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Congolese soldiers on a march. *New York Times*

Africa's World War

Julianne Parker



The world needs to face up to yet another terrifying reality about Africa: war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo did not end with the elections this summer, and will not end with the upcoming presidential run-off. Called "Africa's World War," the conflict in the DR Congo began in 1994 and has caused 4 million deaths – the largest death toll of any conflict since World War II. The magnitude of this number is hard to comprehend, especially compared to the 40,000 Iraqi civilian deaths. Or the 1,000 Lebanese deaths from this summer's hugely-publicized Israeli bombardment of Beirut. Despite peace being declared over 2 years ago, 1,000 Congolese continue to die every day from starvation and disease spread by political instability. The DR Congo's rebel leaders now running in democratic elections have simply shifted their ethno-centric animosities from the battlefield to the polling station. There has been no obvious move by any candidate towards a general Congolese solidarity – factions and violent ideologies still reign supreme.

On July 30 of this year, the Congolese voted in their first multi-party elections since independence in 1960. The presidential seat will be determined in

a run-off election between two rebel commanders: Jean-Pierre Bemba and Joseph Kabila. It is these two men who now have the power to finally end the killing and bring stability to a nation battered and bruised by violence and poverty. But neither seems able to put their ego-centric campaign rhetoric aside and begin truly working for the people. Both Bemba and Kabila have incited their supporters to violence in the recent post-election street wars in the capital Kinshasha. Kabila even sent the Congolese Armed Forces to attack Bemba's headquarters. The future of the DR Congo is frightening when put in the context of the leadership of either presidential candidate.

Bemba is the leader of the Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC), a rebel group which has been one of the principal perpetrators of war atrocities in the eastern Ituri region. Bemba was also invited to quell rebel uprisings in the neighboring Central African Republic, and is currently wanted by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity. He is widely popular in the western portion of the DR Congo—spouting ethnic hatred against "foreign" Swahili speaking easterners. Bemba uses eastern Congolese as a scapegoat for the country's problems, promising

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Why You Should Vote, and Vote Republican

Jacob Lybbert



Whether anyone likes it or not, this election comes down to one question. Sure, a variety of issues are at play, but the one overriding theme is Iraq.

Make no mistake. If elected, Democrats will pull out of Iraq. They may try and play word games, calling for "redeployment" or "change in strategy," but the net effect will be to abandon Iraq.

Admittedly, things have not gone well in Iraq. I am sobered by the deaths of American soldiers. But do not kid yourselves; if we leave now, things will get worse.

In the case of Iraq, historical context helps give us perspective and greater understanding of the struggle we face. Our experiences in Japan and Germany after WWII teach us that establishing successful, self-sustaining democracies is neither a short nor easy process. Those were never countries considered *ripe* for democracy. Conversely, we know what happens when the U.S. pulls out before the job is finished. One needs to look no further than Vietnam, Somalia, and Lebanon for a cautionary tale.

These were fights the U.S. did not have to lose. We had the military might, but the American public and its leaders lacked the will. As a direct result of that weakness of will, millions of people died and innocent people in Somalia, Lebanon, Vietnam and neighboring Cambodia continue to pay the price.

I mourn the civilian casualties in Iraq, but if we lose, if we give up now or anytime before Iraq can defend and maintain itself, numbers that can now

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Rationality and Policy Decision-Making

Darren Jackson



One of the most basic assumptions of economics is inherent rationality. All actors, no matter their situation, are treated as individuals capable of understanding a certain range of options, and then choosing the option that best suits their preferences. While we are susceptible to the occasional brain lapse, assuming rationality allows us to analyze an actor's behavior in their "best" possible moment, when the mind is lucid and decisions are logical. We are then able to make conclusions and formulate policies regarding that actor for any possible decisions, identifying their strongest option as that taken when acting rationally, and all other decisions as deviations from that standard. To approach the situation any other way risks underestimating the actor and ignore possible outcomes, while assuming inherent rationality avoids this. This lesson, however, seems to be lost on most politicians. You see, a rational person can be understood. A rational person has logical reasons for his/her choices. To judge the decisions of a rational actor requires the careful consideration of his/her logic. And when you're trying to garner public support in a world of five-second attention spans, consideration of opponents is something that, frankly, we just don't have time for.

I recently noticed a College Republican club member recruiting at a campus booth, decked out in a distinctive t-shirt. The shirt carried the classic red, white, and blue pachyderm on the front, and on the back it showed what was made up to look like a definition taken from a dictionary. "Liberal:" it said, "someone whose mind is so open their brain had fallen out." It intrigued me that rather than

emphasizing a key issue of a party platform or a catchy party slogan, or even attempting to logically attack "liberal" ideals, the individual had chosen to use that valuable advertising place to profile the opposing party as irrational.

Before the conservative right starts crying "foul play," let me emphasize that similar pigeonholing of Republicans as irrationally close-minded is equally rampant among those of the Democratic Party. The disease of stereotyping is universal and has paralleled the growth of a reactive, not proactive, political mindset in the past decade. The acceleration of communication and transportation has created a kind of national attention deficit disorder in which our tolerance of political messages maxes out at a sound byte. And so, rather than attempting to convert voters based on fiscal policies, education plans, or health-care reform, candidates are increasingly turning to the easiest sales pitch of all: "Everyone else is crazy."

Another example is the word "terrorist." September 11, 2001 brought the destructive power of America's enemies to its front door, and almost overnight, "terrorist organization" became a household phrase. Conflicts throughout the Middle East, starring such colorful characters as Bin Laden, Al Zarqawi, and Nasrallah have provided fodder for the exploding "War on Terrorism." But what does the word terrorist mean? One dictionary defines it as an individual or group that advocates the use of violence or threat to intimidate or coerce, especially for political reasons. Those definitions may seem normal to many, but pale in comparison to the additional weight carried by terrorist or terrorism today. The words have become synonymous with irrationality, insanity, inherent evil and bloodlust. I will not deny that there are certainly degrees of all those characteristics at play within these terrorist

organizations, but our expansion of the terminology to eliminate the possibility of any rational action on their part places America at a significant disadvantage in our attempts to understand them and thereby better oppose them. In 1945, the United States dropped two atomic bombs on Japan, killing an estimated 120,000 people instantly and an estimated 100,000 more through radiation exposure, all in an effort to dissuade Japan from continuing military action in World War II. In 2006, Hezbollah was reported to be winning public approval amongst its citizens by offering to repair homes and structures destroyed in the month-long war between Israel and Lebanon. One would not go so far as to call the United States a "terrorist organization," nor cast Hezbollah as a human-rights advocacy group, but one can see that the clear line between "us" and "them," between "rational" and "irrational," becomes a little blurry.

I am not arguing for vilification of American public officials, nor for exonerating Al-Qaeda or Hezbollah, but that we should assume rationality in our enemies. There may be moments where political frustration, religious zeal, or simple mental instability lead to inappropriate actions by players on the political and world scene. But I would suggest that there is great value in assuming rationality, as it forces us to consider all options and be proactive in our policy decisions. To not assume inherent rationality in any individual is almost certainly to underestimate them and to limit any understanding we have of them. The blessing of the Information Age is that all the tools we need for correct decision-making are at our fingertips. We just need to take the time to use them.

Darren is from Ashburn, Virginia majoring in International Relations.

Reasons to Reconsider Roe v. Wade

Mark Webb



Jonathan Stradling recently wrote an article approaching the subject of abortion from a pro-choice standpoint. One of Stradling's main points was that abortion cannot be approached as a black and white issue. I present an alternate view of the subject that Stradling may not have considered.

To many, the debate concerning abortion concerns not only the ethical aspects of deliberately ending a pregnancy, but also includes the increasing trend in the courts to legislate from the bench. Roe v. Wade (1973) effectively created a legal precedent to which all other legislation about abortion is now subject. Some feel this Supreme Court decision was founded on solid legal grounds, while others view the ruling as a prime example of the Court overstretching its

authority to make decisions about pressing moral questions. If the Supreme Court is allowed to overstep its bounds in the instance of abortion, it may show similar abuses of power in the future. This trend is a concern because by using careful rhetoric, the Supreme Court could hand-pick cases and pass judgments to create a binding legal precedent, affecting the outcome of court cases at all levels for years to come.

Many ethical issues, such as capital punishment, homosexual marriage, and euthanasia are currently the subject of legislation around the country, yet the Court could use its supreme legal authority and hand down verdicts on these key items without the consent of the American people.

Pro-choice individuals may count Roe v. Wade as a victory, yet they must realize that this small victory comes at a large cost if other moral issues are decided by the court that don't agree with their particular moral system. As a native of Utah, this topic is particularly important to me. Many of the

recent issues Utahans have faced have been caused by large organizations coming into the state to bully us around. Remember the Main Street Plaza debate? It wasn't entirely about the church's trade with the city but rather involved national organizations attempting to easily win in Utah in hopes of setting a precedent for the tough cases they faced in their home states. Had it not been for the strong support of the church, the trading of Utah public land would have been decided by people who didn't even care about Utah or Salt Lake City's long-term welfare.

Roe v. Wade should be overturned not just because abortion is wrong, but because of the unwanted externalities of legislating from the bench. The outcome of these complicated moral debates should ultimately be decided by the voters, not by the Supreme Court.

Mark is from Salt Lake City majoring in Microbiology.

A Platform Over Troubled Water

Carl Brinton



Last week I wrote about how the headless Democrats will suffer in the midterm elections for lack of a solid platform. But rather than just be cynical or critical, I want to be constructive. So, calling on my early childhood visiospatial skills honed by hours of legos and Wolfenstein 3D, I've come up with several possible platforms that Democrats could construct to offer voters safe haven from the tumultuous realities of the world in which we live.

Security: Bush has been using this trump card for the past 5 years. It seems every time he uses the word "terror", voters get scared red. Why? Democrats seem to merely throw up their hands and focus on other things. Even though Bush says he doesn't follow the polls, at least the Democrats should be. As CNN reported on Sept. 4, "Just 35% of 1,033 adults polled say they favor the war in Iraq; 61% say they oppose it -- the highest opposition noted in any CNN poll since the conflict began more than three years ago." CBS added in its own poll on Sept. 6 that "By a four-to-one margin (48% to 12%), Americans think the war in Iraq has made the threat of terrorism against the United States worse rather than better." Democrats, are you listening? It's time Democrats stepped up and became the party that

both promises and delivers a safer America through constructive international relations and respectful, rather than "robust" diplomacy.

Human rights: Secret prisons, suspending the Geneva Convention on human rights, torture, tacit consent to the deaths of a thousand Lebanese civilians, intrusive laws that provide a paranoid government the ability to search, seize, arrest, detain, and try people without constitutional rights, international outrage against Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, "enemy combatant" status that's so legal it's extralegal, and blatant disregard of the constitutional checks and balances by sidestepping repeated Supreme Court rulings. It's time for Operation American Freedom, where the Democrats step up and say, "No, we won't accept any more neoconservative propaganda about liberty when this administration has more to curtail the liberties of US and world citizens than any other since the Red Scare."

Environmental protection: Everyone from Arnold Schwarzenegger to Al Gore to Richard Branson and even the Carnegian capitalist machine of Wal-Mart have turned green. Meanwhile, the Bush administration has cut the meager \$80 million of federal funding to geothermal and hydroelectric power. Despite the findings of the National Academy of Sciences in a Bush administration-commissioned report that: "Temperatures are, in fact, rising. Greenhouse gases are accumulating in

the earth's atmosphere as a result of human activities, causing surface air temperatures and subsurface ocean temperatures to rise... national policy decisions made now and in the longer-term future will influence the extent of any damage suffered by vulnerable human populations and ecosystems later in this century," the Administration has not made a noticeable effort to do anything. What's more, Nicholas Stern, former chief economist for the World Bank, recently came out with a sobering report that rising temperatures due to global warming will decrease the world GDP by 3-10%. These are two very conservative sources handing out very clear reports about how serious global warming actually is. With such furor at high gas prices and an increasingly large preponderance of evidence that global warming does exist and that it is directly caused by burning fossil fuels (go to www.pewclimate.org to learn more), the Democrats could appeal to both left-leaning environmentalists and fence-sitting people who want to save money and care about the future of this world.

The list goes on and on. The question is, will the Democratic plague of circumambulation continue until the Republicans win the race, or will they stand up for the democratic values they are supposed to represent? When you vote, choose those people who will step up, or ask those who don't to step down.

Carl is from Bountiful majoring in Chinese and Economics.

AN EYE FOR AN EYE MAKES THE WHOLE WORLD BLIND

Jansen Gunther



On August 11, with a ceasefire visibly near, Israel inexplicably dropped thousands of cluster bombs into Southern Lebanon over a period of three days. These projectiles contain over a thousand bomblets that scatter in mid-descent over a broad range, twenty-five percent of which, on failure to detonate, invariably become landmines waiting to release a deadly shrapnel explosion. The problem is only worsened by the bomblets shiny, round appearance that surely strikes the curiosity of any toddler unlucky enough to play in its vicinity. More appalling is that Israel did this well aware that such a weapon is incapable of discriminating between soldier and civilian, especially when fired into Lebanese villages waiting to be re-inhabited. To put it bluntly, Israel knew these bombs would end up killing kids, and they fired them anyway. And these

actions neither anticipated nor brought about any *military advantage*, Shoom Davar—none!!

Despite the stomach churning caused by the aforementioned, one must sympathize with the precarious situation that Israel was in, having to fight a non-state actor shielding itself within civilian settlements. Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah's Kingpin, should be indicted for war crimes for purposefully enticing Israeli projectile engagement of Lebanese civilian areas. But Israel only worsened the situation on all sides by senselessly deploying a million bomblets ready and waiting to explode Lebanese children (the going rate is three casualties per day). Can anyone really look at such actions as insufficient or even proportionate?

The sad answer to that question is made obvious through the recent condoning of Israel's abhorrent force by Democrat and Republican alike. And why may you ask, does a democratic government condone such an immoral onslaught? Well, nobody wants to be an anti-semitic, right? Call it what you like, but there is a Judeo-Christian bias throughout much of the US media. As a result, TV-watchers are spoon-fed prejudice,

subconsciously assuming Israeli actions are morally and legally justifiable without regard to substantiation. And when someone does look the other way to question Israeli actions, the media unleashes the hounds. The result? Citizens who are afraid, unable, or unaware of how to act rationally regarding US-Israeli policy. Just take a look at the reaction of two popular political figures. While Howard Dean, having caught the McCarthy bug, hops around the hill pointing his finger at everything "anti-Semitic," Human Rights Watch's Ken Roth gets smeared across newspapers for impartially accusing both Hezbollah and Israel of war crimes. As much as I enjoy chuckling at Howard Dean, it worries me when such insanity stagnates necessary change. And what necessary changes need be made? To judge a nation not by name but by action, impartial to prevailing thought. That and to stop selling them cluster bombs.

Jansen is from New York, New York. He is a senior majoring in Political Science.

DRC

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to “unite” the western Congolese against foreign incursions.

Joseph Kabila, currently the interim president of the DR Congo, is not as favorable an alternative to Bemba as one would hope. His father ousted the former Congolese dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko, and was subsequently assassinated in 2001. Joseph then took over the presidency, after serving both on the rebel front as an operations commander of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo (AFDL), and as a Chief of Staff in the Congolese Armed Forces. He has been accused of perpetrating mass sex crimes while serving both in the Army and AFDL. As president for the past five years, Kabila has made no personal moves to disarm rebel militias or build infrastructure to aid the millions displaced throughout the country. The UN peacekeeping troops and Doctors Without Borders seem to be the only effective aid groups on the ground.

The future of the DR Congo is therefore dependant on the leadership of these two former rebel-commanders. While campaigning, both have borrowed convenient phrases of Congolese “liberation” and rule of the “people” from their backgrounds as guerilla fighters. In using empty rhetoric, both have simply urged more ethnic division, spurred more animosity, and conveniently ignored concrete policy proposals on how stop the 1,000 people from dying each day. Bemba’s campaign slogan—“One Hundred Percent Congolese”—is simply an attack on Kabila’s half-Rwandan heritage. Instead of concentrating on bolstering his own ethnic credo, Bemba ought to start taking measures to get food and medicine to the war-torn Ituri region.

Although this election is a land-mark in the history of the DR Congo, I fear it is simply being used as a new ethnic war zone between two reckless and self-absorbed rebel fighters. The DR Congo needs a strong leader to look beyond ethno-centric ideologies and begin emergency aid immediately. It is only the Congolese who can ultimately end their own suffering, and unless such a leader steps forward soon, innocent individuals will continue to die in Africa’s World War.

Julianne is from Tustin, California majoring in Art History and Curatorial Studies.

Vote Republican

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be figured with five digits will jump to six and then seven. We will not be lamenting 30,000 deaths; we will be outraged at the hundreds of thousands and then millions.

If we leave, various terrorist states and rogue nations will be emboldened. Rather than the voluntary disarmament we saw in Libya after Iraq, we will see more Irans and North Koreas.

We must continue to support the war in Iraq because it is the central battle in the war on terror. This is not a war in the traditional sense, in which nation-states engage in set-piece battles governed by the Geneva Convention. This is a war against a trans-national ideology—a war that does not recognize borders and boundaries. Worse still, it is a war in which our opponent places no value

on human life. They will kill man, woman, and child and they will not negotiate. If we leave Iraq, it will not end our fight with the jihadists, it will simply force us to wage battle on a ground not of our choosing. I fear that ground will be American soil.

In my hierarchy of political priorities, I place the most value on a candidate’s position on Iraq. When I fill out my absentee ballot thousands of miles from my home district in Washington state, I will ask myself one question: does this candidate want to fight the jihadists in the homeland or in Iraq?

Jacob is from Kennewick, Washington. He graduated from BYU in 2006 with a Bachelors Degree in History and is currently working on an MA in Modern History at University College London.

CHECK IT OUT

Upcoming Political Events on Campus

NSEP Scholarship Information Meeting

Learn about the David L. Boren Scholarship which offers thousands of dollars for study abroad, language, and cultural experience. Find out about deadlines and how to apply.

Tuesday, 31 October
10:00–10:50 AM, 238 HRCB

Global Awareness Lecture

“Remapping Taipei: How Poets and Filmmakers Rethink Postwar Nationalist Cultural Policy,”

Steven Riep, assistant professor of Chinese
Wednesday, 1 November
Noon, 238 HRCB

International Field Studies Lecture

“It’s About the Story,”

Wynn Hougaard, award-winning film editor,
LDS Motion Picture Studio
Friday, 3 November
Noon, 238 HRCB

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6:00

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