Southern Methodist University

STUDENT FORUM

JOHN GOODWIN TOWER CENTER FOR

POLITICAL STUDIES

dialogue welcomes undergraduate submissions on political and international studies topics at all times. To send a submission or request information on submission guidelines, please email tcsf@mail.smu.edu.

Opinions expressed in issues of dialogue represent only the views of the author; they do not represent the views of Southern Methodist University, the views of the John Goodwin Tower Center for Political Studies, or the views of the members of dialogue. Copyright © 2014 by the John Goodwin Tower Center for Political Studies Student Forum, dialogue. All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the express written consent of the copyright owner. Requests should be sent via email to tcsf@mail.smu.edu.
dialogue

Undergraduate Journal for Political Studies

Editor-in-Chief
Katie Schaible

Co-Editor
Jaime Shim

Student Forum
John Goodwin Tower Center for Political Studies
CONTENTS

FOREWORD
Rahfin Faruk, Katie Schaible

NATIONAL SECURITY
The Blowback of the US Drone Program in Pakistan: A Critique
Alexander Hoskins

The Danger of Neglecting the Influence of Willpower in a Confrontation with North Korea
Elliott Silverman

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
Unintended Consequences: The EU’s Common Agricultural Policy and Dumping
Caroline Dillard

A Tale of Two Cities: Health Literacy in Two Western Healthcare Models
Xinqi Ren, Jaison Thomas

Iraq, The Anchor to Kurdish Freedom
Brandon Roselius

AMERICAN POLITICS
Social Security and the Need for Reform
Nick Saliba
Dear Reader,

We titled our undergraduate journal *dialogue* because we are interested in serving as a forum for engaging discourse. It is our goal as a student organization to bring a diverse group of students, faculty and scholars together in rich conversation. This year in our fifth edition of the journal, we are proud to publish six student papers. The Tower Center Student Forum sponsored and facilitated the research for two of the papers through our policy research committees. As in past years, our number of submissions increased this year—emblematic not only of our progress as a center but also of our university. All in all, the quality of the journal has continued to increase; each paper within this edition concerns an area of policy—nationally or internationally—that is a significant part of today’s dynamic political discussion.

This fifth volume of *dialogue* explores various topics, from the blowback of the U.S. drone program to the consequences of the EU’s common agricultural policy. We feel that each of our student authors worked very hard in his or her research and submitted high-quality undergraduate work.

We hope that you enjoy this edition of *dialogue* as much as we have.

Rahfin Faruk
*Executive Director—Tower Center Student Forum*

Katie Schaible
*Editor-in-Chief—Tower Center Student Forum*
National Security
The Blowback of the U.S. Drone Program in Pakistan: A Critique

Alexander Hoskins

Introduction

We are faced with an enemy we cannot find, in a land we do not understand, fighting a war we do not know how to win. This is the bleak challenge of the War on Terror (WoT) that stood before the United States following the attacks on September 11th. Henry Crumpton, a clandestine Operations Officer of the Central Intelligence Agency, was charged with recruiting and gathering human-based intelligence (HUMINT) in Afghanistan to aid in American operations to combat terrorism. In his unclassified account of his work in Afghanistan, Crumpton details the unique challenge faced in the wake of the opening volleys of the war: “…we needed more than the conventional flow of text and imagery intelligence…We had to recruit the Afghan people to our side, pry them away from [al Qaeda] and the Taliban. We had to demonstrate our care for the Afghans by killing only their enemy…We needed to find a way to win the people, not just kill select foes.”

Unlike previous wars, the WoT presented the US with an enemy that could not be defined by the borders of his residence or the features of his appearance – only by the ideology behind his actions. We could no longer select targets based on location or visual identification, but had to know the enemy to know whether or not he was an enemy. This is where intelligence officers like Crumpton shined and where our need to recruit the Afghan people through our clandestine officers abroad became a necessity rather than a luxury.

But Crumpton’s compelling narrative of his efforts to gather HUMINT in the Middle East reveals a puzzle surrounding Crumpton’s recruiting tactics, or the means the CIA utilized to “win the people.” In this instance, winning over the people meant persuading the people (namely the Afghan tribal militia leaders) to ally with our cause instead of using force to coerce them into obedience. Through their support, we could win the strategically valuable cooperation of their tribes and their people. Crumpton recounts, “In our effort to recruit tribal militia leaders to our cause, we worked jointly with our Afghan Allies...The accurate and extensive bombing campaign [of the Predator drones in Afghanistan] had recalibrated the perceptions of many uncertain Afghan tribal leaders.” The very same Predator drones that now form the centerpiece of controversy and the face of seeming American omnipotence and civilian slaughter in the Middle East, controversies to be examined later in this paper, served as recruiting tools for our clandestine officers.

The logic behind the use of Predator drones as a recruiting tactic is not as far-fetched as it might seem. The drone program was designed to target and eliminate members of al Qaeda (AQ) and the Taliban, not kill Middle Easterners or terrorize civilians. It follows then, as it did for Crumpton in Afghanistan, that the drone program should be quite successful in “winning the hearts and minds of the people,” conveying American determination to rid the Middle East of the oppressive and horrible violent reign of terrorism. This notion of winning the hearts and minds of the people is crucial in our WoT, as “terrorists can be successfully destroyed only if public opinion, both at home and abroad, supports the authorities in regarding them as criminals rather than heroes.” We need the support of the people in countries likely to harbor terrorists (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen) to gain their cooperation, and we need their cooperation to gather intelligence such as that sought by operatives like Crumpton, intelligence vital to defeating terrorism. That support is not gained through force and coercion against the people, but rather showing the people that we are truly on their side, acting in their best interests as well as ours. If we take action that is in conflict with the people’s interests and the people subsequently oppose our actions, then we have not won their “hearts and minds.” Without any incentive,

the people have no reason to take any action to support us, including reporting terrorist activities, tolerating our troops and operations, and cooperating with our operatives’ efforts to rid the area of AQ and other terrorist cells.

So then when and where did the program fail in the eyes of the people? Why did the drone program succeed in convincing Afghan tribal militia leaders to join our side in the early 2000s, but now fails to garner global support? Why has the program, now concentrated primarily on terrorist activity in Pakistan and its neighboring tribal regions, left officers like Crumpton completely devoid of any “hearts and minds?” What follows is an examination of how exactly the US drone program in Pakistan and the neighboring tribal regions turned the Pakistani people so forcefully against the United States, and what, if anything, can be done to rebuild the burned bridges.

**Literature Review**

In determining the full impact of the drone program on the opinion of the Pakistani people, we begin with an examination of the program’s history. In the Middle Eastern Theater, drone strikes have served as the primary weapon of the US in the War on Terror (WoT). Unlike the use of traditional force, which entails the challenges of putting boots on the ground, the problems of housing and supporting personnel in Forward Operating Bases (FOBs), and the risks associated with deploying troops, drones launched from remote bases provide a great deal of convenience in terms of operational planning and execution when it comes to locating and eliminating targets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: DoD UAV Defense Budget 2007-2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: In fiscal year 2009 constant dollars in millions

Since 2007, the US drone program has spent a total of $20.12 billion, an amount that pales in comparison to the billions of dollars expended with the complications of traditional force. Each Predator drone, the primary tool of the US’s Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) fleet, costs a total of $20 million to produce and operate, including the pilot, control systems, operating costs, and $4 million Predator drone itself. The US currently operates a fleet of roughly 7,000 UAVs, with an undisclosed number of Predator drones in operation by the CIA. Each Predator drone carries 2 Hellfire missiles and is equipped with advanced laser-targeting systems capable of eliminating targets from miles away.

**Figure 1: MQ-1 Predator Drone**

The chief benefit of the Predator drone, aside from the reduced cost of operation, is the reduced cost of lives of those operating the drone. Predator drones are “accurate, efficient, and deadly,” and reduce the loss of American life by keeping all operational personnel removed from the operational drone. If the drone were to be attacked, the only casualty would be the hardware, and not personnel. Our UAV system reflects a gradual shift in operational doctrine towards targeting. Since WWII, US airpower doctrine has evolved into more detached, remote tactics, gradually shifting away from dogfights to remote bombing campaigns, removing more and more US personnel from harm’s way. The Predator drone fulfills this doctrinal shift in its high-altitude observation and target elimination function, providing US personnel with a complete picture of the battlefield and full capabilities to engage targets at will. Unlike other offensive aerial tactics, drone strikes have a relatively small blast radius (reducing casualties surrounding the target) and have

---

the ability to hover above the target at high altitudes to wait for the most opportune moment to attack (as opposed to traditional bombing strikes that travel at relatively higher speeds and cause more collateral damage). As technology has evolved, the capabilities of our drone fleet have vastly exceeded initial capacities. Predator drones are now capable of greatly improved carrying capacities, flight duration, and deployment versatility.

At the start of the 1990s, the US drone fleet consisted of about 10 drones, used solely for reconnaissance on AQ in Afghanistan. Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, President Bush and Pakistan’s President General agreed for the US to offer diplomatic and financial support to Pakistan in exchange for Pakistan’s support in Bush’s War on Terror, much to the outrage of the Pakistani people, who did not want the US imposing policy and getting involved in Pakistan. Soon thereafter, the US received intelligence that Pakistan had entered negotiations with and signed peace deals with Taliban militants, offering them aid. In response, the CIA implemented our small drone fleet in the hunt for AQ leadership in Afghanistan and Pakistan, thus beginning the first of four phases of US drone involvement in the Middle East.

The first phase of US drone involvement lasted from 2002 to 2004. During this time, drone capabilities were tested and expanded from mere reconnaissance into a more active operational status (search and destroy). In Yemen in 2002, a Predator drone killed AQ operative Salim Sinan al-Harethi, a suspected conspirator in the bombing of the USS Cole, marking the first recorded kill by a drone. During this phase of operations, 2 strikes were carried out with a “High-Value Target” (HVT) kill ratio of 1:5 (2 HVTs eliminated). High-Value targets are those who are confirmed as organizational leaders before the attack occurs. Following the drones’ initial success, drones were given a more active role in targeting and destroying targets, beginning in 2004.

The second phase of drone warfare in the Middle East, spanning from 2005 to 2007, saw an increased number of strikes carried out by drones. Over the course of 6 strikes, the HVT ratio dropped to 1:26 (2 HVTs eliminated), and operations were constrained within Pakistan and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) bordering Pakistan and Afghanistan, where the majority of AQ operatives were believed to be operating. Bush kept the strike frequency relatively low, generally not exceeding one strike per 40 days, as he relied more on intelligence gathering through enhanced interrogation tactics. Phase two ended with President Obama’s installment as President of the United States.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Strikes</th>
<th>High Value Targets Killed</th>
<th>Total Deaths</th>
<th>HVT-to-Total-Deaths Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (2002-2004)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (2005-2007)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>1:26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (2008-2009)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>1:66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (2009-2010)</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1029</td>
<td>1:147</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phase three, extending from 2008-2009, marked the beginning of a dramatically increased strike frequency under Obama, as he reallocated much of the energy Bush committed to enhanced interrogation tactics to the drone program. The 48 strikes conducted during this period dropped the HVT ratio to 1:66 (5 HVTs eliminated), nearly quadrupling the number of strikes in one year over the total number of strikes under Bush’s entire administration. The fourth phase, from 2009 to 2010, reduced the HVT ratio to 1:147 over 161 strikes (7 HVTs eliminated), firmly defining a shift in policy from infrequent and successful (in terms of HVT elimination) strikes under Bush to a policy of roughly one strike every four day - ten times more frequent than under Bush.

The vast majority of the drone strikes have been conducted in the FATA region of the Middle East, beginning in 2004. The FATA are comprised of 7 “tribal agencies,” consisting of roughly 3.1 million inhabitants. Each of these agencies was established due to the inhabitants’ strict adherence to customs that make them ungovernable under normal law. Each agency acts as a “political agent,” serving as the sole governing body for its people (resulting in laws that adhere to the extremely religiously conservative beliefs of the agencies’ inhabitants). The agencies of North Waziristan, South Waziristan, and Bajour are particularly religiously conservative, resulting in laws that prove particularly hospitable to AQ and the Taliban, only exacerbated by the Pakistani military’s refusal to take action in the region. Drone strikes in Pakistan have forced a majority of Taliban fighters to flee to the FATA region, where most of the training camps are reported to operate. Even in the FATA region, however, the drone strikes have created an intensely fearful atmosphere, inflicting significant losses on AQ and AQ-allied forces in the region. Since 2004, we have reportedly cut AQ’s numbers by 75% and greatly decreased instances of violence and militant attacks in areas where drone strikes are active.

The drone program, however, is far from perfect, as critics, both foreign and domestic, are quick to point out. Since 2011, the drone program has expanded substantially, now covering territory in Yemen, Somalia, and Libya in the hunt for AQ, which has raised numerous concerns over the overall effectiveness of the program. The US maintains three counterterrorism goals, all of which critics claim are undermined by the drone program: 1) Elimination of AQ and all of its affiliates, 2) Preclusion of the creating of new enemies by containing local conflicts, and 3) Protecting the security of the American people. The first area of concern with the drone program, the potential retaliation against the US, undermines all three goals. While no conclusive evidence exists that the drone program has created more enemies, as no major drone-motivated counterstrikes have occurred, some relatively minor threats to the US have been admittedly sparked in response to the program. 2009 marked a record high of militant violence in Pakistan and the FATA regions, casting doubt onto how effective the program is. In December of that year, a Jordanian National named al-Balawi gained access to a CIA compound outside of Khost, Afghanistan, and detonated a suicide bomb, claiming retaliation against the US for its drone program in a video released after the attack. 2009 saw a total of 1,916 terrorist attacks in the tribal regions, compared to just 150 in 2004. As the US continues its drone program, AQ and other militants do not seem to be hindered in retaliating against the US and its allies. Further expansion of the drone program could potentially lead to further retaliation from the opposition and a loss of the Pakistani people’s trust.

In addition to retaliatory actions by the opposition, the increase in attacks also increases incentive for recruitment by the opposition. As the number of attacks increases, so do the number of witnesses and survivors of the attacks. According to the Pakistani tribal principle of Badal, it is imperative to exact vengeance upon those who kill one’s friends or relatives. While only a small minority of those who are affected by the strikes adopt radical viewpoints (previously moderates) and join the opposition, any actions that provide an incentive to join the opposition must be avoided. This is arguably one of the most fundamental flaws with US drone policy. Each additional incentive increases the degree of radicalization that can be expected in an individual. Radicals will

---

29. Ibid, page 44.
32. Ibid, page 124.
likely adopt even more radical beliefs, moderates may be swayed to radicalism, and those viewing the US positively may be overcome by grief to the point where they abandon their alliances with the US and become moderates or even radicals (this transition depends heavily upon the circumstances of the individual’s loss and their logical reasoning in dealing with the outcomes of the drone strike). Even the elimination of legitimate targets can produce this sort of radicalism that leads to joining the opposition.

These setbacks in the drone program also negatively affect our stabilization efforts in the FATA-bordering countries of both Pakistan and Afghanistan. In the Afghan theater, US policy is the implementation of Counterinsurgency (COIN) tactics used in Iraq, namely eliminating any and all factors that support AQ and allied insurgents. Not only is the increased death toll from the strikes potentially enhancing, rather than eliminating, support for the insurgents and AQ, but these strikes are also destroying valuable intelligence. Every time a target is taken out in a drone strike, any possible intelligence they may have been carrying on their person (papers, phones, maps, etc.) is also destroyed, as are any opportunities for further interrogation.

Our operations in Pakistan are further destabilized by the Pakistani outrage over the drone program, which will be explored in more detail later. Pakistanis feel threatened in a number of ways by the strikes, and are compelled to speak out against them. This public outcry creates a certain degree of chaos and turmoil among the people, undermining any efforts at achieving social stability for a more stable state. Those militants in the FATA regions sufficiently threatened by the strikes are also migrating into the more densely populated regions of Pakistan, where they are confident drones will not strike due to the high civilian population. Their presence only further destabilizes the public by further whipping up the chaos already set into motion by those who oppose the drone program.

This destabilization of Pakistan is poisonous to US-Pakistani relations. Only 17% of Pakistanis view the US favorably, with 60% perceiving us as the enemy. Many Pakistanis view the US War on Islam, and respond as such. Following the 2011 raid in Abbottabad to capture Osama bin Laden (UBL), on 14 May 2011, The parliament of Pakistan passed a joint resolution to “defend the country’s sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity against US military actions.” As a result of the high visibility and publicity of these criticisms, the Pakistani public is strongly against US involvement in Pakistan via the drone program, and yet we carry out operations in spite of their protests. This defiance in no way benefits our standing with the Pakistani people.

A number of other various setbacks have plagued the drone program as well. Despite our continued attacks on the FATA region, AQ training camps in the areas are reportedly operating at full capacity, indicating a gross lack of effectiveness in the region. In those regions, Tribal leaders are reportedly routinely executing those suspected of providing intelligence to the US, leading to more civilian deaths, fewer sources of intelligence, and a decreased willingness to provide the US with any intelligence regarding operations in the region. None of this is helped by the intense debate over whether or not these strikes are legal. Some have concluded that the strikes are “lawful self-defense measures,” but aspects of the program make such a conclusion shaky at best, such as the fact that the operators of the drones are CIA civilians, and civilians are not technically the “combatants” that such legal conclusions require. If the public continues to view the drone program as illegal, then the US leaves itself vulnerable to scathing criticism and opposition. Ensuring that the program is at least viewed as legal provides the US with a stronger foundation upon which to make a case for continuing the program, potentially leading to a rise in public opinion of the program. While the drone program may be saving the US millions in lives and dollars, it is not without its costs.

**Theory/ Hypothesis**

General Petraeus, Commander of US Central Command from 2008 to 2010 and the Director of the CIA, the operating agency of the 2011-2012 drone program in Pakistan, said, “by conducting these strikes, we are helping Pakistan.” These strikes serve a preventive purpose in

---

defending the world from the terrorist actions of the AQ network. This raises the question as to why the Director of the CIA insists that the program is helping Pakistan, while we see so much evidence that the program is ultimately hurting both Pakistan and our operations therein. The strikes only target militants, they are far less imposing that deployed troops, and we are ridding the world of terrorism, so why the opposition?

What is clear, above all else, is that Pakistan does not approve of our involvement through the strikes, despite the supposed benefits. In a 2009 Gallup Poll of the Pakistani people, 67% those surveyed expressed opposition to the program, with 24% reporting indifference and only 9% in favor of the program. If we want to win support of the Pakistani people, we are going to need more than 9% of their hearts and minds. To understand the root cause of this overwhelmingly negative sentiment, we must examine potential factors motivating the Pakistani people against the program.

Pakistanis believe that US involvement in Pakistan through the drone program is a violation of Pakistani sovereignty and that the drone program kills innocent civilians (far more than US statistics indicate). The Pakistani people feel such a violation of their sovereignty in response to our repeated violation of their border (flying drones in their airspace in spite of public protest, the raid on Abbottabad, etc.). The Pakistanis have repeatedly requested we hand over the drone technology so that they can carry out their own drone program without our involvement or oversight. US Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff disagrees, however, that we are violating their sovereignty, arguing that sovereignty entails the responsibility to protect your territory from threats such as terrorists, and, as Pakistan is unwilling to do that, we must do so for them.

This raises the questions as to how our purported violations of Pakistani sovereignty are continuing in spite of the opposition of the Pakistani government. The issue the US runs into with the Pakistani government is that the Pakistani government publicly opposes US involvement in the drone program but privately supports it, maintaining its frontlines privately and appeasing the people as a resolute sovereign nation publicly. In 2006, Pakistani President Musharraf gave President Bush permission to carry out AQ drone strikes in the FATA regions, in 2008, Pakistani President Zardari explicitly told CIA Director Michael Hayden to “kill the seniors;” in 2009, US Predator drones were confirmed as having taken off from a Pakistani military base, indicating Pakistan’s compliance. Evidence also exists that the Pakistani military and intelligence agencies have been passing valuable intelligence to the CIA for targeting purposes. This is very understandable, given that our drones eliminate enemies of the Pakistani state, harm the morale and practices of insurgents, and instill great fears of the drones among low-level militants.

The evidence is strong then that the Pakistani government supports the drone program, but only behind closed doors. The drone program is incredibly unpopular among the Pakistani people, and the government does not want to appear supportive of program viewed so harshly by the people. Not only is it humiliating to the Pakistani government that they are incapable of dealing with this domestic threat on their own, but the US has also targeted some pro-Pakistan (but anti-US) groups, which the Pakistani government does not want to appear supportive of. This disconnect between private government approval and public disgust is largely due to the influence of the Pakistani media. Pakistan has a total of 90 television channels, one third of which are dedicated to covering news and current affairs. Unfortunately, despite potential access to 30 channels to learn of the benefits of the program, the Pakistani media is internationally decried for its furthering of an anti-American agenda over objective new reporting, as anti-US rhetoric is far more popular and boosts ratings (high ratings are crucial in the Pakistani media, as 60% of advertising revenue is held by just 7 channels, so channels must get high ratings or be cancelled). Rather than report the news, broadcasts are used to disseminate anti-US conspiracy theories and whip up national hysteria over alleged US violations of Pakistan’s honor and dignity by offering aid.

Curiously enough, while 77% of Pakistani journalists report being against US foreign policy in regards to its involvement with Pakistan, their chief domestic concern is terrorism - the very thing

This raises the question of what exactly the civilian death toll is, targeting. FATA regions highlights the importance of the FATA regions in drone of factors increasing the probability of increased AQ recruitment in the train to do just that in the nearby AQ training camp. The convergence convenient for these people who now believe strikes on US civilians to be wholly justified. Public opinion in the tribal regions is particularly considering that roughly 80% of suicide bombers come from the Pakistani people believes that US drone strikes kill civilians, with roughly 66% of tribes therefore concluding attacks against the US to be wholly justified. Public opinion in the tribal regions is particularly important, considering that roughly 80% of suicide bombers come from the tribal regions of Pakistan. This speaks to the fundamental issue of insurgent creation: If the Pakistani people believe that our attacks are needlessly killing civilians, then they are far more inclined to see terrorist attacks on US civilians as justified. Given that most of the AQ training centers are located in the FATA regions, it is incredibly convenient for these people who now believe strikes on US civilians to train to do just that in the nearby AQ training camp. The convergence of factors increasing the probability of increased AQ recruitment in the FATA regions highlights the importance of the FATA regions in drone targeting.

This raises the question of what exactly the civilian death toll is, and why the Pakistani people believe it to be so high; a critical question, as it appears to be the key piece of (misrepresented) information that the Pakistani media uses as fuel for its anti-American expression, leading to such overwhelmingly negative opinions of the US. If the death tolls are in fact as high as the Pakistani media reports, then the Pakistani media is entirely accurate and the US needs to reform its drone policy. If the Pakistani media inflates the tolls, however, then actions need to be taken to disconnect the Pakistani people from the Pakistani media’s false information if public opinion of the US is to be improved. The official US report is that roughly 30 total civilians casualties have been incurred in the nine years since the drone program was officially implemented in 2004, with drones being 60% accurate (hitting militants only) under Bush, and 85% accurate under Obama. This statistic differs dramatically from Pakistan’s count at 700 civilian deaths. Other sources argue that less than 2% of the casualties from these strikes are HVTs, less than 14% are militant leaders, and more than 30% are civilians.60

While exact numbers are unclear, which is not helped by the secrecy of the program’s operators, aggregate objective data indicate an overall increase in accuracy as the program has developed.62

There are a number of issues that cause this disparity between US reports and other claims at civilian death rates. The first of such issues is the data gathering method. To put it bluntly, these strikes do not leave much behind. It is not possible for objective parties to interview the corpses and determine whether or not they are allied with AQ or not, so we are forced to resort to estimates and third-party accounts. This is only exacerbated by another factor; AQ’s use of civilians as shields. It is common for AQ to use civilians as cover, either by surrounding their bases with them or by locating their operations in areas heavily populated by civilians, knowing that the US desires to limit civilian casualties as much as possible.63 If we do not strike because civilians are present, AQ wins. If we do strike anyway, those AQ who are killed are made martyrs and gain potential recruitment by those negatively affected by the strike. Given this confusing and dangerous landscape, accurate statistics are nearly impossible to maintain.

What we have then is a battlefield on which the US must remotely balance potential losses of civilian lives against the potential certainty of 56. Bergen and Tiedemann, The Year of the Drone, page 4-5.
eliminating the ranks of the opposition. These potential civilian deaths are reduced with every improvement in our drone technology, but the improvements are far from perfect. Reports indicate that we are erring on the reckless side of these balances by placing higher value on the potential death of a terrorist than the value of civilian life, signifying a disconnect between our counterterrorism policy, which puts more value on increased terrorist casualties, and our COIN policy, which puts more value on weakening sources of insurgent support (undermined by killing civilians).

This theory of the ways in which the drone program affects the Pakistani people is founded upon assertions that require further testing: 1) The Pakistani people’s beliefs regarding the drone program are heavily influenced by a biased media. 2) AQ recruitment is positively influenced by the losses to civilians inflicted by drone strikes. The first assertion forms the foundation for why the Pakistani people view the drone program so negatively. This claim can be broken into a number of different components and claims that must be tested for individually in a surveying of Pakistani civilians and journalists.

Methodology

I. Pakistani Beliefs and the Media

In addressing the question of how the US drone program has led to negative Pakistani public opinion of the US, we must assess which variables are affecting Pakistani public opinion of the US, the dependent variable. To determine the effects of the various independent variables, namely how the people feel about the US drone program and the US in general, the peoples’ source of information about the drone program, and the degree of Pakistani media bias against the US, on the Pakistani public opinion of the US, a survey of the Pakistani people would be conducted. The survey would be given to inhabitants of Pakistan, men and women between the ages of 18 and 80 (to capture the broadest possible range of the Pakistani population, by a Pakistani native (to account for any reservations about speaking in favor of or in opposition to the US to an American).

1. Pakistani Views on the Drone Program

The first independent variable to assess would simply be how the Pakistani people view the drone program and the US in general and why. This set of variables provides a baseline for how to interpret the remainder of the variables. If responses are favorable of the drone program and the US, then the reasons given as to why and where the respondent receives information about the drone program are indicative of elements of the program that should be emphasized more to the Pakistani people. If responses are unfavorable of the drone program and the US in general, then a certain bias may be present in that respondents may view everything about the US as negative, though the remainder of their variables should still be analyzed. Responses that are unfavorable of the drone program and favorable of the US in general, or vice versa, provide an example of a respondent who is potentially not biased for or against the program by their feelings for the US itself, indicating strong feelings for or against the program itself, and not just US operations. Respondents will additionally be polled on whether or not they know someone who was affected/has been affected by the strikes (this question is to test if the respondent has lost someone or knows someone who lost someone in the strikes, but the question is left intentionally vague so as not to put images of civilian death in the heads of the respondents). Those who were affected by the strikes by means of losing someone significant to them will be examined separately from those who have not been personally affected, as those respondents have a motivating factor far stronger than other respondents that may render variables such as the media completely irrelevant.

2. Sources of Information Regarding the Drone Program

The secondary variables to assess would be where the Pakistani people receive their information about the drone program, what information they receive, and how they feel about that source. If reports indicate that those who receive information from the Pakistani media view the program negatively and believe what they hear from the media, and those who receive it elsewhere and believe those other sources view the program positively, then there is some evidence that the media influences the Pakistani people in such a way as to adversely affect their views on the program. Any correlation between consumption of Pakistani media and negative views of the drone program is indicative of the influence of the Pakistani media’s influence in guiding and shaping beliefs. If people provide reasons for favorable or unfavorable opinions of the program that are not provided by their information outlet of choice, then their responses may be inaccurate. This degree of influence could also be assessed by surveying the Pakistani people on what they would think of a program that rid their country of terrorist threats while only
inflicting roughly thirty civilian casualties. If they were to view such a program as favorable, yet they view the drone program negatively, then it is likely that their beliefs have been influenced by potentially inaccurate statistics, possibly reported by the media.

3. Information Reported by Media

The third variable to assess would be the actual degree of bias of the media itself. The media sources respondents listed they utilized would at this point be examined for the content they report. The first measure would gauge the objective facts reported by the media source. If the facts reported have no reliable source and are contradicted by readily-available reliable sources, then that is strong evidence of media bias against the US. The second measure would gauge the subjectivity of the media. This measure would record the number of subjective statements and comments (not reported facts) made through the media. If the media source produced a high level of subjective commentary against the US (such as comments between reporters about how awful the drone program is), then that would be evidence for a strong media bias, indicating that journalists report the program negatively to stay in AQ’s favor and avoid retaliation for supporting an anti-AQ program or to garner higher ratings.

4. Control

Following an assessment of the previous three variables, survey respondents would be asked how they feel about a hypothetical non-US program with the same statistics, operations, and goals as the US drone program (a control of sorts to see if favorable/unfavorable opinions are a result of the program or the program’s operating country). If there is a high correlation between positive views of this hypothetical program and negative views of the US drone program, this is evidence that negative views of the drone program are a result of inaccurate information and not the actual US drone program, pointing to bias in the respondent’s source of information. If these high civilian casualty beliefs are all associated with a particular news source, as opposed to lower statistics with other sources, this could indicate the source of inaccurate statistics, the source driving the media against the program, and subsequently, the Pakistani people against the program.

II. AQ Recruitment and Civilian Drone Casualties

The second assertion is more straightforward, but much more difficult to test. Ideally, we could look at the annual recruiting numbers of AQ and its allies over the past decade, but such statistics are not available, as AQ does not regularly publish such reports. What can be tested for is the reaction of civilians who have been affected by these strikes. Various questions would be posed, such as “How many people do you think have been killed by these strikes?,” “How many friends/relatives have been killed by these strikes?,” “Do you view the drone program as positive or negative and why?,” “What did you think of the US before the strikes started?,” and “Do you think anything should be done about the strikes/What should be done?”. Other factors, such as proximity to known AQ training camps, can also be coded for, to determine an individual’s risk for AQ recruitment. These responses can indicate how real the risk is that those affected by drone strikes may be more likely to join AQ or an ally to retaliate. A high correlation between any number of friends/relatives killed by these strikes and a desire to take action, combined with a positive view of the US prior to attacks, indicates that the civilian casualties inflicted by the strikes are indeed driving more individuals to join AQ. There will be some inherent bias in this, as people who are so outraged by the strikes may be unwilling to participate in this survey, or those who do participate and are planning on joining AQ may be unwilling to indicate so.

Based on the available literature, my initial hypothesis is that the US drone program has in fact led to an increase in negative Pakistani public opinion. This is most likely due to the belief of the Pakistani people that the US drone program carelessly inflicts mass civilian casualties and violates Pakistani sovereignty. The Pakistani people receive this potentially biased and incorrect information (inflated civilian casualty statistics) from the Pakistani media. Evidence suggests that the Pakistani media proliferates this biased anti-US picture of the drone program because the anti-US message is popular among the people and fuels ratings and media consumption, which the Pakistani media desperately needs given the fierce competition among competing media outlets for funding, without which the media outlets are unable to operate. This hypothesis would be supported by survey results indicating that those with unfavorable opinions of the drone program feel that way because of reasons provided by their information outlet of choice, which they view favorably. These media outlets would then have to indicate a high reporting bias against the US, as indicated by favorable opinion of hypothetical non-US programs with similar statistics, operations, and goals as the US drone program (indicating they support all aspects of
the US drone program, just not the “US” aspect).

**Conclusion**

Supposing, then, that the results of the research support the hypothesis that the US drone program has led to an overwhelmingly negative Pakistani public opinion of the US, largely due to the influence of the Pakistani media, a number of reforms must be made to the program. These reforms must eliminate those elements of the program that the Pakistani people perceive so unfavorably in order to increase the likelihood of victory of the hearts and minds of the Pakistani people. The first of such reforms is a greater partnership with Pakistan in the program’s total operation. This can be done in a number of ways, either by providing the Pakistani military with Shadow and Raven drones, UAV platforms designed more for reconnaissance and surveillance with more limited combat capabilities than the Predators, or by giving the Pakistani people more control over the operation of the program itself, such as the actual operation of the drones, the drone systems, or greater involvement in aspects of the program such as target acquisition, planning, or the logistics of the strikes.

Given the highly sensitive nature of the program in relation to US national security and the program’s current operation by the CIA, it is highly unlikely that the Pakistanis will be involved in the classified aspects of the operation of the drone program, such as targeting and strike coordination, but providing the government with the less lethal drones to produce a joint fleet of drones of sorts holds promise. The Pakistani people have already expressed a desire to have more control over the program, giving the Pakistani government control over their own drones may satisfy this desire to some degree. This potential Pakistani drone fleet, depending on which UAV platforms are in use, may also alter the Pakistani media’s depiction of the US drone program. The existence of a Pakistani drone fleet, especially one in joint operations with the US drone fleet, may make it harder for the Pakistani media to criticize our drones without criticizing Pakistani drones as well and both governments by extension.

The second potential reform is greater transparency about the program and its operations. Again, given the sensitive nature of the program’s operation in relation to US national security, the program cannot be completely transparent, but opening up greater availability of statistics regarding operational aspects such as civilian death tolls, the methodology behind determining those death tolls, and the measures taken to avoid civilian deaths (this one could be tricky given that AQ could potentially use this knowledge to operate under conditions the drone program would refuse to strike due to high risk for civilian casualties) would prove helpful, as would providing spokespeople for the program accountable to the press. Understandably, not much information can be divulged to the public regarding sensitive and classified materials, but some greater degree of transparency is needed. The more secretly the drone program operates, the more suspicion and speculation surrounds it, leading to the proliferation of potentially inaccurate statistics that can cause people to view the program negatively. The more we can make reliable and accurate statistics available to the Pakistani people (assuming they are receiving biased information and that information is causing them to view the program negatively), the more effective we will be at undermining any media bias and increasing positive opinion of the program. It is entirely understandable that the Pakistani people would be hostile to the operation of combative measures in their sovereign territory that we do not tell them everything about. Greater transparency could therefore potentially lead to the clarification on a myriad of speculations fostering hostility towards the program and stop the nature of the speculation itself.

The third potential, and much needed, reform is the transfer of the program’s operation from the CIA into the hands of the US military. Operation of these drones by civilians undermines the legality of the program, setting a global example that the US is willing to violate international law to meet its objectives. If the US can violate international law to meet its goals, why can’t AQ? This transfer to the US military puts the program in compliance with the Laws of Armed Combat, which holds that in order for combative strikes by one country (US) against that country’s enemies (AQ) in the territory of another country (Pakistan), those striking must be “combatants,” which the civilians of the CIA are not, but military personnel are. Transfer of the program into the hands of the US military would be placing the operation of the strikes in the hands of legal combatants, further reinforcing that legal validity of the program’s operation in Pakistan. If the public

---

sees the program as a legal action by one state against its enemies in another state, and not the program as an illegal US violation of Pakistani sovereignty, then public support for the program may increase, raising the number of hearts and minds won with the program.

The second benefit to transferring control of the program to the US military is that the US military often makes compensations for civilian causalities either to the civilian’s family or the civilian’s host government. This practice may appease, to some small degree, those affected by the civilians casualties resulting from the strikes by expressing regret and sympathy over the casualties, rather than dismissing them as statistics. If the Pakistani people see that we are actively trying to avoid civilian casualties and “repenting” for our mistakes, approval of the program might increase as the Pakistani people see the program trying to avoid civilian casualties as much as possible.

The third benefit to control by the US military is the increase in accountability and transparency of the program inherent under their control. The people do not have direct control or oversight over the actions of the highly classified Central Intelligence Agency to the degree that they have with the fare more public US military. Putting the program into the hands of an organization more subject to public scrutiny and oversight may lead to policies seen as more favorable by the American people. While the American people are not the Pakistanis whose hearts and minds we must win, the American people do certainly have strong opinions against civilian death tolls and may very likely see them as more intolerable that the executive operators of the current drone program. Policies proliferated by the American people and pushed onto the US military (a process that is not possible with the CIA, which is fare more unaccountable to the American people), may very well be in line with the desires of the Pakistani people, at least more so than they currently are. Additional reforms may even be needed to reform the journalistic integrity and accuracy of the Pakistani media if media sources are, in fact, found to be a biased motivator of negative public opinion. Which policies, exactly, may meet these criteria are uncertain, but the potential exists with the introduction of institutions that give the public more control over the program, even if that control is minute.

These reforms, while promising in theory, still leave open the possibility for the continuation of aspects of the program viewed as unfavorable by the Pakistani people, namely civilian casualties and the operation of classified foreign combative operations on Pakistani soil. So why not stop the strikes altogether? Two alternatives to continued operations of the drone program are the total surrender of operations to the Pakistanis or the use of more “controllable” forces in Pakistan to eliminate AQ and other threats. Allowing the Pakistanis to deal with the AQ presence on their own has proved unpromising in the past, with the Pakistani military either unable to locate and eliminate AQ and other terrorist cells or unwilling to devote a significant enough portion of their forces to such operations. Either way, the protection of US national security is far too important for the US to take such a hands-off approach in areas where enemies of the US are highly concentrated and active. The second alternative is equally bleak, as the use of more controllable forces such as special operations teams would equate to putting boots on the ground. While these human combatants may be more discrete in their elimination of targets, they are not/have not been condoned by Pakistan, there is no guarantee of zero civilians casualties, the loss of US life is far higher with the implementation of human force, nor are ground teams nearly as rapidly mobile or undetectable as the high-flying drones.

The truth of the matter is, given current technology and the challenges faced by US national security, the drone program will most likely not be shut down. Under current conditions, our operations are presently more aligned against enemies of the US than they ever have been before. Given the consequences of the program however, namely public backlash, the US finds itself in an AOS situation: “All Options Stink.” If we continue using the drone program with our current operating procedures, we risk Pakistani opposition to US efforts to rid the area of AQ. If we cease drone operations, we risk the proliferation of AQ and the prolonging of the WoT, a scenario which AQ would readily use to convince the Pakistani people that we had abandoned them and condoned AQ actions. Our current operations do have substantial costs associated with them, not the least of which is civilian casualties and the resulting public disapproval of the program and the US, but the perceived net gains currently exceed the costs of the consequences.

Unlike previous strategies, the drone program has proven

---

70. Ibid, page 18.
74. Howard, “What’s in a Name?,” 11.
incredibly effective at keeping AQ from coordinating and operating to the degree they would otherwise be able to, at least in Pakistan, and, increasingly, in the FATA regions. Limiting AQ freedom as much as possible is absolutely critical to limiting the ability of AQ to coordinate any actions, thereby reducing their threat substantially.75 As long as parts of Pakistan and the FATA regions remain the hotbeds for anti-US sentiment and terrorist operations that they currently are, our operations in those areas are simply not going to stop,76 as doing so risks allowing the area to increase in effectiveness and scope of operations against the United States. Furthermore, direct action to reduce the actions of AQ and other terrorist cells is not only critical to preventing attacks on the US homeland, but also in protecting the Pakistani people, as the terrorist cells being targeted by the drone program also pose a substantial threat to Pakistan. Allowing substantial harm to befall the people of Pakistan is seen by many as just as much of murder as the civilian casualties inflicted by the drone program.77

The drone program is far from perfect, but it is the best option the US currently possesses in the war on terror. Not only is the program far cheaper than other counterterrorism tactics, but it is far safer for US personnel than manned aircraft or deployed troops. Civilian death tolls, while regrettable and a major source of public disapproval, cannot be considered conclusively as no measures currently exist to accurately determine death tolls. The biggest challenges faced by the program are the potential creation of martyrs and new terrorists in the wake of deaths from the strikes and the anti-US rhetoric potentially generated by the biased Pakistani media. While not perfect, it is the best option we have, and it will continue operating in order to protect US national security, but that does not mean that changed cannot be implemented, as current operations may be creating just as many, if not more, enemies to the US than it eliminates.

77. Byman, “Terrorism After the Revolutions,” Page 54.
The Danger of Neglecting the Influence of Willpower in a Confrontation with Nuclear North Korea

Elliott Silverman

Introduction
On June 15th, 1994, then-U.S President Bill Clinton was faced with the possibility of starting an all-out war with North Korea. The regime of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea had ordered nuclear fuel rods unloaded from the reactor at Yongbyon nuclear complex, which is the first step in creating a nuclear weapon. General Gary Luck—American commander of U.S. forces in Korea—gave the stark assessment, “A million, a hundred billion, and a trillion.” A second Korean War would result in 1 million casualties, would cost the U.S. $100 billion, and would cause $1 Trillion in industrial damage. These numbers only capture half of the story, and almost none of the forces at play. There is a human element which would be present in a possible conflict with North Korea that cannot be ignored. The willpower of the North Korean people is unlike anything else that has been seen in the 21st century. Decades of indoctrination and brainwashing under the cult of personality of the ruling Kim family mixed with a standing military of 1.2 million, the fourth largest in the world, has created a very dangerous situation on the Korean peninsula. One of the biggest challenges facing the United States military apparatus will be its ability to overcome and compensate for an opponent with a stronger willpower, which can lead both sides to do very dangerous things. In the event of a conflict with North Korea, the human element poses a real strategic danger and needs to be addressed by the United States in a conventional or nuclear scenario. The regimes’ promotion of Juche ideology and its influence over willpower should not be underestimated, among other reasons, when considering the likelihood of nuclear use in conflict.

Regime Control and Juche Ideology
As acclaimed scholar Victor Cha notes, “During the Cold War, nothing epitomized the North Koreans’ view that they were the true defenders of the Korean ethnic identity and nationalism more than Kim Il-Sung’s ideology of Juche.” When translated, Juche means “self-determination,” but can be viewed on a more significant level as meaning “self-reliance.” Under this ideology, the North Korean people believe that they must become self-sufficient and independent from the influence of the great-power nations that surround them. They believe that they must fend for themselves to preserve the true Korean identity. Juche stresses the role of man’s efforts as the primary mover of history. Further, the key to this “revolution” is loyalty to the supreme leader, Kim Il-Sung. Juche is the sole guiding principle of the state.

Juche has changed over time since its adoption by the state in 1955. It has evolved from a political ideology to a cult of personality in which Kim Il-Sung (the “Great Leader”) came to have Godlike qualities as the embodiment and savior of the Korean race. This evolution is largely due to Kim Jong-Il, the son and successor of Kim Il-Sung. The ideology is credited as the reason for citizens blindly following a leadership that serves its own needs before those of the people. As Cha notes, “It forms the backbone of the state’s control. Without the ideology, the state could not survive.” Simply put, Juche is the state’s instrument of control. It has been seared into the minds of North Koreans through daily repetitive indoctrination sessions. Because of this, there is an almost biological and anatomical rationalization for loyalty to the Kim regime. This indoctrination is so strong that as many as one third of the 21,000 North Korean defectors living in South Korea still identify themselves as “North Korean,” as opposed to “Korean,” and still express a loyalty to the “Great Leader” and the Kim family regime.

There is truly no option to resist state control in North Korea.

4. Ibid. Page 37.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid. p. 42
Those who dissent against the regime end up in one of the six labor or prison camps scattered throughout the country. Journalist Blaine Harden notes, “North Korea’s labor camps have now existed twice as long as the Soviet Gulag and about twelve times longer than Nazi concentration camps... U.S. State department and human rights groups have estimated that there may be as many as two hundred thousand prisoners currently in the camps.”10 The conditions in these camps are unimaginable. Twelve to fifteen hour workdays are routine until prisoners die, usually of malnutrition-related illnesses. A few prisoners are executed each year, while others are beaten to death or secretly murdered by the guards, who have full autonomous control of the camps and abuse and rape prisoners regularly.11 Fear of ending up in one of these camps only adds to the iron-grip that the regime holds over the North Korean people. Further, these camps also serve to legitimize the regime through fear.

Today, North Korea has entered a state of “Neojuche revivalism.”12 After experimenting with halfhearted economic reforms during the 1990’s which failed and contributed to devastating the country, the regime, currently led by Kim Jong-Un, the grandson of Kim Il-Sung, has returned to the principles and propaganda of the 1960’s and 1970’s, but with an even more conservative tone than before.13 This Juche revivalism stresses “Son’gun” or “military first” politics. Cha notes it also “wholeheartedly associates the drive for nuclear weapons with the country’s achievement of “Kangsong tae’guk” (rich nation, strong army).”14 Academic Lee Hy-Sang has noted that this obsession with aggrandizing the military is driven by ideology as much as it is by external security threats.15 With both of those notions paired together, it is easy to understand why military spending in the DPRK amounts to 31% of the country’s $28 Billion GDP.16

The economic engine, and perhaps the most frightening principle of Juche is termed “Ch’ollima,” which is the idea that on the backs of the workers, the state would fly to a socialist paradise.17 This principle forces workers to labor long hours in the name of the Great Leader. It is a concept of mass mobilization, but also a form of state control in the sense that “it squeezes as much as possible out of the workforce based on revolutionary zeal.”18 This “revolutionary zeal” has alarming implications not because it is replacing basic economic market principles, but because it shows what the North Korean people are capable of achieving quickly as soon as their leadership gives the word. Not only does it empower the masses to reach achievement in public works, but it also makes the masses a very powerful tool that can be used in the most desperate times.

The Influence of Willpower in Conflict
While writing on the concept of imperfect knowledge of a situation, the esteemed 19th century military theorist, Carl Von Clausewitz said, “The stronger motive increases willpower, and willpower, as we know, is always both an element in and the product of strength.”19 Whether the scenario is conventional or involves nuclear weapons, the willpower, and therefore the strength of the DPRK, cannot be underestimated. The DPRK knows that it cannot win a war against the allied U.S. and South Korean (ROK) militaries. In fact, it is deterred from a massive invasion because it knows it would lose, and this calculation has been what has held the peace at the Demilitarized Zone for the past fifty-plus years.20 With that in mind, North Korea still has the ability to inflict massive amounts of damage and deaths, possibly numbering in the millions. The DPRK will not go down without a fight, and that fight has the potential to be the bloodiest of the 21st century. North Koreans live by the mantra “powerful and prosperous nation.” While the latter may not be true, they are powerful and this power, equated in this case with strength of will, must be accounted for when dealing with a Korean conflict. This is not just rhetoric either. The people of the DPRK believe what they are told. They would expect nothing less than a powerful response to any provocation from an enemy.

If the military objective of the DPRK is reunification of the Korean Peninsula under the rule of Pyongyang, one can assume that the leadership knows its military objective can no longer be achieved in the present day. They cannot fully destroy their enemy, but their willpower and passions may cause them to fight to the death, and in doing so inflict as much damage as possible on the enemy. If the North Korean leadership sees an increasingly negative outcome, they may latch

11. Ibid. Page 5-6.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid. Page 116.
17. Ibid. Page 44-5.
18. Ibid.
out on a moment’s notice. Clausewitz writes, “If one side uses force without compunction, undeterred by the bloodshed it involves, while the other side refrains, the first will gain the upper hand.”

21.

If war is an instrument of policy, and even more so a continuation of policy by other means, then there is considerable reason to worry that a second Korean War could quickly become nuclear. The “military first” policies of the DPRK, which have become an intrinsic value of the Korean Workers Party (KWP) (ruling political class), are very worrisome. If the motives driving the populace are so strong because of the indoctrination that it has undergone, there must be a policy of proportionate magnitude to match those motivations. That policy could end up being the use of a nuclear weapon in conflict. This irrational logic could lead to nuclear use by Pyongyang. If the DPRK leadership uses strength of will as a source of power in conflict, it could lead to rationalizing irrational logic. While rational reasons exist for the DPRK to use a nuclear weapon, irrational logic must be kept in mind when creating strategy for dealing with North Korea.

Factors Leading to Potential Vertical Escalation

Since 2006, after the first successful nuclear test by the DPRK, the threats coming out of the “hermit kingdom” have been increasingly belligerent. In fact, “the continued references to their nuclear deterrent reflect a degree of confidence that we have not witnessed before.”

22. Scholars Keir Lieber and Daryl Press point out that, “the risk of nuclear war with North Korea is far from remote...the current crisis has substantially increased the risk of conventional conflict — and any conventional war with North Korea is likely to go nuclear.”

23. To be clear, the most serious and frightening threat facing the DPRK would be the destruction or downfall of its political system. As soon as this threat becomes a reality, there may be no means in the free world to stop the DPRK from using a nuclear weapon. They would not use it out of a search for victory, but rather out of a necessity for survival. Accordingly, there is rational logic for Pyongyang to use a nuclear weapon.

The Kim regime and the loyal KWP have thought of this scenario. This is why, in Pyongyang, there are over eleven thousand underground facilities. Victor Cha writes, “All key buildings and palaces are linked with a deep underground network to allow for quick escape if attacked. Nuclear bunkers reportedly exist underneath the main subway system in the city that is already three hundred feet underground. After the experience of American bombing and napalm during the Korean War, the North sought refuge by burrowing deeper underground than anyone else in the world, making the country like a block of Swiss cheese, with caverns and tunnels everywhere.”

24. The fact that North Korea has such a first class civil defense and leadership strike protection in place poses a problem. The DPRK has convinced itself that it might actually be able to survive a nuclear attack. Because of this, they might be more inclined themselves to start or escalate to the nuclear level, thinking that it could survive the ensuing chaos.

The question has already been asked and answered: What political object for the DPRK would be valuable enough to use a nuclear weapon? The answer is regime survival. “The North wants a special type of regime security assurance from the United States.”

25. The question then becomes: How many North Korean lives will it take for the regime to realize that the culminating point of victory has been reached? Unfortunately there is no answer to this question.

Military theorist Carl Von Clausewitz points out that violence tends to escalate. Pyongyang could turn this logic on its head by escalating to the nuclear level in conflict. They could rationalize this by applying violence to control the escalation of the conflict, with the driving fear that if they don’t escalate, the other side will. This leads to a “use it or lose it” dilemma. As Cha puts it, “Once the regime realizes they are not invulnerable to attack, they will become very worried that not just their artillery, but their nuclear weapons would be at risk of being neutralized by an attack.”

26. With the current state of affairs on the Korean peninsula, there is ample room for a “spiral of miscalculation to occur,” also carrying with it the potential for any conflict to quickly go nuclear. Cha writes, “Seoul has basically reoriented its military to respond to the next action by the North. Meanwhile, the North believes its nuclear capabilities deter

25. Ibid. Page 304.
states from retaliating against it. Pyongyang therefore feels uninhibited in pursuing its coercive strategy aimed at leveraging the peaceful status quo against Seoul to reap the benefits. The North acts with another attack, the South responds with military force. Both sides escalate in response to each other. This dynamic is perhaps the easiest way a war, and even a nuclear war, can be started between the North and the South.

The most compelling argument for escalation is that Pyongyang will use a nuclear weapon when they feel that they are on their death ground. The ancient Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu describes death ground as “Ground on which we can only be saved from destruction by fighting without delay.” He goes on to say, “Throw your soldiers into positions whence there is no escape, and they will prefer death to flight. If they face death, there is nothing they may not achieve.” As previously mentioned, if the DPRK sees the inevitable negative outcome, they will not hesitate to use any and all means at their disposal to fight for their lives. This is especially true when keeping their ideological values in mind. Cha writes, “The fact that conventional deterrence has held indeed offers evidence of a degree of rationality in Pyongyang. But what is concerning is that sometimes even rational actors, when they become especially stressed, can do dangerous things.” In social psychology, there is a need to overcome cognitive dissonance based on actions an individual takes. This manifests itself through rational behavior versus rationalizing behavior. Social psychologists describe, “People who are in the midst of reducing dissonance are so involved with convincing themselves that they are right that they frequently end up behaving irrationally and maladaptively.” As the regime begins to lose control, North Korea’s rational behavior will turn to rationalizing behavior, potentially leading to a spiral of miscalculation—which is escalation.

**U.S. Response to an Escalated Crisis**

In an ideal situation for the DPRK, it would be able to slow the U.S. capacity to respond to any crisis that it starts. Unfortunately for North Korea, slowing down U.S. response will not matter in the end. While in office, President Bill Clinton stated, “A nuclear war started by the North would mean the end of the country as they knew it.” With that in mind, U.S. strategy must not neglect willpower as a factor in conflict, as doing this could result in unforeseen pitfalls.

Clausewitz writes, “Two different motives make men fight one another: hostile feelings and hostile intentions.” He then goes on to say that, “Savage peoples are ruled by passion, civilized peoples by the mind. The difference, however, lies not in their respective natures of savagery and civilization, but in their attendant circumstances, institutions, and so forth.” This frames the fight that the United States and South Korea is up against. For the sake of comparison, Juche can be equated as a form of 21st century savagery, making the DPRK a state that is driven by passion. This means that the true fight for the United States will be its ability to overcome an extremely passionate state.

Any invasion by the United States into North Korean territory is sure to evoke an expectedly loud nationalist reaction out of the North Korean people. North Korean nationalism is almost synonymous with anti-colonialism. North Korea does an excellent job of portraying the U.S. as a warmongering colonial power through its propaganda system. At a young age, North Korean children are taught grammatical conjugations by learning “We Killed Americans, We are killing Americans, and We will kill Americans.” If The United States military enters North Korea, the invasion will only be vindicating the imperialist narrative that the North Korean people have been taught their whole life. The people will fight to the death because that is what they have been taught to do. Following a conventional invasion, it is not out of the realm of possibility to think that a “people’s war” could be started. All this requires is the people’s will, which will be in abundance. This could cause an unexpectedly violent fight for which the U.S. ground forces might not be ready.

Clausewitz writes, “If you want to overcome your enemy you must match your effort against his power of resistance, which can be expressed as the product of two inseparable factors, viz. the total means

---

27. Ibid. Page 243.
29. Ibid. Page 61.
34. Ibid.
at his disposal and the strength of his will.” The strength of his will can only be measured by the motive animating it. This is what has the potential to cause problems for the United States. The ground forces that go in will be facing a populace that has never been exposed to the outside world, and has been trained to hate Americans. While the U.S. may employ tactics to kill the willpower of the North Korean people and coerce them to accept defeat, killing the willpower may be an unwinnable strategy. One way to attempt this strategy would be through strategic bombing, and although this can eliminate high value targets, it is unlikely to lower or deter the morale of the North Korean people. You cannot lower the morale of the people of the DPRK because they are so used to living a life of deprivation. They are a resilient people.

The United States must avoid being caught off guard for this inevitable fight. As Cha notes, “The world has watched North Korea slowly build a ballistic missile and nuclear weapons program over the past twenty-five years in no small part because the world can’t be bothered with North Korea...the issue simply does not rank highly enough in terms of U.S. priorities.” This attitude must quickly change, for when this conflict takes place, the U.S will be in it for the long haul. Just for comparison, President Harry Truman raised taxes 3 times (1950-51) to fund the first Korean War. Though the circumstances were different, the U.S. should expect no less than a complete investment effort in Korea. It must also avoid a strategy-policy mismatch. While (OPLAN) 5027 (Joint U.S-ROK war plans for war on the Peninsula) is certainly all encompassing, it must take the human element into account. The hardest part of a war with North Korea will be compelling them that they have lost. The leadership may fall, yet through all of the violence, irrationality and nationalism will prevail with the people. They will not give up.

If North Korea does escalate to the nuclear level, it will almost certainly expect the United States to respond in kind, which current policy already dictates through extended deterrence. This policy of reciprocation should be followed in a conflict with the North. If the aim of war is to compel your enemy’s surrender, a U.S. nuclear option might be the only option on the table that carries coercive ability. The real problem is that a U.S. nuclear weapon must defeat the will of the DPRK. It is hard to use history here. When the U.S. dropped an atomic weapon over Japan, the Japanese did not anticipate it. Furthermore, the Japanese never used a nuclear weapon in conflict, which does not match the scenario given. However, there are some parallels that can be drawn from the U.S. experience combating Japanese willpower in World War II to present day Korea.

In his piece, “Thank God for the Atom Bomb,” Paul Fussell quotes an enlisted man and describes, “What we had experienced in fighting the Japs on Peleliu and Okinawa caused us to formulate some very definite opinions that the invasion…would be a ghastly bloodletting. It would shock the American public and the world. Every Japanese soldier, civilian, woman, and child would fight to the death with whatever weapons they had.” A conventional conflict with North Korea would likely hold true to some of the key variables present in Japanese willpower prior to the bomb being dropped, in which case, the best option to destroy the will of the enemy would be to use a nuclear weapon.

Conclusion

When attempting to create a strategy for a conflict on the Korean Peninsula, the human element cannot be left out of decision-makers thinking. Through ideology and indoctrination, the North Korean people have been trained for generations to think that the world is against them. Therefore, any conventional invasion would be playing right into their narrative. A conventional invasion of the North by U.S.-led forces may spur the North to quickly escalate, in which case the U.S. should respond in kind. The key to any conflict will be managing or defeating the willpower of the North Korean people. It is likely that the majority of the private population will not surrender quietly. The U.S. must come up with a strategy that takes this into account, and includes a trump card for defeating or breaking the willpower of the North Korean populace. Whether this U.S. strategy includes nuclear use or not, the will DPRK should under no circumstance be underestimated.

International Studies
Unintended Consequences: The EU’s Common Agricultural Policy and Dumping

Caroline Dillard

While debate rages within the European Union about its costly agricultural support program, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the effect of this policy beyond the borders of the EU is often ignored. Mechanisms within the CAP allow excess agricultural products to be sold at artificially low prices on international markets, a phenomenon called “dumping” which has crippled certain agricultural industries in many developing countries that cannot compete with this unfair trade practice. In this essay I will first explain the background of the European Union’s CAP and graphically examine the policy to demonstrate how the phenomenon of dumping occurs. I will then examine evidence from the Jamaica milk industry to show the harmful effects of dumping on an industry in a developing country. Through this, I will conclude that both older methods of price support and reforms that introduce direct payments to farmers through the CAP negatively impact agricultural industries in developing countries and subsidy reduction should continue with the ultimate goal of elimination in order to both benefit agricultural development in developing countries and further trade liberalization.

The Common Agricultural Policy came into force in Europe in 1963 to encourage production in a post-war period characterized by food shortages. It was also intended to guarantee a decent standard of living for farmers while ensuring reasonable prices for consumers. However, the attempt to erase a history of underproduction through price supports for agricultural goods began to create problems in the mid-1970s when agricultural surpluses began to emerge. Though recent reforms, starting with the 1992 MacSherry Reforms, have served to decrease the “wine lakes and butter mountains,” 40 percent of the EU budget is still devoted to this largely inefficient policy. Currently, most agricultural subsidization has shifted away from price supports toward direct payments to farmers, which removes the incentive to overproduce. However, I will argue that the shift towards direct payments still results in dumping on the international market.

Figure 1: Implications of the Common Agricultural Policy

This graph represents the effect of the Common Agricultural Policy on a single good within the EU and how the phenomenon of dumping arises. $P^*$ represents the world price for the good. Without the CAP, consumers within the EU would pay $P^*$ for the good. $P_c$ represents the price that EU consumers pay as a result of CAP. This increase in price from $P^*$ occurred in the past due to price supports on agricultural goods, which guaranteed farmers a minimum price on their goods with the intention of ensuring a decent standard of living for the producers of agricultural goods. As reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy have come into effect in recent years, the mechanism that increases the price of agricultural goods within the EU has increasingly been the use of direct payments to farmers on the basis of amount of land. This switch was intended to prevent the costly overproduction that created massive inefficiencies and led to dumping of agricultural products in developing countries.


developing nations. While the cost of CAP to EU taxpayers might have been reduced and extreme overproduction stopped by the advent of direct payments, dumping has not stopped. Prices within the EU are still artificially higher than they would be without the CAP, even with recent reforms. The increase in price shown by $P_c$ creates an environment in which supply of the agricultural product within the EU is greater than the demand of the agricultural product of the EU. In order to sell the excess product, a price below the world price is set, noted by the line $P_d$, and it is exported to developing markets.

Providing a cheaper agricultural product to a developing nation sounds at a very basic level like a beneficial effect of Common Agricultural Policy dumping. Indeed, for developing countries that have historically relied on the importation of foodstuff, dumping would prove to be helpful. However, the vast majority of developing economies rely on agricultural production. Therefore, the price at which the EU dumps its products on these developing economies does significant damage to domestic production, as producers are no longer able to compete with the highly subsidized European products. As the development of agriculture is often seen as a stepping stone to industrialization within a country, the stunting of domestic agriculture that results from EU dumping has even graver implications for economic growth than just a decline in the local sugar industry. Furthermore, 60 percent of the work in agriculture and good production is done by women. The decline of agricultural production within a developing country may, therefore, have serious implications on the status of women.

Duncan Green and Matthew Smith argue in their 2002 article “Dumping on the Poor” that dumping transforms from competition based on productive efficiency to a competition of subsidization. Though riddled with inefficiencies, the EU agricultural products can compete on the world stage not because they have particularly productive farms—in fact, quite the contrary—but because the EU is rich enough to subsidize its way to exportation. The result is the loss of a crucial market for the more than half of the world’s poor whose livelihood depends on agricultural production.

4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

The negative effects of the CAP on developing countries’ agriculture are particularly visible in the Jamaican dairy industry. The graph above depicts Jamaican milk production from 1981 to 2008. The peak in 1992 reflects two occurrences: a shift in Jamaica towards trade liberalization and an effort in the EU to reduce its stockpiles of whole milk powder that had built up as a result of CAP subsidies that incentivize overproduction. The EU was able to dump its excess whole milk powder on the Jamaican market at artificially low prices, with which domestic producers could not compete. Thus, as the graph demonstrates, local fresh milk production in Jamaica began to decline. An Anti-Dumping Advisory Committee set up in 1995 to investigate the problem found that the whole milk powder from the EU being dumped on the Jamaican market had subsidies of 78 percent of the domestic price in Europe. The committee recommended a 137 percent duty, which was not implemented for fear of the duty’s possible negative effect on the Jamaica poor. Consequently, Jamaican milk production continued to fall and more than 550 small and medium sized farmers left the industry between 1990 and 2004.

Within Jamaica, efforts have been made to mitigate the effects of dumping. The Jamaican Customs Duties Act of 1999 established laws on dumping and subsidization of goods as well as the investigation into any possible incidents of dumping. It also provides for the

7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.

---

Figure 2: Declining Local Fresh Milk Production (1981-2008)
possibility of anti-dumping duties to be applied to imports into the Jamaican market.\textsuperscript{9} Globally, anti-dumping measures have also been enacted. Article VI of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994—or the “Anti-Dumping Agreement”—gives governments the right to take anti-dumping measures if they can show that dumping is taking place, calculate the extent of the dumping, and show that the dumping is causing harm.\textsuperscript{10} These anti-dumping measures entail a duty to be applied to the offending product that brings its imported price close to its normal value, which is calculated by either price of the good in the exporter’s domestic market, the price charged by the exporter in another country, or a calculation based on the combination of the exporter’s production costs, other expenses and normal profit margins.\textsuperscript{11} However, Article VI stipulates that the measures must only last five years unless a subsequent investigation proves that they should continue past this deadline.\textsuperscript{12} Though the Doha round of World Trade Organization talks focusing on agricultural trade—particularly Western and EU agricultural protectionism—failed, their focus signals an increasing awareness and desire to tackle the significant failings and detriments caused by agriculture subsidy programs such as the CAP.\textsuperscript{13}

While the situation in Jamaica provides a useful case study of the effects of the CAP on a developing country, it should be noted that dumping of dairy products is not even the most egregious example of the negative effects of CAP agricultural subsidies. Sugar subsidies have been largely untouched even after reforms beginning in 1992.\textsuperscript{14} The Common Organisation of the Markets in Sugar (Com Sugar) is the program through which enormous subsidies are directed to the EU sugar beet industry, allowing the EU to be the world’s largest exporter of sugar with 30 percent of the world’s exports.\textsuperscript{15} Without the CAP, the EU would be completely unable to export sugar.\textsuperscript{16} With the CAP, the EU is able to dump sugar onto the world, creating large trade distortions.

A simple suggestion to improve the CAP is the removal of all agricultural subsidies. This measure would both remove the deadweight loss that occurs in the EU as a result of the Common Agricultural Policy and prevent harmful dumping on developing countries. Unfortunately, the political realities in the EU make the removal of all agriculture subsidies virtually impossible. France, controlled by its powerful farm unions, strongly supports traditional subsidization programs and has proved resistant to most reforms.\textsuperscript{17} Though the last decade has seen a shift in support from direct agricultural payments—“pillar one” payments—to incentives for rural development—“pillar two” payments—an EU in which CAP agricultural subsidies no longer exist is a distant reality as long as the French farm lobbies continue to exercise power over French politicians. Additionally, the stalled international efforts to reduce agricultural subsidies in the Doha Round of the World Trade Organization demonstrate just how contentious many of the issues surrounding international agricultural trade can be and the difficulty of developing a solution that satisfies the varied participants in a world characterized by growing international trade.

Furthermore, in some cases the removal of CAP subsidies would not positively benefit developing countries. A study by Richard Gibb in The Journal of Modern African Studies found that states in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific who have preferential access to European markets through trade agreements would actually be negatively benefited by trade liberalization efforts such as the removal of CAP agricultural subsidies. Gibb cites a 2000 study by Correll and Hubbard that found that “the removal of price protection would completely eliminate all EU sugar exports...The net result would be a significant increase in the world market price for sugar, by as much as 33%.”\textsuperscript{18} Developing countries that were benefitting from priority access to EU markets by importing sugar from the EU at artificially low prices would ultimately be hurt by such a steep increase in the price of sugar. Therefore, the elimination of CAP will not lead to entirely positive results; as with most policies that affect international trade, there will be winners as well as losers.

Regardless of the negative impact that select countries benefitting

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} “Europe’s farm follies.”
from preferential access to European Union markets may experience in
the aftermath of CAP subsidy removal or the political friction within
the EU that may make agricultural subsidy removal difficult, efforts
to reform the Common Agricultural Policy should continue and make
subsidy removal. Not only will developing countries producers suffering
from dumping benefit from CAP reform and subsidy removal, allowing
the agricultural industries within these countries to develop more fully.
Therefore, the goal of the EU should be subsidy removal not subsidy
redirection, the current trend in CAP reform. As demonstrated, both
traditional price supports and new forms of subsidization that involve
direct payments to farmers distort trade and result in dumping. In order
to satisfy political forces within the EU uneasy about ending agricultural
subsidies and to mitigate the potentially negative effects of developing
countries with preferential access to EU markets, subsidy removal
should occur gradually in stages rather than all at once. Furthermore,
international efforts should be made to resume talks at the Doha
Round of the World Trade Organization. Despite the contentions about
agricultural subsidy removal that initially stalled talks, the WTO has
proved to be an effective forum through which trade liberalization can
occur. Talks that promote subsidy reduction policies and compromises
that reduce dumping will serve to lessen the burden on developing
country producers and Western consumers by removing trade distortions.

Ultimately, the Common Agricultural Policy cannot go
untouched. It is a symbol of the West’s hypocritical "You liberalize. We
subsidize." attitude towards international trade and a mechanism through
which agricultural markets in developing countries are continuously
repressed by countries that are rich enough to subsidize domestic
products to competitiveness. Without a shift in European attitudes
that allows for a radical reform of a policy so dear to the Post-World
War II reconstruction and reparation efforts, however, the developing
countries that suffer under the yoke of dumping cannot receive justice
in international trade.

19. Ibid.
A Tale of Two Cities: Health Literacy in Two Western Healthcare Models

Xinqi Ren, Jaison Thomas

Introduction

Nothing is a better indicator of individuals’ health than their health literacy. According to the American Medical Association, poor health literacy is “a stronger predictor of a person’s health than age, income, employment status, education level, and race.” However, current models of healthcare administration and prevention identify ethnicity, race, and genetic dispositions as the leading markers of an individual’s prospective health. Health literacy is defined as “the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.”" Perhaps most exemplifying unmet needs are the homeless, who in the United States, have limited access to healthcare. In contrast, however, in select European countries, specifically Denmark, the entire homeless population has access to a primary healthcare physician. This raises the fundamental question of whether increased healthcare access leads to improved health literacy in a population.

Despite the importance of health literacy, a recent analysis of PubMed databases reveals that less than two percent of all articles pertaining to health literacy mentioned European populations. This disparity strengthened our curiosity and points to the need for further research of this topic. Dr. Nora Gimpel, a professor at UT Southwestern, shares this belief and indicated that her department is interested in replicating the project as a pilot study for her medical students. As Pre-Medical students with backgrounds in research, we propose an exploratory project to survey two comparable populations under two different healthcare models, and to analyze the gathered data in order to reveal trends in health literacy. Within our current perspective of the American healthcare model, there is an incomplete understanding of the causal link of health literacy to patient health. We are interested in broadening this understanding by comparing the American model of healthcare to that of Denmark. In doing so, we will seek associations between the system of healthcare delivery and the health literacy of the population. Ultimately, the purpose of our Richter Fellowship project is to explore this connection by comparing the health literacy of two homeless populations, one that is served by the American model of healthcare—Dallas, Texas—and the other that exists under a Western European model—Copenhagen, Denmark.

Background

Health literacy is commonly assessed with the Rapid Estimate of Adult Literacy in Medicine—Short Form (REALM-SF), the Single Item Literacy Screener (SILS), or the Test of Functional Health Literacy in Adults (TOFHLA). Specifically, the REALM is assessed on a scale from 0-66 with 0-14 indicating a lack of health literacy and 42-66 indicating proficiency at a high school level (AHRQ). In order to understand and effectively compare the health literacy of two populations in Denmark and the United States, it is necessary to describe the two different healthcare environments. Though both countries are developed, western democracies, they noticeably differ in their delivery of health services to the homeless populations.

The history of the Danish healthcare system is one marked not by sweeping reform but rather waves of progressive, gradual changes from the 1970s to the middle of the last decade. Due to an overwhelming aura of fiscal federalism that exists in the Danish state, the path of healthcare reform followed one of decentralization and a reimbursement system. Although Denmark belongs to the group of national health care systems, it is much like its ethnic cousins Sweden, Norway, and Finland in that the state run healthcare model is decentralized into the county delivery system. Among Danes, fairly broad political consensus towards universal health avoided any political battlegrounds that have encompassed other Western counterparts. The 1970 local government

reform movements reduced the number of counties and municipalities and put in place a unified health service at the county level, opening the path for universal health delivery.

It is evident that Danes are involved and concerned with health literacy. This concern is derived from their trust and support of the Denmark health care system. “A country of 5.3 million people, Denmark is known in public management circles for having remarkable support for its public institutions, such as healthcare. Comparative surveys of 13 countries conducted by the World Values Institute and supplemented by Danish Government-sponsored surveys show average confidence in Danish public institutions, such as its healthcare system in the range of 65-70 per cent over the last two decades.”

Healthcare in Denmark is based upon the European model, where all persons are covered under the financial responsibility of counties and municipalities. Recent figures indicate that Denmark spends approximately 9.8 percent of its GDP, or 30.7 billion US dollars, on healthcare services. This translates into approximately 3,540 US Dollars per capita spent on healthcare in Denmark. Furthermore, in Denmark, municipalities are responsible for health visitors, homeless health centers, and municipal dentists. Additionally, access to general practitioners and hospital care is free for all Danish residents. This current Danish system was designed to ensure that all people of Denmark are eligible to receive health services. Denmark reports a 95 percent satisfaction with their healthcare system. We plan to further investigate and report on this topic.

Conversely, healthcare in the United States is not a system in the true sense as the government has not organized national health insurance programs like most developed countries in the world do. As a result, not all Americans are automatically covered by health insurance: access to healthcare among homeless populations is too often compromised by the immense scope of the healthcare structure. Healthcare in the United States does not consist of interrelated components that work together coherently as a system should, but is instead a kaleidoscope of insurance and finance agencies along with delivery and payment mechanisms. The World Health Organization (WHO) ranked the U.S. health care system as the highest in cost, first in responsiveness, 37th in overall performance, and 72nd by overall level of health among 191 nations included in its research study.

In contrast to Denmark’s 9.8 percent GDP spending on healthcare, in the United States up to 16 percent of the GDP is spent on healthcare, with 15 percent of its GDP spent on healthcare in 2003: the highest percentage among developed nations. In addition, the United States spends $5,635 per capita, twice the per capita of developed countries. Ultimately, though the United States pays more per head towards the healthcare of its citizens, the result is a delivery mechanism that fails to serve nearly as many individuals as its European counterparts. Consequently, individuals affected most by this inefficiency are the underserved populations, including the homeless.

Though healthcare for marginalized individuals in Denmark has been studied in the past, research has often failed to address how the healthcare structure affects access to health delivery. In the Danish sense, although “homeless” is not concretely defined, rough-sleepers and those without a home for 14 days or more are considered homeless. Studies conducted show that vulnerable groups in Denmark, including the homeless, use hospital-based healthcare noticeably more often than average Danes. In contrast, these same groups make use of their general practitioners much less frequently; in a survey, up to 70% of these individuals did not even know whom their general practitioners were. The significance of these statistics is highlighted when analyzing the situation with a health literacy aspect—homeless members who frequent their GPs less often are less likely to develop adequate health literacy and in turn expose themselves to an increased risk of health deterioration.

Homelessness is an ongoing public health concern in Dallas County—the Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance 2011 Point-in-Time Homeless Count and Census Report showed that on one given night there were 5,783 homeless, including 4,626 adults, 1,106 children in family units and 51 unaccompanied children. These figures included

---

504 individuals categorized as chronically homeless, defined as any unaccompanied disabled individual who has been continuously homeless for over one year. The report, which provides a snapshot of homelessness in Dallas, showed health concerns as a contributing cause to homelessness as well as a significant unmet need among the homeless. The problem of Americans without proper healthcare and adequate health literacy continues to rise. Not surprisingly, the rates of both chronic and acute health problems are extremely high among the homeless population. “With the exception of obesity, strokes, and cancer, homeless people are far more likely to suffer from every category of chronic health problem. Conditions which require regular, uninterrupted treatment, such as tuberculosis, diabetes, hypertension, and addictive disorders, are extremely difficult to treat or control” among those without adequate housing. We believe this tragic problem is exacerbated because the homeless neither have information on preventative measures, nor do they possess the health literacy needed to understand and seek treatment. At present, there is one federally funded program, Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) that is designed specifically to provide primary healthcare to homeless persons. More programs similar to this are needed, as well as programs to increase health literacy among not just the homeless, but the entire American population.

As a component of the research to be conducted in Denmark, we will study the Danish population’s perception of their healthcare delivery as well as the general consensus towards the effectiveness of the system. There is limited information available through U.S. publications regarding Danish views on healthcare—a thorough understanding of the healthcare system in Denmark is available by studying local records regarding policy towards the delivery process. Records of spending towards healthcare are also more transparent with local governmental records as opposed to information that is available online.

Significance

The significance of health literacy is reflected in its implications: health literacy is a prime determinant in an individual’s self-reported health status, rate of compliance and understanding of treatment, and use and comprehension of preventative services. Results from health literacy tests reveal that functional health literacy scores essentially mirror the patient’s knowledge of his or her illness; individuals who score higher on health literacy evaluations know more about their illness and how to accurately care for themselves as compared to individuals who have lower or have mediocre scores. Furthermore, lower scoring individuals are more likely to answer incorrectly regarding the state and severity of their illness and how to recover. For example, compared to individuals with adequate health literacy, patients with low health literacy on average do not understand when to take “as needed” drugs, increasing their chance for accidental overdose or insufficient use. An increase in health literacy should improve these facets of an individual’s life thus lowering health care costs.

Methods

Preface

The study was conducted in various homeless shelters and centers throughout both research locations, Copenhagen during the summer of 2012 and Dallas during winter of 2012-2013. The subjects’ participation was on a purely voluntary basis – they were given information about our study and then the option to take part in it. We developed our survey strategy based on two established methods of evaluating health literacy: REALM and Short-TOFHLA health literacy assessment surveys. The original TOFHLA’s sheer length hinders our ability to complete the project within the time parameters with a satisfactory sample size. Consequently, we opted to utilize the S-TOFHLA (Short-TOFHLA), which can be administered in less than ten minutes per subject. Furthermore, the REALM and S-TOFHLA complement each other as health literacy surveys, having a high correlation of r=0.84.

Setting

For our Richter Fellowship project, we chose to compare the healthcare model and demographics of Copenhagen, Denmark with


\[\text{Ibid.}\]
Dallas, Texas. Copenhagen is the most attractive choice for this project for multiple reasons, including the practicality of carrying out our inquiry. Primarily, there are 3.8 homeless persons per 1000 citizens in Copenhagen, which has an urban population of approximately 1.2 million as of January 2011. In a study completed by Project UDENFOR, a private Danish social foundation, approximately 5,500 homeless people lived in Denmark, of which three-fifths or 3,300 live in the Copenhagen metropolitan area. This homeless population is relevant because it provides the project sufficient access to the intended population of study. Furthermore, the population of Copenhagen is nearly identical to that of Dallas in terms of total population as well as the homeless population, which is estimated to be approximately 5,800 in 2011. These similarities in the populations provide the study a higher degree of control, which limit extraneous variables that can bias the results.

Second, English is the predominant second language in Denmark, spoken by over 86 percent of the population. This was vital to the administration of our health proficiency surveys (REALM and S-TOFHLA), which require verbal exercises and communication between the subject and administrator. In addition to facilitating the administration of our survey, the population’s knowledge of English contributed to our ease of travel, allowed direct communication with our healthcare contacts, and offered the opportunity to explore research institutions for pertinent data and additional information sources. Moreover, English as a prevalent language permitted us to collect oral narratives from our subjects that are important in further exploring the consequences of health literacy, and further humanized the study.

Furthermore, Southern Methodist University has strong connections with the Danish Institute for Study Abroad—DIS. This benefited the project because we had close affiliation with Danish research individuals who are familiar with the culture and customs of the local population and have a thorough understanding of the public perception of healthcare delivery. These individuals at the DIS assisted us in conducting research about the Danish model of healthcare and disseminating relevant data.

Although Canada may appear to have been a plausible, alternative location, its proximity to the United States created several problems. We elected to forego Canada because close interaction between the Canadian and American populations results in a transmission of healthcare knowledge via radio, television, newspapers, and direct access to U.S. health services. This diffusion diluted the effects of the two different healthcare models on their populations, and subsequently, their health literacy. Canada’s population was simply not isolated enough from the United States population to provide a discernable set of effects.

**Design**

In order to compare health literacy among the homeless populations, we contacted the homeless shelters and centers in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Professors Dr. Nora Gimpel and Patti Pagels at UT Southwestern Medical School agreed to assist in formally connecting us with homeless centers that they have worked with through the Family and Community Medicine Department. With the homeless centers’ cooperation, we administered the surveys to a sample size of 100 individuals. This sample size reflects a 95% confidence level, the most common metric used by researchers, and a confidence interval (margin of error) of 6.8. We realize that our sample size is appropriate given our three month period prior to traveling to Copenhagen. Eligible study subjects include individuals aged 18 and older who identify themselves as homeless and have been, as the Danish say, rough sleeping. However, our survey population did not include participants who are linguistically illiterate to prevent confusion in our results between health literacy and language literacy. Surveys were administered with consent and release forms according to their pre-determined instructions. To supplement the assessments, a brief questionnaire was given regarding participants’ relevant information such as age, gender, and education received.

Upon the completion of a survey, each administrator recorded the data in a Microsoft Excel file to be documented and analyzed. Once the surveys were completed, each participant received a simple, easy-to-comprehend flier detailing the benefits of health literacy and healthcare resources available to them. We hope that this provides a service that gives back to the community and allows the participants to have greater input in their own healthcare decisions. To maintain the anonymity of the individual and eliminate bias, we did not inquire the individual’s name.

but instead tracked each set of surveys using an assigned number. In order to ensure that no survey is repeated, we documented each surveyed individual by their birth date and initials. In the Dallas segment of our project, we surveyed approximately 20 people per week. Additionally, on designated weekends, we visited public records offices to further investigate the healthcare system in Dallas.

In Copenhagen, we communicated with our contacts at the DIS—Danish Institute for Study Abroad—and visited predetermined homeless centers and shelters. The professors at DIS strengthened our connections to the homeless centers throughout Copenhagen as well as facilitated our research at local institutions. These instructors—Jakob Hansen, Maj Vingum and Anders Moller Jakonsen—have backgrounds in the study, organization, and provisions of public health in Northern Europe and its connection to the historical, social, economic, and political climates of the present healthcare system. We also worked in conjunction with instructors in the field of Health Economics and Health Policy in Europe to determine a connection between public health delivery and the policy of Denmark. Henceforth, we repeated the previous steps in distributing and recording the surveys as well as parameters for survey participants. However, due to the shortened time period of five weeks, we compensated by surveying approximately ten individuals daily, with each survey requiring roughly twenty minutes. Following this schedule, we finished the surveys, while having the necessary time to analyze the data gathered and generate comparisons. In the summer we did not have the responsibilities of an academic semester; therefore, our time and focus was directed towards conducting this research.

Initially, we utilized weekends for more independent research—the public records that reveal the healthcare systems of Dallas and Copenhagen in more detail, talking with healthcare providers and reviewing available public information. The information we collected included, but was not limited to, expenditures, propensity of various diseases, number and location of hospitals or healthcare facilities, and healthcare regulations. This information was obtained through primary sources such as books, public ledgers, and local scholarly articles. During the finishing stages of our project, our efforts shifted toward compiling the data we had assembled through surveys with the information accumulated from our primary sources. Combining this data provides us sufficient knowledge to formulate graphs and detect possible trends between healthcare models and health literacy.

### Description of Instruments

**REALM**

The Rapid Estimate of Adult Literacy in Medicine – REALM is a widely utilized health literacy assessment tool. It is a word recognition test, where subjects are presented with 66 medical words in order of increasing difficulty. The subjects are asked to read through the list aloud by an examiner, who records their score. Each word pronounced correctly is a point; scores of 0-44 represent literacy below the sixth grade level, scores from 45-60 indicate proficiency at an eighth grade level, while scores above 60 reflect aptitude of high school and beyond.

The reason for REALM’s success and popularity is the speed with which it can be administered, around 5 minutes per subject. Furthermore, the test has been used time and again and has proven to remain accurate and produce reliable results.

**S-TOFHLA**

The Short Test of Functional Health Literacy in Adults (S-TOFHLA) is a 36-question, seven-minute timed test that assesses an individual’s reading skills. In its procedure, subjects are required to read health-related sentences, which contain missing words; they then fill in the blanks by selecting the correct word from four choices. The authors of the test found high correlation between the STOFHLA and original TOFHLA as well as the REALM, r=0.97 and r=0.84, respectively. Similar to the REALM, each question on this test grants one score. Scores of 0-16 implies inadequate health literacy, 17-22 are marginally proficient, while scores of 23-36 have adequate health literacy.

### Results

Data from the Copenhagen interviews suggested a mean score of 62.5 out of a potential 66 on the REALM and 10.9/14 on the S-TOFHLA – these values correspond to percentage scores of 94.69% and 77.86% respectively. The percentage values indicate a correlation r=0.8195 compared to the correlation of r=0.84 that should be expected between the two tests. Differences in grammatical structure between Danish and English may cause confusion in part with the Danish population who need to choose between articles and also singular tense verbs – has versus had. Even so, the standard deviation of the participants was fairly low, with a range of scores ranging from several perfect scores in the REALM – 66 – to a low of 57. TOFHLA scores reflected similar deviations with scores ranging from perfect – 14 – to
a low of 8. The REALM distribution was skewed heavily to the left, indicating that more of the population was at or above average while the TOFHLA score distribution was fairly standardized. Again, the discrepancy may stem from the nature of the tests themselves: because the REALM is a recognition and pronunciation based test, chances are higher for improved scores. Conversely, the S-TOFHLA tests for both recognition and application of health literacy terms—including a comprehension element in the test helps to normalize the distribution of scores. Nonetheless, both sets of tests proved to be remarkable given the fact that the population is homeless.

The study found a much different result among the Dallas homeless population. The surveyed population sample scored an average 57.2 on the REALM and 8.7 on the S-TOFHLA: these values correspond to percentage scores of 88% and 62% on the REALM and S-TOFHLA, respectively. Data from the Dallas sample population was also spread on a large range, with a high score of 65 and a low score of 16 on the REALM. These results are in line with what we perceive as the primary difference between the two populations in regard to their health advocacy: adequate access to healthcare venues. In fact, a majority of the individuals surveyed had no primary care physician and would sporadically visit the emergency room when symptoms of disease progressed to intolerable levels. Such encounters were limited to once or twice every several years, a direct comparison to the annual visits enjoyed by their Danish counterparts.

Much to our surprise, the pilot study of the Dallas homeless population also produced similar data. Of the individuals surveyed, many had perfect scores on both the REALM and S-TOFHLA. The extremely high distribution of scores among the pilot population was alarming as it threatened the entire foundation of the health literacy hypothesis that lower income individuals are susceptible to lower health literacy rates. However, a correlation was quickly established: the individuals in the pilot population all originate from the Union Gospel Mission homeless clinic—these individuals already visit a healthcare establishment at a remarkably higher rate than most homeless individuals, on par with a middle-class American. Upon further interviewing, these individuals typically revealed that they had high school level schooling or higher and were typically concerned about developing or exacerbating medical conditions. Ultimately, the connection elucidated the fact that these individuals had higher health literacy rates, on par with the general homeless population in Copenhagen.

However, upon completing interviews with the Dallas population, we saw the average health literacy rate decrease in comparison to both the Union Gospel pilot population as well as the Copenhagen homeless population. Our initial pilot was flawed in that it did not systematically select homeless individuals from among the Dallas population—only those who frequently visited health centers and were aware of their health consequences; the pilot did serve its purpose in serving as a primary tool to work out potential kinks in the survey delivery prior to implementation in Copenhagen. Because the pilot population frequented healthcare establishments at a comparable rate to the Copenhagen population, the general Dallas population is expected to have a lower health literacy rate exclusively on the notion that their access to health services is either non-existent or hindered. If the data from the Dallas segments holds true to these expectations, there will be very strong conclusive evidence pointing to the connection between access to health services and the subsequent health literacy of the individual or population.

**Implications for Policy**

There is a notable disparity between the homeless who were Danish citizens and the homeless who lacked Danish citizenship. Most discernible were the living conditions of the two populations. The former lived in a homeless shelter complex with a variety of buildings—including a dining hall, apartments, a job search center, and nursing station. The latter, however, only had a few facilities to visit, all of which were separate buildings that consisted of only a kitchen and living space. These were located throughout Copenhagen. In light of this discovery, we speculated that the homeless who had citizenship would have higher health literacy because of their improved conditions. However, upon surveying both groups, no such correlation is evident. This is attributed to the full availability of primary healthcare to both populations in Denmark.

The success of the homeless shelter complex is the result of mutual cooperation between staff and the homeless who reside. There are few staff members, who work with the homeless there to create a haven where there are three meals a day, full-time living and recreational areas, and employment opportunities. This shelter complex is a simple idea: work to serve yourself and your community. Replicating this foundation would be very beneficial to communities elsewhere.

The Danish recycling policy is innovative and beneficial,
particularly for the homeless population. People are rewarded for returning used bottles — glass, aluminum, or plastic. This is prevalent in many developed countries; however, the difference is that instead of bringing the recycled materials to a plant to be paid, one simply can collect bottles and return them to a special machine located in all major grocery stores in Denmark. The machine sorts the bottles and rewards the recycler with either store credit or cash.

The success of this policy is because it simplifies the recycling process and reduces the work load of the recycler. Moreover, because the recycling machines are so easy to access, many homeless and impoverished people carry bags and clean the streets of empty bottles and cans. In theory, they are receiving payment to clean the city and increase recycling. Implementing a similar recycling system elsewhere would promote recycling while providing the homeless population a source of income.

Conclusion

We speculate that the readily available access to healthcare among the Danish homeless population leads to higher rates of health literacy over the health literacy of the Dallas individuals. Whereas the Dallas population may receive a wider variety of healthcare options—VA hospitals, county hospital, charity clinics—the sporadic nature of visits may prove to be unfavorable compared to the more holistic access provided in Denmark. Ultimately, any correlation—or lack thereof—lends vital information on how to address the health needs of the homeless population.

Limitations and Future Queries

One limitation to this project was that often, people were unwilling to partake in the survey. Some felt embarrassed by it, while others saw little reason to take the survey as there was no incentive. To amend this problem, we assured the subjects that their anonymity would not be compromised. Additionally, we offered them bottled water as an incentive for completing the surveys.

Future ventures include performing this survey in cities with easier access to healthcare than Dallas, but less than Copenhagen. Such cities include Boston and New York. Furthermore, these cities have comprehensive public transportation, which allows for easier access to health clinics and hospitals. Additionally, it would be interesting and supplemental to investigate the role of doctors in providing and teaching their patients, especially those who have lower health literacy, to become more knowledgeable about their health and treatment. This area of research would provide insight into how healthcare professionals view the problem of low health literacy among patients, and what solutions there are to mitigate this problem.
Introduction

In the aftermath of the First Gulf War, the Kurds of Iraq could finally exert their autonomy and celebrate their newfound peace and stability, a peace that had not been seen since the days of the Ottoman Empire. In 2003 U.S. President George W. Bush ordered an invasion of Iraq. By 2005, Saddam and his forces had been defeated and democratic elections were being held under Iraq’s new constitution. Written by U.S. lawyers and U.S. political scholars, the Iraqi constitution referred to Iraq as a unified nation-state and completely ignored the true sentiments felt by the people of Iraq. Unfortunately, this flaw complicated the development of the newly democratic Iraq’s reconstruction and rebranding. This error led to clashes between the Shiite dominated south and the Sunni dominant center that culminated in the deaths of 61,467 people according to the Iraqi Body Count project (IBC). While violence raged throughout central and southern Iraq, northern Iraq—the Kurdish controlled part of Iraq—remained safe and relatively peaceful. With such rampant violence and bloodshed south of their borders, many Kurds felt like it was time for the KRG to formally separate from Iraq. Why didn’t the Kurds succeed from Iraq then, what was holding the Kurds back, and what is holding the Kurds of Iraq back from succession today?

Who are the Kurds?

It is impossible to say with accuracy from where the Kurdish people originated. Such a statement can be made in reference to nearly all of the world’s ethnic groups if you trace their lineage far enough back, but in regards to the Kurds it is completely and wholeheartedly true. Maria O’Shea sums it up nicely by saying, “It is impossible with the information available to achieve a reasonable understanding of either the precise origins of the Kurds [or] when they coalesced into such an identifiable group.” That being said, there are multiple documented references made by the Talmud in the sixth century C.E. in reference to the group of people who would eventually be labeled the Kurds. Nevertheless, the actual term “Kurds” was not used until the mid-seventh century C.E. by Muslim historians, and the term “Kurdistan” was not used until the twelfth century C.E. by the Seljuk Turks. For much of history, the Kurds lived in tribal communities based throughout the eastern Taurus mountain range, the northwestern Zagros mountain range, and the plains of northern Iraq.

The Islamic Empires conquered the Kurds fairly early in Islamic history. Since then, the Kurds have played a critical role in the region. The Kurds were a difficult people to control and rose up to challenge the Abbasid or Umayyad Caliphs often. It was not until Ottoman rule that the Kurds became an important element, though. Since the Kurds populated the border regions of the Safavid Empire and the Ottoman Empire, both Empires had to maintain relatively good relations with the Kurds to ensure that if conflict broke out between them, they would have the support of the Kurdish tribes. This mutual understanding between the Kurds and the Ottoman rulers led to their relative autonomy. The Kurds only had two obligations: to pay their taxes and to side with the Ottomans if war broke out between the Ottoman Empire and the Safavid Empire.

It is important to take the Kurd’s early history into account because it is this historical background that contributes to Kurdish tradition, and this tradition explains the subsequent actions of the Kurds. For nearly 500 years the Kurds were semi-autonomous vassals to the Ottoman Empire; in 1918 with the conclusion of the First World War, that changed. In 1924, the caliphate that had ruled Turkey for over 500 years was abolished, and that same day Mustafa Kemal—a radical Turkish national hoping to secure the future of his people after the dismal failure that was the First World War—banned all Kurdish institutions, publications, schools, and even the words Kurd, Kurdistan, and Kurdish, while U.S. President Woodrow Wilson declared in point twelve of his Fourteen Point Program for World Peace that the Kurds,
and other ethnic minorities of the Ottoman Empire should be guaranteed “an absolute unmolested opportunity of autonomous development.” Unfortunately, the British and French completely disregarded Wilson’s intentions and the Iraqi mandate was fashioned by the British in 1921. The Kurds of Mosul were subsequently forced to join a state created from three distinct Ottoman provinces, each supporting a different majority—in Mosul the Kurds, in Baghdad the Sunni Arabs, and in Basra the Shia Arabs. A similar system was established under the French Syrian mandate where the Kurds were mixed with the Alawites, Sunnis, and Shias to create a state that had never existed before. With a swish of their wrist and their inked cutlery, the western powers of Britain and France damned the Kurds to a century of bloodshed, oppression, and genocide.

The Century of Bloodshed: The Kurds of Turkey and Iraq

To truly understand the contemporary issues facing the Kurds, the trials and struggles that the Kurds suffered in the 20th century must first be examined. After the First World War, the Kurds were divided among four main states: Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Ultra-nationalist governments governed three of these states: Turkey, Iraq, and Syria. Of these three states, two are relevant to this discussion—Turkey and Iraq.

Turkey

The Republic of Turkey was founded by Mustafa Kemal, more commonly known as Ataturk, after fighting a three-year war of independence against the Allied forces following the conclusion of the First World War. Ataturk founded Turkey on two main principles, Turkish nationalism and secularism. While the Turks were reshaping themselves as a secular western facing nation, the Kurds were steadfast in their cultural identity as Muslims with anti-Western ideals. Ataturk saw this Kurdish cultural identity as a threat to the fledgling Turkish government because it was the antithesis of the ideals upon which he founded the new Turkish state. When the Kurds rose up in anger over the blatant suppression of their rights and freedoms during the Koçgiri Rebellion, Ataturk brutally put them down.

For the next ninety years, Turkey would be mostly governed by Ataturk’s legacy of nationalism, secularism, and pro-western civil structures better known today as Kemalism. These Kemalist policies did not allow for the cultural identity of the Kurds to coexist with Turkish cultural identity, and this led to a near eighty-year on-and-off conflict between the Turkish governments and the Kurdish peoples of Turkey. In 1978, the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) was formed in a small village in eastern Turkey and began a nearly nonstop war in 1984 against the Turkish government. Due to its foundation as a Marxist, anti-statist group, the PKK have been classified as a terror group by the E.U., U.S., and Turkey. Recently, after a 2003 cease-fire, the PKK and its leaders officially abandoned their Marxist ideology and embraced a new democratic vision of Kurdistan. Nonetheless, the Turkish-Kurdish conflict in Turkey between the years of 1984 and 2013 has led to the deaths of 45,000 individuals and estimates of up to 3,000,000 displaced alone. In more recent years, current Prime Minister Erdogan attempted to bridge the gap between the two groups by softening the cultural restrictions the government imposed upon the Kurds. This past year, Prime Minister Erdogan was generous enough to finally allow the Kurds to use the full extent of their alphabet, speak their own language, and even participate in the governance of their country. These reforms did not impress the Kurds of Turkey, and rightly so. Basic rights that the Kurds should have possessed for the past ninety years are not rewards or concessions; these rights were only handed out in hopes of pacifying the Kurdish population as civil unrest developed further west in the Turkish heartland. The Turkish Kurds have grown tired of these political games, however. If the Turkish government does not want to grant the Kurds of Turkey their equal and due rights, then the Kurds should have every right to attempt and create their own state that will respect their rights, and as the Kurdistan Regional Government to the south sees more and more success, the Kurds of Turkey will be harder to pacify.

Iraq

Iraq, the state that never existed before World War One, was created by the British government to protect its oil interests in the region. In 1921, the Mandate of Iraq was created in response to the Iraqi


Rebellion of 1920, a rebellion that lasted almost a year throughout Iraq and led to the deaths of over 6,000 British and Iraqis. The rebellion indicated to the British that they needed to take a much more indirect role in the governance of Iraq. Therefore, the Colonial Secretary, Winston Churchill, convened the infamous meeting in Cairo where he created the nations of Jordan and Iraq with a swish of his hand, a feat that he would boast about quite often in his later years.

While the state of Iraq was officially created in 1921, it wasn’t until 1932 that the Kingdom of Iraq was given true independence from British influence and control. Shortly after the conclusion of the Second World War, the monarchy was overthrown by the Iraqi military. In 1968, the Ba’ath party of Iraq led a coup d’état that ended the military rule of Iraq and brought Saddam al-Bakr to power. The first fifty years of Iraqi history was characterized by a string of coup d’etats and Kurdish rebellions. In 1970, Saddam Hussein and Mustafa Barzani, representing the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and all of the northern Kurds of Iraq, signed the March Declaration ending the Kurdish-Iraqi conflict and granting Kurdistan autonomy. Unfortunately, the March Declaration was never implemented. Saddam only signed it so that he could buy time to force the rest of the Iraqi government to submit to his control and remove President al-Bakr from the reigns of the Iraqi government. The moment Saddam secured his rule, he removed all support for the March Agreement of 1970 and began an Arabization program that led to the forced exodus of over 250,000 Kurds to inhospitable regions of southern and central Iraq while transporting tens of thousands of Arab families deep into Kurdish dominated territory. These actions led to the Second Kurdish-Iraqi War. The war was brief and brutal. Over ten thousand died and millions of Kurds were forced to flee their homes and take refuge in the neighboring states of Turkey or Iran. Only five years later, the Iran-Iraq war broke out between the two neighboring states and the Kurds saw their chance to strike at the distracted regime. Thousands of Kurds streamed back into Iraq from Iran and Turkey to fight against Saddam’s forces. Unable to continue fighting against both the Kurds and Iranians on two fronts, Saddam decided that if he wanted to be able to defeat the Iranians, he needed to deal with the Kurdish uprising quickly and decisively. On March 16, 1988 Iraqi air forces attacked a small Kurdish town named Halabja in northern Iraq. Due to frequent attacks on Kurdish villages by Iraqi forces, such an occurrence was not unusual or rare enough to deserve a thorough investigation. However, this attack violated the Geneva Protocol of 1921 and a number of other international laws. The attack on Halabja in March, 1988 was the pinnacle of terror of Saddam’s Al-Anfal Campaign, the systematic genocide of the Kurds of Iraq, and lead to the deaths of over five thousand Kurdish civilians by chemical weapons. Between 1987 and 1989, over four thousand Kurdish villages were destroyed and over 100,000 civilians, including women and children, were killed in the gas attacks orchestrated by Saddam Hussein and his murderous regime.

The attacks were devastating to the Kurds, who had their homes destroyed, their families torn apart. It seemed like Saddam would walk away free of any punishment, but Saddam made a misstep. His 1990 invasion of Kuwait led to the invasion of Iraq by a U.S. led coalition. Shortly after the U.S. led coalition entered Iraq, Saddam was forced to surrender and a no-fly zone was established in northern Iraq. This no-fly zone led to the creation of an autonomous Kurdistan. Twelve years later the U.S. invaded Iraq again, this time deposing Saddam Hussein, ending his tyrannical regime. After the fall of Saddam, the Kurds of Iraq were finally free, and Kurdistan, the impossible dream, finally become a possibility.

The Kurdish Political Parties of Iraq

To properly understand the policy recommendations suggested in this paper, it is necessary first to introduce the main characters that helped shape the Kurdish-Iraqi movement.

There are two Kurdish parties at the forefront of Kurdish-Iraqi politics: the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) headed by Mustafa Barzani and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) headed by Jalal Talabani. In addition to the KDP and PUK, the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) and the Turkish-based Kurdistan Worker’s Party (PKK) both played important roles in the development of the Iraqi Kurd’s political culture. Talabani, head of the PUK, and Barzani, head of the KDP, are

the two most premier political figures in the KRG and arguably all of Kurdistan. Until the mid 1990s, the PUK and KDP fought against one another as much as they fought the Ba’athist regime of Iraq.

Mustafa Barzani is a legend to the Kurds of Iraq, and until his death on March 1, 1979, Barzani was the primary leader and head of the Kurdish independence movement in Iraq. Barzani’s father, uncles, and older brothers all fought against their respective governments, and were even executed for leading insurrections against the Ottoman Empire when Mustafa Barzani was just a child.17 Barzani became head of the KDP-Iraq in 1946, and under his direction it became a powerful force that the contemporary governments of Iraq could not ignore or suppress. Barzani fought hard for Kurdish autonomy for the entirety of his life, but conflicts with the ICP and the PUK constantly kept the KDP in a weakened state.

Jalal Talabani, the first President of Iraq, was another prominent leader of the Kurds of Iraq. A staunch socialist Talabani founded the PUK with several leading Kurdish intellectuals who shared Talabani’s belief that the current leaders were headed in the wrong direction. While the ICP was and is not a huge player in Kurdish politics, it is important to brieflly address who they are and what effect they had on the Kurds of Iraq. The ICP was mostly comprised of Iraqi Shiites with a sizably strong minority of southern Kurds. For much of the early Ba’athist reign, the ICP and KDP fought against each other to secure the support of the central government, concessions, and peace. With the March Declaration in 1970 the ICP’s importance and political capital was marginalized, and led to IDP members being assaulted by the KDP in the north and actually attacked by the Federal Government of Iraq in the south. Ironically, only a few years later when Saddam had centralized his power, he rekindled relations between Iraq and the Soviet Union in anticipation of a conflict with Iran. This restoration of relations between the Soviet Union and Saddam open the way for the ICP to become a “partner” in the government and the KDP and their esteemed March Declaration to become irrelevant. Finally, in 1974, conflict broke out between the KDP and the central government, but Saddam’s Soviet equipped army soundly routed the KDP and the Kurdish forces. After this conflict, the Second Kurdish-Iraqi War, the ICP and KDP came to the realization that they could not continue to fight amongst each other or else they would further weaken their respective position, and only further empower Saddam’s central government.

In 1988, the KDP and PUK along with several smaller Kurdish fringe parties came together to create the Kurdistan Front.18 However a mere five years later, relations between the KDP and PUK reached an all-time low as open conflict broke out between the two groups in what became known as the Iraqi Kurdish Civil War. Despite these tensions, the formation of the Kurdish front in 1988 and the reestablishment of relations between the PUK and KDP after the war can be seen as huge steps to further the Iraqi-Kurdish cause through the provision of a stable political front that the Kurds of Iraq can rally behind.

The Kurdistan Regional Government Since the Invasion of Iraq

Kurdistan encompasses the northern third of Iraq, a large section of southeastern Turkey, the northeast part of Syria, and a western fragment of Iran, as can be seen in the map below.

Figure 1: Map of Kurdistan

Source: www.politicalresources.net

The Kurdistan Regional Government is made up of the provinces of Erbil, Duhok, and Silemani, and possesses partial authority and control of Nineveh and Kirkuk. The KRG also disputes the Iraqi right


to govern the cities of Kirkuk and Mosul, arguing that the cities were Kurdish cities until Saddam forcefully relocated the Kurds who lived there. Thus the Kurds, and therefore the KRG, has the right to govern them. The new Iraqi constitution embraces a federalized view of the nation with the north controlled by the KRG, the center controlled by the majority Sunni provinces, and the south controlled by the Shiite bloc. The division of Iraq into three separate regions operates effectively in some ways, but the constitution does not take into account the sentiments felt by the vast majority of the Iraqi people.

The referendum to approve the constitution was heavily supported by the Shiite majority and the Kurds in the North. Regions heavily dominated by the Shiites and Kurds voted in the upper 90 percent in support of the new constitution. The Arab Sunnis of Iraq boycotted the referendum in protest, and those that did vote were overwhelmingly against the new constitution. The Sunni Arabs, only encompassing 20 percent of the Iraqi population, saw the new constitution as a threat because it allowed the Iraqi Shiite majority to gain control of the government. The Kurds of Iraq, however, were in full support of the constitution because it finally recognized and granted them their legal autonomy. At the same time, an unofficial referendum polled the citizens of the KRG to figure out their positions in regards to Kurdish Independence. The referendum possessed only two questions and asked whether the individual would prefer Iraqi Kurdistan stay with Iraq or for Iraqi Kurdistan to become independent of Iraq entirely. The Kurds of Iraq voted 98.8% in favor of independence; 1,973,412 Kurds of the Kurdistan Regional Government voted in favor of freedom. Such high numbers reveal several things to us. (1) The Kurds are no longer as divided as they once were, and tribal ties are playing less and less of a role in politics. (2) Even with recognition of their autonomy, the Kurds of Iraq felt that they were not as secure and free under the federal Iraqi government as they could be under an independent Kurdish government. The constitution of Iraq was not a panacea though, and shortly after its institution, violence between the Shiites and Sunni escalated leading to the deaths of 70,789 Iraqis in 2006 and 2007. The increased violence in central and southern Iraq only proved to the Kurds that the state of Iraq was insecure. Six years later, the Kurdish opinion on the independence of Kurdistan was still high with 91.6 percent of Kurds polled agreeing that Kurdistan (The KRG in Iraq) should be fully independent from Iraq.

The Main Issues Facing Kurdish Independence

The United States’ unwillingness to give up its idea of a united Iraq is the main deterrent to Kurdish independence. The U.S. fears that if the KRG separates from Iraq, the Shiite majority will become the de facto majority and align the Iraqi state with Iran. The U.S. aimed for the construction of a democratic, unified state in Iraq. Such a vision did not include a powerful Kurdistan Region Government. However, while the U.S. supported a stronger central government for Iraq, they also supported the political independence of the KRG as a method of stabilizing the country. Moreover, the U.S. did not differentiate between the unstable southern and central parts of Iraq and the peaceful Kurdish north in their attempts to create a revamped Iraqi state. The U.S., in an attempt to strengthen the central government, poured cash into the southern and central zones of Iraq, but the reliance on inefficient and unskilled administrators meant billions of dollars in aid money was excessively and needlessly spent. At the same time, the KRG, a peaceful region with little violence, was forced to the periphery in all discussions of the future of Iraq. Kurdish support for the initial U.S. invasion made such a blunt move even more offensive to the Kurds. It had been the Iraqi Kurds that had kept northern Iraq stable and under control while the U.S. forces invaded Iraq at the beginning of the Iraq War, and it was the Kurds who maintained peace and stability in the north so the U.S. occupational forces could focus on the growing violence in the south after Saddam’s fall. The U.S.’s blatant disregard of the Kurd’s sacrifices and continued opposition to the independence of the KRG baffled Kurdish leaders and citizens alike. The U.S. opposition to Kurdish independence is grounded in its fear of destabilizing Iraq even further, yet as U.S. leaders publicly advocated against Kurdish independence,

20. Ibid., page 262.
they governed Iraq in such a way that the central government of Iraq was unable to gain legitimacy to stand on. Without legitimacy the central Iraqi government was unable to properly serve the Kurds and led to a stronger push for Kurdish independence. While the Iraqi federal government continues to falter, the KRG, pushed to the margins of Iraqi reconstruction, remains stable and reliable. The inability of the U.S. to accept the failure of Iraqi reconstruction will ultimately lead to the slow death of not only Iraq, but the KRG as well.

The central government of Iraq would oppose the succession of the KRG, but their complaints would ultimately carry little weight. Iraq is only worried about losing the massive oil reservoirs that lie beneath the KRG. Furthermore, the state government of Iraq has failed in every sense of their duty to the northern Kurds. Violence, corruption, and poverty runs rampant across the country, while the Kurdish governed areas remained peaceful until violence in Syria spilt over across the borders of Iraq. The Iraqi central government and the KRG dispute the rightful governance of several provinces and key cities, mainly Mosul and Kirkuk. Most of the regions initially contained a Kurdish majority, but Saddam’s Arabization program forced many Kurdish families to migrate out of the formerly Kurdish regions and relocated a number of Arab families into the Kurdish territory. Now, thirty years later, a large Arab population exists in these formerly Kurdish regions and the Iraqi central government claims that such numbers prove that the provinces belong to the Arabs and Iraq—not the KRG. Such claims are exaggerated, because the evidence of Kurdish forced migration out of these regions. With such evidence in hand, the position of the Iraqi central government is hard to defend. Therefore, the KRG should have rightful governance of the territory and should pay any Arabs who wish to leave the face value of their land.

Initially, fears of inciting the volatile Turkish minority might have prevented the Turkish government from supporting an independent KRG. In recent years, however, the Turkish government has moved closer to the KRG through mutually beneficial economic agreements. As a land-locked region, the oil-rich KRG needs Turkey to transport its oil out of the region and into the market. At the same time, the KRG agreed to distance itself from the PKK, the armed Kurdish group that opposes Turkish oppression of Kurdish right. Earlier this year, oil began to flow between the KRG and Turkey through a newly completed and controversial pipeline. This deal made the Iraqi central government furious because the constitution requires all oil to go through Baghdad. The Turkish-KRG pipeline provides the KRG with an independent source of income, an income that Baghdad claims as its own. The flow of oil through the pipeline was halted in February, however. Baghdad’s heavy-handed method of punishing the KRG through various economic and political sanctions may cause tensions between the Kurds and the federal government to erupt into violence.27 Turkey retreated from Iraqi tensions and realized that they have much more in common with the KRG than unified Iraq. An independent KRG provides an alternative to violence between the PKK and the Turkish government and could mediate any future conflict between Turkey and its Kurdish minority; this could bring an end to the Kurdish-Turkish disputes that have plagued Turkey for nearly a century. Additionally, an independent KRG could provide Turkey with a buffer state between their lands and the instability and chaos in Iraq and could aid Turkish forces in their struggle to keep extremist terror groups fighting in Syria out of Turkey.

The U.S fears Iran for a myriad of reasons, but mainly due to its enthusiastic and obstinate support for terror organizations that have threatened both the United States and its allies. Recently, though, U.S-Iranian relations have de-thawed with the recent election in Iran of the much more moderate president Hassan Rouhani. Rouhani wants to improve Iran’s struggling economy but cannot do so with the current U.S. and European sanctions. As a result Rouhani has opened up dialogue with the U.S. and key E.U. nations and is presenting the state of Iran as a willing partner in future discussions to improve Iran’s economy. With the far more volatile and radical Ahmadinejad out of the picture Iran no longer threatens the U.S. as greatly as it used to; while still a supporter of Hamas, and the regime of Bashar Hafez al-Assad, Rouhani and Iran have shown that they are ready to open communication and conduct translucent dialogue. While the improved relations between Iran and the U.S. are an advantageous development, the Iranian government would almost certainly still not feel secure enough to allow a U.S. backed Kurdish succession to occur along their border. Iran and the U.S. are still adversaries in many conflicts around the world, and Iran would not likely allow the KRG to gain its independence, making way for U.S. troop placement right on its border. However, there are measures the U.S. could take that would perhaps make such a move easier for the Iranians to swallow.

How can Kurdish Independence feasibly be achieved?

The creation of a more stable and democratic Middle East is in the interest of the U.S. However, the way in which the U.S. operated in the region the past fifty years alienated the population and pushed the regimes in power away. One of the few groups left in the Middle East who still views the U.S. as an ally and as a friend is the Kurds, especially the Kurds of Iraq. The Kurds of Iraq have been American allies since the rule of Mustafa Barzani’s, and have aided the Americans and their Israeli allies numerous times over the past forty years. When George H.W. Bush invaded Iraq in the early 1990s the Kurds rose up to assist. When George W. Bush invaded Iraq a decade later, the Kurds rose up to assist, yet again. Time and time again, the Kurds proved themselves as stalwart and committed U.S. allies. Yet, the U.S. does not see the benefits of a Kurdish-American alliance.

Two benefits of a Kurdish-American alliance are that the Kurdish held lands in Iraq are rich in fossil fuels and are strategically located. If the U.S. supported a Kurdish push for independence, then the U.S. would not only gain a strategically located ally, but it would also gain access to Kurdish resources. A U.S. base located in the Kurdish mountains would be critically placed to watch over not just the Middle East, but even the fringe states of Africa, India, Pakistan, and Russia. Additionally, a relatively untapped energy sector exists in Kurdistan that could enrich both the U.S. and the KRG. While there are many western companies currently operating in the KRG, their options are limited due to U.S. sanctions. If the U.S. sanctions that are affecting the KRG were lifted, the KRG would be able to grow at increased rates while western companies’ profits would drastically increase.

The U.S. wants to see a more stable and progressive Middle East and to protect the oil flow to the West. The U.S. needs to abandon its outdated and incorrect view of the Middle East and embrace the facts that are seen on the ground to achieve these goals. The state of Iraq recently lost control of several key cities to the terror group known as ISIS, or the Islamic Soldiers of Iraq and Syria (also known as ISIL, Islamic Soldiers of Iraq and the Levantine), and has fought for nearly 6 months to take them back unsuccessfully.28 The U.S. media downplays the internal struggle in Iraq but the truth is that the attempts at a democratic Iraq have failed. The KRG should not be forced to suffer because the inability of the unified Iraqi state to govern the central and southern regions. The United States should push for a separation between the Kurdistan Regional Government and the state of Iraq. An independent Kurdistan would be free from problems of the southern and central regions and the problems stemming from the Iraqi state government. Instead, the KRG could move forward in developing its emerging energy sector and finally provide a nation state for the world’s largest unlanded ethnic group.

How to sustain an independent Kurdistan

An independent Kurdistan would face significant barriers at first and would need U.S. aid to help the Kurdish government’s transitional period from regional government to federal government. Billions of dollars are given to the Egypt every year by the U.S. despite the severe mismanagement of the funds and widespread under appreciation within Egypt. Funding given to the Egyptian government, which now holds very anti-American views, should be restricted and re-routed to the Kurdish government. While the KRG is by no means free of corruption—admittedly there have been many reports of mishandled funds—it would be a better investment than the state of Egypt’s current government: undemocratic, unstable, prolific corruption throughout all levels of government, and government sponsored anti-American sentiment.

Iraq would not allow the KRG to go peacefully, and the U.S. public may be unwilling to engage in another Middle Eastern conflict. Therefore, the U.S. would need to entice the Iraqi government to agree to a Kurdish succession. Two treaties would need to be formed between Iraq and the newly created Kurdistan: a treaty guarantying the free flow of water and a treaty guarantying Iraq a fair percentage of profits from oil wells already in production. Even with such guarantees, Iraq might not agree to a Kurdish secession. However, Iraq is a democratic state established on very vulnerable foundations, and the Kurds only opt to be apart of Iraq because there is no other option available. Peter Galbraith described the situation well when he wrote, “Over the long term, it is almost impossible for a democratic state to hold together if a people in a geographically compact area overwhelmingly prefer not to be part of that state. The people of Kurdistan equate Iraq with repression and genocide. Almost no one in Kurdistan would choose to be part of Iraq if there

were an alternative.” For the Kurds, independence is an eventuality. The Iraqi government cannot adequately provide for the Kurds and the Kurds of Iraq will never forgive the state and its people for their brutal rule during the twentieth century. There has never been a better time for the Kurds to declare their independence. Turkey, already the biggest trading partner of the KRG, would benefit greatly and would likely support a push for independence if it meant the potential end for their conflict with the Kurds of Turkey. Iran and U.S. have recently re-opened diplomatic dialogue, and the U.S. could potentially convince Iran to agree with such a move. Iraq is at its weakest and is not able to resist such a push for Kurdish independence. All the Kurdish independence movement needs to succeed is U.S. support. The dream of an entire culture could become a reality.

Conclusions
The United States invaded Iraq in 2003, instituted a new constitution in 2005, and claimed victory after the new Iraqi state held elections. In 2007 George W. Bush sent 20,000 more American soldiers into Baghdad to try and pacify the rampant sectarian violence. It is now 2014, and “victory” has not been achieved. A single statement made by an Egyptian interviewer to U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in 2006 sums up the anger that was felt in Iraq: “Excessive meddling has brought the Shiites in Iraq to power. The neighboring Iranians are Shia. The Sunnis are compromised. America’s trusted Arab allies are Sunnis. There is a civil war brewing in Iraq. What have you done?”

The U.S. invasion of Iraq destabilized an already unstable country. The establishment of a constitution that did not accept the realities of Iraq condemned it to continued violence. Now nearly a decade later, Iraq suffers from corruption, crime, and death. Bombings are a daily occurrence and armed extremist groups dominate entire regions and have even taken control of large cities where they kill innocent civilians by the hundreds. The American-led reconstruction of Iraq failed, but not all should suffer. The United States has the ability to save the Kurds of the north. The Kurds of Iraq, a people long oppressed, have been allies of America for decades. The Kurds are not just strategic allies, but allies in ideology as well. The Kurds are democratic, capitalist, and moderate Muslims. The Kurds are a solution to U.S. problems in the Middle East, and the U.S. has the ability to help them gain the one thing that the entire ethnic group has longed for centuries: independence. The Kurds have suffered long enough at the hands of their oppressors, and the United States has made many mistakes in the Middle East. The U.S. should support an independent Kurdistan and right the many wrongs of the past.

American Politics
Social Security and the Need for Reform

Nick Saliba

Introduction
The current system of Social Security in America is not sustainable. In order to continually provide adequate benefits for retirees, disabled workers, and surviving spouses, Social Security must be reformed. This paper explores some potential options for reform that could create a sustainable system of Social Security. It also examines the policy context that will underlie any system of reform.

Background
In 1929, the United States of America entered into the most severe and prolonged economic recession in the nation’s history. In the midst of the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) proposed a “New Deal” to the American people, with the hope that “relief, reform, and recovery” would stimulate the sluggish American economy and prevent another depression in the future. Through reform, the New Deal created permanent programs designed to limit the dangers of modern life and insure citizens against economic disasters. Some of the so-called “dangers” of modern life include old age, unemployment, poverty, and the burdens of widows and fatherless children. To insure against these dangers, the New Deal created a federal system of Social Security in the United States. Prior to the federal system of Social Security, the responsibility to care for the elderly and disabled fell mostly upon families, charities, and to some extent, state governments. In response to alarming rates of poverty among the elderly, the Social Security Act of 1935 clearly signaled that the federal government had a responsibility to provide for the welfare and income security of elderly and disabled Americans.

Overview of Current System
As of 2013, more than 57 million Americans receive Social Security benefits. The Social Security program consists of two parts: Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI), which pays benefits to retired workers and to their dependents and survivors, and Disability Insurance (DI), which makes payments to disabled workers who have not reached full retirement age and to their dependents. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that outlays for that program in fiscal year 2013 will total $809 billion, accounting for nearly a quarter of all federal spending. Sixty-eight percent of these benefits are paid to retired workers or the spouses and children of these people. Roughly 14 percent of benefits are paid to the deceased workers’ surviving spouses and dependents, and 18 percent are paid to workers younger than the full retirement age who have had to limit their employment because of a physical or mental disability. The federal government spends more money on Social Security than it does on any other single government program.

The Social Security program is funded by two sources of dedicated tax revenues. About 96 percent of those revenues are collected with a payroll tax—12.4 percent of earnings—that is split evenly between workers and their employers. Self-employed people pay the entire tax, but can deduct one-half of their payroll tax on their federal income tax returns. The other 4 percent of funds for the Social Security program is collected from income taxes on benefits paid to beneficiaries of Social Security. In other words, even some retirees pay taxes upon their Social Security receipts. As a mechanism for testing neediness and redistributing income to low-income workers, “those filing singly must pay taxes on Social Security benefits if the sum of their non-Social Security income and half of their benefits exceeds $25,000. The threshold for those filing jointly is $32,000.”

Social Security taxes, after collection, are placed into one of two Social Security trust funds: the OASI trust fund and the DI trust fund. Social Security benefits and the program’s administrative costs are paid from these funds, with benefit payments constituting the lion’s share (99 percent) of total outlays for the program. The funds have accumulated surpluses over the span of their existence, due to the fact that revenue
collection and interest earned by the funds has exceeded benefits paid out by the funds. Law requires the funds to invest their balances exclusively in government-issued treasury securities. Interest on the trust funds’ balances is credited to the funds, representing a payment from one part of the government (the general fund of the U.S. Treasury) to another (the Social Security trust funds). At the end of August 2013, the balance in these two funds totaled $2.8 trillion.5

The benefits that retired or disabled workers initially receive are based on their individual earnings histories, although the formula used to compute initial benefits is indexed to changes in average annual earnings for the workforce as a whole. Every subsequent year, a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) is applied to the initial benefits to reflect annual growth in consumer prices. Workers born before 1938 were able to receive full retirement benefits at the age of 65, but legislation mandates that the age for full retirement will increase to 67 for people born after 1959. The age at which workers may start receiving reduced benefits is 62, and the longest that workers may defer benefit receipts is age 70.

The Social Security Administration estimates that workers who retire at age 65 in 2013 and who made earnings equal to the average earnings of all workers in the country throughout their career will qualify for an annual benefit of about $18,000. That amount will replace slightly more than 40 percent of their preretirement earnings.6 For many seniors, Social Security is their only form of income in retirement. Without Social Security, almost half of all older Americans would be in poverty. Instead, only 8.9 percent are below the poverty line.7

Why is Reform Necessary?

In the coming decades, the cost of the Social Security program will rise significantly. Demographic shifts in American society are the driving force behind this rapid and steep increase in costs. As more baby-boomers reach retirement and retirees continue to live longer, the share of the population receiving Social Security benefits will grow precipitously.8 The problem, quite simply, is that there will be fewer workers per retiree. CBO projects that the population age 65 or older will increase by almost 90 percent between now and 2035, compared with an increase of just 11 percent over that same period in the number of people aged 20 to 64. Today, the ratio of people aged 65 and older to people aged 20 to 64 is about 1.5. By 2035, CBO projects the ratio will be closer to 1:3. About 97 million people will collect benefits in 2035, compared with the 57 million people who currently receive benefits. CBO estimates that spending for the Social Security program will rise from 4.8 percent of GDP today to 6.1 percent by 2035 (See following figures).9

Figure 1: Social Security Spending

![Figure 1](http://www.cbo.gov/)

Source: http://www.cbo.gov/10

In 2010, for the first time since Social Security was established, annual outlays for the program exceeded annual revenues collected through taxes. CBO projects that this gap will continue indefinitely. Throughout the years, the two Social Security trust funds (the OASI trust fund and the DI trust fund) have built surpluses, due to the fact

---

5. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
that tax revenues and interest received by the trust funds have exceeded the benefits paid from those funds. As of August 2013, the balance in the two trust funds was approximately $2.8 trillion. CBO projects that, under current law, the two Social Security trust funds combined will be exhausted in calendar year 2031. Once the trust funds are depleted, the Social Security Administration will no longer have legal authority to pay full benefits when they are due. At that point, the only money available to fund retiree benefits will be the revenue collected through payroll taxes in a given year. By 2031, CBO projects that the revenues collected (under current law) will only fund about 75% of benefits due (under current law).11

Figure 1: Social Security Spending

The U.S. is by no means the only country in the world facing the policy consequences of a demographic shift. In fact, Japan and some European countries, such as Germany, France, and Italy, face a more unfavorably skewed distribution of retirees to workers than does the U.S. A large inflow of immigrant workers (relative to countries like Japan and Germany) over the coming decades will undoubtedly help to fund Social Security. Nonetheless, in the U.S. and throughout the world, the solvency of government-funded retirement systems will be a function of the number of workers per retiree. Policy will need to respond to these demographic shifts. With regards to Social Security in the United States, a few reform options can be considered. These options include adjustments to benefits received by retirees, adjustments to taxes, and an overhaul of the Social Security system by way of privatization.

Options to Reform Social Security (Without Privatization)

Increasing payroll taxes and/or decreasing benefits could fix Social Security’s problem of unfunded liabilities. However, these solutions would be politically unpopular with two of the most active voting blocks: the elderly and those with high-incomes. Opponents would also argue that these reforms could impair economic efficiency by providing disincentives to work, and by forcing businesses to transfer increased labor costs to consumers by way of raising the costs of goods and services.13

One of the most straightforward ways to ensure the long-term viability of Social Security is to raise or eliminate the cap on the amount of income that is subject to the payroll tax. As of 2013, only the first $113,700 of wage and salary income is subject to payroll taxes.14 This means only 82 percent of total U.S. wages are subject to the payroll tax.15 By eliminating the cap and allowing all income to be taxed, as is the case for the Medicare tax, the Social Security program would be able to delay the problem of unfunded liabilities until at least 2061.16 Only 6 percent of workers earn more than $113,700, but these high-earning workers would likely be opposed to any significant increase in the payroll tax cap.17

Furthermore, the payroll tax rate could be increased and/or the rate base could be expanded to include non-wage income such as dividends and capital gains. Currently, the rate is 12.4 percent, and

12. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
half being paid by the employer and half being paid by the employee. While viable, this proposal would likely attract opposition from both sides of the political spectrum. Wealthy investors would likely oppose taxing investment income, and businesses would lobby for legislation that opposes increasing taxes on corporations and high-earning workers in order to fund Social Security. Opponents of rate increases would also argue that hiking payroll tax rates without lifting the cap would make the payroll tax even more regressive than it currently is.\(^\text{18}\)

Another relatively straightforward way to ensure the solvency of Social Security is to raise the retirement age. When the Social Security program was initiated in 1935, the average American life expectancy was 63. Today, the average life is 79 years.\(^\text{19}\) In 1935, the minimum age to receive full Social Security benefits was 65. Today, it is still 65, although law mandates that it will rise to 67 over the coming decades. Clearly, the demographics of America have changed since the program’s inception. To combat this change and ensure the solvency of Social Security, policymakers could raise the retirement age even higher, effectively erasing some or all of the unfunded liabilities that the program will face in the future.

Finally, the benefits paid to Social Security beneficiaries could be decreased. In his 2014 budget, President Obama proposes changing the measure of inflation used to calculate annual Social Security cost-of-living adjustments from the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI) to the chained CPI beginning in 2015.\(^\text{20}\) The chained CPI differs from CPI-U by accounting for how consumers substitute among goods when the prices of goods change. This change would result in retirees getting slightly smaller annual increases in their Social Security checks. The chained CPI has grown more slowly than the traditional CPI by an average of about 0.25 percentage points over the past decade.\(^\text{21}\) Using the chained CPI would only eliminate between 16 and 20 percent of Social Security’s long-term funding shortfall, according to Charles Blahous, a public trustee for Social Security.\(^\text{22}\) Therefore, chained CPI alone will not fix the Social Security system. Moreover, any cuts to benefits for seniors and the disabled will elicit strong political opposition from advocacy groups and elderly voters.

**Privatizing Social Security**

The most sweeping solution to the policy dilemma of Social Security is to privatize the system. One of the key elements of privatization is a change in the administration of retirement accounts. Under the current system, the federal government collects payroll taxes, places the taxes into government trust funds where they are invested in government treasury securities, and distributes benefits to qualified members of society, such as the retired, the disabled and surviving spouses. The federal government has complete control over the administration of the Social Security program, and citizens have no say in regards to how their money is invested.

In contrast, under a partially or completely privatized system, people can take part or all of the Social Security taxes they currently pay to the federal government (payroll taxes) and instead place them into private accounts with personal ownership. Proponents of privatization argue that beneficiaries would be able to achieve higher rates of return in the stock and bond markets than they currently earn with investments in risk-free government securities. Privatizing Social Security would add an increased element of freedom and choice to the Social Security system. Under a privatized system, families could develop their own asset base, with the freedom to choose how the money is invested and the ability to pass the account down to heirs.\(^\text{23}\) However, privatizing Social Security is not without risks.

When financial markets are surging and the value of investment portfolios is rising, privatizing Social Security becomes more and more appealing. While markets rise, the Social Security trust funds are relegated to earning the relatively small returns yielded by government treasury securities. However, the idea of private Social Security turns on its head when markets crash. Workers set to retire during a recession, such as those turning 65 in 2009, would be particularly affected.\(^\text{24}\) While younger workers have the luxury of waiting for markets to recover,

\(^{18}\) Ibid.  
\(^{19}\) Erskine Bowles, “The Omni Hotels Lecture” (2013-2014 SMU Tate Lecture Series, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, December 3, 2013).  
\(^{21}\) Ibid.  
\(^{22}\) Ibid.  
people at retirement age during a recession face a severe and unexpected lack of savings. Many of these retirees would have likely been counting on their savings to fund basic necessities such as food and housing. Suddenly, money needed for retirement would no longer be available, forcing workers to delay retirement or slip into poverty.

**Privatization Models**

*A. President George W. Bush Proposal (2005)*

In his 2005 State of the Union Address, President Bush declared that Social Security was “headed for bankruptcy.”25 In response, he introduced a proposal for a system of partial privatization. Under the Bush proposal, younger beneficiaries would have the option to divert half of their payroll taxes to private accounts, where they could invest in higher yielding stocks and bonds. The plan would be phased in, with no changes for beneficiaries over the age of 55. In his speech, President Bush emphasized benefits of a private system, including higher rates of return, freedom of investment choices, personal ownership of assets, and the ability to pass one’s account down to heirs. Bush’s stated goal was greater security in retirement, and he promised that: 1) the money could only be invested in a conservative mix of stocks and bonds, 2) earnings would not be eaten up by hidden Wall Street fees, 3) earnings would be protected from sudden market swings on the eve of retirement, and 4) personal accounts must be emptied out over time, not all at once. 

President Bush’s proposal failed to garner bipartisan support from Congress in 2005, and no new proposals for privatization have since been debated. One of the reasons the Bush proposal fell short can be attributed to political party polarization. Many Republicans favor a complete privatization of Social Security, rather than the partial privatization proposed by Bush. A large faction of Democrats, on the other hand, vehemently oppose privatization, claiming that it puts the welfare and security of current and future beneficiaries at the risk of market fluctuations. Another concern within both the parties was the cost of implementing the privatized system. Under the Bush proposal, workers under the age of 55 could choose to divert 2 percent of their income (about one-third of the 6.2 percent payroll tax) into a private account. Presumably, many younger workers would choose to participate. By doing so, these participants would create a gap in funding for the government Social Security trust funds, putting the benefits of current retirees at risk. To cover this shortfall, the federal government would likely need to borrow money. Due to strong opposition on both sides of the political spectrum, the Bush proposal for privatization was effectively dead upon arrival.26

*B. The Chilean Model*

Perhaps the most notable, and successful, international example of a privatized Social Security system is the model that has been implemented in Chile. Chile transitioned from a public pension program to a private pension program in 1981. Workers must contribute 10-20 percent of their income to private plans, managed by investment companies known as AFPs. The government subsidizes the program, guaranteeing a minimum level of retirement income. This system has, so far, been very successful, providing high real rates of annual return. Over the past 30 years, average annual real returns in the Chilean system have exceeded 9 percent, compared to returns of less than 2 percent offered by the U.S. system.27 Chile has become one of the most prosperous countries in Latin America, fueled by high rates of economic growth, budget surpluses, and high savings rates.

Nevertheless, it is hard to compare the demographics of Chile to those in the U.S. In 1981, there were more than nine workers per retiree in Chile, versus the current three to one ratio in the U.S.28 Furthermore, the Chilean government was running a surplus when it implemented the private system in 1981, allowing Chile to fund the temporary costs of transition with general government revenues.29 In the U.S., current and projected budget deficits would make the costs of transition much more complicated, likely involving temporary tax increases, benefit cuts, or government borrowing.


29. Ibid.
C. The Galveston (TX) Alternate Plan

A small-scale example of Social Security privatization is taking place right here in the United States. Government workers in the Galveston, Brazoria, and Matagorda counties of Texas chose to opt out of Social Security in 1981, before Congress passed legislation to prohibit this in 1983. In each paycheck, employees contribute 13.9 percent of their gross pay (6.1 percent from the employee, 7.8 percent from the county) to a private account, managed by the firm First Financial Benefits. The firm invests the accounts conservatively, with the goal of providing a 3.5-4 percent annual return. Employees can elect to put their portion of the contributions into riskier investments, like mutual funds and stocks, to potentially generate more interest. At retirement, employees in the Alternate Plan can choose to take their payout in a lump sum, take monthly benefits for a given time period, or take a lifetime annuity. Galveston County Clerk Dwight Sullivan, speaking to the New York Times, cites one of the key benefits of the Galveston Alternate Plan when he says, “You have some kind of control of your money, because ultimately it’s your money.” However, according to 1999 studies conducted by both the General Accounting Office and the Social Security Administration, “lower-wage workers, particularly those with many dependents, would fare better under Social Security, while middle- and higher-wage workers were likely to fare better, at least initially, under the Alternate Plan.”

Conclusion

For any system of social security reform to be successfully pitched, it will need to preserve elements of equity and economic efficiency. In theory, fixing Social Security in the United States is possible. Unlike Medicare and Medicaid, future Social Security costs are predictable. However, political gridlock and ideological differences threaten to delay any implementation of reform until a compromise can be reached.

Even if privatization never manages to garner enough Congressional support to become law, some method of reform, either on the taxes or the benefits side, will be required in order to ensure the solvency of Social Security for generations to come. Since the Great Recession of 2007-2009, Americans have become more aware of the budgetary realities facing federal welfare programs. Voters will increasingly demand that policymakers implement legislation to reduce government debt while still ensuring the solvency of entitlement programs, creating an obvious policy paradox. The clock is ticking, with CBO projecting that Social Security will be unable to pay 25 percent of its liabilities by the year 2031. The longer the U.S. waits to substantially reform the Social Security system, the more severe the problem will become, and the harder it will be to fix.

31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.