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Afghanistan's Two Masters



Jonathan Stradling



Although the Bush Administration's National Security Strategy aims to topple tyranny and overcome global obstacles through the spread of effective democracies, its attempts to spread

free and open societies to nations with an Islamic social order are unsound. At one point, the Bush Administration's strategy seemed valid; I was cautiously optimistic that an Islamic government could espouse liberty. Yet after witnessing Abdul Rahman's recent arrest in Afghanistan and last month's protests over *Jyllands-Posten's* Muhammad cartoons, I am convinced that although an Islamic regime may be democratically elected, it cannot be both Islamist and free.

In 2004, the Bush Administration averred that the newly drafted Afghan constitution "protects the rights of all" and cited Afghanistan's first democratic elections as evidence that "the Afghan people are on the path to democracy and freedom." Certainly the 282 US soldiers who have given their lives in Afghanistan would hope that this is the case. However, in spite of their sacrifice and the millions of dollars in US aid that have made a democratic Afghanistan possible, its constitution is self-contradictory regarding individual rights and freedoms. It declares that Afghanistan will respect the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18 of which states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest

his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance." Yet the constitution goes on to assert that "in Afghanistan, no law can be contrary to the beliefs and provisions of the sacred religion of Islam." This disquieting dichotomy became readily apparent last week when a Kabul court charged Mr. Rahman with conversion to Christianity, a capital crime under Islam's Sharia law.

In spite of the Bush Administration's assertions, a society ruled by Sharia law, like Afghanistan, does not "protect the rights of all." Sharia law infringes

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on the traditional rights that Americans equate with freedom, including freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and gender equality. Although Article 23 of the Afghan constitution avows that "life is a gift of God and a natural right of human beings," under Sharia law, conversion to Christianity and criticism of the prophet Muhammad are both capital crimes. In Afghanistan, the liberties guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are apparently subservient to Islamic law.

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Evo Morales: First Indigenous President

Dayan Bernal



On January 22, Evo Morales became Bolivia's first indigenous president. While many think of Evo Morales as a radical socialist with far-reaching goals, Bolivia's newly elected president

has fought for the civil rights and liberties of the indigenous people of Bolivia.

Evo Morales is an indigenous Aymara from Orinoca, a mining town in the department of Oruro, located in the Bolivian Altiplano. Morales, as a leader of the cocalero (coca leaf growers) movement, was elected to the Chamber of Deputies in 1997 to represent provinces of Chapare and Charasco. As a representative of the people of these indigenous lands where coca is cultivated, Morales continually fought against the United States' efforts to eradicate coca in Bolivia.

Although for Europe and North America coca is best-known as the plant which cocaine is derived from, for the indigenous people of Bolivia coca is best-known as natural resource and a holy plant that is essential to their culture and way of life. Coca is a natural resource originated from the Andes and used for: medicine, stimulant, religious rituals, gift-giving, etiquette, socialization and more. This plant is an essential natural resource for millions of indigenous people, who cultivate this plant for their physical survival and the perpetuation of their culture. The national newspaper, *La Razon* interviewed Cáceres, who is an advocate for coca cultivation, "There is an erroneous notion from the international community; they see the farmers of coca as drug dealers and the leaf as cocaine." For example, miners chew on this plant because it numbs

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Afghanistan's Two Masters

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This ambivalence towards human rights, however, hardly seems anomalous. Freedom House classifies only three countries with a Muslim majority as *Free* (Senegal, Mali and Indonesia), all of which do not have an Islamic government. Found among the world's other 43 Muslim countries are the most heinous oppressors of political and civil liberties, including US allies Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the United Arab Emirates.

Bush's National Security Strategy pledges to "take special efforts to promote freedom of religion and conscience and defend it from encroachment by repressive governments," but can this be done in countries like Afghanistan and Iraq, where the US is trying desperately to stimulate democracy, in any form and at any cost? Can Islamic democracies adopt Sharia law and still "protect the rights of all?" Recent events suggest that they cannot. The US must stop sacrificing American lives for what can hardly be deemed the cause of liberty. Democratic elections in Afghanistan and Iraq may end tyranny and oppression, but only for those in the devout Muslim majority.

Jonathan is from Los Alamos, New Mexico majoring in International Relations and Japanese. His favorite book is The Great Gatsby.

Evo Morales

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their stomach and allows them to ignore their daily hunger sensations, thirst, and fatigue. For the Aymaras and the Quechuas, the eradication of coca means losing an essential natural resource, the lands where they labor, and more importantly it means obliterating the fundamental component for their social and economic way of life.

Due to the United States' implementation of its policies in Bolivia, there has been great conflict and terror among the indigenous people and government officials in the past decade. Evo Morales has been the main advocate for the indigenous peoples' civil right for the production and the consumption of coca. According to the Freedom House database, "An anti-coca expeditionary task force paid for by the U.S. Embassy and made up of 1,500 former Bolivian soldiers was the subject of frequent charges of the use of excessive force and human rights violations ranging from torture to murder. Critics claimed that the creation of a military force paid for by foreign funds violated both the Bolivian constitution and military regulations" Although the United States' purpose and objective of the War on Drugs in Latin America is well-intentioned,

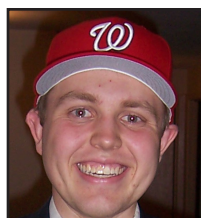
their intervention has caused political, economic, and social instability to Bolivia. This problem has diminished due to new policies endorsed by Evo Morales, who strives to protect coca production and consumption among the indigenous people and has also agreed to work against drug trafficking.

Evo Morales' movement against the eradication of coca in Bolivia generated his great popularity throughout the region, and especially among the majority indigenous population. Together with his political party Movement for Socialism MAS (*more*), Evo Morales was able to become the first indigenous president. Throughout Bolivian history, indigenous people have constantly been misrepresented and ignored by political officials, who disregarded their struggles with poverty and political unrest. Evo Morales' platform promotes the acceptance of different social and cultural backgrounds, human rights, and equality through public opinion and acknowledges the civil rights and liberties of the indigenous people. Never before have indigenous people had greater participation and respect in government.

Dayan is from La Paz, Bolivia majoring in Philosophy and Latin American Studies. Her favorite movie is Bon Voyage.

The Plight of China's Farmers

Daniel Evensen



With Prime Minister Wen Jiaobao's recent national address, the world's attention focused on the depressing plight of the Chinese farmer. It is not a story of future prospects, as in the American case; nor is it a story of eventual revolution and social justice, as in the European case. It is a story of frustration, a story of people who have been ravished by poverty over the space of thousands of years, and who, despite a communist and a capitalist economic revolution, still find themselves where they have always been.

Any student interested in the history of China need not look far to see the perennial social injustice meted out upon the lower classes. From the earliest feudal history to the workings of China's famous imperial system, there has never been much hope in rural Chinese families. One was born poor, one died poor. In times of plenty one had enough to eat and work harder; in times of famine, many were reduced to eating stones or the bark of trees. Social progression could only be found in the old Imperial Examination (*keju*), and even then one had to devote an entire life to intensive study to stand a chance. To say that life held little opportunity for such people would be an understatement.

As Chinese society developed over the course of time, the land holdings in China began to become monopolized. Large landowners bought up land

left and right, bringing ruin and starvation to the poor farmers. The Great Proletarian Revolution of 1949 was supposed to right all these wrongs and return the land back to the people. It wound up simply putting the people into communes, replacing the landowners with the government, and the people continued to starve. Deng Xiaoping's reforms brought in foreign investment and capitalism, but, after twenty years, have still only benefited a small segment of Chinese society. Something must be done.

The question here concerns a group of workers that make up nearly half of China's work force. For China to become a great world power, it needs to address this problem once and for all. Squabbling with other Asian nations and increasing its military power may build power in one way, but China will never meet its power potential without social justice at home. Prime Minister Wen needs to keep his country on the right path, as outlined in this speech, by continuing to economically support these poor perishing peasants.

A few days ago, I talked with a good friend from Nanjing, China about this subject. "I don't want to talk about the farmers," she said, "too depressing." It's about time we stop ignoring the issue and start talking about these poor farmers. Where a businessman sees China as a profit goldmine, the rest of us should look closer and see all those faces that are left behind.

Daniel is from South Jordan, Utah majoring in International Relations. His favorite book should be On the Road.

CHECK IT OUT

Upcoming Political Events on Campus

Global Awareness Lecture

ProtectingSoft Targets:

Marriott International's Approach to
Mitigating the Terrorist Threat
Alan Orlob

Vice President of Corporate Security and
Loss Prevention, Marriott International
Wednesday, 29 March 12:00 238 HRCB

Korea Workshop

Tigers on the Peninsula:

The Koreas in 2006

Thursday, 30 March 1:00 238 HRCB

Council on Foreign Relations

America's Opportunity to Alter History's
Course

Richard N. Haass, President, Council on
Foreign Relations

Friday, 31 March 10:00 257 HRCB

Benefit Concert

Grammy Winner Bill Miller

Proceeds Go Towards African Children
Thursday, 30 March 7:30, Provo Tabernacle

Book Review of “Preemption” by Alan M. Dershowitz

Max Stoneman



Is it better for ten guilty men go unpunished than to have one innocent man condemned? Should ten innocents be detained so that one terrorist can be stopped from threatening civilians? To what extent should the powers of the government of democratic nations look to preempt terrorist or criminal activities? In his new book, Alan M. Dershowitz, a law professor at Harvard, explains that these questions and myriad more are being answered and implemented by democratic nations every day “without a firm basis in law, jurisprudence, or morality,” though precedents (some good, some shaky) exist historically. The issue of what seems to be the inverse relationship between liberty and security is dissected in full by Dershowitz, with fascinating attention to historical, legal and ethical detail. In his introduction and throughout the book, he argues that it is “meaningless to declare support for, or opposition to, prevention or precaution as a general principle because so much properly depends on the values at stake... [Numerous perils to liberty] are not being properly discussed today.” (Dershowitz, pg. 6-7)

For the 40 years of the Cold War, the idea of deterrence and mutually assured destruction (MAD) kept an all-out war with the Soviet Union at bay. Since the Soviets could be trusted in their interest for

self-preservation, we could count on them thinking twice about using nuclear or military force against the US or her allies. Unlike Communist nations, religious extremists who do not seem to have an interest in their own self-preservation cannot be deterred by threats of punishment from the state. Their cost-benefit analysis includes “otherworldly” benefits and as such, “We have no morally acceptable way of deterring those willing to die for their cause... Because they are not deterrable, the argument for preventive measures becomes more compelling.” (Dershowitz, pg. 8)

Dershowitz mentions the Sept. 10, 2002 lead editorial of the New York Times which argued that while preemption may be appropriate against terrorists, it was a far more questionable strategy in dealing with Iraq in 2003. Dershowitz confronts not only the invasion of Iraq in 2003 in chapter 5 (with some interesting double-standards applied by US officials to Israel), but also the long list of failures and victories of Israel’s “first-strike” doctrine against Islamic nations and terrorists in chapter 3, the historical legality of preventive detention and targeted assassinations in chapter 2 and the question of whether a preemptive strike against Iran’s nuclear capabilities would be justifiable by moral and legal code in chapter 6.

He goes to great lengths to demonstrate how decisions to act preemptively require a complex assessment of multiple, complex factors (i.e. possibility of failure, costs of a successful or failed

preemption, nature and quality of the information on which these decisions are based, the incentive for others to act preemptively, the inevitability of unanticipated outcomes, etc.). On allowing power to accumulate and broaden within the government for preemptive action domestically, Dershowitz shows his uneasiness in allowing the government to intervene in the lives of its citizens before harm has occurred, but remains confident that on a case by case basis, a legal foundation can be laid for the future security of the democratic world.

Dershowitz’s book is a milestone in the modern legal debate between liberty and security. While his bias towards civil liberties as opposed to government intervention is pronounced, his support for preventive surgical action against terrorists is founded on the considerations that must be taken by decision-makers (the list of factors found in the introduction is worth the price of the book alone). The jurisprudence he hopes will take root will eventually guide all decisions of preemptive action, exacting a due assessment of the quality of intelligence available and the probabilities of success/failure, cost/benefit inherent in such actions. Debate on this subject will continue as America looks to reconcile its civil liberties with its national security. This book is an indispensable tool for this debate.

Max is from Salt Lake City, Utah majoring in Middle Eastern Studies. His favorite book is The Stand.

God’s Economy: The Choice Between Better and Best

Mike Layton



“Behold the Lord slayeth the wicked to bring forth his righteous purposes. It is better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief” (1 Ne. 4:13, emphasis added). Thus whispered the Spirit of God when Nephi hesitated to kill Laban in Jerusalem. This verse illustrates a fascinating principle: compromise in God’s economy. “Better” was used, not “best,” because God delights neither in death nor sin. Obviously, it would be best that no man should perish and that no nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief.

Economics is the study of choice, which is why it can help us to understand God. Upon knowing His desires and His values, we can understand His choices—why He intervenes in human affairs, and why He often does not. Some may say that to comprehend God is impossible. Perhaps to a degree, but I have savored sweet insights while contemplating scriptural examples of divine choice. I admire Einstein, who said, “I want to know God’s thoughts . . . the rest are details.”

The Lord reveals a glimpse of His thoughts when teaching Enoch about mankind: “Behold these thy brethren; they are the workmanship of mine own

hands, and I gave unto them their *knowledge*, in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his *agency*” (Moses 7:32, emphasis added; see also Moses 6:56; Hel. 14:30). Knowledge and agency comprise the core of human existence. Specifically, God refers to knowledge of Him, but knowledge in general is necessary for intelligent choice. We gather knowledge in order to choose.

Everyone makes decisions through the same process: weighing of costs and benefits, pros and cons. That’s economics. Whenever a regrettable decision is made, either knowledge or agency is lacking (lack of agency includes limited time, power, and will). For example, I sometimes arise late with a clear understanding of the consequences. I simply don’t have the *will* to get up. On the other hand, if I were to perform an open heart surgery, someone would surely die, because I don’t have the necessary *knowledge*, regardless of my desires.

Even omnipotence and omniscience yield optimum results only to the extent that God succeeds in sharing them with others (Moses 1:39). Each human being runs a personal economy, one that may grow into harmony with God’s economy. Just as businesses compete for revenue in global markets, God and Satan compete for minds and hearts in personal economies. You decide what you value and what you do not, just like you decide what product brands to purchase. Therefore, God’s power

and knowledge produce decisions that yield “better” results, not “best,” because that would not allow His children any room for error.

So compromise exists in God’s economy because He loves us all, but at the same time “cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance” (D&C 1:31). The Atonement is a magnificent compromise, a buffer of time between justice and mercy. God lives and chooses within that buffer—not mechanically, but much the same way we do, constantly weighing costs and benefits, pros and cons. (For examples of divine compromise, the following passages may be of interest: Alma 14:8-13; D&C 64:21; D&C 101:9-11; Isa. 9:16-17; Isa. 48:9-11; Isa. 54:6-8; Num. 14:11-24; Jacob 5).

The application of this principle to students of politics and economics should be apparent. For optimum results, we ought to apply the knowledge God has revealed, both in public policy and in our personal economies. No knowledge is more fundamental than that in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7; see 3 Ne. 15:1 for another knowledge/agency gem). Beyond that, governmental choices are rarely between bad and good, but rather between good and better.

Mike is from Orem, Utah majoring in International Relations. His favorite book is Your Memory: How It Works and How to Improve It.

In Defense of Vitriol

Tim Taylor



Partisanship. Bickering. Mudslinging. Our political system constantly deepens its uncompromising rut, while concurrently burying the public interest. Without fail, the upcoming midterm elections will see politicians sink to unprecedented lows, resorting to character smearing and general ugliness. Whether or not our government is actually more divided than in times past, as some assert, is debatable. But hopefully it is. Despite the general cry for more compromise, more cooperation, and more respect for opposing viewpoints, it is the brutal, and sometimes even spiteful, competition among ideas that fortifies the American democracy.

Gloria Jean Gong's recent article suggests that "thoughtful conservatives and liberals alike should refuse to allow increasingly vitriolic rhetoric to undermine the quality of their political dialogue." While decent people should refrain from ad hominem attacks, they are not obligated to abstain from attacking, viciously if need be, the ideas and values of others. The highest measure of respect for opposing viewpoints is to honestly engage, debate, and assess them. And candid, respectful assessment reflects the merit of the idea, or the lack thereof. Sometimes, the truth hurts.

Dumb ideas find respite from warranted criticism under the cozy, uncritical shelter of tolerance. We could choose to check our straightforward criticism of rotten ideas, but

this is risky. Such restraint, to some extent, lends equal merit to all ideas, both good and bad, implicitly suggesting they all have at least some value. This affirmative action for poor ideas has adverse consequences. If we suggest all ideas have equal value, then we may cease to sincerely evaluate the merits of our own. After all, there is no need for us to challenge our own opinions because, by golly, they deserve respect. Further, this affirmative action suggests that an idea's diversity is concomitant to its merit. Yet an idea's non-conformity ought not provide shelter from objective, and potentially ardent, criticism. An original idea is not necessarily better than, or even equal to, those already established.

Ms. Gong points out that "charitable compromise, thoughtful debate, and intelligent disagreement are the foundations of effective democracy." This is true. But it is fierce competition that allows for this fruitful dialectic. Leaders may attempt to rise above partisan politics, only to have their legs—and the values of their constituents—cut out from underneath them by more aggressive competition. We ought not worry, then, about so-called partisan pandering. Although another may deem idiotic that which you find brilliant, between an exchange of spittle the two of you may yet reach an understanding. The alternative is to dull the competitive edge of politics in the name of "respect" and turn vibrant democracy into a game of paddy-cake.

Tim is from Cardston, Alberta, Canada majoring in Political Science. His favorite book is *The Old Man and the Sea*.

A Mormon Glass Ceiling?

Seth Dilworth



Several weeks ago, Derek Staples wrote an article asking, "Will Mitt Romney be the Mormon JFK?" Staples's article, like other recent articles in the national media, alludes to a purported Mormon glass ceiling. As Romney begins preparing his candidacy, pundits are analyzing how low this ceiling actually is. In spite of the fact that many predicted the religious glass ceiling would hinder John F. Kennedy's campaign, he was the first Roman Catholic elected president, running as a presidential candidate "who happens to be Catholic." And even though many believe that a supposed glass ceiling hampered George Romney's campaign, it was comments regarding Vietnam and not his religion that ended Romney's quest for the White House.

We live in a different time than JFK and George Romney, and the glass ceiling, if there ever was one, is diminishing. Our society is friendly and tolerant to most religions, including Mormons. There are many LDS celebrities in our generation, like Steve Young, J.W. Marriot, and Napoleon. These celebrities and Mormon leaders in both parties, like Senators Harry Reid of Nevada and Gordon Smith of Oregon, have garnered national attention for their influence and success. National media attention has done much to diminish prejudice against the Mormon faith.

Perhaps the most encouraging development occurred several weeks ago, when Mitt Romney exceeded expectations in a straw poll taken at the Republican Southern Leadership Conference. Even though Bill Frist won in his home state of Tennessee, media attention focused on Romney for his success with the South's electorate, the group most likely to take issue with Romney's religion. Assuming there ever was a Mormon glass ceiling, if Romney can do well in the Bible Belt, then what does it matter? Even if Romney's campaign doesn't shatter the glass ceiling, it will greatly eliminate the prejudices faced by future Presidential candidates, Mormon and otherwise.

Seth is from Brigham City, Utah majoring in Political Science. His favorite book is *Huckleberry Finn*.

African Children Benefit Concert

Over the past year, the Zamani Project, a student run non-profit group, has been organizing a major benefit concert in order to help assist a pre-school in East London, South Africa called the Zamani Educare Centre. Zamani is located in a squatter's camp in South Africa known as Duncan Village. Before 1995 impoverished parents were unable to enroll their children in preparatory schools. As a result, hundreds of village children played in the narrow, dirty streets without adult supervision or hope for an early education. For the past few years students from Brigham Young University have been volunteering at the Zamani pre-school. About two years ago, a fire burned a

major portion of the pre-school down. Since that time the parents, teachers and volunteer students have been working to try and find a way to rebuild the school. Over the last few months, some of the students who volunteered at the school have been organizing a major benefit concert in order to help assist Zamani in raising the funding it needs to rebuild their school. Native American, Grammy Award winning musician, Bill Miller, has agreed to come and perform a benefit concert in behalf of the Zamani Educare Center. He will be performing Thursday, March 30th at 7:30 at Provo Tabernacle. Tickets are available at bookstore.byu.edu/benefitconcert.



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