The Diplomatic Envoy

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY BEGINNS 76TH SESSION

Sergei Valenzuela  
Staff Writer

Mexico’s Supreme Court has passed a histor-  
ing adjudication allowing pregnant women to  
decide their own reproductive destiny without having to  
face criminal prosecution. According to Jacobin, the  
court decided it was un-  
constitutional for the state of  
Coahuila to penalize women for performing a  
voluntary abortion, an act that previously could  
have led to up to 3 years in prison. The Supreme  
Court also proceeded to declare the criminalization of  
abortion as unconstitutional. Throughout Mex-  
ican history, many women have been criminally  
punished and shamed by lawmakers in Mexico  
through the court system, thus making it poss-  
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tive on the topic of abortion. As Justice Río Far-  
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Jacobin continues that the ruling will make it pos-  
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This judgment follows the decision of the state of Texas to make abortion illegal after 6 weeks from conception. As a result, the Mexican territory that borders Texas may receive an influx of Texans who are looking to get an abort- 
ion in the coming years, suggests NPR. Above all, the decriminalization of abortion is seen a victo-  
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The ruling came about through the effort that women have put forth in Mexico to fight for their  
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particularly hard for doctors and even harder for patients.

United Nations General Assembly Begins 76th Session

According to The New York Times, the 76th ses- 
sion of the United Na-  
tions General Assembly (UNGA) began on Tues-  
day, September 14. In the general debate, rep-  
resentatives from all 193 member states have the  
ability to speak in front of the chamber and give their thoughts address-  
ing the many complex world issues and chal-  
genges those individual members are facing. Top-  
ics on the floor included a pledge of $1 billion in aid for Afghanistan, a call to  
return Kyaw Moe Than as Myanmar’s ambassa-  
dor, and a criticism by China of American pol- 

cies, reports Al Jazeera.

Many of these topics, however, were largely overshadowed by concerns with the rapid in-  
crease of COVID-19 cases in the United States. According to Jacobin, the courts have been decriminalized  
the ruling will make it pos-  
sicion is climate change and biodiversity. The  
UN Foundation reports that many of the UNGA members are quite dis-  
turbed with the current state of climate change and that many are feeling cautious for the future. One of the members of the debate spoke out about this topic and said that “speakers almost certainly will raise the in-  
tenational system and shared challenges and need to adopt a systems approach to address them, and they  
are expected to bring calls for pursuing nature-based solutions. This meeting is expected to conclude with the adoption of a  
global biodiversity framework outlined through 2030, which could feature in UNGA discussions as well.” This will be an excellent dis-  
cussion in connection with the environment that will help construct an idea to lead govern- 
ment leaders into focusing on world problems. Together, leaders of the UNGA are working to overcome COVID-19, find a way to make peace within many different states, and solve econom- 
ically important issues. However, in order to develop solutions to promote perma-  
nent, effective change, many states must agree  
on the same topic. During these types of de-  
bates, conversations and negotiations are required to develop shared agenda and reach a point where countries are able to take collective action. For in-  
stance, numerous states are still against vaccina-  
tions, but some are decid- 
ing to change their mind due to globally high cases of COVID-19. Even so, persuasion is key during these debates, and it will be interesting to see how members of the UNGA will work together to change global perspectives.

Through the many topics that will be discussed by countries from all over the world, states are guaran-  
teed to disagree. However,  
many of the decisions made will have significant global impact that will have a large effect on society.

Contact Farnsworth at  
farnsworth.hendrickson@shu.edu


Mexico’s Supreme Court Decriminalizes Abortion

Farnsworth Hendrickson Jr.  
Staff Writer

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Contact Farnsworth at  
farnsworth.hendrickson@shu.edu


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Photo: Courtesy of Dominic Router (Flickr)

A woman celebrates the Supreme Court ruling, which removes penalties for abortions in Mexico. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Photo: Courtesy of Dominick Reuter (Flickr)

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DPRK Missile Test Inflames Tensions on the Korean Peninsula

On September 15, North Korea successfully launched ballistic missiles off its east coast. In doing so, they violated various United Nations resolutions. According to Al Jazeera, the missiles traveled for over two hours before they reached their target 930 miles away. During their journey, the missiles demonstrated agility by circling around into different paths. This is the latest continuation of weapons testing that paused in March. It is part of a detailed plan laid out by Kim Jong Un in January. In reference to the success of the missile testing, he says it is a “strategic weapon of war.”

In August, the United States and South Korea carried out military drills together. CBS News suggests that there is a deeper significance to the North Korean weaponry tests beyond retaliation. They are meant to provoke a reaction from the U.S. and South Korea. Tests like the one on Sept. 14 were new in January within one occurring mere hours after President Biden was sworn into office. The North Korean statements that the testing came exactly a day after the United States, South Korea, and Japan met in Tokyo. At this meeting, U.S. representatives said that “We hope that the DPRK will respond positively to our multiple offers to meet without preconditions.”

Reuters emphasizes that the representatives clearly stated the U.S. does not hold any hostility towards North Korea. In 2019, North Korea and the Trump administration entered talks about ending nuclear and ballistic missile weapons programs. These talks halted once it was clear that President Trump would not give in to North Korea’s demand to relieve economic sanctions. The New York Times reports that just hours after the North Korean announcement, President Moon Jae-in announced that South Korea just tested their first subma- rine-launched ballistic missile. In the release, South Korea states that it has developed a ballistic missile that could reach North Korea’s under- ground war bunkers. President Moon says, “Our missile test today was conducted according to our own schedule to build up our missile force and was not meant as a response to the North Korean provocation.” But strengthening our missile force will provide us with a firm deterrent against North Korean provocations.” This time- line emphasizes the rising tension between both countries and their race to outdo one another. According to Reuters, North Korea is not concerned by the South Korean missile launch. However, they say that continuing these launches could lead to “cross-border tension.”

On September 15, an official of the DPRK’s Academy of the National Defense Science, says that the evidence of the South Korean launch itself does not worry North Korea. He referred to the weaponry as being in its infancy stage. Jang added that South Korea’s vigorous efforts towards their submarine weaponry is contributing to rising military tension in the region. The Washington Post relays that on Sept. 15, the U.S. announced a new pact, called AUKUS, with Australia and Britain. North Korea spoke out against this alliance, saying that it will interfere with the region’s stability. According to The Washington Post, a North Korean Foreign Ministry official expressed that the trilateral agreement would be detrimental to the geopolitics of the Pacific. He suggested that the alliance would lead to a nuclear arms race. This official made additional remarks describing the U.S. as “the chief culprit toppling the international nuclear non-proliferation system,” and accused the U.S. of endangering peace. North Korea has also said that if AUKUS has even the slightest effect on national security, they will take the according measures to counteract it. On Tuesday, President Moon voiced his thoughts in an interview with ABC News. He says he believes that we need to have North Korea understand that dialogue and diplomacy are the only way to achieve peace on the Korean peninsula.” When asked specifically about the AUKUS situation, he replied that “while remarkable changes have taken place during his time in office, they have yet to consolidate peace on the Korean peninsula.”

Calls for Impeachment Spark Populist Backlash in Brazil

The presidency of Jair Bolsonaro, the conservative populist who has been president of Brazil since 2019, is under a new challenge, as opposition protests held across the country this week are calling for his impeachment. According to MetroPress, reports indicate that his support nationwide is dwindling, with national opinion polling placing him in the 22 to 30 percent approval range, with elections being scheduled for next year. Bolsonaro’s well-known military support also seems to be fracturing, with high-ranking General and Vice President Hamilton Mourão refusing to participate in Bolsonaro’s rally specifically in Brasilia last Thursday. Opposition support has historically centered around the administration's management of the COVID-19 pandemic, Al Jazeera explains. Protests in support of the opposition’s calls for impeachment have faltered, however, especially considering the surging support for Bolsonaro’s presidency in counter-rallies across the country this past week. Notably, presidential faction head and leader of the National Front, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva’s party did not participate in the impeachment protests, writes The Associated Press. Bolsonaro’s supporters have held their own, with increasingly fervent protests that included a push towards the Brazilian Supreme Court on September 14, resulting in the teargassing of pro-government supporters trying to take their message to the court itself. Thousands of fans clogged the streets of Brasilia, the capital, on Sept. 9, Brazil’s National Independence Day, in support of what they view as a last stand against left-wing tyranny. The Economist states that attendance included over 120,000 supporters and the event featured an appearance and speech by Bolsonaro. “I have three alternatives in the future: being arrested, getting killed or a victory,” Bolsonaro says, continuing the Economists, before calling for the removal of Supreme Court justice Alexandre de Moraes, one of his most vocal rivals. Moraes is spearheading an investigation into alleged spread of disinformation by Bolsonaro’s administration, following a letter published Sept. 13 by over 150 worldwide political leaders and former heads of state. The letter called Bolsonaro’s protests and the actions of his supporters an “imminent threat to Brazil’s democratic institutions,” one that they “stand vigilant to defend... ahead of 7 Sept. and after.” Brazil and Italy’sypress that Brazil’s administration’s smear tactics are being used to deflect from the perceived mistakes of populist gold-standard Donald Trump. Bolsonaro has successfully coalesced his voter base, including truckers and other vital sectors of the economy, into ardent supporters who act on his word. A truck driver’s strike successfully rose the price of livestock feed to $6,000 on Bolsonaro’s order, before eventually standing down, reports Reuters. Bolsonaro continues to cast opposition protesters as pawns of left-leaning and establishment political parties, vying for a regime change and the re-instatement of former President Da Silva. Inciting even more unraveled cheers by his supporters, his increasingly haranguing speeches are being monitored closely by opposition leaders. The New York Times reports that these opposition leaders fear his provocation of doubt about Brazilian electoral integrity could create a tenuous situation if Bolsonaro contests a loss in the 2022 elections as illegitimate. Calls for impeachment are still on the table, however, The Associated Press reports that over 130 requests for impeachment have been filed since Bolsonaro assumed the presidency. However, the likely opposition strategy hinges on a push for winning the 2022 elections, instead of risking an unsuccessful impeachment attempt.
Egypt and Israel Seek to Reduce Tensions Through Bilateral Summit

Drew Starbuck Staff Writer

The recent visit to Egypt by Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett to meet with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi on September 13 marks a key point in the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli struggle. This is especially noteworthy after the conflict in the Gaza Strip last May between Israel and Hamas. According to The Guardian, this summit marked the first official trip by an Israeli head of government to Egypt in a decade.

In August, Nigeria faced a growing cholera outbreak amidst a rise in COVID-19 cases. 69,925 suspected cholera infections have been recorded in 25 out of 36 states and 2,300 people have died as of September 5, according to Africa News. Deaths totaled 382 on August 3 and jumped to 2,323 in just over a month, according to the Sept. 5 Nigeria government claim. The cholera outbreak has crested a growing health crisis in many hard-to-reach northern states, according to CNN. The Nigerian government reported that 98 percent of Nigeria’s total suspected cases. The rainy season as well as Nigerian malaria battle Islamic militants along their northern border, have both made it extremely difficult for the Nigerian government to respond to this health crisis in many hard-to-reach northern states, according to CNN. The Nigerian government has called for 2,323 deaths to be treated for cholera. It is well known that cholera is a disease that kills daily, and those infected need to be treated within 48 hours to survive.

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Anna Thibodeau Staff Writer

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Egyptian president Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

According to The New York Times, the conflict in Gaza started after members of the Israeli Defense Force attacked the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem following being targeted with stones by Palestinian protestors, a response which enraged Hamas leadership in the Gaza Strip. Reuters reports that there has been an increase in cross-border violence dating back to late August, which has heightened concerns over whether the fragile truce can be maintained. The beginning of Sept. 2021 was marked by Palestinian militants firing rockets into Israel for three nights in a row, necessitating the summit between al-Sisi and Bennett. The Israeli government faces worst cholera outbreak in years by eating or drinking food contaminated with Vibriob cholerae. It takes any between 12 hours and five days for a person to begin showing symptoms and can kill both adults and children within in hours if left untreated. Children ages five to 14 are at the highest risk with a fatality rate of 3.3 percent. If caught early, the disease is easily treatable with an oral rehydration solution according to Food Safety News. Most infected people are asymptomatic, but the bacterium are still present in their feces for up to ten days.

CNN states there is a strong correlation between the states with the most fatalities and states which scored low on the health preparedness index from this past May. Nigeria is Africa’s most populated country with 200 million citizens. However, only 14 percent of Nigerians have access to a safely managed drinking water supply; a United Nations study from 2019 stated only 21 percent have access to safely managed sanitation services. Open defecation and contaminated water are the two main causes of cholera each season in Nigeria. According to 2020 data used in Africa News, 30 percent of Nigerian residents still practice open defecation in 14 states. This is especially dangerous because infected people are shedding the bacteria back into their environment. The NCDC advises all residents to boil water before drinking, make sure bottled water is properly sealed, wash their hands frequently, ensure all food is well cooked, fruits and vegetables are washed with safe water, and to avoid open defecation. There has also been a call for the Nigerian government to strengthen water sanitation and hygiene. Africa News reports that Nigeria is currently struggling with multiple disease outbreaks, and the cholera outbreak has been worsened by a resurgence of COVID-19 cases from the delta variant. Less than 1 percent of Nigeria is fully vaccinated. The cholera outbreak has created a new sense of urgency to make vaccines more available. The Nigerian government claimed prior health crises have helped then prepare for this outbreak, however many people still cannot reach proper care or are being turned away from full hospitals.
Leah Chan and Austin Delontre | Staff Writers

On Monday, September 13, hundreds of journalists surrounded the Pakistani Parliament House in Islamabad to protest a proposed media regulation law. The controversial law would allow the Pakistani government to create a new agency called Pakistan Media Development Authority (PMDA). The PMDA, which would be appointed by Pakistani government officials, would oversee national media, investigate complaints, and grant licenses. Through the PMDA, the Pakistani government believes they can curtail the spread of misinformation, with the stated goal of protecting the public. Due to the sweeping changes, the government would have to re-form, or abolish entirely, current media laws to align with these new regulations. VOA explains that the government believes the PMDA remedies the current “fragmented” and “fractured” media regulatory environment. Writing in The Washington Post, critics view the PMDA as a blatant attempt to tighten federal government control over the media. Critics claim the proposed law would give unchecked powers to a government-controlled assembly, including the ability to punish news organizations and journalists. Such punishments would include heavy fines as well as up to three years in prison. These penalties would apply to anything violating the state-mandated code of conduct or any content deemed “false” news. Human Rights Watch points out how the proposed bill ignores the fact that print, electronic, and social media are separate entities, each with their own defined features. Pakistan’s media includes roughly 150 television channels, with more than 300 radio stations, as well as close to 3,000 print publications, 1,000 print operators, and various film production studios. Journalists believe control of all these types of media under a single authority would be impossible, fearing widespread corruption and abuse. During the 2018 General Election, Prime Minister Imran Khan and his Tehreek-e-Insaf (Pakistan Movement for Justice) party (PTI) gained power. Reporters Without Borders emphasizes that Pakistan media freedom has diminished substantially since Khan took office. Attributing to this constriction of freedom is the exponential rise in attacks on journalists since Khan’s government came to power. Nonetheless, the Pakistani government continues to pledge its support for free speech in accordance with their constitution. While “Pakistan Constitution limits cen- tralization within the country, one provision allows for “reasonable restrictions in the interests of the sovereignty and in- tergrity of Pakistan or public order or moral- ity.” This stipulation provides the basis for the controversial proposal. Despite being introduced in May, the government has yet to move the media regulation law through Parliament. Paki- stani officials have faced public pushback from not only the owners of news organizations and journalist unions, but also opposing members of the National Assembly.

Shibli Faraz, the leader of the opposition party in the Pakistani Parliament, pledged his party’s support in the journal- ists’ struggle against the PMDA, according to The Print. Faraz believes the law is a threat to the so- dia of its independence and stifles free speech,” and he condemns Khan’s PTI-led government for attempting to “[demon- strate] the determination that represents democracy.” According to ANI News, the All Paki- stan Newspapers Soci- ety (APNS), the premier body of newspaper pub- lishing in Pakistan, issued a letter on Sept. 8, declar- ing the law to be “uncon- stitutional and draconian” which goes against laws of “freedom and expres- sion.” APNS executive di- rector Dr. Tanvir A Tahir asserts, “The concept is an attempt to tighten federal government hold over the media through one drago- nizing authority ignoring the fact that print, digital and electronic media are sepa- rate entities each with their own defined features and respective regulatory laws.”

The General Secre- tary of the Pakistan Fed- eral Union of Journalists (PEUJ), the main body behind the demonstrations on Sept. 13, Nasir Zaidi, believes the PMDA will be an attempt to “stifle the voice of the media.” Despite all the pushback, there exists a grow- ing expectation that the PMDA will be instated soon, most likely through a presidential ordinance which the Pakistani Parlia- ment will later pass into law.

Contact Leah and Austin at leah.chan@student.shu.edu and austin.delontre@student.shu.edu

Isabelle Agustin | Staff Writer

On September 12, British Prime Minis- ter Boris Johnson an- nounced his decision to scrap the introduction of vaccine passports. John- son revealed this in his plans on how to manage COVID-19 in the winter months, according to Re- uters. The decision to not implement vaccine passports seemed to many a complete U-turn on the government’s part. In early September, Vaccine Minister Nadhim Zah- wa had emphasized that vaccine passports would be necessary to keep large venues open. However, this change in tone was likely chosen for a multi- tude of reasons. BBC News explains that a vaccine passport could have been detrimental for night life and music festivals in “Europe and” island. Both the Night Times Industries Associa- tion and the Music Venue Trust welcomed Johnson’s decision, acknowledging a hope for economic re- covey. Political and so- cial backlash to the initial decision to implement a vaccine passport was ap- parent from all sides. The Washington Post reports concerns from the Con- servative Party that the mandate would serve as a hindrance to the econo- my and a violation of fun- damental rights, as well as Liberal Democrats wor- rying that it would prove to be divisive and expen- sive. Sashia Lord, Greater Manchester’s nighttime economy adviser, went as far as to describe the vaccine passports as “dis- criminator,” according to Politico. Elaborating on this somewhat relaxed plan of action, Health Minis- ter Sajid Javid said that he did not anticipate more lockdowns and that the government would rely on vaccines and testing to assist the public rather than vaccine passports. However, vaccine pass- ports may not be left completely out of the question. The Associated Press reports that the British government has shoved the idea of vac- cine passports for now but could reconsider the decision if COVID-19 cases rise exponentially once again. Javid told the BBC, “We’ve looked at it properly and, whilst we should keep it in reserve as a potential option, I’m pleased to say that we will not be going ahead with plans for vaccine pass- ports.” He denied the idea that the government was “running scared” on the policy after criticism. In- stead, he described that the passports were not needed because of oth- er factors in the “wall of defense,” including high vaccine uptake, testing, surveillance, and new treatments. There have been overarching criticisms on Johnson since the announcement of his COVID-19 management plans. The Washington Post reports on the pres- tigious position John- son’s government is in, as multiple policy reversals and abrupt U-turns have eroded the public’s trust. Conservative MPs remain wary that the government is simply pausing its introduction of vaccine passports. Mark Harper, the chair of the Covid Recovery Group of Tory MPs, told The Guardian: “They shouldn’t be kept in re- serve – they are pointless, damaging and discrimina- tory.” Stephen Reichier, a government advisor, said that he hoped ministers had shelved the vaccine passports plan based on the scientific arguments against it, but admitted: “I don’t believe that, sad- ly it’s probably politics.” Adding to this concern, many are bracing them- selves for a difficult win- ter, for flu season threat- ers to increase the strain on the country’s health care system alongside COVID-19 booster shot rollout according to The New York Times. The Washington Post reports that 65 percent of the population in En- gland is fully vaccinated; however, vaccination rates among young peo- ple are lower than those of older demographics. While COVID-19 cases have dropped since July, England is still reporting more than 20,000 new cases per day. Around the world, vac- cine passports are being discussed as a possible tool to encourage people to get vaccines, as they allow vaccinated individ- uals to return to a degree of normalcy. France and Italy both adopted such mandates and saw a de- cline in COVID-19 rates and, in Italy’s case, a rise in internal tourism. Con- versely, other nations, such as Russia and the United States are using a more hands-off approach – parting the burden on private employers to require vaccinations.

Johnson’s COVID-19 policy only applies to England. According to BBC News, the rest of the United Kingdom’s approaches on passports vary: Wales is considering adopting vaccine pass- ports. People in Scotland will be required to show proof of full vaccination to get into nightclubs and many large events start- ing in October. Northern Ireland is currently considering such passport measures.

Contact Isabelle at isabelle. agustin@student.shu.edu

England Reverses Course on Vaccine Passports

Vaccine passports skirt the line between personal freedoms and public safety. Courtesy of Marco Verch (Flickr)
Labor Forms Coalition Following Norwegian Election

Christopher Benitez Cuartas
Staff Writer

The September 13 parliametary election in Norway has left the Nordic country in the hands of the Labor Party and its coalition after nearly a decade of a Conservative administration. According to ValgResultat, the official ballot counting site for Norwegian elections, Prime Minister Erna Solberg was unseated by a 5.9 percent margin on a one-to-one comparison with the incoming prime minister, Jonas Gahr Store. Though she did win the overall majority, Solberg gained sufficient votes for a left-wing coalition. Store will have a plethora of issues to address to a divided nation with a dubious coalition.

The Conservative Party ended up with 36 seats, losing 9, and while the Labor Party ended up victorious with 48, it is currently negotiating a coalition with moderate left-wing parties such as the Center and Socialist Left. These parties’ seats, 28 and 13 respectively, would make up close to half of a three-party coalition. Disagreements on several major issues between these parties, however, heightens the possibility of Labor failing to form a coalition.

One of the big issues of contention between the parties concerns the extraction of oil and gas. In the late 1960s, oil was discovered in the Barents Sea off the North Atlantic coast of Norway. Such resources have benefited Norway with a healthy income and helped finance the welfare state Norway is known for. According to Foreign Policy, the oil and gas industry employs 6% of Norwegian laborers.

While Solberg insisted on continuing oil drilling despite international warnings regarding climate effects, Financial Times describes that the possible coalition does not have a conclusive answer as to whether drilling will be permitted to continue. The Center Party, led by Trygve Slagsvold, insists that Norway’s resources belong to Norway and should be used to develop it, according to Senter Partiet, the Center Party’s official website. Arbeider Partiet, the Labor Party’s official website, however, explains that the party is pro-oil, yet aims for a reduction of emissions and an eventual full transition to renewable energy. The goal would be to cut emissions in half by 2030 and eliminate all emissions by 2050 by electrifying oil fields. During the pandemic, however, oil prices dropped, and measures by both the Conservatives in power and the Labor in opposition to support the Norwegian energy industry passed almost unanimously, according to Reuters.

While Norwegians have become individually wealthier than their parents or grandparents, Norway still struggles with internal wealth inequality. Science Norway states that “if the richest had paid tax on their entire income, the tax revenue to the country and the municipalities would have increased by an estimated 52 billion kroner in 2018.” The Labor Party proposes tax cuts for the working class as a major campaign component in hopes to cut the wealth distribution gap. With the ongoing diversification of Europe through immigration and ever further parts of the world, the Conservatives under Solberg have pursued, at least according to their manifesto, a “strict, fair and predictable refugee and asylum policy that limits groundless asylum applications to Norway.” On the other hand, the Labor Party’s website states that we are at “a time when authoritarian forces, nationalism and xenophobia are on the rise,” justifying the need to show integration挪威 both socially and economically.

The government’s handling of COVID-19 in Norway is viewed by constituents as largely successful and is credited to the Conservatives, with a sharp rise in approval rates between the pandemic’s inaugural time frame of March-April of 2020 according to Estimine.

One of the major factors in the Conservative’s loss was the stubborn and unpopularity of the outgoing prime minister Erna Solberg over her breaking pandemic rules during her 60th birthday celebrations, Euro News explains. She had invited her 13 guests to the ski resort town of Geilo, when maximum gatherings allowed for ten. When asked about the incident by the NRK, Norway’s state broadcaster, the Prime Minister respondend “I, who every single day stand and talk about infection control to the Norwegian people should have known the rules better. But the truth is that I haven’t checked the rules well enough, and thus had not realized that when a family goes out together and is more than ten members, then it is actually a super spreader.”

Contact Christopher at christopher.benitezcuartas@student.shu.edu
DEAN’S WELCOME CELEBRATES A NEW YEAR FOR THE SCHOOL OF DIPLOMACY

Lauren-Marie Diwatian
Campus News Editor

On September 10, the School of Diplomacy hosted its annual Dean’s Wel- come event in celebration of the new school year. Held on campus, the lunch event was a great opportu- nity for faculty members and students to socialize. The excitement was palpa- ble during one of the first in-person events hosted by the Diplomacy School since the COVID-19 pandemic caused the University’s in-person closure in March 2020. Dean Courtney Smith, head of the School, deliv- ered the opening address to faculty and students, stating that “last year was tough, but it was a very successful year for the School of Diplomacy.” He emphasized how students successfully advanced their internships within the School during the pandemic, with all of the School’s student organizations function- ing during the 2020-2021 school year. He also con- gratulated the creation of the Black Diplomacy Student Organization and its recognition as the Best New Student Organization from Seton Hall’s Student Government Organization. He further acknowl- edged the success of the Diplomacy School’s facul- ty both inside and outside of the classroom. Dean Smith praised the faculty members’ extensive article publica- tions and their poli- cy-driven focus in research, especially about the recent developments in Afghan- istan and the impact of COVID-19 throughout the world in the past year.

Dean Smith also an- nounced the initiative of the School’s students and faculty wanting to do more following the murder of George Floyd. The School of Diplomacy established committees dedicated to diversity, inclusion, and justice, with three new courses dedicated to race, gender, and religion in the field of international rela- tions. Despite the “forces pulling us apart” in soci- ety, the country, and in the international community, Dean Smith closed his ad-dress by emphasizing the strength and success of the School of Diplomacy coming together as some- thing “truly remarkable.”

Following the address, various representatives from the School’s student organizations had the op- portunity to introduce themselves and encourage interested students in tak- ing part in their work on campus. Faculty also intro- duced themselves and their specializations, eager to be- gin working alongside the new and returning students. Freshman student Kai- la Engle expressed how she was originally nervous about joining the School of Diplomacy, but the Dean’s Welcome opened her eyes to the various organizations and opportunities available. “I’m so interested in learn- ing different aspects of the School of Diplomacy, and I’m really excited to start the school year here.” Associate Dean of School of Diplomacy Eliza- beth Halpin expressed her excitement in hosting the Dean’s Welcome after this past year with COVID-19 restrictions. “Just being able to gather with this many people in person is such a relief.” She greatly appreci- ates the interactions within such social events like the Dean’s Welcome, finding them necessary to build the skills and connections with the school’s community.

Ms. Pforzheimer stated, “They don’t have a relationship, they don’t like each other, and perhaps in the future may fight each other.” Al-Qaeda and ISIS are present in Afghanistan, which could result in vi- olence, a critical concern for the people of Afghan- istan. Al-Qaeda says that explosions in Jalalabad and in Kabul appear to be the work of ISIL-K remnants. The Biden ad- ministration, meanwhile, may plan to push the Taliban to a peace nego- tiation but would be pressed to not give up any leverage during talks. Ms. Pforzheimer stated that “after 20 years of fighting the U.S. has no way of assessing what le- sions it learned from Af- ghanistan.” One-in-person teaching graduate and un- dergraduate courses as well as being the founder of the Diploloab, the school’s un- dergraduate research lab. The Dean’s Welcome event was an excellent op- portunity for the School of Diplomacy’s commu- nity to reconnect and to foster new connections with new and returning members. The eagerness of the faculty and the students demonstrates great promise for success in the new school year.

Lauren at laurenmarie.diwatian@student.shu.edu

Contact Lauren

Dr. Joseph Huddleston

Lauren-Marie Diwatian

Lylian Pagan
Staff Writer

On Tuesday, September 14, the World Af- fairs Council hosted an in-depth talk about the Taliban’s takeover of Afghanistan with guest speaker Annie Pforzheimer at Seton Hall’s Walsh Library. The in-person and online discussion was led by the president of WACNJ Rozlyn Engel, also in attendance were Dean Courtney Smith and Dr. Martin Edwards.

Ms. Pforzheimer is an adjunct professor at City University of New York and a non-resident as- sociate with the Center for Strategic and Inter- national Studies (CSIS). A member of the Taliban with the personal rank of minister counselor, Pfor- zheimer held numerous prominent roles shaping U.S. foreign policy at the State Department, hold- ing positions as the acting deputy assistant secretary of state for Afghanistan and the ranks of depu- ty chief of mission and political counselor. Pfor- zheimer also directed the implementation of the 2014 U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America at the National Security Council and the Office of Andean Af- fairs in the State Depart- ment’s Bureau of West- ern Hemisphere Affairs.

The Taliban stormed to power in mid-August, overthrowing the govern- ment as the United States-led international forces completed their withdrawal from Afghan- istan. According to Ms. Pforzheimer, negotiations with the Taliban began in November 2020, under President Trump’s admin- istration. The Trump ad- ministration appointed a special envoy for Taliban peace talks without the Afghan government. She further explained that the Biden administra- tion had the task of withdrawing U.S. troops from Afghanistan but did not keep to the con- ditions of the agreement.

The decision to with- draw U.S. troops should not have been set on a timeline but condi- tions-based, and a bet- ter outcome would have been more favorable. One of the biggest shifts from one administra- tion to the other, and by NATO, was that the U.S. announced in April the withdrawal of its troops by no later than September, a month or two earlier than anticipated. The Trump administration had made the same announcement, and decision to withdraw troops, but with some conditions for the Taliban. “China is now negoti- ating with the Taliban and Russia is pushing their interest in the region as well,” said Ms. Pforzhe-imer. “Women and girls under the Taliban are subject to horrific treat- ment.” After depowering the Taliban in 2001, the U.S. wanted to develop that country and establish rights for Afghan women. Under Taliban rule, their lives were hellish, as girls were banned from school and women forbidden to leave their homes ex- cept in the company of a male, as reported by Human Rights Watch.

When an online par- ticipant asked about the relationship between ISIS and the Taliban, Ms. Pforzhe-imer stated, “They don’t have a relationship, they don’t like each other, and perhaps in the future may fight each other.” Al-Qaeda and ISIS are present in Afghanistan, which could result in vi- olence, a critical concern for the people of Afghan- istan. Al-Qaeda says that explosions in Jalalabad and in Kabul appear to be the work of ISIL-K remnants. The Biden ad- ministration, meanwhile, may plan to push the Taliban to a peace nego- tiation but would be pressed to not give up any leverage during talks. Ms. Pforzheimer stated that “after 20 years of fighting the U.S. has no way of assessing what le- sions it learned from Af- ghanistan.” One-in-person participant asked her to further elaborate on that point. She stated there is no department within the U.S. that assesses lessons learned because the situa- tion changes constant- ly. Furthermore, the U.S. government does not fre- quently speak about failed wars like Vietnam or Af- ghanistan. At the current moment, the setback in Afghanistan will remain unfavorable for the Unit- ed States image abroad.

Lylian at lylian.pagan@student.shu.edu

Contact Lylian

The School of Diplomacy promises to continue promoting more diversity, inclusivity, and community this school year. Courtesy of Seton Hall University

After the Fall: A Conversation with Annie Pforzheimer on Afghanistan

Annie Pforzheimer (left) and Rozlyn Engle (right)

Courtesy of Seton Hall University

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Courtesy of Seton Hall University
School of Diplomacy Hosts Panel of Experts to Discuss the Future of Afghanistan

Jazlyn Dominguez  Staff Writer

On the eve of the 20th anniversary of September 11, the School of Diplomacy hosted a panel discussing the implications of the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan. The panel featured Professor Sara Bjerg Møller, also the event’s organizer and moderator, Professor Joseph Huddleston, former Afghan Ambassador Sayed Jalal Karim, and the U.S. Institute of Peace’s (USIP) Andrew Watkins.

Professor Møller opened the event by requesting the audience observe a moment of silence in recognition of the lives lost in both the tragic 9/11 attacks and the Afghan conflict. She then proceeded to introduce Sayed Jalal Karim, former Afghan ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Mr. Karim summarized recent events in Afghanistan, beginning with former U.S. President Trump’s February 2020 Agreement for Bringing Peace in Afghanistan, also known as the Doha Agreement, with the Taliban. He then shared his thoughts on the new Taliban government and whether the international community should recognize this new government.

Following Karim’s statement, Dr. Møller introduced Andrew Watkins, senior expert on Afghanistan for the USIP. Watkins provided his take on the Afghanistan conflict and discussed the international community’s response to recent developments in Afghanistan.

“In together, out together,” said Watkins, who explained NATO’s decision to pull out of Afghanistan after seventeen years of war with the American military withdrawal. Concerning regional countries’ relations with the new government, Watkins said they would “quietly but pragmatically repose themselves with the Taliban.”

Dr. Møller addressed the public criticism that the U.S. is now weak in the eyes of both its adversaries and allies following its withdrawal from Afghanistan. One of the arguments some critics have made is that because the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan suggests to some in the international community that American resolve is weakened, China will now be emboldened to seize Taiwan. Watkins did not agree, stating that “no matter what happens, the number one person in charge decides, everyone will listen.” Watkins also emphasized the polycen- tric organization of the Taliban.

“Taliban” has many different centers of power and powerful figures but [are] bound together by a set of loyalty and obedience to a single figurehead and idea: all of [the Taliban factions] are brothers in a struggle to ejection large-scale terrorism. The response was summed up by Lt. Col. Price, who stated that while there would never be an end to the war on terrorism, any politi- cian who wanted to call it something else would “look like you’re soft on national security and soft on terrorism,” though he believes that the best way to look at terrorism is like cancer that can’t be eradicated but only controlled.

The discussion closed on the question of what each panelist would submit as a necessary change in the ongoing war on terrorism. Ambassador Westphal suggested that it was necessary for there to be more clarity on the end goal of counterterrorism efforts. Ambassador Westphal agreed, adding that it would also be beneficial to move counterterrorism from a political to strategic environment. Lt. Col. Price concluded by saying that there should be a focus on values and knowing who we are and what we want.

Closing the event, Dr. Catherine Ruby, Seton Hall’s Director of Internships and Career Development within the School of Diplomacy and International Relations, thanked the panelists both for their service and for sharing their insight on past and future events.

Contact Sophie at sophie.adams@student.shu.edu
The Taliban debate, as their tactics of securing national interests are different. While the U.S. will still maintain its liberal policies in engaging with state actors, China is likely to pursue immediate gains. Unlike the U.S., China has no permanent friends and no permanent enemies—even if it extends a hand to the Taliban, it should not be necessarily interpreted as a gesture of recognition or an indication of an alliance. While most experts predict that the U.S. will not recognize the Taliban regime anytime soon, the question of whether it will ever grant recognition can only be determined by the Taliban’s behavior and the alliances it forms. While international recognition might make a difference for the regime in terms of diplomatic and economic activities, it does not limit the influence that the Taliban can use in a world of the “modern state”–as described by Robert Pape in his work, why economic Sanctions don’t work—isolation of this kind is not as effective today.

The biggest challenge for the international community is whether the geopolitical interests of powerful countries would take center stage over seeking common ground to bring the Taliban regime to international humanitarian and diplomatic recognition. As UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stated to Reuters in August as the Taliban took control of Afghanistan, “The Taliban’s desire for international recognition is the Security Council’s only leverage to press for respect for rights, particularly for women, in Afghanistan.”

The Taliban is still at a phase where it’s not yet to be formally recognized by any state. “Who will formally recognize the Taliban?” remains a lingering question as the UN credentials committee—which includes the United States, Russia, and China—considers the Taliban’s request to speak at the General Assembly. Amidst a frantic exit from Kabul, the United States, European Union, United Kingdom and many other countries of the world have, at least for now, pushed against formal recognition of the new Afghanistan led by the Taliban, per an additional Reuters report. For most of these countries, the new government where women’s rights were enshrined into the new constitution should determine future engagement in Afghanistan. The U.S. and China are on opposite sides of the

Hamzah Khan
Staff Writer

Since the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban’s take-over of Kabul, many questions have arisen regarding women’s rights in the country. The Taliban announced that they would lead an inclusive government where women would work “shoulder to shoulder” with men. However, a monolith—while many warlords ruling rural areas. They have been in charge, however, cannot be ignored. Women are no longer roaming the streets of Kabul, staying in their homes out of fear. The limited rights women have enjoyed are seemingly gone now. The future remains unclear, but while the women of Kabul hold their breath, the women of the country are sleep without the sounds of war for the first time in decades.

Contact Hamzah at hamzah.khan@alumn.shu.edu

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The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan is deepening the country’s long-standing refugee crisis. According to the United Nations, there were around six million Afghan refugees and internally displaced people at the end of 2020. Another half a million could leave over the next year. Countries accepting refugees may face difficulties integrating large numbers of refugees, as mass migration on such a scale can result in political backlash and instability. Given this potential for chaos, leaders around the world are paying close attention to where Afghan refugees are going.

The U.S. and its allies evacuated close to 65,000 refugees from Kabul airport, according to Brookings, with most being evacuated to U.S., German, and overseas military bases. The evacuation process was not without incident. The New York Times reports that some concerns include missing documents and disease outbreaks among refugees. Still, the number of people evacuated is higher than in past waves. While former elected officials, such as Marc Polymeropoulos, a former acting director of the CIA, and other security forces. The arrest of acting Interior Minister. Acting Interior Minister.

The Return of Terrorism

Joshua Powanda Staff Writer

The United States intervened in Afghanistan to root out al-Qaeda in 2001. While the Taliban continue to fight in the country, U.S. leaders worry that the group could provide fuel for right-wing nationalist parties in Pakistan and Germany could have indicated some willingness to accept refugees but haven't offered any estimates. States such as Australia, Austria, Belgium, Greece and other countries do have a minimal process for asylum seekers. Turkey has said it would accept refugees but has not provided additional asylum seekers. Turkey, the world's largest refugee depot, recorded 20,000 refugees in the past few weeks. Turkey must be a favorable situation for the U.S. in its efforts to prevent terrorism in Afghanistan. Although the U.S. fought the Taliban for 20 years, ISIS-K can foreseeably be seen as a greater evil in the country. Should the Taliban continue to fight ISIS-K, the latter group's ascent and ability to govern its territory outside Afghanistan should be diminished.

Without a U.S. presence in the Middle East, terrorism may find its foothold again.
Mass Migrations are on the Horizon if Politicians Keep Ignoring Climate Change

Katherine Dorrer
Staff Writer

Conflicts and instability have been driving forces for migration across the world for decades, but now global leaders must worry about climate change before it is too late. Forced migration is often exhibited in areas of conflict where refugees and asylum-seekers hope to flee persecution, yet The International Red Cross estimates that there are currently more environmental refugees than political refugees. Although the term ‘environmental refugee’ is not protected by any international or national law, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees provides environmental refugees with the term “persons displaced in the context of disasters.” For decades, people have been displaced from their native lands because of natural disasters and environmental changes, however as global warming progresses, these internally displaced people are being protected as sea levels rise, CO2 emissions increase, and environmental disasters continue.

Labeling this group as climate and environmental refugees creates a sense of urgency. This sense of urgency has been emphasized for years, as exemplified in the 1990 Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), where world leaders stated that global warming may affect human migration the most. The 1951 Geneva Convention defines refugees as someone who has crossed an international boundary “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.” No part of that statement includes refugees who are fleeing their nation because of environmental disasters caused by the effects of climate change. The closest leaders have come to codifying the term ‘environmental refugee’ was in 2007, when the International Organization for Migration (IOM) created a loose term for environmental migrants; “Environmental migrants are persons or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment that adversely affects their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad.”

With scientific findings confirming that global temperatures are skyrocketing, there is still a widespread lack of recognition of climate change, and only 1% of the number of displaced people. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre calculated in 2019 that weather related disasters displaced approximately 24.9 million people. Climate-related displacements occur three times more than conflict displacement, at 8.5 million, throughout 2019. Within that statistic, 19.1 million of those displaced lived in Asia and the Pacific. Bangladesh is just one of the most densely populated countries with one of the highest vulnerability to environmental disasters. As rising sea levels continue, millions of Bangladeshis will become climate migrants. This is a climate crisis. Bangladesh is just one of many countries facing massive, long-term solutions that will directly impact global warming.

The United States does not offer temporary safe haven to climate refugees. The government has a moral obligation to extend this protection to refugees to account for all in need. The Biden Administration must incorporate environmental refugees into the current asylum agenda and system. Greenhouse gases will continue to emit into the atmosphere, sea levels will rise higher and wipe out towns, and air pollution will eventually suffocate healthy lungs if politicians continue to turn their heads. In order to mitigate mass migration, governmental administrations need to step up and create an aggressive, long-term solution to combat global warming, and protect millions of climate refugees.

Contact Katherine at katherine.dorrer@student.shu.edu

China’s Authoritarianism Facilitated its Economic Victory Over COVID-19

Andrea Gonzalez
Staff Writer

Despite being the epicenter of the COVID-19 outbreak, China’s swift and strict response to the pandemic allegedly led to a 2.3 percent increase in GDP in the year 2020, reports NPR. The pandemic posed a unique challenge for the communist government, but not an unmanageable one. Learning from authoritarian tactics, the Chinese government was able to fight the virus while simultaneously building back its economy. Although the United States was unable to sustain a similar GDP increase, the tactics used by the Chinese government to achieve this financial success came at an unimaginable price.

Wuhan saw the classic cases of COVID-19 in November 2019, as doctors and scientists began to warn the public about the dangers of the virus. At the same time, Chinese authorities silenced and censored public and expert opinion to avoid panic and convince national operations. However, the strategy did not work. Soon, COVID-19 spread to over 31,000 people, reports (WHO). The entire country went into a brutal lockdown, highlighted by the use of surveillance drones to detect unmasked individuals in Mongolia, door-to-door health checks by government officials, and forced isolation in government facilities, as reports The Guardian. Concurrently, financial operations came to a halt, and state’s GDP shrunk 6.8 percent in the first quarter.

Back in the U.S., a lack of transnational standards and trust in other countries’ abilities to fight the pandemic as noted Pro-Publica. Millions across the world protested against the virus, stayed in their homes and made it a priority to leave only if necessary. Many others did not. Public officials and skeptics downplayed the virus,Embedding climate refugees in a basic picture of the future. (Courtesy of Robert S. Donner)
The amicable, yet cautious, relationship between the Taliban and the Chinese Communist Party has been unmistakable in the weeks leading up to and following the contentious U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. According to Reuters, Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with the political chief of the Taliban, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, at the end of July. In this meeting, the two discussed Afghanistan's sovereignty and independence, in addition to security and stability concerns within the nation. According to Deutsche Welle, after the Taliban took over Kabul, the CCP promised to send around $30 million (200 million yuan) worth of vaccines and other humanitarian aid. This demonstrates the first economic assistance the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has received since the country's take-over by the Taliban. Not only does this represent an olive branch handed to the newly formed government, but it also displays China's true intentions in the country—that the state is invested in the financial future of Afghanistan. By being the first superpower to recognize the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, China placed itself in a strategic position to avoid conflict. Xi Jinping and his party can have focused diplomatic affairs on self preservation, mineral mining, and an expansion of their ever-growing sphere of influence. Afghanistan is located in central Asia and borders Pakistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and China. The geographical location of Afghanistan is crucial for China's Belt and Road Initiative, also known as the One Belt One Road policy (OBOR). The New York Times writes that "the initiative…looms on a scope and scale with little precedent in modern history, promising more than $1 trillion in infrastructure and spanning more than 60 countries." This initiative aims to unite rural and urban China by modernizing the region with transnational transport lines and other infrastructure. On top of domestic change, China is developing infrastructure in neighboring nations; namely Afghanistan. The Lowy Institute, an Australian think-tank, writes, "one, on land, Beijing aims to connect the country's underdeveloped hinterland to Europe through Central Asia. The second leg of Xi’s plan is to build a 21st century Maritime Silk Road connecting the fast-growing Southeast Asian region to China's southern provinces through ports and railways." Unlike the United States, Britain, or the former Soviet Union, China does not want to reform or "democratize" the Afghan government. The CCP knows and continues to analyze the legacy of nations that failed to invade the grevent of empires, treated less invasions over the past centuries have been unsuccessful and attempts at "democratization" have only led to bloodshed and millions of dollars wasted. Rather than repeat the mistakes of the West, Xi and his party want to stabilize the region and spur economic prosperity in Afghanistan. Regional stability would legitimize the Taliban-led government and, as CNN writes, "[and] give them access to international aid that Afghanistan desperately needs." Global aid coupled with a developing and prospering economy in Afghanistan would increase global recognition and foreign investments that the nation needs to sustain itself. And for China's side, without the stability and cooperation of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the OBOR project would be impractical. A healthier Afghanistan economy would raise the standard of living and lift millions of Afghans out of poverty. Perhaps over time, with such improvements, the appeal of extremist groups would diminish and reduce terrorism in Afghanistan, fostering a safer place to live for the Afghan people. In addition to stability, China needs the minerals Afghanistan has to satiate the domestic and global demand for commodities and batteries. According to Al Jazeera, "Afghanistan is sitting on deposits estimated to be worth $1 trillion or more, including what may be the world's largest lithium reserves." While Afghanistan has smaller mines, they lack the engineering capacity to capitalize on their abundance of resources. On the other hand, China has the technological prowess to extract, export, and process these minerals. China will utilize its strategic alliance with Pakistan, entitled the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), to easily transport raw materials to China using the Maritime Silk Road. Although strategically planned so far, China is playing with fire. The CCP is over-leveraged across Asia and Africa, and there may be a powder keg waiting to ignite. Economic expansion is finite, and China knows they cannot subjugate OBOR nations to the same censors as mainland China. Once Afghanistan gets what they want, what is stopping them from cutting ties to the CCP? And then the rest of the countries? In addition, China's disregard for the rights of Uyghur Muslims and the Taliban's history of human rights abuses will continue to stifle future progress, deepening the rift between China's political and economic philosophies and the rest of the world.

Contact Henrik at Henrik.petterson@shu.edu

 what are China's true intentions in Afghanistan? Henrik Petterson Staff Writer The amicable, yet cautious, relationship between the Taliban and the Chinese Communist Party has been unmistakable in the weeks leading up to and following the contentious U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. According to Reuters, Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with the political chief of the Taliban, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, at the end of July. In this meeting, the two discussed Afghanistan's sovereignty and independence, in addition to security and stability concerns within the nation. According to Deutsche Welle, after the Taliban took over Kabul, the CCP promised to send around $30 million (200 million yuan) worth of vaccines and other humanitarian aid. This demonstrates the first economic assistance the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has received since the country's take-over by the Taliban. Not only does this represent an olive branch handed to the newly formed government, but it also displays China's true intentions in the country—that the state is invested in the financial future of Afghanistan. By being the first superpower to recognize the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, China placed itself in a strategic position to avoid conflict. Xi Jinping and his party can have focused diplomatic affairs on self preservation, mineral mining, and an expansion of their ever-growing sphere of influence. Afghanistan is located in central Asia and borders Pakistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and China. The geographical location of Afghanistan is crucial for China's Belt and Road Initiative, also known as the One Belt One Road policy (OBOR). The New York Times writes that "the initiative…looms on a scope and scale with little precedent in modern history, promising more than $1 trillion in infrastructure and spanning more than 60 countries." This initiative aims to unite rural and urban China by modernizing the region with transnational transport lines and other infrastructure. On top of domestic change, China is developing infrastructure in neighboring nations; namely Afghanistan. The Lowy Institute, an Australian think-tank, writes, "one, on land, Beijing aims to connect the country's underdeveloped hinterland to Europe through Central Asia. The second leg of Xi’s plan is to build a 21st century Maritime Silk Road connecting the fast-growing Southeast Asian region to China's southern provinces through ports and railways." Unlike the United States, Britain, or the former Soviet Union, China does not want to reform or "democratize" the Afghan government. The CCP knows and continues to analyze the legacy of nations that failed to invade the grave of empires, treated less invasions over the past centuries have been unsuccessful and attempts at "democratization" have only led to bloodshed and millions of dollars wasted. Rather than repeat the mistakes of the West, Xi and his party want to stabilize the region and spur economic prosperity in Afghanistan. Regional stability would legitimize the Taliban-led government and, as CNN writes, "[and] give them access to international aid that Afghanistan desperately needs." Global aid coupled with a developing and prospering economy in Afghanistan would increase global recognition and foreign investments that the nation needs to sustain itself. And for China's side, without the stability and cooperation of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the OBOR project would be impractical. A healthier Afghanistan economy would raise the standard of living and lift millions of Afghans out of poverty. Perhaps over time, with such improvements, the appeal of extremist groups would diminish and reduce terrorism in Afghanistan, fostering a safer place to live for the Afghan people. In addition to stability, China needs the minerals Afghanistan has to satiate the domestic and global demand for commodities and batteries. According to Al Jazeera, "Afghanistan is sitting on deposits estimated to be worth $1 trillion or more, including what may be the world's largest lithium reserves." While Afghanistan has smaller mines, they lack the engineering capacity to capitalize on their abundance of resources. On the other hand, China has the technological prowess to extract, export, and process these minerals. China will utilize its strategic alliance with Pakistan, entitled the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), to easily transport raw materials to China using the Maritime Silk Road. Although strategically planned so far, China is playing with fire. The CCP is over-leveraged across Asia and Africa, and there may be a powder keg waiting to ignite. Economic expansion is finite, and China knows they cannot subjugate OBOR nations to the same censors as mainland China. Once Afghanistan gets what they want, what is stopping them from cutting ties to the CCP? And then the rest of the countries? In addition, China's disregard for the rights of Uyghur Muslims and the Taliban's history of human rights abuses will continue to stifle future progress, deepening the rift between China's political and economic philosophies and the rest of the world.

Contact Henrik at Henrik.petterson@shu.edu

 booster shots unethically exacerbate global vaccine inequity Cat Anderson Staff Writer It has been one year, six months, and a little over a week since March 13, 2020: the day that the flu-like illness called "coronavirus" suddenly brought the lives of every American to a screeching halt. The country waited nearly a full year for vaccines to become available yet, months after a nationwide vaccination campaign began, the crisis has morphed into a “pandemic of the unvaccinated,” as The Guardian writes. Now, in light of the Delta variant and a slight waning immunity to COVID-19, there is talk of a third booster shot. Many Americans have welcomed the prospect of a booster shot. According to Scientific American, vaccine efficacy has waned, although it is important to note the distinction between protection against infection and protection against severe cases. While protection against infection by the Delta variant has waned, according to the Scientific American, vaccine efficacy against hospitalization is still strong. Getting a booster shot is likely not a necessity for the majority of people, except in cases of immunocompromised people. However, according to The Guardian, they may be necessary for those who received the single dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Approaching this issue from a uniquely first world perspective, the boosters offer an exciting glimmer of hope that the pandemic could soon conclude. Unfortunately, this issue is more complicated than that. The administration of booster shots raises an ethical dilemma; while for many, their third shot, many in developing countries are still waiting to receive their first. According to the Associated Press, just 0.8 percent of the population of South Africa is fully vaccinated. Only 0.1 percent of Nigeria's population is vaccinated, and at least 5 countries haven't begun vaccination efforts at all. When evaluating the pandemic on a global scale, it can seem as though there are two distinctly different COVID-19 experiences. One experience is highlighted by a lack of trust in the vaccine, and a fear of violations of personal liberties. The other experience, prevalent throughout the developing and unvaccinated world, is defined by the plight for simple access to a vaccine. According to Reuters, only three percent of the entire African population is vaccinated, and according to The New York Times, as COVID-19 surges, so does the presence of other deadly diseases, such as Ebola and Polio. And still, despite a WHO moratorium on booster shots, wealthy countries continue to ignore the pleas of developing states. Though the Biden administration says it’s “keeping [its] part of the bargain” by “providing more [vaccines] to the rest of the world than all the rest of the world combined” it still plans to begin booster shots this month, according to The New York Times. And maybe that’s true, but it is not worth questioning the morality of administering a possibly unnecessary third shot, while people in the developing world continue to suffer because they haven’t received the shots that we know are saving lives. With all of that in mind, how might one even consider the possibility of whether to get the booster or not? For American citizens, it is undoubtedly a privilege and a duty to take it. Americans must do everything they can to protect themselves and those around them. As global citizens however, the American populous must speak up about this inequity. Advocacy on behalf of those living in developing nations is a crucial element in ending the pandemic, and continuing to pressure the Biden administration to export doses of the vaccine is essential. In the long term, there is a necessity to advocate for better global health infrastructure. Should another global pandemic occur, such disparity cannot be allowed to exist. There needs to be something in place to provide for underprivileged nations and stop their citizens from dying just because they don't have access to the same materials as the rest of the world. This situation, this inequity absolutely can never happen again.

Contact Cat at catherine.anderson@shu.edu
Man Shot Dead After Stabbing Attack
In New Zealand Supermarket

A man in New Zealand was shot dead Friday, the 3rd, after a stabbing attack that wounded seven people, The Associated Press reports. Police arrived at the scene of the stabblings within 60 seconds, where he was fatally shot. The attack occurred at a Countdown supermarket in the country’s largest city, Auckland, at around 2:40 p.m. local time. Those injured were taken to hospitals in the Auckland area, reports The New York Times.

According to court reports from the New Zealand Herald, via the Guardian, prosecutors had originally planned to arrest Samsudeen under the Terrorism Suppression Act. He was accused of plotting a “lone wolf” knife attack, but a court ruled that planning an attack in and of itself did not violate existing laws. Samsudeen was eventually released this past July but placed under heavy surveillance, as there was no existing law that would have allowed him to be locked away in jail. According to Reuters, the attacker used a supermarket visit as an opportunity for the attack.

One eyewitness reports he picked up a knife and started “running around like a lunatic,” shouting “Allahu Akbar,” or “God is Greatest.”

Since the 2019 Christchurch shootings when a white supremacist killed 51 people at two mosques, New Zealand has been on high alert for terrorist and ideology-inspired violence. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern spoke about the perpetrator of the stabbing attack, stating, “It was carried out by an individual, not a faith. It would be wrong to direct any frustration to anyone beyond this individual,” according to Reuters.

Despite Ardern’s uni-fying comments after the Christchurch massacre, some may be perplexed as to how the knife-wielder was able to remain free despite being so closely watched by authorities. This event will inevitably raise debate on tightening counterterrorism measures within the country. In a news briefing, Ardern stated, “We must be willing to make the changes that we know may not necessarily have changed history, but could change the future.” She additionally described the stabblings as a “terror attack” and expected that changes to anti-terrorism legislation would be backed by Parliament by the end of September.

This new legislation aims to resolve some of the “loopholes” and makes it easier to convict those like Samsudeen. Ardern said every legal avenue to keep Samsudeen out of the community had been exhausted, which left surveillance the strictest measure left on the table.

Contact Zachary at zachary.schullian@student.shu.edu

The attacker at the Countdown supermarket was thought to be a supporter of the Islamic State (ISIS).

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CONTRIBUTORS
Alejandro Ramirez
Andrea Gonzalez
Anna Thibodeau
Austin Delsentro
Cat Anderson
Christopher Benitez Cuartas
Chris Gomez
Chimdi Chukwukere
Drew Starbuck
Eric Bunce
Farnsworth Hendrickson Jr.
Hamzah Khan
Henrik Pettersson
Isabelle Agustin
Jazlyn Dominguez
Jazlyn Dominguez
Joshua Powanda
Katherine Dorrer
Lauren-Marie Diawatam
Leah Chan
Lylian Pagan
Sophie Ulm
Sergei Valenzuela
Waina Ali
Zachary Schullian

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