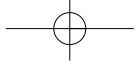


EDITORS' FOREWORD

Water has been a considerable source of power throughout human civilization. Watercourses have served as natural boundaries between states, routes for trade and commerce, and as a necessary component in health, cultural and religious practices of peoples around the world. Over time, human population growth and economic expansion have placed enormous demands on the planet's freshwater resources. As a result, water has long been a source of hostility and conflict between neighboring communities and across borders. From the Tigris-Euphrates River basin to the American Southwest to the deserts of Sudan, water has been a driver of tension between its users. The insertion of global climate change into this equation threatens to make water resources less secure and the potential for conflict even greater.

At present, an estimated 1.1 billion people lack access to safe drinking water. Each year, over 3 billion people suffer from water-related diseases. Understanding the compounding global challenges of climate change, population growth and the increasing demand for water has never been more urgent. This is reflected in the language of politicians and businesspeople, the media and international institutions. For instance, in 2002, the United Nations amended the Millennium Development Goals to include drinking water and sanitation targets. The United Nations has also branded the years 2005-2015 as the "International Decade for Water Action" and 2008 as the "International Year of Sanitation." At the 2008 World Economic Forum in Davos, water was featured prominently in the discussions between corporate and government leaders, with particular corporations pledging to become net-zero water users in the near future.

The *Journal of International Affairs* uses its single-topic format to analyze water from a variety of angles. "Water: A Global Challenge" examines water in remote indigenous communities and cosmopolitan megacities, as a right and as a commodity, in sustaining ecosystems and our modern lifestyles, as a source of disease and life, and in promoting conflict and cooperation. Such an endeavor is

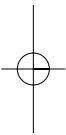


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accomplished through the works of a diverse set of scholars and practitioners experienced in water's global implications.

In this issue's capstone essay, Upmanu Lall, Tanya Heikkila, Casey Brown and Tobias Siegfried identify three distinct water crises that have yet to be systematically connected by scholars: access, pollution and scarcity. By looking at how these three challenges are interrelated, the authors argue that scholars can better articulate the global characteristics of water resource dilemmas, and ultimately identify the factors that can lead to solutions.

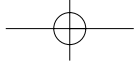
Sandra Postel and Kathleen Miller remind readers that water, in addition to being an essential human need, is an integral part of the environmental system. Postel examines how ecological infrastructures are deteriorating, and how a number of nations are pioneering policies that establish boundaries on human degradation of fresh waters, with the aim of safeguarding ecosystem health. Miller addresses one of the most preoccupying topics of our generation—climate change—and its implications for water resource planning and policy negotiations.



We present two essays that challenge the notion that shrinking freshwater supplies will inevitably lead to future wars. Karin R. Bencala and Geoffrey D. Dabelko contend that the challenge for scholars and practitioners is to differentiate between the various dynamics that can lead to conflict over water and find ways to capitalize on a range of cooperative opportunities, which are often overlooked by the water wars rhetoric. Aaron T. Wolf explores how a more holistic approach to water use could unite nations through a comparison between the North/West's more practical approach to water use and the South/East's holistic approach to this vital resource.

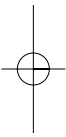
Collins Ayoo and Theodore Horbulyk explore the potential and promise of water pricing and its ability to promote appropriate and efficient usage levels, while simultaneously encouraging conservation and reuse through investment and innovation in new technologies and practices. Cecilia Tortajada analyzes the nature of water management in megacities with a detailed examination of the metropolitan area of Mexico City. Her comparative analysis highlights the similarities and differences of water access and allocation among urban conglomerates across the globe, such as Dhaka, São Paulo, Bangkok and London.

The control of water sources is historically a story of power relationships. Rutgerd Boelens explores how water creates complex power dynamics between indigenous communities in the Andes and water experts who impose universal strategies for water management, which often do not fit local structures and needs. Vivienne Bennett, Sonia Dávila-Poblete and María Nieves Rico investigate women's role in water management in Latin America, showing that even though women are often the primary water users, they are left out of the decisionmaking process of water allocation and management.

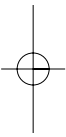


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Four authors look at historical regional disputes over water and how strategies for cooperation have succeeded in some cases and failed in others. Saleem H. Ali explores the possibility of instrumental cooperation in the case of South Asia where regional conflict between two nuclear neighbors, India and Pakistan, is predicated in a history of religious rivalries and post-colonial demarcation, and how despite antagonism the two countries have managed to cooperate over the water resources of the Indus River. Aysegul Kibaroglu considers the role of epistemic communities in creating frameworks of cooperation in the Euphrates-Tigris River basin, with special attention to war's impact on water resources in Iraq. In Ashok Swain's essay, he suggests policy measures that riparian countries might adopt with the aim of reducing tension over scarce resources and facilitating effective and lasting cooperation in the Nile River basin. Marwa Daoudy looks at the failed peace negotiations between Israel and Syria over the Golan Heights, highlighting water's role as a catalyst for both conflict and cooperation throughout the negotiating history of the two countries.



Roberto Lenton, Kristen Lewis and Albert M. Wright offer a policy update on the role of water and sanitation in the Millennium Development Goals, outlining recommendations to meet the target year of 2015. The issue also presents an exclusive interview with leading global water rights advocate and author Maude Barlow. Barlow discusses her experiences fighting for indigenous rights and gender equity as they relate to water access, as well as her views on what roles the public and private sectors should play in ensuring water rights.



This collection of essays not only updates the international affairs audience on global water scarcity, but introduces readers to the world's foremost scholars on the matter and their forward-looking analyses and policy recommendations. This issue moves the discussion of water beyond simply identifying it as the next oil. Water is the very essence of our existence, making up the largest portions of our planet, as well as the human body. With the world's freshwater supply shrinking, this distinction has been recognized by policymakers and a greater sense of urgency to better manage our shared resources has emerged. It remains to be seen whether calls for action will be met before global health and quality of life are placed at greater risk. This is our challenge.

—*The Editors*