

A NEW HOPE? A Doubt Towards Real-Life Star Wars



BY SAMUEL LIU

In recent years, the outer space has become another “New World” after its value has been unveiled—but this time, Columbus is not involved.

Back to the past, Europe then faced an outbreak of population, which means, at that very moment, they were about to tackle with the lack of resources. To put an end to the popping-up problems and to pursue commercial benefits, nations started to turn their aim to the American Continent, and later on, with the rise of Imperialism and Capitalism, the African Continent. It has turned out that humans have to face the aftermath of invading these alien wilds. Wars had come as soon as conflicts between nations were stirred up. Nations started to hold conferences, for instance, the Berlin conference held in 1884, in pursuit of peace. However, the sit-down negotiations solved nothing due to the lack of provisions and regulations which were fair to all nations and were appropriate to apply on the colonized areas.

It is now our own brand-new era of 21st century, but there is no difference between now and the past. History is always there to show us

about the potential results which might come after our decisions. Furthermore, we do not hope to make the same mistakes already made decades ago especially when we are, to some extent, under the same situations. To sum up, if human beings are not to make scenes existing in Star Wars come true, the need for a comprehensive rulebook, which makes sure that the outer space does not become a Wild West after humans’ arrival and expansion, is truly a must.

First, current regulations are not enough. As soon as the outer space was militarized and was viewed as a potential war field in times of the Cold War, a number of nations ratified a series of treaties regarding the rescue of astronauts and exploration of the space in the 1970s. Space technology has been developed in a fast pace for years. However, with unclear definitions of weapons and no mention of regulating or banning future weapons, those treaties which were once redeemers for peace seekers are now deemed incompatible to the future circumstances and the changing nature of armed conflicts. At the moment, existing treaties focus predominantly on the “peacetime exploration of the outer space.”

To fix the loopholes in previous measures and to establish the legal parameters for the military uses of outer space, an international coalition of lawyers, scientists, government representatives and academics has recently started to draft the first legal manual of space warfare. Those helping to draft the document hope it will eliminate the legal uncertainty within the previous measures. The manual, known as MILAMOS—the manual on international law applicable to military uses of outer space, will provide guidelines on issues such as the legality of attacking satellites and firing lasers from space during war and the future rules of outer space engagement. It will include contents of assigning nations concerned to clean up the debris left in the orbits after military actions. What’s more, the document will also consider what constitutes a war crime in space, for example, whether it is a crime to alter satellite images to suggest civilian objects are military targets and whether military astronauts should be governed by the same laws, such as the Geneva Conventions, as terrestrial combatants.

However, the new manual was still questioned with doubt. “To what extent are states constrained by the law when it comes to their military activities in space?” “What type of interference with a satellite in orbit amounts to an ‘armed attack’ which would trigger the right of the victim state to use force in self-defence against the attacker?”(clipped from the Guardian) There are tons of pestering problems unsolved and many unanticipated things unearthed as we again stride into another wonderland like our ancestors have done. Manuals that seem necessary for people to adhere to in the sake of peace now, however, might be eliminated by those people themselves someday in a warless world a long long time later in a galaxy far far away. All we have to do at this very moment is to learn from the past and envision the revolutionary success ahead in the future with carefulness. After all, the outer space is beyond dollars and cents but a place ought to be protected and shared.



Exodus — The Displaced Middle East

BY RUBIN KU

The Middle East conflict has been one of the most devastating humanitarian crises of the past decade. The region’s diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds, along with its inherited economic interests in the abundance of natural resources, all contributed to the region’s catalysed distortion.

The ongoing political turmoil after the Arab Spring of 2011 has been a dominant domino effect sweeping through the region. However, despite toppling major regimes, other conflicts and consequences that were far less predictable began emerging in the rubbles of divergence. While some may glorify the Arab Spring as a revolutionary upheaval, a prairie fire started by the sparks of democratic enlightenment; with the remaining conflicts in the region, we can’t help but wonder, has this lionized event truly served the people of the Middle East? Or was this event only the mere manifestations of foreign influence and power wrestle?

For the last 15 years, the UN High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) reports more than 16 million refugees and 60 million displaced persons around the world today. While wars in Syria and Iraq

produced the greatest share of the Middle East’s refugees in recent years, many else have fled wars and failed states in Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen. With refugees gushing through key transit hubs including North Africa and Turkey, resettlement has been proven difficult, creating political turbulence in refugee-hosting countries such as Germany and Lebanon.

As the international community moves towards the adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees, there is a growing focus on international cooperation and responses from actors outside the regions where displacement is occurring. Even though most hosting countries of Middle Eastern refugees are not Parties to the 1951 Refugee Convention, these countries have accepted far more refugees than many of the countries that have ratified the Convention or its protocol.

Along with the increased global attention on the issue of responsibility sharing, understanding the perspectives of these governments, of the refugees themselves, and of local host populations in relation to responsibility sharing is imperative for finding solutions to the refugee crisis.

UN Women — My body, My Rights.



BY CATHERINE HSU
Introduction to issue:

Female Genital Mutilation. Even just by looking at the term, you know it's not something good. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), female genital mutilation are procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is estimated that over 200 million women and girls alive today have undergone female genital mutilation, and over 3 million girls are at risk of undergoing female genital mutilation every year. For those of us who live in the "developed world", even if we consider ourselves "worldly", "knowledgeable", and "quite tolerant of other cultures and practices", it can be hard to understand why people would commit such acts that seem to bring about no benefit whatsoever. Female Genital Mutilation is actually a very old practice—it even predates Islam and Christianity, which might definitely surprise some. Historians have said the records from the 5th century B.C. show that female genital mutilation was practiced by the Phoenicians, Hittites, and Ethiopians. It was also a part of the culture of some tribes in the Amazon, the Philippines, Africa, and Australia. The reasons behind the practice are many and complicated, and differ from place to place. In some areas, FGM is considered a part of a girl's transition to womanhood, and in others, it is said to be a way to control women's sexuality.

Still, you may think, the detrimental effects of

FGM so undoubtedly outnumber the benefits, that surely people cannot possibly use these reasons to justify their actions.

Well, it isn't until quite recently that the severity of the harms that FGM may cause has become clear. As recent as the 1950's, FGM was practiced in the United States and Western Europe (places many of us now consider to be the epitome of justice and equality) to treat a wide variety of illnesses, which include epilepsy, hysteria, or mental disorders. Our understanding of the consequences of FGM is limited even now, and for those whose ancestors have been practicing the procedures for hundreds of or even thousands of years, things can not be so easily changed.

However, that doesn't mean that there is no hope. After all, as Bernard Williams said, "there was never a night or a problem that could defeat sunrise or hope". Organizations such as the WHO, UNICEF, and of course, UN Women, have all been and are still working tirelessly to improve the situation for girls and women around the world. New WHO guidelines on improving care for those living with female genital mutilation, published in 2016, include informing health workers on how to deal with these problems, ensuring that health workers themselves are properly educated and do not cause more harm to these women, and overall prevention and care. According to a statement from UN Women on February 6th, 2017 (International Day of Zero

Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation since 2003), stigma and a desire for social acceptance are the main factors that cause a girl to undergo FGM, and as cases in Egypt have shown, education can do much in the way of changing that. Legislations to protect those who have undergone FGM, such as in Gambia, can also help improve the situation, but laws and regulations alone are not enough. Society is slow to change, but improvement can be done. FGM is a practice that is deeply and inextricably linked to gender inequality around the globe, and in order to create a world where all people can live together in peace, all countries must strive to lower and eliminate the practice of female genital mutilation.

Current news: Female Genital Mutilation in Singapore?

When you think of Female Genital Mutilation, your mind may immediately flit towards Africa or the Middle East, but in fact, the practice may be quite common in a place considered much more modern and well-educated, and much closer to home.

Malay Muslims comprise roughly 13% of the total population of Singapore, and for them, FGM is a ritual of their culture. It is known in Malay as Sunat Perempuan, and is usually carried out on infants before the age of two. It involves having the tip of the clitoris, one of the female sex organs, cut out, sometimes along with a piece of skin.

One of the major issues with FGM is consent—some say that as long as the subject agrees to the operation, it may not be necessary to ban the act completely. However, it should be quite clear that a child that can barely speak or walk, would be incapable of understanding or expressing either assent or dissent for the practice. According to Filzah Sumartono, a co-coordinator of the gender equality group Aware, the group members and herself underwent the procedure as a baby, and all of the Malay Muslim girls she knew in Singapore had underwent the procedure as well. Yet none of them had known about it until they asked their parents.

Singapore has no strict laws enforcing the prohibition of female genital mutilation, a fact that has recently come under fire as it was found out by the BBC that several Singaporean clinics said they were willing to provide Sunat for British girls. FGM has been banned in Britain for over 30 years, yet a case is discovered or treated every hour, according to statistics from a local charity. Sumartono herself believes that it is too early to ban FGM outright, especially as the practice is well-hidden and many non-Malay Singaporeans were shocked to find out it even existed. She states that the first step should be to create more awareness and debate for the issue.

Female genital mutilation is an issue that impacts millions of girls and women in countries all over the world. It is something that harms, that robs women of their dignity and sometimes, their ability to give birth, and something, as seen in the case above, that can be hidden deep in society without knowledge of others. That only makes it all the more important for countries to overcome their differences and work together to ensure that no women or girls are subjected to this detrimental practice.

The Situation in Afghanistan

BY JASON LIN



The seemingly endless war in Afghanistan has challenged the country in various areas and has undermined the prospect of Afghans for a brighter future. The US and NATO deployed their military to Afghanistan claiming to maintain and foster peace and stability in the nation. Yet, their 16-year-span of presence proves otherwise.

Since the beginning of the conflict, the Afghan government and military backed by the United States and its allies have been fighting a brutal war against the Taliban and other emerging terrorist groups, such as ISIS.

The "never-ending" war in Afghanistan is devastating and takes the lives of thousands of Afghans on a regular basis, mostly children. To make things

even worse, after the announcement of the US's new strategy towards Afghanistan and the region around, US bombings in Afghanistan have increased and civilian casualties have doubled as a result.

The airstrikes of the American troops have also caused heavy civilian casualties in the already unstable nation. In United Nations' recent report Children and Armed Conflicts, the UN claims that in 2016, the casualties of children in Afghanistan exceeds 3500.

In addition to civilian casualties of the war caused by, namely airstrikes and deadly explosions, crimes also challenge the field of security in Afghanistan. According to the statistics of the country, thousands of crime incidents occur in the country on a yearly basis, and it is rising every year.



The Possibility of Future Warfare

BY RANITA WU

Technology is a double-edged sword. It has advanced rapidly for the past few decades, and while people enjoy the convenience it brings, humankind has to pay for the risks that tag along. During the conference, chair Gene Lee, co-chairs Frank Chiu and Rubin Ku will lead discussions on two major crises that everyone should be alerted to—the use of nuclear weapons and measures to prevent cyberwarfare.

The mass destruction that brought an end to World War II alarmed the world on how deadly the new invention could be, and thus, although every country continued racing to improve its weaponries, all stay put in erupting another world war. Relevant organizations, treaties, and meetings started to appear to restrict one another and to maintain peace. However, tensions brought up

with the nuclear issue can still be felt. Even until today, nuclear weapons is a huge crisis experts are anxious about, especially with the heated conflicts between US and DPRK, it is only a few minutes to midnight on the doomsday clock.

Cyberspace started a new era in human history. Literally, everyone uses the internet—to stay connected to the world, to keep in touch with friends and families, or to save and forward important messages. The government is no exception. Therefore, cyberattack has become one of the simplest ways to corrupt a hostile nation. Not only can demolishing a country’s internet access panic the government and civilians alike, but encrypted information including personal ones can also be stolen. Morris Worm, the first computer worm, was an initial shot to the chaos of further security of cyberspace, and until now, the issue still remains unsolved.



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CROSSWORD
PUZZLE

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- Across
- 2. the use or targeting of computers, online control systems, and networks in a battlespace or warfare context
 - 4. a sect of Islam that the monarchy of Saudi Arabia belongs to
 - 6. the manual on international law applicable to military uses of outer space
 - 8. a sect of Islam that more than 90% of Iranians belong to

- Down
- 1. indirect military involvement between nations in a third-party country
 - 3. the ritual of cutting or removing some or all of the external female genitalia
 - 5. people who seek asylum due to, mainly, political upheavals in their countries
 - 7. a wave of pro-democracy protests and uprisings that took place in the Middle East and North Africa

*BLANKS ARE NOT INCLUDED

- Answers
- Across
- 2. cyber warfare
 - 4. Sunni
 - 6. MILAMOS
 - 8. Shia
- Down
- 1. proxy war
 - 3. female genital mutilation
 - 5. refugee
 - 7. Arab Spring

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