

COMMUNIQUE

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Dual Tragedies Shake the Philippines

By Michaela Cabrera

Tragedy struck the Philippines twice this February: first in Manila, where a popular game show drew a crowd of thousands and led to a stampede; and two weeks later in Leyte province, where a landslide wiped out an entire farming village.

The majority of the 74 stampede victims and the more than 1,000 mudslide casualties came from poor families.

The stampede occurred on the first anniversary celebration of a

popular television game show called Wowowee. Advertisements for the show had unintentionally led viewers to believe that everyone in the audience would take home a prize, from a few thousand pesos to a house worth 1 million pesos (\$20,000).

With a per capita gross domestic product of a little more than \$4,000, a daily minimum wage of \$5.76 and 30 percent of the population living below the poverty line,

many Filipinos would rather resort to dole-outs and pin their hopes on a game show than expect to find a decent paying job. Next to going abroad and working as a nurse, domestic helper or factory worker—which many aspire to—winning a contest may be the only way to pay for their children's school textbooks or their sick old mother's expensive medicines.

Two days before the Wowowee celebration, a kilometer-long line had already formed outside the Ultra sports arena, where the event was to be held. When the gates opened, 30,000 people scrambled through the narrow passageway to a stadium that could hold only 10,000. Those in front were trampled to the ground.

Ironically, many of the victims were the show's devotees, mostly old women who watched it in the studio and who came early for the anniversary of their favorite program. They had stood in line for two days with hardly a bite to eat, and had no strength to fight the giant stampede.

Two weeks later, disaster struck again. Torrential rains came without warning and the deforested earth gave way, causing a landslide that buried the village of Guinsaugon in the southern province of Leyte.

"We're still alive, rescue us," read a text message sent by one of the teachers stuck in a public school building. By 7 p.m. that evening, however, the messages stopped coming. Thirty meters of earth had fallen onto the village, and the dense mud plus the continuous rains eliminated the chance of finding survivors.

Investigations are currently under way regarding the stampede. The

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SIPA's Assassin

By Andrew Monahan

For a long time, SIPA alumna Yukari Sato has nimbly navigated a society traditionally strewn with traps for women. So when the Japanese press called her a "female ninja" last year, the moniker seemed to fit.

In early August 2005, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi dissolved the Lower House of the Diet, Japan's parliament. He called a risky snap election to purge his own party—the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)—of opponents blocking passage of his postal privatization bill. Within weeks, Sato (MIA '88) emerged as the most prominent of a group dubbed the "assassins." The prime minister dispatched this team of high-profile political outsiders—most of them attractive women—to unseat the LDP rebels.

The purge succeeded largely due to the effectiveness of these women, who came to be known as "female ninjas" in an election that excited the usually apathetic electorate. The election, held in early September, highlighted the ways in which women like Sato have cleared many obstacles to women's progress in public life in Japan.

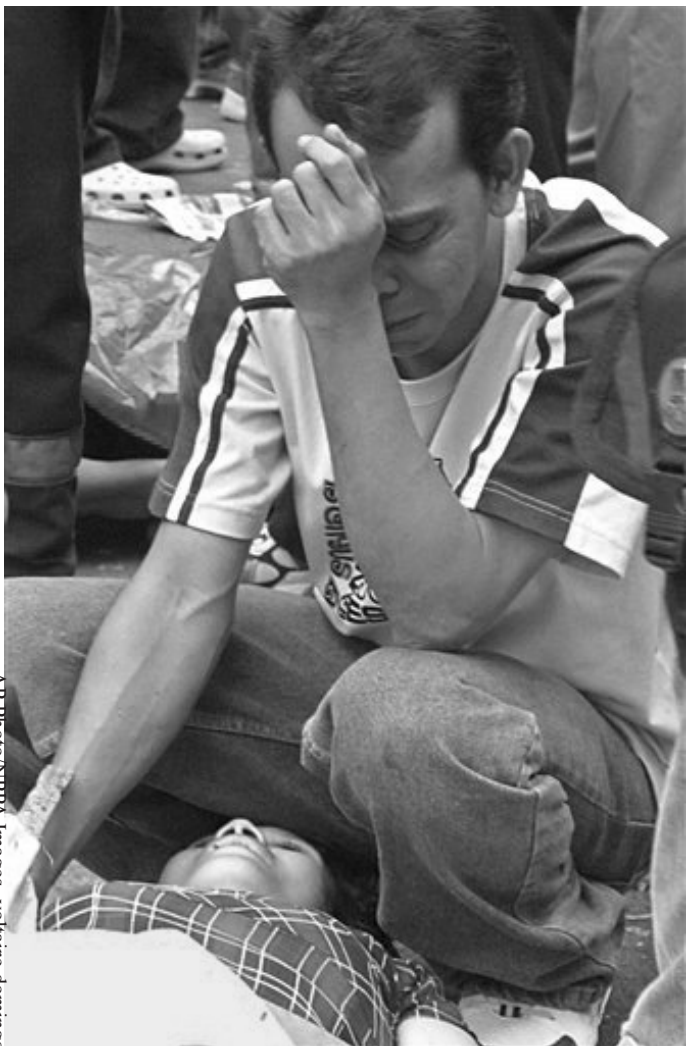
Sato originally came to Columbia to take classes in political science through the School of General Studies. She completed an MIA at SIPA, and went on to earn a Ph.D. in economics at New York University.

This female ninja is a symbol of change not only in Japanese politics but also in Japanese society as a whole. With her Ph.D. and her successful career in the upper echelons of investment banking, she represents the increasingly influential role of women in academia and business. Like a growing number of women, Sato has not let her status as a *batsuichi*, a divorcee, debilitate her career.

As Chief Economist for Credit Suisse First Boston Japan, she was tapped to be one of Koizumi's "assassins." In a recent telephone interview, Sato related that she received an urgent call from an influential LDP figure in August. The caller asked her to immediately meet Tsutomu Takebe, the secretary general of the party.

At LDP Headquarters, Takebe offered Sato an assignment she

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AP Photo/NPPA Images, voltaire domingo

A man mourns over his dead relative, a victim of a stampede in suburban Pasig city, east of Manila, Feb. 4, 2006. At least 73 people, mostly women and children, were killed, and more than 300 others were injured.

Following the Museum Trail: the Met

By Joe Speicher

When you first walk into the Metropolitan Museum of Art—the "Met" for short—head in any direction but to the right. The tourists, soccer moms, dilettantes and yuppies always go to the right, to see the big, bad Egyptian Temple. Yes, it is huge. Yes, it is ancient and historic. Yes, it was disassembled piece by piece from the banks of the Nile and rebuilt right here in Central Park.

But there is so much else to see! Alternative (and more exciting) options include: Khmer Hindu

icons, African fertility figurines, Jain temple carvings, Tibetan sand paintings, Byzantine stained glass icons, the façade of the First American Bank, Cypriot burial caskets, Aztec deity idols, Japanese Shinto panel paintings, Mesopotamian effigies and some Rembrandts, to name a few.

It is mind-blowing to discover the Met. You can spend weeks exploring the network of interlacing galleries, corridors and arcades and never once bump into that damn temple (the Temple of

Dendur is okay, but if it's possible for artwork to jump the shark, this piece is the Arthur Fonzerreli).

Most museums are mausoleums for art. The stale, commercial staging of amazing artwork can be tedious at best, depressing at worst (read: the National Gallery of Art in D.C.). The Met's curators avoid this by creating an evocative milieu that contextualizes the sprawling collections, inviting viewers to bathe in the aura of the artwork.

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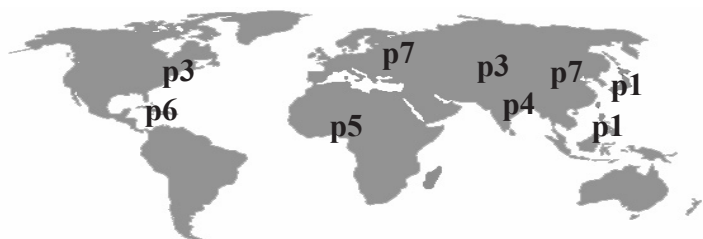


AP Photo/Katsumi Kasahara

Yukari Sato (MIA '88) speaks to reporters in Tokyo on Sept. 21, 2005, the opening day of her first Diet session. Sato was backed by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in the general elections and fought an intense campaign. She is regarded as an important publicist of Koizumi's reforms.

Got Horse
Milk?
Slurp.

3



Coca-Cola:
Always
Thirsty

4



6

News, Views and FAQs
From the People in Power

Results of Fall 2005 Disciplinary Proceedings

All SIPA students sign a pledge to follow the school's Code of Academic and Professional Conduct when they commence their studies. Possible violations of the Code are reported to Associate Dean Sara Mason in the Office of Student Affairs (OSA). Dean Mason reviews the information provided and determines if there is cause for a disciplinary proceeding at SIPA, or refers the matter to the appropriate University office if the matter is outside the jurisdiction of school policy.

Cases heard at SIPA are reviewed by an Honor Board consisting of two faculty members, two students and an assistant dean from OSA, with Dean Mason providing administrative oversight.

The Code of Academic and Professional Conduct and the procedures for Dean's Discipline are available on the Student Affairs website—click on "Academic Policies and Regulations" at:

www.sipa.columbia.edu/resources_services/student_affairs.html.

Case #1

A student was charged with lying to a faculty member about submission of the final paper for a class. Although there was not sufficient evidence to prove this, the student was found to be in violation of the Code of Conduct for failing to communicate with the faculty member in a timely and responsible manner regarding the assignment in question. A letter noting this violation was placed in the student's academic file. The assignment will be graded, with the faculty member retaining the right to impose a penalty for late submission.

Case #2

A student was charged with submitting the same paper to two separate faculty members for two classes without seeking their permission to do so. The student admitted the violation. A letter noting the violation was placed in the student's file and a grade of F imposed in both classes.

NYC Career Series 2006

The New York City Career Series is organized by the Office of Career Services to inform students of career opportunities in the New York area. Participants include representatives from New York organizations and SIPA alumni working in the city. Panel speakers from various professions will describe their career paths and the opportunities within their organizations.

The series will culminate in a major Alumni Networking Reception on Thursday, April 20. For more information, please contact Bobbie Cappiello, Manager of Career Events:

bbg2105@columbia.edu.
All panels are from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Please sign up on SIPATRAK.

February 27: Human Rights, 1512 IAB

March 6: Media and Communications, 1512 IAB

March 8: Philanthropy and Foundations, 420 IAB

March 21: International Finance Policy, 1512 IAB

March 22: Economic Policy, 707 IAB

March 27: Humanitarian Affairs, 1512 IAB

March 29: Consulting, 707 IAB

March 30: Urban Policy, 420 IAB

April 3: United Nations, 1512 IAB

April 4: Education, 707 IAB

April 6: Environmental Policy, 420 IAB

April 10: Economic and Political Development, 1512 IAB

April 12: Security Policy, 707 IAB

April 13: Energy, 420 IAB

April 18: Health, 420 IAB

April 20: ALUMNI RECEPTION, Location TBA

April 21: NETWORKING INTERVIEWS

EDITORIAL



Abu Ghraib, Dec. 12, 2003, 10.47 p.m.: Soldier orders a detainee to the floor while dog handlers and their dogs look on.

For the past year, the Pentagon has been battling the American Civil Liberties Union in federal court to prevent the remaining Abu Ghraib images from being released to the public. Reasons cited include fear of a rise in anti-American sen-

timent and injury to detainee rights under the Geneva Convention.

These claims are as outrageous as they are ridiculous. For it is the military's actions that rouse anti-American sentiments, and those pretending to safeguard the

detainees' rights have in fact violated them egregiously.

It is evident that the Bush administration is interested in protecting its already tattered reputation more than in the rights of Iraqi detainees. This can be seen in Defense Secretary Rumsfeld's expressed wish for the media to divert coverage from Abu Ghraib to Saddam's mass graves; we believe it can also be seen in the major U.S. media outlets' use of the words "assault" and "abuse"—not "torture"—to describe the events of Abu Ghraib.

Of the detainees, Rumsfeld has said: "...they're trained to lie... trained to allege that they've been tortured... to put out misinformation, and they're very good at it."

It is time for the media to start recognizing that Rumsfeld and company are very good at it, too. Time to publish the images the public needs to see.

SIPASA Speaks

I get a lot of questions about the Class Gift Committee.

"What exactly is the class gift?"

"Do I get a gift?"

While the class gift is a long-established tradition at many universities, it is relatively new at SIPA. Each year, the graduating class, their friends, family, the staff and faculty bestow a gift upon the school that has given them so much. Graduating students vote on the gift; this year's gift is a fellowship for a first-year student.

While the class gift's primary purpose is to give something to the school, current students, soon-to-be graduates, and future students benefit from it in many ways. First, it shows the administration that we appreciate the education we are receiving. It also shows our will-

By Veronica Lucia Alvarez, CGWG's External Relations & Development Chair
ingness to contribute toward making SIPA a better place.

Voting to make the 2006 gift a fellowship sends a message that fellowships are important. Our commitment to the gift encourages alumni to support SIPA.

While SIPA has well-established social traditions like Follies and the Gala, it does not have a strong history of student giving. We now have the opportunity to rectify that. With one year of fundraising under its belt, this year's Class Gift Working Group (CGWG) is planning events and other ways to get the word out about the class gift during the semester. We kicked off the giving season by co-hosting a party with SIPASA on the 15th floor in January. We also sold roses for Valentine's Day. Next, we will be holding raffles at upcoming

SIPASA socials and hosting a guest bartending event with SIPA "celebrity" bartenders.

Donations will be accepted at events throughout the semester and at tables on the fourth floor during the Class Gift 2006 Pledge Week, from April 24-28. You can donate by cash, check (made out to Columbia University with SIPA Class Gift Fund 2006 in the memo) or credit card. You can also give online at <https://wwwb.ais.columbia.edu/udar/UDARGiftForm.jsp> (from the drop-down boxes select School of International and Public Affairs, Student Financial Aid, Class of 2006 Gift Fund). Contact me at va59@columbia.edu with any questions.

Everyone is welcome to attend CGWG meetings every Wednesday from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. in 1401 IAB.

SIPA's Assassin

Continued from Page 1

could not refuse. The target was Seiko Noda, a respected politician and pioneering woman in Japanese politics. Noda had been elected four times to the lower house and was chair of the LDP municipal chapter in Gifu prefecture. She had served as minister of Posts and Telecommunications and was cited as a promising candidate for Japan's first female prime minister. But Noda opposed postal privatization, the issue on which Koizumi was staking his political career.

There are two ways to get a Diet seat: in a winner-take-all single-seat district or in a proportional-representation block. In the blocks,

seats are allocated to each party according to the percentage of votes received. Takebe told Sato that she was to unseat Noda in the single-seat Gifu District 1. But he also offered Sato the lead position on the list of candidates for the proportional representation block in that area. This assured her a seat even if she failed to beat Noda.

"Ten seconds later I responded that I would go for it," Sato said.

In the end, Sato went to the Diet with a seat from the proportional-representation block after barely losing to Noda. She was one of 83 new LDP members to join the lower house.

Although Sato failed to "assassinate" Noda, she forced her to leave the LDP to become an independent

and usurped her seat as chair of the LDP municipal chapter in Gifu, a previously unthinkable change. The old-LDP has deep roots in conservative, rural Gifu. One of the joys of the campaign, said Sato, was discovering that "the general voters were open to accepting a newcomer." Noda got the message, and dared not oppose the postal privatization bill when the Diet took it up again in October. Members of the die-hard conservative factions within the LDP were dismayed, but as Sato sees it, these people belong to the past. "The LDP as a party clearly got renewed," she said.

Andrew Monahan (MLA1) is writing a profile of Yukari Sato for the next issue of SIPA News magazine.



Student of the Fortnight



Reem Akkad (MIA1) concentrates in IMC and the Middle East and moonlights as an ABC producer.

What's your weekend job?

I'm a producer for Good Morning America Weekend. I worked full-time for ABC World News Tonight, and when I got into grad school they offered me my current position. I work Fridays and Saturdays from 3 a.m. to 11 a.m.

What brings you to SIPA?

I wanted a stronger grounding in Arab politics and culture. Prof. Rashid Khalidi is one of the main reasons I wanted to come here.

What do you think of media coverage of the Middle East?

In terms of Iraq, I think it's appalling. You don't see enough of what Iraqis are suffering... It's a gap in understanding.

You immigrated from Syria when you were nine. Do Syrians want the regime to go?

You'd be hard-pressed to find any Syrian who wants the U.S. to intervene in Syrian affairs. With that said, do most Syrians want the regime to go? Yes.

SIPA Asks: Got Horse Milk?

By Andrew Monahan

At 7.45 a.m. on February 12, SIPA's Kyrgyz Governance Team, part of an Economic and Political Development workshop, left Kyrgyzstan's capital, Bishkek, on an Aeroflot International Airlines flight. Just over a week later, at 6 p.m. on February 20, team member Talant Sultanov (MIA2) stood in the SIPA student lounge with two silver coffee urns behind him, each labeled with a print-out reading "KMYZ."

Kymyz (pronounced "koo-mis") is a singularly sour alcoholic beverage made with fermented horse milk. Sultanov and the other team members had managed to get some kymyz back to New York in plastic soda bottles, and were now hosting, with the Central Asia Group and the Eurasia Students Initiative, what they billed as "the very first public tasting in the U.S. of Kyrgyzstan's favorite drink."

Sultanov wore an *ak-kalpak*, a yurt-shaped felt hat. Kyrgyz rugs with elegant patterns were draped behind a table stacked with *borsok* (fried pastries) and a bread called *batyr-nan*, particularly tasty with *ikra* (salmon roe). A large, curious crowd stood waiting to sample from the urns and plates.

Sultanov asked the crowd in a warm-up exercise, "Can anyone

name some things Kyrgyzstan is famous for?"

"Sheep hunting?" someone shouted.

"Sheep herding, maybe," Sultanov replied, eliciting laughter.

In fact, the Kyrgyz people consider sheep and cow herding inefficient; their animal of choice is the horse. Sultanov steered the conversation toward the animal of honor: "We love them so much we eat their meat and drink their milk."

To make kymyz, the Kyrgyz pour horse milk into a leather bag and stir it with a stick called a *bishkek*. According to Rafis Abazov in his book *Historical Dictionary of Kyrgyzstan*, this is where the country's capital city gets its name.

Abazov, an adjunct lecturer at the Harriman Institute, stood in the crowd, a cup of kymyz in his hand. He spoke about the SIPA Kyrgyz Governance Team's trip, which was part of a joint project the team is conducting with the United Nations Development Program that will "assess how the president, prime minister and parliament share power" and produce recommendations "designed to help streamline decision-making in Kyrgyzstan." He noted the ability of the SIPA team to rapidly establish a rapport with Kyrgyz govern-

ment officials in a culture where "you need time to develop trust, and drink and drink."

At the kymyz urns, Assel Zhumadil (MIA1) poured shots of the thin whitish drink into plastic cups. To one taster who asked about its origins, she joked, "It was made in Kyrgyzstan 10 years ago." When some of the uninitiated looked as though they believed it, she let on, "No, no, 10 days ago!"

Her husband Duman—who looks strikingly like a Central Asian Keanu Reeves—said that kymyz has excellent health benefits, but that its "most efficient influence is within five days" of production. He noted that transporting it in plastic also seemed to adversely affect its flavor. But when one taster went gamely for seconds, he immediately joined and raised a toast.

The sourness overwhelmed some palates. Tod Murphy, a Columbia College student, said it was "kind of like drinking liquid cheese."

Replied Sultanov generously, "That is a comparison I hadn't thought of."

Jaynbek Abakirov, a tall Kyrgyz man who had come from work at Ernst & Young, explained that the fermentation, which causes the sourness, was a way to preserve the nutritious drink for travelers:

Lehman Languishes, Students Complain

By Elina Sverdlova

Frozen in its early '70s glory, Lehman Library is an odd fixture in the fast-paced SIPA environment. Some students have raised their eyebrows at the sagging chairs, absence of lighting, lack of study space, dirty walls and empty caged bookshelves around the perimeter of the second floor.

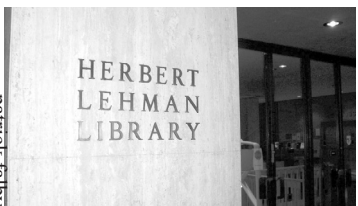
"The library does not have enough study room," said Andrea Golfari (MIA1).

"Lehman is not conducive to studying," added Remi Bello (MIA1). "The seating arrangement is inadequate. There is not enough open space to study or chat."

A familiar scenario for students is browsing the library in search of a spot for group study. During midterms and finals, it is often difficult to find a seat, with or without a working light.

"I can never get a strong enough internet signal," said Deborah Batista (MIA1) while attempting to get online. Suzanne Truchard (MIA1) is concerned mainly with aesthetics. "The library looks like a Motel 6," she said laconically.

As much as it might seem appro-



priate to blame the SIPA administration for the deteriorating state of Lehman Library, the 14th floor has nothing to do with it. Lehman is administered by the University Librarian's Office, which oversees 22 campus libraries.

Patricia Renfro, the university's deputy librarian, understands SIPA students' frustration. "Lehman's condition has been on our office's radar for quite some time," she said. "We have been implementing renovations in increments." Such was last summer's installation of new desks and light fixtures in the west wing quiet study area, the upgrade of the ACIS lab and purchase of the dry erase boards for the second-floor study room.

Jane Winfield, the director of Social Sciences Libraries and the administrator for operations and services in Lehman, believes the

university has given the library a considerable amount for updating the digital collections each year.

"We do plan to purchase new chairs for the library, and we will need to phase this, since the cost will be substantial. Beyond that, we will be mapping out a series of improvements that can be incorporated over time," said Renfro. "However, no big renovation is foreseen for Lehman."

SIPA and non-SIPA students use Lehman Library. Between July 2004 and June 2005 there were 270,000 entrances and 394,000 exits recorded, as per the security counter installed at the library's entrance. Whether students breed in the library or not, though, Lehman's high usage rate is evident, making the lack of study space even more crucial.

Students have also questioned the presence of metal book cages that take up a big part of the second floor. According to Winfield, the law school, with a directive from the office of the provost, purchased the space to store their book collections. They also voiced their con-

cerns about the library's book reserve system.

"Why are they so strict with the books on reserve?" asked Probal DasGupta (MIA1). "If a book is the last copy then you cannot take it overnight. Also, you cannot peacefully renew the last copy after two hours. You have to wait 15 minutes in between in case somebody else wants it. The system should not obstruct learning, it should facilitate it."

Winfield is considering relaxing the rule for last copies and allowing them to be taken out overnight. As for adding more copies per book title, she believes the library is doing everything possible.

"We put all the books we have on reserve. If it is a large class there is usually more than one copy available," said Winfield.

Concerns and suggestions about Lehman Library can be submitted via the online suggestion site <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/help/suggestions.html>.

Elina Sverdlova (MIA1) concentrates in ISP. She studies in Butler.

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Bangladesh: The Next Terror Haven?

By Probal DasGupta

Wedged between the hurricanes that sweep north of the Bay of Bengal and the devastating monsoon floods, Bangladesh is currently in danger of falling prey to another form of tempest: Islamic fundamentalism.

About six months ago, more than 300 explosions simultaneously rocked Dhaka and fifty other Bangladeshi cities; an outlawed Islamic militant group, Jamatul Mujahideen Bangladesh, took responsibility for the attacks. In the past few years, there has also been an unsuccessful assassination attempt on the country’s former prime minister, a fatal attack on its former finance minister and threats of attacks against western diplomatic missions and local government buildings. Women—both Muslim and non-Muslim—are being harassed for not covering their faces. And the Bangladeshi national anthem has been denounced as anti-Islamic by terrorist organizations.

Politically, Bangladesh has had a tumultuous past, beginning with its birth in a bloody war in 1971. After oscillating between nebulous democracy and authoritarian rule for two decades, it finally settled into its current uneasy political system in the nineties.

The growth of terrorism across the country can be traced to opportunism and infighting between the leading political parties. In 2001, then-Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia of the Bangladeshi Nationalist Party (BNP) aligned with the fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami party against BNP’s opposition, the Awami League.

The ensuing period has seen the rapid rise of extremist organizations such as the Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh, which has acted as a front for funds channeled to extremist parties—including Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami, which has ties to al-Qaeda.



AP Photo/pavel rahman

Opposition leader and former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, of Bangladesh’s Awami League, consoles a woman who was disabled in grenade attacks in Dhaka that killed 22 and wounded 300 in Aug. 2004.

Today, the government seems to have lost control over the elements with which it once sought to align. Poor rural regions have provided easy fodder for extremists. Support for Osama bin Laden has grown vociferous since the U.S. occupation of Iraq. In addition, *madrasas*, or religious schools, that preach the radical Wahhabi brand of Islam are undermining the more moderate, Sufi-oriented tradition of Bengali Islam. Several *madrasas*, allegedly funded by the Kuwaiti-based Revival of Islamic Heritage Society, have been an important recruiting ground for terrorists.

Terrorist organizations are increasingly choosing Bangladesh as a hub for their activities. The region’s thick vegetation provides natural camouflage, and the porous Burmese and Indian borders—combined with the instability of the northeastern Indian states—facilitate the exchange of weapons and explosives. There have been reports of trafficking in low-grade plutonium across adjoining India, Nepal and Burma. Low-grade plutonium can be used to make “dirty bombs,” conventional explosives coupled with radioactive material.

Despite the gloomy portents of a violent future, however, there is some room for optimism. Despite

its problems, the country still manages to maintain a growth rate of between 4 and 6 percent; the success of micro-credit institutions and increasing empowerment of women in Bangladesh are worthy of emulation by larger countries.

The fundamentalist school of thought that fuels terror is bound to clash with a society that is open to female empowerment and liberal growth. It is therefore necessary to strengthen these virtues in Bangladeshi society. Economic development of poor rural areas, stronger internal security measures and a crackdown on weapons proliferation may hold the solution to Bangladesh’s problems.

Bangladesh is not on the brink of disaster yet. But considering the rapid growth of militant Islam and the country’s vulnerable political and geographical situation, its peace and security are critical for the rest of the region. Peace is necessary to prevent the country from being hijacked by factors that are inimical to its moderate, secular culture. And the world must help prevent another “Talibanization” of a peace-loving people.

Probal DasGupta (MIAI) worked in areas of counter-terrorism and insurgency before coming to SIPA.

Letter To The Editors

I read with great astonishment—and incredulous amusement—Boaz Nol’s tribute to Israeli prime minister-cum-war criminal Ariel Sharon (“My Sharon,” February 27). If this glowing whitewash is anything to go by, Mr. Nol’s skills should surely land him a job as an advertiser. Let us pause to take a factual look at the life of the man Mr. Nol says “could lead Israel in her struggle for peace.”

In his teenage years, the young Sharon joined the Haganah, the terrorist organization responsible for the massacre and ethnic cleansing of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. Sharon was later hand-picked by David Ben-Gurion, Israel’s first prime minister, to lead the elite Unit 101 forces. In August 1953, he showed his leadership credentials by massacring between 15 and 50 (reports vary) Palestinians in the village of El-Bureig. Unit 101 carried out several “operations” that claimed hundreds of Palestinian lives, including the infamous Qibya massacre that obliterated a whole village. In his autobiography, Sharon describes Ben-Gurion’s pride in congratulating him on this achievement.

In the 1970s, Sharon was a leading force in demolishing thousands of homes in Gaza and in establishing the illegal Israeli settlements across the West Bank—the ultimate roadblock to a two-state-solution.

In 1982, Sharon was defense minister in charge of the invasion of Lebanon, which claimed tens of thousands of Palestinian and Lebanese lives and culminated in the Sabra and Chatila massacre, in which 1,000 to 3,000 Palestinian civilians were killed in cold blood. Israel’s own Kahan commission found Sharon “directly responsible.”

You would expect the little matter of the massacre of thousands to put a damper on someone’s political career, but not in Israel—and certainly not Sharon. He was democratically elected as prime minister. During his reign, thousands of Palestinians were killed—including 700 children—and all forms of Palestinian livelihood were destroyed.

No day epitomized the bloody rule of Sharon to Palestinians like July 26, 2002, when a fighter jet bombed a residential building in Gaza, making its 400 residents homeless, killing 22 and injuring dozens. Sharon went on television and proclaimed the operation “a success.”

I could go on listing the crimes of Ariel Sharon, but all the issues of *Communiqué* would not fit half the names of his victims. Yet the pattern of his behavior is clear—and it was set to continue along the same path, toward the destruction of the last vestiges of livelihood, justice, dignity, peace and security for Palestinians.

More pertinently, I will move to Sharon’s vision of “peace.” In 2004, Sharon’s most trusted advisor and the initiator of the disengagement from Gaza, Dov Weissglass, spoke frankly to Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, saying that “The significance of the ‘disengagement’ plan is the freezing of the peace process... When you freeze that process, you prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state... with all that it entails.”

It would also be instructive to look at a map of Israel/Palestine to realize the true horror of Sharon’s “peace.” Palestinians are locked up into dozens of cages and surrounded by Israeli walls, making apartheid South Africa’s Bantustans look like sovereign states in comparison.

To think that this is the peace plan that makes Mr. Nol and the rest of Israel’s “progressive youth” laud Ariel Sharon is truly worrisome for any prospects of future peace. Even more worrying is that the majority of world opinion has fallen for this propaganda and is lauding Sharon as a peacemaker. Some peace! Some peacemaker! Some world!

Saifedean Ammous

The High Social Cost of Thirst Quenching

By Josee Lavoie

Overcrowded sweatshops, oil cartels and big tobacco readily come to mind in any discussion of corporate social responsibility and its failings. Just as formidable a behemoth, however, is the food and beverage industry, which has also been guilty of egregious social corporate practices.

The Coca-Cola Company epitomizes big business. However, to its detractors, the company’s ubiquitous logo may epitomize big business’ failure to act in a socially-conscious manner. The company’s disregard for local customs and needs is perhaps most starkly exemplified by its operations in South India, particularly in Palakkad, Kerala.

Until 1993, India had a protectionist policy toward its national brand of cola, and kept Coca-Cola out of its markets. Today, however, the Coca-Cola Company has 54 plants in India, with plans for more in the works. Its manufacturing process requires an abundant water supply—problematic in a country such as India, which already faces severe water shortages. The company also seriously contaminates the land with “waste sludge” from its toxic chemicals. As the

Guardian reports, India is now accusing Coca-Cola of depleting the water supply around its plants, thereby making the land unsuitable for farming.

The list of grievances against the company is long. Indian officials and activists are vocal in their demands for Coca-Cola to close its facility and scale back its operations at other sites.

Like Coca-Cola, the ethical standards of baby-formula corporations also leave much to be desired. “Good Food, Good Life” is Nestlé’s slogan, but does that slogan reflect the reality of the marketing tactics of the world’s largest food company?

In the late 1970s, as the western trend toward smaller families grew, Nestlé began to feel the pinch of a shrinking market. Together with other makers of baby formula, it felt the need to expand its share of the global marketplace. Nestlé representatives held aloft images of healthy Western babies in the public squares of developing countries, proclaiming that Nestlé’s formula would give their infants that same chubby glow.

The company also disseminated propaganda extolling the “modern”



jayati vora

Coke’s carefully constructed corporate image does not match its business practices in water-scarce India.

virtues of formula over breast milk. The product was marketed to impoverished women, particularly in India’s huge market. These women did not have access to the proper sanitary conditions that the product required, and often mixed it with contaminated water, used unsterilized bottles or diluted it too much in order to save on cost.

These practices led to rampant cases of malnutrition and to the death of tens of thousands of infants from diarrhea, dehydration

and septic shock by a condition known as “bottle baby disease.” The ensuing international protest spurred a 20-country boycott of Nestlé products.

The World Health Assembly has determined that the marketing practices of Nestlé and other makers of baby formula violate requirements. Though Nestlé is currently participating in the United Nations Global Compact talks in an attempt to improve its worldwide standing, the Global Compact has no way to

enforce any promises of reform that the company might offer.

We have yet to see if any real changes will emerge from Nestlé’s much-publicized association with the United Nations.

What will it take for big business to finally come to recognize its responsibility in human terms rather than in the bottom line?

Josee Lavoie (MIAI) is concentrating in ISP with an emphasis in the Middle East.

Shell Shocked: Nigeria's Oil Causes Conflict

By Remi Bello

In what has become a familiar scene in southern Nigeria, a band of well-spoken armed men attacked a Shell pipe-laying barge in the oil-rich Niger Delta last month. The attackers—members of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)—kidnapped eight workers, three of whom are American.

If the pictures that MEND members e-mail the media are anything to go by, the captives are well fed and groomed, similar to previous kidnappings. And as before, militia leaders have used the media to project their selfish but subtly Robin Hood-esque demands to the Nigerian government and President Olusegun Obasanjo.

MEND spokesperson Cynthia Whyte e-mailed a statement to news organizations after the abduction. “We decided in response to pleas from our kin in these communities, to carry out strikes against oil and gas facilities in Delta state,” the statement said. “We shall keep the hostages and there shall be no tea party any more.

“We will no more be given to the intervention of our elders who will only be used and dumped by the agents of the Nigerian state who had the guts and effrontery to label us rascal elements and terrorists,” the statement continued. “If they are bent on testing our resolve, we will kill all the hostages.”

Despite its preoccupation with the simultaneous outbreak of sectarian religious violence across the country, the Obasanjo administration has been too slow to respond to what should now be a more than familiar crisis. Shell was forced to

shut down its operations in the west of the Niger Delta and slashed production by 450,000 barrels a day, one-fifth of Nigeria's total oil output. World oil prices have since skyrocketed and the country's economic engines have stalled.

All this damage and uncertainty has been caused by what appears to be a hardscrabble militia of young (probably college-educated) men and women armed with a smattering of small-engine boats, a few grenade launchers and Kalashnikov rifles so old that one member was pictured with his cartridge taped to the barrel of his gun to keep it from falling off.

Despite the triteness of this activity, there is more to this current group than what the world has seen in the past. The new militia seems more brazen and pronounced in its aggression, perhaps emboldened by the Nigerian government's feeble attempts at squelching similar insurrections in the past.

Inexplicably, the Obasanjo government's strategy in the past has been to reach financial settlements with the militia.

In response to previous threats and kidnappings, the Nigerian government formed the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to join forces with oil companies in developing the Niger Delta area. Many in the Ijaw community (Nigeria's fourth-largest ethnic group) have criticized the NDDC as being a flimsy front, claiming that the commission has achieved little since its inception.

But Shell, which is part of NDDC, spent more than \$80 million on assistance to the Niger

Delta region last year.

“Shell is making a significant contribution to the development of the Delta,” said Shell's managing director in Nigeria, Basil Omiyi, in a BBC interview. “Offering scholarships and education, for example. That's tangible assistance and that's been a success.”

However, this assistance has often led to the proliferation of even more complex problems. The Niger Delta area is littered with a plethora of abandoned aid projects, ranging from unfinished hospital buildings to short-lived scholarship

programs, all serving to solidify the community's conviction that neither Shell nor the government cares about them, and also to serve as a memento of the overall reckless waste that encircles them.

These militia groups often say they represent the arguably legitimate claim of the local Ijaw population for greater access to the wealth of the region. However, in reality, these groups often use such popular sentiments to disguise a plethora of illegal activities, including the theft of oil and the vandalism of pipelines.

According to a MEND statement, “There have been reports that negotiations are ongoing towards the release of these individuals. This is absolutely untrue.”

The Nigerian government, Shell and the affected Niger Delta communities are stuck at a crucial crossroads, each burdened with a challenging, destiny-determining responsibility. The Obasanjo administration must neutralize the support base and relevance of these militias by heeding past promises to develop Niger Delta lands.

Likewise, the local communities must seek alternatives to violence and terrorism for advancing their cause. As it stands, MEND has a monopoly in the market of political expression regarding the development and preservation of the Niger Delta community. Other elder leaders must mobilize themselves to put forth an alternative voice, one that calls for development through legal and diplomatic means.

Shell must also dig deeper into its wallet and well of conscience in increasing its commitment to economic development and safeguarding against pollution in the Niger Delta. The Nigerian government must hold Shell accountable for any perceived abusive tendencies toward its neighbors in the area.

The success of these reshufflings and reorientations is at the heart of Nigeria's future. If they fail, the “Giant of Africa” may find itself on the verge of another civil war.



AP Photo/george osodi

Evacuees pass smoke and flames from a burning oil pipeline belonging to Shell Petroleum Development Company, near Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Remi Bello (MIAI) grew up in Nigeria. He is the founder of The Africa Institute, a non-profit that seeks to build awareness of Africa.

Marketing Morality

By David Blakeslee

Is corporate benevolence a marketable good? Or, to put the question more strongly, is the demand for socially and environmentally responsible conduct on the part of corporations a sufficiently powerful force to significantly alter corporate behavior without the heavy hand of the state?

Most of us have purchased a pound of “fair trade” coffee at Starbucks or a carton of eggs produced by wild chickens. Indeed, it seems the market for such goods has exploded in recent years. Through a variety of individual consumption choices, affluent consumers in the United States and other industrialized countries have created a market for socially responsible behavior by corporations that has inspired a proliferation of industries specializing in socially and environmentally responsible production. Even in the vast hinterlands of “red state” America it is becoming increasingly common to find organic foods at the local supermarket, usually arranged adjacent to piles of tofu and fake hot dogs.

Good conduct has become a marketable commodity, and the profits from this industry are attracting more and more producers.

At a more sophisticated level, non-governmental organizations and public pressure have brought about greater transparency in corporate conduct and a mitigation of the worst excesses of corporate malfeasance. Organizations such as Transparency International have

worked to end corruption in global industries such as oil production, employing the weapon of transparency to publicly shame corporations (and governments) engaged in misconduct.

From Nike's sweatshops in Vietnam to the cavernous sprawl of Wal-Mart's endless aisles, the often unsavory methods by which corporations seek to maximize their profits have come under greater scrutiny by the general public.

Such attention can and has induced corporations to improve their behavior, if only for the sake of better public relations. With the explosion of NGOs and public action groups in the last 10 years, this attention has become an increasingly cogent motivator for better corporate conduct.

One might reasonably ask if such trends could in the near future obviate or at least diminish the need for obtrusive and unwieldy state mechanisms to impose socially responsible behavior on the corporate sector. Were it possible to accomplish these admirable goals without introducing the inefficiencies of government bureaucracy, a powerful force for social change that could be embraced by liberals and conservatives alike would be discovered. There are limits, however, to what can be accomplished by private action.

While President Bush, no doubt, would be happy to promote such a solution to the very real problems generated by industrialization and corporate malfeasance, we can hap-

pily reject such naïveté. Though on the margins public pressure and consumer preference can induce socially beneficial behavior by corporations, so long as the profit motive dictates production decisions, competition and greed will make such loose-cannon altruism unviable. For such serious problems as global warming, child labor or deforestation, one must look to more vigorous means for the accomplishment of desired ends. And that means the state.

The *Onion* ran an article several years ago headlined “Corporate Philanthropy-Misanthropy Ratio Holding Steady.” In their inimitable fashion, the spoof newspaper's writers captured a fundamental truth about the corporate sector: while individual executives might be genuinely concerned about social and environmental issues, corporate philanthropy tends to be driven by public relations.

Greater transparency has increased public pressure on corporations and created a greater need for good PR; but it is still a small, inconsistent force. Similarly, while the demand for socially responsible production is increasing—a positive trend—most people still visit McDonald's and Wal-Mart for sustenance.

To fix the problems that plague the world, it is not enough to buy jars of organic honey.

David Blakeslee (MIAI) spent several years traveling the world, and studying economics and Sanskrit.

Museum Trail: The Met

Continued from Page 1

The color and design of the wings establishes the time, place and mood. You can be in a fidgety, restless mood, but as soon as you step into the Asian art wing, sobriety and solemnity ensue. The simplicity and texture of Chinese calligraphy is more striking in the low light and earth-toned walls. Dancing Shiva statues, presented in a cavern-like atmosphere and submersed in white light, evoke the sacred ambiance of an Indian cave temple.

There are two rules to follow when experiencing the Met: explore aimlessly and participate in a guided tour. There are so many galleries that it is impossible to see them all in one go. Or even two or three. Your correspondent has been to the Met innumerable times, and has not seen half of the place (he frequently gets lost).

The guided tours, led by erudite and interesting docents, are fabulous. On any given day, there are 20-odd tours, ranging from talks on Islamic art to the arts of China and the ever-popular Museum Highlights Tour (temple included).

There is a threshold of absorption on a museum visit; one can only take so much intellectual stimulation (like two hours of statistics class). The best place for a break, or a little meditation, is Astor Court, found in the Asian art wing. It is a depiction of a quaint Japanese household garden and colonnade. It is delightfully difficult to find and has a tranquility and calmness that is very rare for a

public museum.

The African, pre-Columbian and Oceania wing is always devoid of people; maybe visitors fear suffering the same fate of Nelson Rockefeller, the collector who was killed on a trip in Papua New Guinea by the natives. His collection of native Oceania art was subsequently donated to the museum.

Many visitors stick to the more popular galleries, and smaller collections can be completely empty despite huge crowds elsewhere.

The various eateries and gift shops scattered around the museum are a welcome break from viewing. In the summer, the roof patio is opened for interesting conversations over a glass of wine and spectacular views of the park.

Once you've been around some of the less popular and more exciting parts of the Met, it is acceptable to visit the Egyptian Temple of Dendur. It might be a bore after all that you've seen, but that's all that people will ask you about anyway.

Joe Speicher (MIAI) used to live in the Philippines, where he volunteered as a development worker.

The Met is open from Tuesday to Thursday, on Sunday, from 9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.; on Friday and Saturday from 9.30 a.m. to 9 p.m. The museum is located on 5th Avenue at 82nd Street. (The M4 bus from 110th street is the quickest route.) Admission is free with a Columbia ID.

World Affairs

U.N. Report Condemns Mistreatment at Guantanamo

By Matt Schumann

Just when it seemed that the United States' public image regarding the war on terror could not get any worse, the U.N. Human Rights Commission released a report on February 15 condemning the treatment of detainees at the U.S. Navy base in Guantanamo Bay and calling for the center's immediate closure.

Four years ago, in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, the U.S. government built the Guantanamo detention center to hold and interrogate suspected terrorists. It opened with controversy when the U.S. government decided to hold detainees not as criminal suspects with the standard rights of *habeas corpus*, but as prisoners of the declared war on terror. Instead of appearing before a judge, the prisoners were to be tried by specially created "military commissions."

The report primarily indicts detainees' lack of access to a fair trial, though accusations of arbitrary detention, poor conditions, religious intolerance and torture also fill its pages. According to the report, "the U.S. government should close the Guantanamo detention facilities without further delay."

The allegations contained in the report are old news by now, but for the first time, they have come from the United Nations. U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan agreed that the Guantanamo detention center should be



A Guantanamo detainee is placed onto a stretcher after interrogation by military officials.

AP Photo/Lynne Sladky

closed "as soon as is possible." But despite the controversy it has generated, U.S. officials have maintained that nothing illegal has occurred at Guantanamo, and that the center is crucial for U.S. security.

In a recent press briefing, White House press secretary Scott McClellan defended the center's continued existence, reminding the audience of why the suspects were detained.

"They are people that are determined to harm innocent civilians, or harm innocent

Americans. They were enemy combatants picked up on the battlefield in the war on terrorism," he said.

Professor Richard Betts, Director of both the Institute of War and Peace Studies at Columbia and the International Security Policy program at SIPA, described the debate over Guantanamo.

"The dilemma is the contradiction between fairness to individual prisoners and the safety of American citizens," he said. "It offends

American values to imprison individuals indefinitely without proof of guilt or giving them a proper day in court, and imprisonment is indefinite because there is no reason to expect that the war on terror will end in their lifetimes."

Yet concerns about compromised civil liberties continue to be balanced against the need to prevent future terrorist attacks.

"If hundreds of them are released...some number of them will come back at us and kill people," Betts said.

In fact, this has already happened. In October 2004, a Pentagon spokesman reported that at least seven former detainees of a group of 146 released from Guantanamo had been rediscovered in connection with terrorist activities, including two killed and one recaptured in combat against U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

The question of what the United States should do with the Guantanamo detention center is one that continues to plague the Bush administration.

Betts, too, finds a solution elusive.

"I have been unable to think of a reasonable solution to this dilemma," he said.

Matt Schumann (MIA1) was assistant director of the Senior Fellows Program at the Atlantic Council of the United States.

Students Kick Off World Cup '06

By Gustavo Chacra

It is bigger than the Super Bowl, the World Series and the Olympics combined. Football—that thing Americans call "soccer"—is the most popular sport in the world.

World Cup football will begin on June 9, but the anticipation has already begun.

For my American readers, I will explain the World Cup Tournament (Europeans, South Americans and Africans can skip this paragraph). The World Cup happens every four years, rotating among nations. Thirty-two countries qualified to play in Germany this year. Teams are divided in eight groups of four; each plays three first-round matches. The top two teams from each group qualify for the playoffs and try to fight their way to the finals.

The football superpowers include Brazil (my country, five-time world champion and winner of the last World Cup), Germany (three-time world champion), Italy (three-time world champion), Argentina (two-time world champion), England and France (one championship each).

Yet, the World Cup is entertaining because any team can rise up and defeat a powerhouse. Uruguay, for example, has two titles but did not qualify for this World Cup after losing to Australia in an upset.

Often, World Cup games are connected to history and international affairs. In 1986, Argentina defeated England four years after the British had won the Malvinas/Falklands War. Argentinean football star Diego Maradona declared that the victory was for all the soldiers killed by the British. In 1998, Iran defeated the United States in what was known as "the game of peace." In the last World Cup, Senegal beat its colonizer, France. This year Angola takes on its former occupier, Portugal.

Many SIPA students eagerly await June 9, but we decided to get the tournament of words started now through interviews with some of SIPA's biggest football fans.

Julius Thaler (MIA1), Germany

Q: Which country is Germany's biggest rival?

A: I guess traditionally our biggest rivals are Holland and England. For them, playing Germany it is always a bit like waging World War III... which of course only reflects their deep-rooted jealousy.



Sydney Morning Herald; portraits courtesy of the SIPA directory

The author's favorite footballer scores a goal against England in the infamous "Hand of God" incident, World Cup 1986.

Q: Who do you think will win the World Cup and why?

A: Even though I hate to admit it, England and Holland are strong right now... What a nightmare the following scenario would be: Holland beating Germany in Germany... So my painful answer is Holland.

Q: Football or soccer and why?

A: Football. I don't even know what soccer means. Football describes perfectly well what you do in this game.

Quentin Laurent (MIA1), France

Q: Which country is France's biggest rival?

A: On the scale of French nationalistic wounds, just above the loss of Alsace-Moselle in 1871, is the French World Cup semi-final match defeat in Seville in 1982... The French player Battiston was running to score a decisive goal when the German goalkeeper, Schumacher, deliberately attacked him. He eventually collapsed... under the eyes of the referee who did not even bother to blow his whistle... The war between France and Germany is definitely over, but there will always remain something different happening when "les Bleus" play the Nationalmannschaft.



Q: In a globalizing world, how would you explain that most of the planet loves football and Formula One racing, while the United States prefers the Super Bowl and NASCAR?

A: Obviously, then, the USA is a (case of) globalization's discontent.

Anil Kavuri (MIA1), England

Q: Which country is Britain's biggest rival?

A: Although for us English, Scotland is apparently our biggest rival, we get greatest pleasure in beating the Germans, because for many years they always used to beat us in penalty shoot-outs.



Q: Why does most of the planet love football and Formula One, while the United States prefers the Super Bowl and NASCAR?

A: Extremely strange. The strangest thing is calling everything the "world championships" in the United States.

Guga Chacra (that's me), Brazil

Q: Which country is Brazil's biggest rival?

A: Argentina. They are the only team in the world that doesn't accept Brazilian supremacy, even though they've won only two World Cups and we've won five.

Q: Who do you think will win the world cup?

A: Brazil is the best team and the favorite, as always, but a European team is going to win. It is better to be modest and say that we are at the same level as them, even though we have been ranked number one since 1994 and have the best players in the world. I also hope that our brothers from Argentina do a little better than their 17th place in the last World Cup. Otherwise, we will need a new rival.

Q: What, in your opinion, is the most unforgettable World Cup match?

A: It was 26 years before I was born, but it was the World Cup final in 1950 when Brazil lost to Uruguay in front of 200,000 people in Maracanã, Rio de Janeiro. It is our Pearl Harbor, our Hiroshima—it is the major defeat of Brazilian history.

Gustavo Chacra (MIA1) is a rabid Brazil football fan, but his idol is Argentinean footballer Diego Maradona (the second-best player ever, after Pelé).

Philippines' Tragedies

Continued from Page 1

network that produced the game show is likely to face charges of neglect. The network's security plans are suspected to be deficient, as they had no ambulances on hand, nor a blueprint of the site, nor a clear plan of how to manage the growing crowd.

As for the mudslide in Leyte, fingers are being pointed at illegal loggers who felled the trees that should have absorbed the heavy waters and prevented the mud and rocks from falling onto the village. The area had been determined a "danger zone," lying on an earthquake fault line; however, no official warnings were issued. A national "geo-hazard map" showing landslide-prone regions has been around for years, but lack of funding and organization prevented the Department of Environment and Natural Resources from making detailed maps that indicate which towns face danger. The project only began last year. A little bit of

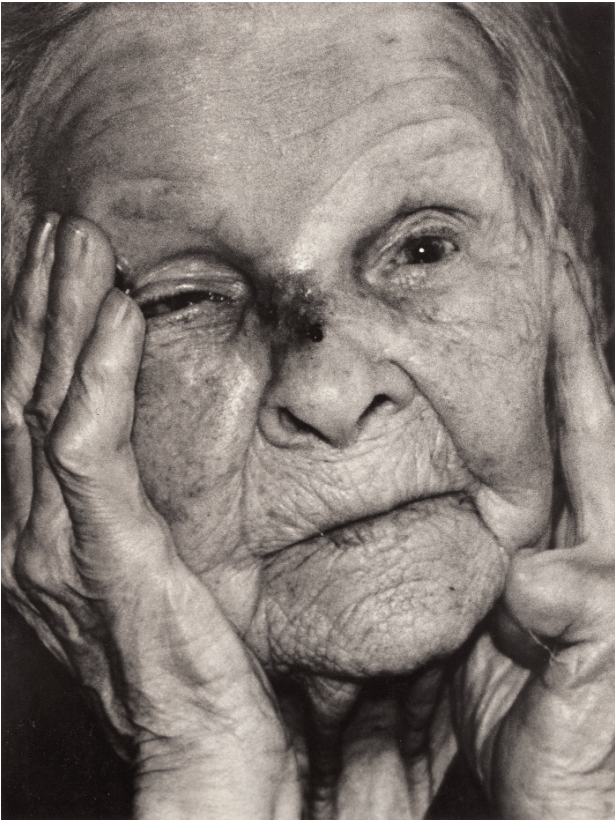
The network's security plans are suspected to be deficient; they had no ambulances on hand, nor a blueprint of the site, nor a clear plan of how to manage the crowd

bureaucratic efficiency could have saved lives. However, even early warnings might not have convinced the residents of Guinsaugon to leave the village, for their livelihood depended on their land.

The outrage is enormous, the aid is generous and the cries for restitution are loud. But chances are that the more than 1,000 Filipinos who perished in these disasters will soon become mere statistics. The victims' families were given a small compensation; President Arroyo will visit a funeral or two; perhaps the first anniversary will be commemorated—but nothing legally significant will take place. No class action suit will be filed against the network or the illegal loggers, and no one will be punished for horrendous neglect. Filipinos have become so used to a spineless and graft-prone justice system that the chances of a poor man winning a lawsuit against big businesses is about the same as the chance that President Arroyo will win another election.

Michaela Cabrera (MIA2) produced a television news network in Manila. She covered poverty, natural disaster and migration.

A Photograph and a Story



natasha ossinova

Most of the time my great-grandmother, Stepanida, protested my attempts to take her picture. Occasionally I would be able to sneak a photo or two, but no more. This time my great-grandmother not only let me take her picture, but posed. She took off her head scarf, covered a sore at the corner of her right eye with her beautiful, withered hand, and looked straight at me.

Stepanida was born in 1903 in a peasant family outside of Russia. As a young teenager she was sent to Moscow to baby-sit for an aristocratic family. The family fled Russia following the events of 1917. At the age of 19 Stepanida was married to a 17-year-old man, Efrem, for economic reasons. Efrem's mother needed help around the house. Stepanida worked all her life, first as the main caretaker in her new house; then, with the process of collectivization, as a worker on the collective farm. During the Second World War, her house was one of the most prosperous in the village, and so they were able to feed neighbors and soldiers in need.

Able to read a newspaper without glasses until her death, my great-grandmother only stopped tending to the garden in her 90s. Ostracized by her family because of the sores on her face (her immediate family decided, despite the evidence to the contrary, that basal carcinoma on her face was contagious), she spent the last decade of her life sitting by the window of her house, constantly knitting socks and rugs so that she would have something to give back to everyone who came to visit her.

Natasha Ossinova (MIAI) was born in Russia, and came to the United States at the age of 14. She was a labor and delivery nurse before she joined SIPA and the School of Public Health for a dual degree.

Remittances Trump Development Assistance

By Steve A. Pérez

Last year, an estimated \$40 billion left the United States for foreign lands. This wasn't the result of foreign direct investment or official development assistance, but rather migrant workers in the United States sending money to relatives back home—a form of capital flow known as “remittances.”

As described by the World Bank, remittances are money transfers from persons living in a country other than that of their birth, primarily to persons in their country of origin.

The idea of sending money home to one's family is certainly not new. After the second World War ended in 1945, Spanish guest workers in Germany sent money back to Spain; in the 1980s, the Filipino government created an Overseas Employment Administration to send workers to countries in need of labor, including many Gulf states, Australia and the United States.

But the capital flows associated with remittances are becoming increasingly important for developing countries. In the past 15 years, remittances have doubled. There are more than 25 countries around the developing world where remittances represent at least 5 percent of gross domestic product.

Senders often operate under the official radar and use informal means to send remittances. As a result, accurate numbers on how much money is transferred can be hard to obtain. The International Monetary Fund's International Financial Statistics database in 2003 placed the amount of remittances at more than \$95 billion worldwide. This figure dwarfs official development assistance, which stood at about \$60 billion the same year. A 2004 World Bank survey of more than 40 central banks around the world placed the actual amount as high as \$125 billion per year. Unrecorded flows, however, could be more than 50 percent higher than the estimates.

Lenora Suki, the associate director of the Program on Remittances and Development at Columbia's Earth Institute, highlighted the importance of remittances in the lives of recipients. She said remittances “can have an important effect on the human development of receiving persons by giving them access to health and education they may otherwise be unable to afford.”

For Latin American immigrants in the United States, these transfers are most often made via big wire transfer agencies like Western Union, independent *remesas* chains, retail or grocery stores, or by hand.

Dr. Manuel Orozco, a visiting scholar at the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University, called this phenomenon Latin America's “most important financial flow.” Remittances account for \$30 billion in capital inflow to the region each year. A 2004 survey conducted by Bendixen & Associates, a

Washington, D.C.-based firm that specializes in surveys of migrant communities in the United States, found that remittances from New York state top \$3.5 billion per year; migrants in California remit \$9.6 billion annually.

Increases in remittances are certainly not the result of a few big earners. In fact, the average individual remittance is less than \$250. The annual income of the average remitter is less than \$30,000. Recent studies have shown that migrants living in the United States for less than five years remit more frequently (as often as twice a month), while those living here longer remit higher amounts. While Mexico receives more than 59 percent of the remittances emanating from the United States, the percentage of adults receiving remittances is highest in El Salvador and the Dominican Republic, at 28 percent and 24 percent, respectively.

The biggest public policy question associated with remittances is how to harness this enormous—and by most accounts stable—capital flow in order to foster economic development in recipient countries.

Migration experts, including Orozco, suggest that the growing popularity of hometown associations could complement traditional development methods. These associations are funded by donations from migrants, and work to build schools, irrigation plants and even sports fields in receiving countries.

Connel Fullenkamp, a professor of economics at Duke University and a critic of increased reliance on remittances, says that the lion's share of remittances is compensatory, aimed at addressing financial deficiencies in the family unit. Rather than investing the money, he said, most recipients use the cash for direct consumption of consumer goods, often manufactured in the developed world—thus perpetuating a cycle of stunted development, brain drain and dependency.

Suki disagrees.

“There's no question that remittances drive increased consumption in receiving countries,” she said. “Yet even that can have an effect on the development of local and regional economies. The challenge is to ensure that senders and receivers have access to appropriate options and financial services to meet their needs on both sides, and for receiving governments to create a stable investment environment and conditions conducive to the migrant workers' decision to save, invest and possibly return.”

On one issue, however, the experts agree: remittances are unlikely to decrease anytime soon.

Prior to SIPA, Steve A. Pérez (MIAI) researched transnationalism and remittances at the Bildner Center for Western Hemisphere Studies.

U.S. and China Dispute the Value of the Yuan

News Analysis by Anmol Vanamali

In 2005, trade with China contributed about \$200 billion to the United States' total current account deficit of \$726 billion. Some politicians are accusing China of increasing this humongous deficit by indulging in currency manipulation to spur Chinese exports. Economists say China's currency, the yuan, might be undervalued by anywhere from 10 to 60 percent, and U.S. Treasury Secretary John Snow is currently contemplating issuing official accusations against China in the Treasury's forthcoming biannual report.

Last summer, Senators Charles Schumer (a Democrat from New York) and Lindsey Graham (a Republican from South Carolina) found a two-thirds Senate majority willing to support 27 percent tariffs on all Chinese imports unless the Chinese revalued their currency. What followed was a 2.1 percent revaluation.

This did not satisfy U.S. officials, however; and unless China undertakes a more serious revaluation, the chance of the Senate tariff proposal becoming law is high.

So what are the main issues surrounding the currency tug-of-war between the United States and China?

First, the claims that an appreciation of the yuan will help reduce the U.S. current account deficit should be taken with a pinch of salt. Last year, the trade deficit with China was responsible for approximately 25 percent of the total deficit. According to analysts, a yuan revaluation of around 25 percent would have only decreased the total cur-

rent account deficit by 4 to 5 percent.

There are other claims against China that, though relevant, do not necessarily justify protectionist measures—such as the loss of U.S. jobs. The shifting of manufacturing industries to China is a function of lower costs, and cannot be dealt with by building artificial barriers to trade. For example, in the textile sector, wages in China are one-tenth those in the United States. This, along with cheaper input and regulation-based costs, makes China a cheaper producer.

Second, U.S. policy-makers should remember that China is an assembly point for final goods. This means that while China runs huge trade surpluses with the United States, its overall surplus is small because it imports intermediary goods from the rest of Asia. An appreciation of the yuan would mean cheaper imports for China, enabling it to export to the United States at even cheaper prices. Ultimately, then, the trade deficit would continue.

For example, say China was originally selling a television to the United States for 8,000 yuan, made with imports from Vietnam costing 4,000 yuan. After the appreciation, China could export the same television to the United States for 7,000 yuan, because the

Vietnamese imports would now only cost 3,000 yuan. China's margins would still be the same, despite reducing the price to U.S. consumers. Even a revaluation of the Chinese currency would not drastically reduce the consumption of final goods.

Charles Calomiris, a professor at Columbia's Graduate School of Business and instructor for the Emerging Financial Markets course at SIPA, is concerned about the dismal state of China's domestic financial behemoths and the declining productivity of capital. He says the rigidity of the currency is

a symptom of larger problems of political economy. As long as the domestic financial institutions continue to serve political interests and refuse modernization and transparency, China's financial system will not be able to handle a floating or flexible currency. The problem is so endemic that exposure to the vagaries of the foreign exchange markets would increase the chances of a financial crisis in China and put the international economy at risk.

Claude Meyer, a professor at the Sorbonne and an expert on China's love-hate counterpart, Japan, cites various similarities and dif-

ferences between China today and Japan in the 1980s. Both garner similar rhetoric from the United States and Europe, leading to tremendous international pressure.

However, while Japan's comparative advantage is in high-tech industries, China dominates in low-cost mass production across all industries.

He suggests some guidelines based on the Japanese experience. The revaluation should be gradual; exchange controls should be maintained to prevent hot money entering and leaving the country, and there should be progressive liberalization.

However, he also says that modernizing domestic financial institutions should be a pre-condition for the above. In the short-run, he expects the Chinese to appreciate the yuan by a percentage similar to last year's 2.1 percent increase to quell the cries for blood coming from the United States.

China needs to recognize its own importance in the global system. Procrastination on the path to reform is increasing the transmission costs of a financial crisis and overhaul in China. The United States and the developing world, for their part, should focus on transferring best practices from their own financial institutions to China in order to cure its domestic problems. Attacking the value of the currency merely addresses the symptom.

Anmol Vanamali (MIAI) is an IFP concentrator. He worked in project finance before coming to SIPA.



AP Photo/vincent yu

VinSense

Dean Gumbi... Still Unemployed

By Vincent Villano

Hey, kids! Dean Gumbi here. Just thought I'd ask my old buddy, Vincent, for some more writing space this semester. As you may remember from my last article, I just found out that SIPA fired me five years ago. I remain unemployed, but the good news is that the Office of Career Services (formerly the SIPA student lounge) has been very supportive, allowing me to use its resources to find a new job. So I have been visiting SIPA about once a week to work on my job search.

The other day I was using a computer on the sixth floor when, all of a sudden, a group of students with bottles of wine announced that an eight-week wine tasting course was about to commence. I asked them why they didn't just use the Dag Lounge (now on the 15th floor, no longer the sixth). They replied that they were unable to reserve this space due its increased demand. Given that I do not have \$250 to take the wine tasting course, I guess I better find somewhere else to do my job searching on Thursdays from 6.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. That goes for you students writing papers too! Ha Ha Ha!

Anyway, after leaving the sixth floor lounge, I began speaking with the students

who had been displaced along with me. They said they had no idea that the sixth floor lounge was reserved during this time. They found it quite strange that they had not been informed of this new development, given all the efforts to improve something they called the "transparency issue."

They said that as far back as the 1980s, administrators and students have had great difficulty communicating with each other. Administrators would work hard to obtain resources from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences—to which SIPA and five other schools must pay a significant portion of their budgets each year—but then would make decisions about how to use the new funds to "upgrade" the school that upset the students.

This left the administration feeling unappreciated for its hard work, while students felt frustrated by their lack of decision-making power. The students then began telling me stories of disappearing concentration directors, director search committees, vanishing student space, new offices for administrators and basketball gurus speaking at graduation.

But now things are different, they say. Students expressed a level of frustration at the last Town Hall to which the administration had to respond. Meetings were held, surveys were constructed, administrators moved their office hour locations to the sixth floor, and important information was disseminated, namely:

- 1) which existing mechanisms students should utilize to address different types of grievances,
- 2) which problems have more to do with SIPA's historical relationship to the university than with the administration itself, and
- 3) that student feedback *is* considered in making decisions.

On the student end, mobilization on many issues continues, but now with the added support of a new SIPASA board that has completed its transformation from a glorified social event-planning organization to one that takes student representation seriously.

Lastly, students can read about all the new developments in a *Communique* column written by a different dean every two weeks. I asked the students if this would help with finding the missing concentration directors

and preventing student battles over space. The students remained skeptical that these problems would not be repeated in the future given the scarcity of resources and the top-down approach by which they are addressed, but were hopeful that they could be a valuable asset to the process of solving these problems. They reminded me that simply knowing about the decisions that are being made by the administration (transparency) is separate from—although related to—actually participating in the formation of decisions that affect student life (student decision-making power).

These students hope, as do I, that SIPA can one day become a real community of administrators, faculty, students and student organizations, and of the workers/staff that maintain the school daily—a place where we can all sip wine in celebration of our efforts to truly respect one another.



Ask Annie:
Long-Distance Information

Advice columnist Annie Thing is out of town on an EPD junket and is being filled in for by her estranged step-brother Ralph, who is not affiliated with SIPA.

Dear Annie,

I've been dating my younger boyfriend Jorgen long distance for almost three years. Yeah, I know, I know, dumb—and it never works. The situation is that he stayed in Rotterdam to finish university when I came to SIPA, and over the last six months it's starting to feel like it's definitely not working. Less frequent e-mails, little disagreements (okay, arguments) about how he "can't" come to the States unless I pay for the flights, etc. And of course, no sex. It's good when we have it, but ahh, we don't have it—it's been almost a year since we've seen each other.

You seem to know guys—what's he thinking and what should I do?

Going the Distance?

The way I see it, unlike many "geographically single" couples, you and Jorgen actually have a lot in common, despite the fact he's overseas: You're jointly experiencing infidelity. In other words, you're sharing something you're both enjoying. And if sharing isn't the bedrock of a great relationship, then I don't know what is.

It was none other than Erasmus of Rotterdam who said, "A nail is driven out by another nail. Habit is overcome by habit." So it goes then that you and Jorgen will eventually either go the distance or end up going all the way with someone else. Hell, that said, maybe you don't even need any advice, it sounds like it will all just come out in the wash.

But since that's the business I'm in and I'm almost out of Johnnie Walker, my words to you are to forget about Jorgen and all men for that matter—because underneath it all, guys are pigs.

Besides, there are tons of ways you can pleasure yourself that don't involve relations with a man; in fact, many women these days find online shoe shopping at zappos.com as good as or better than sex. Why? Because Zappos does business like all relationships would work if we lived in an ideal world—order whatever you want, return what you don't like for free—all with no questions asked.

Good luck and good riddance.

Your pal,
Ralph
(The estranged step-brother)

Dear Going the Distance?,

Jorgen sounds like he could be "Mr. Right," even if he isn't "Mr. Right Now." So what if he's uncommunicative, cheap and unavailable—what else were you expecting from a guy?

If your long-distance relationship is like most, and since you said it's been almost a year since you've seen each other, he's very likely seeing someone else; and by now, either you are, too, or you've been very seriously considering it.

On Being a Back-Page Columnist

By Maria Thomas



~To understand recursion, you have to understand recursion.

A few weeks back, Dark Lord Deckoff, master and commander of the mystical empire of back page editing, asked me for a bio of myself. Y'know. A couple of lines just to communicate to gentle SIPA readers who I am.

And I thought about it for a good two days, vacuous expression firmly on face, physically present and mentally absent in all my advanced economic policy analysis classes. My mind frantically cart-wheeling around the question: Who am I? I mean, who am I, really?

I wished then that I had the clarity of self-identification that Garfield's toy-friend, Stretch, has. Stretch, when asked the same question, can look someone unblinkingly in the eye and say with the calm assurance of someone who KNOWS what he's about: "I am a

rubber chicken."

Man, I wish I had that.

I don't know what exactly I'm about, and I'm working on finding out. But, gentle readers, in the meantime, here are some of my attempts at self-characterization:

- 1) "Maria Thomas is a lucid confusion of a human being. Come to think of it, she's not entirely sure of that either."
- 2) "Maria Thomas enjoys reciting bawdy 17th-century poetry, playing the guitar, painting, acting, learning new languages and climbing trees. Yes. All at the same time."
- 3) "Maria Thomas can open beer bottles with her teeth, do the splits and stand on her head with minimal effort. She hopes there will be a thriving market for these skills in corporate America by the time she graduates."
- 4) "Maria Thomas hopes she will graduate."

That S.O.B. didn't print any of them.

The Mayo Shot

Hit Me With Your Ugly Stick

By Chris Mayo



The "branding" for this column is thanks to my fellow ex-*Incommunicado* editor (first name-drop of the column), Michael Roston; we were toying with names around the theme of "The Money Shot," and this is what we came up with. For those who don't know what it refers to—ask a friend. I don't want to reach my climax too early.

Befittingly, my columns will cover three topics related to that term—money, sex and alcohol.

Let's start with sex. I was at a SIPA social the other day and I was astounded at the number of good-looking women with ugly men. Okay, so I was off my face on the free vodka and viewing the world through chemically altered glasses. But the trend was undeniable.

I came to SIPA the next day and asked some friends if they had observed this trend. I even asked the World Affairs editor if Back Page editor Anthony Deckoff's wife was good-looking. She replied in the affirmative. Go look up Anthony in the facebook. Case closed, epidemic confirmed. (Incidentally, Anthony edited this column himself and didn't take that comment out.)

So I wondered why this might be the case. Ugly people have great personalities? I don't think so. They have big wal-

lets? We might be onto something. So I resolve to put it to the test. At the next social, I will put my big wallet in my front pocket and some unfeasibly hot woman may approach me and say, "Is that a big wallet in your pocket or are you just pleased to see me?" (I'll let you know how it goes.)

But if I am unable to explain this puzzling phenomenon, as other people struggle with such mysteries as Tom Cruise/Katie Holmes and Professor Della Valle's continued employment at SIPA, then I can always fall back on looking up an ex-girlfriend. But that should give you the same icky feeling I had about recycled toilet paper (it took me a while to realize it was toilet paper made out of recycled paper, not actually recycled toilet paper taken direct from the sewer).

I know this girl who was considering getting back with her boyfriend. His biggest crime while they were dating was to call her accidentally from his cell phone while on a business trip in Asia. No problem, you might say, until you learn that he was in a strip club at the time having a particularly lurid conversation with one of the employees.

So she is considering getting back with him, and I make the following parallel. Did you see *Bridget Jones's Diary*? Not bad, eh? Did you see *Bridget Jones 2*? Utter drivelt, bollocks, frankly. Same goes for *The Whole Ten Yards* or *Ocean's Twelve*. In fact, *Ocean's Twelve* is so patently sloppy, unprofessional, insulting and offensive that it is enough to make Lee Bollinger kick Joe Stiglitz in the groin out of disgust. (Naturally, *The Godfather: Part II* is the sequel exception

that proves the rule.) Don't go back with the ex, kids. I did once. It turned out that I used to be the ugly guy with the fat wallet; thanks to her, it's now depressingly thin. (I'm going to stuff a sock in it for the next social.) She turned out not to be *Ocean's Twelve* but *Friday the 13th Part VII*.

A friend warned me against being too lurid in this column as, according to her, SIPA students are liberal and sophisticated and only go for the "Jon Stewart type" of humor. I can only assume that she didn't go to last year's Follies. Her view of SIPA students indicates she is guilty of what the intelligence services call "mirror imaging." She may also have missed the fact that Jon Stewart's funniest Oscar jokes revolved around the lack of dress material covering female stars' breasts.

Talking of SIPA's own Oscars, the Follies, I am sure that Vinny Villano's column is looking down on mine from above or from the side. Most first-years won't know that Vinny did an awesome job at last year's Follies doing an impersonation of Dean Anderson. The likeness was uncanny: the blonde wig, the thrusting shoulders and the carefully groomed beard (oh, that's not right). But what he really captured was the true essence of Dean Anderson, that gritty, brooding butchness that drives this great institution forward.

But perhaps the real lesson we all took from Vinny's skit is that if there is one place where such sophisticated humor as hairy men dressed up in drag is completely normal, that place is SIPA.