

# UTRIKES PERSPEKTIV

The Student Magazine on  
Foreign Affairs

Nr. 1  
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***In Focus:***  
**AFRICA**

***INTERVIEW:***  
**Sir Graham Watson**  
The Climate Parliament

***Western Sahara:***  
The Last Desert Colony

***Rouhani in Europe***  
A new era of cooperation

***Poetry:***  
**MOHAMED  
RIYAD**

# DIPLOMACY

The Art of Communicating Foreign Affairs





ASSOCIATION OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS

LUND • EST. 1935

## EDITORS' NOTE

### “DIPLOMACY IS THE ART OF COMMUNICATING FOREIGN AFFAIRS

We are very happy to select and release our third issue on Diplomacy. This subject area is that quintessential subtle element shaping foreign affairs, which determines the way we see the world for the better or worse. Hence, this issue would like to convince you that Diplomacy is the art of communicating foreign affairs.

WHEN THINKING ABOUT the term “diplomacy”, one is inclined to believe that it only has relevance in the political realm. An institutional toolkit for people speaking officially on behalf of elective representatives of the general public. Today, diplomacy can represent any political discussion. Governments use diplomatic approaches with one another, with organizations, and even some organizations take a diplomatic approach in their line of work.

IN THIS EDITION, we see how diplomatic efforts are used by a group of nations to fight climate change (page 35), how a nation sets out to improve its transportation infrastructure (page 56), firsthand accounts of people working in or for Swedish diplomacy and several examples highlighting the foreign affairs of Africa.

As we have already taken strides into 2016, we can observe the year will get interesting as it unfolds. The British referendum on their EU membership, the Syrian peace process, the ongoing refugee crisis in Europe. In all of them, diplomatic efforts being employed to the extreme to solve the situation for the best outcome benefitting all parties. It is not a mere skill, but even an art, to communicate a point of view that represents a solution best for all.



*Wishing you a Fruitful Spring,  
Arttu Närhi & Saahil Waslekar  
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## PRESIDENTS' ADDRESS

**I**t seems as though the new term has just begun, when in reality we are well into March and the coffee machine at the UPF office has been running hot for several weeks. With the coffee come the weekly committee meetings, to which were added several new members after our Get Active-meeting in early February. Whether you have just joined our association or have been a part of it for some time, we welcome you to another eventful year with UPF!

**WITH THE NEW** Year, our association has begun working on this year's theme "Grassrooted Peace" – a subject that we wish to shed light upon through lectures, articles in our Magazine and Webzine, radio shows and through our travel committee's anticipated trip to Lebanon this spring. We are also currently in the process of giving our website, upflund.se, a makeover with the help of our new project group – the fruits of which we hope to share with you all before the end of this term. We have also begun the important process of updating our by-laws in order to have them reflect the progresses made in our association over the past years.

**THESE UPDATES AND** changes notwithstanding, UPF will continue to provide you with the largest discussion forum in Lund with regard to foreign affairs, with the possibility to engage yourself in any of our eight committees. We look forward to meeting you at our upcoming events, and we hope that you enjoy the first issue of Utrikesperspektiv in 2016.



On behalf of the board,

**Anahita Nicoobayan Shiri & Oscar Waldner**  
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# RADIO UPF

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## The World on the US Election



**T**he United States is locked in the middle of one of the most dramatic (if not, at least the loudest) presidential race in history. With incumbent Barack Obama stepping down after his second and final term, his successor from the democratic side would at present seem to be his former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. On the rival side, the Republican primary race has been dominated by businessman Donald Trump. Obama already has expressed his disbelief of Trump winning the final race, *The Guardian* reports. Yet there have been varying reactions from around the world as to who should be the president elect this November.

**AMERICA'S SUPERPOWER RIVAL** Russia seems to have mixed feelings on the matter. **NPR** interviewed Moscow residents, whom all expressed dislike for both Clinton and Trump. As for the government's stance, **CNN** quoted Putin saying Trump is a highly talented and bright person. Trump in turn has said he would get along with the Russian President.

**USA'S OTHER HISTORIC** adversary, China, is also following the race closely. **The Washington Free Beacon** quoted a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson reaffirming China's and America's

joint role in safeguarding world peace and hoping the US would conduct responsible relationship building in the future. The Foreign Ministry has not commented on Trump's hard stance on China.

**IT IS CLEAR** all around that Trump leads in global headlines just like in his home country. Having him as one of the primary points of political contact between your nation and the USA must seem like an intimidating and unpredictable situation. For now, careful vague comments might do the trick, but as the race draws closer to November, nations have to plan their foreign political approach carefully if a Trump presidency looks likely. ●

### Important Campaign Dates

Now -> June 14th - Primaries & Caucuses

July 18th-21st - Republican National Convention

July 25th-28th - Democratic National Convention

Sept. 27th, Oct 9th & 19th - Presidential Debates

Oct. 4th - Vice Presidential Debate

Nov. 8th - Election Day



# Brexit

After renegotiating terms of the UK's membership in the EU, British Prime Minister David Cameron announced the United Kingdom European Union Membership Referendum or "Brexit" Referendum to be held on the 23rd of June, 2016. The Brexit (derived from the words British Exit) vote is a simple in-or-out referendum on whether the British public feels they should remain in the EU.

**THE ARGUMENTS FOR** and against a potential Brexit range from political, to economic, to matters of principle. **The Guardian** reports BMW-owned Rolls Royce reached out to its British employees warning of adverse Brexit effects on the company's ability to employ people in the event of an Brexit becoming reality. Conversely, one study has shown a restriction on EU workers would lead to an increase in UK wages.



Photo: Garry Knight

This was even admitted by the leader of the pro-EU campaign Lord Rose, **The Telegraph** reports.

**THE BREXIT DEBATE** has renewed hopes and fears of Scottish independence again. With Scotland voting

Photo: Gage Skidmore



to remain in the UK in 2014 with the promise of more devolved powers to the Scottish parliament, the coalition government of the time failed to deliver on this promise. As a result, the Scottish National Party

Photo: SignorDefazio/flickr



Photo: Dave Kellam



Photo: Number 10/flickr

swept 53 out of 56 Scottish MPs in the 2015 parliamentary election. **The BBC** reports Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon reiterating the SNP's commitment to Scottish independence, and in the event of a Brexit, she would see another independence referendum on the horizon.

**NOT ALL EFFECTS** of an exit would be limited to Britain, one of the largest British trading partners, Ireland, is due for a massive impact if the UK would vote to leave. **Financial Times** reports that the Irish concerns of not only complicating trade to the UK, but worries of Brexit undoing decades of work to bring peace in Northern Ireland could become a reality. The close ties between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland and the elimination of a physical border between the nations has been a key in this development.



Photo: NHS Confed./flickr

**ALL IN ALL**, the referendum has split the British public completely. The issues around it are multilayered, and a high amount of rational and emotional reasoning can be found to support both sides. ●



# CHRUSJTJOVS FALL I SOVJETISK PRESS

**Sovjetunionens förste statspensionär har nyss firat jubileum som sådan. Ett år har gått sedan Chrusjtjov ersattes av Brezjnev som partiledare och Kosygin som regeringschef. Med anledning härav kan det kanske vara av intresse att undersöka hur palatsrevolutionen i Kreml kom till uttryck i den inhemska pressen.**

**D**en första aningen om att något var i görningen fick Moskvaborna den 15 oktober genom att Izvestija inte kom ut som vanligt på eftermiddagen. På morgonen den 16 tillkännagav så Pravda, att "kamrat N.S. Chrusjtjovs anhållan om befrielse från åliggandena som KPSS:s CK:s förste sekreterare, medlem i KPSS:s CK:s presidium och ord förande i SSSR:s ministerråd beviljats av KPSS:s CK. Samtidigt meddelades att till ny förste sekreterare valts L.I. Brezjnev. Omedelbart under detta sexspaltiga tillkännagivande redogjordes på trespalters bredd för Högsta Sovjets presidiums sammanträde. Enhälligt (f.ö. ett ord, som saknas i meddelandet från CK) godkände presidiet Chrusjtjovs ansökan om avsked från posten som ordförande i ministerrådet, och lika enhälligt utsågs Kosygin till hans efterträdare.

UNDER MÅNADEN DÄREFTER pågick utan tvekan en mer eller mindre häftig maktkamp bakom kulisserna i Kreml. En noggrann tidningsläsare kunde lägga märke till att namnen på vissa personer inom parti- och statsledningen förekom alltmera sällan i Pravda och Izvestija. Den 18 november kom ett nytt meddelande från ett CK-sammanträde. Den noggranne tidningsläsaren konstaterade att de flesta av dem som omnämnts mera sällan under den gångna månaden nu återfanns bland dem som avsatts från sina befattningar inom CK eller dess presidium. Sammanträdets viktigaste beslut var väl annars undanröjandet av en tidigare uppdelning av partiapparaten på det lokala planet i en jordbruks- och industrigren. Genom denna sammanslagning fick de nya ledarna möjlighet att rensa ut Chrusjtjov-trogna partimedlemmar också på ett lägre plan.

INOM DEN SOVJETISKA tidningsvärlden medförde Chrusjtjovs fall personskitte på chefredaktörsstolen både för Pravda och Izvestija. Däremot fick chefen för den tredje (efter parti- och statshierarkin) maktfaktorns officiella organ, krigsmaktens Krasnaja Zvezda, sitta kvar. Detta kan ses mot bakgrund av den publicitet den avsatte diktatorn brukade få i de tre tidningarna. Både i relativa och absoluta tal hade hans namn förekommit mycket mindre i den tidning som fick behålla sin chefredaktör efter maktskitet.



**DETTA INTIMA SAMBAND** mellan makthavande och propagandachefer framgår också av ett annat förhållande. Under en 14-dagarsperiod i maj 1964 (alltså när Chrusjtjov tycktes stå på höjden av sin bana) förekom namnen på chefer för olika propagandamedel sammanlagt 84 gånger i de tre tidningarna Pravda, Izvestija och Krasnaja Zvezda. Under en lika lång period i november 1964 (alltså när Chrusjtjov störtats) omnämndes samma personer endast fyra gånger och därav Chrusjtjovs svärson Adzjubej's namn två gånger i samband med att denne miste sin plats i CK på grund av "i arbetet begångna fel." (Såvitt man vet är han f.ö. den ende som i pressen blivit direkt beskyldd för att ha begått fel under Chrusjtjovs tid).

**DEN ANTYDDA METODEN** med att räkna namn för att sedan analysera de siffror som kommer fram, lämnar en del intressant resultat (förutom det redan nämnda med propagandacheferna). Sålunda avspeglas partipresidiets större beroende av CK under månaden närmast efter palatsrevolutionen – sedan CK medverkat till att stöta sin förste partisekreterare – i det förhållandet att antalet publicerade namn på CK-ledamöter ökade under novemberperioden medan presidiemedlemmarna fick mindre publicitet. Den modifierade inställningen till Stalin kunde utläsas ur det faktum att hans namn dök upp allt mera sällan i tidningsspalterna. De ideologiska lärofädernas (Marx, Engels och Lenins) frekvens tydde på att de nya ledarna kände behov av att bygga under sin nyvunna ställning med ideologiska argument.

# “DEN MODIFIERADE INSTÄLLNINGEN TILL STALIN KUNDE UTLÄSAS UR DET FAKTUM ATT HANS NAMN DÖK UPP ALLT MERA SÄLLAN I TIDNINGSSPALTERNA

**DE OVAN NÄMNDNA** skillnader, som den noggranne tidningsläsaren kunde iakttaga mallen tidningarna från Chrusjtjovs glansdagar och tidningarna från tiden närmast efter hans fall, var knappast märkbara för den vanlige ryssen. Han lade säkert märke till att Chrusjtjovs namn försvunnit (i maj hade det namnet stått att läsa ca 35 gånger i varje nummer av Pravda), men för övrigt var kontinuiteten mera iögonfallande. Det normala omfånget på tidningarna var fortfarande fyra sidor, de två parallellt löpande kampanjerna för "kemisering" och ökad kvalitet på industriprodukter fortsatte månader framåt och pressens roll som "kollektiv agitator, propagandist och organisatör" var oförändrat den samma. ●

Av: Ola Mårtensson  
(1966. Utrikesnytt: Organ för Utrikespolitiska Föreningen i Lund, 5(1), pp. 13-14)

Photo: Caleb Kimbrough



## FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

JOHANNES ERNSTBERGER, ETHIOPIA



# Addis Ababa's new metro: A foreign train for local people?

**Beyond land-grabbing and geopolitics, the role of Chinese investments in East Africa is multifaceted and ambiguously received by locals. Addis Ababa's brand-new metro network shows.**

*Downtown Addis Ababa with the new metro line in operation. Author's own photo.*

**E**ast Africa and Ethiopia have seen plenty of Chinese investments and Addis Ababa is no exception. The cordial relationship with the East Asian giant had its preliminary diplomatic peak in 2012 when the Chinese government generously financed the construction of the new African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa. The impressive complex, including the highest building in the Ethiopian capital, was donated to the African Union as a gift from China. While criticised internationally, China's growing involvement in the region has also produced a number of interesting infrastructural developments which could turn out to be improvements locally.

**"THE CHINESE BUILD** everywhere here. Everywhere", a local student explains. He says he has seen the city

change during the 6 years he's been living here. "Look at any of the construction sites around here and you will see some Chinese billboards".

**THE LATEST ADDITION** to Chinese infrastructure investments in Ethiopia is the Addis Ababa light train, a commuter train that connects the Far East of the city with the West and the South. Its two lines combined, stretch over nearly 35 kilometres, opening in September and November 2015, respectively. In Western media, the light train has been acknowledged as the "first metro of Sub-Saharan Africa". Built by the China Railway Engineering Corporation (CREC), financed through a loan from China's Exim Bank and operated by Shenzhen Metro Group, there is not much 'Ethiopian' about the light train, except for its location.

**THE TRAIN SYSTEM** is the first major step in the government's efforts to free its national capital from traffic chaos. H.E Ato Workeneh Gebeyehu, the Ethiopian Minister of Transport, emphasises the welfare aspect of the train network, calling it "a social infrastructure" for the country's low income workers. At between 0.10 and 0.30 USD per journey, the tickets are just slightly more expensive than the minibus transport system, which the train seeks to complement. Generally, the affordability of the train is agreed upon by many Ethiopians and on-board, there seems to be a wide range of different income classes.

## **“THE TRAIN SYSTEM IS THE FIRST MAJOR STEP IN THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO FREE ITS NATIONAL CAPITAL FROM TRAFFIC CHAOS”**

**THERE ARE OTHER** issues that leave some Ethiopians reluctant to use the train. "Although it has been proved to be the safest and fastest way of transportation I do not feel secure to use it so soon," Giram, a retired public servant remarked shortly after the network was opened. This concern relates to a general distrust in Chinese construction work, as David\* explains: "Some of the Chinese constructions are just of poor quality, so they don't hold very long, but the railway seems to be okay. I use it sometimes."

**FRANKLY SPEAKING, NOT** everything seems to work yet. The escalators and lifts are permanently out of function, stairs descending from the grade-intersected rail platforms lead oftentimes straight into a construction site, and the ticket counter is not more than an unobtrusive booth somewhere in the vicinity of the station where you after some queuing can obtain a paper ticket which nobody seems to check onboard of the train anyways. Furthermore, if you want to change from one line to the other, you might have to descend from the platform, cross the highway underneath and climb up the numerous stairs on the other side again. Alternatively, as many locals do, you just cross the rails.

**NEVERTHELESS, THE METRO** is tremendously popular. Around 200,000 people use the network daily. Trains are packed during any time of the day and while looking down at the traffic jams on the highway below, you understand why. "I think it's good that they built it. Addis needs more public transport and this company was willing to build it, so we should be grateful" Salomon\*, a local mechanic, explains. "Chinese companies seem to be the only ones interested in building something here". Kefi\*, another student, says that he is very positive towards the new train. Still, he finds it almost comical that it is entirely Chinese. "If you look at it, you will see that even the drivers are Chinese", he exclaims, followed by a short laughter.

**FINALLY ON THE** train myself, I am greeted by an onboard television, broadcasting short informative clips about the accomplishments and excellence of the China Railway Engineering Corporation (CREC). As the doors close, a middle-aged man next to me crosses himself hastily and looks up to the roof for a short prayer. For many locals, it seems, the benefits outweigh the costs. ●

*Flag: Wikimedia Commons*

# Where is South Korean History

**In 2017, middle and high school students are going to study Korean history with a single, government-issued history textbook. Although the government says it is the way forward to achieve pride of Korean history, current critics show that it might prevent the appearance of diverse perspectives of seeing the past among students.**

**I**t was when I was working as an intern at UNESCO Bangkok last year that one of my colleagues came and told me that there is a very interesting project called 'Promoting intercultural dialogue and a

culture of peace in South-East Asia through Shared Histories', which aims to promote a balanced historical perception by developing history education resources with the final purpose of incorporating them into countries' formal education system.

### Chung-hee Park

- President (1963-79) of the Republic of Korea (South Korea)

- Joined the new South Korean army after Korean independence and rose through the ranks.

- Was in 1961 member of the military junta that overthrew the civilian government. Became chairman of the junta government and was in 1963 elected president.

- Amended the constitution twice (1969, 1972) in order to gain almost unlimited power.

- Although his government aided economic progress by emphasizing export-oriented growth, it became more dictatorial over the years through (increased) censorship, political repression and torture of political prisoners.

- In Aug., 1974, Park's wife was killed during one of the several assassination attempts against him.

- Park was killed in 1979 by the head of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency.

Source: The Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th ed. | 2015

**IT WAS THE** Korean government which positioned itself as the biggest funder of this project. When asked about the motivation of this funding, the government said that they saw the critical importance of a project that will accommodate diverse perspectives and interpretations of seeing history in the region. However, this is quite ironic, considering how the Korean government is now working towards promoting Korean history.

**MIDDLE AND HIGH** school students are expected to use a single history textbook issued by the Korean government from 2017. It was 3rd November last year when the bill for rewriting a Korean history textbook had been passed in the National Assembly. The poll conducted showed that already 99 percent of Korean historians and educators declared themselves against this bill. Nonetheless, the current president of South Korea, Geun-hye Park, says that students need history education which can inculcate in them

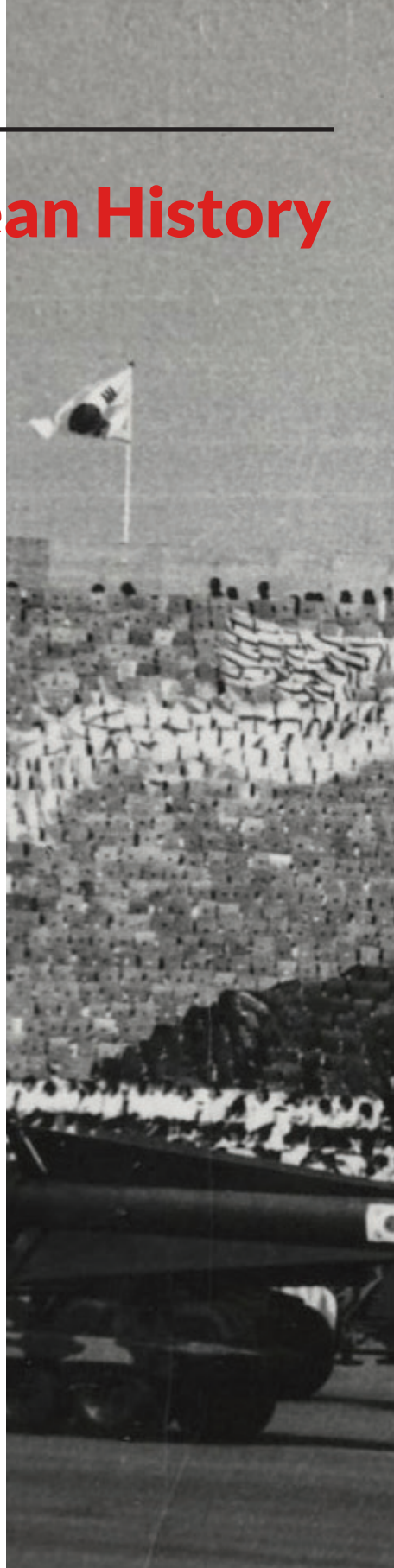


Photo: Jong-sik Baek



# heading?

a pride for the country and balanced historical awareness. According to the centre-right government, the current seven history textbooks used in schools are too left-leaning.

**THERE ARE SOME** countries which are using only government-issued history textbooks, including North Korea, Sri Lanka, Mongolia, and Vietnam. South Korea was one of them before. The previous president Chung-hee Park who came into power through a 1961 coup and maintained his control until 1979, initiated the use of a government-issued history textbook at that time. Due to many shortcomings, the 2003 administration shifted to a system of several authorized history textbooks published by private companies, which gave history educators freedom to choose their teaching resources.

**MANY CRITICS CURRENTLY** start from the point that going back to the past indicates that a government-issued history textbook will whitewash past disgraces, for instance, describing Chung-hee Park's long dictatorship as a revolution. Considering the fact that the current president is Chung-hee Park's daughter

and her known long-held respect toward her father, this point gains ground. And, more seriously, the Korean government is now repeating their position in revealing who will participate in rewriting the textbook. As the current textbooks are left-biased, as they said, the uneven composition of writers could be very problematic as it might not reflect diversity in terms of points of views on Korean history.

**ALTHOUGH EDUCATION IS** important in every country, there is no doubt that all Koreans think of education as the first priority in their lives. That parents spend more than half of their salary educating their children is one example of illustrating this. Coincidentally, Korean history will start to be one of the mandatory subjects in the university entrance exams exactly when the new history textbook is to be used in schools in 2017.

**IN MY HOME** country, South Korea, more than 70 percent of high school graduates advance to college every year. In other words, for students, history education in schools will be the primary source of knowing our history like I experienced it before.

**FORTUNATELY, THERE ARE** many technological sources to get to know history nowadays except for school education. However, questions remain on whether using a single government-issued textbook is the only way to help people to have pride in their country's history and balanced historical perspectives. ●

**“ THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT ALL KOREANS THINK OF EDUCATION AS THE FIRST PRIORITY IN THEIR LIVES**

## FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

LOVISA PRAGE, MEXICO

# ZAPATISTA COMMUNITY A NEW WAY

**Utrikesperspektiv reporter Lovisa Prage gives an insight to the indigenous Zapatista communities in Chiapas, Mexico. Having been victims of brutal oppression since the Spanish Empire, their autonomy from the Mexican state is a unique story of anti-capitalist resistance.**

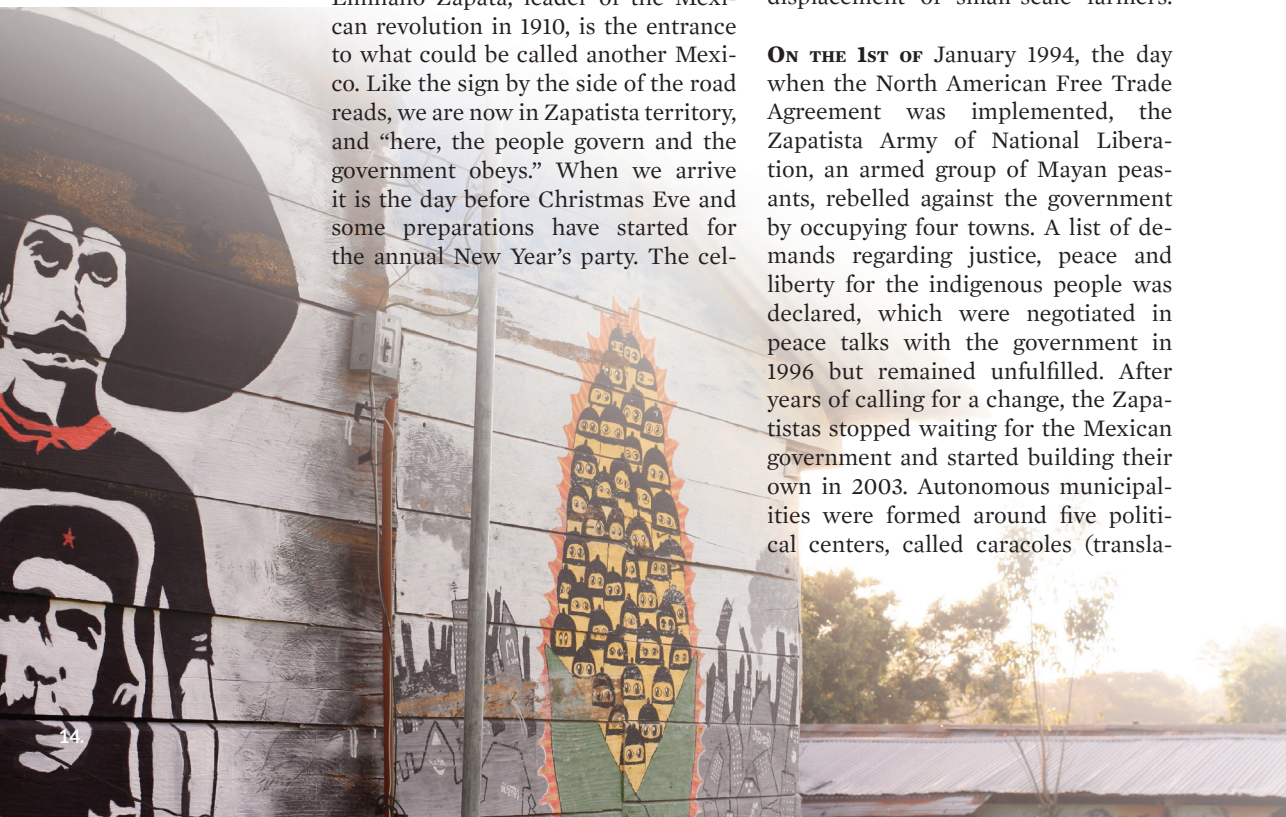
*To the right, "the children of the corn", as the Mayan people are often referred to, resisting neoliberalism. To the left, Emiliano Zapata, leader of the Mexican revolution in 1910, decisively posing with a Che Guevara T-shirt.*

A few hour bus ride from San Cristobal de las Cas as in midst of the green lush mountains leads you to the gates of Morelia. It is one of the centers for indigenous autonomy in Chiapas, the place that symbolizes indigenous people's resistance worldwide. Next to a large portrait of Emiliano Zapata, leader of the Mexican revolution in 1910, is the entrance to what could be called another Mexico. Like the sign by the side of the road reads, we are now in Zapatista territory, and "here, the people govern and the government obeys." When we arrive it is the day before Christmas Eve and some preparations have started for the annual New Year's party. The cel-

ebration lasts for three days, for both the beginning of 2016 and the 22nd anniversary of the Zapatista uprising.

**THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE** in Chiapas, constituting around a third of the state's total population, have been subjected to marginalization and violence since the time of Spanish colonialism. In a society where corruption, discrimination in public health system, police violence and abusive judicial practices against these groups in particular are common, the situation became fatal when Mexico's neoliberal policies initiated in the 1980's. The facilitation of land privatization meant increased land dispossession and forced displacement of small-scale farmers.

**ON THE 1ST OF** January 1994, the day when the North American Free Trade Agreement was implemented, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, an armed group of Mayan peasants, rebelled against the government by occupying four towns. A list of demands regarding justice, peace and liberty for the indigenous people was declared, which were negotiated in peace talks with the government in 1996 but remained unfulfilled. After years of calling for a change, the Zapatistas stopped waiting for the Mexican government and started building their own in 2003. Autonomous municipalities were formed around five political centers, called caracoles (transla-







tion: shells). Every caracol has a Junta de Buen Gobierno ('Council of Good Government') as well as autonomous schools and health clinics, admitting anyone for free. The caracol of Morelia is in charge of seven autonomous municipalities, most of them in areas where the indigenous language Tzeltal dominates, the second most common indigenous language in Chiapas. Others speak Tsotsil or Tojolabal, all usually assigned to the category 'Maya'.

**ENTERING THE SMALL** building of the autonomous government, the Otherness of the Zapatista political system is quickly felt. While most governments sit in large congress buildings, both geographically and socio-economically remote from the people they supposedly represent, this one consists of women and men, many of them very young, who are out carrying bags of corn yields one minute, making decisions in the assembly the next. The political structure is built on rotation between community members, who are elected by their community every third year, sometimes at the age of 16. The council is divided into several teams, staying at the caracol for one week at a time. If the communities are unhappy with any of the council members, he or she can be replaced and re-election is normally not permitted.

**THE GOVERNMENT COUNCIL** is one of the spaces where the importance of gender equality in the autonomy project becomes evident. In fundamental ways, the Zapatistas break with the common narrative of development, where women of the Global South are to be empowered by NGO's of the global North. Starting from the declaration of the Women's Revolutionary Law claiming equal rights between men and women in 1994, the rebellion of indigenous women against patriarchy has played an essential part in the struggle. Apart from women's active and obvious roles in government councils and other charges, there is a clear difference between autonomous communities and government controlled areas to be seen on household level. Gender dynamics in the villages slowly but steadily change as women are elected chairpersons and the men increasingly have to take care of the home.

**SCHOLARS AND ACTIVISTS** have for years been trying to understand the "Zapatismo" and there is a lively discussion on how their autonomy should be conceptualized. Spending this Christmas

**Left:** "Work of ants" shows how cooperation and collective efforts by many small forces results in large achievements.

**Right:** The importance of education and health is central to Zapatista autonomy, here colorfully expressed on the building of the Council of Good Government.

## “THE WORK OF A ZAPATISTA CARACOL HIGHLIGHTS THE ABSURDITY OF THE WESTERN DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM

and New Years in this autonomy gives an insight into the everyday effort that underlies this project. Making tortillas with the Zapatista women, talking to education promoters, the members of the good government, learning Tseltal songs with the elder's council, there is one thing that particularly lingers in my mind after the last cup of coffee has been finished by the logfire - the importance of collective work. While other communities around Chiapas are experiencing large divisions and conflicts around religion, political affiliation, paramilitary terrorism, drug- and alcohol related violence, cooperation and organized work is crucial for the Zapatista system to continue.

**OPPOSED TO ANY** utopian romanticization of this other Mexico, building an autonomous society is difficult. Contributing with your share to the organizations work sometimes means leaving your family and work for a week. But it also means having a social environment where your needs are fulfilled in a dignified way, where you can afford to be absent from work in la milpa, the cornfield, when you are sick, and where you do not need to depend on a system that discriminates you.

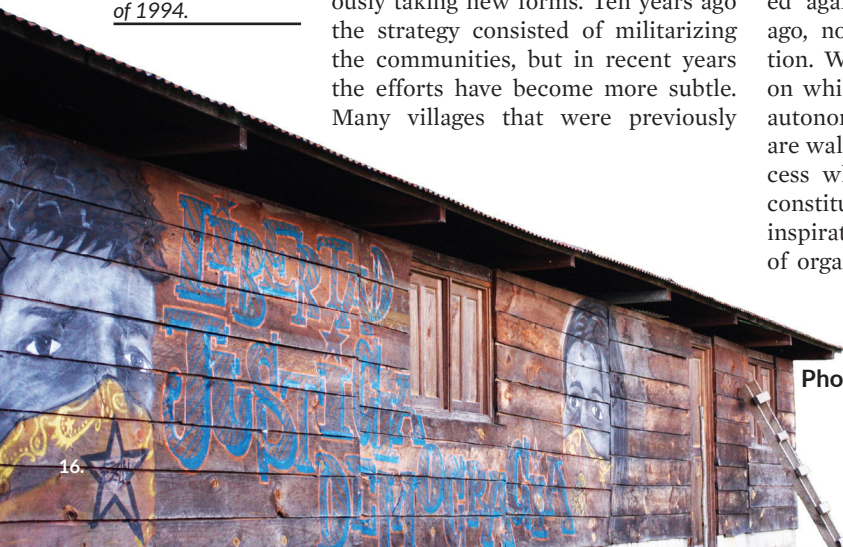
**MAINTAINING THIS ORGANIZATION** outside of the official system is not easy. The Mexican government's strategy to control the Zapatistas seems to be continuously taking new forms. Ten years ago the strategy consisted of militarizing the communities, but in recent years the efforts have become more subtle. Many villages that were previously

Zapatista supportive, have been divided since the government started handing out packages in exchange for loyalty and absence from organizing, a counter-insurgency currently taking the form of wide screen televisions. Nonetheless, despite the official change in policy, paramilitary organizations have been constantly present, attacking anti-government mobilization violently.

**SEEING THE WORK** of a Zapatista caracol highlights the absurdity of the Western development paradigm. The rural, the indigenous, the communal, usually considered backward and traditional in the language of modernization and development, is in fact an arena where one of the most concrete and progressive anti-capitalist alternatives has been constructed. After ten days of experiencing the Zapatista autonomy up-close, it is clear that it is not a utopia, or even an end in itself, but an experimental process, departing from the priorities of the community and based on practice. It can be seen in the hands that start making tortillas at 5 in the morning, tirelessly nourishing the collective work on a daily basis. It is in the organically and commonly grown beans for breakfast and the pozol, the corn porridge, at noon.

**JUST LIKE NOBODY** knew that this 'other' society would exist by the time a group of indigenous peasants revolted against the government 22 years ago, nobody knows its final destination. What is certain is that the path on which the women and men in the autonomous communities of Chiapas are walking is a learning-by-doing process which no one has done before, constituting an important and unique inspiration for what alternative forms of organizing society can look like. ●

*Liberty, Justice and Democracy - three of the main objectives of the zapatistas declared in the uprising of 1994.*



Photos: Lovisa Prage





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*Photo: CMES, Finngatan 16, Lund*



# SPEAKING about REFUGEES:

## The Power of Language

Refugees, migrants, asylum-seekers—there are many terms for people who are forcefully migrating. But their exact meanings differ and they matter. Looking at respective terms in other languages reveals that nuances in their connotations are highly political and their usage often need to be reconsidered and criticised.

**T**he *Economist*'s cover page in February 2016 headlines "How to manage the migrant crisis". Sounds like a nice hands-on perspective; only the vast majority of the arriving people to Europe in 2015 and 2016 can technically be considered *refugees*, not *migrants* – a vital difference, both in legal and moral terms.

**DIPLOMACY EXTENDS TO** our daily lives when it comes to language, especially when using terms for a certain group of people. Labelling members of society in a specific way has implications. During the ongoing "asylum debate", a whole bunch of words potentially depicting the same group of people pops up. Let's shed light into this word jungle.

**INTERNATIONAL LAW OFFERS** official legal definitions for forced migration. According to the UNHCR definitions an "*asylum-seeker* is someone who says he or she is a refugee, but whose claim has not yet been definitively evaluated." In the next step, an asylum-seeker is granted refugee status if he or she is "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality" This legal definition is provided for by the Geneva Refugee Convention from 1951 with the 1967 Protocol, signed by 146 countries. Furthermore, respective national asylum legislations define criteria

for giving shelter.

**APART FROM THAT,** the term migrant describes any other kind of migration movement, mostly for more voluntary reasons, such as the wish to improve future prospects. Consequently, this word equally applies to international students in Lund, the retiring Swedish couple in Spain, but also to the farmer from sub-Saharan Africa who cannot grow enough due to droughts. The only difference being that the latter does not have any legal possibility to move to Europe – a circumstance which resulted in the terms *economic*

**“MOST PEOPLE  
ARRIVING TO  
EUROPE CANNOT BE  
CONSIDERED  
MIGRANTS**

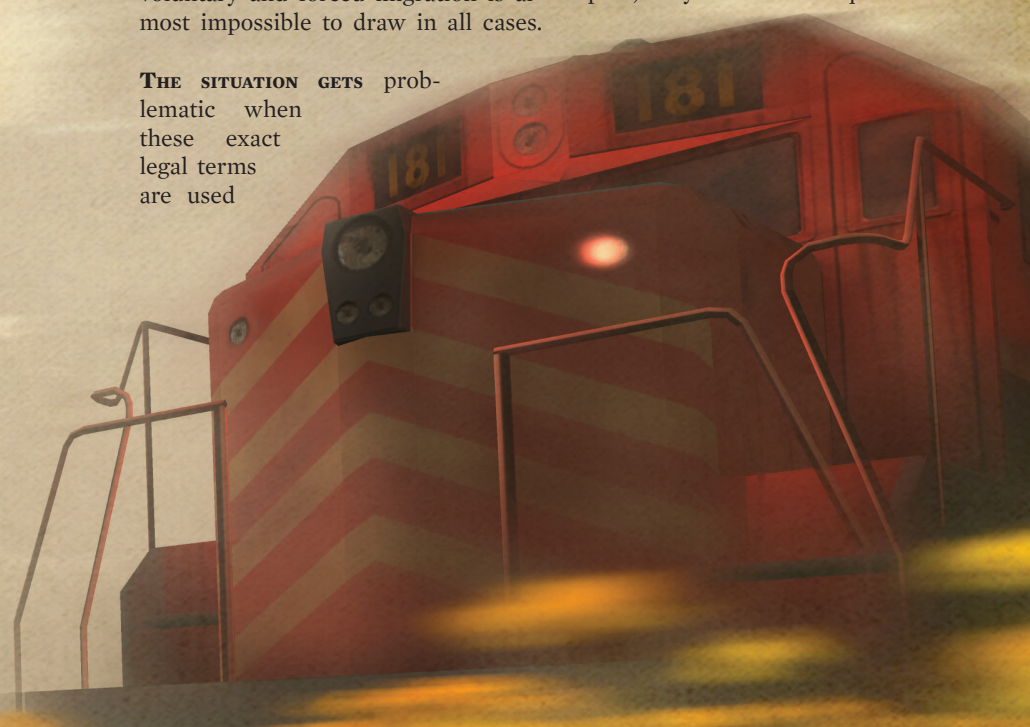


Inspiration for the image was drawn from the song 'Running' by IAMX (2009)  
Image: Sabbian Paine

migrant, or *Wirtschaftsflüchtling* (economic refugee) in German, as applying for asylum is the only passage-way into Europe. The fine line between voluntary and forced migration is almost impossible to draw in all cases.

**THE SITUATION GETS** problematic when these exact legal terms are used

HCR compared the media reporting on the “refugee crisis” in five European countries. The researchers noticed a difference in the used terminology: in Spain, Italy and Britain equivalents of



## “REFUGEE EMPHASIZES THE GOAL AND REASON FOR MIGRATION: THE REFUGE

in varying contexts and meanings in everyday language and the media. Not only is the exact labelling of every person impossible and the terms are used inaccurately, but also are there more words in use with certain biased meanings. A recent study conducted for UN-

migrant dominated, while Germany and Sweden mostly speak of refugees and asylum seekers – a difference which influences the whole discourse and ultimately the arriving people's treatment.

**THE EXAMPLE OF GERMAN** portrays the word jungle with terms of different political implications in that context very well. The term *Flüchtling* (refugee) is most commonly used in the present discourse. In the more leftist, language critical milieu, however, it faces criticism. Firstly, *Geflüchtete/r* (a fled) as an alternative slowly makes its way into the mainstream. This participle used as a noun not only gets rid of the ending -ling, which is considered pejorative and diminutive as in many similar words, but also less labels the person entirely but rather considers



the flight one episode in the human's life. Secondly, borrowing the English term refugee gets more and more popular, a word which emphasizes the goal and reason of the migration, namely the refuge, whereas all German words conceptualize the flight movement itself.

**REVEALING A RATHER** opposite political milieu, the term *Asylant* still yields 32.000 Google hits only last year – a bureaucratic term from the early 1970s, which established itself as a clearly scornful and derogatory alternative for asylum-seeker. It still made its way into the common discourse (1980 into the standard dictionary with a neutral meaning), with the implied contempt obviously growing pale.

**LOOKING INTO OTHER** languages reveals more nuanced terminology for forced migration. In Sweden the terms *nyanlända* (newly arrived) alongside *flykting* (refugee) give the discussion a rather positive tone. The Finnish words *turvapaikanhakija* (lit. safe-place-seeker, asylum-seeker) and *maahanmuuttaja* (lit. into-the-land-mover, immigrant) describe the circumstances very literally. The list can even be continued when going through the history of forced migration. Germans arriving from the former settlement areas in Eastern Europe after World War II were called refugees and *expellees* in West Germany, while being *resettlers* and *new citizens* in the GDR – two clearly different reminiscences of the reasons of migration.

Image: [\\_kcuflickr](#)





# “LOOKING INTO OTHER LANGUAGES REVEALS MORE NUANCED TERMINOLOGY FOR FORCED MIGRATION

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**ALL THE EXAMPLES** above demonstrate the variety of political implications and connotations vocabulary can have. Using a certain term often says more about the speaker than about the described person.

**LINGUISTICS AND PSYCHOLOGY** have shown that language and thinking intersect. The structure of our language, the way it divides our experiences into concepts, determines the lines along which we structure the world around us. One of the most outstanding theoretical approaches to this, named after its inventors, is called the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativity. It claims that a given language's structure influences if not determines our worldviews and cognition - a constructionist and relativist approach to the role of language in society.

**OF COURSE, ALL** our social actions are based on our thinking. Hence, labelling a group of people, stigmatising them with a certain concept, gives ground to certain attitudes and actions towards them. Each specific term has a specific detailed meaning with connotations. Language and discourse are capable of forming our experiences and feelings. Thus, vocabulary is political. Recently, Al Jazeera editor Barry Malone put the relation of language and thinking

in the discussion about forced migration as potentially dehumanising into these words: “It is not hundreds of people who drown when a boat goes down in the Mediterranean, nor even hundreds of refugees. It is hundreds of migrants. It is not a person – like you, filled with thoughts and history and hopes – who is on the tracks delaying a train. It is a migrant. A nuisance.”

**ALL THE EXAMPLES** show that our languages' expressions have semantic careers shaped by the discourse they are used in. Words developed in certain environments with certain meanings and connotations – which tend to be forgotten. Critical initiatives to examine and criticise patterns in vocabulary need to be taken seriously.

**So, THE ECONOMIST** should maybe reconsider if headlining “the migrant crisis” adequately covers what they are reporting about. Labelling refugees as migrants deprives them of the basic human right of receiving shelter. Language, thinking, feeling and acting go hand in hand – a consequence worth considering when the labelling of groups and their humane treatment are at stake. ●

**By:** Philipp Seufferling



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DIPLOMACY HAS  
TRADITIONALLY BEEN  
TRACK 1 IN NATURE,  
TAKING PLACE ON THE  
INTERNATIONAL STAGE  
OF AFFAIRS. OUR  
ARTICLES PROVIDE YOU  
WITH AN OVERVIEW.



*DIPLOMACY:  
COMMUNICATING  
FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS*

TRANSPORTATION P. 10

# SAMTAL MED EN DIPLOMAT

Klockan är 8.30 en frostig februarimorgon. Min mentor, Catherine von Heidenstam, meddelar smått bedrövat att hon dessvärre inte kan komma ihåg sitt lösenord till Skype. Varav vår intervju tas över telefon medan jag frenetiskt antecknar ner en minst sagt imponerande karriär.

**C**atherine och jag blev ihop matchade genom UPE:s mentorskapsprogram och detta är första gången vi talas vid. I syftet att få en personlig inblick i vad arbetet som diplomat innebär börjar jag med att fråga Catherine kring hennes yrkesval och livserfarenheter.

**DET HELA BÖRJADE** under 70-talet där världen spänt följde utvecklingen i Vietnam. "Det var en tid när utrikesfrågor var intressant och levande, svarar Catherine när jag frågar hur det kom sig att hon valde att bli till diplomat och fortsätter, jag hade läst juridik och det stod mellan advokatyrket eller internationella rättsfrågor. Då fanns det ingen un-

dervisning i mänskliga rättigheter men under min tid i Bryssel fick jag studera Europarätt samt praktisera vid Europeiska Gemenskapen."

**"PÅ MIN TID** fanns det något som hette Aspirantprogrammet, där man tillsammans med fjorton andra fick utbildas under två år på UD. Jag var av dessa femton antagna ensam tjej och UD var en märklig miljö att komma till men likaså spännande. Jag fick chansen att praktisera med OECD i Paris och sedan på Dagens Nyheter i Stockholm, då jag var intresserad av att bli journalist förstår du, likaså var det nyttigt för en diplomat att förstå sig på pressfrågor."

**CATHERINE BLEV EFTER** programmet anställd av UD 1971 och har sedan dess varit verksam diplomat. Hennes första positionering blev i 1983 i Hanoi, Vietnam, som tio år efter kriget beskrevs av henne som fattigt och restriktivt. "Man var tvungen att få tillstånd för att lämna staden. Men i landet fanns en kämparanda och Sverige betraktades som vänner och man hade gott utvecklingsarbete. Sida tog initiativ för fiskeskola och sjukhus samarbete med politiska- och handelsfrågor, samtidigt som man bjöd in Vietnameser för utbildning i Sverige."

**UNDER SINA ÅR** har Catherine varit verksam i Paris, New York, Genève, Helsingfors, Tunis, Prag och mellan turerna hemmavid i Stockholm. Jag frågar hur



det är att flytta runt så pass mycket, varav hon svarar; "Man blir van vid att anpassa sig och med nyfikenhet kommer man långt. Mest spännande var det helt klart att arbeta i New York och Prag. De främsta egenskaperna man ska ha är nyfikenhet och en öppenhet att vilja lära sig, det är viktigast att visa sig som diplomat."

**JAG GÅR IN** på genus och Catherine berättar att det främst är i undantagsfall hon behandlats annorlunda på grund av sitt kön. "Det var i Tunis, där man efter middagen hade könsuppdelade rum. Mina manliga kollegor gick till sitt och deras fruar till ett annat. Jag följde med mina kollegor, då man diskuterade arbete. Detta var speciellt i Tunis, vid FN i New York eller Prag var det ingen skillnad. I Wien kunde det ibland vara speciellt att vara kvinnlig diplomat, för det var inte vanligt. Det var gånger man fick klargöra att man inte var sekreterare på ambassaden utan diplomat, medger Catherine, men jag stod väl ut på andra sätt, såsom att jag cyklade till ambassaden och sådant, säger hon och skrattar."

**JAG GÅR ÖVER** till hennes arbete och frågar vilka frågor hon anser viktigast i internationella sammanhang, vilka hon direkt svarar vara mänskliga rättigheter och demokrati, "Frågorna är alltid mer eller mindre relevanta beroende på vart man är. Jag blev utnämnd som ambassadör för mänskliga rättigheter, vilket var både spännande och frustrerande. Mänskliga rättigheter är mycket mer framträdande idag än var de var på 80-talet. Under hela denna period har man arbetat mycket för att få fram och utarbeta många konventioner som vi har idag. Rollen innebar att man ledde delegationer som förhandlade om nya resolutioner och konventioner. Åter igen är det platsbundet, när jag åkte med Anna Lindh till Turkiet lyfte vi ett fall där en person blev satt i fängelse för att

ha främjat kvinnofrågor. Man arbetar utifrån landet och inte på gräsrotsnivå."

**VIDARE BERÄTTAR CATHERINE** om svårigheten i hur man som västerländsk diplomat skall förhålla sig till kritiken som mänskliga rättigheter får. Nämligen om att vara ett nytt sätt för västvärlden att implementera egen moral och värderingar i resterande världsdelar. "Man skall inte använda mänskliga rättigheter som västvärldens leksak. Det handlar om att mötas och att visa öppenhet. Bara för det skall man inte ge efter grundläggande värderingar, betonar hon."

## “MAN SKALL INTE ANVÄNDA MÄNSKLIGA RÄTTIGHETER SOM VÄSTVÄRLDENS LEKSAK

**INTERVJUN BÖRJAR LIDA** mot sitt slut och jag passar på att fråga Catherine kring hennes syn på diplomatin och dess förändring samt hennes egna tankar kring diplomatlivet; "Den tekniska utvecklingen har förändrat diplomatin otroligt, svarar hon och fortsätter, men oavsett denna utveckling är det mest givande med diplomatyrket att få arbeta med frågor som man intresserar sig bäst med. Samt att få uppleva så många länder och människor." ●

**Av:** Sandra Jakobsson



## TRADE DIPLOMACY WITH IRAN

As the West congratulates itself on the success of the Iranian nuclear deal, Iran focuses on economic diplomacy as a pathway to becoming an influential international player.



**R**elations between Iran and the West have not been the most cooperative since the re-installment of the Shah in 1950s, the Islamic revolution in 1979, and recent Iranian advances in nuclear development. However, the diplomatic success of 2015 in reducing Iran's nuclear capabilities demonstrates the success of diplomacy in a region where diplomacy seems a quixotic mirage. This January saw the lifting of a decade long economic sanction which prevented both Iran and the West from the prosperity of trade. However miraculous the achievement in Geneva last September may have been, future relations between the two sides remain contingent on the economic relations that can be forged in the aftermath.

**ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY** is more than merely promoting trade between countries and regions in a broad sense; it is promoting trade that would lead to greater involvement of all parties. For instance investing in long-term infrastructure projects that requires sharing resources and supports wider commercial development,

freeing up visa applications and processes, as well as engaging with commerce through cultural considerations.

**WITHIN ITS REGION**, no other population possesses the greatest potential for prosperity and development as the people of Iran. The country has 80 million inhabitants that are endowed with a well-educated middle class, a stable government and basic law and order. But economic sanctions as well as fluctuating oil prices have offered little respite in terms of prosperity for the Iranian people, with joblessness and inflation a concern for many Iranian households.

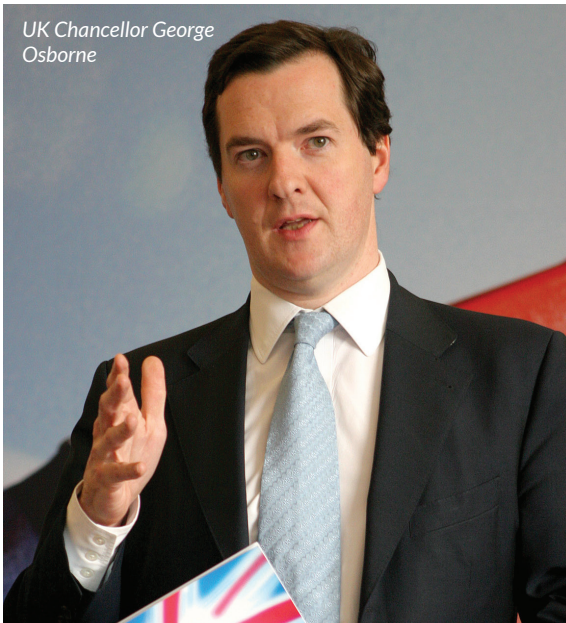
**THE LIFTING OF** sanctions in January will release an initial \$70 Billion of a total \$120 Billion to be lifted in accordance to complying with terms agreed in the Iran nuclear deal. With such a vast sum to hand, Iran is keen to ensure that it is able to extract all it can from business deals in order to promote cordial relations, as well as boosting the standard of living of its people.

**PRESIDENT ROUHANI'S TRIP** to Italy and France in January, the first such European trip by an Iranian President in 17 years, announced a whole host of new contracts and arrangements. Contracting France's rail company, Alstom, for developing rail connections in Iran, and construction companies for expanding Tehran's international airport. As well as spending \$18 billion on Italian oil and construction companies.

**PERHAPS A SIGN** of Iranian optimism for cordial relations is the purchase of 118 of France's Airbus jumbo-jets for \$17 Billion to replace its fleet of 30-year-old jets operated by many Iranian air operators. Currently the fleet is uncertified from flying in European Airspace due to safety fears as such, lack of point-to-point European destinations has reduced the capacity for travel – both business and pleasure.

*Photo: altogetherfool/flickr*

UK Chancellor George Osborne



**THESE PRELIMINARY DEALS** highlight revitalised trade between it and the West, with the UK Chancellor George Osborne mulling a possible trade visit before the end of the year. As well as Germany seeking to establish deeper ties through such visit, for instance the Vice Chancellor and former Chancellor Schröder making separate visits alongside representatives of Germany's leading business.

**HOWEVER REVITALISING THESE** deals may seem, diplomatic protocol between each side remain in its infancy. The French and Italian visits by Rouhani were subject to diplomatic headaches; France refused to serve a halal and non-alcoholic state dinner – cancelling it. And Italy covering the century's old, but ubiquitous nude statues that clutter the Campidoglio Museum in Rome, much to the outrage of proud Italians. The UK's inertia to issue visas for the Iranian delegation ahead of the London Oil Summit resulting in cancelling it for the fourth time. As for the Iranians, European distaste at its human rights record continues to mar each diplomatic effort.

**FOR THE EUROPEAN** business community, Iranian investment is welcomed, albeit with some caution. European banks remain sceptical to trade in Iran partly due to fluctuating oil prices coupled with wholesale slump in demands. As well as many European Banks with a US presence wary of Iran due to American non-nuclear sanctions. As the US congress still debates and amends the Nuclear Deal alongside the appropriate sanctions, Europe was able to capitalise on this delay by lifting sanctions in rapid succession, facilitating Iranian investment and trade before the US could compete.

**FOR PRESIDENT ROUHANI** and moderates alike, the lifting of the sanctions provides the opportunity to modernise Iranian politics. February marks the crucial legislative elections, in which

Iranians will elect deputies for the house of experts; which in turn elects the supreme leader. The current supreme leader Ali Khamenei, has acknowledged that such an election might take place in the forthcoming 8 year term in the likelihood of his death.

**AS IRAN ENTERS** new diplomatic relations with the West, it reminds itself of the assertiveness needed in protecting its status as well as promoting the necessary economic development its people so desperately need. And so, unlike its famous export of Persian rugs, Iran remains one economy which the West will continue to tread light upon. ●

By: Thomas M. Rogerson



Germany's former Chancellor Gerhard Schröder Photo: Blaues Sofa



# Thailand's Foreign Policy Identity and Role Projection

*The Bangkok skyline at sunset. Being one of the largest cities in Asia, it is also transforming into a commercial hub with a bright future.*

*Image:*  
d26b73/flickr

**The role of idea, identity and self-perception play a key determining factor in foreign policy preferences and this is apparently clear in the case of Thailand's foreign policy.**

**I**narguably, most foreign policy makers have held on to an orthodox view of realist assumptions on power calculation logic where the self-interested state maximizes material power and relative gains, whether it be military or economic prowess for survival in an anarchical world. Bamboo diplomacy categorizes the essential nature of Thailand's foreign policy which entails a logic that a medium-sized state, Thailand, seeks to accommodate and balance major powers' influence. This assumption however tells us half a story of what happens in social realities where the role of idea, values, self-perception and identity plays an indispensable role which are imperative in shaping world views of the state, policy choices and

importantly determining foreign policy preferences. Thailand's active foreign policy in the last two decades, in fact, derives from these ideational factors.

**THE RISE** of a modern nation-state under the Westphalia system in 1648 was a momentous change not only in the Northern Hemisphere but also the Southern Hemisphere. For Asian states, like Siam, former name of Thailand, the key impetus at that time was, 'how' to remain relevant in the international system.

**THE THAI KING** and elites adjusted domestic structures and reformed institutions by 'westernizing' bureaucratic, educational systems and the military, in order to catch up with the West.



**THIS PERIOD SAW** Thailand's 'self' construction as a 'modern' nation-state. The term *siwilai* in English, 'civilized', is used to portray Thailand's self-perception. This was supplemented with a colonial past in which Thailand managed to escape from Western colonialism. This allowed for Thai elites to perceive that the Siamese nation-state was superior and more civilized in comparison with her 'other' neighbours who were under Western control. In this sense, Thailand's self-construction also ties up with a nationalist sentiment. This nationalist sentiment has also been captured in three official institutions: Nation, Religion (Buddhism) and Monarchy.

**LASTLY, THE GEOPOLITICAL** vision provided by Thailand's engagement with Western powers, especially in Western demarcation of Thailand's territorial boundaries, and its strategic location during the Cold War has helped shape national identity and regional relations.

**THAILAND PROJECTS HER** regional aspirations at the sub-regional level in the mainland Southeast Asia through various sub-regional frameworks. These frameworks include the launch of the Quadrangle Economic Co-operation (QEC), which is currently subsumed under the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS), inclusive of CLMV countries and China's two Southern provinces. Thailand is also part of Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Co-operation (ACMECS) and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) which brings mainland Southeast Asia countries to meet with South Asian neighbours.

**THAILAND ALSO PLAYS** a larger role at the regional level as being a founding member of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) which has currently transformed to become ASEAN Community. Moreover, Thailand per-

ceives herself as a 'coordinator' thus projecting her international profile with the initiative to establish a cooperative framework known as Asia Development Cooperation (ACD) which aims to include likeminded countries from within Asia. Currently, under the buzzword of sustainable development, Thailand projects her role under her self-conception as a 'bridge-builder' under the chairmanship of the Group of 77 (G-77), the largest group of developing countries in the United Nation system. This global level also sees Thailand attempting to enhance this role in the bid for a non-permanent seat in the United Nation Security Council for the term 2017-2018.

## “DEVELOPMENT DIPLOMACY IS THE MAIN DIPLOMATIC TOOL THAILAND HAS BEEN UTILIZING

**DEVELOPMENT DIPLOMACY** is the main diplomatic tool Thailand has been utilizing to project her role since the end of the Cold War. Thailand's aspiration, to being a regional leader at the sub-regional level in the mainland Southeast Asia is built upon a development paradigm under the so called South-South Cooperation, emphasizing her constructive role as a development partner with the aim to reduce development gaps between countries.

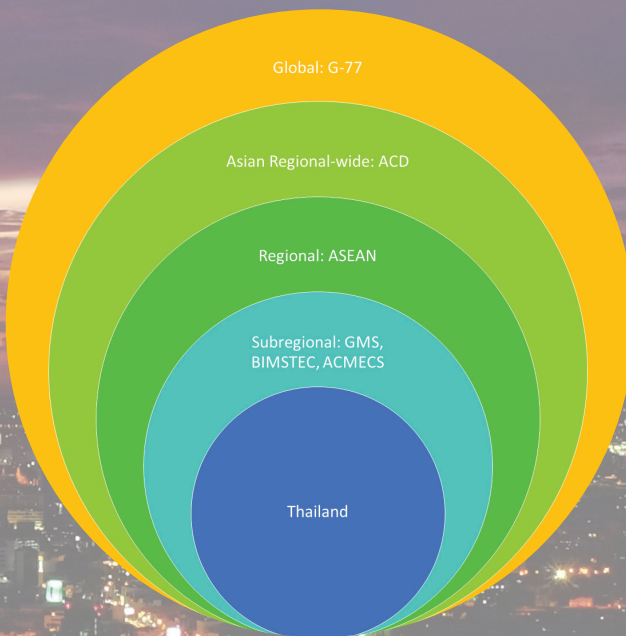
**BASED ON THE** claim that Thailand is equipped with an understanding of political, economic and socio-cultural



contexts of her neighbours and her perception of being economically advanced in comparison among other neighbours, Thailand employs development diplomacy to provide technical and financial assistance to neighbouring countries including 'hard' infrastructure development projects such as road, bridge and rail link and 'soft' infrastructure including human development, health care and agricultural skills. What makes Thailand eager to perform such regional leadership role in the sub-regional frameworks rests on the critical transformation of Thailand from a recipient country to an emerging donor.

MECS and BIMSTEC but to the region wide framework of Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) where Thailand projects her role as the coordinator.

**THE SECOND KEY** idea that Thailand has been hard selling is that of the 'sufficiency economy' under His Majesty the King and his Royal Patronage. This idea not only disseminates regionally through development assistance but also globally under the current chairmanship of G77. In this global context, Thailand projects her role as being a 'bridge-builder', not only among countries in the South but also in North-South Cooperation.



Thailand's involvement in international organizations visualized in a Stacked Venn-diagram.  
Author's own image.

**SIGNIFICANTLY, LOOKING AT** Thailand's foreign policy discourse, one can find two core ideas that Thailand has been hard selling. First is the concept of 'connectivity'. This idea is not only based on economic rationale, but also on her identity as the geopolitical center in the mainland Southeast Asia where she perceives herself as the 'hub' of the Asian connectivity. This core idea has been sold hard not only to the sub-regional frameworks of GMS, AC-

**IN THIS RESPECT,** Thailand employs the idea of sufficiency economy and proposes to share it as an 'alternative' development approach proclaiming it is in line with the sustainable development goals. Owing to the three pillars of moderation, reasonableness and self-immunity, Thailand claims to have survived after the Asian Financial Crisis, also having succeeded as a resilient country amidst the recent global economic crisis.

**CHALLENGES LIE AHEAD** for Thailand's self-image and role projection. Domestic politics and turmoil during the last decade shadows Thailand's image internationally. This image has been hit hard by recurrent change in governments, and subsequent policy incoherence and inconsistency in her role projection at various levels. This has also been the core concern of Thailand's foreign policy at the moment. Thai ambassadors and diplomats have been working hard to reassure the international community that Thailand is moving ahead firmly and has capacity to perform a constructive role in all levels of cooperation. ●

By: Varintorn Thanvichien

## INTERVIEW

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SIR GRAHAM WATSON



*Photo: Sir Graham Watson*

# THE CLIMATE PARLIAMENT

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Sir Graham Watson is currently Gibraltar's Representative to the European Union and is also a member of the European Economic and Social Committee. The multi-lingual M.E.P held a seat representing south west of England and Gibraltar from 1994 to 2014. As of today, besides politics, a series of private consultancies balance his time. Although, more specifically, Utrikesperspektiv, Lund talks with Sir Graham, the co-founder of The Climate Parliament.

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By :Saahil Waslekar

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### **What is Climate Parliament and how was it formed?**

It is the brainchild of Nicholas Dunlop, a New Zealander. He travelled a lot as his father was a diplomat. He decided very early on that he was interested in peace issues. He coordinated the launch of the Six Nation Peace Initiative which involved Indira Gandhi and various other leaders. Later he set up his own environmental NGO called Earth Action.

When I became a member of the European Parliament in 1994, I used to get many bits of paper

He said that he had managed to get some funding for research from USA, Sweden and other countries. The time was 1996-97. We decided to meet up and had a detailed conversation. At the end of which we decided to set up what we called the e-parliament. At that time people were beginning to use electronic communication. We figured if at that point in time we could actually have a real time online discussion, among the legislators of the world, on different global issues, it would be interesting. We got together with a couple of other parliamentarians and we set this up. The issues back

biggest contributor to climate change is fossil fuels, so if we can start campaigning against fossil fuels it would make most sense. At the moment my main role, as Honorary Chairman of the Climate Parliament, is fund-raising. We organise hearings all over the world and have people employed in about 15 countries: China, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Morocco, Jordan, Senegal, Peru, Chile, Bolivia, Argentina and others.

We work cross party through carrying out and executing programmes. Most of our programmes are about raising

## **“ POLITICS IS NOT WHAT PEOPLE DO OR WHAT HAPPENS BUT HOW THEY JUSTIFY THEIR REACTIONS**

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on my desk. For a while I had been receiving post from an organisation called Earth Action. They sent me briefings which stood out because they were very concise and well presented. One day, I rang the guy who was sending it and told him that if ever he was in Brussels I would have an interest in meeting with him. Dunlop said that he would be most glad to meet although at that moment was thinking of starting a new project. The idea was for a global on-line parliament. I found that interesting, since his analysis of the need for a global parliamentary forum was very close to my own ideas.

then were about Millennium Development Goals, fighting HIV, poverty and others. After 4-5 years, as the network kept growing, we noticed that people were really interested in climate. While we were never successful in finding funding for many of the other issues, we were successful in finding funding for climate. So we called it the Climate Parliament and concentrated on climate issues.

More recently, we have narrowed down to one pivotal function, which is the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy. Our view is that the

awareness among elected officials and then supporting those elected officials to pursue climate issues within their parliament. It is not a game changer but is making useful contribution.

### **What is the role of Climate Parliament in helping Europe achieve its goal of 27% renewable energy by 2050?**

We do not play as much of a role in Europe as we should. Taking one step backward one should know why we work with legislators. Government leaders,

however much determination they have, will need parliamentary backing for their policies. In the end, parliaments decide budgets and policies and that is the reason why we work with legislators.

In Europe most of our activity has been in the European Parliament rather than national parliaments. The reason for this is that energy policy and climate policy is determined more at European level than at national level. It is an area which is disputed and over the last three years member states have gone back to having their own energy policy rather than agreeing on a common energy policy. This is the big fight going on at the moment between member state capitals and Brussels, as to who is in charge of energy and

climate policy. But until three years ago all of the developments were at European level.

The other reason we do not focus very much on national parliaments in Europe is because there is already a high level of awareness of climate. The number of people to be helped as a result of our work is not likely to grow very much. Whereas when working with legislators in Tunisia or Morocco, where there are much lower levels of awareness, we can make a lot of progress very quickly.

**While working with legislators, is it more to do with awareness or building an integrated environmental policy?**

It is to do with getting things done and yes, it has got to be in-

tegrated. Our thesis is that we need a Global Energy Internet, where we are able to produce renewable energy in places where it is most efficient, with solar in the deserts of the world and wind energy near the poles. If we laid high voltage direct current (HVDC) electricity cables around the world we could transport energy from the places where the sun is shining to places where the sun is not shining because it is night. At the moment the only advantage fossil fuels have is the distribution system. If there is a good distribution system for electricity one does not need fossil fuels. These days it is relatively inexpensive to lay a cable, also we have the infrastructure. The cable industry also creates a lot of jobs, thus it is advantageous. On a macro scale, demand and supply needs to be



*Photo: Justin Elliott*



balanced and through smart grid technology, input stations and electricity storage facilities it can become a current day reality.

**Finally, keeping above challenges in mind, with whom do legislators hold hands in order to gain support for their views and ideas?**

There are three things that can fundamentally change the process of governance. In Western Europe, one of them is the legitimate role of civil society. The second is the rapid development of communication technology and rising levels of education and I think the third is the progress being made in transparency in governance. Sweden is a very good example. These three developments have made it much easier for people to control

government. Although the big problem for Europe is that people are still thinking in national silos, whereas the challenges we are facing are supra-national.

In my view, what is most interesting about politics is not what people do or what happens but how they justify their reactions. In other words, what arguments they use to support those. You can always look at any society, at any stage in human development and you can see the underlying economic, sociological drivers of change. Then you look at how the people who want to induce this change, argue in favour, it is what messages they use, how they argue why something is necessary. That gets to the heart of human identity. ●



# THE LAST COLONY OF AFRICA AND THE FAILURE OF DIPLOMACY

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**For 40 years the Sahrawi people have been stuck in a limbo, as the diplomatic process have stalled and perished due to the parties blindly seeking their own interests.**

**T**he colonial times being a period in history that most recognize as morally abhorrent, the tale of Western Sahara is one that you might be surprised to hear of in this day and age. The large region south east of Morocco and north of Mauritania was first made a colony of Spain in 1884, and, although it today is in the hands of a new master, it is still occupied.

**It was in 1975**, 15 years after the UN had adopted a resolution to grant independence to all colonized countries, that the neighboring Morocco started to show interest in the area, and, due to the turmoil in the dying days of the Franco-era, it ended up being relinquished to them. This happened even though international courts had dismissed the Moroccan claims as illegitimate. A Western Saharan independence movement, Front Polisario, had been created a few years before, and violent conflict ensued in the following years. Morocco built a literal sand wall filled with land-mines, stretching 2700 kilometers, to keep the resistance away. Most of the people that ended up outside the wall were forced to relocate to refugee

camps in south western Algeria, where, today, there still lives between 50.000 and 100.000 people, depending on who supplies the numbers. This is also where Polisario has set up a government-in-exile, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), that is still waiting to be allowed on their own turf.

**In 1991**, a UN backed peacekeeping mission led to a cease-fire, which was supposed to be followed by a referendum in which the Sahrawi people would vote on whether they wanted to form an independent state or become a permanent part of Morocco. This referendum was planned for 1992, but as of today the plan have still not been realized.

**Since 1991, then**, the struggle for in-

**“THE SAME  
NARRATIVE THAT  
IS FOUND ALL  
THROUGH THE  
HISTORY OF  
COLONIALISM**

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*Refugee camp in Tin-douf, Algeria, where a large part of the Sahrawi people live since the Moroccan occupation.*

dependence has gone on by way of diplomacy, but the process has yet to display any prominent results. Many rounds of negotiations between Polisario and the SADR and Morocco have gone by without any conclusions. It is easy to see why Morocco clings to the region, it being the same narrative found all through the history of colonialism; Western Sahara has among the world's richest phosphate reserves, and its fishing waters are very fertile.

**SINCE THE BORDER** is not fully definitive, and because so many have lived in the Algerian refugee camps for so long, the two sides have not been able to agree on who should be eligible to vote in the referendum. Neither side will accept a population that will make them lose. As nothing has happened in 25 years, despite the UN being there to broker the negotiations, one cannot call this anything but a failure of diplomacy.

**TURNING TO ANOTHER** story, in a different part of the world, a clue regarding the failure might be found. On January 15th this year, the Swedish government made the statement that they

will not recognize Western Sahara as a sovereign state. This choice can shine some light as to why the road to independence is such a slow walk.

**THE OFFICIAL REASON** given for the decision was that the situation in the country is not stable enough, and that the SADR does not have full control of its territory. However, this was quickly refuted by several Swedish experts on international law. It is also particularly strange considering the quite similar situation of Palestinian statehood, which the Swedish government chose to recognize in 2014. But what really gives this argument, and by extension the whole decision, its foul stench is the hypocrisy: not only is a majority of the parliament in support of recognition, but the Social Democrats, now in government, decided at their party congresses in both 2009 and 2013 that they would recognize SADR sovereignty, should they take office.

**WHERE, THEN, MIGHT** the truth of this diplomatic turn lie? The investigation



*The flag of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic.*

leading up to the decision has been made confidential, but the number of Moroccan delegations visiting Sweden last year gives a hint that a fair share of strong-arming has taken place. Sweden is seeking a spot as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, and for this it will need the vote of France. With the close knit relations between France and Morocco, and the fact that France supports the Moroccan occupation, this by extension means that Sweden is at Moroccan mercy for the council spot. In addition, the building of several IKEA stores in Morocco was recently shut down, and Morocco has repeatedly refused to accept the return of several hundred Moroccan orphans currently living in Stockholm. These reasons, however shallow they might seem, are the best guesses as to why the Swedish government failed to realize their promise.

**ALTHOUGH A SWEDISH** recognition by itself would not give Western Sahara its independence, it could, seeing that not one western country currently supports them, prove to be the tipping point. In-

ternational pressure on Morocco and the UN is essential if the Sahrawi people, whom for forty years have lived without a functioning political system and thus even basic civil rights, is to gain freedom from their occupiers. The lack of it is what constitutes the diplomatic failure, and what keeps the half million Sahrawis' in limbo. It is clear that on the hierarchical list of diplomatic priorities scarcely populated areas in Africa fall far behind, even if it is contrary to the democratic and moral ideals the western powers so highly praise. ●

**By: Tobias Adolfsson**



# A **SINKING** NATION

**With the continuing effect of global warming, the island nation of Kiribati is about to be engulfed by the rising sea. As a result, it is trying to prevent a situation, seen by some, as being inevitable.**

**H**ow does a country act and react when it is about to disappear from the face of the earth? One such nation is Kiribati, an island state of around 100,000 inhabitants, consisting of 33 small islands in the Pacific Ocean. Finding an answer to the question, especially through immediate action is of rising interest to Kiribati. According to President Anote Tong, known internationally for his concern and interest in finding climate solutions for the island says that it will most likely be swallowed by the sea, by the end of this century.

**AS A CONSEQUENCE**, the country has been given a significant role in international climate diplomacy and its government has spent the last decades trying to sway international debate in their favour. During climate talks in Paris, for instance, Kiribati and other small island nations pushed for maximum temperature not to cross 1.5 degrees, instead of the currently promised 2 degrees. Such a change according to President Tong is needed "if we are to be given a chance". Nonetheless, such a push resulted in a meeting with Obama to discuss more aggressive climate measures.

**BUT EVEN WITH** this strong influence, strangely enough, Tong remains pessimistic. In a recent interview with TIME magazine where he claimed that at this point reducing emissions "really does not matter" and even if

future climate talks succeed in reducing carbon emissions the country will still face enormous negative effects. In about five years it has been speculated that a portion of the island's inhabitants will be forced to migrate because of rising sea levels. The only partial solution to exist would consume enormous resources that the state cannot provide and even with a technical solution people will be forced to move.

**AT THE MOMENT**, the government is working on two options: first, they have bought 20 square kilometres of land in nearby Fiji as an emergency exit and second, Japanese engineers and representatives from the United Arab Emirates are being consulted in order to build artificial islands if needed. However, both these alternatives and the technical solution preventing further negative effects require the nation to access resources they don't have. With this background, the country's climate policy is slowly shifting from preventing global warming to giving poorer countries such as itself the resources to deal with the consequences of climate change. A sad indication lurking in the deep waters of the Pacific Ocean is that, for some, the fight against climate change might have already been decided. ●

**By:** Rickard A. Wählhammar

*Anote Tong, slightly dissatisfied, contemplating the prospects of his nation.*

*Photo: Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet*



*Photo: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade/flickr*

# From abundance

**Zambia is experiencing one of its worst droughts in a long time. A climate issue which not only sparked the start of enforced load shedding's, but also stirred an ongoing political chaos and an economical crisis.**

**I**t was the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January and the rain which was supposed to have fallen in October were still drying out Zambia and its neighboring countries in its absence. The temperature were pushed to an unusually high degree and made a heat sensitive Swede like myself really reconsider my choice of destination. According to statistics the country is now experiencing one of its worst droughts in a long time.

**IN A REPORT** recently published by the Swedish Embassy in Lusaka, it was shown how the drought had played a crucial role in the country's economic crisis. The lack of water had led to grave consequences for their main power station, a hydroelectric power dam on the Zambezi River. Last summer the country found it all but drained out of power. The river level had never been so low. The President enforced scheduled load shedding in order to save what was left to avoid consequences on the copper mines, the country's main export revenue. However, the country's economy has been suffering even without the energy crisis.

**HOWEVER, THE COUNTRY'S** economy is suffering even without the energy crisis. The international price of copper has fallen putting the country on the

brink of a debt crisis according to the IMF. This situation is leaving no one unaffected with increased food prices and high inflation. The media shows that no one is ready to take responsibility for the situation. The report mentions the action taken by President Lungu, who, in previous year proclaimed a national day of fasting and prayer in order to solve the situation, giving an outsider the vision of a populist leader who's lacking the necessary solutions.

**ZAMBIA IS A** landlocked country with a landmass almost double that of Sweden, bordered by ten countries. In 2010, it was estimated to be one of the fastest economically reforming countries in Africa by the World Bank. It is the home of great national parks and the world's largest waterfall, Victoria Falls

**TAKING ON THE** serious role of tourists, our group decided to take a swim in the Devil's Pool, located on top of the falls. This natural beauty is the country's main attraction, although astonishing, it is also an unavoidable proof of the ongoing drought and drainage shown in the Zambezi River. The river, being the fourth longest in Africa, is not only the





# to electrical power loss

country's main water resource but also the provider of hydroelectric power. A resource which until recently not only provided the Zambians with subsidized electricity but also made up an important proportion of the country's exports together with the copper mines. However, due to various factors, the previously taken for granted resource has now more or less dried out forcing the President to import energy from Turkey at a monthly cost of 18.2 million dollars.

**“A WEAK REGULATOR** sitting between two puppies drinking milk from the same saucer” were the words of the former Zambian interim President Guy Scott when he described the situation of the dam last year. The dam has for a long time supplied both Zambia and Zimbabwe and its usage is now strongly criticized for being both irresponsible and wasteful. During my visit, load shedding was scheduled for at least 2-3 hours per day, including the state line area being the home of the President and ministers. “No one is spared, not even myself,” President Edgar Lungu said “I know how it feels to come back home and find that there is no electricity, or to see children who cannot do their homework because there is no electricity”. The Kariba dam is estimated to need three years of normal rain to regain its natural level.

**THE REPORT STATES** that the Swedish Embassy has had an ongoing dialogue with the Zambian government concerning the problems on the electricity market. Sweden, together with the United States, has encouraged Zambia to transition to sustainable production, promoting the advantages of solar power due to the country's generous amount of sun hours (3000h/year). Anyhow,

the ambassador's remarks on the issue are that the government has to make a fast and united approach to solve this crisis before it is too late. If the crisis is left too late it would mean the need for the government to apply for a loan from the IMF which would have a harsh backlash for a country who has had a positive development for a long time.

**“A WEAK  
REGULATOR  
SITTING BETWEEN  
TWO PUPPIES  
DRINKING MILK  
FROM THE SAME  
SAUCER**

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**THE PLANNED BUDGET** for 2016 shows the government's decision to increase taxes by 20% (mainly VAT) and to withdraw finances in health and food security. However, the ambassador stresses the fact that the crisis might force the government to come together and for once transfer to a more sustainable solution, leading the country towards a more environmentally friendly direction. ●

**Photo and text:** Sandra Jakobsson

National Nostalgia and Universal Suffering

# Why We Need a Star-Trekian Approach

Discussions of world problems mainly revolve around the way things ought to be rather than the construction of practical roads that take us there. Political actors, for example, within the European Union, tend to walk along familiar routes, thereby half looking over their shoulder instead of collectively ahead.





*Star Trek's USS Enterprise (NCC-1701-D)*  
Image: Ezra S F7  
/flickr



**R**asmus Karlsson, associate professor at Umeå University's Department of Political Science, is unsurprisingly pessimistic about the future. He imagines three possible pathways in the context of climate change, which he explains by metaphorically likening human civilisation to an airplane and modernity (meaning industrialization, economic growth and technological advancement) to a runway. According to Karlsson, sustainability or the continuation of human civilization can only be achieved by taking off the metaphorical plane or coming to a full stop. If politicians and the general public do not commit to either trajectories, the end of the runway will be transgressed, leading to a probably catastrophic crash. The situation is further complicated by the lack of knowledge on the runway's length, which symbolizes environmental limits to modern progress. Besides that, some passengers are unaware or reject being in a plane altogether due to certain religious or other metaphysical beliefs that they might have. In contrast to a real world flight, this plane only takes off or slows down after unanimous approval and cooperation by everyone on board.

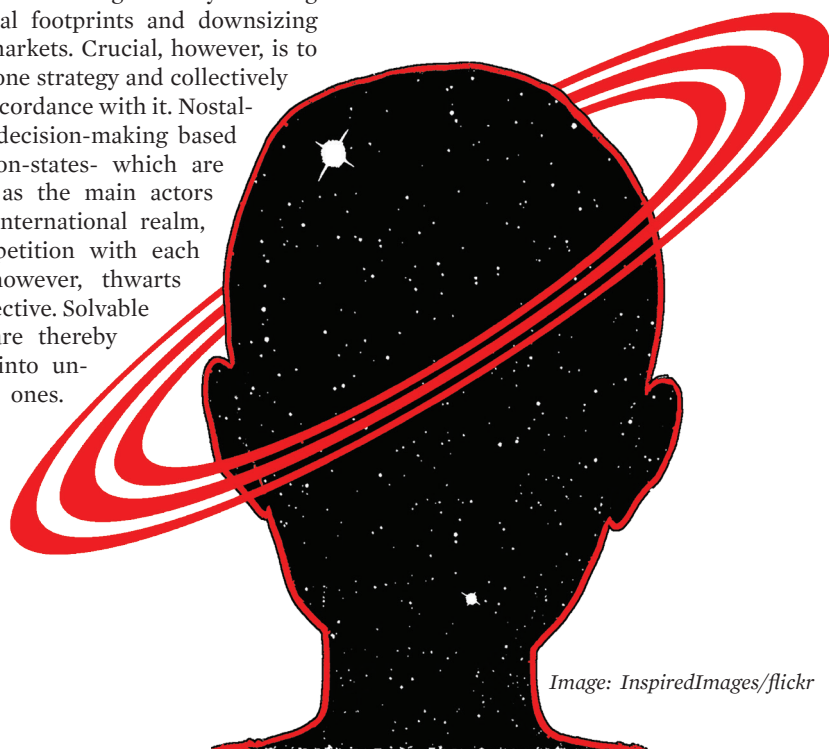
**A STAR-TREKIAN APPROACH** might therefore be necessary. While not hinting to start blazing starship engines (and leaving behind *Star Wars* fans who want to be saved by the Millennium Falcon), the point is to develop a federalist system similar to the United Federation of Planets (UFP). The UFP embodies *Star Trek* creator Gene Roddenberry's attempt to construct an idealized version of the United Nations. Guided by the same principles—universal liberty, equality, justice, peace and cooperation—the UFP's Starfleet, Supreme Assembly and Federation Council, respectively, mirror the UN's Peacekeeping Forces, General Assembly and Security Council. The crucial difference lies in the effective contexts of both organizations.

While Roddenberry's classless, currency-less *Star Trek* world prevents most interplanetary competition; the UN operates in a system driven by national self-interest with individual member states first and foremost trying to secure and increase internal welfare, even at the expense of universal wellbeing.

**WITH REGARD TO** the latter, a telling example currently unfolds in the European Union, which goes under the heading of 'refugee crisis'. The used terminology is unfortunate according to Don Flynn, director of the UK Migrants Rights Network, as it masks the real political nature of the crisis. Flynn claims that human movement is nothing new to Europe, with millions of refugees periodically knocking on the continent's door. Although the current scale has not occurred since the end of World War II, policymakers could have anticipated it. Basing common policies constructed long before today's 'crisis' hit on member states' individual preferences, ensuing action would prove insufficient in overcoming the challenges that lay ahead. As a consequence, the European Union now deals with countries reinforcing border controls and undermining the once treasured absence of national boundaries. In failing to act concertedly, EU politicians are pushing their plane in a potentially fatal direction.

**AS OPPOSED TO** what some political parties make electorates believe, human civilization is not endangered by cross-national problems like mass refugee flows or climate change. It is just a matter of decision-making. Referring again to Karlsson's metaphorical airplane, politicians could for example decide to take off by stimulating technological advancement. Environmental conditions on earth would initially worsen, but—moving back to what is yet still science fiction—technological sophistication would enable humans

to explore opportunities to maintain our current lifestyle by colonizing outer space (a less fictitious scenario is the optimization of production cycles, which reduces the necessary input of natural resources—but this obviously is not nearly as exciting). Policymakers could on the contrary also keep Karlsson's plane on the ground by reducing ecological footprints and downsizing global markets. Crucial, however, is to choose one strategy and collectively act in accordance with it. Nostalgia for decision-making based on nation-states— which are viewed as the main actors of the international realm, in competition with each other however, thwarts this objective. Solvable issues are thereby turned into unsolvable ones.

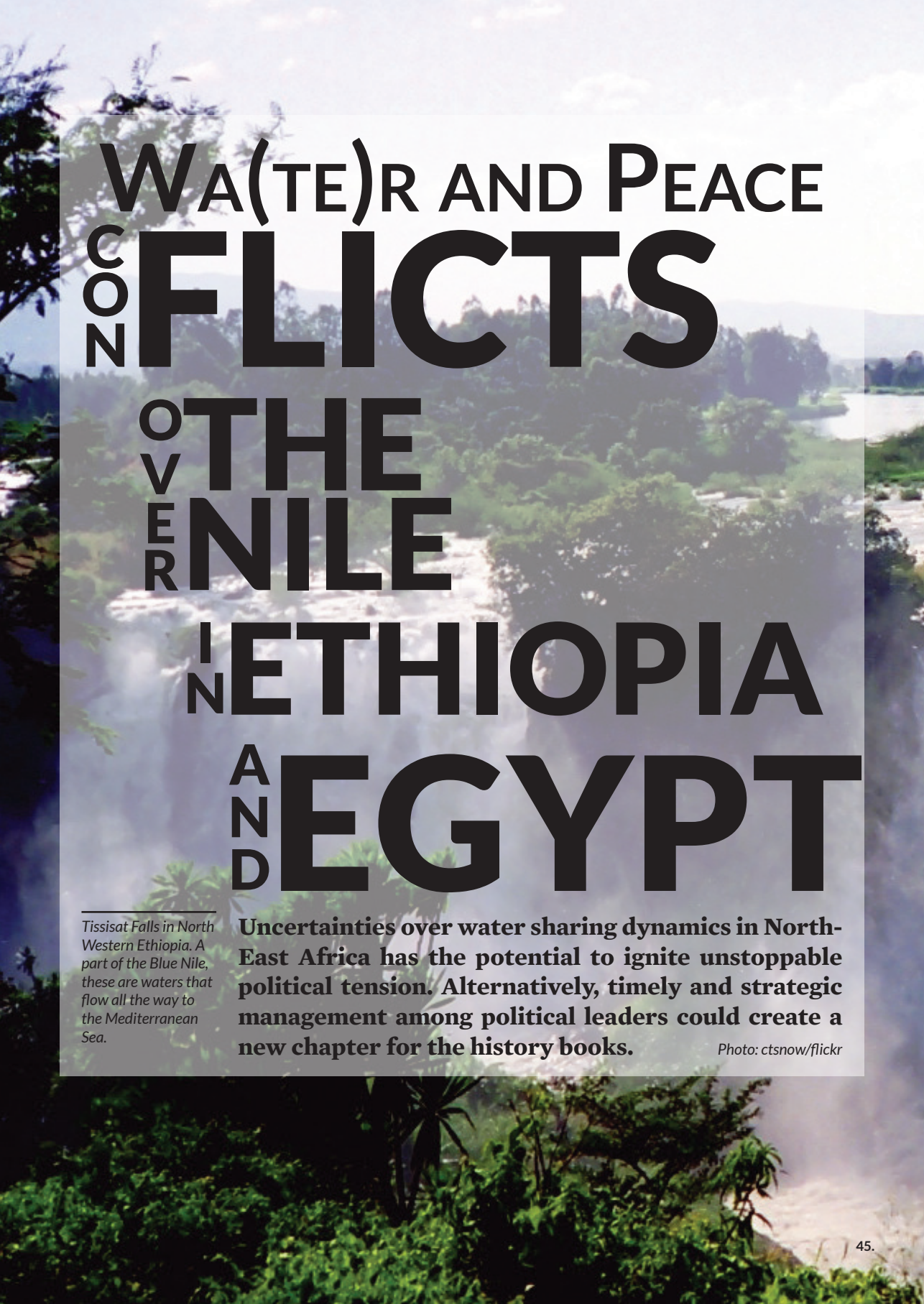


*Image: InspiredImages/flickr*

**THE ONLY WAY** forward is to realize that policy has to be beneficial for citizens of the world rather than those of particular countries or members of certain social groups. The establishment of regional or even global federalist government(s) is key, but the arguably failed EU project highlights some of the difficulties—with a possible 'Brexit' being the most recent chapter. In 500 years an UFP-like government will watch over the world, Karlsson believes, but the end of the runway will by then have long been passed. ●

**By:** Elizabeth Aardenburg





# WA(TE)R AND PEACE CONFLICTS OF THE OVERNILE IN ETHIOPIA AND EGYPT

*Tisissat Falls in North Western Ethiopia. A part of the Blue Nile, these are waters that flow all the way to the Mediterranean Sea.*

**Uncertainties over water sharing dynamics in North-East Africa has the potential to ignite unstoppable political tension. Alternatively, timely and strategic management among political leaders could create a new chapter for the history books.**

*Photo: ctsnow/flickr*

**B**outros Boutros-Ghali, former Secretary-General of the United Nations famously said that the next war will be fought over water, not politics. Although his prediction has not become a reality as yet. The fight for water rights has been a major source of conflict in regions threatened by water scarcity. According to research conducted by the WHO and UNICEF, 663 million people lack access to safe drinking water sources. The Global Risks Landscape Report, 2016, World Economic Forum, lists water crises as among the top risks for coming years.

**ONE HOTSPOT** FOR conflicts over the “blue gold” has been the Nile region. In recent years, Ethiopia’s new dam evoked serious opposition from Egypt and Sudan, whose water flow would be largely affected by it.

**THE GRAND ETHIOPIAN** Renaissance Dam, expected to be completed in 2017, will be the largest hydroelectric power plant on the continent. The project costs \$4.8 billion and is mainly financed through Ethiopian taxes and bonds.

**AS THE WORD** “renaissance” suggests in its prestigiously sounding name, the dam is considered to be another important cornerstone in Ethiopia’s economic rebirth. Recent years have brought steep growth to one of the world’s poorest economies. With a growth rate of 11%, it was ranked one of the five fastest growing economies by the IMF. On a similar track, the UN Economic Commission for Africa predicted it to become the most powerful economy in Africa by 2050.

**FROM THE BEGINNING**, the country was determined to complete the project and despite concerns, construction work began 30 km from the Sudanese border in 2011. After the dam is completed, it will allow to double electricity production in the country which would greatly

improve living conditions. Currently, only 10% of the population has reliable access to electricity. With the capacity to produce 6000 megawatts of electricity annually, Ethiopia could also export to other countries in the region.

## “ONE HOTSPOT FOR CONFLICTS OVER THE “BLUE GOLD” HAS BEEN THE NILE REGION

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**WHILE FOR ADDIS** Ababa the project symbolizes growth, Cairo sees it as a serious threat to its water security. With a growing population of more than 90 million and a heavy reliance on water for agriculture, water is a cardinal issue in Egypt. Rated as being below UN’s water threshold level, the country is extremely dependent on the Nile, gaining nearly all of its water from there as rainfall is rare and most of the country constitutes of desert. Egypt’s primary fear is that the dam would reduce water flow, doubting Ethiopia’s claims that the water would not be used for irrigation. Even if Ethiopia keeps its promise of only using water for producing electricity and finally letting it flow to downstream countries, having control can rearrange power relations in the region, and the timing of water releases could threaten Egyptian agriculture.

**EGYPT HAS BEEN** holding on to its “historical rights” as a main argument against the project. History books show how for centuries Egypt and the Nile are tied together. Besides being the “Gift of the Nile”, there is little mention to the other ten countries that the world’s lon-



gest river passes through. Even to this day, Egypt enjoys an almost monopoly-like access to the water through two

canism”, implying that clinging to colonial treaties is an obsolete argument.



Original Map: Wikimedia Commons

Location of the dam displayed by the red circle, on a map of the region. The river flowing away from the construction site is the Blue Nile, which joins the White Nile, originating from Uganda, in central Sudan.

treaties in 1929 and 1959, dating back to British colonial times. According to these agreements signed by Sudan and Egypt, Egypt is entitled to around 75% of the water, leaving the remaining 25% to Sudan. Allocation to other riparian countries, including Ethiopia where around 80% of the river originates from, were not taken into consideration.

**IN THE FIRST** years of construction work, Egyptian politicians warned that water was so essential to Egyptians that it would be worth to go to war in order to safeguard their future. In 2013, only one month before then-president Mohamed Morsi was removed, he and other politicians discussed the water conflict. Brainstorming about possible scenarios to sabotage the project and treating it as a provocation to Egypt, the politicians did not know that their talk was recorded and aired live. Shortly after the “secret” talk, Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union urged the importance of dialogue. She said that war cannot be a solution and that the case should be discussed “in a new context, not in the context of the colonial powers but in the context of Pan-Afri-

**SUDAN, WEDGED BETWEEN** the two countries both geographically and diplomatically, had a hard time choosing sides. First, it voted for maintaining the status quo. The benefits however, namely the dam’s ability to prevent floods and share electricity convinced the country to support the project.

**DIPLOMATIC BREAKTHROUGH** CAME in spring 2015, when the three countries signed an agreement that allowed Ethiopia to continue with the project. Although the points made in the “Declaration of Principles” seem blurry and are formulated loosely. They emphasize cooperation based on common interest among the three parties and “fair and appropriate use” of the dam, as well as ascertaining that further technical studies are needed.

**IN THE LONG** term, the production of electricity would bring improvements to living conditions as well as tightening trade relations, as Ethiopia assured Egypt and Sudan of priority in sales of electricity at competitive prices. The ability to store water for times of drought would also bring benefits to all parties. Ethiopia is currently suffering from a drought believed to be the worst in 50 years, causing massive food shortages. Holding back water for a long period of time however, could endanger the living conditions of millions of Egyptians living in coastal areas.

**ONLY ONE YEAR** before its completion, there are still uncertainties about the project’s effects. The three countries agreed that further impact studies should be carried out and have already selected two French consulting firms. Although contracts still have not been signed as of February, 2016. It remains to be seen whether the expected benefits will iron out conflicts and doubts or fluid solutions in the long run. ●

By: Kriszti Tóth



By: Arttu Närhi

Photos: Sandra Jakobsson

**Charlotte Petri Gornitzka is the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency's (Sida's) pragmatically managing, yet passionately leading Director General. Utrikesperspektiv met with her when she visited UPF's Mentorship Program, to discuss how Sida fits into Swedish foreign policy.**

**S**itting on the UPF office couch is one of Sweden's most important public servants. Sida is an independent governmental agency which works directly under the Swedish Foreign Ministry, having its budget allocated with the rest of the government's public expenses. As Director General, Charlotte Petri Gornitzka over-

sees Sweden's development cooperation budget allocation to about 35 target countries.

**"IN THESE COUNTRIES,** the Swedish embassy is the face of development cooperation," she explains. Swedish diplomatic efforts are in this system an important part of foreign aid. Gornitzka explains that a Swedish embassy has three functions: to keep the political and security channel open, to promote Swedish relations and business interests and manage development cooperation. "If we go back 20 years, foreign aid was not a part of the embassy like it is today. It was more of a separate line in Swedish foreign policy. Sida had a separate office in the embassy with its own country manager," Gornitzka

begins to describe the changes undertaken in the agency.

**FIFTEEN YEARS AGO,** official government policy was drawn up to begin the decentralization of Sida. Before that, Sida was run for the most part, from Stockholm. "Performance and follow up was done in the country on a field level, but budget decisions were a HQ's responsibility," Gornitzka recalls. This was far before her time though; she took on the job in 2011 and has since continued on the chosen path. "Today I have the overall responsibility for almost 75 % of the budget of Swedish development cooperation, and I delegate the budget for a country to a Swedish ambassador in said country."



**THIS IS A** dramatic change in any organizational structure, to bring responsibility to the professionals in the field. Yet in the context of development aid, it is a viable option. “The people who are closer to those realities, they know better than Stockholm what is actually needed,” Gornitzka says. “It is not rocket science, it is believing in a decentralized model and learning from other organizations that the responsibility belongs where the best knowledge is.”

**DIPLOMATIC ACTION TOO** needs to be done with pragmatic reasoning. A minister in Stockholm cannot keep up with strategies tailored for projects in 35 nations. It seems foreign aid and traditional diplomatic missions are destined for a symbiotic relationship in the 21st century. Gornitzka feels this is an important change in Swedish diplomacy: foreign aid is seen as an important part of foreign policy in forming long lasting ties between nations. This development

begs the question: Do the experiences garnered from the projects undertaken by Sida influence policy in Sweden?

**“WE’VE [INFLUENCED POLICY]** before. We do it even more today,” Gornitzka answers. “The government has two overarching tasks for us. The first one is ‘implement what the government decides’, the other is ‘provide us with good analysis and proposals that inform our decisions’. So we are the experts and the implement-

## UPF Lund Career Committee

Charlotte Petri Gornitzka stopped by to give an inspiring talk to members of our own Career Committee. But who are they and how can you get involved?

- Organizers of the UPF Lund Prep Course and Mentorship Program.

- The Prep Course consists of 10-12 interactive seminars.

-The aim of the course is to give participating students a chance to ask questions regarding what it takes to get a job in the field of foreign affairs.

-The Mentorship Program links participating students with a mentor, who will provide guidance based on their professional expertise.

-The program provides students with a chance to obtain a better understanding of what it takes to work with specific international or political issues.

-The application round for the next series of programs with the Careers Committee will begin in the Fall.

More information available on [upflund.se/committees/career](http://upflund.se/committees/career)



Gornitzka with Career Committee heads Camilla Wendestam and Frida Edström outside the University White House

ers.” Of course, having a government agency with a large budget and plenty of liberty can make the voting public uncomfortable. Gornitzka recalls problems with this in the past, and is proud to tell how they have improved on accountability. “We were criticized by the Swedish audit authority for not having procedures and processes in place, so today you can follow what we do in a transparent process which is a huge change.”

**IT HAS BEEN** huge for the employees too, as Gornitzka describes the new working environment. “The people who work in development are passionate. They know a lot about certain realities, but now they have to plan in a structured way, and sometimes it feels limiting. We need to balance between our own knowledge and beliefs and what it means to implement political decisions and work like any agency. We need to leave a bit of the activist aside,” she laughs. It is clear she has an activist alive in her as well.

**STRUCTURE IS NOT** the only new dimension activists have to get used to at Sida. Along with the new diplomatic atmosphere, Sida employees are learning more about what private initiatives in the corporate sector can do for development. “We are more experienced in working with governments and civil society, less with the private sector. We have tried to open up to every actor in a society, meaning for instance financial markets and other things we did not do 20 years ago,” Gornitzka elaborates on their changing culture. “I am told we used to criticize the private sector, which is not the role of an agency as such, but to support the civil soci-

ety organisations in their role as watchdogs. Our mission is to look for the best solutions out there, being open to new ways of working, new partnerships, and never to forget our aim and lose our integrity.

**BY TRANSFORMING THEIR** profile, Sida has become an important part of the government’s foreign outreach. Gornitzka feels that the Foreign Minister Margot Wallström has Sida as a prime example to showcase the power of a feminist approach to foreign policy. “We are one of the few countries and agencies who push for women’s rights in development cooperation early on. We have also been pushing when the Swedish government channels money through the World Bank. We work hard to influence their ways of working towards a gender sensitive perspective.”

**GORNITZKA ALSO MAINTAINS** that Sida’s working culture is inherently feminist: “The feminist policy is not just about investing in women, it is a way of thinking. I think we already have the *modus operandi* with the perspectives you would expect a feminist to have. With social inclusion and a rights’ based approach”, she lists as the aspects of their approach to the work. Sida also takes this to their target countries. With government backed development plans, they are uniquely placed to influence social policy with a focus on inclusiveness. “ONE WAY OF working is using experience from pilot projects in advocating and implementing social safety nets investing in women. We do that with local authorities, and sometimes with NGOs,” Gornitzka continues discussing their gender equality aims. “We could prove

that the money was invested differently when directed to the mother, instead of the family as a whole. The mother invested it in health and education for the children,” Gornitzka explains. Using examples of Swedish child support mechanism, Sida has also been able to use a truly Nordic approach to family welfare.

**FOREIGN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION** as a tool of diplomacy can work to advance the development of a bilateral relationship. Furthermore, as Sida proves, diplomacy working alongside foreign aid can yield fantastic results. As part of the Swedish foreign mission, they have access to all sectors of society on something agreed upon to help advance their solutions. “We can influence systems, because it is a relationship government to government,” she says. “If we invest in, for example, Tanzania’s budget, we can focus on what they need to improve. We can put demands on the relationship with Tanzania, if we invest money in education we want to see it is being implemented.”

**SIDA CAN BE** seen as a Nordic example of how to carry out social policy. Bringing foreign aid into the diplomatic tool box presents new opportunities for forming closer ties with other nations. Especially for an agency working under the government, it is reassuring to know that the government itself is invested in this for the long term. “The Swedish way of working in bilateral development cooperation is a long term relationship,” Gornitzka summarizes as the success of Swedish foreign policy. “We have 5-7 years strategies, you can depend on Sweden to be there for quite long. It is quite a predictable relationship.” ●





# Has the African Union Failed Burundi?



Above: Burundi's President Pierre Nkurinziza  
Left: AU Peacekeeping troops in Somalia  
Right: UNHCR refugee camp in Burundi last July



**On January 28th 2016, the African Union (AU) decided against sending troops into Burundi in response to the increasing violence. This decision established a policy line for AU. However, the lack of military aid leaves those suffering at the mercy of the warring factions in the country.**

**B**urundi's history is steeped in sectarian violence. Since its independence in 1962, the country has experienced two genocides, as classified by the International Commission for Inquiry of Burundi by the United Nations Security Council. Following a period of relative stability in the country, President Pierre Nkurunziza announced he would begin his third presidential term in April 2015, going against the constitutionally mandated two term limit. This sparked a new conflict in the country, as protesters contested the Court's ruling on the constitutionality of Nkurunziza's third term claiming the decision was achieved as a result of coercion by his agents.

**“AFRICAN SOLUTIONS FOR** African problems” was the idea behind the creation of the African Union (AU) in 2001, an institution that replaced the impeded Organisation of African Unity (OAU). The AU's strength vis-à-vis the OAU lies in the inclusion of Article 4 in the Constitutive Act of the Union. This Article gives Member States the power to intervene in the conflicts of another Member state to prevent “grave circumstances” such as war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. This clause was intended to give the AU teeth the OAU never had, which forced the disbanded Union to stand at the side lines and watch in 1994 as the Rwandan Genocide took place.

**THE NEW CONFLICT** in Burundi has displaced over 250,000 people, who have fled the country, and left at least 500 dead. Following President Nkurunziza's refusal to accept the aid of AU troops; the escalating crisis led the AU Peace and Security Council to consider implementing Article 4. They proposed to send 5,000 troops into Burundi to protect the civilian population. How-

ever, this was only a consideration. Had they sent the troops under an Article 4 mandate this would have been an act of humanitarian military intervention. Instead, in threatening to violate the sovereignty of Burundi with a coalition of African forces, the Global Observatory and other publications have accused the AU of partaking in coercive diplo-

## “NKURUNZIZA'S THIRD TERM ALREADY APPEARS TO HAVE AFFECTED THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN NEIGHBOURING RWANDA AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

macy: attempting to affect the decisions of a sovereign country by threatening an invasion and use of force.

**HOWEVER, THIS FEAR** attributed far more effectiveness to the AU than it has in reality. An analysis of the AU's previous relationship with their Article 4 powers reveals a trend. Other than supporting a trial against the former President of Chad that commenced at the end of 2015, the AU has never used this section of Article 4 to justify a military invasion. Examples of “grave cir-



cumstances” most closely resembling Burundi today was Sudan in 2004 and Libya in 2011. Both times the AU decided against military intervention without the government’s consent.

**ONCE AGAIN, AS** of January 2016 the AU had made the decision not to send in troops to Burundi. Instead the Union proposes to deploy 100 humanitarian observers and 100 military observers to oversee the situation in the country. However, the effectiveness of sending in peacekeeping troops, especially without the consent of the host nation, has been questioned internationally. The AU shares almost all its peacekeeping mandates with the UN. Although the peacekeeping operations of these institutions have been somewhat successful at protecting civilians, George Washington University Professor Paul Williams states that overall “these missions have failed largely because they were deployed in a context of ongoing war where the belligerents themselves did not want to stop fighting or preying on civilians.” As President Nkurunziza vowed to launch an attack on AU forces if they were to enter Burundi, it would appear that the AU’s decision to refrain from sending troops was tactically wise.

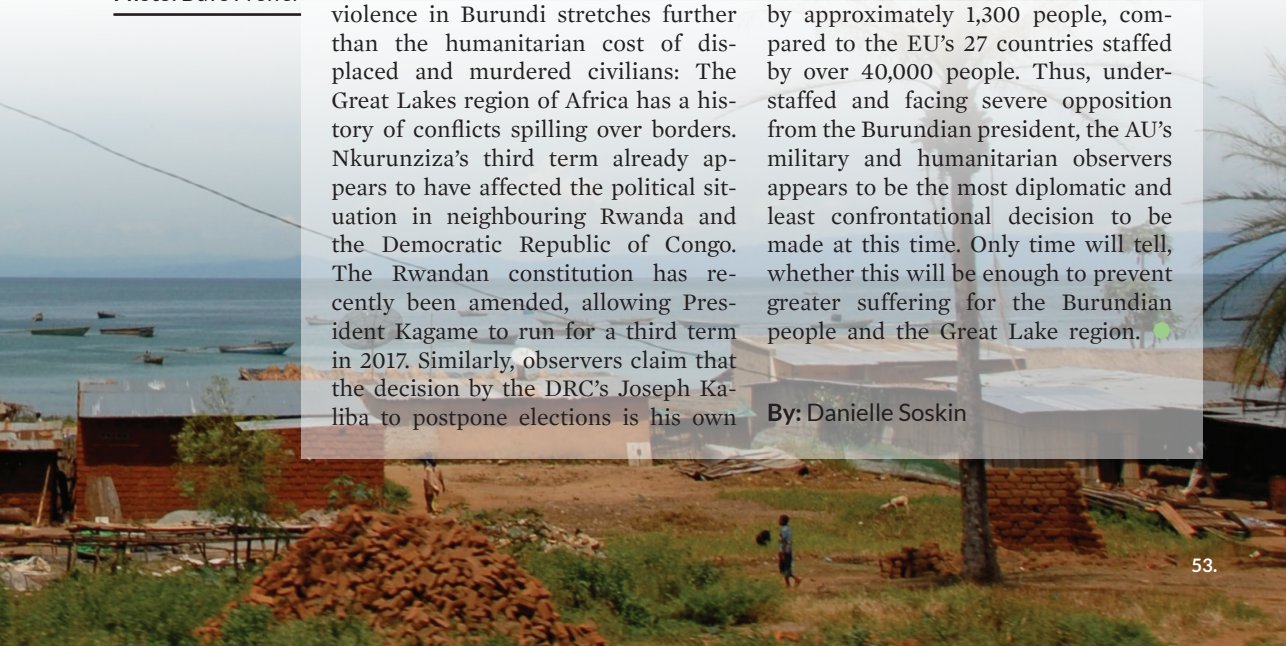
**THE IMPORTANCE OF** dealing with the violence in Burundi stretches further than the humanitarian cost of displaced and murdered civilians: The Great Lakes region of Africa has a history of conflicts spilling over borders. Nkurunziza’s third term already appears to have affected the political situation in neighbouring Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Rwandan constitution has recently been amended, allowing President Kagame to run for a third term in 2017. Similarly, observers claim that the decision by the DRC’s Joseph Kabila to postpone elections is his own

attempt to engineer his third presidential term. Thus, it is imperative the AU find a way to contain the Burundi crisis. The AU is pushing for inclusive peace talks between the opposition forces and President Nkurunziza. Presumably, with the intention of encouraging Nkurunziza to abandon his third term; or, at the very least, to consider limiting the length of his presidency to appease the opposition forces. Ironically, President Museveni of Uganda, who is running the talks, has himself led the Republic of Uganda for 30 years. Considering the number of long term presidencies amongst the member states of the AU this choice is not entirely suspect. Furthermore, the viability of such talks rests on being able to identify the opposition forces to be brought around the table with Nkurunziza. However, fragmentation within the opposition forces, as well as opposition leaders currently residing outside of Burundi, has made this difficult.

**ULTIMATELY, THE AFRICAN** Union diplomatic approach has been criticised by those within the conflict zone as reinforcing the hegemony of African leaders and not taking decisive action in conflicts, currently with relation to Burundi. However, as an institution made of 54 countries it is staffed by approximately 1,300 people, compared to the EU’s 27 countries staffed by over 40,000 people. Thus, understaffed and facing severe opposition from the Burundian president, the AU’s military and humanitarian observers appears to be the most diplomatic and least confrontational decision to be made at this time. Only time will tell, whether this will be enough to prevent greater suffering for the Burundian people and the Great Lake region.

**By:** Danielle Soskin

Lake Tanganyika  
from Nyanza-Lac  
village  
**Photo:** Dave Proffer



## INTERVIEW

AMBASSADOR KAYA TÜRKMEN

# THE TURKISH MISSION

Flags: Jacob Breivik Grimstveit



Photos: Anders Henrikson



## AMBASSADOR TÜRKMEN ON THE SWEDISH-TURKISH RELATIONSHIP

By: Umut Can Adisönmez

**Turkey-EU relations are the focus in discussions currently. However, the Turkish embassy in Stockholm is focused on their bilateral relationship with Sweden to improve lives of citizens living in both countries. Utrikesperspektiv approached Ambassador Kaya Türkmen to discuss the state of the Sweden-Turkey relationship.**



### What is the nature of Turkish-Swedish bilateral relations?

The relations between Turkey and Sweden are progressing in a very positive manner. Sweden is one of the leading countries strongly backing Turkey's EU membership.

During the State Visit of President Abdullah Gül to Sweden in March 2013, the two countries signed a "Declaration of Strategic Partnership" and consolidated their cooperation. The bilateral trade volume between Turkey and Sweden was 3.3 billion USD (exports 1.3 billion USD, imports 2 billion USD) in 2014.

Turkey's exports to Sweden can be roughly categorized as textiles and ready-to-wear products (Turkey is Sweden's third biggest supplier in textiles), motor vehicles and spare parts, televisions, refrigerators and ceramic products. Turkey's main imports from Sweden are iron and steel products, machinery and parts, electrical equipment, motor vehicles, drugs and other chemicals.

The total amount of direct investments from Sweden to Turkey in the 2002-2014 period is 268 million USD and 36 million USD from Turkey to Sweden. The number of Swedish tourists visiting Turkey exceeded 670 thousand in 2014.

The Turcology Department in Uppsala University has a history of 170 years. Efforts are being deployed to reopen Turcology departments at Stockholm and Lund Universities. During the State Visit of President Abdullah Gül in 2013, an "Institute of Turkish Studies" was inaugurated at Stockholm University. Approximately 115,000 emigrants from Turkey live in Sweden, most of whom having dual citizenship.

### As an ambassador, what are the unique characteristics of your position in Sweden? Is your position focused on facilitating Turkish-Swedish bilateral relations or on preserving the status quo between the two countries?

The nature of my mission in Sweden is shaped by a number of different factors. These are: the distinguishing features of the bilateral relations between Turkey and Sweden, the role and action of Turkey in the international arena, the internal developments in Turkey, the general perception on Turkey and Turks in the Swedish society and the presence in Sweden of more than 100 thousands immigrants from Turkey. All these have an important bearing on the conduct of my work as Ambassador of Turkey.

My first and foremost duty is not only to preserve and uphold the positive nature of our bilateral

relations, but to further develop these relations in all possible areas. The tools for this are diplomacy, communication, consultation and cultural exchange.

### To further develop relations, do the two countries make use of elements of innovation?

Relations between countries are conducted in a world in constant change. Thus, the form and tools of diplomacy which are, how governments handle their relations with other nations have to adapt to new realities. These changes are not only limited to the emergence of new parameters in the political landscape, but also involve technological developments, climate change and cultural trends. To give an example, we witness today that all political leaders make wide use of social media. I cannot think of an Ambassador in Stockholm who does not care to follow at least the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs on Twitter.

As far as other aspects of bilateral relations are concerned, innovation is a natural component. It affects communication, trade, tourism and the dissemination of novel values. Recent trends in international relations such as criticism of a country concerning human rights not being seen as an intervention in internal affairs anymore, are innovations by themselves. ●

# DIFFICULTIES OF THE AFRICAN UNION

*What to do if nobody wants to talk to your chairman  
because he's Robert Mugabe?*

**The requirements for being a successful chairman of the African Union are unexpectedly pragmatic. As the latest succession shows, human rights violations or despotism are not per se no-goes, unless they are coupled with notoriety.**

**E**very 30th of January, the Assembly of the African Union, the highest decision making organ pan Africa, appoints a new chairperson. A couple of weeks ago, the new incumbent, President of the Chad Republic, Idriss Déby, replaced Robert Mugabe, a figure who was met with mixed reactions during his one-year term.

**ESPECIALLY OUTSIDE OF** the African continent, Mugabe's appointment as chairperson did not receive much praise. The Zimbabwean's nationalist views and repeated human rights accusations have made him one of Sub-Saharan Africa's foremost notorious troublemakers. As a result, financial sanctions by the EU and USA are enforced on the 92 year-

old and his family since the beginning of the 20th century.

**FOR THE AFRICAN** Union (AU), however, it was not Mugabe's despotism that made him a difficult candidate. Instead it was the Zimbabwean's diplomatic legacy. For being head of a major intergovernmental decision

**“MANY WERE  
RELIEVED WHEN  
MUGABE STEPPED  
DOWN**

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making body, it is an advantage if people actually want to talk to you. With Mugabe, that was not the case and many claim he was a hindrance for the AU.

**WHEN OBAMA CAME** to East Africa in 2015, he was the first American President to visit Ethiopia and the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa. In his speech to the



AU he did not address the Assembly, but the AU Commission, the secretariat concerned with political structures. This way, he was formally hosted by the head of the Commission, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, and did not have to shake hands with the Zimbabwean president. Consequently, many were relieved when Mugabe stepped down after his one-year term was over in the beginning of 2016.

**HIS SUCCESSOR, IDRIS Déby**, is seen as a diplomatic improvement. Undeniably, he too has been accused of human rights violations and has been in office for a staggering twenty-six years. However, things do work differently in Africa and if you are looking to place the position only with uncontested democratically elected heads of state, you might run out of options very soon.

**ONE OF THE** main criticisms towards Déby is the situation on

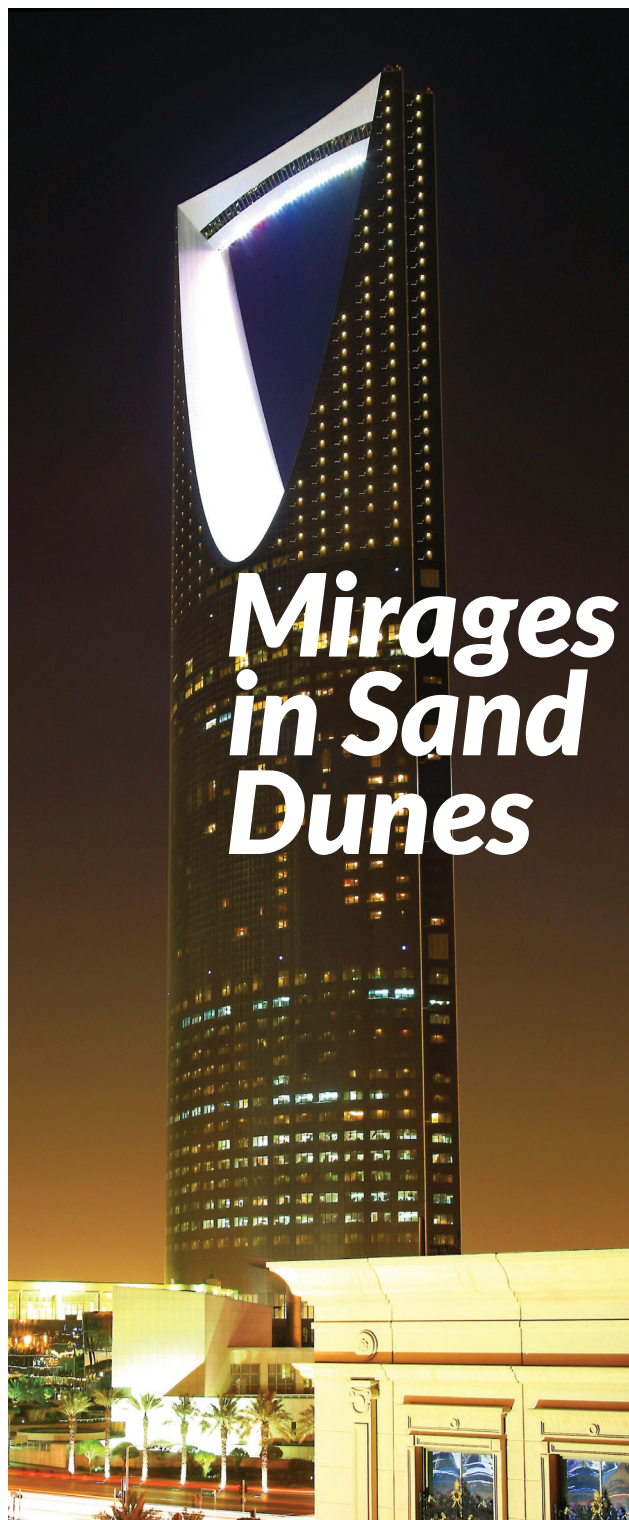
human rights in his home country. Chad has most recently, in February, 2016, ratified the protocol for the establishment of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. This development and Chad national elections in April, 2016, during his period as chairman might demand for best behaviour from the capable leader. Ironically, this criticism is ward off by his advocates who claim that he will win national elections anyway.

**STILL, IT SEEMS** Déby is a pragmatic and realistic choice. Most importantly, his name is clean enough for being talked to on a diplomatic level. In a press release in mid February, Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, congratulated Déby and advocated a close collaboration with the African Union for his term in office. Already in two weeks, Déby has shown a clear diplomatic advantage compared to his predecessor Mugabe. ●

The Assembly of the African Union.



Photo: U.S. Department of State



# **Mirages in Sand Dunes**

# **Saudi Arabia's role in the Syrian Civil War**

*Photo: Ahmed Rabea*



*Left: The tower of Kingdom Center in central Riyadh. The third tallest skyscraper in the country.*

**The Arab Spring and the ensuing Syrian Civil War has in many ways unfolded a complex system of underlining conflicts among Middle-Eastern states; Saudi Arabia particularly. Evidently, Saudi involvement in the Syrian Civil War will in many ways shape the future stability in the region.**

**S**audi Arabia's involvement in the Syrian Civil War as well as other conflicts that arose in the midst of the Arab Spring can partly be explained by Saudi Arabia's underpinned sectarianism. As a state shaped by Wahhabism, the Saudi government follows an entrenched element that deems a range of Islamic schools of thought and their respective ideas and practices as deviations of devotion to the oneness of God. As a result, sectarianism has been a ubiquitous element in Saudi domestic and foreign policy. It has been part of their ambitions to control, limit and even oppress Islamic ideas and practices. This in return explains the strenuous and tense relationship with Iran (whose population is majority Shia Muslims) as Saudi Arabia denounces Shia faith. Sectarianism is further cemented in Saudi politics as

“**...THEY BECOME  
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DOMINANCE  
IN SYRIA**

Shia groups and regimes, such as the Houthi rebels in Yemen, Al-Assad in Syria and Hezbollah in Lebanon, are supported by Iran. Consequently, imbedded sectarianism becomes a key element in aspects of Saudi Arabia's involvement in Syria as it urges it to check Iranian and Shia expansionism.

**NOT SURPRISINGLY, SAUDI** Arabia has seen the Syrian Civil War as an opportunity to dislodge Syria from Iranian influence and replace it with a Sunni-led government that is friendly towards Saudi Arabia. Financial and military aid has therefore been deployed to various groups, such as the Free Syrian Army, as an endeavour to topple the Al-Assad regime. However, with Iran's continued support to Al-Assad, both states resort to war by proxy tactics in order to reach their goals and ambitions. Thus, it urges Saudi Arabia, along with Iran, to identify, create and activate proxies by whom they become pawns in their effort to secure and gain influence and dominance in Syria. Evidently, these chess pieces become means to an end, by which consequences or implications that comes with it is being overlooked or ignored. Unfortunately, Syria becomes the battleground of Saudi Arabia and Iran's clashing interests. Thus, it can be argued that a new Cold War has erupted as Saudi Arabia and Iran are by no means ready to make concessions over Syria's future, at least not for the time being.

**HOWEVER, SAUDI ARABIA'S** role and impact on the Syrian Civil War is not solely limited to its conflict with Iran. Saudi Arabia's interests in Syria, in terms of installing a friendly-government, faces issue elsewhere. States such as Qatar seeks to become a key regional player that is independent from Saudi interference. Thus, Saudi Arabia, who wants to be seen as the prime Sunni Muslim leader and coordinator of the operations and events in Syria, faces obstacles in the form of intra-Gulf rivalry. Although it is unanimous among

the Gulf-states that Iran is the prime enemy, they remain divided as to how to confront and coordinate operations in Syria as well as how the political future of Syria ought to look like. Qatar's support of Muslim Brotherhood-linked groups such as Liwaa al-Tawhid in Aleppo is an example of this division and intra-Gulf rivalry. The Muslim Brotherhood is a political opponent to Saudi Arabia in terms of political Islam as they promote alternative Islamic models of governance based on electoral politics. This is a stark contrast to the absolute and monarchist rule of Saudi Arabia. Consequently, Saudi Arabia sees Qatar's rapprochement to the Muslim Brotherhood groups as steps towards destabilizing Saudi rule domestically but also its influence in the region. Thus, it becomes all the more important to check and neutralize developments in Syria that might deviate from Saudi's course of action and interests. As a result, Syria not only becomes a battleground for states' clashing interests, it also becomes an extended part of Saudi Arabia's domestic politics concerning threats to its own security and monarchist rule.

**IN THE END,** Saudi Arabia plays a significant role in the development and the continued complexity of the Syrian Civil War. Saudi foreign policies that are shaped by sectarianism contribute in many ways to the failure of diplomatic relations that are necessary in order to find solutions and common ground in the conflict. The intra-Gulf rivalries only cement Saudi interests of increased interference in Syria in order to become the dominant regional power and to safeguard its own domestic security as a monarchy. As a consequence, Saudi Arabia's engagement with short-term priorities of increasing its regional influence and to protect itself from exterior threats may deteriorate the possibility of reaching long-term interest of establishing peace and stability in Syria. ●

By: Fredrik Blix



Photo: watchsmart - flickr



Photo: Christian Triebert



Photo: Sharroff's Global Views/flickr



Photo: Wikimedia Commons



# Game Theory

Photo: DonkeyHorey/flickr



## & Diplomacy

**Diplomats are the people in control of the global political conversation. There is one significant principle guiding their talk: game theory. Christian Barsoum delves into the rationality of diplomatic discourse to uncover the challenges met with this strategy.**

*Above: President Obama depicted as a stealthy chess-player on the board of the Democrat-Republican domestic policy game*

**W**e have all heard the news, or rather, the discussions surrounding them. Every time it's the same: What will happen? How will they compromise? Why can't they just agree?

**FOR MANY, STRIKING** a simple conversation with a complete stranger, under relaxed circumstances, can be an extremely demanding task. For better, or worse, you could bet on the odds that the stranger is, most of the time, well meaning, polite and does not differ too much from your own personal values. The chances of running into someone who is not only there to profess their own self-interests and 'unusual' values, but also to convince you of why they're right and everyone else wrong, is close to nil.

**NOW, IMAGINE BEING** a diplomat, a representative of millions of voices, differing ideologies and values. You are trying to strike a conversation with someone of similar responsibility, but from a continent on the other side of the world. Strangers at the bus stop might seem like best friends in comparison.

**SO WHAT MAKES** diplomacy so difficult? Besides voicing an ocean of idea, that is. It's the act of negotiating itself, to be exact, the part where two or more representatives need to compromise and settle for a solution; but first, and foremost, understand each other. As is the nature of nations, and most entities in general, the fulfillment of self-interests, and the preservation of themselves, exceeds any will of benevolence and generosity in regards to others' survival. Of course, it's a highly dramatic scenario, but isn't all political activity built on some form of drama?

**THE QUESTION REMAINS** - how on earth do nations reach agreements. The COP21 in Paris last year did prove fruitful despite the difficulties surrounding it. Let us introduce the con-

ductor of diplomatic orchestra, game theory. Please contain your excitement.

**IMAGINE THE NEIGHBORING** country posing a military threat to your nation. Do you prepare for battle, or will you trust them not to attack? Of course, both nations will endure casualties and tremendous losses in capital if they decide to wage war on each other. However, the outcome of that will be far less disastrous if both manage to decide on a truce. Unfortunately, they do not. So what is the solution to this dilemma? In a world that lacks the possibility of negotiation and diplomacy, war is inevitable as it poses the least loss for each actor.

## “OUR INCREASINGLY INTRICATE WORLD IS STILL DEPENDENT ON THE PROPER INTERPRETATION AND EXECUTIONS OF DIPLOMATS

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**THIS EXAMPLE ILLUSTRATES** the difficulty of decision-making, strategic planning and the fragile thread that is foreign policy, which ties countries together. Here, we were only concerned with two countries and one issue; once again imagine being a diplomat at a global conference.

**What can we** then derive from all this? That diplomacy is tough, relentless to say the least. Just the way craftsmen have their toolbox, diplomats have their own, one which we just visited: game theory. The ability to map out strategic



moves and outcomes is vital to the progress of negotiation. What does China actually gain by neglecting an environmental policy and how can we change our approach to outweigh our differences, and eventually reach an agreement?

**THERE ARE MANY** factors to be taken into consideration and even more outcomes with respect to all the possible combinations of strategies. With an increasingly complex world, the number of sensitive issues seems only to increase exponentially, as does their difficulty in handling. What will countries from the previous example do if they were to reach a trade agreement? Alternatively, if the land currently separating them is a natural reserve, one of the last remaining after an escalating environmental catastrophe wiped out most other areas of vegetation, how they would cooperate.

*Strange game, Professor. The only winning move is not to play.*

Photo: Campaign Against Arms Trade/flickr



**AS YOU CAN** see, it is a difficult issue to grasp and resolve. Yet, our increasingly intricate world is still dependent on the proper interpretation and executions of diplomats. Will they not eventually reach their limits though?

**WHEN PUT INTO** contrast, development that runs out of hand can sometimes be devastating. It is a fundamental

principle that without control over the situation, reality will soon slip out of our hands. We will be stuck with problems that are so complex that nations will never reach upon an agreement. There is however one more instrument which, if properly handled, can prove so fruitful at the conference tables, one that is easily overlooked, which is, computer-processing power.

**IN JANUARY 2016**, an artificial intelligence (A.I) company owned by Google, called, Deep Mind, beat a world champion in what is believed to be the hardest board game in existence, Go. This marked a major breakthrough for the power of machine intelligence. A program that foresaw millions upon millions of outcomes, and analyzed countless strategies, was able to beat a world-renowned champion. The astounding part isn't that though, it is that it taught itself how to play Go in the first place.

**WHAT ARE THEN** the prospects for intelligent programs to be used in diplomatic decision-making in the future? Huge. Specialized A.I are already being deployed in the financial sector to maximize profits for firms and investment opportunities, especially amongst banks.

**IT IS ONLY** a matter of time until the game of diplomacy becomes too hard for us to play, and our game theories grow stellar in size. By the time we reach Conference of the Parties 50, we might just even plug in a couple of values into a supercomputer and never worry about our climate again, who knows? Until then, however, we will do well by ourselves to strike up conversations with strangers and ask if they are interested in a round of chess. Because that stupid computer just kept beating you. ●



# UPS AND DOWNS OF GLOBAL CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS

## LOOKING BEYOND PARIS

**Being one of the greatest threats mankind has ever faced, climate change is one issue that calls for worldwide cooperation in order to gain any leeway into combating it. Krithi Venkat looks into climate diplomacy, thinking back on COP21 of last year.**

**O**ver the last few decades, leaders of the world have engaged in an intense battle in order to reach a consensus on issues of whether or not climate change is real, who is responsible for it and who pays, how much, for how long and finally, what actions to put in place to actually tackle the complex issue. These negotiations have been facilitated mainly by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. We have seen the ages pass by through denial of existence of the issue, to the latest revolutionary agreement signed by 189 of 196 states at the most recent Conference of the Parties (COP21) in December 2015. And the journey has only just begun.

**CLIMATE CHANGE HAS** taken its place in the realm of international relations as one of the most prominent foreign political issues. It has always been a battle to get countries to see eye to eye on the issues of climate change, on who is responsible and who needs to pay. It is because of this that climate negotiations are known to be a slow process. There is a long standing debate that the countries of the Global North, having developed earlier, are the reason for the extent of the issue. However, the impacts of climate change are most devastating

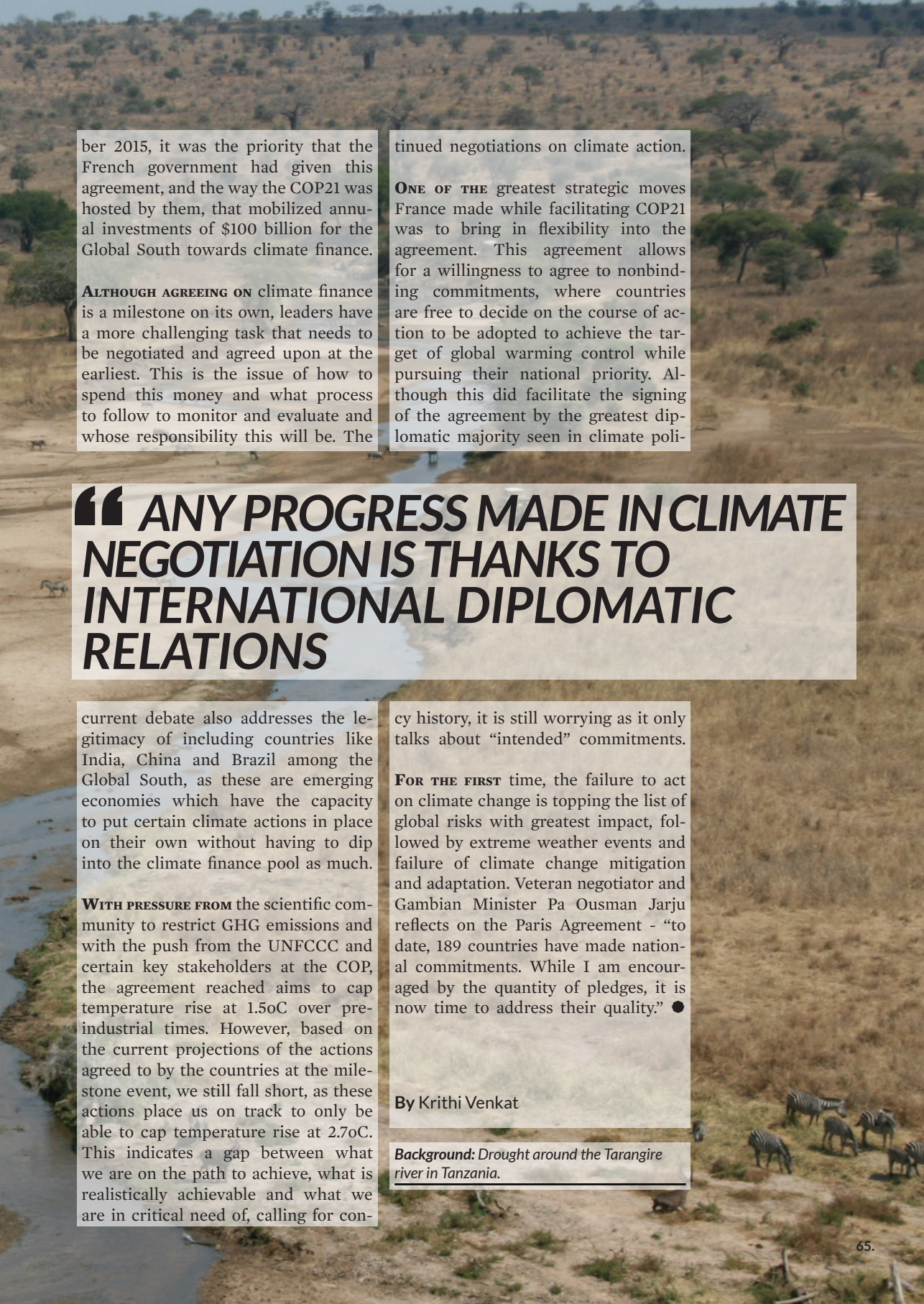
in poorer regions of the Global South, mostly because these countries do not have the capital to deal with these impacts and are further behind on the development timeline. Manon Verchot, reporting for The Quint, puts it very well when she says “the consequences of delays in climate action will have the most devastating effect on nations least responsible for creating global warming”. Any progress made in climate negotiations, bringing together governments, businesses, the academic community and the citizens of the world, is thanks to international diplomatic relations.

**CLIMATE DIPLOMACY,** as defined by the European Environmental Action Service, has its basis on three foundational pillars - promotion of ambitious climate action, support for the implementation of climate policies and measures, and activities in the area of climate change and international security. Countries with diverse cultural and natural resources and varied historical backgrounds of colonisation, have different priorities, irrespective of the impacts of climate change in their geographical region. This is especially true for countries of the Global South, where development and poverty alleviation take precedence over the slower impacts of climate change.

**BASING CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS** on the foundational pillars mentioned earlier, will not just help reach an agreement with countries striving for development, but aid them with financial or technical capital to bring climate change on their radar. In Decem-

*Photo: lady-lbrty/flickr.com*





ber 2015, it was the priority that the French government had given this agreement, and the way the COP21 was hosted by them, that mobilized annual investments of \$100 billion for the Global South towards climate finance.

**ALTHOUGH AGREEING ON** climate finance is a milestone on its own, leaders have a more challenging task that needs to be negotiated and agreed upon at the earliest. This is the issue of how to spend this money and what process to follow to monitor and evaluate and whose responsibility this will be. The

tinued negotiations on climate action.

**ONE OF THE** greatest strategic moves France made while facilitating COP21 was to bring in flexibility into the agreement. This agreement allows for a willingness to agree to nonbinding commitments, where countries are free to decide on the course of action to be adopted to achieve the target of global warming control while pursuing their national priority. Although this did facilitate the signing of the agreement by the greatest diplomatic majority seen in climate poli-

## “ ANY PROGRESS MADE IN CLIMATE NEGOTIATION IS THANKS TO INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

current debate also addresses the legitimacy of including countries like India, China and Brazil among the Global South, as these are emerging economies which have the capacity to put certain climate actions in place on their own without having to dip into the climate finance pool as much.

**WITH PRESSURE FROM** the scientific community to restrict GHG emissions and with the push from the UNFCCC and certain key stakeholders at the COP, the agreement reached aims to cap temperature rise at 1.5oC over pre-industrial times. However, based on the current projections of the actions agreed to by the countries at the milestone event, we still fall short, as these actions place us on track to only be able to cap temperature rise at 2.7oC. This indicates a gap between what we are on the path to achieve, what is realistically achievable and what we are in critical need of, calling for con-

cy history, it is still worrying as it only talks about “intended” commitments.

**FOR THE FIRST** time, the failure to act on climate change is topping the list of global risks with greatest impact, followed by extreme weather events and failure of climate change mitigation and adaptation. Veteran negotiator and Gambian Minister Pa Ousman Jarju reflects on the Paris Agreement - “to date, 189 countries have made national commitments. While I am encouraged by the quantity of pledges, it is now time to address their quality.” ●

By Krithi Venkat

**Background:** Drought around the Tarangire river in Tanzania.



# THE LANGUAGE OF POETRY

## Translation and review of 'Emerging forth into the Light'

"Emerging Forth Into The Light" (2014) by Mohamed Riyad.  
Publisher: Merit Publishing House, Cairo.



Above: Graffiti from downtown Cairo in 2011. Reads, "Dress up, we are going out".



Left: Frontline of clashes between protesters and security forces in Mohamed Mahmoud street, or "Eyes of freedom" because of the many protesters who lost their eyes by security's gunshot fire

Photos: Hossam el-Hamalawy

After the Tahrir square glory and Mubarak stepping down in early 2011, came the sinister and epic days and nights of tear gas, armored vehicles, gas masks and morgues. Starting late summer 2011, and until early 2012, there was a dark yet beautiful time no one knows anything about except those who were there. The events of "Mohamed Mahmoud street" in November 2011, and then the "Cabinet events" starting mid December, same year, both in downtown Cairo. Confrontations between rebels and the anti-revolution's security forces. Mohamed Riyad, the visionary young poet and journalist was there.

**REBELS DEFIED CHAOS** and violence, they owned the streets of downtown Cairo for a time that seemed like forever, battle raging day and night, never halting, many died, many went blind when they were targeted with security's shotguns in the eyes, and a lot of families lost a son or a daughter.

**LITERATURE IN EGYPT** still didn't come to grips with these years, not with these days specifically. Poetry did. Riyad's book, "...emerging forth into the Light" (another name for the ancient Egyptian funerary text, "Book of the Dead") consists of two long poems, "The Poet Becomes Victorious" and the second carries the book's name.

**PERHAPS NOTHING REMAIN** of those days except memories, mostly personal and fragmented, and this book. Since its publication in 2014, it was widely recognized as the birth of a very strong and original poetic voice. This is merely an attempt to 'translate' how it felt like to be in the middle of it all. The poet's language is Arabic, which is also my native language. ●

**Text and translation:** Amr Khairy Ahmed



# Emerging Forth into the Light

المدرعات ليست كائنات من المعدن،

المدرعات تخور، مثل الثيران المذبوحة، في الشوارع،

والدم الحار يصيبها بالجنون،

المدرعات تبكي بكاء جماعياً،

عندما تصطف بمحاذاة الرصيف،

تنتفخ دخاناً ورصاصاً،

وعيونها الواسعة مفتوحة دائماً على الناس،

للتعرف على الفرائس المحتملة.

ستزهر أجسادكم في يوم من الأيام،

وقلوبكم ستصير خالية من الجدية والألم،

ومن صراعات العمل، وكراهية النساء،

سيقبل كل منكم حبيبته في طوابير التذاكر،

وفي القطارات والبواخر في الإجازات،

ستعبرون بفرح في هذا العالم،

ولن تجدوا أثراً للأغاني الحماسية

أو الخوذات في الشوارع،

هذه الهتافات ستختفي للأبد،

ولاقتات الشهداء ستفرعها الريح،

ولن يسألكم أحد في الممرات:

هل تريدون رفقاء،

أو قواداً،

أو شريكاً في الجريمة؟،

سيملك كل منكم نجمة في السماء،

تضيء من أجله فقط،

وقبراً فخماً وسط الحدائق،

لكي لا يرى الآخرون هشاشته وإنهياره،

إنني مؤهل في هذه اللحظة،

لأن أكتب المستقبل:

أكتب الأولاد القادمين،

والشوارع المفتوحة على الانهيار،

والموسيقى التي تطل من جميع الشرفات،

والتماتيل التي تبتسم للعابرين،

وهي تشير بعلامة النصر.

الثوار باسمون،

ذقونهم نابذة كاشوك القنفاذ،

جذابون، وعاطفيون، ومتفائلون،

حقيقيون بصورة غريبة

حتى على الخيال،

مستعدون للقتال من أجل لحظة،

أو مباراة،

برهافة وعنف

يسوقون متع الحياة العظمى

إلى غرفهم البائسة،

ويستقبلون الرصاص

بالوسامة التي يلطخها الغناد،

متوحون

كان في قم كل واحد منهم نهذاً،

جريمة هائلة تنهض خلف روحه،

غارقون في أحلامهم،

غارقون في القلق،

تغريهم نثرات المفاهي، وروائح البنات،

وعيونهم تنتظر دائماً إلى الداخل،

تسبح وتضاجع وتستريح

فوق شاطئ بعيد.

Armored vehicles are not creatures made of metal,  
Armored vehicles bellow, like slaughtered bulls,  
Hot blood drive them crazy,  
Armored vehicles cry in groups,  
When they align along the pavement,  
Breathing smoke and bullets,  
Their wide eyes always staring at people,  
To identify potential preys.

Revolutionaries are smiley,  
Their beards grown like hedgehogs,  
Attractive, passionate, optimistic,  
Strangely real,

Even for imagination,  
Ready to fight over a concert,  
Or a match,

Delicately, violently,  
Pushing along grand pleasures of life,  
Towards their miserable rooms,  
And confronting the bullets,  
Handsome, stubborn,  
Autistic

As if each of them got a breast in his mouth,  
An incredible crime rising behind his soul,  
Immersed in their dreams,  
Immersed in anxiety,  
Allured by chatter in cafés, by girls' smell,  
And their eyes, always, looking to the inside,  
Swim, make love, rest,  
On a far away beach.

Your bodies will bloom one day,  
And your hearts will depart with seriousness and pain,  
And with work struggles, and hate for women,  
And you will kiss your lovers in the tickets queues,  
And in trains, and on board vacation ships,  
You will cross happily in this world,  
And will not find a trace of patriotic songs,  
Or helmets in the streets,  
These slogans of marches and demonstrating will disappear forever,  
And the banners of martyrs will be lift by the wind,  
And nobody will ask you in narrow streets:  
Do you want a comrade,

Or a pimp,

Or a partner in crime?

Each of you will own a star in the sky,  
Lighting for him only,  
And a spacious grave among the orchards,  
So that others won't see his vulnerability and fall-  
ing-apart,  
I am ready in this moment,  
To write the future:  
Write the kids to come,  
And the streets open to infinity,  
And the music coming from every window,

And the statues smiling to passersby,  
Waving the V sign

# B



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