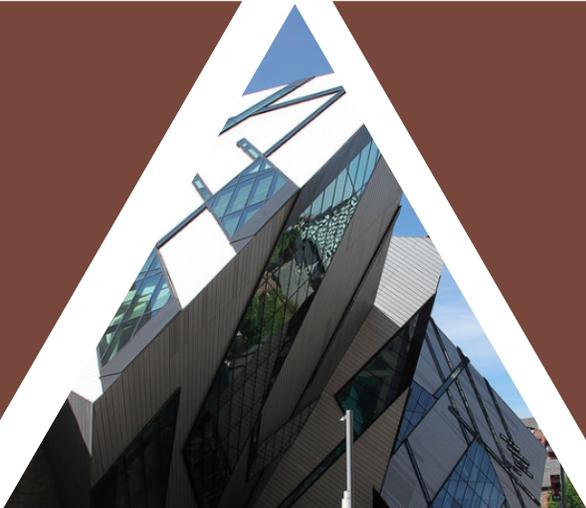


GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS



FALL
2016

the 2016

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Letter from the Executives

We're thrilled to introduce the first edition of Global Conversations (GC) for the 2016-17 academic year.

This edition marks a significant change for GC. Alongside the 2016 team, we've been working hard to rebuild and rebrand GC. This year, GC is working to establish meaningful connections and valuable opportunities for MGA students. This means building a publication that highlights the challenging and dynamic questions MGA students are grappling with during their studies. It also means looking beyond our small group to the larger University of Toronto community, to look for opportunities for partnership and collaboration.

In this issue, readers will find analytical pieces covering everything from North Korea's capabilities in cybersecurity and the ramifications of a Trump presidency on Canada, to the migrant crisis in Central America. This thematic diversity speaks to the variety of current issues students are interested in - something we hope appeals to an even wider range of readers.

With this new format for publication, we're launching a new, more user-friendly website. We hope this clean, yet professional branding positions GC as a prominent host for academic writing at the Munk School. You can now visit us at www.munkgc.com. Highlighted on our homepage, you will find the winning photographs from our summer photo context.

The progress GC has made over the course of a few months wouldn't be possible without an exceptional team of hard working and dedicated contributors who met rapid deadlines and wrote thought-provoking articles. Behind the scenes of this publication is also the work of a team of brilliant editors, associate producers and communications coordinators.

We hope you're as excited about this issue as we are to share it with you.

*Executive Producers,
Nikki Gladstone & Bojana Radan*

in this issue



Creed Atkinson covers the impact of Russia's information warfare on U.S. strategy



Marko Kljajic takes a look at the EU-Turkey statement and its humanitarian impact



Sarah Israr looks at the increasing cyber capabilities of North Korea



Briana MacLeod details the post-Brexit security implications in Europe



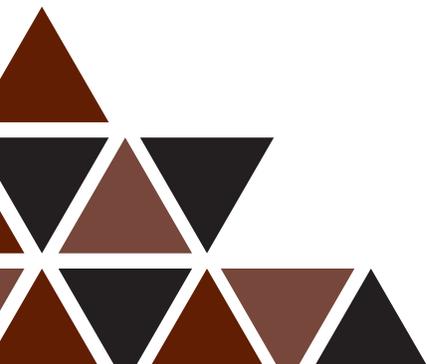
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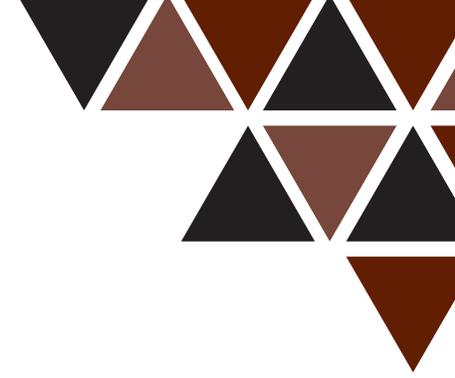


Kyle Jacques looks at the Mexico and U.S. response to the Central American migrant crisis



Siobhan Bradley reports on assaults on activism in Iran





Michael Thomas details the quiet rise of Vietnam



Ben Windeler goes indepth on the Paris Agreement and its ramifications



Tara Rajabi covers the need for a new approach to development and climate change



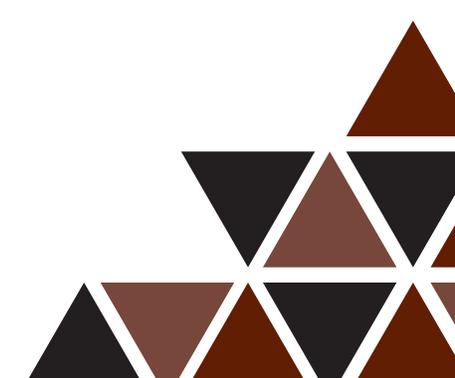
Zara Bukhari takes a look at the global fight against tax evasion



Andrew Aulthouse asks the question: what would a Trump presidency mean for Canada?



Rinchen Dolma-Karma looks at the merits - and complications - of Kazakhstan at the United Nations Security Council



THE RISE OF THE LEAK: THE IMPACT OF RUSSIA'S INFORMATION WARFARE ON U.S. STRATEGY

BY: CREED ATKINSON

Russia has leveraged 'information' as part of its coercive arsenal for the past fifty years by using it to deceive and disrupt its adversaries abroad and gain domestic support at home through propaganda. As early as 1976, Soviet generals and military theorists were articulating ways in which the "veritable flood of information" could cause confusion and contribute to deception. Using information in cyberspace, such as leaking documents, is often considered one of the battles in the greater 'cyberwar'.

CYBERWAR, OR INFORMATION WARFARE?

Cyberwar is an all too familiar term to American security practitioners and most policy-makers and military strategists strongly support the cyberwar narrative. Former U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta argues that cyber attacks could be as destructive as 9/11, former Deputy Defense Secretary John Hamre claimed that the U.S. could face an "electronic Pearl Harbor", and current Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert O. Work claims that the U.S. is dropping "cyberbombs". On the other hand, most academics argue that there is threat inflation in cyberspace and that the true focus of effort should be on non-violent network intrusions in which cyber espionage and leaks occur.

Contrary to the Western cyberwar narrative, Russia maneuvers in cyberspace through an information warfare (IW) campaign. Russia's IW campaign has been placed under the Western label of 'hybrid warfare', but Dmitry Adamsky, an expert on Russian ideology surrounding IW, cautions that "when exploring the theory and practice of Russian operational art, terminology matters. Utilizing Western terms and concepts to define the Russian approach to warfare may result in inaccurate analysis of Russian modus operandi." Russia's military doctrine has combined both kinetic and non-kinetic power across domains since the Cold War, with many unique non-kinetic attributes such as attempting to cause "psycholog-

ical-cognitive-informational" suppression against adversaries, and employing deception and disinformation campaigns.

The DNC leak is a recent example of how information can cause psychological-cognitive suppression. Russia's view of the global battlefield is a "consciousness, perception, and strategic calculus of the adversary, [and] the main operational tool is informational struggle". As Dmitry Adamsky points out, how the U.S. perceives Russia's intentions is the "strategic center of gravity". Robert Jervis' influential book, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, goes into great length in describing how decision-makers rely heavily on the perceived intentions of state actors and how misperceiving their true intentions are often the key driver of escalating states into conflict.

Forty years after Russia's initial idea of embedding information in its military doctrine in 1976, the U.S. Democratic National Committee (DNC) was dealt a political blow with 20,000 of its internal emails being leaked through WikiLeaks, subsequently leading to the resignation of DNC's Chairwoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Chief Executive Amy Dacey, Communications Director Luis Miranda, and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Brad Marshall. Many analysts suspect Russian responsibility for the DNC leak, including U.S.' National Intelligence Director James Clapper, House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, numerous reputable cybersecurity firms, and even well regarded cybersecurity scholars such as Thomas Rid.

ATTRIBUTION, HIGH NON-KINETIC PAYOFFS, AND RETALIATION

There are two conflicting arguments in regards to attribution. Some argue that attributing cyber-attacks and intrusions is prohibitively difficult due to the Internet not being designed with attribution in mind, while others suggest it is possible, but requires sub-



Source: Global Panorama, Creative Commons

stantial political will and cooperation along with the adversary making mistakes along the way. This means that attribution requires either a lot of work, some luck, or a mix of both.

Democratically elected politicians, such as those in the U.S., are highly sensitive to audience costs - the costs of negative reactions from domestic audiences. Leaked documents that cast a negative light on elected politicians lead to audience costs that ultimately reduce their probability of re-election. This means that if Russia's IW campaign is successful enough, it can shape, or at least partly shape, the outcome of democratic elections. Due to Russia's 'weak' democracy on the other hand, it faces far fewer audience costs than the U.S. This means that an IW campaign by the U.S. against Russia would have less of an impact, leaving the U.S. with fewer options.

Responding to a non-kinetic attack, such as a leak, with kinetic force will come under immense international scrutiny in regards to proportionality under international humanitarian law. Before the U.S. could justify striking Russian targets with kinetic force, it would have to attribute with confidence that Russians were behind the leaks, and then determine what payload is proportionate to a non-kinetic 'attack'. Do-

mestic scrutiny will also arise with the use of kinetic retaliation due to the potential escalation of conflict into a war, which normally incurs further audience costs for politicians.

FUTURE FRONTIERS

Russia has an incentive to continue pressing forward with its IW campaign against the U.S. through the leaking of sensitive documents that strategically target politicians, agencies, and organizations. The difficulty of precise attribution, relatively high payoffs from non-kinetic operations, and the low risk of conflict escalation make this a sound strategy for Russia to pursue its interests. The U.S. needs to find a way to credibly respond and deter Russia from continuing its IW campaign, designing proportionate counter-operations retaliating against leaks, and reducing the supply of sensitive documents to Russia. 



Creed is a 2nd year Master of Global Affairs (MGA) student at the University of Toronto whose topical interests lie in international security, strategy and game theory, finance and economics, and innovation. Although his regional focuses tend to shift, he is

currently most interested in Asia (inclusive of the Middle East) and the U.S. Specifically, he has done research in cybersecurity, economic sanctions, and diplomatic negotiations.

THE EU-TURKEY STATEMENT OR POLITICAL

BY: MARKO KLJAJIC

In what has become the worst refugee crisis on the European continent since the exodus of hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing the Yugoslavian Wars in the 1990s, the EU-Turkey Statement has been hailed by European and Turkish leaders as a successful plan to halt irregular migration from Turkey to Europe. However, it is more difficult to evaluate the humanitarian fallout of this policy action.

The core objective of the Statement was to halt illegal migration through the Balkan Corridor – from Turkey to Greece and through the Western Balkans towards Central, Western, and Northern European countries – in order to provide much needed humanitarian support for refugees and to secure internal and external borders and thereby restore order to the Schengen area. The Statement called for a one-for-one mechanism whereby every new irregular migrant crossing from Turkey to Greece would be returned in accordance to international and European laws, and for every Syrian refugee returned to Turkey from the Greek Islands, another Syrian would be resettled in the European Union (EU). The substantial decline in both irregular crossings and sea fatalities since its implementation suggests that the policy has been largely successful in meeting its main objectives.

In the weeks before the March 18 implementation of the Statement, an average of 1,740 migrants arrived daily to Greece, but as of September 2016 that figure has fallen to 81 – a decrease of over 95 per cent. Moreover, improved sea search and rescue operations have significantly reduced the number of deaths at sea. Over 300 migrants died at sea in the three months before the Statement, but as of September, only 11 fatalities have been recorded.

Disagreement and resistance to migrant quotas among EU states has made for more sluggish progress in the relocation and resettlement of migrants, as only 48 per cent of the most recent pledges (22,504) have been fulfilled. From the



Source: Freedom House, Creative Commons

original resettlement target of 160,000 migrants, however, only 3 per cent (3,791) of refugees and asylum seekers in Greece have been relocated within the EU. European officials have acknowledged that progress on the relocation and resettlement schemes has been slow – encouraging members to fulfil their collective responsibilities – but continue to stress that the Statement has produced positive results.

Despite the technical success of the EU-Turkey Statement, civil society organisations and international humanitarian agencies have disputed both the legality and morality of the agreement. Critics argue that it violates the codified principle of non-refoulement and that Turkey cannot be classified as a “third safe country” (Article 39) because it is not physically safe for 90 per

MENT: A HUMANITARIAN - L - SUCCESS?



cent of the 3.1 million Syrian refugees living outside refugee camps in extremely challenging conditions. Moreover, they have criticised European and Turkish leaders for their improvidence in leaving tens of thousands of refugees and migrants without basic necessities in cramped and under-resourced reception centres in Greece, as well as for failing to protect civil society actors providing aid to refugees and migrants from government coercion. Despite a decline in arrivals and increases in EU and international support to help the upwards of 60,000 refugees receive basic necessities such as food, safe shelter, access to legal services, and medical care, the situation has not ameliorated. International and local humanitarian agencies working in coordination with government bodies remain under-equipped to adequately respond to emergencies.

Reception centres and refugee camps on the Greek Islands are at nearly double capacity. Overcrowded living conditions, combined with persisting uncertainties about asylum registration and fear of deportation have continued to fuel tension and frustration that has led to incidents of violence and lack of security.

Enhanced securitisation has created incentives for migrants to take more dangerous alternative routes to reach the continent. More than one million refugees and asylum seekers, predominantly from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, fled from their countries to seek refuge in Europe over the last year. Over 80 per cent of these migrants crossed via the Eastern Mediterranean and Aegean Sea. The latest data from the International Organisation for Migration's (IOM) Missing Migrant Project shows a new trend. The year 2016 is on course to be the deadliest year in terms of deaths at sea in the Mediterranean, as the number of deaths in the first six months was 67 per cent higher than the same period last year. Although the number of deaths in the Eastern Mediterranean fell substantially after the Statement came into effect, there has simultaneously been a marked increase in the number of recorded deaths and disappearances in the Central Mediterranean, signaling a reactive shift in regional migration patterns towards riskier routes.

These trends raise questions of whether political expediency in maintaining border controls has exacerbated the ongoing humanitarian emergency in Greece and the Mediterranean region or actually improved the situation for those most vulnerable.



Marko Kljajic is currently a MGA Candidate and enrolled in the Collaborative Program in Ethnicity and Pluralism Studies at the Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto. Marko holds an Honours B.A. in International Relations and a Minor in Transitional Justice and Post-Conflict Reconstruction from the University of Western Ontario.

THE DPRK: A NEW CYBERTHREAT?



Source: Stephan, Creative Commons

BY: SARAH ISRAR

North Korea's increasing capabilities in the evolving world of cyberterrorism and the implications of their advancement in the field is often eclipsed by the nation's human rights abuses and nuclear ambitions. Kim Jong-Un nonetheless recently announced that he considered cyber warfare an "all-purpose sword that would guarantee [North Korea's] military's capability to strike relentlessly." Moreover, South Korea recently revealed that Pyongyang was behind 43 separate hacking attacks against the nation, 27 of which were apparent phishing attempts. Phishing attacks against governments require sophistication, a degree of which North Korea had never previously demonstrated. There is clear evidence that North Korea is making significant effort to catch up to other global players to use cyberterrorism as a way to pursue its interests and undermine its adversaries.

Rules and regulations that govern the emerging realm of cyber security are outdated, and countries are lagging in an effort to protect themselves against an

increasing amount of hackers. Even typically powerful nations like the United States has recognized the gravity of being vulnerable in an increasingly interconnected world. Back in 2010, the former US Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell told Congress that since the United States was "the most connected... We have the most to lose."

Six years later, the US is still scrambling to effectively create a unified governance system that protects its citizens from the threat that cyberspace poses. Recently, while recognizing North Korea's rising prominence as a cybersecurity threat, United States General Vincent Brooks warned the Senate saying, "While I would not characterize them as the best in the world, they are among the best in the world, and the best organized."

Referring to Kim Jong-Un's rising cyberterrorism capabilities as the "best organized" is a stark warning. In recent reports by South Korean officials, Kim

Jong-Un has organized a “cyber-army” of 6000 hackers, working towards attacking South Korea’s military and government targets. Spoken of by defectors, this cyber-army reportedly undergoes intense hacking training at a government funded agency called Bureau 121, where North Korea’s brightest minds are taught how to infiltrate the cyber networks of North Korea’s greatest enemies.

Students at the agency are commended for being Kim Jong-Un’s “cyber warriors,” and the position is prestigious and sought after one. Projects undertaken by those at Bureau 121 are of no insignificance either. The most famously known attack is the alleged Sony Hack prior to the release of The Interview.

However, North Korea has achieved far more than just that. From DDoS attacks against various South Korean institutions, phishing attacks against the South Korean railway and Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power Corporation to potential ransomware attacks against major Korean Airlines. The DPRK is targeting major institutional organizations to cause the instability and unrest.

North Korea has been a consistent and significant threat to U.S. interests and global security overall. As the world of cyberspace is so new, the issues of cybersecurity so plenty, and regulations so few, it’s difficult to gauge what the increasingly interconnected future will look like in regards to cybersecurity. If the reports of North Korea’s capabilities are true and the rhetoric of its leader Kim Jong-Un is sincere, North Korea will soon be an emergent threat in the realm of cyber-security. 



Sarah is a published writer and freelance journalist. Her work as a reporter has been published in the non-partisan International Affairs journal Freedom Observatory, the South China Morning Post’s country business reports, and her literary

pursuits have been recognized by the University of Toronto which awarded her the Sonny Ladoo Book Prize award in 2014. Trilingual, and having lived in three continents by the age of ten, she is an avid traveler and is passionate about cybersecurity, foreign affairs and ethical sustainability.

EU SECURITY IN A POST-BREXIT WORLD

BY: BRIANA MACLEOD



Source: European External Action Service, Creative Commons

In the aftermath of the “Brexit” referendum, the European Union is pushing for a more coordinated defence policy, shared military assets, and the establishment of a permanent military headquarters. Conflicting opinions on this issue are symptomatic of a larger question that the whole region is asking, specifically on whether Brexit will divide Europe further or lead to greater integration of the remaining EU nations.

The EU’s conception of integration has never been fully clear, and divisions between member states have always existed. Brexit is one of the more glaring culminations of these differences of opinion, and talks of a unified army highlight an existential crisis of balancing sovereignty and integration that has been present since the regional project’s foundation.

In the midst of several complex issues such as the Syrian refugee crisis, Russia’s recent annexation of Crimea, and the emerging threat of climate change, there are opposing views about how to approach European security. While some argue that deeper security and military coordination will give the region a stronger voice, others worry that a European army is not feasible and will unnecessarily replicate the role of NATO.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel and President of the EU Commission Jean-Claude Juncker are spearheading the ambitious plan to integrate armed forces.

ASSAULTS ON ACTIVISM IN IRAN

BY: SIOBHAN BRADLEY

Homa Hoodfar, an Iranian-Canadian anthropologist and professor who was arbitrarily detained in July for “feminism and national security offences”, was released after four months in Iran’s notorious Evin Prison on September 26th.

Homa Hoodfar, an Iranian-Canadian anthropologist and professor who was arbitrarily detained in July for “feminism and national security offences”, was released after four months in Iran’s notorious Evin Prison on September 26th.

While visiting the Islamic Republic of Iran she was seized for what the Prosecutor General of Tehran ambiguously deemed criminal activity. Iran’s counter-espionage service, known as the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution, accused her of being a foreign agent. More specifically, they published allegations of Hoodfar facilitating a conspiracy against the Iranian government and society.

Hoodfar’s incarceration is entangled within a larger web of harassment against feminists in Iran. Hoodfar is renowned for her research on female participation in Iranian elections. It is one of many recent example of Iran’s hardline religious and military authorities attempting to stagnate the collective action of feminists in the country. Since January 2016, there has been a stream of interrogations and threats directed at women in Iran. Over a dozen women’s rights activists have been summoned and questioned on various national security-related charges. According to Amnesty International, they are denied lawyers and often verbally abused.

Iran’s hardliners and former governments have historically repressed female activists and gender equality. There are clear challenges posed by “egalitarian Islam,” which is a reinterpretation of Islamic texts where men and women are considered equal. Former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad intensified gendered policies by prohibiting women from studying certain post-secondary subjects, implementing stricter dress codes,

Meanwhile, Britain plans to veto any measures outlined in the plan for as long as it remains a member state. This is problematic because it is still unclear how long Britain will actually take to officially leave the EU. The UK has yet to trigger Article 50 of the EU Charter, the formal mechanism for leaving the Union, and after doing so it still may take up to 10 years to fully exit the Union. It is not only Britain that opposes this idea. Eastern European countries such as Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia are also opposed to creating an EU army.

While the creation of a “common defence” policy requires a unanimous vote under the EU treaty, a “permanent structured co-operation” requires only a majority vote. Therefore, certain member states – such as Germany, France, and Italy – could take the latter route without British support.

Creating a single army is not a new idea, nor is it radical. The EU already runs joint operations of increasing complexity in several regional security challenges. Regarding the Syrian refugee crisis for example, merging existing defence structures was a matter of necessity rather than mere political preference.

Moreover, the issue of annexed Crimea has increased feelings of European insecurity and suspicion in relation to Russia. As the most powerful military force in Europe and the world’s largest gas producer, Russia poses a threat to European interests and security. Recently, Russia suspended its weapons-grade plutonium deal with the US, indicating a possible shift towards expanding its already vast nuclear arsenal.

Despite the strong claims for unified armed forces, European leaders may want to tread lightly. Further integration during a period of multiple crises may cause the “Eurosceptics” to become further disillusioned with the regional project. Once Brexit is complete in a more substantive manner, the coming decisions will be key in shaping how this political object evolves and how Europe as a whole forges its new identity. 



Briana just finished my undergraduate degree at Dalhousie University, double majoring in Political Science and International Development Studies. While her ideas about her future are dynamic, becoming a diplomat has always been a dream of hers. Most recently, Briana traveled to Strasbourg to participate in an internship with the Council of Europe.



Source: Hamed Saber, Creative Commons

and reducing accepted work hours.

The sanctioned reinforcement of traditional cultural roles means it is not uncommon nor illegal for husbands to stop their wives from working if they think their job “damages their dignity.” This reflects the fact that only 17 per cent of women between 15 and 64 are active in the labour market.

In contrast, President Hassan Rouhani’s election in 2013 created a space for feminist activists to emerge and engage yet again in public life. Though met with strong resistance, women worked tenaciously and ambitiously to bring progressive campaigns to the forefront of national conversation.

A bold publication, *Zanan-e Emrooz* (Today’s Women), was determined to bring women’s issues into

national dialogue after being shut down in 2008. The February issue entailed a spotlight interview with Hoodfar, illuminating her work on women and elections that fuelled the debate on increased female political representation.

Changes in the political sphere became a leading priority for activists, manifesting as the Campaign to Change the Masculine Face of Parliament. Their 30 per cent quota goal for female representation in parliament led to a four-fold increase in elected women in February 2016. Another target of repression was a pedagogical website called Feminist School. The site was a forum for articles encompassing feminist theories, practices, and the state of current women’s affairs in Iran and globally.

The efforts of a vibrant feminist movement within a patriarchal climate were framed as “Western-orchestrated plots” by Iran’s conservative hardliners. Pressure was placed on collective feminist initiatives to cease their activities due to accusations of espionage and collusion with “foreign-based currents seeking the overthrow of the Islamic Republic system.”

Zanan-e Emrooz consequently suspended its publication in July. Similarly, the Feminist School stopped updating their online platforms in February. In response to the success of the Campaign for Changing the Male Dominated Face of Parliament, there were mass disqualifications of women contending for political positions.

The intimidation schemes against women have taken place under the self-proclaimed reformist government of Rouhani. In December 2015, Rouhani expressed his promising desires, “We are not doing women a favour [by bringing them into government]. This is their natural right..”

Rouhani and his government have not yet initiated substantial change, nor have they publicly addressed the surreptitious harassment of female activists. In

fact, according to a recent UN Report, “the Islamic Republic of Iran has made little progress towards gender equality and has yet to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.”

The persecution of women’s rights activists, both in law and practice, has characterized Iran’s Islamic Republic for years. Keeping this in mind, every small success of activists is a step to reversing the culture of repression. Eyes and expectations will now be on the elected government to construct a space for Iranian women to act without fear of arrest, detention or prosecution. 



Siobhan is a first year Master of Global Affairs candidate at the Munk School of Global Affairs, and also holds a BA Honours in Political Science with a History minor from Queen’s University. She is passionate about global health, development, gender equity and human rights.

US AND MEXICO IN COMPETITION OVER CENTRAL AMERICAN MIGRANT CRISIS

BY: KYLE JACQUES

The Obama Administration has come under criticism for using extensive deportations and large detention facilities as a way of deterring potential migrants fleeing Central America. In January 2016, a new strategy was announced that focuses on a more holistic program of developmental aid and asylum provision. Unfortunately, these aggressive attempts at deterrence remain firmly in place in Mexico, where human rights abuses against undocumented migrants are quickly becoming the new norm.

The persecution of women’s rights activists, both in law and practice, has characterized Iran’s Islamic Republic for years. Keeping this in mind, every small success of activists is a step to reversing the culture of repression. Eyes and expectations will now be on the



Source: Quim Gil, Creative Commons

elected government to construct a space for Iranian women to act without fear of arrest, detention or prosecution.

The issue reached its peak in the summer of 2014, when United States border agencies were overwhelmed by a surge of Central American children trying to enter the country. Pictures from the crisis showed dim, beige border agencies lined with young children asleep on benches and floors. President Barack Obama called the event an “urgent humanitarian situation.”

Events like this are not new. Individuals have been fleeing the violence, poverty, and corruption that plagues swaths of Central America for decades. Until recently, the United States’ strategy to combat this trend entailed an “aggressive deterrence strategy,” involving tightened border patrols, the use of massive detention facilities, and large-scale deportations. Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson stressed the need to “send a message” to potential migrants that “if you come here, you should not expect to simply be released.”

The message, however, has been largely ineffective, and exemplified by the scores of migrants that seemingly remained undeterred. Apprehensions of unac-



accompanied children remained high in 2015 and, by mid 2016, such arrivals were already reaching levels akin to the 2014 crisis. Not only was this policy of deterrence ineffective but, according to its critics, also deeply inhumane. At best, the deportations served to separate parents from their children. At worst, they sent individuals back to a life of persecution and violence, in direct violation of the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Earlier this year, however, the United States government announced a new program to screen individuals for potential asylum status within the countries of origin, before they feel forced to flee. They will also coordinate with the Costa Rican government to hold individuals in safe zones should the processing take longer than expected. Finally, Vice President Joe Biden announced an expansive aid program designed at targeting the root causes of migration, such as rampant poverty and government corruption. Human Rights Watch called the program a “long-overdue development.”

Unfortunately, similar accolades are not being directed at Mexico, through which these migrants must pass. Instead, the Mexican government has scaled up its border controls and increased security checkpoints. As a result, the number of Central American children

detained has gone from 4,000 in 2011 to over 35,000 in 2015. Once seized, the migrants are often held in immigration facilities, where they endure fierce interrogation procedures and, in some instances, electric shocks and torture.

Many children who speak indigenous languages are forced to sign documents agreeing to return home, despite not understanding the Spanish on the page. As well, due to extreme understaffing and corruption in Mexican immigration offices, most children are not made aware of their ability to seek asylum. Of the cases these offices do hear, less than 1 per cent are accepted as refugees.

The effects have been tragic. Again, migrants are not deterred, but are simply seeking out less-traveled and riskier routes through Mexico to avoid detection. As a result, they often fall prey to human traffickers or coyotes, who promise to help them for a large fee. Many are left stranded without food or water, while others, mainly women, are forced into sex work along the Mexico-Guatemala border. Mexico announced a firmer anti-trafficking law in 2012 that punishes convicted traffickers to 30 years in prison. However, prosecutions so far remain low for human traffickers, with only 156 of the 621 preliminary cases resulting in convictions.

It is true that governments face tremendous domestic pressure to control unregulated entry into their countries, and one should not pretend that the solutions to this problem are either easy or straightforward. However, governments have a concurrent duty to respect and uphold international principles of human rights. The United States has demonstrated that they are, at least, willing to try moving on from techniques that have been deemed ineffective and inhumane. 



Kyle Jacques graduated from McGill University in 2014 with an Honours Bachelor's Degree in Political Science. While at McGill he worked as a research assistant on a book about the history of socialist political thought. After graduating, he worked as a freelance writer for a current affairs journal based out of Montréal, writing on various issues surrounding international human rights. He later traveled to Guatemala, where he conducted research for an organization that provides skills training and employment assistance to returned international migrants. He is in his first year of the MGA program.

THE QUIET RISE OF VIETNAM

BY: MICHAEL THOMAS

Watching hordes of motorbikes roar by from a roadside food stall, you would be forgiven for missing the dramatic change occurring right before your eyes. It is not uncommon for visitors to be distracted in Ho Chi Minh City. But those who look past the conical-hatted vendors, steaming bowls of pho and Soviet-style billboards might notice some less-anticipated sights. Maybe it will be a notice for the construction of a new subway line. Maybe it will be the increasing number of cars appearing on the streets. Whatever the indicator, it will be one of many signs that a wave of economic change has quietly struck Ho Chi Minh City and carried on throughout the rest of Vietnam.

In a quiet, focused effort, Vietnam has sustained a growth rate of seven per cent, making it the second-fastest growing economy in the world since 1990. Foreign direct investment inflows and domestic demand are booming. Unlike many of its neighbours, it is experiencing positive population growth, declining fertility rates, and a growing labour force. The economy has opened up to such a vast extent that Vietnam now has a trade surplus of \$13.7 billion USD and trade accounts for 150 per cent of its GDP.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Vietnam's rise is the expansion of its middle class through a steep reduction of poverty. The World Bank estimates that the rate of extreme poverty in Vietnam dropped from around 50 per cent to roughly three per cent between 1990 and 2012. An increased consumerism in its markets have come with its growing middle class, many of which were not previously accessible to the average citizen. For example, the luxury of car ownership rose by a staggering 55 per cent in 2015 alone. The optimism triggered by such trends has led the central government to hope that Vietnam will be a "developed" country by 2020. If the country continues to grow at seven per cent for the next decade, it will follow the same development trajectory as Taiwan and South Korea, which became developed countries long ago.

But the remainder of its journey toward "developed

country" status still faces many challenges. The most concerning of these is the fine line that it will have to tread between a China that is poised for regional dominance and an America that is striving to maintain influence in Asia. 30 per cent of Vietnam's imports come from China, meaning that it will need to maneuver carefully around many of its points of contention with its northern neighbour, especially if it wants to avoid trade disruptions. It will also have to avoid being dominated by China while resisting economic dependency on its powerful neighbour. Forming a stronger relationship with the United States appears to be Vietnam's preferred strategy to accomplish this.

One way in which it could do this is through the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Vietnam is expected to benefit significantly from the deal and hopes to use it to build stronger ties with the United States as it becomes more concerned with China's growing power. Given the current opposition for the TPP voiced by both US presidential candidates, it will have to hope that the TPP succeeds before the end of President Obama's second term. If the deal fails, Vietnam may become economically isolated and even more reliant on trade with a China that it hopes to shift away from. If the TPP succeeds, Vietnam will enjoy a more favourable balance of power in the region, but will have to ensure that China's government does not feel as though it is being backed into the kind of geopolitical corner that may cause it to take a more aggressive regional stance. If Vietnam can avoid such disruptions, it will continue to move quickly and quietly toward economic development. 



Michael is a Master of Global Affairs candidate with a broad interest in global capital markets. He is primarily focused on Canada's trade relationships and foreign direct investment outflows, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. Michael has held multiple positions in globally-focused organizations, including the Thai-Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Descartes Systems Group and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Carleton University.

UNDERSTANDING THE PARIS AGREEMENT



Source: WeMeanBusiness, Creative Commons

BY: BEN WINDELER

October 5, 2016 was a milestone in international climate action as the Paris Agreement came into force with its ratification by all European Union (EU) member states – bringing the total membership to 72 countries, accounting for 56.75 per cent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This notably includes the ratifications of the three largest GHG emitters: the U.S., China, and India. The agreement sets the tone for the cooperation of states in combatting climate change. However, with no enforcement mechanisms and unambitious national targets it can only be viewed as a preliminary step on the path of mitigating negative impacts.

The Paris Agreement has two primary goals: to keep global temperature rise below 2°C by 2100, and to improve nations' resilience to climate change impacts. The agreement aims to facilitate green finance flows, technology innovation, and enhanced capacity-building frameworks in order to achieve these goals.

To meet the 2°C target, the party countries have committed themselves to Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). NDCs have been ambitious, time progressive, and must be targeted towards meeting the aforementioned goals of the treaty. As demonstrative examples, the U.S. has an NDC targeting emission reductions of 26 to 28 per cent by 2025, and China has an NDC that includes the peaking of CO₂ emissions by 2030.

While nations have made their NDC commitments public, the agreement is inherently unenforceable apart from 'name-and-shame' pressure. No hard law prevents governments from altering their commitments following a change in priorities, possibly due to new leadership or economic shocks. Nonetheless, normative treaties like the Ottawa Treaty to ban land mines have proven effective for coordinating action on

the global level. So while the agreement may not guarantee that governments will meet their NDCs, it has at the least provided motivation for them to do so.

Of more significance is the self-determined nature of the NDCs. Although the commitments made by the U.S. and China (together contributing about 38 per cent of global GHG emissions) sound impressive, there is no evidence that they will be enough to keep the global temperature below a 2°C rise. Based on model projections from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Fifth Assessment Report, to safely stay under 2°C would require annual emissions to peak by 2025, carbon neutrality by 2075, and net negative emissions by 2100. And more recent reports suggest that even more drastic action, with peak emissions before 2020 and net negative emissions by 2070, will be necessary to stay under the limit. Meanwhile, Climate Action Tracker found that if all signatories to the Paris Agreement meet their stated NDCs, a minimum of 2.7°C of warming would occur by 2100.

It is vital to recognize the significance of the 2°C limit. The Paris Agreement made it clear that scientists and politicians agree this ceiling is important. It would represent a substantial reduction in climate-related risks in the second half of this century, although lesser risks to ecosystem stability, coastal regions, and food security are already inevitable. Above 2°C of warming, these risks move from disruptive to catastrophic.

None of this is to disparage the Paris Agreement. There is no question that some commitment is better than none – and this is the best global agreement yet. Furthermore, the funds committed by nations towards green research and developments represent concrete opportunities for progress.

Reaching the 2°C target set by the Paris Agreement will require a peak in global GHG emissions as soon as possible, meaning a slowdown or stop in new fossil fuel extraction developments. It will call for steady progress towards carbon neutrality, including decreased reliance on fossil fuels and on meat consumption. And it will hinge on the development of carbon sequestration practices and technologies that can eventually allow for net negative GHG emissions. These steps may be close to impossible, requiring simultaneous government action, societal change, and technological innovation. However, this is not a

zero-sum game, and each incremental push towards the target will have long-term sustainable benefits. The Paris Agreement has established the destination, but it still remains for the world at large to create the pathway there. 



Ben graduated from McMaster University in 2015 with a degree in Integrated Science. Ben's experiences include stints as an environmental modeller, a science literacy TA, an AML investigator, and a canoe trip guide. The frontier of science is fascinating, and he believes that clear communication of research findings can benefit professionals in all fields.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: A NEED FOR ADAPTION

BY: TARA RAJABI



Source: Stephan, Creative Commons

Almost a year after the Paris climate change agreement at the United Nations, ratification processes are underway in many signatory countries, including – and especially – in those of the developing world. Last month, the US and China, both major carbon emitters, agreed to ratify the agreement, a decision that was soon after replicated by Brazil.

Emerging economies and developing nations are showing no signs of curtailing their efforts for global

climate change ratification. Following Brazil's decision last month, India has agreed to ratify the agreement ahead of the EU, Canada, Russia, and Australia. India has not been the only country in the global south to take leadership in addressing climate change; Fiji was the first country in the world to ratify the agreement, and this past summer, the environment and energy minister of the Maldives urged that there was "no time to waste" in ratification

The leadership of the global south on climate change is indicative of its accelerating role in climate action. It is increasingly apparent to policy makers in the developing world that the most intense and frequent symptoms of climate change will be disproportionately felt by their countries. Climate change will increase the intensity and frequency of natural disasters such as tropical cyclones, floods, and droughts. This will inevitably lead to significant problems in the developing world as it will affect food security and agriculture, water resources, and human health. Developing countries are also more vulnerable to the effects of climate change in general because many of their economies rely on resource extraction, which is highly climate-dependent. While these effects will be felt directly in the developing world, they will also impact the developed world, as global leaders will feel international pressure to provide humanitarian relief more frequently, and potentially in greater scope than is currently necessary.

While climate mitigation agreements such as the COP21 are important steps, they may not be sufficient climate action for many signatory countries. For many developing countries that are already feeling the adverse effects of decades of accelerating carbon emissions, mitigation may not be adequate. This is in part due to the nature of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere. Carbon that is emitted into the atmosphere will continue to cause a global greenhouse effect even long after carbon emissions are reduced, or even halted. As a result, mitigation may only be the first step in climate change response.

Alongside efforts to reduce carbon emissions, climate agreements may need to incorporate development strategies to adapt to climate change. As natural disasters, crop failure, drought and famine, disease, and even intensified conflict over resources begin to increase in the coming years, developing nations need

to be equipped with adequate methods for climate risk management. These methods could include modifying existing infrastructure, establishing high-capacity reservoirs, land-use planning to avoid development in regions prone to flooding or drought, or improving emergency response.

Compounding this issue is the limited capacity with which developing nations can adapt to climate change. Many of the technologies and adaptive policies required by the developing world are beyond their economic ability to establish. However, while development programs that specifically target climate change adaptation strategies may require significant funding from the developed world, they will ultimately help to prevent greater expenditures in the future, as they will prevent economic loss and reduce the need for humanitarian response to disaster.

The developing world's zeal in mitigating climate change is with good reason. Agreements to establish long-term solutions of reducing greenhouse gas emissions are fundamentally important. However, if mitigation is not complemented by adaptive strategies, the global community could risk witnessing many decades of development and progress unravel in the global south. 



Tara is a first year Master of Global Affairs student at the University of Toronto and holds a BSc in Environmental Science from the University of Calgary. Her interests lie in the intersection of human rights and migration, international law, sustainability, and the interplay between conflict and climate change.

THE GLOBAL FIGHT AGAINST TAX HAVENS

BY: ZARA BUKHARI

Multinational corporations, banks, and the wealthy elite of society are storing millions of dollars in offshore accounts in order to avoid paying a high tax on their income. These tax-evading strategies have been examined for years, and countries do their best to put regulations in place in order to stimulate their own economies. There is an increasingly loud cry for a global regulator for such tax havens, in part due to the world's increasingly interconnected economies as well as



Source: Stephan, Creative Commons

the increase in international investments. However, due to the overwhelming disagreement on this matter, usually stemming from larger corporations and the elite, there has not been much progress.

There are different incentives for countries to try and shut down tax havens. For the European Union and the United States, the fear is that these havens are directly funding terrorism as well as concealing profits of crimes. For the Global South, the main argument remains that tax evasion directly affects their economic and institutional growth. Indeed, this argument holds for every country.

The Prime Minister of Ecuador proposed the creation of a global tax regulator at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly. This proposal, the second of its kind in the past two consecutive years, was shut down. The regulation problem of tax havens remains under the control of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and many European countries wish it to stay within their mandate. The OECD, however, has a long record of misidentifying tax havens. The criteria are often tweaked to only include small islands and not the major players and worst offenders. These regulations have been ineffective in regulating the global economy, prompting individuals to call for a different regulatory system to be put in place.

Most countries that operate as tax havens offer lower taxes, in hopes that it will attract economic investments and activity. But what those countries do not take into account is that individuals from high-tax states will often invest back into their own home countries, not into the economies of the tax haven

countries. However, neither the tax haven country nor the high-tax country necessarily benefits. In 2015, Canadians alone put \$40 billion in tax havens, accounting for approximately 15 per cent of the wealth in the top ten most popular tax havens. An economic argument in support of tax havens is that they incentivize individuals to invest back into their home countries. Oftentimes, individuals that move money into tax havens ultimately invest their money back into countries where the taxes are higher. The main benefit of this is that their return on investment becomes tax-free, as the money originated from a tax haven, where little or no taxes were levied. But, it is argued that these individuals would invest their money in the same places regardless of their money going through a tax haven or not. Due to this, tax havens have no effect on increases in capital investment in high-tax countries.

Individuals that take this investment route do, however, forgo their responsibilities to society by avoiding taxes. While wealthy individuals accumulate an increase in their assets, governments are left to struggle with smaller tax revenues. With a lower tax base produced by the population, the government is not able to provide as much funding towards public expenditure, thereby restricting growth. This invariably puts the burden of tax on middle and lower income individuals, continually adding to the increasing inequalities in global income.

Tax havens have become an increasingly strong player in the world economy. The development and structure of institutions continue to weaken due to lower tax revenues. If there was a concentrated effort from powerful countries, there could, at the very least, be a reduction in the use of tax havens. While this may be a good starting point, effort needs to be directed toward a global regulator. While this regulator could be the OECD, their weak approach taken in the past leaves room for another organization to easily step up to the plate. 



Zara is a first year MGA student. She currently holds a BA (Hons. Spec.) in Financial and Business Economics as well as a Masters of Economics, from York University. During her Master's she analyzed the economic implications of a legal human organ market. Her focus is predominantly within the financial sector, but eventually hopes to work for the Government of Canada analyzing and developing trade policies.

WHAT DOES A TRUMP PRESIDENCY MEAN FOR CANADA?



Source: Gage Skidmore, Creative Commons

BY: ANDREW AULHOUSE

With election day approaching, Canada must consider what the presidency of Donald Trump would mean for its economy and its relationship with its neighbor and largest trading partner. While Trump dismissed the idea of a northern border wall, his election could have a significant impact on Canada.

Predicting the specifics of a Trump presidency is a challenging task, given his inconsistency and vagueness on most issues. However, for all of Trump's policy fluidity and imprecision, there are several themes that he maintains. Throughout the campaign Trump has consistently voiced his belief that the United States (US) is doing too much for the rest of the world, and that trade agreements and immigrants are harming America. These themes provide the basis for assessing what a Trump presidency would mean for Canada.

Canada is dependent on trade with the US, and this is where the consequences of a Trump presidency would be most acutely felt. Trump has campaigned on a protectionist platform, having stated that as president he would withdraw the US from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). International Trade Minister Chrystia Freeland has acknowledged that whatever Canada

does regarding the TPP will be rendered moot if the next American president withdraws from the deal.

Trump has also said that he would renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and that if Canada or Mexico objects, then the US will withdraw from the deal. There is some uncertainty as to what would come next, with some trade lawyers suggesting that Canada and the US would revert to their original 1987 free trade deal. The end of free trade with the US would be disastrous for Canada, though such a move would be beyond the powers of a President Trump, given that it is up to Congress to introduce trade tariffs.

Trump's protectionism could potentially launch a trade war. Former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers warned that Trump's policies would plunge the US into recession within eighteen months, which would also adversely affect the Canadian economy. Capital Economics has warned that Canada could suffer as collateral damage of Trump's protectionism. However, Brian Belski, Chief Investment Strategist for BMO Capital Markets, has warned against such dire predictions; while there would be a reaction in the stock market to a Trump victory in November, it would recover by the end of the year and the longer-term effects would remain to be seen.

A recent RBC Capital Markets report said that Trump's tax plan - which would cut income taxes and reduce the corporate tax rate from 35 per cent to 15 per cent - would make it harder for Canada to attract top talent and make its own low corporate tax rates less competitive. However, it also stated that the growth created in the US by lower taxes would yield benefits for Canada, at least in the short term.

While Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has said that he is willing to work with whoever wins the election, he would likely have a far more strained relationship

with Donald Trump than the amicable one that he has enjoyed with President Barack Obama. Trump and Trudeau disagree on a number of defining issues, immigration being the starkest. While Trudeau welcomed more than 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada over the last year, Trump has advocated for a ban on Muslim immigration to the US. Trudeau has criticized protectionist rhetoric, saying in September that “building walls” was not an avenue for growth--an overt reference to Trump.

One Canadian industry that would benefit under Trump would be the energy sector, as he has said that he would approve the Keystone XL pipeline, scrap the Iran deal, and stop importing oil from OPEC countries. Nevertheless, the complexity of the Canada-US relationship means that the full impact of a President Trump must be considered holistically. 



Andrew is a second year Master of Global Affairs student. This past summer he interned at the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations in New York City. Andrew previously studied transnational criminal networks in North America as a Research Assistant at the Queen's University School of

Policy Studies. Andrew is passionate about all things political, and has a keen interest in North American relations, Canadian and American foreign policy, and American presidential politics.

KAZAKHSTAN AT THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL: MERITS AND COMPLICATIONS

BY: RINCHEN DOLMA-KARMA

Kazakhstan has become the first Central Asian state to secure a seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The country will sit as a non-permanent member for a period of two years starting January 1, 2017, alongside Sweden, Ethiopia and Bolivia. This new role came after Astana's 20 year-long campaign to be recognized as a powerful regional leader and an active global player.

KAZAKHSTAN'S MERITS AS A GLOBAL PLAYER

Kazakhstan's merits primarily derive from the country's active engagement in global politics since its independence in 1991, most notably in the area of nuclear disarmament. During the Soviet era, a total number of 456 nuclear tests were conducted at the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site in northern Kazakhstan. The total explosive power of these tests was equivalent to about 2,500 atomic bombs of the type dropped on Hiroshima. This resulted in more than 1 million people being exposed to radioactive fallout, as well as the contamination of vast tracts of land in Semipalatinsk and the surrounding areas. As a response to mass public outcry immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan voluntarily renounced its possession of nuclear weapons and began relinquishing the nuclear arsenal that it inherited from its predecessor. Astana justifies this move as its president's “conviction that security guarantees stem from nuclear weapons”, as well as the country's commitment to promoting global peace and security.

Kazakhstan's engagements in other multilateral and international settings have strengthened its candidacy and legitimacy to claim a UNSC seat. Kazakhstan became the first post-Soviet republic and the first predominantly Muslim country to chair the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2010, its role as the only Central Asian state to chair the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, from 2011-2012 and its Kazakhstan organization and hosting of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE UNSC SEAT

Being the first of the post-Soviet Republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan) to secure a seat at the UNSC, Kazakhstan's election will draw more attention to Central Asia. As Kazakhstani Foreign Minister Idrissof stated in September, Central Asia will have its first historical appearance in the Council, where this will be an opportunity to attract attention to its members on regional issues, especially in the fields of peace, cooperation, and security.

Kazakhstan's new status could also potentially help strengthen its sovereignty and stature, particularly

within a challenging regional environment surrounded by two powerful neighbours--China in the East and Russia in the North. While China defines its objectives toward Kazakhstan and greater Central Asia as “forming a positive image as a reliable economic partner that has no political expectations,” its assertive stance on the South China Sea and other territorial disputes have made its neighbors weary that Beijing could turn to its immediate western flank for land and other natural resources if necessary.

To the North, the Russian Federation has been on the march to regain lost territory and reunify ethnic Russians, as evidenced by its annexation of Crimea and its aggressive claims against Georgia. Given that 20 per cent of Kazakhstan’s 17 million population is of Russian ethnicity, and that Russia has been working systematically to bring Kazakhstan and other neighbouring states under its influence within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union, Kazakhstan could become a target of Putin’s expansionist policies. In light of these challenges, Kazakhstan’s new status on the UNSC could be seen as a buffer to repel its neighbours’ potential agendas and secure its position as an independent sovereign nation of Central Asia.

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LOOKING FORWARD

While Idrissov wrote that his country should be proud of the remarkable improvements it has made over the course of last two decades and that it is “ready to assume new responsibilities as part of the global community,” Astana still has a long way to go to live up to its new regional leadership role. Among other issues, the oil-rich Central Asian nation has been scrutinized multiple times by civil society and non-government organizations, particularly for its poor human rights record. Indeed, the day before Kazakhstan’s victory in New York, Human Rights Watch called for a closer examination of the human rights situation in the country, especially after the introduction of new or reinforced restrictions on freedom of association, speech, assembly and religion. Astana’s restrictions on media freedom, independent journalism, and opposition have also been under criticism. Many current and past UNSC members, including some of the Permanent Five, have similarly problematic human rights records. However, Kazakhstan does not have to follow the same path. The next two years of Kazakhstan’s non-permanent membership will be an opportunity to improve its performance and demonstrate to the international community its commitment to becoming a legitimate global player. (GC)



Rinchen-Dolma is a second year Master of Global Affairs student. She graduated from McGill University with an Honours Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and East Asian Studies. Her research interests include: Central and East Asian politics, human rights, international law, and refugee politics. In summer 2016, she interned in the political section of the Embassy of Canada to Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan.