

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
International Affairs Society



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

I am proud to introduce you to *The Globe: World News from All Sides*. This journal is the only undergraduate journal at the George Washington University devoted solely to International Affairs. The Globe is an amazing opportunity for International Affairs Society members, as well as Elliot School students to be published. More than that it is an opportunity to open discussion, publish ideas and to think and write critically on world affairs.

For those of you who are new to the International Affairs Society, welcome! Writing an article for the Globe would be a great way to get involved in the organization and I am always accepting articles for submission. Returning members: welcome back! Put your academic papers to good use and submit them to the Globe and allow others to gain insight from your academic endeavors. One of *The Globe's* great strengths is that those who participate submit such a wide variety articles on a multitude of topics that *The Globe* becomes a great way to broaden your views and learn something new.

I hope all of you enjoy reading and writing for the Globe!

Best,

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Editor-In-Chief

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The World's Most Polluted Places: The Top Ten of the Dirty Thirty

By Barnett S. Koven

The health of the environment is a delicate and global issue. Every country on every continent contributes to the environmental distress in which the world finds itself currently mired. However, as with every situation of global proportion each country's contributions to both the problem and the solution are not the same. Since 2006 the Blacksmith Institute has released a report listing the 30 dirtiest countries in the world. Each country on the list has been the subject of an extensive and in-depth analysis of the polluted area, examining the criteria under assessment as well as charting the progress each country has made in its efforts to remediate the situation. Nations within the same region frequently share similar characteristics due to their geographical location. The dirtiest countries currently are in Asia, including India, as well as in the former Soviet Union, Africa and South America. These nations suffer from environmental issues which are a direct result of human behavior and technological disadvantages which make rectifying their environmental discrepancies a consistent uphill battle.

Each region of the world has specific countries which are so ingrained with human activity that creates environmental pollution and its associated human behaviors that they form clusters of countries which are among the 30 dirtiest in the world.

Asia and Asia Minor have contributed to this compilation given the environmental pollution in India and China. In Sukina, India, Hexavalent Chromium and Chromite mines have led to the extreme pollution of water supplies. The waste rock and the untreated water from the mines have caused the drinking water to become unfit for human consumption. Additionally pollution of the air and soil have resulted in severe health consequences for its residents, who suffer from gastrointestinal bleeding and tuberculosis, as well as asthma and infertility, with a significant increase in birth defects plaguing the surviving births.

Similar situations have arisen in Vapi, India where more than 50 industrial estates discharge heavy metals, pesticides and chemical waste all of which have led to birth defects and high incidences of cancer. Mercury latent water readings 96 times higher than World Health Organization standards are also to blame for the dire medical situations endured by the residents in these afflicted areas.

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Attempts at rectifying the problem have proved to be futile and staggering. Mining companies have taken a few piecemeal actions, however the problems have been identified as being so widespread that they are beyond the control of the respective states. Consequently the problems persist without any genuine concern on behalf of the governments or the companies themselves. A dedicated initiative by the governments of Sukina and Vapi are needed to enforce policies requiring corporations to exercise cleaner practices. In Linfen and Tianying, China, the conditions are tragically similar.

Linfen and Tianying are the most polluted cities in China. Particles and gases from industry and traffic have resulted in Linfen having the worst air quality in all of China. Coal and other related resource extraction industries have continued to expand operations while their activities are unregulated by the Chinese government, resulting in respiratory and skin diseases, as well as lung cancer.

Tianying suffers from the same heavy metal and particle pollutants as Sukina and Vapi India. The heavy metal pollutants in Tianying have settled into the soil creating an average lead content 10 times higher than the Chinese national standard. As a result, children in Tianying frequently suffer from birth defects and developmental challenges. However, the changes taking place in Linfen and Tianying, China are vastly different from those occurring in Sukina and Vapi, India.

In Linfen, the local government has made plans to shut down more than 200 factories by the close of 2007 and replace them with cleaner and better regulated facilities. The State Environmental Protection Administration has ordered that all lead processing firms in Linfen be shut down until the environmental effects have been accurately and adequately assessed.

La Oroya, Peru, appropriately named for its long history of mining, and Kabwe, Zambia suffer from extremely high lead pollution. WHO has determined that in La Oroya, the average blood level for lead in children is 33.6 micrograms per deciliter, three times the recommended safe limit. In Kabwe, levels of lead in children are even higher (50-100 micrograms per deciliter). Limited efforts have been taken in La Oroya. There have been initiatives which attempted to isolate children from lead contamination, however, these efforts have been undermined by economic conditions which force children, some as young as 7 or 8, into the mines.

In Kabwe, the public knows very little about the health implications of working in 80 plus year old mines. Often workers will die as a result of physically unsafe conditions before they begin suffering any acute health effects. As such, clean-up has not even been targeted as a priority.

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Soviet rule left a legacy of a dilapidated environment throughout the former USSR. In Ukraine, the Chernobyl nuclear disaster released more radiation than the atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II. Nineteen miles of land around the reactor 4 site remain completely uninhabitable. Nearly 2,000 tons of combustible material still exists within the structure. Leaks in that structure have led experts to fear that rain water and dust from fuels have formed a toxic liquid that may currently be contaminating the ground water in the surrounding areas.

The health impacts of the meltdown have resulted in more than 5,000 cases of thyroid cancer, with those under the age of 14 being the most severely affected. These cases have been attributed to elevated concentrations of radioiodine in milk. Pollution which resulted from the Chernobyl nuclear disaster still affects vast swaths of land in Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine, all countries are still classified (by the Blacksmith Institute) as “contaminated” with radio nucleotides. Additionally, following the incidents, residents were acknowledged as having skin lesions, respiratory ailments, infertility and birth defects.

Clean up activity begun in 1986 immediately following the disaster and has resulted in a significant decrease in pollution, especially radio nucleotide concentrations. Furthermore, decreased radioactive activity has been projected for future generations. Following the meltdown, the reactor was enclosed in a concrete casing designed to absorb radiation and contain the remaining fuel. The sarcophagus, however, was not a permanent solution. Its effectiveness in reducing the exposure of the remaining radiation from the reactor was only to last at a maximum 30 years. New programs are underway to further secure the sight. Currently there are plans for a 19 mile exclusion zone around the site, once an appropriate environmental impact assessment is completed. Nevertheless, Chernobyl seems poised to remain one of the top ten most polluted areas for the foreseeable future.

In other areas of the former Soviet Union, Cold War era manufacturing has led to very different environmental problems. In Dzerzhinsk and Norilsk, Russia, chemicals and toxic byproducts, including Sarin and VX gas as well as lead, have caused a staggering death rate that far exceeds the country’s birth rate (by 280%). In Dzerzhinsk, the city’s annual death rate of 17 per 1,000 is higher than Russia’s national average of 14 deaths per 1,000. The nickel and related metal mining in Norilsk has caused air pollution with sulfur dioxide and heavy metals such as nickel, copper, cobalt and lead, as well as phenols and hydrogen sulfide. Norilsk’s population is subjected to numerous respiratory, ear, nose and throat diseases. Norilsk also shares Dzershinsk’s elevated mortality rate, with 15.8% of these deaths being in children.

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Clean up work has begun in both cities to undo the health dilemmas caused by the exposure to harsh metals. In Dzerzhinsk, a local NGO, DRONT, in cooperation with the Nizhniy Novgorod municipal government has brought together a steering committee to work on the design of a large scale remediation and pollution mitigation plan for the affected area. In Norilsk, Norilsk Nickel has worked to reduce its emissions of major air pollutants. In 2006, the company invested more than \$5 million to overhaul its dust and gas recovery and removal systems. It has committed nearly \$1.4 million for its air pollutant prevention program and is eagerly working to combat its high emissions statistic. While initiatives such as those funded by DRONT do have significant impact, much more work is needed.

The environmental issues that plague the planet's most polluted countries are an ongoing issue and can no longer be ignored. In order to adequately address these problems, there must be financial and political support, as well as a willingness by the polluters to modify and if necessary cease the actions which are destroying the environment and harming the citizens. The most effective method for achieving these necessary goals is inter-network cooperation between the private and public sector, working toward changing behaviors and enforcing enacted policies. Lastly, financial assistance to national and/or local governments would help impoverished polluted areas to make use of the technologies and expertise required for large scale clean-up. We must realize that contamination abroad will have a deleterious effect on the entire world.

Sources: *The World's Worst Polluted Places: The Top Ten of The Dirty Thirty. A project of the Blacksmith Institute, September 2007.*

Health Effects of the Chernobyl accident: an Overview, World Health Organization, April 2006

The Beginning of United States Diplomacy

By Robert Baxter

Following the tragedies of World War One it became apparent to Americans that what they looked to change in the world had yet to be accomplished; the world had been cultivated for democracy but could still not stand the test of irrational revolution. Americans did not retreat from the world in the 1920's and resorted to nothing less than restructuring the world's affairs. Thus, inter-war diplomacy created a transformation from a nation who began testing the waters of the global

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community to a nation that sought to bring about a new world order. “A New international system, built by American hands and money and based on American principles, now had to be erected on the bloody ruins of the old European order.”¹ This transformation into inter-war diplomacy can be attributed to one principal actor, Herbert Hoover as both Secretary of Commerce and the President. His philosophies of promoting American commerce and economic stability in the world to bring about global peace were the most instrumental ideals of the time.

Herbert Hoover despite his criticism as a villain whose policies caused the depression, he was one of the most capable and intelligent people of his generation. Hoover accepted the Secretary of Commerce position in 1921, after Harding agreed that Hoover would be involved in key diplomatic decisions. In the coming years Hoover would become world famous for his belief that individual freedom at home was directly related to a policy abroad. Thus, Hoover was influential in shifting the old search for order at home, to a search for a world that would build his interwar-diplomacy. This shift to creating a new world order would create a lasting impact on the future of the U.S. diplomatic policies. This concept of a new world order can be defined as a dramatic change in world political thought and the balance of power. The phrase "new world order" was first used in connection with Woodrow Wilson in his designs of the League of Nations just after WWI. Like Wilson, Hoover saw the new world order as a policy that surpassed traditional great power politics and emphasized collective security, democracy, and American individualism.

During his presidency, Hoover was a champion of American individualism, a concept that insisted on U.S. freedom of action that would allow the country to use its new power when and how he saw fit. Historian Joan Hoff articulates it as, “...not retreating from the world, but keeping American hands as free as possible to build a world order in which Americans could prosper.”² This concept of American individualism was the key motivator in Hoover’s later belief that Americans needed to build and aid Europe. As he articulates in his own words, “By contributing to peace and economic stability, by the loan of our surplus savings abroad for productive purposes, by the spread of inventions over the world, we can contribute to the elevation of standards of living in foreign countries and the demand for all goods.”³ Hoover understood that there was this intuitive relationship between peace and developing economies, and thus he became influential in establishing a new path for the world.

¹ Walter LaFeber, *The American Age*, 2nd ed., (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994), 334.

² LaFeber, 336.

³ Herbert Hoover, “[Herbert Hoover Extols the Virtues of Foreign Trade](#)”, 1

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World War I had resulted in a devastated global system by its end and Hoover decided that the United States would take the lead in restoring the devastation of the postwar era. Hoover's concept of American individualism developed in his commitment to economic stability in the world. He would use the countries economic wealth to create a new prosperous world that would be safe from the rivalries that tried to destroy it. As the top state department official of the time, Huntington Wilson, noted "Any student of modern diplomacy knows that in these days of competition, capital, trade, agriculture, labor and statecraft all go hand in hand if a country is to profit."⁴ Prior to his presidency, as Secretary of Commerce, Hoover worked with Secretary of State Hughes to urge Harding, that rather than retreating from the world, it was important that the United States restart the international economy of the world so that all freedoms were protected. Hoover's effort in building free trade and providing aid and economic development to Europe would leave a lasting affect on the future of both Europe and U.S. European relations.

Hoover insisted on protecting the freedoms of the world and for that reason, he wanted to establish a world order that at the very center looked to create economic stability but also world peace. It was a cause and effect relationship of goals, both were essential to one another in accomplishing their outcomes. In order to have world peace, economic stability was needed and to begin tackling economic stability peaceful terms needed to be made. In accordance with this, Hoover sought to not only build economic stability but also promote this aspect of peacekeeping. As Secretary Hughes explained to the French ambassador, "There is the humanitarian requirement, which carries such a strong appeal, and the knowledge that out of our abundance it is our duty to help where help will be used for meeting just requirements and the promotion of a peaceful purpose."⁵ World peace developed as a policy because of Wilson's efforts in creating the League of Nations but Hoover took it a step farther in implementing actual steps towards decreasing conflict with the Washington Conference and Five-Power Treaty. These combined efforts for a peacetime era looked to end the quarrels and tribulations in European nations, but more importantly would open the door for further effort at disarmament.

The transformation that took place during the interwar period was successful in making the United States the key player in defining and securing a new global order. Herbert Hoover was the key actor in the process with his commitment to

⁴ LaFeber, 342.

⁵ Charles Evans Hughes, "*Secretary of State Speech to the Ambassador of France*," 2

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American individualism. From this concept of individualism, Hoover pushed the ideas of economic stability and world peace in order to facilitate a world order. He was successful in his efforts with the peace and disarmament treaties of the Washington Conference and Five Power's Treaty. These ideals developed by Hoover would be used in the years to come with the drafting of the United Nations and the Marshall plan. The United States had succeeded in establishing a world order, an order that they found themselves at the top of. World War II would challenge this order in the coming years but the fundamentals of the ideals would hold. Hoover had been successful in his efforts in avoiding many small conflicts, though he would eventually fall victim to the economic crisis in 1929. An economic crisis that would prove the world's dependence on the United States as a leading power in the new world order.

GW Scallion

So sometimes, the world of international affairs is completely ridiculous. Often, there is no other recourse than to simply laugh. The GW Scallion is a section of The Globe that reflects the Onion's take on world affairs, but is written by students, for students. If you are interested in writing for the Scallion, please email me at iasglobe@gmail.com. Enjoy!

NUCLEAR ZIMBABWE?: Economic Powerhouse Zimbabwe Announces Billion Zimbabwe-Dollar Investment in Nuclear Technology

By; Rhee Seshin

Harare, Zimbabwe – Reports from the capitol today show worrying news regarding a potential new nuclear threat. This time the world takes its eyes of Iran to focus on the African continent. President Robert Mugabe announced today that his nation would begin a new age of nuclear energy and weapons research on the African continent at a press conference he held today at a local tavern owned by misters Zimm, Bobb and Way.

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Also at the conference was military representative Robert Mugabe who declared, “Zimbabwe’s time has come.” When asked by a reporter what he meant, Mugabe seemed flustered and answered, “Happy hour, you moron.”

Economic advisor Robert Mugabe was without fail the target of most of the questioning from the journalists that were in attendance. One journalist asked Mugabe if he could describe how his nation would afford such a program given the economic situation of his nation. To this Mugabe replied, “Today, my people are earning billions more Zimbabwe dollars than they were only a few years ago.”

One journalist replied, “I went to get a cup of coffee from the Starbucks downtown and it cost me 900 million dollars.” A local sitting in the tavern, obviously had been taking advantage of the “economic boom” and ordered himself another “gin and genocide” before spitting out, “Today a loaf of bread in this country costs what about a dozen cars did only ten years ago.” Masked men quickly seized the “delusional drunkard,” and according to reports he was banished to South Africa as punishment. Apparently Zimbabwe’s Treasury Minister Robert Mugabe missed a few decimal points in the nations million-percent inflation.

This billion-dollar investment in nuclear technology will surely get the ball rolling in Zimbabwe. That money will surely be spent on a shiny new calculator to help calculate the real cost of the project. Economic, military, social and political advisor Robert Mugabe has made a stand in Southern Africa – this is the biggest investment in nuclear technology in the region since Namibia spent the equivalent of thirty-six US cents on a stamp to send a postcard to Iran.

When this paper put in calls to the African Union, they were forwarded to a call center in Khartoum, Sudan. Enough said.

Seeking another opinion, we called Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea. President Mbasogo patted himself on the back for assassinating his uncle and the support he gets from the US (including President George Bush and Condeleeza Rice) despite the utter lack of democracy and human rights. When we enlightened him about the recent actions in Zimbabwe, he clearly was not to be outdone. He flatly stated that he would US funding along with Chinese investment to fund his new program, “No Soldier Left Behind.” At that point, we wished him good luck and hung up abruptly.

The world shivers in anxiety wondering if this nuclear epidemic will spread in the African subcontinent.

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