Open Forum

The Tower Center Student Forum newsletter

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The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA) was created and implemented by the Obama administration in 2012. This program allowed people under the age of 31 who had come to the United States illegally before turning 16, and have lived in the country since June 15, 2007 to apply for protection from deportation for up to two years. Though the application is thorough: including screening for a criminal record, verification of high school diploma or GED certifications, or previous military service. Although the application process is strict, according to the Guardians 787, 580 “Dreamers” have been granted access.

On September 5th, the Trump administration announced that it would end the DACA program, meaning that applications are closed, and permits will begin to expire in March of 2018. The closing of the DACA program aligns with Trump’s campaign promise of putting America first. Trump release his justification for terminating the program on twitter, tweeting “I look forward to working w/ D’s + R’s in Congress to address immigration reform in a way that puts hardworking citizens of our country 1st”. However, the issues many have with the closing of this program are that many of the dreamers have lived in America most of their formative years, and they therefore view America as their home country. Due to their long time in the United States, it is possible that some of these “dreamers” will be deported to countries where they have no familial ties. As Barack Obama said in statement via Facebook, “To target these young people is wrong – because they have done nothing wrong…. And it is cruel.”
It’s Time to Condemn Myanmar

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It would seem impossible that any government overseen by a Nobel Peace Prize winner would oversee human rights atrocities. Unfortunately, this situation is exactly what is occurring in Myanmar. In recent months, the country’s military has increased the level of persecution against the Rohingya, a majority-Muslim group. Killings, rapes, and arson against Rohingya villages are occurring, displacing hundreds of thousands of people. Organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights watch are condemning violence against the Rohingya while various UN officials have independently condemned the violence in the country. One UN report has stated that it is very likely that the military have committed grave human rights abuses.

Myanmar has refuted all these claims by stating that the international community is misinformed. However, journalists have been refused entry into the persecuted areas of the country, and UN investigators have been denied visas. The only information available is satellite images showing the burning of villages and anecdotes from refugees. A recent influx of Rohingya into neighboring Bangladesh have created a refugee crisis, where the country is unable to aid those fleeing persecution. Institutional discrimination has existed for decades; since 1982, the Rohingya have been denied citizenship, but are not allowed to leave.
the country without governmental permission. In essence, the Rohingya are a stateless people with no freedom of movement.

Unfortunately, there is no simple response to the Rohingya crisis. Intervention has historically proven ineffective. The international community’s best response to the Myanmar crisis would be to place pressure on the country to allow journalists and UN investigators safe and legal passage. Myanmar is an ally of China’s, so a condemnation from the UN Security Council is quite unlikely. However, a UN General Assembly condemnation with calls for transparency is a solid first step. In addition, written statements from world leaders would place tremendous pressure on the country. In the US, a statement from the White House or the State Department would set the tone for further discussion on the situation in Myanmar. One thing is abundantly clear: if the international community fails to reign in Myanmar soon, then it loses all credibility to deter future human rights abusers.

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Amidst the political chaos that has occupied the forefront of news domestically and internationally since the start of 2017, it is easy to forget about global issues that continue to exist without proper attention paid. Last year the number of chronically malnourished people reached 815 million, a 38 million person rise from the previous year. There are many ways to explain this increase—like through climate change and politically related conflict — but the underlying fact remains the same: in the next 30 years, the world will have to account for a two-billion-person population increase by doubling global food production. Unfortunately, traditional methods are projected to only yield a fraction of this required amount. It is clear that the world needs to look hard at feasible alternatives, and GMOs are likely to be the saving grace.

Food security is an intricate concept, but can be understood in two areas: availability, accessibility. It’s no secret that the earth’s arable land is limited, and especially for areas with less-than-ideal growing conditions, realizing the maximum potential of the land is paramount.

However, various environmental factors prevent this from coming true like overwhelming pests and high levels of salinity in possible farmland, leading countries like Nigeria to lose 30% of their crops to pests, and 50% of their land going to waste. Fortunately, GMOs can be
engineered to self-produce pesticides and remove salt from soil. What’s even better is that these benefits extend to traditional crops as well, by providing better growing conditions regionally.

As a result, within the US, GMO crops increased yields by 3.8 billion pounds in one year and in the Philippines, farmers experienced a 138% increase in available food. The convenience and flexibility of GMOs also decreases input costs for farmers and facilitates local production of crops, which solves for the enormous costs related to mass distribution. This reduces prices overall for food, allowing those who are hungry to actually access the increased yields. Indeed, in 2012 the global farm income benefit from GM crops was $18.8 billion, with over 46% of benefits going to developing nations. As the quest for a sustainable future continues and as the sheer breadth of technological innovation proceeds to revolutionize the way food is developed and processed, it is vital that new methods be adopted to utilize the world’s full potential to feed humanity.

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The Skim: Our monthly guide to what’s in the news

Science and Technology:
- Frictionless borders — we can learn from Norway
- Facebook’s Ad-Targeting Problem, Captured in a Literal Shade of Gray
- Apple is Opening Up Amid Privacy Questions about Face ID, Personal Data Collection
- Why China’s Uber is Investing in Used Cars
- With Echo, Amazon Builds a Wall Against Google
- Twitter’s Response to Russia Inquiry ‘Inadequate,’ Democratic Senator Says

International Affairs:
- North Korea Supposedly Tests a Hydrogen Bomb Able to be loaded onto a Long-Range Missile
- China Tells North Korean Firms to Close as Part of UN Sanctions
- Former Brazilian Presidents Charged with Racketeering in Huge Corruption Scandal
- To prevent the return of Rohingya Muslims, Myanmar lays Mines along the Bangladeshi Border
- India’s Top General Urges to be Prepared to Fight as Regional Tensions escalate
- Saudi coalitions in Yemen Continue to Worse the Human Rights Conditions of Yemenis
- Hurricane Maria Devastates Puerto Rico and Leaves Millions Without Power
- Massive Earthquake Hits Mexico
- Merkel Looks Set for Difficult Coalition Talks After Germany’s Far Right Posts Strong Showing
- Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe calls Snap Election
- South Korea Says It’s Speeding Up Arms Buildup to Counter the North

Business and Economics:
- Janet Yellen, Federal Reserve, and the Big Unwind
- President Trump Unveils New Tax Plan
- Marijuana is Driving the Revenue of Taco Bell, McDonald’s, and other Fast Food Companies
- Roku has a Huge IPO
- The Financial Repercussions of President Trump’s Recent Squabble with the NFL
October Events:

The Status of Latinos and Health in a Shifting Policy Landscape

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM, October 10th, The Martha Proctor Mack Ballroom, Umphrey Lee Center

Curbing the North Korean Missile and Nuclear

12:00 – 1:30 PM, October 12th, Tower Center Board Room, Room 227, Carr Collins Hall

Cuba after Castro

5:30 – 7:30 PM, October 18th, Great Hall, Elizabeth Perkins Prothro Hall

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John G. Tower Center

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for Political Studies

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