



Yearbooks and Newsletters

4-5-2016

The LCW Political Update April 5, 2016

Lander College for Women

Follow this and additional works at: https://touro scholar.touro.edu/archives_books



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Political Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lander College for Women. (2016). The LCW Political Update April 5, 2016. Retrieved from https://touro scholar.touro.edu/archives_books/203

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by Touro Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Yearbooks and Newsletters by an authorized administrator of Touro Scholar. For more information, please contact touro.scholar@touro.edu.



The LCW Political Update

APRIL 5, 2016

ISIS: AN EVOLUTION

Regrettably, There is
Still a Point in Trying

Is Feminism
Relevant in 2016?

US v McConnell: The
Ultimate Supreme
Court Case

The LCW Political Update is bi-weekly newsletter about Politics and Current Events that is written and compiled by students at the Lander College for Women. We are committed to producing an honest news source and educating our student body. The writers and editors of the LCW Political Update seek to fulfill the highest standards of academic integrity. If you are interested in getting involved, please send us your information at: lcwupdate@gmail.com

Our Staff:

Rivka Arno and Carla Loebenstein, Founders and Editors in Chief

Rena Devora Winick, Foreign Policy Editor

Dr. Ross Zucker, Faculty Advisor

Contributing Writers:

Tehila Aryeh

Rivi Brauner

Miri Frei

Liad Yitzhak

Lander College for Women

Anna Ruth and Mark Hasten School

an undergraduate division of Touro College

227 W 60th Street, New York NY 10023

ISIS: An Evolution

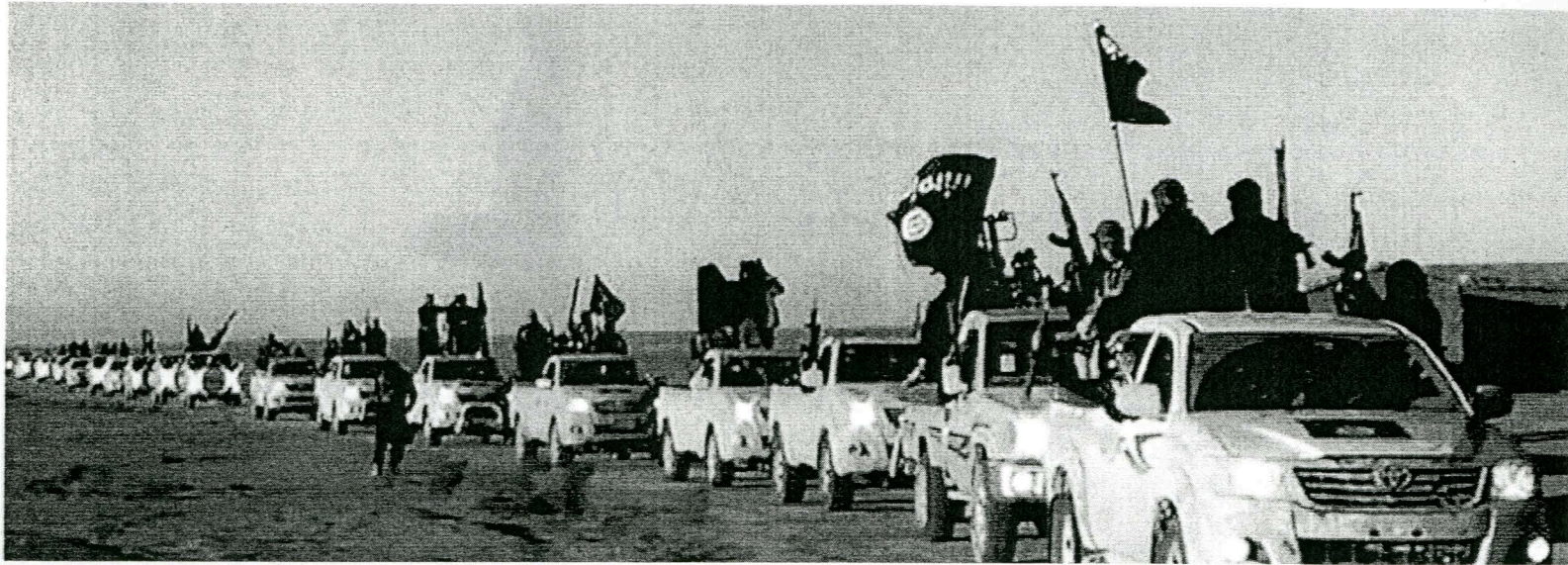
by Liad Yitzhak

The 9/11 terrorist attack at the World Trade Center made the jihadist terrorist organization Al-Qaeda the most infamous terrorist organization in the world. Recently, especially with the terrorist attack in Paris in November 2015, a new and more fanatic jihadist organization came to the attention of billions: the Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria [al-Sham] (ISIS). ISIS, once a branch of al-Qaeda, is now widely considered to be more fanatical and dangerous than Al-Qaeda itself. What makes ISIS more deadly is not just the fact that it has more weapons and support than any other terrorist group, but its harsh guiding ideology.

While most Islamists--the people who believe that Islamic law should unequivocally provide the basis for government--place a great significance on Jihad, it is not necessarily one of the "five pillars" of the Muslim faith. The Koran identifies three types of jihad: the first, and most important, is the individual's internal struggle to renounce evil and live faithfully by following proper religious practices; the second is the struggle of the individual to right evils and injustice within the Muslim community as a whole; and, the third and least important, is protection, of the Muslim community, armed and violent if necessary. The most radical Islamists argue that the "umma," or Muslim community, is under attack externally from the west and internally via secularization and Westernization. For jihadi groups such as Al-Qaeda, this view justifies violent opposition to these threats, both internal and external. Following ijtiḥad, the process of making a legal decision by independent interpretation of religious texts, these individuals reject the traditional teachings that violent opposition to these "corrupting" and harmful forces should only be carried out on the orders of high religious authorities. They argue instead that individuals, and religiously untrained leaders like Osama bin Laden, can determine for themselves when and where violent jihad is not only a justifiable option but a moral necessity.

Established in 2004 by Al-Qaeda, and led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI) served to wage terrorist-guerilla warfare against the military forces of the U.S. and its allies, as well the Shi'ite population. ISI was the first branch that Al-Qaeda





established beyond Afghanistan and Pakistan. Jordanian Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, who became a major advocate of jihadism in Jordan, directly contributed to the Islamic State's two most prominent ideological tenets: an extreme anti-Shi'ism and a focus on restoring the caliphate. While Zarqawi's sectarian views clashed with Al-Qaeda, he shared Al-Qaeda's emphasis on the caliphate. In the late 1980s, Zarqawi left Jordan to participate in the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan, where he formed a close relationship with Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, from whom he learned the principles of Jihadi-Salafism. Between 1994 and 1999, Zarqawi and Maqdisi were imprisoned in Jordan, where together they led a jihadi missionary group. Through his time in prison, Zarqawi evolved into a charismatic leader and cultivated a following.

In October 2004, Zarqawi merged his group with al-Qaeda and swore an oath to Osama bin Laden, becoming the leader of Al-Qaeda in Iraq. The jihad network al-Zarqawi established in Iraq was originally made up of members who had been associated with it in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and later enlisted operatives from Iraq, Syria and other Arab countries. Al-Zarqawi created a strategy for the campaign against the United States, and a wave of terrorism against the Shi'ite population, carried out by suicide bombers and causing severe civilian casualties. The new regime brought chaos throughout Iraq, making it difficult to stabilize the internal situation and added a fanatic and deadly characteristic to ISIS.

Al-Zarqawi's strategy was criticized by Al-Qaeda leaders Osama bin Laden and his second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri. Al-Qaeda leaders were concerned that the indiscriminate killing of innocent Muslim civilians would ruin public support for Al-Qaeda

throughout the entire region. In July 2005, they criticized Zarqawi's strategy and ordered him to stop attacking Shi'ite religious and cultural sites. He refused, and his relations with the Al-Qaeda leadership became severely strained. This dispute laid the foundation for the future tensions and rivalry between the Al-Qaeda branch in Iraq and the central Al-Qaeda leadership.

On October 15, 2006, about four months after the death of Al-Zarqawi, the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI) was established for Sunni jihadi organizations as an extension of Al-Qaeda. The ISI was headed by Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, an Iraqi jihadist operative. Towards the end of 2011, the ISI sent Syrian and Iraqi jihadists to Syria to participate in the campaign against the Assad regime. In January 2012, they secretly established the Jabhat al-Nusra Front, a jihadi organization headed by Abu Muhammad al-Julani, thereby establishing an additional power base for ISI outside Iraq. The gradual development of the al-Nusra Front as an independent jihadi organization was accompanied by a deepening rift with ISI. On April 9, 2013, in an attempt to prevent this process, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared the unification of the ISI and al-Nusra Front, changing the name of ISI to a new name that would express this unification, "The Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria [al-Sham]," or ISIS. Abu Muhammad al-Julani, founder and leader of the al-Nusra Front, refused to submit to al-Baghdadi's authority and immediately swore an oath of allegiance to Al-Qaeda. In response to the developing rivalry between the two organizations, Al-Qaeda sided with the al-Nusra Front and announced the unification had been annulled. On January 3, 2014, Al-Qaeda announced they had severed all connections with ISIS and that

ISIS was no longer a branch of their organization.

On February 2, 2014, Al-Qaeda issued a statement asserting that it was “not responsible for [the Islamic State’s] actions,” and that no organizational ties existed. Tensions between Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State grew in mid-2014 when Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri publically clarified the relationship between the two groups; the Islamic State was originally a branch of al-Qaeda, he said.

In February 2014, Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, a senior leader of ISIS and its official spokesman, refuted al-Zawahiri’s claims- that ISIS had made an oath: “The [Islamic] State is no subservient branch of al-Qaeda, nor was it ever before.” he stated. Adnani asserted that the Islamic State had never given al-Qaeda an oath, and al-Zawahiri was unable to prove that it had. The true nature of the relationship between the Islamic State and al-Qaeda, according to Adnani, was that the Islamic State acted independently within Iraq while simply deferring to Al-Qaeda’s leadership and authority for external matters. Thus the Islamic State routinely defied Al-Qaeda’s orders in Iraq, never following its “frequent requests to withhold from targeting the Shi’a masses.” Outside Iraq, however, the Islamic State had accepted al-Qaeda’s demands, such as not engaging in operations against Iran.

The controversy over the Islamic State’s alleged oath to al-Qaeda has formed a major issue in the ongoing jihadi ideological conflict between the two groups. Pro Al-Qaeda jihadis have supported Zawahiri’s claim, while pro-Islamic State jihadis have followed Adnani in disputing it. Such an issue is crucial, for if the Islamic State was indeed merely a branch of al-Qaeda and had made an oath, its refusal to follow Zawahiri’s order to retreat to Iraq in May 2013 represented an act of insubordination. But a without an oath, the Islamic State was under no obligation to respect the order.

Many jihadis (including younger-generation al-Qaeda jihadists) were overjoyed at this news and were drawn into its ranks. Jihadism, however, was soon plagued by internal fighting, both physically and ideologically. The ideological differences that continue to divide ISIS and Al-Qaeda supporters emerged during this period. Jihadist groups were divided over which side to support; one group, dominated by younger jihadis, put its support behind Baghdadi and the Islamic State, while another group of mainly senior jihadis remains in support of Al-Qaeda and opposed the Islamic State’s outright defiance of Al-Qaeda.

Stay tuned for the next issue of the LCW Political Update, where we examine the internal workings of ISIS.

This Issue in Numbers

35

Number of people injured after Amtrak train derailed near Philadelphia

3

Number of times Bernie Sanders' team rejected a proposed debate from the Clinton campaign

800

Amount of hostages rescued from extremist group Boko Haram

4

Number of Touro College students admitted to Harvard this week

105

Number of years since the devastating Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire which later caused improved working conditions

74

Age of "Queen of Soul" Aretha Franklin, who celebrated her birthday on Friday



Regrettably, There is Still a Point in Trying: The Diatribe of a Fed-Up Touro Student

by Miri Frei

Too many political debates end with one person saying, "I don't care, these issues don't affect me that much." This stance is ludicrous.

I recently read an article, a translation, about French philosopher Michel Onfray. This article caught my eye because of a beautifully expressed idea right at the beginning. Onfray states, "The cruel truth is that our civilization is collapsing. It's lasted 1,500 years. That is a lot already." By civilization, he is referring to the West: North America and Western Europe, which seem to have drawn the long straw in regard to human tragedy per capita.

We have had a pretty good time of late, yes there have been wars, natural disasters, and the overall inclusion of radio top 40s as music. But we also have vaccines, iPhones, and a National Eat Ice Cream for Breakfast Day (February 6th). What makes his point so compelling is not the prediction of the loss of all of this, but rather what our reaction should be to the threat-- nothing. He doesn't think we can, let alone,

should do anything. He says, "You can't stop once you've fallen off a cliff," and his only advice is, "The boat is sinking. Remain elegant. Die upright." It seems Onfray expects us to rummage around in a sinking ship for a fur coat and an issue of Vogue.

However metaphorically resonant an image this creates, I strongly disagree (digression: metaphorically resonant is an excellent name for a band). That is not to say that I don't understand where he is coming from. The idea of our futures not being intrinsically connected to capricious politicians and a polar yet paradoxically apathetic electorate is comforting. We cannot fight the unforgivable tide of historical change so why waste energy trying? Just sit back and attempt to forget that you are part of a generation that equates eloquence with ideas packed into 140 characters, and chooses to embrace staggeringly ill-punctuated role models.

This is the default of too many voters. Only 62.3% of the electorate actually turn up to vote. According to

the Washington Post, 28% of non-voters polled don't vote because they are too busy, 16% are not interested, and 8% simply forgot. People are obviously either content in their ignorance, or else see the government as some far off entity unconnected to them. Why rage against the dying of the light, when you can simply open a beer and watch Howard Stern make a grown man cry?

Sometimes people excuse their apathy with the current state of political discourse in the US, pointing to the recent focus on Donald Trump's hand-size as an obvious example. The Onfray approach, adopted by so many, allows viewers to ignore this as they might a car-crash, stare until there is actual blood on the floor and then turn away embarrassed and yet indifferent. Somebody else's problem. There is nothing we could do. However, I would like to throw some rain on this false prophet parade. Onfray, like so many fatalists, is basing his capitulation on a prediction. What if we had all killed ourselves back in 2012, a year the Mayans predicted would bring the apocalypse? In fact, humans have been predicting the end of time, since... well the beginning of time. Back in 365 AD Hilary of Poitiers announced that the world would end that year. And yet, here we are. Arguably not that much more evolved. So it may seem like Onfray, and the apathetic electorate, are profound, but it is more likely that it is the petulant rantings of a lethargic generation. There is no accountability in modern day prophecy. Due to the high probability that they are wrong, we need to err on the side of caution, row our boats back to shore as inelegantly as we possibly can, wave our hands, burp our national anthems. Because I would rather a world that devotes some of its time to the fake tans and large ears of its politicians than a world that thinks that caring is archaic.

Terror Across the Globe

On Sunday, March 13th, Turkey's capital city Ankara was attacked by the Kurdistan Freedom Hawks in Kizilay Square. The bombing killed at least thirty-seven people, largely attributed to heightened tensions between Kurdish militants and Turkish forces following Turkey's operations in the southeastern region. One week later, on March 19th, Turkish tourist hub Isitkal Street was attacked by a suicide bomber, killing five and injuring over thirty people. Among those killed were two Israeli and two American citizens. Turkey's interior minister later linked the attacks to ISIS, identifying Mehmet Ozturk as the attacker.

Meanwhile, in Nigeria, two female suicide bombers attacked in a mosque located in Maidaguri, killing twenty-four worshippers. The March 16th attack is the most recent one in a six-year series of attacks conducted by Islamist extremist group Boko Haram. The group is responsible for over twenty thousand deaths across Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, and Chad.

Earlier in the month, the small Pakistani town of Shabqadar was attacked by Jamaat-ur-Ahrar, a Taliban militant who was reportedly seeking revenge for the man accused killing the Punjab governor back in 2011. The March 7th attack killed ten and injured over thirty people. On the same day as the Maidaguri attack, March 16th, a bus in Peshawar, Pakistan was bombed by Pakistani-Taliban ally Lashkar-e-Islam. The bus was filled with over fifty government officials on their way to work, fifteen of whom were killed and thirty of whom were injured. Peshawar is reported to be a city that is commonly targeted by the Taliban. Most recently, the Pakistani city of Lahore was attacked on Easter Sunday, March 27th, killing over seventy and injuring over four hundred; the attack was noted to specifically target Pakistani Christians.

Mirroring the Paris attacks back in November, Brussels Belgium experienced explosions on March 22nd in both the airport and metro station, killing thirty-two people and injuring around two hundred. ISIS immediately claimed responsibility for these attacks, launching a series of investigations by both Belgian and American counter-terrorism agencies. Since the attacks, ten different suspects have been arrested across Europe, making for an interesting counter-terrorism manhunt to come.



Is Feminism Relevant in 2016?

by Rivka Arno

It is an undeniable fact that society in 2016 has come a long way throughout the world, and in America in particular. In the last 200 years we have transformed from a country in which only white men could vote into a country with universal suffrage, from a country where women could not attend the same schools as men, could not retain their property after marriage, could not exercise the same legal rights as men could, to a country with more women than men in college and almost as many in the workforce.

In light of all this advancement, it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that as women, our work is done. That feminism is out of date, irrelevant, a thing of the past. That there is no need, in today's equal opportunity society, to advocate for women's rights. That International Women's day is somehow sexist against men.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

As long as sexism is still a part of society, so must feminism be.

And it is just as undeniable (although many try) that sexism is alive and well in 2016. Anyone who doubts that need look no further than the current Republican front-runner. Donald Trump's sexist comments range from calling women "fat pigs", 'dogs', 'slobs', and 'disgusting animals,' as Megyn Kelly pointed out in one of the GOP debates, to telling a reporter that she only had her job because of her looks. These incredibly

sexist comments are representative of an attitude towards women that is very much a reality in today's society, despite decades of advancement.

Furthermore, while things are more equal than they have been in the past, there is still vast room for improvement in the future. Gender inequality is still a reality. The oft-cited statistic that women make 70 cents to the dollar may be overly simplistic, but a report by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, of "median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by detailed occupation and sex," reveals that in the exact same jobs, full-time women workers are consistently paid less than their male counterparts. Women in sales, for example, earned an average of 727 dollars a week; men in the same field, however, earned 916. The data is extensive and almost absurd in its level of detail, and consistent across the board: for the same jobs, and the same hours, women make less than men do. So yes, as a woman living in America in 2016, you can do almost anything a man can do. In fact, you can probably even become President. But the reality is that you'll get paid slightly less for it.

A bill that attempts to address this exact issue has been proposed to Congress not once, not twice, but ten times. And every time, it has been defeated by Congress, which just by the way is composed of 407 men and 128 women, in yet another example of just how far we still have to go.

Sexism and gender inequality is not merely an American issue. March 8th was called International Women's Day, not national. We need to look beyond our borders at the global landscape before declaring a problem solved. Throughout the world, women do not have the same opportunities as men do, do not have the same access to education as men do. International Women's Day allows us to recognize this, to take a step back and work to address it.

So yes, feminism is relevant today, both on a national scale and a global one. In the words of Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani woman who advocates for female education, "we cannot all succeed while half of us are held back."

Election Update

Democrats

Delegates:

Needed to win nomination: 2,383

Hillary Clinton: 1712 with 469 superdelegates

Bernie Sanders: 1011 with 31 superdelegates

Recent Primaries/Caucuses:

3/15: Hillary won all 5 states: Florida, Illinois, Missouri, North Carolina, and Ohio

3/22: Bernie won 2 states, Idaho and Utah, while Hillary won Arizona

3/26: Bernie won all 3 states: Alaska, Hawaii, and Washington

Republicans

Delegates:

Needed to win nomination: 1,237

Donald Trump: 736

Ted Cruz: 463

Marco Rubio: 171

John Kasich: 143

Recent Primaries/Caucuses:

3/8: Trump won 3 states, Hawaii, Michigan, and Mississippi, while Cruz won Idaho

3/15: Trump won 4 states: Florida, Illinois, Missouri, and North Carolina, and Kasich won Ohio

3/22: Trump won Arizona and Cruz won Utah

Trending Now

Cuba

President Obama the first sitting U.S. President to visit the nation since 1928

Microsoft

Company shuts down chatbot targeted at millennials due to inappropriate responses

Pope Francis

Follow the Pope on Instagram @Franciscus

#PanamaPapers

Leaked documents reveal offshore money laundering operations conducted by Vladimir Putin's associates

John Kerry

Secretary of State tells crowd in Brussels that ISIS is faltering

Al-Qaduli

The Pentagon reported that airstrikes in Syria have killed ISIS's second-in-command last Friday



US v McConnell: The Ultimate Supreme Court Case

by Carla Loebenstein

Since the death of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia last month, debate over President Obama's choice for the nomination has escalated quickly and generated a great response among the people. Two weeks ago, Obama announced that Merrick Garland, chief judge at the U.S. Court of Appeals in the D.C. Circuit, would fill the seat left vacant by Scalia. In an immediate response, Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) reported that the Senate would refuse to confirm Garland's nomination because Supreme Court appointments should be avoided during presidential election years.

McConnell, along with fellow Republicans Paul Ryan and Chuck Grassley, have called this principle 'The Biden Rule,' referring to Vice President Biden's speech to the Senate made back in 1992, during which Biden explained that it would be acceptable to temporarily allow only eight justices to sit on the Supreme Court bench. Many have criticized the GOP for using its majority in the Senate to shoot down Obama's less conservative pick for the Supreme Court. Supporters of McConnell's statement, on the other hand, have cited

that it is the Senate's right to refuse their "advice and consent" to the president.

Though McConnell is technically right, the failure to grant Garland a hearing for nomination would be an unprecedented action taken by the Senate. It could also be a threat to the democratic voice of the American people. In a letter to the White House, political scientists across the nation warn McConnell that the Senate is obliged to advise on nominations to the Court and failure to do so would be an abrogation of the constitution. It is not unheard of for the Senate to aggressively deny a nomination made by the Senate, but a refusal to deliberate that choice in the first place would be a dangerous decision.

At least five Supreme Court vacancies have been filled during a presidential election year, and in certain cases, an expedited confirmation process conducted by the Senate. Based on this precedent, the political scientists' letter to the White House concludes that it must not be constitutional reasoning; rather, McConnell is allowing partisan polarization to interfere with the democratic process. Though neither party is directly to blame, the ideological divisiveness in court confirmations has reached a frightening peak during the Obama presidency. If matters become worse, the American people will suffer: a deadlocked U.S. court system, especially the Supreme Court, leaves cases open like festering wounds of American society.

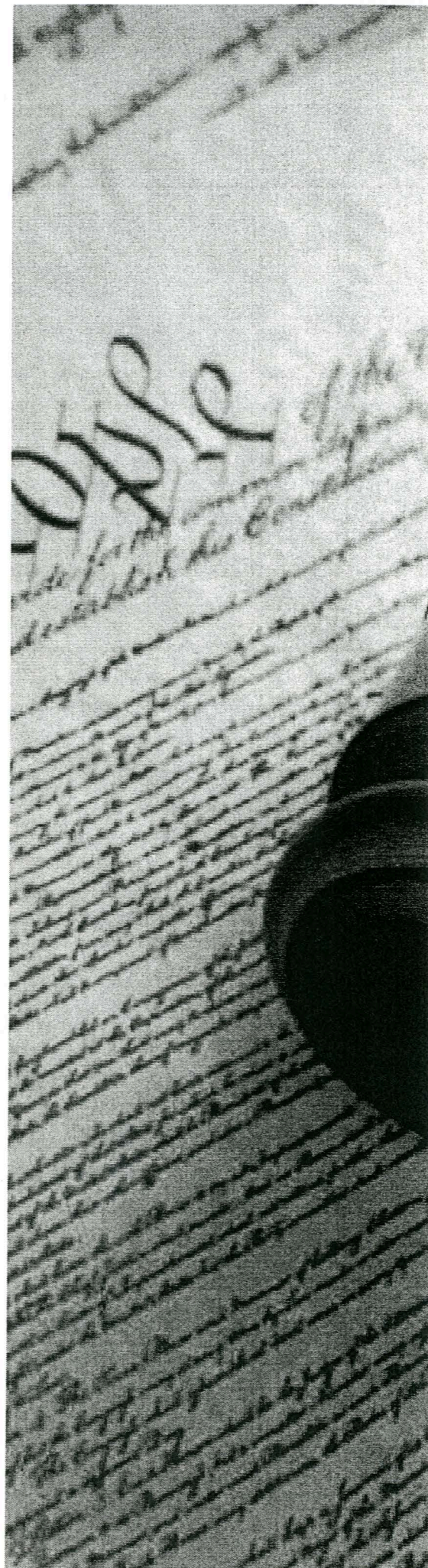
There is a high risk associated with allowing the Supreme Court nomination to roll over to the next presidency; in a WGAN News interview on Tuesday, Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) raised the compelling point that if Clinton were elected president this year, her nomination may tip even farther to the left than Garland. On the other hand, if Trump were to be elected, who knows who his nominee will be—he is certainly unpredictable, let alone politically inexperienced. Collins, in this case, disagrees with her fellow Republican McConnell on this one: Garland is a safer bet than anything coming from the next presidency.

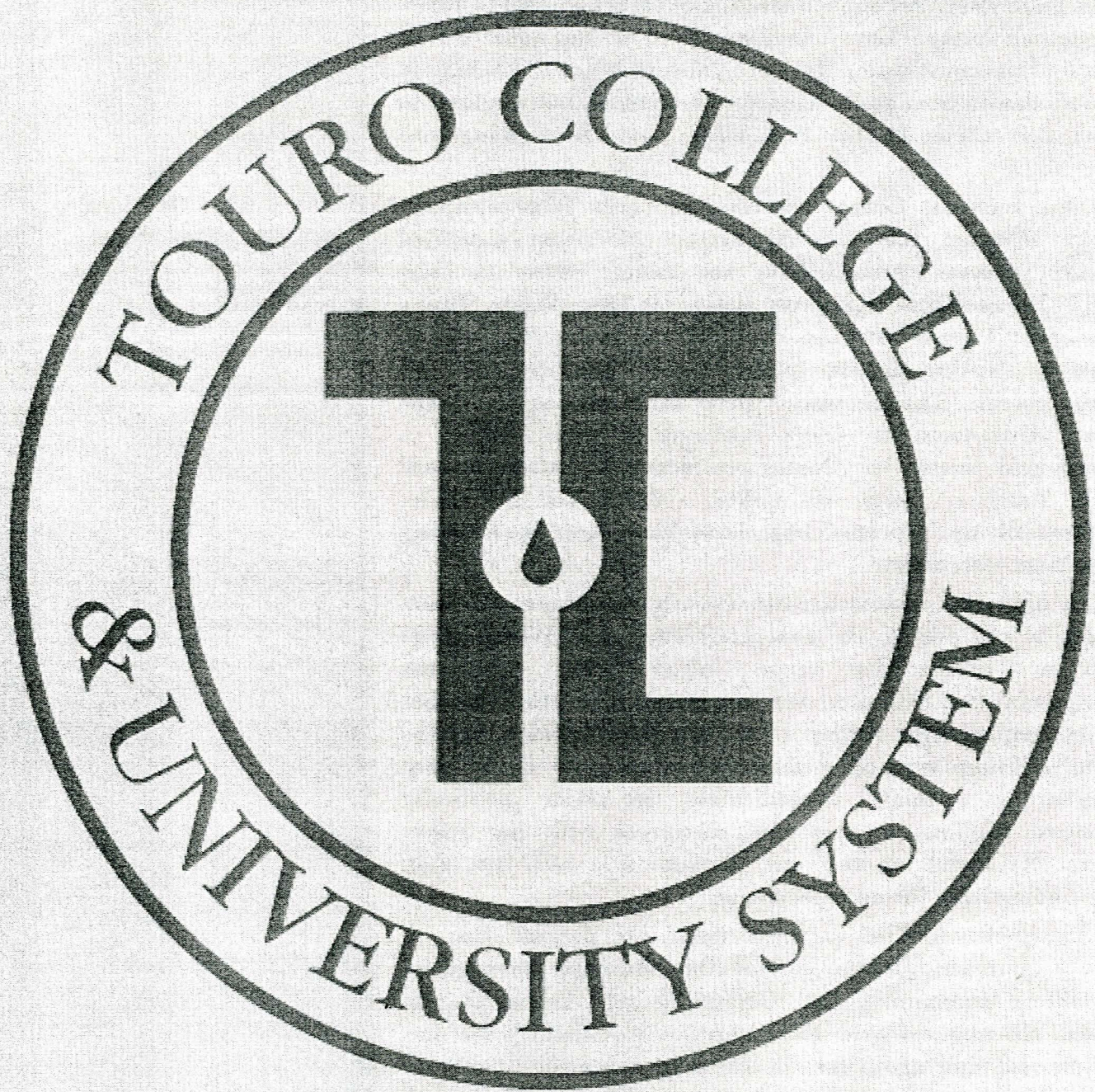
In her statement, Collins touched upon the largest flaw in McConnell's approach to Judge Garland. She notes, like the majority of the political community, that Garland is well known for his moderation. His nineteen-year service on the DC Circuit court has proven time and time again that he has been responsible for both right- and left-leaning judicial decisions. Tom Goldstein of SCOTUSBlog persuasively notes that "to the extent that the President's goal is to select a nominee who will articulate a broad progressive vision for the law, Judge Garland would be an unlikely candidate."

Well, there you have it, Mitch—Garland seems to be the ideal candidate at a time like this. Perhaps you might want to reconsider your constitutional obligations.

For a complete list of the names of scholars who participated in the letter to the White House, visit

www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2016/03/10/letter-experts-president-supreme-court-nominee





The LCW
Political Update