

## *In this issue...*

The dominant theme of this year's *Global Topics* seems to be United States Foreign policy – its strengths, failings, and future prospects. The articles in this issue tackle different problems and employ different theoretical perspectives, but all of them suggest serious flaws in U.S. policies to date, and as a group they offer constructive advice for a more effective, humane, and secure U.S. global role going forward.

Five of our seven authors directly address issues of current U.S. policy concern. Colin Cronin's piece examines the significance of asymmetric warfare in U.S. military strategy toward China. He explains its importance to Chinese strategic thinking, and recommends the U.S. develop greater asymmetric deterrence capacity while maintaining its superiority in conventional capabilities. Garrett Heilman's article analyzes the problem of proliferation of nuclear weapons to Iran. He advocates a transatlantic solution, one in which the United States and the European Union form a control regime that both engages and economically rewards Iran for good behavior, and imposes costs if Iran persists in developing its nuclear program. In her article, Rossella Maria Moyer critiques the United States' growing reliance on private contractors in prosecuting the war in Iraq. She concludes that large-scale privatization of the military is not in the interests of the United States, and it is not helping the U.S. achieve its counterinsurgency goals. Charlotte Hill investigates the United States' foreign policy record of inaction with regard to genocide. She argues that the dominance of realist theory in U.S. policymaking explains this stance, and that alternatives to realist assumptions, such as those held by the American anti-genocide movement (AGM), are both imperative and possible. Finally, Connor P. O'Brien uses the case of Operation Iraqi Freedom to assess the relative merits of neorealism and liberalism as explanatory frameworks. He finds liberalism's focus on economic gains or Iraqi democracy as reasons for the U.S. invasion to be contradictory and implausible. By contrast, he says, neorealism both aptly highlights the U.S.' folly in embarking on preventative war, and predicts its current predicament.

Two of our authors do not explicitly consider the United States' role, but they nevertheless still examine topics that are central to U.S. policy success: human rights, democracy, and Islam. Emily Dubie's work explores India's defiance of the modernization theory maxim that economic development must precede democracy. She notes that India's unique colonial legacy and decolonization experience, as well as its civilian control of the military, robust civil society, and experienced leadership in the Congress Party, have allowed India to overcome the factors that typically inhibit democratization in poor, ethnically diverse societies. Alexa Hoyne's work provides insights into Islamic values and rituals, first with regard to resolving contradictions between the sacred and profane, and second as to how they conform to international human rights standards. She finds that although a number of human rights abuses seem to be sanctioned under shari'ah law, the shari'ah in place in many countries is not congruent with basic Islamic values. Her studies of Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Tunisia suggest that there is hope for human rights in Islamic countries if shari'ah can be brought back in to line with Islam's original texts and beliefs.

*Global Topics* welcomes submissions from undergraduates in all disciplines – humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and the fine arts. In subsequent issues, we look forward to publishing papers on an ever widening range of themes, including, but not limited to, global and/or international aspects of art and music, literature, philosophy, culture, social movements, the environment, wealth and poverty, migration, religion, and commerce. Since every aspect of modern life is inextricably linked to global society, an exploration of the global and international aspects of students' respective subject areas seems essential in preparing them to contribute toward a better world.

Christine A. Gustafson, Ph.D.

Faculty Advisor