

Human Rights & Human Welfare

Volume 8

Issue 11 *November Roundtable: An Annotation
of "Foreign Policy Myths Debunked" in The
Nation*

Article 1

11-2008

November Roundtable: Introduction

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Recommended Citation

(2008) "November Roundtable: Introduction," *Human Rights & Human Welfare*: Vol. 8: Iss. 11, Article 1.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/hrhw/vol8/iss11/1>



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November Roundtable: Introduction

Abstract

An annotation of:

"Foreign Policy Myths Debunked." The Nation. October 6, 2008.

Keywords

Human rights, United States foreign policy, National security, Economy

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“Foreign Policy Myths Debunked.” *The Nation*. October 6, 2008.

An Annotation

Amid the competitive and somewhat heated rhetoric on the economy, race, taxes, and healthcare, noticeably down-played from the campaign for the White House has been an in-depth discussion of American foreign policy. With two ongoing and unpopular wars, and a faltering economic position in global markets, the new administration must rapidly address these, and other, demanding foreign policy concerns. In "Foreign Policy Myths Debunked," the editors of *The Nation* attempt to outline the foreign policy myths that have adversely impacted American national security, economic growth, and most importantly, international standing.

"As the election draws near, a new set of myths and fallacies as misleading as those that led the Senate to support George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq have become embedded in our foreign policy discourse. If left unchallenged, these myths and fallacies could influence the outcome of the election and shape policy in the next administration."

Given the pressing foreign policy challenges facing the new administration, and the different opinions and perspectives that Senators McCain and Obama would bring to the Oval Office, what can we expect to see from each? This month's Roundtable asks how human rights factor into the election, and, more specifically, the positions of each candidate. Does the enforcement of human rights play a role in this election's foreign policy? In the context of genocide in Darfur, and continued ethnic conflict in the Middle East, will human rights norms become the forefront of American foreign policy? If the new administration follows the path set forth by the Bush administration, particularly in the use of human rights rhetoric to justify aggression and intervention, the realities of grave human rights violations and abuses occurring throughout the world will no longer demand immediate, comprehensive action.

"The challenge for the next administration, then, is not how to restore American leadership but how to share these responsibilities in an increasingly multipolar world, and thus free up the energy and resources needed to rebuild American society."

Come inauguration on January 20, 2009, Senator McCain or Senator Obama will be forced to examine the past, present, and future of American foreign policy. Moreover, their decisive action or inaction will impact, not only Americans at home, but also the entire world. The centerpiece this month asks the key question: Will myths and lies continue to be the foundation for American foreign policy, as they have been for the past eight years under the Bush administration? Indeed, the American people and the international community are watching and waiting to witness the next phase of American foreign policy.

These issues and others are considered in this month's Roundtable.