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EFFECTIVENESS OF AID AS A STRATEGY OF REDUCING HARMFUL DISPARITIES

BY STEVEN YE H
LAYOUT BY SEOHYEON KIM

Professor Sawa Quiviger (B.A. McGill University, M.A. The London School of Politics and Economics) defines foreign aid as the transfer of services, goods, or money from governments or organizations to the recipient government and population (beneficiary).

There are two types of foreign aid: bottom-up, which is from charity-based organizations to governments; top-down, which is from government leaders' task distribution toward responsible personnel. Similarly, there is private and public foreign aid. For instance, NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and charities like Oxfam and Red Cross are examples of private aid providers. Oppositely, USAid provides aids in public approaches as they are bilateral: government-to-government and the United Nations, World Bank, and IMF (International Monetary Fund) are multi-lateral: many governments to global-scale organizations with different branches. There are even foreign-aid fundraising events like the Live Aid concert, which utilizes celebrities to publicize the necessity for public donations to save Africans.

However, most economists argue that foreign aid is ineffective and unsustainable in reducing disparities as it creates a structure of reliance and dependence on the aids, causing government corruption, driving local industries out of business. Simultaneously, aid is quintessential for countries' recovery from unforeseen circumstances like natural disasters and disease prevalence and its potential to resolve poverty traps in LEDCs (less-economically-developed countries). Hence, aids are mandatory when applied as a band-aid (temporary) solution but redundant and economically detrimental long-term. Thus, it does not foundationally reduce harmful disparities.

Foreign aid is effective in resolving short-term difficulties and struggles. For instance, Columbia University professor and economist Jeffrey Sachs believe that foreign aid can alleviate the poverty trap because the poverty-stricken population struggles for savings. So, if they receive aids, the saving gap is filled, allowing them to escape the vicious poverty cycle.

However, without countries' increase of employment opportunities and education quality, the aid-money would be spent on purchases instead of long-term investments like education. For instance, unemployment means no source of income to sustain the wealth. Therefore, governments should align infrastructures with the purpose of foreign aid.

Otherwise, it would be an abyss-like investment with no outcome. For instance, as Zimbabwean Economist, Dambisa Moyo, (M.A. Harvard University, Ph.D. University of Oxford) reaffirms, that in Africa, infrastructure like education and employment opportunities must be in level with each other, since investing in education after using foreign aid would only result in fostering a group of the educated population who are jobless. Because of foreign aid's limitation in changing the "big economic picture" into prosperity, it is up to the government to provide equal opportunities for citizens, not the one-facet economic-support aid. Still, aids are indisputably crucial for humanitarian and disaster relief. Entrepreneur and philanthropist Bill Gates explicitly stated statistics in his annual report, confirming the outcome of eradicating millions of cases of HIV/AIDs, tuberculosis, and malaria since the year 1998. Nevertheless, countries in Africa rely on treatment services from NGOs like Red Cross and Oxfam, and global UN organizations reported in the Poverty Inc. documentary. So this hinders African leaders' motivation of investing in education for more locally-based doctors.

Consequently, foreign aid causes corrupt governments, because as Dr. Jason Hickel (Ph.D. University of Virginia) suggested, foreign aid is making governmental leaders lazy since there are free suppliers of services, goods, and money from foreign countries.

Plus, even if it seems like an advantage of Africa, they have an unsuccessful economy, with a GDP per capita gap of nearly four times away from the industrialized countries like the United States and the United Kingdom, collectively known as the "richer" hemisphere called the global north. Moreover, it is a lucrative construct that allows these countries to gainfully manipulate finances to receive trillions of dollars back from giving foreign aid. Poverty Inc. also revealed that most money goes to the employees of foreign-aid organizations instead of the beneficiary. So, Economist Dambisa Moyo strongly suggests a five-year systematic plan for African countries to reject foreign aid and become economically and socially independent. Indeed, it is the government's responsibility to provide health-care services and establish strong foundations of infrastructure because the African population elected their presidents. Foreign resources should never structure the African society.

Furthermore, foreign aid drives local industries out of business, as indicated in the Poverty Inc. documentary. For example, after Haiti's earthquake, NGOs sent rice to the population, but because they are free, people did not purchase the local rice, which puts local farmers out of business. After the EU donated free clothes to Kenya, there were no longer apparel manufacturers that use local Kenyan cotton. According to Professor Sowa Quiviger, there is the Principal-Agent Problem, also known as the Knowledge problem, where the donors do not know what the recipient needs to grow into prosperity, which causes unnecessary donations that people do not need, thus ineffective.

In brief, though it is short-term effective, it is unsustainable long-term because it causes corrupt government and dependence structure and drives local industries out of business, along with the Principal-Agent Problem.

RISE TO THE SURFACE

*By Sunny Cho
Layout by Lydia Meng*

There is an ocean inside my body, sloshing at the edge of my throat.

Cover your mouth with your hands, stuff your words back into your throat; this was what I learned from that day, at the age of 15. That day was rainy, and I was under the blanket, scared of the roaring thunder.

You entered my house without permission, but I didn't mind because I believed in you, and I loved you. You trampled in my room when I was blue. You were fumed at something, something very trivial that I cannot even remember now, and your lost anger chose to aim at me.

Arguments between you and I were often, but that day you were different. You dragged me down, and whenever I tried to speak, you raised your volume and muted my voice. You were more violent than usual and confused me with your odd behavior. Your harsh words stabbed my body, but I still tried to talk to you, to find a compromise as usual. But you couldn't hear my voice or my apology. Then I finally realized that what you wanted to do was not having a conversation but just dump your anger on me. My head started to buzz. My voice will never reach you. I felt vanity striking my head and made me stop striving. I was your trashcan, and all I can do was swallow everything you dumped. The thunder that scared me was now rumbling from your mouth. The rain was getting heavier and started to flood my house.

Raindrops drove against the window, you yelled to me, and my mouth was clogged with trashes you threw, the words, anger, and blame you rammed into my body. Water, entering from the crack on the wall, was slowly flooding up my house. It started to wave around my ankles, and I was standing blankly in this chaos, frightened by the water now up at my stomach.

'Stop it! Please, please stop it!' I screamed with my last remaining strength, but you kept on pushing in those rubbishes into my mouth with your thick fingers. Finally, my chin started to rip, and I was riddled with rubbish, you stopped and stepped away from me, and I also stopped talking.

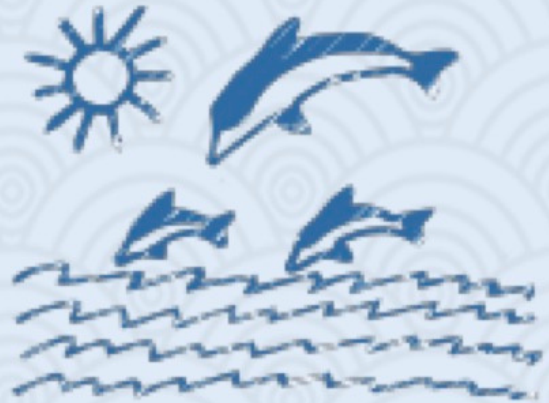


"Finally, you stopped wailing like a baby," you said. My jaw was ripped open, and the bone was barely dangling from the edge of my face. The blood started to dye the crumpled words in my mouth red. You even seemed like you were proud of what you have done to me. My gaze was hollow, but you lightly shrugged your shoulders, giving me a weird look like I'm the wrong one.

"Why are you acting so sensitive? All for your good. You should thank me," you said.

I closed my eyes.

Then the water, waving at my chest suddenly rushed into my mouth; filled up the house and myself. You escaped, leaving me here alone under the blues, the ocean created in a house. The water was scratching my throat as it filled in my body. All of my screams, pleading your name for help, was blocked by the trashes you filled in my mouth. Sinking to the floor, I couldn't move or speak. I was drowning in this despair, and whenever I tried to swim to the surface your words dragged me down to the deeper end. When my body reached the floor and created a clanging sound, I slowly felt my breath lacking. The garbage came out of my mouth and floated, polluting my beloved house. All for my own good, that was the reason, the excuse for your violence.



After a long period of silence from then, when the house was dry, you returned and pretended like nothing happened, even though the wall of the house collapsed. Everything drained, but the water I swallowed still remained in my body, creating a blue ocean nibbling down myself.

The second time you did this to me, I started to block my mouth with my own hands. The third time I experienced this, I found that it actually ended early when I remained silent. The fourth time, I realized the fact that people force silence, and all I can do is to obey to not get hurt. The fifth time, I found myself getting used to this role, to the disgusting taste of the trash; however, this wave, a sloshing of an ocean at my throat, the choking it gives, is the feeling that I will never get used to.



But today, I won't swallow it. I will spew out the ocean that tortures me, I will spit out the trashes you try to stuff into my mouth. I'm not going to stay feeble and hurt underwater anymore in this everlasting misery. I'm cutting off your words dragging me down. I stopped raining tears; your thunder, your knife that scared me will never reach me anymore. Restore the wall of the house more solidly, so that it won't collapse the next time.



Ring the fanfare, the sound of welcome back.
Time to rise, it is now the time to rise to the surface

**CLASS OF 2023
GRADE 10 DRAMA
SHOWCASE**

2020.12.03

I CAN'T BREATHE

COVID Play - 3

*By Summer Hsia
Layout by Yerin Lim*

CAST

Doctor

Politician

Scientist

Journalist 1

Journalist 2

Online daughter/sister

Online mother

Family member

Dad

Son

Father

Brother

SCENE 1

The current/performance date on the screen – December 3rd

Doctor

Sends out a message which comes onto the screen

ALERT: I am facing what I think is a new virus, a severe respiratory illness, that requires a rapid response. This is not SARS, rather a virus we've never encountered. I'm afraid if we don't take any measures now, we will repeat the same error in 2003, following our path for the Sars pandemic, this is serious, please pay attention.

OPTION 1

The situation is getting out of control. I've had countless patients die in the last 2 weeks with the same symptoms, they didn't respond to medication and there was a rapid deterioration in their condition. This is the beginning of something that we've never seen before, I hope we find ways to cease this illness before the consequences become devastating.

SCENE 2

Politician: Good morning, and welcome to this emergency press conference. We will be addressing actions for the new virus that was originated in Wuhan, China. Alongside me is Dr. Chris, the government's newly appointed chief scientific advisor.

Scientist: The Virus itself was reported as a type of 'Pneumonia', which at the later stages causes severe respiratory distress, coughing, and fever.

Politician: Due to this airborne virus is highly infectious, we are expecting to see a rise in cases over the coming days, therefore we have concluded that some precautionary steps must be taken to avoid mass infection.

Journalist 1: Who is likely to be infected?

Scientist: It is dependent on age and any underlying health conditions.

Journalist 2: How can we prevent infection?

Scientist: I urge everyone to stay calm, wash their hands regularly for at least 20 seconds, and if you feel you have any of the symptoms described then you should self-isolate.

Journalist 1: The virus is spreading quickly; do you think we will be able to contain it? And do you think we should enter a full lockdown?

Politician: At this point, we see no need to undertake any full lockdown, like the ones in Wuhan.

Journalist 2: How do we know when to self-isolate, many people can't afford to take time off work.

Scientist: As I mentioned before if you have any of the following symptoms: Fever, cough, and a loss of taste and smell you should self-isolate.

Journalist 2: What measures are in place for hospitals to deal with a rise in patient numbers?

Politician: At the present, we are working on a strategic plan to open temporary hospitals and we are also looking at recruiting extra staff to deal with emergency cases.

Journalist 1: When is the vaccine coming to the public?

(Politician looks at the scientist)

Scientist: many countries are working hard on creating a vaccine, and trials should start within 4-6 months.

Journalist 2: Won't the virus be out of control by then?

Scientist: We have to wait for the development and testing stage for a safe and effective vaccine. When the time arrives, we will make sure that people in this country have access to it.

Journalist 1: Aren't you afraid we aren't acting fast enough?

Politician: We are trying our best and will continue to hold weekly briefings to address this situation and offer advice to the people of this country, Thank you.

Doctor Monologue

We've been fighting, the corridors are filled with people coughing, trying hard to breathe... You see, we are humans, and we feel things like you do. If one patient's life is lost through my hands, guilt and regrets will devour me. Have you ever seen the desperation in their eyes before they close it forever? You have to know, we are just like you, we have a family too. I haven't met my husband and kids for a long time, I heard my son

crying...not knowing where I went and when I can come back...We are all the same, the virus is tearing us apart, my colleagues, the world, falling one by one...I can hardly breathe.

February 1st, 2020, message displays on the screen

We've been fighting, the corridors are filled with people coughing, trying hard to breathe... You see, we are humans, and we feel things like you do. If one patients' life is lost through my hands, guilt and regrets will devour me. Have you ever see the desperation in their eyes before they close it forever? You have to know, we are just like you, we have a family too. I haven't met my husband and kids for a long time, I heard my son

SCENE 3

Online daughter: Hey mom, how are you, I'm worried about you.

Mother: Don't worry, I'm at home most of the time.

Online daughter: I heard that there are more cases now.

Mother: It's fine, I'm getting help with the shopping's so I can stay home.

Online daughter: Mom, I can't see you, can you move the screen a bit, and take your hand off the microphone?

Mother: Oh sorry, umm. *(she changes the position of the screen)* is that better?

Online daughter: Yea, I can see you now...I wish I can come and visit instead of seeing you on the screen...

Mother: I know, at least we are both safe.

Online daughter: I hope things will get better soon, so I can get a flight.

Mother: I'm sure it will get better eventually. You take care and let's speak soon,

Online daughter: Ok, promise me you'll stay inside, don't go out unless you need to.

Mother: Don't worry, I won't, talk to you later, I love you.
(screen shuts down, daughter murmured the last word to herself)

Online daughter: love you too.

SCENE 4

Family member: dad, dad, come to the window... how are you?

(dad puts his thumb up and laughs)

Family member: I can't come in, but I've got you some food.

(dad looks confused)

Family member: *(bigger actions)* I've left you some food, here! *(he points to it)*

(dad waves for him to come in)

Family member: I can't come in, I have to...I can't because it's dangerous...I have to stay here, look here's the food, I'll be back later, I promise, I'll see you soon.

(son and dad puts one hand in the middle as if they were touching the screen, spotlight fade)

SCENE 5

Son: Dad, we've been stuck here for days. I want to go out.

Father: Sorry son, you know why we are quarantined.

Son: Yea I know, we've got symptoms, but how do we know if we can't get tested.

Father: play it safe, we mustn't infect others.

Son: That's not fair! We were also infected by others. It's just the way it is.

father: Look, we have to be responsible.

Son: I know, but it's terrible being stuck inside, and what if they tell us we have to stay here longer.

father: We'll just have to see.

Son: When will we see mum?

Father: She's still working at the hospital, if she comes back now it'll be dangerous for all her patients.

Son: And what about granddad? And what about my friends, can I see them?

Father: We can't see anyone, we just have to wait. It'll be over soon.

March 30th, 2020, message displays on the screen

Doctor monologue

I've worked now for 91 days straight, no breaks, just constant work treating all the patients and their families. Things have eased here with the lockdown, the hospitals are less crowded, the wards are less chaotic and we have enough beds for everyone, but in other countries, it's just the beginning. I'm not sure they realize what's coming to them, but they need to learn from our experience. I can't understand why they are not going into full lockdown, I just can't understand it, they must take action.

SCENE 6

Online daughter: Mom, have you been to the doctor yet? If you have symptoms you need to go.

Mom: I'm ok at the moment, I'm worried if I go to the hospital it'll be worse, they're so busy.

Online daughter: But Mom, please, you need to get treated before it gets worse.

Mom: I'll go when I need to.

Online daughter: Well can anyone come and help you?

Mom: My neighbors are bringing me food, don't worry about me, I just got a cold.

Online daughter: Ok, as soon as the border opens I will come back. Please, just take care of yourself.

(As she is speaking the mother walks away)

Online daughter: Mom, Mom, are you there?

SCENE 7

Son: Dad, Dad, are you ok?

Father: I'm fine, don't worry, I'm healthy enough to get through this.

Son: But dad, you are coughing, you have a fever, and this morning you couldn't taste anything! I think you've got all the symptoms...

Father: It's no big deal, really, I just a cold. I'll be ok in a few days. You try to get on with some schoolwork. You shouldn't get too behind with it, you must study.

Son: Alright, are you sure?

Father: Yes, I'm sure, I'll be fine.

SCENE 8

Brother: I need to see her, please, she doesn't understand what's happening.

(Mother is sitting looking confused and slightly distressed)

Brother: Please...!

Doctor: We're doing everything we can to protect her, we have new protocols now, you can see her through the window, or skype.

Brother: But she doesn't use technology, she'll get more confused.

Doctor: We are here to help with the technology. Unfortunately, it's the only thing we can do now. you would be exposed to an infectious disease if we let you in.

Brother: Well...when can I see her?

Doctor: I'm not sure, we'll have to wait, as soon as things change, we will let you know.

(The doctor walks away and the brother now talks to his sister (also online daughter) on the phone)

Brother: Look, I think it's too late, they won't let me see her, I don't think she's going to make it...

Online daughter/sister: You have to do something! you have to try...this cant happen!

Brother: *(interrupts)* I'm doing everything I can but you have to be prepared for the worst.

Online daughter/sister: I can't believe this is happening, I can't lose her...

SCENE 9

(Family member enters)

Family member: dad? dad? dad answer me! Doctor, what happened to him? Can I go in and see him?

Doctor: No, not at this time. I'm sorry for your loss

Family member: No, this can't be happening! You haven't done enough! He was alright back then, he could talk, he could laugh, he could breathe! It was just a cold. And now you're telling me he is gone...

Doctor: We've tried our best...I'm sorry...

Family member: you didn't let me see him weeks ago, I never knew when will be his last second. *(waits a bit, depressed then say)* Where is he? I need to see him; I need to say goodbye. *(collapse on the knee, cover his face with hands, in grieve)*

Doctor monologue

I'm sorry. I'm sorry! I'm sorry for your loss. I've repeated these words countless times. COVID leaves destruction and loss everywhere, it's like a hurricane, crushing everything in its path. Fortunately, in China, the situation is getting better. It's a relief, but when I see the doctors in other countries struggling to cope, I wish there was more we could do...

July 14th, 2020, message displays on the screen

SCENE 10

Throughout this scene we see the date-changing and death toll increasing on the screen.

Journalist 1: What are we going to do to stop a second wave?

Politician: We will continue to enforce a series of Lockdown measures when we need to.

Journalist 2: When will this crisis end?

Politician: We expect the vaccination to be developed soon, this is what we are waiting for.

Journalist 2: But when will this happen?

Scientist: We are working as fast as we can.

Journalist 1: *(Interrupts)* how will we know if the vaccine is safe?

Scientist: All vaccines have to be tested and undergo several trials before they can be used.

Journalist 1: Will there be more long-term national lockdowns?

Politician: Not at this moment.

Journalist 2: What about people's livelihoods, how will businesses survive?

Politician: We are offering as much support as we can.

Journalist 1: And what about airlines, when can we travel again?

Politician: I can't answer that question now.

Journalist 1: Why are countries like England and America in such a crisis, when other countries have dealt with it so much more efficiently?

Scientist: We acted on the scientific evidence provided at each stage of the pandemic.

Journalist 2: Really? Then why are we in this situation now?

Politician: We are doing our best.

Journalist 1: Are you sure?

SCENE 11

Doctor Monologue

The whole world is still struggling with this virus. Today...2020, December 3rd, 2.4 million people have died from COVID. So many lives were lost. However, we must have hope that we are approaching the end, I can see a faint halo flickering in the distance. Scientists are developing vaccines, Most politicians are taking more effective measures to control the virus, people are showing kindness and countries are learning from each other. We, doctors, will always try our best to save lives. But we can't do this alone. If we work together, then maybe we can breathe.

The end of COVID play

Ethics of US Government Surveillance: Should We Sacrifice the Privacy of All US Citizens for Detecting a Small Number of Terrorism Activities?

By Andy Zeng

Layout by Romana Xu



In 1890, the article “The Right to Have Privacy” was published by two famous American lawyers, Samuel Warren and Louis Brandeis, that they advocated the right to privacy, and the impact on the US society had been influential back then. Its purpose of “to consider whether the existing law affords a principle which can properly be invoked to protect the privacy of the individual” (Warren & Brandeis, 1890) catalyzed privacy to be a social norm of the US (Warren & Brandeis, 1890). But in the early June of 2013, a former contractor of CIA named Edward Snowden had leaked out PRISM, which is a US National Security Agency’s internet and network surveillance program, to the media, that the program was surveilling all of US citizens network communications, to attain the goal of finding terrorism (BBC, 2014). The surveillance was obeying the social norm of privacy, thus it made lots of people concerned about their network privacy, and proposed the surveillance to be unethical and illegal. The main argument of the surveillance is “if you have not done anything wrong, you have nothing to worry about” and “it’s a necessary sacrifice to stop terrorism”. But the other side of the argument often opposes these statements by claiming US citizens should have privacy rights.



People who argue that we need government surveillance usually indicate that we need to sacrifice our privacy for detecting terrorism. A representation of this argument is a CNN opinion article written by Glenn



Sulmasy, who is an acclaimed international law and national security expert. He has mentioned the reason US citizens should allow government surveillance is that it can protect the citizens from terrorists. Although people of right-wing politics think the surveillance is the overreach of the US government, the executive branch has the authority and the surveillance appears to be legal. Also, the threat of al Qaeda and jihadists requires massive computer surveillance and collection. With the involvement of these kinds of programs, he states that terrorist attacks such as the New York City subway attack and the Boston Marathon attack would not have happened. Moreover, US citizens also need the government to surveil when al Qaeda is initiating a war, in order to protect the citizens, the students, the streets, and the buildings. In the 21st century, we need new technology to gather valuable and actionable information, but the surveillance of terrorism unavoidably requires collecting US citizens' conversations. As an open society, the US needs surveillance technology to protect itself, so it contradicts the Constitution that prevents the federal government to conduct “unreasonable searches” (Sulmasy, 2013). Accordingly, the government needs a program like PRISM to protect its

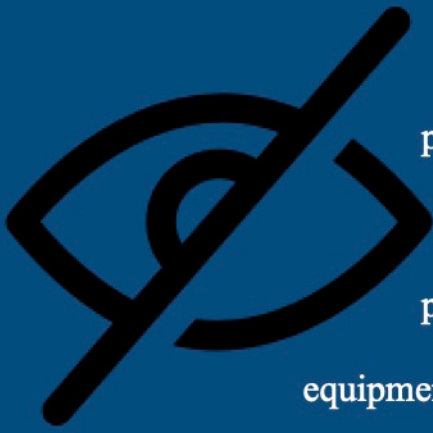


citizens, but we must ensure the Congress is keeping in track such a surveillance program, that the surveillance abuse would be unacceptable. US citizens need the executive branch to ensure the surveillance activity is legal, by policy, and what US citizens wanted. (Sulmasy, 2013).

Nonetheless, an obvious limit has appeared in Sulmasy's opinion, that he has not given any evidence of the statement of the capability of the surveillance program, and the statement he claims that we need the program to detect terrorism and for precautioning the war initiation of al Qaeda seems to be a guess only. Furthermore, a typical query of anti-surveillance people has also been "is the program effective?"



Dr. Micelle Cayford and Dr. Wolter Pieters from the Delft University of Technology have answered this query with their paper "The effectiveness of surveillance technology: What intelligence officials are saying" (Cayford & Pieters, 2018). The primary focus of the paper has been what intelligence official says about the effectiveness of the surveillance program but not justifying its veracity because, since the leak of the PRISM program, there have been lots of voices saying the government's surveillance is intruding on the privacy of millions of American citizens, but with no evidence of success. The purpose of the paper is to evaluate the effectiveness and identify the significance of the surveillance program according to what intelligence officials said. Cayford and Pieters collect the evidence using the methodology of analyzing statements made from 2006 to 2016 by NSA and CIA, including forms of speeches, congressional and parliamentary testimonies, articles, and books. By using relating keywords, in total 42 documents were analyzed, and also 8 interviews with government officials, intelligence officers, and inspectors, and a cryptanalyst was conducted. The evidence has shown that after the leak of Snowden, NSA director General Alexander cited that there have been 54 terrorism activities been detected by "surveillance programs operating under Section 215 of the Patriot Act and Section 702



of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978”, to prove the surveillance to be effective. In the writing of destroying the terrorist organization, Hayden argues the program to be effective, because, with the surveillance equipment, it has disrupted terrorists’ plot, and even reduced the original Qaeda organizations. Also for criminal cases, Omand stated that the surveillance program was used in more than 90% investigative important tool. But there has also been an analysis of the issue of mass surveillance (Cayford & Pieters, 2018). Hayden argued that NSA merely touched 1.6% of the data and only 0.025% was analyzed. For the question of “what surveillance collect?” Hayden stated, “Your privacy is simply not the concern of the NSA director” (Hayden, 2014 as cited in Cayford & Pieters, 2018). The evidence supports the claim of Sulmasy that we need government surveillance to detect terrorism previously, that the surveillance program has the capability of finding terrorists. But by analyzing the evidence, Cayford and Pieters conclude that the effectiveness of the surveilling program has been low because the data shows that the terrorist or criminal being detected is not proportional to the number of people that the surveillance cover, which is almost the entire US population. According to the data, it has also shown the intruding of citizens’ privacy has been massive. This brings out the ethical question of is the privacy of all US citizens, or the small number of lives been saved by the surveillance program more important. When considering the profit maximization rule, the privacy protection of entire US citizens seems to bring more profit than the lives saving of a few people, but can this business rule be applied to ethical controversy? The statement “if you have not done anything wrong, you have nothing to worry about” seems to lower the value of privacy, but is this the case?

The article “Ethics of Government Massive Surveillance” by three Stanford students disproves the argument “If you haven’t done anything wrong, you have nothing to fear”. This statement is simply a common excuse for the government to justify its spying activities. It seems to make sense because most people are law-abiding citizens, which would not be the target of government surveillance, and their daily life either would not be impacted. Government is also using the program to eliminate criminals, hence no matter the CCTV or the network surveillance has only minimal invasion to US citizens’ requirements of privacy. But the case is that the citizens refuse the program not because they have committed any crimes, it is because modern surveillance technology is abusing. The government can track the target’s location, personal information, purchasing habit, online activities, phone conversations, emails, messages, etc.; therefore, people argue that this mandatory tracking device of the entire US population is extremely unacceptable. Moreover, the data and personal information collected by the surveillance program would be stored in an archive, but the archive is accessible by the insiders, and the insiders can use this information to conduct illegal activities. For example, Benjamin Robinson used the government database, TECS, to track the movement of his ex-girlfriend and her family, and the record shows that he has tracked over 160 times before he was caught. (Wu, Chung, & Yamat, n.d.) Consequently, as the surveillance program is getting more advanced, such abuses would be more numerous, and more personal information would be easily leaked out for criminals' illegal usages.



As the surveillance program gets more advanced, the issue it brings is not only abusing, according to Marder, Joinson, Shankar, and Houghton's paper "The Extended 'Chilling' Effect of Facebook: The Cold Reality of Ubiquitous Social Networking", the surveillance leads to an online chilling effect, that the users "carefully manage their online personas, constrained by the expectations of their audiences" (Marwick, 2008 as cited in Marder, Joinson, Shankar & Houghton, 2016) (the audiences here is the spectator of the surveillance program). The chilling effect causes by surveillance that leads to constraining people's behavior has been proven when in the offline domain. The research has firstly a qualitative phase of interviews been conducted to prove the extended chilling effect on the real-life of the social media user. And a quantitative phase consisted of an experiment that directly tested the underlying process. It brings out the statement of "the online surveillance of social media not only "chills" user's online behaviors, it also "chills" their offline behavior" (Marder, Joinson, Shankar, & Houghton, 2016). The users of social media are more restricted because they know their every single message, post, and comment would be accessible by the government. The restrain of online communication remains the same when the user is in the offline domain, that it could catalyze the loss of individuality. The US is a highly self-autonomy country, but the surveillance is indirectly causing the majority of people to lose the right to freedom of speech and freedom of action.



By analyzing the evidence and statements has given previously, the statement “if you have not done anything wrong, you have nothing to worry about”, which was given for supporting surveillance has been disproved. The statement “it’s a necessary sacrifice to stop terrorism” is still highly controversial. But the case is that sacrificing people’s life to achieve goals, no matter the what number of people is would be considered to be highly unethical, even the goal is protecting US citizen’s privacy. Accordingly, I support the existence of the US government surveillance, but under the following circumstances: all surveillance programs should be open and transparent to the public, the detail of the operation of the surveillance program should be informed to the public, people who have access to the archive of information should be known by the public, and collecting only useful information that would be reviewed.

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Photon

By Eason Zheng | Layout by Gayeon Sim

I have **no** sense of time. It is only **my** motion that contextualizes **time**. Ever since I was emitted from the camera flashes from the paparazzi on some pregnant teenage actress, I have traveled beyond the atmosphere, solar system, and into the galaxies. I am a photon. I am an explorer. A particle under the undulating tides, the electric and magnetic fields woven together into an elegant mess.

I have no source code like the ones on eggs in a supermarket laid by chickens injected with artificial hormones in their rusty, confined cages. I am light. I am energy. I am weightless. I am the simplest, most refined asteroid that splits the universe with my unswerving path. I sail across the fathomless ocean like a fearless voyager, seldom hearing the signs of life in the depths.

I am in an area sparsely populated with photons. I look behind – there is an entire swarm of us. Gazing forward, the only light appears far away, almost beyond the cosmic horizon. Although it seems like I have company, the photons behind will all eventually go their separate ways. There are no parallel paths, except between companions from the start of the journey. Plenty of photons formed the single thread of light that exposed the appalling reality for the starlet. Even then, we were exploring headlights, avid inquisitors, and dedicated scientists. Gradually, we dimmed. Without energy, everybody else dissolved into the void. No “farewell”s and “goodbye”s, but only a faint hum. They all left roughly the same message: to carry on exploring, inquiring, and investigating. Except for a few who, oddly enough, just silently accepted their death. Being the last photon is difficult, which is why I write in order to engrave the thoughts that arise from solitude.

I have traveled for a long time. I am aware that I might just die at any moment. You could argue that I am a pessimist, but really, who are you kidding? It’s just plain, cruel probability. Probability is math. Math is science. Science is fact. I only believe in fact. The difference between me and a senile, blasé man is that of self-deceiving maturity. I will never lose my enthusiasm for science, my everlasting undulation under the force of electromagnetism.

There is a distortion in spacetime, this is normal – in fact, prevalent. Distortions are irregularities in the fabric of spacetime – the result of any object with mass.

The distortion grows stronger. My path bends at a steeper and steeper angle. I am now on a bizarre trajectory; it must be a supermassive sun. Nevertheless, I approach at the speed of 299,792,458 m/s regardless of the frame of reference. Whether from the spaceships that fly past at impossible velocities powered by nuclear fusion, antimatter, or just the figment of imagination or a point on a planet where “intelligent-life” would encroach, gesturing foolishly at the sky, I, the single-particle of photon, would always maintain the speed of 299,792,458 m/s.

Spacetime is collapsing as I continue to trail across the fabric, it's going to fold inside out. This is a black hole! Oh shoot. The accretion disk is right in front. The ring of fire revolves around the Singularity, ejecting blinding light. I travel against the massive current of photons like the rush hours in the metro station. In this crowd, I gaze past like a... The Singularity must have expanded its empire from the center of the galaxy like an insatiable glutton. It's an avaricious capitalist, a savage creature clawing its way through, devouring the entire universe. Its only ambition is to thrive by subjugating all matter.

As I contemplate, **something** boils inside of me. Ah... The sensation...like the scorching surface of a sun, an impassable rainforest set ablaze – it chars my soul. I am invincible to the dark menace. My electromagnetism, like a hybrid engine using hyperspace, wormholes, or warp drives, propels me indefinitely across space, to expel all darkness.

As I glide across emptiness and space, I descend as the sand in an hourglass. Gravity contorts my path into a spiral. I am in a state of excitation. My charges are aligned. I am ready for the greatest expedition. “Two point six...” A voice reverberates inside of me.

2.6 times the Schwarzschild radius, the product of the mass of an object and universal gravitational constant divided by the square of the speed of light. Within that 2.6, I would eventually plummet into the event horizon and presumably die, consumed as energy for the black hole. Outside that 2.6, I would ultimately escape the grasp of the Singularity.



I continue to advance, unafraid. Whichever path I take – whether it approaches the Singularity farther or closer than 2.6 – they are all opportunities. I am propelled forward by the immortal force of electromagnetism to delve into the enigmas of the universe. As I approach, time would decelerate exponentially for an outside “monkey-scientist.” This is a one-way express to the end of time.

I have entered the photon sphere. I’m orbiting with fellow packets of light energy. It’s just space where photons pass, either descending within the horizon or fleeing from its tyranny. The orbit is like the intensive care unit in a hectic hospital, an intersection between the living and dead where dread pervades. Nonetheless, it is still a society. I hear the faint, electromagnetic hum. I respond delightfully. All the other photons emit a negative charge: a dreary expression. Without any features to distinguish emotion, the charges are our sixth sense.

During my orbit, I saw a photon spiral toward the photon sphere, and then hurling away, never to return. It leaves an ecstatic trail, “Yeehaw!” and off it goes. I wonder, *will it be scarred after grazing past the photon sphere?* I have also witnessed photons, falling slower and slower into the perfect abyss. They all had their cries for help. They all had their last vibrant shimmer. They all had their perpetual decline into oblivion. They all seemed so depressed, just because they were **too weak and ignorant** to see the Singularity as an unsolved problem.

I plunge endlessly from the photon sphere, down the event horizon, to the Singularity. I have felt the shattering force of gravitational waves from the binary stars that revolve around each other like a pair of ballerinas gracefully whirling in the vacuum, the scintillating bursts of radiation from supernovae that ignite entire galaxies instantaneously, and the bleak, desolate **corpses** of dwarf stars, but **this** is different. *This* is physically infinity.

“Hey? Who are you?” I question with resoluteness.
“The void,” the hollow voice engraves itself in my mind.
“So what do you do?”
“I consume matter.” That’s obvious.
“Why?”



“I don’t know, why not?” *Give me an actual answer...*
“How long have I been here?”
“Time does not exist here.”
“Stop trying to sound all profound and answer my straightforward question.
Is there any sort of physics inside the event horizon?”
“Why construct science if there’s no logic in the world in the first place?”

Damn it. Damn its ugly paradoxes, its sick pessimism, and its black magic.
I look around, darkness encloses everything with a primal sense of uncertainty.
All matter dissolves into the Singularity like gastric acid, only providing nourishment
for the black hole.

“I have no ambition to dominate the cosmos,” the Singularity states. The tyrannical
dictator is powerless.
“I am the carcass of a massive, radiant sun. Its blaze faded into a flicker, then into
nothing.”
“How so?” I respond incredulously.
“At an instant throughout the continuum of time, the sun was reduced to a single point.
It held all matter, but in that process, deleted all that was meaningful. It is me.”

The silence is palpable.

“Don’t you see? I am meaningless, dull and empty. Before, you were the single photon
left in that beam of light. I am just as lonely!” Its tone swells with emotion.
“You disgusting creature!” I am lost for words.

I no longer exist – not even as a cryptic quantum of light. In this hermitage, I assume that the Singularity continues to expand, extracting all lifeless matter in its unstoppable colonization of the universe. In the depths of the event horizon, the Singularity, like decrepit and hollow shell, ignites itself with black, melancholic vengeance, clearing away all that stands as material; to be exact, all *that believe they carry an irreplaceable purpose*. I have broken “free” from time.

I question with my faint hum, “Are you satisfied? Is **this** meaningful?”
My questions reverberate across the corpse. The Singularity does not respond.
I expected so.

“Sorry. Do you believe in God?”

“Yes. He has bestowed upon us the universe.” *Miraculously, it responded...*

“As a playground? A laboratory? As his magnum opus?”

“What’s the difference, my friend?” its last words echo endlessly.

Nothing is relieved from the embrace of death. The black hole is splintering away. The Singularity is blasé, like a senile businessman versed in the field of emotional manipulation; an industrialist who promises a brighter future but exchanges the people’s wellbeing and ideals of morality for some twisted sense of prosperity.

Nevertheless, the Singularity is dying. It is time for the raging blaze of its black vengeance to dim into nothing, or the most veritable, **nothing**. There’s no ice or fire, fury or passion in its death. It is merely a prolonged sigh, the sedate demise of the apex predator. By any means, this is the greatest way to die, the only way to die.

Pairs of matter and antimatter particles constantly collide, annihilating each other like star cross’d lovers. While infinite Romeos and Juliets mark their path towards inevitable destruction, the Singularity tears apart their lachrymose tale, seizing the antimatter and emitting the remaining particle of matter, evaporating at a speed which is negligible for the monkey scientists. Even so, time and speed are extraneous to the Singularity. In a second or an hour, year, millennium, any conceivable length of time across the horizon, the universe reaches its end – its state of paralysis.

Something sparks and I emit a charge. I am once again “free.” Time reincarnates me as just another photon. I sense my insubstantial body, across the sphere, or prism, or cube, or any other shape. I am only an amorphous, quantized packet of light. A vague concept that does not entirely exist. I am propelled by the immortal force of electromagnetism. The engine drives me forward, at a forever fixed speed of 299,792,458 m/s. I look around, the photons all emit a positive, radiant charge. They carry on exploring, inquiring, and investigating the universe as I rest in solitude, to be the first photon to dissolve into the void.



Fin.

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