant, fast-paced energy. Within the Washington Semester Program, I chose to study International Law and Organizations. In addition to lectures from our professor, who has a degree in international law, my classmates and visit important organizations, such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, and have high-profile guest lecturers speak to us about their work. Most recently my class returned from a trip to New York City where we visited the United Nations. At the UN, we interacted with representatives from the International Labor Organization, the UN Security Council, and several diplomats. Getting the chance to ask questions directly to some of the most influential figures in international politics is quite a unique experience for an undergraduate student.

The most meaningful facet of the Washington Semester Program has to be the internship requirement. At SMU, I am actively involved in the Embrey Human Rights Program. I have chosen to major in Human Rights and Political Science, with a particular interest in international criminal law

and genocide studies. Through the human rights department, I have been able to apply my studies to independent research abroad from Poland, to Kosovo, to El Salvador, and to Australia. Now in Washington, D.C., I am able to apply all that I have gathered from my academic endeavors to my position as a policy and government relations intern at the non-governmental organization: United to End Genocide.

Part of my internship entails writing blog posts for the organizations website, compiling weekly policy briefings, and researching current global crises. I am also able to attend conferences and panels at various D.C. think-tanks. One such event brought me face to face with a man who is one of my personal heroes: Dr. Denis Mukwege. Dr. Mukwege is a gynecologist who has worked for the past fifteen years in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) with victims of sexual violence as a weapon of war. Eastern DRC has been devastated by a vicious internal con-

flict for almost twenty years. In the midst of the chaos, Dr. Mukwege has risked his life trying to bring peace and justice to the women of the DRC, and his efforts of activism have garnered international recognition and honors, including Nobel Peace Prize nominations. Getting to speak one-on-one with a world-renowned human rights activist is a memory I will never forget.

I knew my time spent in Washington D.C. would present amazing opportunities, but I was not prepared for the extent of their impact. I am fully aware now that the Washington Semester Program means more than the chance to say I studied abroad in the Capitol, but rather the ability to say that this program has allowed me to rediscover my passions for human rights and political science, in a significant perspective outside of the classroom.

*Mankowski is a senior majoring in political science and human rights.*



Courtesy of AP

President Barack Obama speaks in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, Thursday, Nov. 21, 2013, after signing S. 330: the HIV Organ Policy Equity Act.

# A Century-Old Struggle: The Story of the Kurdish People

by Brandon Roselius

Ever since the conclusion of the First World War the Kurdish people have been oppressed, subjugated to acts of violence, and persecuted to unheard of extents. Split between the four nations of Iraq, Turkey, Syria, and Iran, the Kurds have been fighting for their cultural identities, their freedoms, and their independence. In Iraq, analysts estimate the number of Kurds to number somewhere between 18 and 26 percent (around 7 million) of the total Iraqi population. These 7 million Kurds will be the focus of my paper. The Kurds of Iraq have been in near constant conflict with the rulers of Iraq, and it wasn't until two years after the conclusion of Persian Gulf War in 1991 that the Kurds of Iraq gained any semblance of autonomy and freedom. In 2003 the Iraqi Kurds supported the American invasion of Iraq that eventually toppled the authoritarian rule of Saddam Hussein. Two years later, on October 15, 2005 the Iraqi constitution was passed and with it a democratic Iraq was born, or so American Occupational Forces thought.

The democratization of Iraq has failed, the Kurds, our greatest allies in Iraq, were spurned by our own leaders, and now Iraq



Courtesy of AP  
People wave Iraqi Kurdish flags in support of Iraqi Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani.

creeps ever closer to all out Civil War. While Iraq herself may not be savable, the Kurds of Iraq are governed by the increasingly democratic Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) and seem to be prospering while the rest of Iraq slowly collapses in upon itself. In my paper I investigate whether it would be beneficial for the United States and her allies to support a fully independent Kurdistan and how this would reshape the politics in the Middle East. Not only is a completely independent Kurdistan entirely possible, but the foundation for such a country has already been done. The KRG in Iraq governs the northern part of Iraq in the region of Mosul, and, in addition, deals with its citizens and other countries like any other sovereign nation would. In short, the KRG behaves like its own country: It possesses an army, the peshmerga, negotiates treaties with Turkey independent of central Iraqi guidance, distributes its own passports, and flies its own flag. While Iraq suffers under intense

sectarian violence and a struggling economy, the KRG is relatively peaceful and prosperous.

Why is it that the Kurds must remain a part of Iraq? The Kurds never wanted to be apart of Iraq; they were forced too by the Treaty of Sévres. A systematically brutal ethnic cleansing campaign in the late 80's under Saddam targeted the Kurds; they were forcibly removed from their homes, and have been the target of oppression by Iraq's government since the very formation of the state. The Kurds of Iraqi want nothing to do with Iraq, and Iraq has shown that it wants nothing to do with the Kurds.

The independence of the Iraqi Kurds would not only create a free Kurdistan; it would create a strong democratic ally in a region where the U.S. lacks trustworthy allies. An independent Kurdistan would be located in prime position along the Iranian, Iraqi, and Turkish borders. If current relations with Iraq or Iran fail the Kurdish state would not only be a picture-perfect ally, but also perfectly positioned to act in any way the U.S. leadership might desire. In addition, Turkey, long a nemesis to the Kurds, has shown budding friendship towards the Iraqi Kurds, and, if only marginally, shown some steps in bettering the conditions for the Turkish Kurds.

In conclusion, an Independent Kurdistan based upon the borders of the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq would not only be beneficial to the people of Iraq, but also beneficial to U.S. interests in the region.

## Voting just a start: Issue in political engagement

by Brandon Bub

When it comes to politics, I tend to follow the Groucho Marx mantra: "I refuse to join any club that would have me as a member." While I was briefly a member of SMU's College Democrats organization and have done a little work on political campaigns since I was a freshman, I've found that in the past few years my interest in politics has more to do with coming up with snarky comments on Facebook at both parties' expense than agitating for any particular reform.

My mentors tell me I'm too young to be as jaded as I am. Indeed, studying history and political science certainly gives one an eye-opening perspective when it comes to the rancorous nature of our political system. In the midst of the government shutdown and debt ceiling debacle that consumed headlines for weeks, a friend of mine recently asked me, "Has our gridlock always been this bad?" I smugly responded, "No, a lot of the time it's worse."

But then, as our conversation continued, my friend made a comment that threw me for a loop: she told me she had never voted in an election before, probably expecting to get a nod of agreement out of me. Of course, as someone who's never missed an election since he turned 18, I was morti-

fied. "No, you can't just not vote! That just makes the problem even worse!"

It was at that moment that I was forced to face a contradiction of sorts. Here I was, a cynical political science major talking about the inefficacy of any our elected officials, now suddenly telling my friend why it's so important she votes in elections. I could barely stand the weight of my own cognitive dissonance.

I think the reason why I argue so vehemently for people my age to vote coincides with the reason why I continue studying political science in the first place: deep down, I really do think these issues matter. For all the posturing from minority parties I'm forced to endure, for all the lies from candidates I'm forced to sift through, for all the gerrymandering that goes to create dangerously polarized Congressional districts throughout the country, I still believe as a voter that the issues this nation faces are not insurmountable. I believe in the power of an educated electorate and an elevated discourse. I believe that facts exist, and they most certainly matter in public policy. And, perhaps most importantly, I believe that no matter my disagreements with people at all ends of the political spectrum, there will always exist the possibility of consensus.

When it comes down to it, civic engagement is not just about counting votes, shaking hands with senators, posting pictures of yourself in front of the White House on Facebook, or making crude jokes at Ted Cruz's ex-

pense. It's about coming together to share ideas and make all parties involved more educated on a given issue. That's exactly what I strive for as an SMU student, and it's precisely what I hope the Tower Center will continue to foster in the coming years.

Brandon is the Juanita and Henry Miller Tower Center undergraduate fellow. He is a senior majoring in political science, history and English. Over the past year and a half, he has been studying decision making dynamics (specifically in regards to "swing justices" like Anthony Kennedy) on the United States Supreme Court under the guidance of Professor Joeseeph F. Kobyłka who specializes in Supreme Court jurisprudence. Brandon has been fortunate to be able to travel to the Library of Congress multiple times to conduct archival research with the papers of former Supreme Court justices. In April, he looks forward to presenting his completed research at the Southwestern Social Science Association's annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas. After graduation, Brandon plans on teaching history to Dallas high school students. He is also considering pursuing a PhD in political science.

# Can North Korea be stopped?

## The Role of Nuclear Deterrence

by Elliott Silverman

This semester I have the privilege of holding the position of student director of national security studies for the Tower Center Student Forum. I have chosen to write a thesis project on U.S. national security and North Korea.

During the Korean War, United States leadership made many decisions, some of them costly in both lives and capital. The war resulted not in an outright U.S. victory, but in an armistice. While decisions made by presidents and commanders are critically scrutinized to gain a more full understanding of this conflict and its historical ramifications, it is the decisions that were not made that deserve the scrutiny today. After dropping two nuclear weapons to end World War II, the administration of Harry Truman and later the administration of Dwight Eisenhower decided not to drop nuclear weapons in Korea. Though they had the power to do so, the United States sent a message---nuclear weapons would not be used in conflict.

In 2006, North Korea detonated its first nuclear device. Since that time the United States has seen increasingly harsh rhetoric and bellicose threats come out of the world's most isolated nation. The United States has deep-running national security interests when it comes to dealing with North Korea. The dynasty government of North Korea must be viewed as an irrational ac-



Courtesy of AP

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un waves to war veterans during a mass military parade celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Korean War armistice in Pyongyang.

tor in today's world in order to take the nations threats seriously. The U.S. government now finds itself in a position of deterrence. This is a complicated position to hold, considering the U.S. is dealing with a nation that has the ability to produce completely unpredictable actions.

Deterrence dictates that clear red lines involving national security policy must be drawn, and plans to take action must be in place once those red lines are crossed. A problem exists with taking this stance toward North Korea; there is no way to know if the government takes the red lines seriously.

In my thesis project, I will be exploring a range of topics under the umbrella of North Korea and nuclear deterrence. Is the United States willing to drop a nuclear weapon in the event of North Korea doing so? The answer to this question is complex to say the least, but there are a few guidelines which must be followed when exploring this question. If the U.S. takes a stance of nuclear deterrence towards North Korea, and North Korea decides to use nuclear force against its adversary to the south, the U.S. must take a proportionate response. A proportionate response

from the United States must be spelled out clearly in a deterrence policy, otherwise the policy would not be taken seriously.

Moreover, the hypothetical question of what would the circumstances have to be for North Korea to use a nuclear weapon, and how those circumstances can be manipulated by the United States will be explored. It must be kept in mind that in conventional warfare, an adversary like North Korea would be more likely to use a nuclear weapon if the survival of the regime is at stake.

North Korea will attack when the U.S. makes them feel that they are on death ground, or that they have no other options besides going to war. This can happen through a number of different ways. Perhaps U.N. sanctions prove too much to bear, or rhetoric from the west induces a security dilemma. It is up to the U.S. to control the outcome of the conflict, and this must be done with patience and precision.

Elliott Silverman is a senior studying political science, psychology and history.

## Upcoming Events:

January 24 at 4:00 PM, Ernst & Young Gallery, Fincher Building

*Mexican Energy Reform: Insights and Perspectives*

January 30 at 6:00 PM, Elizabeth Prothro Hall

*Demographic Changes and Their Political Impact*

February 5 at 3:00 PM, Tower Center Boardroom

*Rioters for Justice: Remnants of Colonization and Civil Unrest in the French Banlieues*

February 18 - 19, Bob Hope Theatre

*When Life Strikes the President: Scandal, Death, and Illness in the White House*

February 24 at 5:30 PM, McCord Auditorium

*U.S., South & North Korea: What the Future Holds*

April 3-4, Location To Be Determined

*The Political Economy of International Money*

April 16 at 3:00 PM, Tower Center Boardroom

*The Idea of International Intellectual Property*

April 25 at 10:30 AM, Hughes-Trigg Student Center

*Elect Her: Campus Women Win Training*

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